

Workers Struggles: Asia, Australia and the Pacific

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

South Korea: Kakao platform workers strike for higher wage and bonus

About 1,500 workers from Kakao, the operator of South Korea's leading messaging service, walked off the job for four hours on Wednesday in response to a breakdown in wage and bonus negotiations. About 800 union members held a sit-down rally outside Kakao's Pangyo office in Seongnam, followed by an 800-metre march from Pangyo Station. This was the first strike at Kakao since the company's founding in 2006.

The Kakao branch of the Korean Federation of Chemical, Textile and Food Industry Trade Unions, which represents more than 4,000 workers at Kakao's headquarters and four affiliates—Kakao Pay, Kakao Enterprise, DK Techin and XL Games—has several demands. These include management reform and accountability, job security and community safety nets, fair performance compensation and profit distribution, and the establishment of universal labor conditions and welfare systems.

A central point of contention is the size of bonuses and whether restricted stock units (RSUs) worth 5 million won (US\$3,270) are included. The union says Kakao's compensation system needs reform, arguing that only executives have received increases in bonus payments in recent years while other employees have seen limited benefits. Separately, the union is seeking a halt to sales, spinoffs and restructuring measures that it says threaten job security.

India: Karnataka ASHA workers demand outstanding wages

Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA) workers in Hosapete, Karnataka, protested outside the District Health Officer's office on Monday, demanding five months of unpaid wages and incentives. Workers said the government had withheld pay despite allocating funds.

The workers also said the state had deactivated nine portal components, ending incentive payments for critical tasks such as vaccination drives. They are boycotting these unpaid tasks and have threatened to escalate their protest if the state continues to withhold the payments. The protest was organised by the ASHA workers' union, which is affiliated with the All-India United Trade Union Centre.

Himachal Pradesh: Rural childcare workers protest at Shimla

Thousands of Anganwadi (childcare) workers marched to the State Secretariat at Shimla on Monday, demanding higher wages, gratuity, and social security benefits. These highly exploited workers are the backbone of the government's Integrated Child Development Services but are denied dignified pay and often forced to cover operational costs out of pocket.

Following the protest, a union delegation met with the Social Justice and Empowerment Minister, who verbally agreed to implement gratuity benefits, double the workers' annual mobile recharge allowance to 4,000 rupees (\$US42), and ensure monthly reimbursements for fuel and material transport. He also said the government would consider the workers' demand for a wage hike in line with the neighbouring Haryana model.

Further talks on pensions and provident funds are scheduled for late July. Workers have threatened to launch a wider agitation if the government fails to turn its verbal assurances into concrete action.

Punjab Roadways, PUNBUS, PRTC and Pepsu's contract workers strike

On Wednesday, Contract Workers Union members from Punjab Roadways, PUNBUS, and the Pepsu Road Transport Corporation (PRTC) stopped work for the day to protest the ruling Aam Admi Party's persistent ignoring of their demands. About 60 percent of bus routes were affected.

After talks with the government in the evening, the union called off the strike, saying it had secured a written agreement. A union spokesperson said the government agreed to initiate the process of withdrawing cases against arrested workers. On regularisation, the department agreed to forward its report to the personnel department and consider outsourced workers with three or more years of experience for absorption. Both issues are to be addressed within a month.

Punjab: Outsourced power workers protest in Taran Tarn

Outsourced workers from the Guru Amardas Thermal Power Plant at Goindwal Sahib, Punjab, demonstrated at the plant on June 6. Members of the Power Plant Workers Union shouted slogans against the state government and Powercom management, alleging that commitments made at a May 24 meeting to merge them into the department had not occurred. The protest was organised by the Powercom and Transco

Outsource Employee Coordination Committee Punjab.

The demonstration was part of a wider statewide movement demanding action on workers' concerns. Union members warned that further protests could halt work across Punjab and disrupt electricity services.

Jammu & Kashmir: Sanitation workers at Doda strike for better pay and permanent jobs

Sanitation workers at Doda, Jammu & Kashmir, struck on June 4 to demand better pay, permanent jobs, and an end to the contract-based GeM portal system, which workers said had led to prolonged periods of unpaid work. The strike was led by the Chenab Valley Safai Karamchari Union.

Earlier this year, the workers travelled to Srinagar to reinforce their demands and met with the Chief Minister, but their demands remain unresolved. A union spokesman said workers had been protesting for a decade without resolution, while many sanitation workers remain poorly paid, earning only 9,000 rupees (\$US94) a month.

Bangladesh: Thousands of apparel workers protest job cuts and other issues

Thousands of apparel workers from several factories staged protests in and around Dhaka in the days leading up to Wednesday, June 11. They demonstrated against thousands of layoffs and factory closures after Eid-ul-Azha, demanding the reopening of factories and reinstatement of dismissed workers. Several protests included road blockades.

On Tuesday, June 10, workers from Uniform Textiles in Kochukhet blocked a road in the Mirpur area of Dhaka to protest the closure of the factory. From June 6 to June 10, workers from Al Muslim Group, Texas Dresses, Nassa Mainland Garments, and Uniform Textiles staged protests involving road blockades over factory closures and mass layoffs, while AKM Knitwear factory workers in Savar protested the layoffs on June 6.

A sewing section worker at AKM Knitwear told media, "We were paid only 20 days' wages before the Eid holidays. We received no prior notice of the layoffs," adding, "We regularly worked overtime, yet management says there is no work." Police, along with armored personnel carriers equipped with water cannons, were deployed in front of the AKM Knitwear factory gate, creating a tense atmosphere.

