

Goods transporters go on strike

KARACHI: Goods transporters on Monday went on strike for indefinite period and demanded Prime Minister Imran Khan to remove Murad Saeed as federal minister for communication.

Talking to Business Recorder, Ghulam Yasin chairman United Goods Transport Alliance (UGTA) said that all goods transporters have demanded removal of federal minister for communication Murad Saeed, who has not knowledge about this important sector. He said that UGTA, Pakistan Goods Transport Alliance, All Pakistan Goods Transport Owners Association, All Pakistan Customs Agents Association (APCAA), All Pakistan Bonded Carriers Association (APBCA), Supreme Council of All Pakistan Transporters, Intercity Bus Owners Association, Sindh jointly observed the strike on Monday.

He said the Sindh governor along with Punjab Transport Minister convened a meeting where they presented the chartered of demands and added that the meeting remained unfruitful as all authorities concerned were not present in the meeting.

Therefore, transporters have proposed the Governor Sindh to call all authorities concerned in Karachi and chair another meeting with the transporters in order to resolve the grievances of the latter.

Commenting on UGTA's chartered of demands he said the government should enforce axel load regime as per the court's directives and cargo loading should be controlled from the source.

Moreover, he said that the process of driving licence should be simplified, speedy and corruption-free and for the purpose, licensing authority should be centralized; adding that KPT should allocate separate area for parking of Karachi-bound goods transports to ease traffic pressure from the main city arteries besides it would also protect transporters from street crimes.

Furthermore, he also demanded to open Mai Kolachi Road, connecting Karachi Port and port Qasim, for goods transports and urged the government to withdraw the latest revision in road permit fees and token tax.

While advising the authorities concerned to restrict NH&MP for imposing heavy fine and penalties on goods carriers, Ghulam said that land should be allocated at Northern Bypass and Port Qasim for new truck stand because existing parking facility is now insufficient.

Meanwhile, chairman APCAA Arshad Jamal confirmed that inward and outward cargo movement remained halted on Monday due to goods transporters' strike and urged the

concerned authority to resolve the issue on immediate basis as the transporters' action has started creating additional financial burden (US\$ 1.5 million per day in terms of shipping charges) on the trade.

Arshad said that if the strike remained continued then the ports would start facing congestion issues due to containers' backlog, which may be cleared in months; adding that the transporters' agitation was also damaging the country's image globally as the movement of transit cargoes were also suspended.

Syed Shams Burney, chairman APBCA said that the demands of the transporters were genuine and the authorities should look into it and take remedial measures on urgent basis to resolve the issues.