

Workers Struggles: Asia, Australia and the Pacific

23 May 2025

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

India: Rajendra Institute of Medical Sciences support workers' protest over outstanding wages

Workers from the central sterile supply department and laundry services at the Rajendra Institute of Medical Sciences in Ranchi, Jharkhand protested on Tuesday over non-payment of wages. The workers, who are only paid 6,500 (\$US76) to 8,500 rupees a month, complained that they were not paid properly for the past six months leading to financial difficulties and the inability to take care of their families' expenses.

Uttarakhand ASHA workers hold state-wide protest

ASHA (Accredited Social Health Activists) workers in Uttarakhand held a state-wide protest on Tuesday demanding higher wages, better working conditions and job security. The Uttarakhand ASHA Health Workers Union, affiliated to the All-India Central Council of Trade Unions, organised the demonstrations. Workers want a monthly honorarium of 11,500 rupees (\$US134), permanent jobs, daily stipend of 500 rupees during the training period and a retirement package of one million rupees.

Chandigarh state Anganwadi workers protest harassment by both central and state governments

Chandigarh state Anganwadi (childcare) workers protested outside the Deputy Commissioner's Office on Tuesday over non-payment of gratuity and increments, lack of basic workplace amenities and lack of promotions. Workers said that the state and central governments are harassing them, causing strong resentment among the workers.

Uttar Pradesh power utility workers protest privatisation

Power utility workers protested in Varanasi on May 20 against the privatisation of the Purvanchal and Dhakshinanchal Electricity Distribution Corporations. They held a rally outside the managing

director's office between 2 p.m. and 5 p.m. The protest was called by the Vidyut Karmachari Samyukt Sangharsh Samiti (trade union).

Pakistan: Retired non-teaching staff at Federal Urdu University demand pensions

Retired faculty members and non-teaching staff from the Federal Urdu University of Arts, Science and Technology () protested outside the Karachi Press Club to demand payment of their long-outstanding pensions and other entitlements on May 15. Protesters held placards and chanted slogans against the university administration, particularly the vice chancellor.

Speaking to the media, protesters claimed that despite the university having 670 million rupees (\$US2 million) in Pension Funds and receiving 320 million in recent federal grants, dozens of employees who retired as far back as 2017 had yet to receive their pension payments and entitlements.

According to workers, at least eight retired employees have passed away while awaiting their rightful entitlements. Protesters vowed to continue their campaign until demands were met.

Pakistan: Punjab sanitary workers protest salary delays

Sanitary workers from Suthra Punjab in Kot Chhutta tehsil, Dera Ghazi Khan, demonstrated this week against the non-provision of salaries for the last two months. Workers complained the delay in payments has pushed many poor sanitary workers into financial distress, with their households struggling to make ends meet.

Bangladeshi garment workers demand unpaid wages

Hundreds of apparel workers from TNZ Group and Ssain Apparels suspended their sit-down protest near the chief adviser Muhammad Yunus' official residence at Jamuna, in Dhaka after receiving an assurance that their demand for payment of wage arrears would be fulfilled within seven working days.

The labour and employment ministry said the arrears would be paid by selling TNZ Group's washing plant and the owner's house in Mohakhali DOHS. Arrangements were to be made to bring the owner back to the country, and to ban the director or management of TNZ from traveling

abroad, while TNZ's director of finance will remain in the custody of the government.

The workers had held a three-month long campaign seeking the payments. They held sit-down protests outside Shrama Bhaban (the Ministry of Labor and Manpower headquarters) in Dhaka for the first time on March 23–30 and for the second time from May 12.

Philippines: Kawasaki Motors factory workers strike for pay rise

Workers from the Kawasaki Motors Philippines Corporation (KMPC) plant at Cupang, Muntinlupa City, in the National Capital Region walked off the job on Wednesday and protested outside the factory. Members of the Kawasaki United Labor Union were protesting the unresolved collective bargaining agreement (CBA) negotiations that have dragged on for almost a year. Workers carried banners calling for fair treatment.

The strike was the first in the company's 57-year history in the Philippines. The union accused management of delaying negotiations which forced members to strike. A union spokesman said members are not demanding excessive compensation but a living wage and just benefits that can help them survive amid rising inflation and cost of living.

Snowy Mountains hydro-power construction workers in New South Wales strike for better pay and conditions

About 900 workers on the multi-billion-dollar Snowy 2.0 hydro-power construction project in southern New South Wales walked off the job for 24 hours on Wednesday to demand higher wages and improved conditions. The FIFO (fly-in-fly-out) workers complete 12-hour underground shifts and 14-day stints at the camp in the Snowy Mountains wilderness, before travelling home for seven days.

The Australian Workers Union (AWU), Australian Manufacturing Workers Union and the Electrical trades Union are in negotiations with the construction contractor Italian-owned Webuild and associate partner Future Generation Joint Venture (FGJV) for a new enterprise agreement. The AWU is calling for a pay increase of 12 percent to bring the workers' pay in line with rates paid by the same companies at the North East Link Tunnels project in Melbourne.

