
Vizag Port strike continues

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BL reported that the strike by workers of the cargo handling department of the Visakhapatnam port continued on the weekend and there was no headway in the talks with the management.

The Assistant Labour Commissioner initiated conciliation proceedings and talks were held on Friday, but they proved to be inconclusive. The next hearing would be on November 23rd 2009.

At present, 18 vessels are in the harbor and cargo handling operations have not been affected by the strike as alternative arrangements have been made.

The port authorities have rebutted the charge of the unions that the performance of the port is affected by the implementation of manning scales. Till date during November, the port handled 3.378 million tonnes of cargo against 3.044 million tonnes last year during the corresponding period and this disproves the contention of the workers.

Further, during the current financial year the port handled 41.984 million tonnes till date against 41.199 million tonnes during the corresponding period last year. Therefore, there was no adverse impact on the performance of the port as alleged by the unions.

The workers of the cargo handling division of the Visakhapatnam Port, the erstwhile Visakhapatnam dock labour board merged into the port, went on strike from 6 AM on Thursday, protesting against the implementation of the manning scales in the port. The two major unions the Hind Mazdoor Sangh and the AITUC supported the strike. The unions contend that the implementation of the scales is only benefiting the stevedores and the port is losing revenue. Besides, they allege, the workers are put to hardship.

(Sourced from BL)

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