

Sri Lanka: Rs.50,000 National Minimum wage hike campaign next week

Friday 23 August 2024, by [DIAS Sunimalee](#) (Date first published: 18 August 2024).

Trade unions are euphoric as the Rs.1700 wage hike for plantation workers means that the salaries of employees in other industries too should be increased to a national minimum wage of Rs.50,000.

Free Trade Zone and General Services Trade Union General Secretary Anton Marcus said that they were still awaiting authorities to respond to their request for a discussion on the increase of the national minimum wage to Rs.50,000 and will start a public campaign from next week.

He noted that following the nominations they would try to meet all politicians and attempt to ensure that they take up this demand on their political platforms as well.

Mr. Marcus said that with the government announcing their will to bring in labour law reforms they hope to expedite legal action against the said bill and based on that “we will start a public campaign that will include a public rally and poster campaign”.

At present the national minimum wage is still at Rs.16,000 but if it should increase to Rs.50,000 then factory workers will also receive this amount.

Ceylon Workers Congress Leader and State Minister of Estate Housing and Community Infrastructure Jeevan Thondaman told the Sunday Times Business that the achievement of ensuring the wages of plantation workers was increased to Rs.1700 due to the direct intervention of the government.

He noted that discussions with Regional Plantation Companies by the government, outside of the wages board, has enabled them to achieve this wage hike.

Personally, Mr. Thondaman noted he did not believe that this wage structure was the perfect model, and on the other hand he called for an alternate system. And this alternate model needs to be regulated, he said.

This year’s wages board meeting held for about four hours resulted in the minimum wage being agreed at Rs.1350 plus Rs.350 productivity allowance. This productivity allowance is to be paid on the over kilo rate at over Rs.50 for 7kg per day. This has now been gazetted and will come into effect on August 28.

Commenting on the outgrower model, he said that they were agreeable to it but noted that there were certain concerns regarding the working of this system that needs to be worked out.

Asked about the state plantations that have already commenced paying this wage based on the previous gazette, Mr. Thondaman said that the government has agreed to make this payment

Sunimalee Dias

[Click here](#) to subscribe to ESSF newsletters in English and or French.

P.S.

Sunday times

https://www.sundaytimes.lk/240818/business-times/rs-50000-national-minimum-wage-hike-campaign-next-week-567600.html?fbclid=IwY2xjawEwKlZleHRuA2FlbQIxMQABHf9LWS_VcWe7wgYJefBgrmnULe7X-SHIYBY71Db47yZp9GTLsmfL.fng6Tg_aem_klvP_7MkXOB33vh6dQmwVQ&sfnsn=mo