

Workers Struggles: Asia, Australia and the Pacific

13 June 2025

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

India: Jammu and Kashmir power workers strike for higher pay

Over 10,000 workers from the Power Development Department in Jammu and Kashmir began an indefinite strike on Wednesday to demand implementation of the Common Wages Act, permanent jobs and payment of pending wages. The walkout followed anti-privatisation protests and the use of private contractors, with workers demanding suspension of all outsourcing by Jammu Power Distribution Corporation Ltd.

Maharashtra sanitation workers demand outstanding wages and promised pay rise

Sanitation workers in Ghansoli and Palghar, Maharashtra state, protested over unpaid wages and unfulfilled salary hike promises on Tuesday. Ghansoli workers received two months' back wages after threatening to strike. Officials promised to clear the remaining dues. Palghar workers ended a day-long strike after assurances were given of negotiations within 48 hours regarding delayed salary increases from contract renewals in 2023.

Malda Medical College workers in West Bengal strike for unpaid salaries

Over 180 temporary workers at Malda Medical College and Hospital stopped work on Tuesday to demand six months' unpaid wages. The strike disrupted critical hospital services, including trauma and emergency care, and compromised security. Workers are employed through a third-party agency. Hospital administration claimed it was attempting to resolve the issue.

Tea plantation workers in the Dooars region demand unpaid wages

Over 500 tea workers from four centralised estates operated by Andrew Yule & Company in the Dooars region, at the foothills of the eastern

Himalayas, protested on Monday, demanding six months of unpaid wages. They staged sit-ins demanding immediate payment, raised concerns about stalled provident fund deposits since July 2023, the lack of new hires, and unrepaired workers quarters. They have threatened to take further action if their concerns are not resolved.

Government workers, midday meal and ASHA workers in Punjab protest unmet promises

Teachers, ASHA (rural health) workers, midday meal workers and other government employees protested on Tuesday in Ludhiana. They were demonstrating over unfulfilled promises made by the AAP-led Punjab government who came to power three years ago. These included commitments for permanent jobs, salary increases and other benefits.

Despite pre-election assurances to double allowances, many honorarium workers earn a meagre 3,000 rupees monthly (\$US35). They are also demanding pending incentives, minimum wage honoraria, free insurance and annual promotions. Protests and rallies are planned with a march scheduled in Ludhiana on June 16.

Meanwhile, Anganwadi (childcare) workers protested in Ludhiana on June 4 and 6, demanding better remuneration, improved infrastructure and recognition for their role in childcare and community health. They criticised inadequate pay, lack of proper equipment, poor beneficiary food quality, and issues with mobile face recognition systems.

Workers also raised concerns about unreleased central funds and the impact of opening pre-primary classes at Anganwadi centres. Police stopped protesting workers' attempts to meet the chief minister on Tuesday.

MNREGA workers in Punjab demand more work and safety measures

Workers employed under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA) protested on June 7 at the Tarn Taran District Administrative Complex to demand full implementation of the employment agreement. They accused the ruling party of political interference in work allocations.

Protesters said workers from Sursing, Narli, Dialpur, Thathian Mahantan, Kirian, Van, Bhojian, Thatha and other villages had reported being denied the full 14 days of work each month.

The protesters, who are members of MNREGA Workers' Union, called for work estimates to factor in extreme-heat conditions and for basic safety measures such as cold water and first-aid kits at work sites.

Protesters submitted a memorandum to the deputy commissioner.

Himachal Pradesh state primary teachers end hunger strike

Primary teachers in Himachal Pradesh ended a 43-day hunger strike after reaching an agreement with the state government on June 8. The government assured teachers that their demands, including reconsideration of suspensions and protection of promotions, would be met. The existing directorate structure for primary and higher education will remain, and a committee including teachers will oversee governance and future decisions.

Tamil Nadu: Sanitary workers in Coimbatore protest unpaid salary increase and job insecurity

Sanitary workers from the Coimbatore City Municipal Corporation protested on June 8 after not receiving the promised revised salary increase from 15,500 (\$US181) to 21,000 rupees. Workers demanded higher wages, permanent employment, proper management of benefits and an end to contract labour. Protesting workers occupied the corporation office where they were violently attacked by police trying to remove them.

