

# 'Less paid workers also forced labour'

NEW DELHI, Sept. 18.

Workers paid less than what they are entitled to under the Minimum Wages Act also come under the concept of "forced labour", the Supreme Court has ruled. The meaning of "forced labour" was not limited to only those compelled to work under physical threats with or without payment. The force could be financial, the court held.

The judgment was delivered, at a special sitting of the Court today by Mr. Justice P. N. Bhagwati and Mr. Justice Baharul Islam on a petition from the People's Union for Democratic Rights alleging that labourers at the Asiad projects were doing forced labour.

The court over-ruled preliminary objections by the Union of India and the Delhi Administration that the writ petition was not maintainable on the ground that fundamental rights of the petitioners were not violated in any way.

Where judicial redress was sought by poor people and the court was moved for this purpose by a member of the public writing a letter, the court "will cast aside" procedural rules and entertain the letter as a writ petition. — PTI.