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Jamaica: Alcoa Workers On Strike

by John Neagle

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On July 21, about 500 workers at Alcoa’s bauxite processing operation in Jamaica went on strike to demand a pay hike. Alcoa managing director Arnold Davis was cited by the Daily Gleaner as saying that the company is losing about 2,000 tons in output per day. Carlton Davis, executive director of the Jamaica Bauxite Institute, said that the strike could also prove costly in terms of foreign exchange losses, and higher interest payments incurred by the government, as a result of delayed bauxite shipments. The Caribbean News Agency, headquartered in Barbados, reported that the labor contract with Alcoa expired Dec. 31. The strikers are asking for an immediate 23% pay hike, and annual 11% raises for the duration of their contract. Alcoa management has responded by stating that it is bound to abide by the 10% wage hike ceiling imposed by the government. According to the news agency, unidentified industry sources have reported that workers at other bauxite processing operations Alcan, Alpart and Kaiser are considering a walkout in solidarity with the Alcoa employees. (Basic data from Xinhua, 07/25/89)

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