

Union win in Indian steel industry

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Indian unions, including IndustriALL affiliates INMF and SMEFI, have successfully finalized a long-awaited wage agreement with Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) and Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Limited (RINL), benefitting more than 100,000 employees.

The wage agreement, concluded by the National joint committee for steel industry (NJCS) on 22 October had been pending since January 2017. Permanent employees only will receive a 13 per cent increase of the minimum guaranteed benefit, as well as a 26.5 per cent increase in fringe benefits and allowances.

Wage arrears from 1 April 2020 will be paid in one instalment for SAIL employees. For RINL employees, the date of payment will be decided by unions and management locally.

“As leading steel industry companies, SAIL and RINL have a responsibility to act together with the unions to achieve decent work. We are pleased that a mutually satisfactory settlement has been finalised under difficult economic conditions due to the pandemic,”

said Dr. G. Sanjeeva Reddy, INMF president and member of IndustriALL’s executive committee.

The agreement is expected to be approved by the ministry of steel in November, and workers to get the wage rise in November to be paid in December. The agreement is valid for ten years, as of 1 January 2017.

“The negotiations were tough, but we achieved a positive result through consistent joint work. It was only possible to reach this agreement through strong plant level support,”

said Sanjay Vadhavkar, SMEFI general secretary and member of IndustriALL’s executive committee.

Kemal Özkan, IndustriALL assistant general secretary, congratulated the unions on their victory:

“We look forward to seeing the steel unions investing their focus and strength to encourage other private steelmakers to respect and follow these agreements as national guidelines for India’s steel industry.”

The NJCS is made up of SAIL and RINL management and the five central trade union federations in India. NJCS decides on wages and all other social, economic and other terms and conditions.

SAIL is a public sector steel company with numerous plants and around 20 coal and iron ore mines located in India. RINL has a major steel plant in Vishakhapatnam.

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