

Transporters' strike: Commuters face some inconvenience; movement of goods not hit

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New Delhi, September 19

Commuters were hit due to the day-long transporters' strike in Delhi-NCR, though organised truck operations were not affected. There were reports of transport service providers such as autorickshaw or other players being prevented from plying on Thursday morning, although it was limited to certain localities. Some autorickshaw operators said that they avoided going into areas that were likely to face violence. Anticipating disruption in bus operations, Delhi schools were closed.

A group of transport unions had called for a day's strike from 6 am to 10 pm in Delhi and adjoining areas in National Capital Region — protesting against higher penalties for traffic violations — which they fear will result in harassment by enforcement authorities.

Commuters faced difficulties in reaching their destinations on Thursday as several private buses, taxis and autorickshaws



Punjabi Bagh Transport Centre, usually crowded with vehicles, was relatively idle on Thursday as transporters were on a one-day strike in Delhi-NCR to protest the hefty fines being imposed under the new Motor Vehicle Act. **KAMAL NARANG**

remained off the roads, according to PTI.

Many schools in the national capital remained closed due to the strike while some asked parents to make their own arrangements to pick up and drop their wards. The services of Delhi Metro, Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC) and cluster buses remained unaffected. Goods transporters said it was business as usual for them. Parag Aggarwal,

Co-founder of GoBOLT, said it had not seen any impact on trucking during the strike. Another large transporter, requesting anonymity, echoed there was no impact of the strike on business. Yet another transport player said that in the times of slowdown it was not possible to disrupt operations even for a day.

More footfalls were expected in metro rail systems and government buses — in Delhi, Noida

and Gurgaon — but data for the day had not been compiled.

Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari pointed out that the intent of the new traffic fines are to protect the lives of drivers as well as people on the roads. "Only those who break the rules will be penalised."

"Various States are reporting an increase in number of people queuing up for driving licences and pollution control certificates. This indicates people were not adhering to traffic rules," said the Minister speaking at a Transport Corporation of India (TCI) event to train drivers in road safety.

"India must be one of the countries where people get driving licences easily," Gadkari said, adding that it takes months for people to get driving licence in the US. Gadkari said, the insurance charges will drop when road safety improves. He reiterated that it is upto the States to levy lower the penalties if they deem fit.