

Trade bodies caution against negligence to reopening precautions

KARACHI: Trade bodies on Wednesday urged shopkeepers of commercial markets to strictly adhere to all the standard operating procedures (SOPs) related to reopening after two-month long lockdown, warning any negligence would create a disaster.

Iftikhar Malik, president designate of SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry appreciated relaxation in lockdown during the days ahead of Eid-ul-Fitr. He appealed to the public to observe the precautions prescribed by the government.

“Easing of lockdown provides opportunity to small shopkeepers and relief to the general public who were waiting for making purchases for the family members,” Malik said. “It is in everyone’s interest to check the spread of virus.”

Agha Shahab, president of Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI), said thousands of people thronged shops and businesses across the metropolis during the first and second day of resumption of business activity, while the standard operating procedures were seemingly swept to the side without any worry about the spread of the coronavirus.

“It’s good to make profits during the shopping season, which would help in recovering some of the previous losses caused by the lockdown but these profits must not be earned at the cost of someone’s precious life,” Shahab said.

Businessmen said it is the responsibility of all the shopkeepers to play their due role by ensuring complete compliance of the standard operating procedures,

while citizens must also be very careful and take necessary precautionary measures.

“Slackness towards following the standard operating procedures by shopkeepers and customers may cause another lockdown which, if occurs, would lead to permanent closure of many businesses,” Shahab said. “Everyone has to act responsibly.”

A lot of efforts were made by Chairman Businessmen Group Siraj Kassam Teli and office bearers of Karachi Chamber that resulted in convincing the Sindh government to ease the lockdown on a condition that the business community would strictly adhere to precautions, which were not difficult to follow and obeying them would go in favour of humanity and businesses.

Shahab said many shopkeepers were seen grossly ignoring the crucial standard operating procedures.

The ease in lockdown doesn’t mean that coronavirus is over. “It’s a widespread misconception as the virus continues to threaten lives of the masses so we all

have to be very careful,” KCCI president said.

“Coronavirus pandemic is likely to stay for long hence, all the shopkeepers, small traders, and industrialists must revisit the way of doing business and reshape all their operations exactly in line with the standard operating procedures and make them part of their routine which is the only way forward towards sustainable business activity.”