Patna Airport sanitation workers fight unfair terminations

Sanitation workers at Patna Airport, Bihar state, protested their termination on June 7 claiming unfair dismissal and demanding reinstatement. Their action disrupted airport operations, temporarily prompting authorities to engage in discussions to address their grievances. The incident underscores ongoing labour issues at the airport which is generally thought a privileged workplace.

Chevron's LNG plant maintenance workers' industrial action in Western Australia enters fourth month

Seventeen maintenance workers employed by contractor Ventia at Chevron's Gorgon LNG-processing plant at Barrow Island, northern Western Australia, continue industrial action begun on March 14 in their opposition to Ventia's baseline low wage agreements. Industrial action could consist of unlimited work stoppages of 30 minutes, 1, 2, 3 and 4 hours, and work bans.

The workers are members of the Electrical Trades Union and Australian Workers Union (AWU). Their bargaining representative is the Offshore Alliance (OA), a partnership of the Maritime Union of Australia and the AWU. It claims the "dodgy" baseline agreements Ventia intends to use were signed off by biscuit factory workers in Perth who had never worked in the oil and gas industry.

The agreements include a wage offer of just \$25.75 per hour, well below the industry standard. Workers are demanding equal pay and conditions with maintenance workers at other Chevron gas-processing facilities.

Vertech oil and gas production workers in Western Australia escalate industrial action

About 50 inspectors and rope access crew employed by Vertech at Woodside, JadeStone and INPEX oil and gas exploration and processing facilities in Western Australia on Wednesday stepped up protected industrial action begun on May 28 after rejecting the company's latest proposed enterprise agreement. Australian Workers Union members said the revised agreement contained sub-industry rates and conditions.

The workers are represented by the Offshore Alliance (OA), which claims Vertech wants to set pay rates \$10 to \$20 below industry standards. It also has refused to include travel provisions in the proposed agreement and wants the ability to remove all existing travel payments whenever and however they like. OA accused Vertech of wanting to have the ability to unilaterally change rosters without reaching agreement with workers.

Workers voted unanimously on April 17 to take industrial action that could include stoppages from 30 minutes to one hour and multiple bans on administrative related work. The workers do critical work associated with safety.

Getinge electricians in Queensland locked out during pay dispute

Eight electricians employed by contractor Getinge, which maintains and repairs sterilising equipment at Queensland Health's public hospitals, have been locked out for over two weeks. The lockout was Getinge's response to low-level industrial action, following five months of failed negotiations for a new agreement.

The Electrical Trades Union voted unanimously on May 19 to take industrial action that could include work stoppages between one hour and up to 24 hours, and bans on overtime and call outs, among other bans. They protested outside the company's headquarters in Brisbane on June 9 to demand wage parity with their Victorian colleagues who they say are paid \$7 per hour more.

Virtus Health IVF nurses in Queensland demand pay rise

About 50 Queensland Nurses and Midwives Union (QNMU) members at Virtus Health IVF facilities in Mackay and Sunshine Coast, Queensland have imposed work bans to demand a pay rise in a new agreement. Some 90 percent of QNMU members rejected the company's pay rise proposal saying it failed to bring their pay in line with Virtus Health colleagues interstate.

The workers voted unanimously on May 28 to approve industrial action that could include stopping work for four hours. QNMU has restricted the current "Stage 1" industrial action to wearing campaign T-shirts and distributing union material.

Roy Fagan Centre health workers in Tasmania strike for new work agreement

Health and Community Services Union (HACSU) members from the Roy Morgan Centre mental health facility in Hobart walked off the job for one hour on Tuesday after a year of stalled negotiations with the state Liberal government for a new work agreement. HACSU claimed that an in-principle agreement was reached with the State Service Management Office during negotiations two months ago, but the government has failed to formalise the deal.

A major component of the dispute is that ward aides, who work 12 or 12.5-hour shifts, do not receive paid meal breaks and are subject to significantly lower shift penalties. The last agreement covering these arrangements expired in 2020.

The Roy Fagan Centre is a vital facility for older Tasmanians with conditions that require 24-hour assistance. Ward aids provide vital operational support similar to carers in nursing homes.

