

Workers Struggles: Asia, Australia and New Zealand

28 October 2022

The World Socialist Web Site invites workers and other readers to contribute to this regular feature.

South Korea: HD Hyundai shipyards vote for strike action

Hundreds of union members at HD Hyundai's three shipbuilding units in South Korea have voted to strike, following failed collective negotiations over pay and conditions. The three unions at Hyundai Heavy Industries, Hyundai Mipo Dockyard and Hyundai Samho Heavy Industries began contract negotiations at each shipyard in July.

The unions want contracts that deliver a 142,300 won (\$US99) rise in base pay, a 250 percent guaranteed bonus, increased dental benefits, and changes to the structure of the pay scale system, including abolition of the wage peak system. The unions have not set a date for commencement of industrial action.

Pakistan: Sacked Punjab mobile health workers demand reinstatement and unpaid wages [subhead]

Over 5,000 contract sanitary workers from the Coimbatore City Municipal Corporation began an indefinite strike and demonstrated outside the corporation's office on Tuesday. They want permanent jobs and a wage increase. Tonnes of garbage, particularly remnants of spent fire-works from Deepavali festival celebrations, remained uncleared in the streets.

Contract workers ended a strike one week earlier, after the Collector and the municipal corporation falsely assured them they would "look into" the matter and recommend that the Tamil Nadu government increase their wages.

BHEL power plant manufacturing workers in Uttarakhand protest over delayed pay

Workers from the government-owned power generating equipment manufacturer Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) in Haridwar, Uttarakhand state, demonstrated at the factory gate on October 21 over non-payment of bonuses. These include the PP bonus, Deepawali

festival bonus and incentive payments.

The Trade Union Sanyukt Morcha said it had called for a Joint Consultative Machinery meeting three months ago to resolve the bonus issues but management had ignored its request.

Jalandhar municipal sanitation workers protest over unpaid wages

Sanitary workers (Safai Karamchari) demonstrated outside the Municipal Corporation Jalandhar (MCJ) office on October 20 to protest delays in payment of wages. The Safai Karamchari Union said that when they went to meet with the corporation commissioner he turned and walked away. The union claimed there are around 1,800 sanitary workers in the city who are each owed 3,500-rupees (\$US43).

Andaman Islands public works daily wage workers on strike

About 4,800 daily wage workers from the Public Works Department on the Andaman Islands, in the Bay of Bengal, have been on strike since October 19 to demand a pay rise. The strike was called by the Andaman Sarvajanik Nirman Vibhag Mazdoor Sangh.

Bangladeshi launch workers strike for pay increase

Bangladeshi launch workers in Khulna stopped work for 48 hours from 10 a.m. on October 21 over ten demands, including a pay increase. The operation of launches between Khulna and Dacope, Koyra and Satkhira were affected. Other demands by the Bangladesh Launch Labour Association included dredging the river from Bhairab to Nowapara and landing passes for India-bound launches.

Apple store workers in Australia boycott Saturday work

Retail and Fast Food Workers Union (RAFFWU) members at Apple stores across Australia took protected industrial action on Saturday 22

October and failed to report for work. The action was part of a campaign to “take back our weekends,” in a dispute for a new enterprise agreement (EA).

Members plan to hold a one hour stop work meeting this Saturday to discuss further action in their fight for a pay increase and set rosters that include time off at weekends. They have implemented more than a dozen work bans, including refusing AirPod repairs and stock deliveries.

Around 150 RAFFWU members walked out of Apple stores across Australia on October 18, after rejecting Apple’s proposed EA, which is offering annual pay increases of only 2.6 percent, a massive wage cut in real terms. This paltry wage bump will only be given to workers who are currently receiving the minimum rate for their classification, which has been frozen since the last enterprise agreement expired in 2018.

Apple also wants to retain conditions in the existing agreement which enable it to roster any employee on any shift, seven days a week, with no set days of work from one two-week roster period to the next.

Other unions involved in negotiations with Apple are the Shop Distributive and Allied Employees Association and the Australian Services Union, who have isolated the RAFFWU members by not backing industrial action. Apple said it will continue negotiations with the unions and 35 non-union representatives.

Lumus Imaging diagnostics workers in Queensland strike

About 40 members of the United Workers Union (UWU), from Queensland’s major private pathology services provider Lumus Imaging, walked off the job for four hours on Monday to demand a pay increase. Lumus Imaging has refused workers’ demand for a pay rise to bring them in line with medical workers doing the same job in the public sector. The UWU said that Lumus Imaging’s medical diagnostics professionals are paid 10 percent less than their counterparts in the public sector.

Lumus Imaging, which is wholly owned by Australian Stock Exchange listed Healius, operates medical imaging facilities and employs skilled workers, such as radiographers, sonographers and nuclear medicine technicians across Queensland and the rest of Australia.

Western Australian public sector workers protest government’s wage offer

Thousands of public sector workers, covered by the Community and Public Sector Union/Community Services Association (CPSU/CSA), took time off work across Western Australia on Wednesday to participate in the union’s “8 Hours of Power” rallies called to protest the state Labor government’s wages policy. A rally in Perth CBD was joined by workers from transport, education and justice.

In 2017, the state Labor government legislated a “budget repair cap” on its public service workforce, limiting public servant wage rises and then, with the assistance of the unions in 2020, applied other

pandemic restraints, resulting in wage increases of just 0.9 percent per annum.

Public sector workers have rejected the government’s latest pay offer of \$3,120 a year increase for workers earning under \$104,000, or 3 percent for those over the threshold. Both will also receive a \$3,000 sign-on bonus. The Australian Nurses Federation (ANF) has demanded 10 percent annual increases and safe nurse-to-patient ratios, while other unions are demanding below inflation pay increases of only 5 percent. The state’s current inflation rate is close to 7 percent.

Nurses have put a ban on overtime and working double shifts.

Primary health nurses strike across New Zealand

About 4,300 nurses who work at general practices and Plunket child health centres in New Zealand held a four-hour strike on Thursday to protest against a low pay offer. Protests were held in Auckland, Christchurch, Wellington, Dunedin, Hamilton, Rotorua and other regional towns.

The New Zealand Nurses Organisation (NZNO) members rejected pay offers of 3 percent or less—well below the 7.2 percent inflation rate. Primary healthcare nurses are already paid 10 to 20 percent less than their counterparts in public hospitals, and are demanding pay parity. Health Minister Andrew Little responded to the strike by declaring that the government and NZNO were working together on a pay agreement, but would not give any details.

Massey University workers strike

Staff at Massey University campuses in Wellington, Auckland and Palmerston North held a four-hour strike on October 26 in protest against a below-inflation pay offer. It was their third strike so far this month, including a nationwide half-day strike on October 6 involving all eight of New Zealand’s universities.

Massey’s staff have been offered a pay increase of just 3.5 percent. The Tertiary Education Union has called for pay rises of 8 percent, which would be slightly above inflation. The university administration told the media that the effect of the strike was limited because it was held after lectures had concluded for the term, and students were on a study break.

Workers are also angry about an announcement last week of up to 72 job cuts, as part of a restructure of the university. The cuts will reportedly affect maintenance workers, administrators and others. This follows 230 redundancies announced recently by the Auckland University of Technology.



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:
wsws.org/contact