

Sri Lanka: TUs, employers in deadlock

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Trade unions have asked employers to release information regarding issues in factories in order to agree to the revised salary scheme for those at home without work.

FTZ Trade Union General Secretary Anton Marcus speaking with the Business Times said that they had asked the employers to provide information that they could then assess if workers need to be given half salaries. The agreement to pay reduced wages to workers at home is to conclude by the end of this month.

He noted that they wanted information like the number of workers dismissed, those in employment, the order situation and the plans for the future.

“We can see that now most of the factories have called back to work most of the employees and most are engaged in overtime as well while some are recruiting new employees as well,” he said.

Labour Minister Nimal Siripala De Silva had stated that once he receives this information all parties will be called for another discussion.

However some companies complain that there is a dearth of orders and that it is impossible to continue and that they need to continue under the current wage scheme for another three months.

“Still the market has not picked up,” Sri Lanka Apparel Exporters Association President Rehan Lakhany told the Business Times on Monday.

He noted that all companies in their membership are currently looking at new ways of receiving orders but sales continued to be low.

“We are hoping that the concession the government announced with regard to the payment of salaries will be extended for a further three months,” Mr. Lakhany said.

Under the tripartite agreement entered into between the trade unions, the Employer’s Federation and the Labour Ministry there is an understanding that workers asked to remain at home will be paid Rs.14, 500 or half of their salaries whichever is higher due to lack of adequate work at the factories.

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The Sunday Times

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