

Tea plantation workers blockade road

• Staff Reporter



Tea plantation workers of Harrisons Malayalam Limited staging a road roko agitation on the Kozhikode-Mysore NH -212 at Vythiri in Wayanad district on Saturday.

List of demands includes 20 p.c.bonus for all plantation workers

Hundreds of tea plantation workers of Harrisons Malayalam Limited (HML), under the aegis of the Wayanad Estates Labour Union (WELU) affiliated to the CITU, staged a road blockade on the Kozhikode-Mysore National Highway-212 at Vythiri in the district on Saturday morning, raising a slew of demands including the provision of 20 per cent bonus to all workers during the 2014-15 fiscal.

Speaking after inaugurating the march, C.K. Saseendran, CPI(M) district secretary, said while most of the tea estates in the State agreed to provide 17 to 19 per cent bonus to the workers after an indefinite agitation last year, the HML management alone took a decision to provide only 8.33 per cent bonus to its workers.

Anti-worker stance

The anti-worker stance of the estate management puts close to 3,000 labourers working in 18 divisions of the four tea estates owned by the HML in a fix, he said.

The Regional Joint Labour Commissioner (Kozhikode) had convened a meeting of the representatives of the HML and leaders of the organisation to discuss the issue on Friday, but it was a failure owing to the anti-worker policies of the HML, he alleged.

Though P. Gagarin, general secretary, WELU, had been observing a fast in front of the HML office at Chundale for the past 15 days, the management was yet to consider the demands of the workers, he said.

Later P. Gangadharan, Additional District Magistrate, Wayanad, informed the leaders that Labour Minister Shibu Baby John would convene a meeting on Wednesday in Thiruvananthapuram to discuss the issue.

Siege to Collectorate

Mr. Saseendran said if the management failed to solve the issue on Wednesday, the workers would lay siege to the Wayanad district Collectorate on Thursday with the support of similar organisations.

