

Karachi traders call off three-day strike

KARACHI: The traders of Karachi on Sunday called off their three-day strike, which was supposed to begin from Monday (today), on the assurance given by Sindh Governor Imran Ismail that the government was prepared to address their reservations on tax issues.

The governor extended this assurance to a delegation of the Karachi Traders Action Committee (KTAC) which called on him at the Governor House.

The governor decided to constitute a six-member committee, comprising three members each from the government and the traders' sides, for holding negotiations to address the reservations of the traders on tax issues. The governor assured the delegation that no action would be initiated against any trader until the negotiations on tax issues concluded.

He also said that a meeting between the traders' representatives and Prime Minister Imran Khan and his economic team would be arranged during the PM's coming visit to Karachi on July 11.

This decision to call off three-day strike was announced at a press conference at the Governor's House after successful negotiations between the governor and the KTAC delegation led by Rizwan Irfan. Other members of the delegation included Jamil Paracah, Shaikh Alam, Hakim Shah and Irshad Quadri. MPAs Ramzan Ghanchi, Saleem Memon and Khurram Sherzaman also participated in the talks.

During the negotiations, the traders' representatives apprised the governor about their reservations on tax issues. The governor also arranged a telephonic contact between the traders' representatives and Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) chief Shabbar Zaidi who assured the traders of sorting out the issues pertaining to their 11-point charter of demands with mutual understanding.

Governor Ismail said that Karachi was the economic hub of the country where economic activities continued round the clock and that was why when Karachi moved, the entire country moved. "As such we would not allow the lights of the city to be dimmed."

He said that the government would take measures to remove reservations of the traders on taxes so that they could continue their business without any fear.

Later, addressing the press conference along with the KTAC team, Governor Ismail said that the traders had talked about their 11-point charter of demands with the FBR chief who had assured them of removing their reservations on taxes and solving their problems through talks.

The governor quoted Mr Zaidi as saying that in order to extricate the country from the prevailing difficult times, "we all have to come into tax net". The traders also presented some suggestions to increase tax net, Mr Ismail added.

Jamil Paracah said that Governor Ismail and FBR chief patiently heard their demands and assured them of addressing their problems and therefore they were deferring their strike.

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