

# **Textile worker's leader charges with anti terrorist laws in Pakistan - Workers block roads in protest for seven hours**

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Textile workers in Faisalabad blocked the main roads of city for seven hours today on 24 April. They were protesting against the arrest of a textile workers leader and leveling charges of anti terrorism laws. The maximum sentence is death under 7 Anti Terrorist Act. The workers leader, Lala Niaz Kamoka was arrested a week ago. The workers in Thudi wala area were on strike immediately but no one listened.

His only crime was to demand a minimum wage of Rupees 6000 as was announced by the Pakistan Peoples Party government. He was called for negotiations and then police was called to arrest him. The bosses bribed the local police to charge his with anti terrorist laws.

These workers were non unionized and were acting in the local area only. The strike was going on and around 700 workers were taking part in this strike. When Labour Qaumi Movement, a textile and power looms workers organization, heard about the strike, they contacted them and the workers agreed to join the union.

Today, on 24 April, the leaders of LQM went to the areas and the workers decided to block the roads in protest. Over 1000 workers took part in the protest and decided to walk to the office of the top police officer of the city. Faisalabad is the third largest city of Pakistan and a hub of textile factories. They walked all the 10 kilometers to make it to the center of the city.

Police came to threat the workers but they would not leave the road until the leader is released. They were demanding an immediate release and withdraw of the charges. Where ever the police would stop the rally, the workers would give a sit in and told the police that they are all ready to be arrested.

One of the main leaders of LQM, Aslam Meraj was elected last week as labour secretary of Labour Party in Punjab. Along with Rana Tahir and other leaders of LPP and LQM, the workers were on the roads for seven hours.

The top police officers office, the police assured the workers that Lala Niaz will be released on bail on Saturday, the date of the hearing of the case. The police also agreed to take a notice of the false charges and if proved, the bosses will also be charges with providing false informations. It was all success at least for the time being. The workers dispersed afterwards and as yet no case is been registered against the workers leaders for taking out the rally and blocking the roads.

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