

Workers Struggles: Asia and Australia

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

Asia

India: Synergies Castings factory workers in Andhra Pradesh demand overdue wages

Workers from Synergies Castings in the Visakhapatnam Special Economic Zone have been holding a sit-down protest outside the company's gate since September 26 demanding ten months of unpaid wages. They were joined on Sunday by family members, including children, holding empty plates.

Protesting women said that they felt humiliated due to the non-payment of wages, as they could not run the family or pay the children's school fees.

Synergies Castings is an alloy wheel manufacturer producing wheels for major auto companies, with a capacity of 1,260,000 wheels a year.

BEST contract worker in Maharashtra on hunger strike

A contract worker from BEST (Brihanmumbai Electricity Supply and Transport) began a hunger strike on Monday over long pending demands. BEST is a government-owned civic transport and electricity provider based in Mumbai.

Contract workers want their wages raised to be on par with permanent workers, payment of gratuity pending for over 4,500 retired staff and the running of the BEST fleet as per the contract. Workers held a flash strike two weeks ago at the Shivaji Nagar Depot for the same demands. They threatened to extend their struggle if demands were not met.

Tamil Nadu outsourced municipal workers in Sirkazhi end protest

Around 72 outsourced workers from the Sirkazhi Municipality in Tamil Nadu ended their two-day strike on November 7 following an assurance from their employer that payments into the Provident Fund would be made. Workers said they decided to strike because their repeated demands were ignored by both the municipal commissioner and their employer Tectus Infra Private.

Uttar Pradesh: Sanitation workers in Bhopal hold flash strike

About 300 sanitation workers from the Bhopal Municipal Corporation (BMC) held a flash strike on the morning of November 8 demanding 15 days of wages owing from October. Media reported that garbage was not collected, which led to widespread littering in the city.

BMC management claimed that workers were not paid because they failed to register their attendance under the new Aadhaar-linked system, which requires employees to take selfies with GPS location tags at the start and finish of each shift. Workers said they had technical problems with the system and lacked training in using it.

After four hours of the strike, management agreed to pay the wages.

Bangladesh: Teachers from government primary schools strike over assaults by Dhaka police

At least 125 protesting primary school teachers were injured on November 8 when they were attacked by police using stun grenades, water cannons, batons and tear gas forcing them to abandon their march toward Shahbagh, in Dhaka. Several teachers were hospitalised and others arrested. The teachers were demanding a pay upgrade.

Provoked by the police assault, thousands of teachers stopped work at all schools and held a two-day strike on Sunday and Monday. They demanded the resignation of advisers to the home ministry and the primary and mass education ministry of the Interim Government over the police assault.

The strike was suspended after assurances from the finance ministry that promotion to grade 11 of the pay scale would be offered after a review by the National Pay Commission 2025.

In May, teachers held strikes and protests over the same issue. Some of them have worked between 10 and 16 years. There are 450,000 teachers in 65,000 schools.

Bangladeshi pharmaceutical workers demonstrate to demand reinstatement of co-workers

Pharmaceutical workers from the Opsonin Group have been demonstrating in Barishal since November 1, demanding the reinstatement of 500 co-workers dismissed from the group's Opso Saline Pharma factory on October 29. They have held sit-down protests, marches and rallies outside the deputy commissioner's office in Barishal, and blocked the Bagura Road in front of the Opso Saline factory.

The factory manufactures pharmaceutical/medical devices and employs 1,100 workers. The factory's Steripack department was suddenly closed on October 28, and 500 workers received letters of termination on October

29.

Angered by the dismissal without prior notice, workers gathered immediately in front of the company's Bagura Road facility to protest. They alleged that the layoffs were revenge for their formation of a trade union on September 25. They claimed that nine members of the new union's executive committee and over 100 union members were included in the dismissals.

Bangladesh: Former migrant workers protest in Dhaka over mistreatment while working in Malaysia

On Monday, over 100 Bangladeshi workers protested outside the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment in Bangladesh's capital, Dhaka, over their mistreatment at the hands of two manufacturing firms in Malaysia.

The firms are Kawaguchi Manufacturing, which produces plastic casings for televisions and air conditioners for multinational companies including Sony, Panasonic and Daikin, and MediCeram, which manufactures high-tech ceramic dipping formers used in the production of rubber gloves.

Protesters demanded full payment of unpaid wages and compensation for 431 Bangladeshi workers they said were exploited by the two Malaysian companies. Speakers at the protest compared the exploitation faced by workers at the two firms to modern-day slavery and blamed both the Bangladesh High Commission in Malaysia and the Expatriates' Welfare Ministry for not protecting the victims.

Workers employed at MediCeram alleged delayed payments, threats, physical abuse and inhumane treatment over years. Management's confiscation of passports left workers undocumented and unable to renew work permits. Earlier in November, the workers said 15 were forcibly deported after they demanded renewal of their work permits and payment of back wages.

Workers from Kawaguchi said they have been facing irregular salary payments since 2022 and went seven months without pay as of September 2024. Although some compensation was paid, it was only in part.

Taiwan: Filipino migrant workers at TaiDoc in New Taipei protest exploitation

Filipino migrant workers at the medical parts manufacturer TaiDoc Technology Corporation in New Taipei are protesting against union-busting and infringements of basic rights of migrant workers at the company. The workers are organised under their newly formed union, the TaiDoc Technology Labor Union (TTLU).

TTLU complained that workers are denied fundamental freedom of movement, subjected to curfews and roll calls. Workers are made to check in at the dormitory by uploading images of themselves, and have restrictions on leaving the dormitories after curfew. If they stay out, they are punished with 30 days of cleaning duty in the factory. They are threatened with termination and repatriation otherwise.

