

Headload workers' stir hits exports from state

DC CORRESPONDENT
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As all unions of headload workers of Mattancherry continue their "flash strike" for the seventh consecutive day, exports from the state have been affected.

The All India Spices Exporters Forum (AISEF) and other trade associations including Cochin Chamber of Commerce and Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) have sought the immediate intervention of the state government to end the impasse.

Addressing a press conference here on Tuesday, Madhusudanan Gupta, president, ICCI said that

the export firms, for no fault of theirs, have become are bearing the brunt.

The exporters failed to fulfil their commitments resulting in substantial losses in business, said Gulshan John, ex-chairman, All India Spices Exporters Forum.

The head-load workers launched a flash strike over the refusal of Kerala Head-load Workers Welfare Board to release festival advance for Eid.

They were receiving approximately Rs 15,000 as festival advance from the board. However, this year it paid no advance to more than 100 workers citing low average emoluments. The board claimed

that many workers had developed the illegal practice of demanding the payment directly from the establishments where they work, resulting in such wages not being reflected in its accounts.

"Though we have taken up the issue with the minister and authorities concerned, no steps have been taken to resolve the crisis," said C.S. Kartha, former chairman, Cochin Chamber of Commerce.

The trade organisations urged the chief minister to immediately intervene and help create a conducive atmosphere for ease of doing business.

Colonel Deric Sebastian, executive director of AISEF, also attended.