

Economy must restart in phases: CII co-chairman

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Naushad Forbes, co-chairman of Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) Economic Affairs Council, on Sunday said economic activity must resume in an organised manner and manufacturing should be an important launchpad.

"We need to restart in phases, wherein we start with activities that we know we can organise in a safe and effective way. There is reasonable evidence that in manufacturing one can set up processes in a very safe way, to ensure no spread takes place," Forbes said, at a virtual town hall organized by CII.

Forbes is also the co-chairman of Forbes Marshall Pvt. Ltd. He was critical of the nationwide lockdown, especially the way manufacturing units and logistics were shut down. "We simply stopped the movement of trucks around the country and said we would figure it out later on. We needn't have done it in quite so uncoordinated a way because it is taking us a huge amount of effort to restart logistics across India."

The country had been under lockdown since 25 March, with almost all economic activity, barring essential services, shut till 17 May. Since last week, economic activity resumed in so-called green zones, and to a large extent in orange zones. However, in red zones of major metros, the curbs continue. With such large cities in red zones, around half of India's economic activity continues to remain shut, Forbes said.