

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.

India: National Thermal Power Corporation workers at Korba, Chhattisgarh protest

National Thermal Power Corporation contract workers at Korba, Chhattisgarh protested at a power plant gate on Wednesday, blocking access. Security personnel were deployed to the site. Workers were protesting working hours and low wages. They said they had been exploited for a long time by the contract company and were deprived of the minimum wage scale set by the central government.

Tamil Nadu police intimidate protesting SS Hyderabad Restaurant workers in Chennai

Immigrant workers from the SS Hyderabad Restaurant demonstrated at the restaurant's head office at Royapuram, Chennai on April 7 over nonpayment of wages for March. The workers resisted attempts by the state police to break up the protest.

Karnataka State Road Transport workers protest outstanding wages

Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) workers held a protest march from Chitradurga to Freedom Park in Bangalore on April 8 to demand 38 months' of outstanding wages from 2020. Affected workers included drivers, conductors, mechanics and timekeepers.

The Joint Action Committee of KSRTC unions previously threatened an indefinite strike on February 19 but postponed it, telling workers that KSRTC and the government had asked for time to fulfill their earlier commitments and had called them to the table for talks.

Last year, the unions called a major strike for wages and for the new contract pending from 2024, but it was stopped when the Congress government enacted the draconian Essential Services Maintenance Act, exposing strikers to heavy fines and disciplinary action.

Rajasthan: Jaipur Municipal Corporation sanitation workers protest outstanding wages

Sanitation workers from the Jaipur Municipal Corporation held a 4-hour

sit-down protest in front of the corporation's office on April 8 with several demands. These included payment of arrears pending and union elections pending for 14 months. They complained that leave entitlements are cancelled often without compensatory leave.

Bangladeshi sugar mill workers demand permanent jobs

Workers from the government-owned Thakurgaon Sugar Mills protested on Sunday with three demands, including a 15 percent special allowance as per the wage commission, transfer of seasonal workers to permanent positions based on merit, as practiced previously, and promotions to create a skilled workforce.

Organised by the Thakurgaon Sugar Mills Workers and Employees Union and the Bangladesh Sugar Industries Corporation Workers-Employees Federation, the workers assembled at a mill gate and held a meeting before marching to the mill management's premises, where a memorandum of demands was submitted.

The mill employs hundreds of permanent workers and hundreds of seasonal workers. Worker representatives threatened that if demands were not met within 10 days, they would "launch a stricter movement."

Philippines: Newtech Pulp mill workers in Northern Mindanao on strike

Mill workers from Newtech Pulp Inc. at Lanao del Norte in Northern Mindanao have been on strike since March 6, following failed negotiations for a pay increase. The NewTech Pulp Supervisory and Staff Union and NewTech Pulp Workers Union said they had already lowered their demands in an attempt to reach a compromise.

Supervisory workers reduced their proposed increase to 2,000 pesos (\$US33.50) a month, while rank-and-file workers brought theirs down to 1,800 pesos. Management has offered increases of only 1,000 pesos for supervisors and 850 pesos for rank-and-file workers.

The unions said management's offer was lower than it had offered in the first round of negotiations. The company justified the reduced offer by citing losses tied to the ongoing strike, a move the unions alleged was punishment for striking. Workers said the issue is not just wage increments but survival, with inflation continuing to erode purchasing power, particularly for food, electricity, water, and fuel.

The standoff underscores a broader tension playing out across the country of unions lowering demands to accommodate employers who are increasingly invoking business losses and instability to justify real wage cuts.

Tasmania: Grange Resources mine workers strike for improved pay offer

About 30 workers at Grange Resources' magnetite iron ore mine and Port Latta processing facility in northern Tasmania stopped work from April 3–7 to demand an improved pay offer in the company's proposed enterprise agreement.

After months of negotiations management refused to improve its sub-inflation pay rise offer of only 9.25 percent over three years. The official inflation rate for Tasmania is already 4 percent and predicted to rise. Workers said the offer is a real pay cut and doesn't account for their skills and the risks they take. They are demanding an 18 percent pay increase over the three-year agreement.

Communications, Electrical and Plumbing Union and Australian Manufacturing Workers Union members voted near unanimously last month to approve industrial action that could include overtime bans and rolling work stoppages from 15 minutes to 24 hours.

Workers from 8 Melbourne metropolitan councils begin joint industrial action

Workers from eight Melbourne metropolitan councils are currently undertaking a campaign of protected industrial action in their fight for improved wages and conditions in a new Multi-Employer Agreement (MEA).

Australian Services Union (ASU) members employed in the local government areas of Darebin, Merri-bek and Hume are refusing to collect rubbish bins, and members in the Yarra, Maribyrnong and Melbourne local government areas are refusing to issue infringement notices.

