

Weavers stop stir as owners agree on wages fixed in 2014

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Coimbatore: Wage talks between the power loom owners, textile manufacturers and Power loom Job Works Weavers Association finally concluded on Monday with the former in Coimbatore and Tirupur agreeing to implement the wages fixed in 2014. The strike that began on January 28 ended on Monday and the workers have agreed to work on Tuesday.

"The talks were held on Monday in the presence of ministers and officials of both districts. The owners accepted the demands and said that they would pay as per the wages fixed in 2014 which was 30% extra for Somanur variety and 27% for other varieties. As the demands were finally accepted, the workers agreed to join work from Tuesday," said a labour department official.

The rates were increased once in three years since 1995.

As per the district administration, both districts have over 30,000 powerloom units and 600 textile manufacturing units. As per the labour department, the city has over 1 lakh workers in powerloom units and Tirupur district has more than 2 lakh workers.

"Because of this strike, the industry has suffered a loss of nearly 1 200 crore. Apart from that, the TANGEDCO, sales tax department and other government departments have also suffered huge losses," said R Ponnusamy, former vice-president of Coimbatore-Tirupur district powerloom job workers' union.

The owners said that the wages were reduced because they faced huge losses due to the fluctuating cotton prices. "The markets were down and the prices of cloth went down which in turn led to a wage cut," said a powerloom unit owner.

Deputy commissioner of labour department, C Thangavel said, "Many units had closed down due to losses. Later, the strike also forced many units to shut down. Their other demand was to declare one day holiday for workers which could not be decided upon as the units worked based on the demand and orders received."

R Ponnusamy said that most workers were from the southern districts and many had returned to their home town. They should return back to work in a few days, he added.