

**APTMA demands restarting entire textile downstream supply chain**

KARACHI: All Pakistan Textiles Mills Association (APTMA) on Thursday demanded Sindh government to allow the entire textile value chain to restart production activity without further delay or else the provincial industry would not survive, leading to total closure, bankruptcies, and mass unemployment.

APTMA Sindh-Balochistan Region Chairman Zahid Mazhar said APTMA appreciates the efforts and measures taken by the Sindh government led by Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah to control the spread of the new coronavirus, and assures its fullest cooperation to fight against the pandemic.

He said the textile industry in the province, which was allowed to resume operation recently, has already adopted all precautionary measures prescribed in the SOPs to prevent the spread of the virus.

So far, textile industries that have export orders to ship consignments and those that have on-premises residential colonies have been given permission by Sindh government to start operating while following strict SOPs, he said.

However, there would be no positive impact on the provincial economy unless downstream textile industry, including sub-sectors of weaving, knitting, stitching, processing and garmenting that provide intermediary materials, did not restart to complete the business cycle of the export industry, he added.

“In the present situation, the industry is not even running at 50 percent of its capacity.”

He said that in the current shape of lockdown being observed in Sindh, industry was facing severe liquidity problem due to which it was not in a position to pay even the utility bills and the wages to its employees.

Mazhar said not allowing downstream textile industry to resume operation was resulting in drastic economic slowdown in the province.

“This would ultimately result in shortfall in the revenue of the province and large scale unemployment which may also create law and order situation,” the APTMA official said.

He reminded the Sindh government that Karachi that makes up about 52 percent of the country’s total exports was incurring heavy losses, which might lead to bankruptcies if the lockdown continues.

“To save the city of Karachi and the province of Sindh from this alarming situation, we have to adopt a smart lockdown policy, allowing the complete value chain to operate after abiding the precautionary SOPs as things are getting towards normal,” Mazhar said.

The world was gradually softening lockdown and industries were getting new orders, while old orders were reviving that were put in abeyance or temporarily suspended to contain coronavirus, he added.

Mazhar urged the Sindh government to issue directives to the concerned quarters to allow the textile industry and all its allied supply chain to resume operation in the larger interest of not only the country’s export sector, but also large scale employment.

“Let us save lives as well as livelihoods,” he concluded.