Workers Struggles: Asia, Australia and the Pacific

3 October 2015

Indian health workers on strike in Telangana

Around 200 Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHA) workers in Telangana have been on strike since September 2 over eight demands, including a minimum monthly wage of 15,000 rupees instead of performance-based incentives. Workers held a funeral march in Nizamabad with an effigy of the government before demonstrating outside the residence of a member of parliament.

The state-wide strike is coordinated by the Telangana Voluntary and Health Workers(ASHA) Union, affiliated to the Centre of Indian Trade Union (CITU). Workers rejected a government promise that it would "examine" their demands if they called off the strike. The health workers said they want an assurance on their main demand for a wage increase.

Karnataka: Daily wage workers protest

Daily wage workers from the horticulture and agriculture departments in Mandya protested outside the Deputy Commissioner's Office on September 28 over job permanency and other demands. Hundreds of workers have been employed on daily wage basis for more than a decade. Beside job permanency, other demands are for gratuity payments, promotions, a housing allowance and equal pay for equal work.

South Korea: Hyundai Motor workers end industrial action

Some 48,000 unionised workers at three Hyundai Motor plants on Thursday ended a series of rolling strikes begun on September 23 in a dispute over pay and entitlements. In a tentative agreement reached on Tuesday the monthly basic wage will increase by 98,000 won ($92), there will be a one-time payout of 8.9 million won and bonuses equivalent to 450 percent of a worker's monthly salary.

The workers' original demands were for a 7.8 percent monthly basic wage increase of 159,900 won ($US133), guaranteed job security for both regular and irregular workers until age 65 and bonuses worth 30 percent of the carmaker's net profit for last year. Workers strongly opposed management's decision to implement the peak-wage system next year which reduces salary in return for extending retirement age. The full content of the agreement has not been reported.

Bonuses had been at the centre of this year's negotiations after Korea's Supreme Court ruled in December that periodic bonuses and other compensation must be included in workers' base pay. Hyundai and its affiliate Kia Motors have been sued in court by their unions over the issue, with verdicts still pending. The union and Hyundai agreed to form a committee to discuss this issue separately and "work on" improving the company's wage system.

South Korean food delivery truck drivers walk out

Around 40 contract truck drivers who do deliveries for the food processing company Pulmuone, have been on strike since September 4 to demand a fee increase from employers, subcontractors Daewon and Seoul Garam Logistics. The workers are picketing

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Pulmuone's logistics centre in Eumseong, North Chungcheong Province in central South Korea to oppose the company's demand that they post the company's logo on their vehicle. About 30 percent of cargo from the centre has been held up.

The drivers are members of the Korea Confederation of Trade Union's cargo workers' unit and own their vehicles and drive them as individual contractors. They claimed they have not had a fee increase for 20 years.

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Tasmanian child protection workers impose bans

Some 20 child protection workers at Tasmania's Child and Youth Services imposed work bans on Wednesday in a campaign to reduce the high number of case-loads forced on each worker. The bans include a limit of 15 children per case management worker and suspension of some reporting and administration duties. The Health and Community Services Union said the industrial action would run until the government allocated more resources.

The union, however, announced an interim agreement with the Department of Health and Human Services in the industrial commission on Wednesday. The sell-out deal fails to resolve the case-load issue and only contains a management agreement to review the situation facing case workers if they are asked to take on more than 15 children. The industrial bans will be lifted on Monday if union members accepted the deal.

According to the union's own figures, case workers in some areas are managing an average of 18 children. Government figures also reveal that more than 200 child protection notifications in Tasmania's north-west over the past year have not been assessed due to inadequate staff numbers.

Papua New Guinea bus drivers strike

Nine bus drivers and crew members in the Port Moresby suburb of Gordon stopped work for an indefinite period on Monday after being attacked by local police. Drivers said police did not give a reason for the attack and alleged that they took the morning's takings. The striking drivers and crew said they would not return to their runs until they were compensated.

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