

Trading community unable to continue corona lockdown: FCCI President

FAISALABAD: "Enough is enough". The trading community has bravely faced the brunt of unprecedented corona lockdown but now they are unable to continue it any more. Hence Government should allow them to restart their businesses under efficient and effective safety measures which could be finalized in consultation with Chambers of Commerce & Industry and other leading trading organizations, said Rana Muhammad Sikandar-e-Azam Khan President Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI).

He was addressing a Press Conference after chairing a consultative session which was attended by the representatives of various trade bodies. They deliberated on critical situation resulted due to the prolonged lockdown. The representatives of Anjumn-e-Tajran City, Supreme Anjumn-e-Tajran, Allied Group, Cloth Board and other organization also participated in this consultative session. They unanimously decided to convey to the Government that traders are new fed up with the lockdown and hence, Government must allow them to restart their normal businesses with proper security and safety measures.

Continuing Rana Sikandar-e-Azam Khan said that FCCI being a mother of all trade bodies is fully aware of its Social Corporate Responsibilities and its members have not only paid the salaries to its employees during the lockdown period but were also distributing free ration packs among the daily wages who have lost their livelihood due to this unusual closure of the city markets and bazaars. Similarly the local philanthropists are also distributing medical kits, Masks, gloves and Personal Protective Equipments (PPE) among the medical and paramedical staff deputed to take care of corona patients.

He said that traders displayed extreme sense of responsibility and close down their businesses as per the directions of the Government. He particularly mentioned export and local industry in addition to the local traders and transporters how have to bear huge financial losses. He said that Government immediately realized the gravity of lockdown and allowed export Industry to start its operation. Similarly the shopkeepers selling eatables were also allowed so that people could get food items without any hassle.

Rana Sikandar-e-Azam Khan told that our experience has proved beyond any doubt that corona has no local roots but it was caused by foreign carriers. He appreciated the prudent measures taken by the District Administration to control corona in addition to maintaining law and order in the city. Rana Sikandar-e-Azam Khan said Government has allowed various segments to start work but their supportive departments were denied of the same facility. Hence the operational businesses were also unable to yield to required results.

Quoting, construction sector, he told that it was allowed to start work from April 14, but the iron stores, timber, sanitary and other allied shops remained closed. Hence the expected results to stimulate economy failed to give the required benefits. He further told that most of the small shopkeepers run their businesses on their goodwill with limited finances. Hence government should allow them to restart their businesses. "It is imperative to gear up the economy and provide them opportunity to earn their livelihood in addition to provide much needed jobs to the unemployed youth", he told and said that all businesses without any discrimination must be allowed to resume their businesses as it will save white-collared segments from humiliations of begging.

Quoting recent statement of Federal Minister Asad Umar, he told that 70-80 million people may slip down below the poverty line if lockdown continued for another month. He said that Government should adopt solid policy instead of issuing confused statements. He said that Government has decided to start "smart lockdown" and hence it should carve out a viable strategy to contain spread of Covid-19.

Responding to a question, Rana Sikandar said that business community do not want clash with Government but Government should also understand their genuine problems and miseries due to the prolong lockdown.