A Trade Union Centre official said several hundred workers had been unable to return to work after Eid because factory owners had shut down the facilities.

Sri Lanka: Duncan Estate workers continue strike over unpaid allowance and increased workload

The strike by workers at the Duncan Estate in Hatton, managed by the Kahawatta Plantation Company, entered its fifth day on Wednesday. Workers are demanding payment of a 200-rupee (\$US0.59) allowance already approved by the government.

Workers allege that the estate management is currently offering a daily wage of 1,550 rupees (\$4.59), excluding the entitled 200-rupee allowance, while demanding the daily tea-plucking target increase from 18 to 20 kilograms. Strikers said they are ready to resume work immediately if the

company agrees to grant the approved allowance.

UGL contract workers extend industrial action at Woodside's LNG plants in Western Australia

About 70 specialised workers employed by maintenance contractor UGL at Woodside's North-West Shelf and Pluto LNG production plants in Western Australia are maintaining rolling stoppages and work bans begun on May 20 following failed negotiations for a new enterprise agreement.

The workers are members of the Australian Workers Union (AWU), Electrical Trades Union and the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union. Their bargaining unit is the Offshore Alliance (OA) which covers workers across Australia's offshore oil, gas, and maritime sectors. The OA said UGL offered an enterprise agreement that was below industry standards.

The two plants involved in the dispute, the onshore Karratha Gas Plant and the offshore Pluto plant, produce a total of 19.2 cubic metric tons of LNG a year. OA has informed UGL that industrial action will continue until a deal is reached.

INPEX LNG production workers in the Northern Territory escalate industrial action

Industrial action by more than 400 production workers at INPEX's three LNG facilities in northern Australia is disrupting production. The Offshore Alliance (OA), representing the Australian Workers Union and the Electrical Trades Union in negotiations, notified INPEX that from Thursday the current daily four-hour rolling stoppages would increase to eight-hour stoppages, alongside additional bans on loading and unloading vessels.

Workers voted on April 24 to take industrial action after seven months of unsuccessful negotiations over a new enterprise agreement. OA said that although six days of talks at the Fair Work Commission resolved some demands, the company did not agree to benchmark pay and conditions or provide job security.

OA claimed INPEX executives in Tokyo had become involved and that negotiations had since moved backward, with the company delaying a proposed classification framework based on workers' measurable competencies until late 2027. The framework is a core union issue that could increase workers' pay.

OA also accused INPEX of reducing remuneration terms from what was discussed in conciliation, failing to lock in enough full-time positions at minimum manning levels, and stripping out previously agreed terms.

INPEX's Ichthys facility near Darwin produces 9.3 million cubic metric tons a year, with Japan receiving 8 percent of its LNG imports from Ichthys and Taiwan receiving 8 percent of its LNG from the facility. INPEX has launched proceedings with the Fair Work Commission seeking urgent orders to stop strike action at its facilities.

Kinetic bus drivers in Tasmania strike again for pay parity

Kinetic bus drivers across Tasmania stopped work for six hours from 6

a.m. on Thursday and rallied outside their depots in Hobart and Launceston, disrupting hundreds of regional, intercity and charter services as the pay parity dispute continued. The Transport Workers Union (TWU) has been negotiating with Kinetic on a new enterprise agreement since November 2025.

The latest action followed a two-hour strike on April 23, after 95 percent of union members rejected Kinetic's proposed agreement in March. The union said the proposal failed to close the \$250 weekly wage gap, or \$6.39 an hour, between Kinetic drivers and drivers at state-owned Metro Tasmania, which operates services in Hobart, Launceston and Burnie. It also said the offer did not deliver meaningful improvements to base pay and conditions.

Parks Victoria workers continue industrial action

About 300 Community and Public Services Union (CPSU) members at Parks Victoria stopped work for 24 hours on Thursday in opposition to the state Labor government's proposed enterprise agreement. Workers later rallied outside Parks Victoria's head office in Melbourne at noon, calling for a higher pay offer.

Two other unions are also involved in the dispute. Australian Workers Union members held three days of industrial action beginning Saturday over what the union described as an inadequate enterprise agreement offer, while Australian Services Union members held a one-hour stoppage on Monday at Brimbank Park.

After 12 months of failed negotiations, in mid-May, 400 members across the three unions voted for future industrial action after rejecting a proposed annual pay increase of 3 percent, which is below the current official inflation rate of 4.6 percent. Management said it could not increase the offer because of the state government's 3 percent wage cap.

Security staff at Australia's immigration detention facilities strike over staffing levels and workload concerns

About 570 United Workers Union (UWU) members employed by security firm Secure Journeys across Australia's onshore immigration detention network began rolling work stoppages on June 4 to protest low pay, rostering pressures, fatigue and chronic understaffing. The affected detention facilities are in Sydney, Melbourne, Perth, Brisbane and Adelaide.

The union claimed that staffing shortages and unworkable rosters, including 11 to 12-hour shifts across 15-day blocks, were contributing to burnout, low morale and recruitment issues across the network. After ten meetings and months of unsuccessful negotiations for a new enterprise agreement, UWU members voted on May 27 to take industrial action, including work stoppages lasting from one minute to 24 hours and 12 separate work bans.

Secure Journeys is a subsidiary of the US-based multinational Management and Training Corporation. In 2025, it won a \$2.3 billion contract to run Australia's onshore immigration detention network.



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