

## Truckers' union calls off strike; state transporters suffer loss of ₹200 crore

PATIALA, JULY 27

After a detailed discussion with the Ministry of Road Transport & Highways, India Motor Transport Congress (AIMTC) has called-off the seven-day nationwide strike on late Friday evening. The protesting union called-off the strike after an assurance was given by the Government of India that their grievances would be considered.

The ministry in a joint statement said the Government of India would constitute a high-level committee under the chairmanship of Secretary of Transport Ministry to facilitate expeditious resolution of the demands of the transport fraternity. The committee will look into the demands of the transporters, sympathetically.

The Truck Union, Punjab, has claimed that truckers in the state have suffered a loss of about ₹200 crore, due to the nationwide strike. In Punjab, there are 80,000 trucks which are affiliated to the union. Truck operators in Punjab are suffering a daily

loss of about 25 crores.

Happy Sandhu, president, All Punjab Truck Operators Union, said nearly 75-80 per cent of in the state were off the road due to the strike. He further said, "Movement of raw materials and finished goods had been affected severely. The factory owners have informed me that if they don't get supply until Monday, the factories will be forced to shut down."

Apart from demanding reduction in fuel prices, the other demands include: a reduction in third-party premium, exemption on third-party insurance from GST, exemptions, and abolition of indirect taxes, national permits for all the buses and trucks, and doing away with the direct port delivery tendering system.

The nationwide strike by the truckers has led to an estimated direct and indirect loss of over ₹50,000 crores to the economy and the government and transporters should resolve the crisis through negotiations, an Assocham statement said on Friday. —TNS

# Truckers call off strike as govt assures to look into demands

FPJ BUREAU / Mumbai

Truckers on Friday called off their eight-day old strike after the government's assurance to look into their demands, according to a statement.

All India Motor Transport Congress (AIMTC), which claims support of 93 lakh truckers, had gone on an indefinite strike demanding reduction in diesel prices, among others, from July 20.

In a joint statement, the Road Transport and Highways Ministry and AIMTC said the strike has been called off. After the assurance from the government to look into transporters demand and constitute a high-level committee under the Road, Transport and Highways Secretary, the strike was called off, the statement said.

The decision was taken after a marathon meeting of transporters and senior Road Transport and Highways Ministry officials today.

Welcoming the decision, Union Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari said the government was "sensitive" to the demands. "We have already agreed to some of their demands earlier. For the rest demands, we have set up a high level committee," Gadkari tweeted.

As per the joint statement issued, Insurance Regulatory



Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has agreed the demand of review of premium for third party insurance for heavy vehicles and the government has agreed to devise a mechanism for seamless movement of transport vehicles across toll plazas.

Also, the government will explore possibility of extending health benefits under ESIC to the drivers and co-workers of the commercial vehicles and notify National Permit Scheme for tourist vehicles. The government also plans to extend coverage of Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana and Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana to the drivers and co-workers of the commercial vehicles. The high level committee will look into issues such as E-way Bill implementation, GST related issues of the transport sector, rationalisation/abolition of TDS rates, rationalisation of rates for presumptive tax on transport

vehicles, seamless travel across the state borders and highways, Direct Port Delivery. Union Finance Minister Piyush Goyal and AIMTC President S.K. Mittal were among those present in the discussion.

Transportation services to and from ports, refineries and industrial units have been stopped from July 20. The AIMTC had demanded that diesel be brought under the ambit of GST and tax structures like the e-way bill should be simplified. Essential commodities had been kept out of the strike. The strike, which had entered the eighth day on Friday, had impacted industries such as e-commerce, FMCG and automobile, besides hitting the supply of cotton, grains and spices also. Industry body Assocham on Friday said the strike had caused direct and indirect estimated loss worth over Rs 50,000 crore to the economy, with MSMEs being worst affected.

# Truckers' strike hits automobile, FMCG, textiles, e-comm sectors

MUMBAI, JULY 27

THE nationwide truckers' strike, which entered the eighth day today, has impacted industries such as e-commerce, FMCG and automobile, besides hitting the supply of cotton, grains and spices.

The All India Motor Transport Congress (AIMTC) started the indefinite strike on July 20, with demands to reduce diesel prices by bringing it under the GST and reforming the "flawed and non-transparent" toll collection system. E-commerce major Amazon said the strike

has affected its product deliveries in some cities.

"Owing to the ongoing difficulties caused by the strike, the delivery of products in a few cities has been impacted and we are working closely with these customers to get their orders to them quickly," its spokesperson said. Flipkart, however, declined to comment on the issue.

FMCG major Dabur India's executive director - operations, Sharukh Khan, said the company had put in place appropriate measures and ensured adequate inventories to meet

the demand in anticipation of the strike.

"However, if the strike continues, the entire industry would be starting at supply disruptions," he warned. Vinay Singh Kushwaha, vice-president - supply chain, Britannia said the prolonged strike has adversely impacted both inbound and outbound stock movements. Kushwaha said the

strike has also resulted in factory stoppages in some locations leading to idle manpower and associated issues, and warned that if the situation does not improve, "we will have

irreversible losses".

Industry body Assocham today said the strike has already caused direct and indirect estimated loss worth over Rs 50,000 crore to the economy, with micro, small and medium enterprises being worst affected.

Automobile industry body SIAM today said companies have had to adjust production as the strike affected both parts supplies and distribution of vehicles. "Our members are facing unprecedented crisis as it is affecting the move-

ment of vehicles and components supply because of the strike," Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM) deputy director general Sugato Sen said in a statement today.

Cotton Textiles Export Promotion Council (Texprocil) chairman Ujwal Lahoti said the transport strike has started adversely affecting textiles exports.

"There is sharp disruption in the movement of raw materials to the factories and finished goods to the ports for exports," he added. -PTI