The ASU said 70 of its members stopped work on Tuesday for 24 hours, and more will commence industrial action across the municipality's general operations areas, and libraries. The union says the current stop work is the first stage in a campaign of industrial action by about 7,000 members in pursuit of a 22 percent pay rise over four years.

Negotiations with the eight councils began in early 2026 but reached deadlock, with councils claiming they are unable to exceed the 3 percent annual wage increase cap imposed by the Labor state government on departments and municipalities. Meanwhile, the government has announced it is considering raising mayoral and councillors' salaries by 20 percent.

The ASU says its members' wages have fallen by 12 percent in real terms over the last four years, with workers finding it difficult to survive under current economic conditions.

Workers at Brownes Foods in Western Australia strike

On April 1, around 60 Transport Workers Union (TWU) members at Brownes Foods dairy processing facilities at Balcatta and Brunswick, in Western Australia (WA), struck for 24 hours over the company's low pay offer in its proposed enterprise agreement. Workers rejected management's offer, which contained a sub-inflation pay rise of only 3 percent, unfair parental leave conditions and poor job security.

The TWU is seeking a cost-of-living wage rise. Inflation in Perth, the WA capital is the highest in the country, currently 4.9 percent per annum and predicted to increase. The cost of housing in the city has increased by

14.5 percent over the past year.

Separate from the dispute, the Fair Work Commission ruled this week that labour hire workers at Brownes Foods facilities must be paid the same as directly employed logistics workers when doing the same job. The TWU said that casual labour hire workers were paid a base rate as low as \$25.65 an hour, while company employees were earning \$36.50.

MSS security guards at Casey Hospital in Victoria campaign for wage rise

Security guards employed by MSS at the government owned Casey Hospital at Berwick, a suburb of Melbourne, are maintaining industrial action begun in late March over low pay. The United Workers Union members are holding rolling stoppages and protesting outside the hospital. The union said the MSS workers are being paid well below the rates of other hospital and government site guards across Victoria. They are demanding pay parity.

Ambulance Tasmania paramedics and communications workers strike

On Tuesday, 400 Ambulance Tasmania paramedics and communication workers escalated their ongoing dispute with the state Liberal government over its proposed enterprise agreement by imposing a ban on overtime and on communications and administrative tasks. They threatened to walk off the job in 24-hour blocks across the state in the coming weeks.

The current wage dispute has been preceded by significant disputes over ambulance ramping and fleet safety issues. In September, paramedics launched industrial action after, the Health and Community Services Union (HACSU) said, the government "walked away" from a deal it had reached with the union to pay specialist staff for extra duties.

The government's March 29 offer did not satisfy ambulance workers' demands for above-inflation wage rises and an end to chronic understaffing. It included unacceptable structural adjustments and pay rises of just 3 percent in the first year, 3 percent in the second and 2.75 percent in the final year.

The annualised February inflation rate for Tasmania's capital, Hobart, is 4 percent and rising.

Royal Hobart Hospital operating theatre workers strike for improved conditions

About 50 theatre support and Central Sterilisation Department (CSD) workers stopped work for eight hours and protested outside Tasmania's Royal Hobart Hospital (RHH) on April 1, accusing the state Liberal government of ignoring their concerns over critical issues like access to training, growing casualisation, unresolved backpay, and the role of CSD team leaders. HACSU members are calling for five casual colleagues to be made permanent and for team leaders in theatre to be properly recognised and paid for the responsibilities they carry.

The dispute is in conjunction with outstanding enterprise agreement negotiations with the state government.

The action by RHH theatre staff is the latest in a series of strikes, stop

works, protests and bans applied by public sector health workers since February. Workers are opposed to the government's underfunding of the public health sector, its sub-inflation wages, delays in negotiating agreements, restructuring, and chronic understaffing.

Vinidex factory workers in Victoria hold second strike for pay increase

Around 50 United Workers Union (UWU) members at the Vinidex pipe manufacturing plant in Sunshine, Victoria walked off the job and rallied outside the plant this week for the second time in two weeks in their fight for higher wages and improved conditions.

On March 13, the workers voted nearly unanimously in favour of strike action. The UWU has not publicly stated any demands, saying it is calling for "fair wages" related to the cost of living and fairer annual leave entitlements.

Vinidex is one of Australia's biggest pipe system manufacturers. It has sites in Brisbane, Smithfield (NSW) and in Sunshine. Vinidex is owned by the Aliaxis group, which operates in 40 countries and declared revenue of €3.5 billion (\$A5.85 billion) last year.



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