

Workers Struggles: Asia, Australia and the Pacific

20 March 2026

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

South Korea: Samsung Electronics semiconductor workers approve strike action

A total of 93 percent of 66,000 Samsung Electronics union members who voted in a ballot on Wednesday approved taking industrial action in their dispute over bonus pay. The ballot was organised by the Joint Struggle Headquarters, composed of the Samsung Electronics Branch of the Enterprise-Level Union, the National Samsung Electronics Union and the Samsung Electronics Union Dongheng.

The unions represent about 90,000 workers, accounting for more than 70 percent of Samsung electronics total workforce of 125,000 in South Korea. The unions threatened that if workers fail to reach a deal they plan to strike on May 21, following a rally on April 23.

Three months of negotiations failed to reach agreement with management regarding the calculation criteria for the Excess Profit Incentive (OPI), a representative performance bonus system. Samsung Electronics has a 50 percent annual salary cap on OPI, but the union wants its removal. Management offered a compromise which was rejected by the unions.

Strike action is likely to disrupt production for memory semiconductors, including HBM. Last month, Samsung Electronics became the first in the industry to begin mass production and shipment of HBM4. The company began manufacturing products intended for Nvidia's "Vera Rubin," the company's next-generation AI accelerator. Nvidia plans to release the Vera Rubin AI accelerator in the second half of this year, which means the planned May general strike will be when HBM manufacturing will be in full swing.

India: Madhya Pradesh power workers strike for pay rise

Contract construction workers employed by Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) at the Singrauli thermal power plant, managed by the National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC), struck on Monday to demand overtime pay and timely wages. The BHEL workers said they were forced to work 12 hours each day but only paid for only 8 hours.

The Singrauli Super Thermal Power Station is undergoing a Stage?III expansion. BHEL, a state-owned engineering company, is responsible for key equipment supply and construction work.

Bihar: Chausa power plant construction workers strike for better conditions

Strike action by construction workers at the 1,320 MW thermal power project in Chausa, near Buxar entered its third day on March 13. Workers want an eight-hour workday, payment according to board rates and the Minimum Wages Act, overtime pay, timely salary disbursement, workplace safety, and proper deduction of Provident Fund (PF) and Employees' State Insurance (ESI) benefits.

Striking workers fear there could be violence after management called for deployment of police and CISF (Central Industrial Security Force) professionals to intervene. Workers said that the struggle remained peaceful but would intensify soon if demands were not met.

Karnataka: Road toll collectors at Balagavi walk out over wage underpayments

Toll plaza contract workers at Belagavi stopped collecting tolls on March 15, protesting the underpayment of wages and not being paid on time by the local contractor. Workers said that their contracted wage was a minimum of 634 rupees (\$US6.83) per day, but this rule had not been implemented for the past five years by the contractors.

West Bengal government employees fight for Dearness Allowance

West Bengal government workers protested across the state on March 13 to demand payment of Dearness Allowance arrears which they have not received for several years. The protest came after the high court on February 5 ordered that the allowance was to be paid. Workers had demanded it be paid by March 31. The protest was called by the Angrami Joutho Mancha rights group.

Pakistan: Capital Development Authority workers protest in Islamabad

Capital Development Authority (CDA) workers in Islamabad demonstrated outside the Chairman Block on Tuesday to protest management's decision to halt their Eid allowances. A CDA Mazdoor Union spokesperson said that all employees have been receiving Eid

allowance since 2006.

Protesters said all Muslim and Christian employees had been paid the Eid allowance under a 2006 agreement and that its sudden cancellation was tantamount to injustice and would increase economic pressure on CDA workers already struggling with the rising cost of living.

Bangladeshi apparel workers protest over outstanding payments

Around 100 garment workers from the MU EN Textile factory at Dhamrai, in a sub-district located in Dhaka District, stopped work and demonstrated on Sunday, demanding the immediate payment of overdue wages and festival allowances ahead of Eid al-Fitr. The factory, which employs around 500–700 workers, saw some workers assemble outside the factory and later block a nearby regional road, chanting slogans.

The protest erupted after management rejected workers' demands for payment of half of March's wages, along with the Eid bonus. Facing rising living costs and mounting financial pressures, workers said they could not wait until the end of the month to receive their pay. One worker said they had no option but to halt production after management ignored repeated appeals. While factory management claimed discussions were ongoing the local police were called to the area.

The workers' action reflects growing anger among garment workers over poverty wages. The minimum monthly wage was set by the government and employers in late 2023 at 12,500 taka (\$US113). The unions and workers had demanded 23,000 taka (\$US318), arguing that 12,500 taka remains well below the cost of living.

Thousands of Victorian school teachers prepare to strike

The Australian Education Union (AEU), representing 35,915 state-school teachers in Victoria, plan to strike for 24 hours on March 24 and impose bans on unpaid overtime, administrative, clerical and reporting measures. Following eight months of failed negotiations for a new enterprise agreement seeking a wage increase, reduced workload and increased staffing, 98 percent of AEU members voted on March 12 to approve taking industrial action.

