

Oil tankers call off strike after govt assurance on taxes

KARACHI: The oil tankers and contractors have called off their strike following successful negotiations with the government, averting a possible fuel crisis across the country, an industry official said on Saturday.

"The government has accepted our demands. Some orders have already been made, while certain notifications would be issued on Monday," said Shoib Ashraf, a spokesman for Oil Tankers and Contractors Association (OTCA).

Ashraf said the supply of fuels to outlets had been resumed from Saturday evening.

Oil tankers association had on Thursday announced to discontinue supply around the country as a protest against a recent increase in income tax, provincial services tax, and toll tax.

Shams Shahwani, a representative of All Pakistan Oil Tankers and Contractors Association (APOTCA), said Minister of Petroleum Umer Ayub in a meeting on Saturday evening assured them to resolve the issues facing the fuel transporters.

"A meeting would be held with chairperson Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) on Monday to deliberate on the income tax issue, and the minister assured the issue would be resolved".

Moreover, the government had also agreed to allow old vehicles plying on the road for another three years until the completion of white oil pipeline, Shahwani said.

OTCA's Shoib Ashraf said the minister also agreed to implement the order of Sindh High Court regarding indiscriminate queue system for the tankers.

"National Logistics Cell (NLC) is also in fuel transportation business and their vehicles are prioritised by Pakistan State Oil (PSO). Now, there will be no discrimination between NLC's and other contractors' vehicles in queue for filling".

The authorities also agreed to withdraw a hike in toll tax and allowed an increase in oil tankers' transportation fee, Ashraf added.