

Tea estate workers in Wayanad threaten stir

- Staff Reporter

They demand provision of 20 per cent bonus during the 2014-15 fiscal

Plantation workers of the Harrisons Malayalam Limited (HML) in the district is preparing to launch an agitation, under the aegis the Wayanad Estates Labour Union (WELU) that is affiliated to the CITU, demanding provision of 20 per cent bonus to all workers during the 2014-15 fiscal.

Talking to media persons here on Monday, C. Bhaskaran, president, WELU, said the anti-worker stance of the estate managements was causing hardship to close to 6,000 labourers working in 18 divisions of the four tea estates owned by the HML in the district.

Though most of the tea estates in the State, including the tea estates under Tata in Munnar, provided 16 to 20 per cent bonus to the tea estate workers after an indefinite agitation that lasted for 17 days last year, the HML management took a drastic decision to provide only 8.33 per cent bonus to its workers.

In 2013-14 fiscal

Such an arbitrary decision put the workers in a fix, Mr. Bhaskaran said.

The management had provided 16.5 per cent bonus in 2013-14 fiscal, he added.

The State government and tea estate managements had promised at a Plantation Labour Committee (PLC) meeting held in Thiruvananthapuram on October 14 last year that the bonus issue would be solved amicably after convening a Legislative sub committee, chaired by Finance Minister, constituted for the purpose, he said.

But the committee was yet to be convened to discuss the issue, Mr. Bhaskaran said.

Though P. Gagarin, general secretary of the organisation, had launched an indefinite fast in front of the HML office at Chundale in the district from February 5 to solve the issue, the HML authorities were yet to take any positive steps to solve the issue, he said. The workers would take out a march to the office of the HML at Chundale and stage a dharna in front of the office on February 11 as a token strike.

To be intensified

If the HML management failed to solve the issue in a time-bound manner, the agitation would be intensified, he added.

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- **HML management provided only 8.33 per cent bonus**
 - **Anti-worker stance causing hardship to 6,000 labourers**
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