

KARACHI: Traders began their protest campaign on Wednesday against the proposed 15 percent value-added tax [VAT], as scores staged a demonstration to persuade government in dropping their idea of legislating the tax. Sending a clear warning, traders vowed to stage sit-ins, rallies and hunger strikes across the country if the government showed even a slight intention for the tax implementation.

Traders protested outside Karachi Press Club hoisting banners and placards, which read VAT not acceptable, save the traders from complete devastation, the VAT procedure is impracticable for traders and a doomsday for country's economy. Talking to Business Recorder, Chairman, of a newly formed body, All Karachi Tajir Itihad [AKTI] Muhammad Atiq Mir warned the government of staging sit-ins in front of Sindh Assembly in protest against the possible legislation of VAT. He said that the protesting traders would not let those provincial legislators, who voted in favour of VAT, come out of the assembly. He expressed reservations over the tax procedure, punishments and its rate, which he said, is higher for the dying economy of Pakistan. Tax rate of 15 percent is higher which will result in the rise of prices of commodities, trouble the already dwindling trade and catalyse bribery in the country, chairman AKTI expressed. Urging the government, he said that policy makers should immediately renounce their plans for VAT before the issue turns into an irresolvable dispute between the government and traders.

Mir suggested that government should first improve law and order situation, bring political stability, resolve energy crisis and provide the poor with essential commodities on affordable prices, then make an attempt to introduce such heavy taxes.

Courtesy: Business Recorder