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No Salary Since Jan, UPPCL Contract Workers Threaten Indefinite Strike

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The power employees union has given one week's time to the Adityanath government for release of pending salaries of contract workers.

Abdul Alim Jafri (/author/Abdul Alim Jafri) 12 Nov 2020



Lucknow: Contractual workers of Uttar Pradesh Power Corporation Ltd. (UPPCL), who have been protesting since last week in Bijnor and Meerut district over non-payment of their salaries for the past one year, have given one week's time to the authorities to either pay their dues else they would be forced to go on indefinite strike.

Protesting against non-payment of wages to contract employees since January 2020, and reduction in the number of such employees, the power department staff, under the banner of Uttar Pradesh Bijli Karmachari Sangh protested in front of the main powerhouse in the state.

The district president of the union, Jitendra Singh, said the employees were forced to go on strike after talks between the executive engineer and a contractor of the electricity corporation department failed.



"We have been not paid wages since January 2020. Every time we raise our demands, they hard cut a coupon, but this time we are not going to hudge," said Singh, adding that "despite not being paid salaries in the past 12 months, we have worked silently in the interest of common citizen and with complete devotion till date, but financial obligations and difficulties had become intolerable now."

Nand Kishor, a lineman from Bijnor, working on contract basis over the past decade, said that while the Yogi Adityanath government was boasting of 24-hour power supply in the state as an achievement, it is also neglecting the livelihood of thousands of electricity employees working as contractual worker.

"It's only because we work for more than 16 hours that they're able to give continuous power supply to people and farmers But, but they're (the UP government) not ready to address our issues," he said.

The contractual workers of Uttar Pradesh Power Corporation Ltd. (UPPCL), despite not being paid for almost a year, continue to work tirelessly in the hope that their jobs will be regularised one day. "These workers play an important role in the department's work across the state. Over decades, many of them have lost their lives and a large number has been seriously injured while repairing transmission lines, but never have they received even a single rupee of compensation from the government," a worker told *NewsClick*.

The union has also demanded speeding up the job regularisation process so that those working in the power department for the past over two decades would get regular jobs and benefits. A majority of them work as linesmen and meter readers, who are the backbone of the power department.

This is not the first time that power employees in UP are protesting against delay in salaries. During the ongoing pandemic, the linesmen and other contractual workers of UPPCL have repeatedly raised the issue of timely payment of salaries.

Read Also: Power Sector Employees in Uttar Pradesh Begin Fight Against Privatisation of Electricity Distribution (<https://www.newsclick.in/power-sector-employees-uttar-pradesh-begin-fight-against-privatisation-electricity-distribution>)

Recently, united under the Power Employees' Joint Action (<https://www.newsclick.in/UP-state-power-employees-protest-against-privatisation-PuVVNL>) Committee (PEJAC), engineers and all other employees of UPPCL held protests against the Bharatiya Janata Party state government's move to privatise distribution of electricity in the state.



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