Other demands are for a \$140 daily camp allowance, a doubling of night shift rates, and increased leave for mental health. Workers also want better food and more varied meals.

Queensland nurses and midwives voting on industrial action

Queensland Nurses and Midwives Union (QNMU) members began voting on Thursday to decide whether to approve taking protected industrial action to oppose proposed cuts to long held conditions under attack from the Liberal-National Party (LNP) government's proposed enterprise agreement. QNMU is also opposed to the government's pay rise which falls short of what the LNP promised in the lead up to the state election.

The pay rise offer in Queensland Health's proposed enterprise agreement is 3 percent on April 1, 2025, 2.5 percent in 2026 and 3 percent in 2027. The state government threatened nurses that if they do not accept

the offer by May 30 and take industrial action they will not receive the 2025 increase from April 1. If not, the increase will be backdated to the first day of the month when agreement is reached. QNMU claimed that Queensland Health said they will not provide a new offer.

Nurses are opposed to proposals to not include several clauses from the current enterprise agreement in the new agreement that remove some hard fought for conditions. Those are special leave entitlements, rural and remote incentive package, parental leave arrangements and rights, access to union delegates, rights to convert casual and temporary staff to permanent, among others.

PepsiCo snack food workers continue strike in South Australia

More than 150 United Workers Union (UWU) members at the Pepsico snack food factory at Regency Park in Adelaide, South Australia are maintaining strike action begun on April 8. Workers are opposed to the company's enterprise agreement pay offer that does not compensate for low pay rises in the past three years. The factory produces potato chips and other snacks, under brands including Smith's, Doritos, Red Rock Deli, Twisties and Burger Rings.

The union has admitted that its last pay deal negotiated in 2022 of 2.6 percent annual increases over three years, while the inflation rate had reached 4.8 percent, means workers' real wages have fallen behind by more than 8 percent.

Workers rejected PepsiCo's 12 percent pay raise over the next three years demanding a 15 percent raise over three years to catch up with inflation. They claim to be worse off than their PepsiCo counterparts in Queensland who are paid 12 percent more for the same work on identical products which are sold at identical prices.

Flinders Medical Centre workers in South Australia strike

About 80 United Workers Union (UWU) members in theatre, patient transport, cleaning, and sterilisation departments at South Australia's Flinders Medical Centre struck for half an hour on Wednesday. They joined the state's disability support, aged and community care, education and health support workers, campaigning for better wages, and resources to meet current health care demands.

Since February, 1,100 Department of Human Services disability support workers and 1,000 health support workers across the state have imposed work bans seeking higher wages. The UWU claimed that its members at the Flinders Medical Centre are some of the lowest paid health care workers in Australia.

Striking workers say a long running crisis in underfunding and the rising cost of living has meant people cannot afford to work at the centre, causing staff shortages and compromising patient care. The UWU says industrial action will continue if the South Australian Malinauskas Labor Government fails to present a wages offer that is acceptable to members.

Osborne shipyard workers strike for pay parity in Adelaide

About 500 welders, boilermakers, electricians, fitters and riggers constructing the Hunter Class Frigates went on strike on Thursday at BAE

Systems Osborne Naval Shipyard in South Australia. They are demanding higher wages in a new enterprise agreement. The strike follows a campaign of limited rolling stoppages begun in February and deadlocked negotiations begun in July last year. The strikers held a protest march and rallied at the company's South Australian headquarters.

Members of the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union (AMWU), the Australian Workers' Union (AWU) and the Electrical Trades Union of Australia want parity wages with equivalent workers at the nearby ASC shipyard, where pay is 20 percent higher.

The unions have dropped all other claims and are only asking for a 30 percent pay increase on average over three years. BAE is currently offering only 12 percent over three years. Faced with minimal industrial action, BAE has refused to increase its pay offer, ended negotiations and applied to the Fair Work Commission to mediate the dispute.

The workers' last union-management negotiated pay rise was in 2023, at just 2 percent and well below the then consumer price index rate of over 6 percent.

New Zealand Ministry of Education staff strike for one hour

More than 1,500 staff members at the Ministry of Education held a one-hour strike during the afternoon on May 21, in protest against the Ministry's proposal for a two-year pay freeze. Pay negotiations, which began in December last year, have reached an impasse.

The Public Service Association said it was the first strike the ministerial workers have taken in 20 years. The union said the ministry was also seeking to eliminate provisions for flexible working arrangements. Mediation between the union bureaucracy and the ministry has been scheduled for May 30.

The action took place the day before New Zealand's right-wing government unveiled an austerity budget that will continue to starve education and other public services. The National Party-led government has frozen pay in several government departments and has made below-inflation pay offers for tens of thousands of healthcare workers.

The PSA and other unions have been instrumental in limiting industrial action, preventing a coordinated fight against austerity, and imposing thousands of redundancies across multiple government agencies.



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