



Honda says two China plants to resume

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AFP

Japan's number two automaker Honda Motor said production was set to resume at two vehicle assembly plants in southern China after a strike at an exhaust parts maker ended.

But a new labour dispute involving workers at a factory in the southern province of Guangdong that produces car locks and key sets for Honda remained "unchanged", a Beijing-based spokesman told AFP.

The latest action to hit Honda comes after a spate of suicides at Taiwanese high tech firm Foxconn and violent clashes at a Taiwan-funded rubber factory in China which have highlighted growing worker discontent over pay and conditions.

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Production at two plants run by Honda's Chinese joint venture Guangqi Honda Automobile have been shut down for two days, primarily due to the strike at a parts plant producing exhaust and muffler components.

But Honda Japan said Thursday in a statement that the labour action at Foshan Fengfu Autoparts, a joint venture between Honda's subsidiary Yutaka Giken and a Taiwanese firm, had been resolved and work resumed Thursday.

"So Guangqi Honda decided to resume operations from June 11," Honda Japan said in a statement.

The new ongoing dispute involving workers at the Honda Lock (Guangdong) Co, which has about 1,500 employees, erupted on Wednesday.

The state Xinhua news agency reported that staff were seeking a monthly pay increase from Y1,700 (\$A21.94) yuan to Y2,040 (\$A26.33) yuan.

Honda, which has a production capacity of 650,000 vehicles per year in China, last week resolved an initial strike at its main parts unit in Guangdong by offering workers a 24 percent pay rise.

Foxconn - which counts Apple, Sony and Hewlett-Packard among its clients - raised wages by 67 percent for its hundreds of thousands of workers in China after 11 suicides, 10 of them in the southern city of Shenzhen.

But the company said Thursday it had stopped offering condolence payments to the families of staff members who kill themselves.

Earlier this week, some 2,000 workers at the KOK Machinery factory in the city of Kunshan outside Shanghai walked off the assembly line, demanding better pay and an improved working environment, the China Daily reported.

Dozens of workers were injured when security forces tried to prevent the workers from taking their strike into the streets, the report said.

Also this week, thousands of workers at a Taiwanese sports equipment factory in eastern China, which supplies Adidas, stopped work to protest the alleged death of a colleague, according to the New York-based China Labor Watch.

The workers broke windows and overturned some cars, the pressure group said.

The company denied anyone had died and said production at the factory had resumed after a brief work stoppage. A local official said the company had promised to raise worker salaries.

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