

Hundreds of LG employees strike for higher pay in South Korea,
Bangalore garment workers protest factory closure

Workers Struggles: Asia, Australia and the Pacific

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South Korea: Workers at public broadcaster MBC end strike

Two thousand workers at South Korea's public broadcaster MBC returned to work on Wednesday after a two-and-half-month strike which forced the dismissal of the company's president. Unionised workers, including production crew and journalists, walked out on September 3 over alleged management interference in news coverage and unfair labour practices. They refused to return to work until the broadcaster's president resigned.

The strike was an escalation of earlier action by 400 MBC reporters, TV producers, camera journalists and announcers. They walked out in August following revelations of an MBC "blacklist" which categorised journalists into different groups based on their involvement in a 170-day strike in 2012, their relations with the labour union and "loyalty" to the company. Six journalists who were dismissed then as a consequence of the strike, however, are still awaiting a final court ruling on their reinstatement.

South Korean cosmetics factory workers on strike

Over 400 workers from LG Household & Healthcare products manufacturer in Seoul have been on strike since September 20 in a dispute over a pay rise. Factory and distribution outlet workers are maintaining a protest outside the company's office building in Seoul.

LG management offered a 5.25 percent pay raise, higher than the initially proposed 3.1 percent, but the union wants a 13.8 percent increase. The union claims that the company is only really offering a 1 percent rise, since 2.1 percent comes from an automatic yearly increase and 2.15 percent from post-settlement adjustments.

India: Rajasthan government doctors end seven-day strike

The All Rajasthan In-Service Doctors Association, representing doctors at government hospitals, ended a seven-day strike on November 12 after claiming the government had agreed to all 33 demands. Police began arresting striking doctors last week after the government enacted the Rajasthan Essential Services Maintenance Act and banned the strike.

The doctors' main demands were for corrections to salary discrepancies,

a 10,000-rupee grade salary benefit and payment of arrears, improvement in service conditions, guaranteed safety inside hospitals and a separate cadre and housing facility.

Andhra Pradesh hospital security guards on strike

Over 400 contract security guards from six government hospitals in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh began an indefinite strike on November 10 over unpaid wages. Visakhapatnam Security Guards Workers' Union members said their employer Jai Balaji Security Services, had not paid wages to 433 workers for over five months.

Strikers rejected the security firm's offer of one month's pay if they returned to work. A union spokesman said the workers would remain on strike until all outstanding wages were paid.

Bangalore garment workers protest factory closure

More than 500 workers from the Shahi Exports garment factory in Bangalore ended a four-day demonstration at the factory gate on November 14, after management agreed to hold talks with the Garments and Textile Workers Union. Workers decided to picket the plant on November 10 after they discovered equipment being moved from the factory and were told that it was closing.

Police were called to protect the equipment and pressure workers to end the picket. Workers ended their industrial action after management gave an assurance that grievances, which included a 5,000-rupee pay rise, would be resolved within two days.

Udupi wind turbine factory workers locked out

Around 500 workers, including 326 permanent workers, have been locked out at the rotor blade manufacturing plant of wind turbine manufacturer Suzlon Energy in Udupi since Wednesday. Management pinned a notice to the front gate with a list of employees who would not be allowed to return to work when the lockout is lifted on November 29.

Workers are holding a 24-hour protest outside the Suzlon Special Economic Zone following a court order prohibiting any protest within one kilometre of the plant. Management claims the lockout was in response to ongoing industrial action by workers which had slowed production.

One hundred and thirty contract workers at the factory were dismissed earlier this month as punishment for protesting over low wages.

Bathinda rural health workers protest

Rural health workers of the All India Anganwadi Association demonstrated in Bathinda on Wednesday to protest Punjab government plans to privatise Anganwadi centres and shift pre-nursery classes to primary schools from November 14. Union leaders claim that 52,000 anganwadi workers' and helpers' jobs are at risk.

Protesters waved black flags and marched to the main bus stand in Bathinda. Their action followed several months of demonstrations throughout Punjab by anganwadi workers over the issues.

