

Flash strike at metro's Eloor casting yard

- Staff Reporter

Kochi Metro works suffered a jolt on Tuesday as a section of workers affiliated to a regional trade union went on flash strike and locked the site office at its casting yard in Eloor.

This resulted in the predominantly 100 migrant workers at the site and heavy machinery idling for the day. 'Metro's civil works are expected to be over by April and such 'unjustified' agitations create obstacles to prompt completion of works. "We are open to discussions and tried to reach out to union leaders, but in vain," said sources associated with the works.

Soma Constructions that is engaged in constructing the metro viaduct from Kaloor to Vyttila had permitted 56 trade union workers to tie steel rods for metro pillars and girders, when 250 migrant workers were deployed at the work site. "The number of migrant workers has now come down to 100, following which there was a bilateral decision to reduce the number of union workers to 36. A prominent union wants to increase the number to 56, which is unjustifiable since each worker is paid Rs 715 per day."

Moreover, union workers seldom adhere to the agreement whereby each one has to tie together 200 kg of rods. Most of them tie hardly 100 kg of rods. The 56 union workers can be deployed if they adhere to the agreed quantity. The contracting firm is struggling to raise funds to pay its own work force and cannot incur unnecessary expenditure, they said.

Apart from the two metro agencies, the Labour Commissioner, District Collector and City Police Commissioner have been informed of the strike and possibility of works coming to a standstill.

Responding to this, a prominent trade union leader said that union workers and migrant workers are often paid delayed salaries by metro's two main civil contractors, who have now deployed sub-contractors. This resulted in many of them returning to their home states, he said.

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