

## Beedi workers take to streets

• Special Correspondent



Beedi workers taking out a rally demanding that the Centre withdraw G.O. no. 727, in Nizamabad on Thursday.— Photo: K.V. RAMANA

Beedi workers under the banner of the Telangana Beedi and Cigar Workers Union affiliated to Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU) took out a rally here on Thursday and burnt the effigy of the Centre demanding the withdrawal of its G.O. no. 727 (E) relating to the mandatory printing of throat cancer danger mark on 85 per cent space on the labels of beedi bundles.

Addressing the rally, union leader Sidhiramulu said that the Central government, bowing to the pressure of multinational cigarette companies, took the decision to dilute the beedi industry which provided employment to over 60 lakh people across the country and seven lakh in Telangana alone. In the district, three lakh people were leading the life depending on the beedi industry, he said.

CITU leader Noorjahan demanded the government withdraw the implementation of the G.O. until all the beedi workers and employees in the industry were shown alternative employment. The decision was a big blow to the industry which has already been in the doldrums, she said.

Beedi company managements were unable to provide work for 26 days in a month and most of the workers were getting beedi rolling job for not more than 15 days, she said. She wondered why the government was targeting the beedi industry ignoring danger from the consumption of liquor for which many people get addicted resulting in destruction of families.

CITU leaders A. Ramesh Babu, Venkat Goud and others also spoke.