

Indian transport workers strike in Uttarakhand, 20,000 health workers continue indefinite walkout in Haryana state

## Workers Struggles: Asia, Australia and the Pacific

23 June 2018

### India: Uttarakhand transport corporate workers strike in Dehradun

Hundreds of Uttarakhand Transport Corporation workers struck on June 18 in Dehradun to demand a wage rise for all employees, including outsourced workers, drivers and operators. Currently paid 10,000 rupees (\$US147) per month, the strikers want their basic wages increased to 18,000 rupees.

Permanent employees are demanding payment of outstanding dues and for their wages to be regularly paid on the seventh of every month, for outsourced workers to be paid overtime and all current corporation job vacancies to be filled.

The strikers have called on the government to stop private buses competing against the state-funded transport services and for the corporation fleet to be increased by at least 2,000 vehicles.

### India: Sanitation workers protest in Punjab

Sanitation Workers' Union members demonstrated outside the Bathinda Municipal Corporation office on June 16 for improved wages and conditions. The protestors called for a special monthly allowance of 1,000 rupees, all contract jobs transformed into permanent positions, the scrapping of a new pension scheme, recruitment to all vacant posts and a provident fund.

The protestors, who chanted slogans and denounced the Punjab state government, have threatened a state-wide strike on July 17 and 18 if their demands are not granted.

### Thousands of social health workers strike Haryana state

Twenty-thousand striking Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHA) workers demonstrated in India's Haryana state on June 15. The mainly women workers have been on strike since June 7 to demand a wage rise and permanent jobs. The state-wide action, which is called "Jail Bharo" or "Fill the Jails," saw protests last week in Sonapat, Panipat, Kaithal, Karnal, Gurugram and other cities.

While the BJP-led state government formally agreed to workers' long-outstanding demands in February, it has not implemented its pledges. Hundreds of ASHA have been arrested during this month's strike.

### Pakistan teachers call for payment of outstanding wages

Government school teachers in Karachi joined with non-teaching Department of Education staff protesting on Monday to demand the immediate payment of wages and benefits outstanding since 2012.

The Pakistan government continues to ignore a court order directing it to pay all outstanding dues. The affected teachers and non-teaching staff were recruited by the Department of Education in 2012. The government has refused to pay them, falsely claiming there had been administrative irregularities in the recruitment process.

### New South Wales: Downer Group workers continue rolling stoppages

Over 400 workers from Downer Group's construction and maintenance division in the Hunter Valley and Illawarra continued industrial action for a new enterprise work agreement this week with a series of four-hour stoppages over three days.

The Australian Manufacturing Workers Union and the Electrical Trades Union (ETU) are employed by Downer on a range of projects, including coal mines, power stations, steel works and light rail construction.

The enterprise work agreement dispute began two weeks ago when the workers walked out for three days and imposed an indefinite overtime ban after negotiations with management collapsed. The unions have been involved in talks with the company since January.

In the last enterprise deal the unions agreed to a two-year wage freeze and reductions in allowances and working conditions. The workers want a 3 percent pay rise and restoration of lost conditions.

Downer Group, which has substantially increased its profits over the last period, has slightly lifted its original 2.25 percent pay rise offer to 2.5 percent but with no improvement in conditions. It intends to put the new offer to a vote by workers on Tuesday. According to the ETU, Downer has threatened redundancies if the deal is not endorsed.

### **Prison transport workers strike in Victoria for 24 hours**

Around 50 workers from global security company G4S in Melbourne went on strike for 24 hours on Wednesday in a dispute over pay and cuts to working conditions and penalty rates. Negotiations for a new work agreement, which began last October stalled on Tuesday.

The Transport Workers Union members are employed to carry out transfers from prisons, youth justice centres, police stations and law courts.

During the protracted negotiations G4S has demanded workers accept sub-standard pay rates and working conditions. The G4S transport workers are not paid overtime after eight-hours' work and denied other basic entitlements.

### **New Zealand: Burger King employees join fast food workers strikes**

Workers from the fast food chain Burger King held a

nationwide strike from Friday, June 15 till 2 a.m. June 18, to demand improved wages and conditions. The strike follows rolling strikes throughout May and early June by workers at rival fast food chain Wendy's.

Burger King employees frequently work overtime without any compensation and are often asked to work without breaks. Burger King managers are only paid \$16.88, just 34c above the minimum wage. According to the Unite Union, KFC management workers earn \$24 an hour. The union wants a "clock-in and clock-out" system to ensure that employees are paid for the actual number of hours they work.

Unite Union have prolonged pay negotiations with the company for over a year. Burger King New Zealand's general manager James Woodbridge has publicly boasted about the company's collaboration with the union, saying that it "has and continues to work constructively with Unite Union on collective bargaining negotiations."

### **New Zealand government workers vote for industrial action**

On June 18, over 4,000 workers at the Inland Revenue Department (IRD) and the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) voted to hold a two-hour strike in July.

The workers will walkout in protest against low pay increase offers and frustrating organisational changes. The Public Services Association (PSA) says wage increases for MBIE workers are tied to a performance based-system with difficult targets to meet.

Changes to the IRD's computer system have resulted in calls being capped and long delays, including up to four-hour waits for customers. The IRD plans to axe about 1,500 jobs by 2021.



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