Bus drivers at CDC in Victoria isolated as Transport Workers Union seeks to push through sell-out deal at Dysons

The Transport Workers Union (TWU), representing members at Dysons Buses (333 workers) and CDC Ballarat (314 workers) gave notice this week that its members would strike for 48 hours starting June 16. The walkout was to impact CDC and Dysons services in regional Victoria and across Melbourne's west, north and north-east.

However, on Friday morning, the TWU announced it had reached an in-principle agreement with Dysons. Despite acknowledging that the company's offer "falls short of what we would have liked," the TWU called off the Dysons stoppage, isolating the CDC drivers and placing them under more pressure to accept a rotten deal.

The workers are employed under separate agreements. In March, Dysons offered a pay rise that included a 9 percent year-one rise. This was rejected by drivers, who said it was inadequate and substandard. The last wage rise for Dysons drivers was just 2.19 percent on January 1 and for CDC drivers it was only 1 percent in July 2024.

The "in-principle" union-management deal at Dysons contains a minimum 13 percent wage increase over three years for metropolitan drivers with a 9 percent increase occurring in the first year. This would then be followed by CPI or two percent rises, depending on which is higher, in subsequent years.

Epworth Medical Imaging nurses in Victoria strike for higher pay

Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (ANMF) members from Epworth Medical Imaging at Geelong and Richmond walked off the job for four hours on June 5 and June 6 respectively demanding higher pay in a new enterprise agreement. The strikes were an escalation of limited industrial action that began in April. The ANMF has been trying to reach a deal with Epworth since late 2024.

The 33 workers want 4.5 percent annual increases in a three-year enterprise agreement and a \$9 lead apron allowance. Management is holding firm on its offer of 4 percent pay increases only. Nurses are forced to wear lead aprons weighing 10kg for about 4 fours each day. The ANF claimed the apron allowance is paid by at least one other employer.

Crown forklift manufacturing workers in Victoria begin industrial

action

Over 80 workers at Crown Equipment forklift truck factories in Wodonga, Mulgrave and Truganina banned overtime and callouts on June 6 after negotiations between the American-owned company and the Australia Manufacturing Workers Union (AMWU) for a new enterprise agreement broke down. Negotiations began before the expiry of the last agreement in March. The workers have not had a pay rise since April 2024.

On May 26, AMWU members voted overwhelmingly for protected industrial action that could include various work bans and work stoppages from one hour up to one week.

In 2022, the workers won a 13.5 percent pay rise over three years. Recent data released by the Fair Work Commission revealed that wages in general have had a 14.4 percent loss in earnings power relative to inflation since July 2021.

South Australian government allied health workers strike over low pay

Health Services Union (HSU) members, including physiotherapists, radiographers, social workers, speech pathologists, occupational therapists, dieticians, psychologists, pharmacists and sonographers' at public health facilities stopped work and rallied across Adelaide and regional South Australia on Wednesday for an hour to protest low wages.

Workers want a new agreement to recognise the specialised nature of their work and a 25 percent wage rise. The HSU says the workers are the lowest paid health professionals in Australia. HSU has been trying to reach a deal with the state Labor government for nine months.

Public hospital cancer care scientists in South Australia strike for higher pay

Cancer care medical physicists and radiopharmaceutical scientists in South Australia's public hospital system stopped work on Wednesday to rally outside the Royal Adelaide Hospital for an hour and a half. Workers are demanding wage rises to bring their salaries into line with their colleagues in other states.

According to their union, Professionals Australia, these workers are paid 40 percent less than their counterparts interstate, contributing to them moving elsewhere for higher paid jobs.

The stop work follows nine months of negotiations with the state Labor government. The union claimed the government had not responded to its wage demands and had offered a totally inadequate wage rise of just 3 percent. Further industrial action is expected.

Qantas air freight pilots prepare for industrial action in pay dispute

About 100 pilots represented by the Transport Workers Union (TWU) and the Australian Federation of Air Pilots (AFAP) have begun voting on possible industrial action in their pay dispute with Express Freighters Australia, a cargo line owned by Qantas. The action follows six months of

failed negotiations.

According to the TWU, Qantas has refused to improve a pay offer that would “entrench poor work-life balance” for pilots. The AFAP claimed the pay offer was “sub-par” and would reduce freighter pilots to the “bottom of the industry.”

Both unions claimed they are pushing for industry standard pay increases, improved roster protections, and a better work life balance through the implementation of more days off.



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wsws.org/contact