

Workers Struggles: Asia and Australia

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India: Punjab government-aided school teachers, workers and students protest

About 730 teachers and 400 non-teaching staff, along with several hundred students, from seven privately run government-aided colleges affiliated to the Punjab University, demonstrated in Chandigarh on Monday for higher pay. The action was a continuation of protests that began on February 1 at several colleges.

Educators demanded implementation of the long-pending university grants commission regulations, promotions, provision of allowances as per government colleges and a revised pay scale for non-teaching workers.

The protest was organised by the Joint Action Committee (JAC) and supported by various student organisations of over 50,000 students. The JAC threatened “bigger struggles” would be organised if their demands were not soon met.

Andhra Pradesh childcare workers demand minimum wage

Several thousand Anganwadi (childcare) workers, teachers and assistants demonstrated in Visakhapatnam on Monday to demand a minimum monthly wage of 26,000 rupees (\$US315) and wages pending for three months. They are currently paid an honorarium. Protesters also demanded withdrawal of the face recognition App.

Workers allege that on the night before the protest police went to the homes of workers’ leaders and issued notices. They said government-issued phones had stopped working and many internet addresses had become unavailable. Workers said that if their demands were not met, they would protest outside State Assembly next month.

Karnataka contract health workers strike for equal pay

The 23,000-strong Karnataka State Health Contractual and Outsource Employees Association began an indefinite strike on Monday. Strikers included doctors, nurses, lab technicians and ground staff. They threatened to suspend their services under the national health mission unless their demands are met.

The association demanded that outsourced employees’ wages be paid directly by the government, that they receive incentive pay and bonuses, and that compensatory jobs be offered to injured workers’ families. They also want equal pay with permanent workers and job security.

Workers’ demands were previously advanced and a report submitted by a committee, which recommended increased salaries, permanent job security and health security. The government failed to respond, but when pressed by workers in July 2022, falsely assured employees that demands would be granted.

Thailand: Temporary health workers demand permanent jobs

Under pressure from its members, the Government Employee Union of Thailand protested outside the ministry of health in Bangkok on February 6 to demand permanent jobs for temporary and contract health workers. A union spokesperson said a charter of six demands for improved conditions and job security previously presented to the ministry had been ignored.

The Public Health Ministry employs temporary and contract workers on a daily or monthly basis in 56 health support fields. Workers want the four-year short-term employment contract scrapped and replaced with a longer contract that expires at the age of 60.

The union also demanded that workers based in high security zones at Yala, Pattani, Narathiwat and five districts in Songkhla be paid a risk allowance similar to state officials.

Liquid natural gas production workers in South Australia on strike

About 170 natural gas production workers employed by Santos at its Cooper Basin extraction plant in northern South Australia and their Port Bonython LNG port facility, near Whyalla, South Australia, have been taking protected industrial action since November last year in their dispute for a new enterprise agreement.

Members of the Australian Workers Union (AWU) and Australian Manufacturing Workers Union (AMWU) have been holding rolling limited work stoppages and are refusing to connect and disconnect oil tankers and gas carriers at Port Bonython.

An AWU spokesman said the union was trying to do a deal for a 5 percent per year pay rise, or a pay rise linked to consumer price index (CPI) increases, backdated to July 2020, as well as protection of entitlements. The unions have allowed negotiations with Santos to drag on for 18 months, leaving members without a pay rise since July 2020.



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