When workers speak up, they face similar threats of termination and repatriation, with workers sent warning letters in response. Those who accumulate enough warning letters are terminated.

Media reported that as with other migrant workers, Taidoc employees are bound to the broker system, in that they have to pay 1,500 NT to 1,800 NT (\$US57.82) to brokers. No services are offered in return. They have to

pay 18,000 NT when renewing contracts, or they have to pay more than 50,000 NT from a placement fee after being sent back to the Philippines. To leave the company, one must pay one month's salary. Pregnant migrant workers are sent back to their country immediately. To take leave, workers are required to deposit one month's salary.

After workers protested outside the Ministry of Labor on November 7, TaiDoc has refused to meet with them. TTLU has since launched a campaign appealing to the broader public.

Australia

TK Elevator technicians in Western Australia strike for pay rise

About 30 installation and maintenance technicians from TK Elevators in Perth stopped work for 24 hours and rallied outside the company's office on November 7 as part of a campaign for an industry standard enterprise agreement. The action by Electrical Trades Union members followed two weeks of partial work bans that affected the restoration of elevators and lifts into service in and around Perth.

Workers want wages and conditions in the company's proposed enterprise agreement brought into line with the rest of the elevator industry. They complained that the company has been reaping profits for years while offering the lowest on-call rates and conditions in the industry.

Monadelphous engineering workers in Queensland strike for improved pay offer

Twenty-three Electrical Trades Union members from the engineering and construction company Monadelphous in Gladstone, northeast Queensland, walked off the job for four hours on Monday and Tuesday to demand a better pay offer in the company's proposed enterprise agreement. The action followed a 24-hour stoppage on November 4 and three one-hour stoppages the next day.

Monadelphous provides construction, maintenance and industrial services to the resources, energy and infrastructure industries.

South Australian public sector workers maintain campaign for improved pay offer

For the past month, South Australia's public sector workers have been walking off the job to hold short demonstrations outside government buildings to protest low wages, short staffing and unsafe conditions. On October 15, more than 2,000 workers, including sheriffs, pathology workers, Service SA employees, prison officers and TAFE administration staff rallied outside parliament in Adelaide. This was followed by weekly "snap" rallies outside the offices of Labor members of parliament.

The workers are members of the Public Service Association (PSA), which says it is demanding a 20 percent pay increase over 18 months. After 13 months of negotiations, the Malinauskas Labor government has offered only a 10 percent pay increase over three years. The PSA claimed that these workers' wages have increased by only 6 percent in the past six

years.

A rallying education worker said his current wage is below the award rate, while a pathology worker said her annual pay is no better than \$55,000. The average annual wage for a full-time employee in South Australia is around \$86,000.

Northern Territory public health sector workers prepare to strike

The United Workers Union (UWU), covering public health sector workers, including cleaners, caterers, personal care assistance, radiographers and sonographers, threatened that their 1,000 members will walk off the job simultaneously for one hour at public hospitals across the Northern Territory before November 21.

Workers rejected the Country Liberal Party government's annual 3 percent pay increase offer in its four-year enterprise agreement. The official annual inflation rate is 3.2 percent, while housing, health and education have increased by 4.7, 4.2 and 5.3 percent, respectively.

Workers want a pay increase that will compensate for the four-year pay freeze in their previous agreement. In that agreement, they were paid bonuses totalling \$10,000 over four years. The UWU said it was willing to accept a slightly improved pay increase offer of 15 percent over four years, plus improvements in safety and staffing.

Pacific National rail workers in Queensland begin industrial action

Close to 320 rail workers from the bulk coal carrier Pacific National (Coal Queensland) (PNC) began protected industrial action on November 7 in their fight against cuts to conditions and the low pay offer in a proposed enterprise agreement. The workers are members of the Rail Tram and Bus Union (RTBU) and the Australian Federated Union of Locomotive Employees (AFULE), which have been in negotiations with the company for over six months.

The RTBU claimed that PNC is trying to strip back conditions and has ignored key concerns of members. Members have put in place work bans on overtime and roster changes. They said they want a fair wage rise and time to rest and recover from gruelling shift work.

AFULE members will commence action on November 17, with a ban on working altered rosters and on their rostered day off. PNC threatened to not pay workers if they refuse to work altered shifts.

Members from both unions voted near unanimously on October 24 to approve taking action that could include four different work bans along with stoppages ranging between one minute and 24 hours.

Access Taxis drivers in South Australia strike over poor wages and conditions

Drivers from Access Taxis, which provides transport in the disability sector, went on strike in Adelaide on Wednesday, calling on the state Labor government to provide greater support for the service.

Drivers complained of hardships caused by the government's removal of the preferential booking system in May and deteriorating work conditions and poor wages. They said these were causing workers to leave the profession, resulting in extended wait times for passengers.

Access Taxis serves passengers with disabilities in the Adelaide metropolitan area. People with mobility aids, such as wheelchairs and scooters, rely on the service.

GenesisCare radiation therapists in Western Australia strike for improved pay offer

Radiation therapists from GenesisCare cancer clinics in Perth stopped work for four hours and rallied outside the Fiona Stanley Hospital on Wednesday, in their dispute with the company over its proposed enterprise agreement. Their current agreement expired in May, and industrial action followed several months of failed negotiations.

Close to 70 Health Services Union (HSU) members are involved in the dispute. They voted on October 28 to approve industrial action that could include bans on overtime and administrative tasks and stopping work for periods from five minutes to eight hours.

GenesisCare has more than 40 oncology centres in metropolitan and regional regions across Australia.



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