

'Beedi workers leading a miserable life'

• Special Correspondent



Demanding work: Beedi workers attending the meeting held by IFTU demanding the re-opening of beedi companies, in Nizamabad on Thursday. – Photo: K.V. RAMANA

Indian Federation of Trade Unions has demanded beedi company managements reopen the companies immediately to rescue the scores of beedi workers who have been leading a miserable life without employment since the past three months.

Addressing a huge gathering of beedi workers here on Thursday, IFTU State president Vanamala Krishna said that with the imposition of the condition through G.O. No. GSR (E) -727 by the Centre that the danger mark – skull and crossbones – be printed on labels of beedi bundles to an extent of 85 per cent of label space. Beedi companies went on strike rendering about seven lakh workers unemployed in the State.

They have continued the strike till date, resulting in deterioration of economic condition of beedi workers. Despite this, the Centre has not yielded to the pressure. Even if the Parliamentary sub-committee recommended to make mandatory the printing of the danger mark on just 50 per cent of the space on labels, the Government made it 85 per cent bowing to pressure from corporate companies, he said.

Demanding the government to scrap the G.O forthwith in the larger interest of people, Mr. Krishna wanted to know why the restrictions have been only to the beedi industry when all other tobacco products such as gutka, pan masala and jarda were allowed to be sold freely in the market.

As regards to liquor, which is equally dangerous, there are no restrictions at all, he pointed out.

Appealing to the managements of beedi companies to reopen and restart the manufacturing of beedi products, the IFTU leader warned against intensifying the struggle if they did not do so soon. Earlier, the beedi workers took out an impressive rally in the town.

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