

LPP strikes at Nawaz Sharif factories

Sunday 29 March 2009, by [TARIQ Farooq](#) (Date first published: 21 March 2009).

Dear all,

Today on 21 March, workers at Choudry Sugar Mills and Hamza Board at Gojra in district Toba Tek Singh, a complete strike was observed. Over 700 workers walked out of the two factories owned by Sharif family to demand for a minimum wage set by the government.

They were demanding at least Rupees 6000 minimum wage. At present, many workers were paid less than Rupees 4000.

Led by activists of Labour Party Pakistan, the workers blocked the main road linking Toba Tek Singh to Faisalabad for three hours. Police tried to frighten the workers with repression. However, workers refuse to leave the main road until they speak to Hamza Shahbaz, son of Mian Shahbaz Sharif. Hamza is also a member of national assembly. He is the responsible person for the factories from Sharif family.

This was the first ever strike in the two factories. There are 1000 workers in both factories and majority of them walked out.

Tariq Mehmood, general secretary LPP district Toba and Shabir Ahmad, secretary LPP Gojra and leader of Labour Qaumi Movement (LQM) along with other LPP activists have been trying the process of unionization in the two factories. They had fly posted the poster of Trade Unions Action Committee For Minimum Wages calling for the implementation of Rupees 6000 minimum wage for unskilled labour. That helped to make the first contacts within the factory.

Today, they were leading a first ever strike in a factory where there is no formal union yet.

Hamza Shahbaz spoke to Tariq Mehmood on phone and told him that he respects LPP very much. He assured that a minimum wage will be paid and that all the contract labour will be employed on permanent basis.

A meeting of workers representatives and Hamza Shahbaz is now fixed for 31 March in Gojra.

The workers went back to factory with an assurance that all their problems will be solved. This was a unique incident. No one ever dared to form a union in the two factories next to each other. There was no one ever thinking of strike. However, with the success of the long march, a new wave of enthusiasm has been witnessed among the workers. They decided to speak up and in loud manner.

Workers have agreed to form a union and work with LQM and LPP.