

Indian state government sacks 500 striking health workers, South Australian cash delivery guards locked out

# Workers Struggles: Asia, Australia and the Pacific

16 December 2017

## South Korea: Hyundai Motor workers strike for second week

Union members at Hyundai Motor's five plants in Ulsan, 400km south of Seoul, are maintaining strike action begun on December 5 for a new wage deal. Workers have been striking for up to six hours each day during the week. The action follows over 36 rounds of negotiations without reaching agreement.

Members of the 51,000-strong union want the basic monthly wage to be increased by 154,883 won (\$US142.50) and a bonus of 30 percent. The company's 2016 full-year net profit for 2016 was 5.72 trillion won.

Workers rejected Hyundai's offer to raise basic salaries by 42,879 won per month and bonuses worth 200 percent of basic pay plus 1 million won. After workers rejected this offer, the company suggested bonuses of 250 percent of basic pay plus 1.5 million won in a revised offer.

## India: Haryana government sacks striking health workers

The Haryana state government last Saturday terminated the contracts of up to 500 striking health workers after they refused to resume duties. Thousands of National Health Mission (NHM) contract workers in Haryana walked out on December 5 to demand a pay rise and job permanency. There are 12,500 NHM contract workers in the state, including medical officers, pharmacists, lab technicians, clerks, data entry operators, and auxiliary nurse midwives. Until they are made permanent the workers want a salary increase to match regular health workers.

Haryana's NHM workers have been demonstrating with these demands since 2015. They ended a 13-day strike in September last year after the government falsely promised to immediately begin the process of permanency. A spokesman from the NHM Workers Union said that the government had already made contract staff working under various other health schemes permanent in 2012 and 2013.

## Maharashtra ASHA health workers locked out

At least 130 striking Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHA) workers were prevented from resuming duties by the Mira Bhayandar Municipal Corporation (MBMC) on Tuesday. ASHA workers struck on December 1 demanding an increase in the monthly wage.

When the corporation flatly refused to consider their demands, the workers decided to call off their strike after 11 days. Health officials refused to allow them to return to work unless they accepted their current monthly pay of 3,000 rupees (\$US46.65).

## Pakistan: Quetta disabled workers end month-long protest

Disabled workers in Quetta, the provincial capital and largest city of Balochistan called off a 36-day strike this week and ended a protest outside the Quetta Press Club. The action was ended after the chief minister promised to address their demand for increased positions in the government service for disabled persons.

The Voice for Disabled Persons, which organised the workers, accused the government of passing an act to increase the quota for disabled persons from 2 to 5 percent but not implementing the decision.

## Peshawar university workers demand permanent jobs

About 500 Class III and Class IV contract workers at the government-run University of Peshawar protested on the university campus on Monday to demand immediate permanency. The workers were originally hired between 2013 and 2014. They now fear for their job security after repeated false promises of job permanency from the university administration.

Workers called off the protest later that day after the Vice Chancellor again promised to fulfil their demand.

## Khyber Pakhtunkhwa paramedics announce industrial action

The Paramedical Association of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa announced on December 10 that its members would invoke limited industrial action in all government hospitals, leading up to a provincial strike on January 3 if the government continued to ignore their demands. Paramedics were to wear black armbands from December 25 and hold stop work meetings in all hospitals on December 28.

The paramedics' action is in support of their long running campaign for better wages and facilities. They want a new service structure that elevates pay grades and increases the promotions quota, as well as a health professional allowance for all Class IV employees.

### **Pakistan printers protest over unpaid wages**

Workers from the state-owned Printing Corporation of Pakistan (PCP) in Islamabad began protest action on Tuesday to demand the immediate payment of overdue wages for October and November. All PCP employees, including management, are affected.

About 700 workers held protests in September when the government failed to pay for the month of August.

### **South Australia: Cash delivery guards locked out**

Multinational security and cash management company Prosecur began locking out guards and drivers on Thursday in response to industrial action. The Transport Workers Union (TWU), after 20 months of failed negotiations over a new enterprise agreement (EA), announced last week that its members would ban servicing automatic teller machines (ATMs) on December 14. Stop-work meetings of TWU members in September voted to impose temporary bans on servicing ATMs.

The TWU claims that the company's proposed agreement ends penalty rates for Saturday work, eliminates extra pay for evening and night work, demands guards to drive for 10 hours a day on a flat rate and forces them to work 50 hours a week before overtime is paid.

The guards and drivers have rejected this and demanded penalty rates for Saturday work, evening and night work, overtime pay and pay parity with other armoured vehicle operators in Australia.

### **New Zealand municipal outdoor workers strike**

Over 90 workers from InfraCore Limited, a council-controlled organisation which maintains parks, water, civil works and nurseries for the Rotorua Lakes Council in New Zealand's North Island, walked off the job on Thursday over a pay dispute. Workers demonstrated in Rotorua's central business district.

The workers are members of the FIRST union and the Amalgamated Workers Union (AWUNZ) and are on the same collective employment agreement. Negotiations have been ongoing for several months, with InfraCore attempting to force the negotiations into mediation.

### **New Zealand government nurses reject pay offer**

Members of the 27,000-strong New Zealand Nurses Organisation (NZNO), employed at District Health Boards (DHBs) have overwhelmingly rejected the government's latest proposed multi-employer collective agreement (MEGA). The NZNO made the announcement on Wednesday, following meetings with nurses at over 400 meetings. NZNO and DHBs commenced negotiations in July.

The proposed agreement for the period from November 2017 to July 2020 included an annual 2 percent wage increase and a one-off \$350 payment to all union members. Senior nurses were offered a 4 percent increase from November 6, followed by 2 percent increases in 2018 and 2019.

An NZNO spokesperson claimed the MEGA offer failed to fully recognise the work efforts of nurses, midwives and healthcare assistants in the community. Nurses told union officials at the mass meetings that the pay offer was not comparable to similarly qualified professions within DHBs, including medical radiology technicians and allied health staff such as physiotherapists.

The NZNO has opposed industrial action and sought to resume negotiations in mediation.

### **Papua New Guinea government doctors threaten to strike**

National Doctors' Association members this week threatened to strike yesterday if the government failed to meet seven outstanding demands. The doctors' demands relate to outstanding contractual matters or payments and allowances owed to doctors. The association demanded the government resolve these issues in a single package or they would boycott all regular services except emergencies.

An association spokesman said that many doctors had been working without their contracts being signed, while the government had frozen recruitments. Several doctors complained that they were evicted from their homes because the government was six months behind in housing allowance payments.

Doctors withdrew the strike threat on Thursday evening after reaching an agreement with the government. Cheques were handed over to cover outstanding payments and a time frame established to resolve remaining issues.



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