

## Economy

# CII-Kerala calls for action plan to strengthen industry

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CII-Kerala has called for an action plan for strengthening the industry in the current lockdown scenario.

In an interactive session organised by the State government, Thomas John Muthoot, Chairman, CII Kerala, applauded the initiatives taken by the government in containing the spread of the virus and explained the support being extended by CII to the government in sourcing essential items.

K Ellangovan, Principal Secretary, Industries, sought the support of the industry in containing the spread of the virus and promised that the authorities would accommodate the views of the industry while taking major decisions.

Navas Meeran, Past Chairman, CII – SR requested the government to ensure that vehicles carrying essential goods are not held up. Aju Jacob, Director, Synthite Industries drew attention to the uncertainty in port operations and container clearance in Kochi.

A major demand raised by the industry was the request to waive the fixed electricity charges for a period of three months. Umang Patodia, past Chairman, CII Kerala, said the electricity charge waiver would be a great relief for most of the Industries in Kerala, especially the MSMEs.

M Khalid, president, Kerala State Small Industries Association sought auto-renewal of all vehicle licences without any fees and to consider supporting the industry in paying the wages of workers since the MSMEs are unable to pay the full wages in the lockdown scenario.

V Abdul Razak, Managing Director, VKC Group, suggested that government consider speeding up the process of GST refund, which will help the Industries to ensure cash flow.

Paul Thomas, Past Chairman, CII Kerala & Founder and Managing Director, ESAF Small Finance Bank representing the microfinance sector, urged the government to permit them to resume operations after April 15.

Jose Dominic, Director, Escapade Resorts Pvt Ltd, representing the tourism and the hospitality sector, stated that the Covid-19 pandemic has heavily impacted the domestic tourism sector and highlighted the need for a subsistence disbursement of funds till the normalcy is restored.

S Sajikumar Managing Director, Dhathri Ayurveda, urged the government to make available duty-free ethyl alcohol for ease in making sanitizers and requested the government to reduce tax on hand sanitizers from 18 per cent to 12 per cent.