Rank-and-file anger has been building for years under successive enterprise agreements that cut real wages and intensified managerial control. The AEU's 2022 Victorian Government Schools Agreement, negotiated amid censorship and tightly managed delegates' meetings, resulted in a real wage cut, with class sizes and workloads virtually remaining the same. About 40 percent of members opposed that sellout.

In 2025–26 the education crisis deepened after it was revealed the Allan Labor government secretly deferred \$2.4 billion in school funding until 2031, worsening staffing and resource shortfalls. Faced with rising resignations and burnout, teachers want a 35 percent pay rise over three years, enforceable class size limits, major workload reductions and proper staffing for special needs, demands that directly reflect the immediate crisis in classrooms.

AEU members have rejected the government's first proposed agreement, which offered an immediate pay rise of 8 percent for teachers and 4 percent for support staff, followed by 3 percent per year for three years, and failed to address unpaid overtime and staffing.

Tasmanian public sector workers maintain industrial action

Thousands of Tasmanian public sector workers, covered by three unions, the Australian Education Union (AEU), the Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU) and the Health and Community Services Union (HACSU), are maintaining industrial action begun in early November with a series of four-hour stoppages in their dispute with the state Liberal government over its proposed enterprise agreements. Action involves teachers, health workers, firefighters, child safety workers, park rangers and other public servants.

On Monday pharmacists and pharmacy technicians at the Royal Hobart Hospital stopped work and rallied outside the facility, saying that the government's proposed agreement failed to incorporate their hard-won market allowance. A change that would mean an effective \$10,000 pay cut.

Workers from all unions decided to escalate industrial action early this month, after rejecting the government's latest proposed agreement of 3 percent pay increases in years one and two, plus structural reforms, and a 2.75 percent increase in year three. The unions say the offer contained significant cuts to existing conditions, issues not mentioned in previous negotiations.

The unions want significant pay increases to achieve pay parity with public sector workers in other states. Teachers are demanding a wage rise of 5.95 percent and other measures to address worsening workloads not addressed in their current agreement. They also want improved staffing, reduced workload and job security.

AEU members have planned future action that will include work bans and strikes of one- or 24-hours duration. HACSU members have endorsed "Stage 4" industrial action—allowing stoppages of between eight and 24 hours if negotiations remain stalled. The CPSU, covering government office workers, warned of "unprecedented strike action" across the state after March 20 if negotiations remain stalled.

The government has threatened that if workers fail to agree with its proposed agreement by March 31 it will remove its offer to include back pay from December 31.

Glencore copper refinery workers in Townsville strike for pay rise

About 40 workers from Glencore's copper refinery at Townsville, North Queensland, stopped work for four hours at 6 a.m. on March 13 following a year of stalled negotiations for a new enterprise agreement. The stoppage was called just 24 hours after the company made a pay offer which workers said was disgraceful.

The workers are represented by the Construction Forestry Maritime Employees Union (CFMEU), Australian Workers Union (AWU) and the Electrical Trades Union (ETU). The AWU claimed its members are paid 15 percent less than other workers in the industry while the ETU claimed its members are paid up to 30 percent less. They said the low wages mean the company has not been able to recruit critical local workers.

Workers have not had a wage rise since their last agreement. Glencore claimed its latest offer included a 15 percent pay increase over four years, but the unions argued that the offer rolled a \$3,000 annual bonus into the calculation, meaning the offer amounted to just 3 percent over four years.

Workers want an immediate 15 percent pay rise to bring them up to industry standard and 5 percent annual increases over the life of the agreement. The unions claim that Glencore, which received a \$600 million government bailout last year, supposedly to save local jobs, wants to employ temporary short-term contractors.

Mater hospital nurses in Queensland strike for pay parity

Queensland Nurses and Midwives' Union (QNMU) members from the Mater Group private hospitals in Brisbane and Townsville walked out and demonstrated outside their facilities on March 12 holding handwritten signs saying, "Thanks doesn't pay the bills" and "Keep our nurses in Qld", among others. About 5,000 Mater nurses and midwives are fighting for pay and conditions on par with their colleagues at Queensland Health (QH) in a new enterprise agreement.

QNMU said its Mater members are paid lower overtime, penalty, allowances and paid parental rates, and professional development leave than QH nurses and midwives.

Mater proposes a two-year agreement with below inflation pay increases of 3 percent for 2025, 2.5 percent for 2026 and 0 percent for 2027, and cuts to entitlements. The QNMU wants a three-year agreement to match increases guaranteed to QH nurses and inclusion of nurse-to-patient ratios, reproductive leave and commitment to increasing Sunday penalty rates.

The QNMU negotiated pay increase for QH nurses and midwives was in effect a pay cut. While the official annual inflation rate for Brisbane is 5.2 percent and expected to increase, the QNMU accepted a below inflation pay increase of only 11 percent over three years—about 3.7 percent annual increases.



To contact the WSW and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

[wsws.org/contact](https://www.wsws.org/contact)