Pakistan: Punjab trainee nurses demand wages

Trainee nurses attending the Gojra Government Nursing School at the state-run THQ Hospital in Toba Tek Singh district demonstrated outside the facility on November 11 to demand immediate payment of 10 months' unpaid wages. While hospital authorities have not paid monthly salaries, they are demanding that the nurses submit written documentation agreeing to pay for meals provided by the hostel mess.

Gujranwala municipal workers protest over unexplained sackings

Dozens of Gujranwala Municipal Corporation workers demonstrated outside the corporation's office complex on November 10 to demand reinstatement of sacked employees. Members of the Ittehad union have accused municipal authorities of firing employees without providing any reason and have threatened to expand the protest if their demands are ignored.

Sri Lankan garment workers strike

Around 850 workers at a garment factory in Matale, Central province walked out on strike on Tuesday saying they would not resume duties until salary anomalies were corrected. Police were called to the factory when a clash erupted between human resources personnel and workers.

Cambodian garment workers end strike

About 500 striking garment workers from the You Li International factory in Svay Rieng province's Bavet town ended a two-day strike on

Monday after management agreed to consider their demands. The strike was in response to bullying and deteriorating working conditions after a new manager was installed several months ago.

The strikers have demanded the company stop discriminating against pregnant workers, end one-month contracts, pay wages on time and in full, and treat employees with respect. Management has been forcing employees who arrive late for work into a separate caged off area.

Victorian meat workers' union suspends strike

The Australasian Meat Industry Employees Union, representing workers of Riverside Meats Echuca on the Victoria-New South Wales border, called off strike action on November 10 after 24 hours. Police were called to the plant on the first day of the walkout after workers picketed the main entrance and blocked the movement of all vehicles.

Workers are opposing company moves to abolish the tally system, an incentive scheme that pays workers more for increased output. According to the union, Riverside wants to shift its staff onto fixed hours and salaries. Negotiations are scheduled to resume next week.

New Zealand: Wellington rail workers strike

Over 400 rail workers in Wellington went on strike on Thursday after employment contract negotiations between the Rail Maritime Transport Union (RMTU) and private train operators Transdev and Hyundai Rotem broke down. Workers stopped for 24 hours from 2 a.m., halting all commuter services on the Johnsonville Hutt, Melling, Wairarapa, and Kaitiaki lines.

It was the first strike since 1994 to affect the Wellington rail network for longer than two hours, and the first since the new Labour-led government took office earlier this month. Transdev took over the operation of the Wellington commuter trains from the publicly owned KiwiRail in July last year and has a 15-year contract.

The strike comes after Transdev and Hyundai Rotem insisted on the removal of long-standing terms and conditions, including the reduction of penalty rates for weekend and night shifts, and imposed a requirement to work public holidays if requested.

During the 2016 contract-round, the RMTU promoted false company claims that there would be no reduction in pay and conditions by the private operator. The union is now running the nationalist line that the "French multinational is attacking New Zealand workers' conditions." In fact, the companies are carrying out what they were contracted to do by the Labour and Green Party-dominated Greater Wellington Regional Council. The RMTU donated heavily to both political parties' election campaigns.

The RMTU has not lodged a claim for a specific pay increase, and has no perspective of fighting to improve conditions. It is using the first strike it has called in 24 years to try to bring the employers back to the negotiating table in order to arrange a deal.

Air France flight attendants in French Polynesia on strike

Air services in and out of France's South Pacific territory French

Polynesians have been restricted since November 11 when Air France flight attendants stationed in Tahiti began strike action. Several flights were cancelled leaving tourists stranded on the island. Air France has hired two Air Tahiti Nui aircraft to circumvent the strike.

The stoppage came after ongoing talks between the carrier and the UFSA-UNSA, the flight attendants union, on a collective agreement and changes to the distribution of wages broke down. The airline failed in its attempt to have the strike ruled illegal by the courts.

French Polynesian hospital doctors call off strike without resolution

Doctors at government hospitals in French Polynesia called off indefinite strike action on November 10 after four days following an agreement with the government. A union spokesman said that talks with the government, however, were not satisfactory and that organisational issues were unresolved.

The doctors' main concern was the government's refusal to recognise and remunerate them according to work experience and seniority obtained outside French Polynesia. Although they were maintaining emergency services during the strike, the union claimed it called off the strike because of an untenable backlog of patients.



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