

Tata Motors likely to sign 5-year wage pact with Sanand workers in June

Unlikely to follow Pune model where a bifurcated package had a portion of pay linked to performance

Sohini Das | Ahmedabad May 06, 2017 Last Updated at 23:00 IST



Tata Motors and the Sanand plant workers are likely to sign a wage settlement agreement for five years (2015-2020) by June this year. Earlier, Tata had signed a landmark wage settlement with Pune Workers' Union in March for three years from September 2015 to August 2018, where a portion of workers'

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salaries was linked to their performance.

However, in the case of Sanand, it is still not clear whether the bifurcated wage package linking pay with performance would be adopted here as well. Worker leaders claimed that so far the discussions have not touched upon the subject. The Pune settlement involved a bifurcated wage package, whereby a component of workers' salaries was directly linked to their performance.

Discussions and negotiations are on their final leg and worker sources indicated that an agreement is likely to be signed in June. "We are negotiating a five-year agreement with the company at the moment. It would be valid

from October 2015 to September 2020," informed a worker who did not wish to divulge finer details of the agreement at the moment.

A Tata Motors spokesperson responded by saying, "These are internal discussions and at present being worked out. At Tata Motors, we remain committed to amicable relationships with our workers and we expect to resolve this matter at the earliest."

Tata Sanand workers had approached the labour department here in March to help them negotiate their demands with the management. Tata Motors Sanand plant has a state labour department recognised union named Bharatiya Kamdar Ekta Sangh Sanand (BKESS). A handful of tripartite meetings have already taken place, and the next meeting is scheduled for May 18.

The workers have been placing their demands before the company for the last one and a half years. Their main issue is that of a wage hike given that the Tiago and the Tigor have taken off well and the company, and as such, the Sanand plant is well past its struggle with the Nano.

"Average worker or operator level salary at Sanand plant is around Rs 12,000 a month. This is far below the standard in the automobile industry for experienced workers, which is around Rs 22,000-25,000 a month. Most of the operators here have five to seven years experience," alleged a worker at the site.

Earlier, Sanand workers had gone on strike in February last year demanding the reinstatement of 28 suspended workers. The strike had lasted for almost a month and had gained the support of several labour welfare organisations in the state.

Tata Motors is at present negotiating wages with workers at Lucknow plant. Around 98 per cent of the operative employees at the Sanand, Pantnagar, Lucknow, Pune and Jamshedpur plants are members of employee unions, and together they represent around 53 per cent of the total permanent employees at these five plants.