# Workers Struggles: Asia, Australia and the Pacific

**7 August 2026**

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

**India: App-based gig workers hold statewide strike in Assam**

App-based cab drivers, two-wheeler taxi drivers and delivery workers across Assam held a statewide strike on August 4 to demand better pay and social security. The industrial action highlighted grievances over low fares, lack of health insurance and the absence of retirement benefits. Workers argued that rising fuel costs and inflation have made current fare structures unsustainable.

Led by Shramik Sol (Workers' Voice), Assam State Cab Drivers Association members and other platform-based workers assembled in Guwahati to submit the memorandum to the Assam chief minister. The strike disrupted services in major cities, including Guwahati, affecting commuters and delivery customers. Union leaders stressed that without government intervention and regulation of app-based platforms, workers will continue to face exploitation. They warned of further action if authorities fail to address their demands promptly.

**Punjab ministerial staff hold two-day "pen-down" strike**

Punjab ministerial staff began a two-day pen-down strike on August 5. Employees across various government departments are participating in the action, which halted all clerical and administrative work.

The strike was organised by the Punjab Ministerial Services Union, which has long been demanding higher pay scales, promotions and the regularisation of temporary staff. Union leaders argue that repeated assurances from the government have not translated into action, leaving them with no choice but to escalate. The union has warned of further industrial action if their concerns remain unresolved.

**Bihar sanitation workers continue walkout**

Sanitation workers in Patna remain on strike after walking out on August 2 and disrupting routine waste collection and disposal. Workers are demanding permanent jobs, better pay and improved working conditions, arguing that the municipal corporation has failed to address their concerns despite repeated appeals. The deadlock remains unresolved and the strike shows no sign of ending soon.

**Punjab transport contract workers call off two-day strike**

Punjab Roadways, PUNBUS and PRTC contract workers suspended strike action after the Punjab government assured them in writing that their demands would be considered. The strike, which began on August 3, disrupted bus services across the state.

Union leaders said the industrial action had only been suspended, not withdrawn, and highlighted strong district-wide support during the three-day protest. In Bathinda only 74 of the city's 226 buses were on the road even though the strike was just a partial one.

Workers' key demands include permanent jobs, no outsourcing and withdrawal of police cases linked to last year's kilometre-scheme protest. Meetings between the unions and the board of directors and transport minister are scheduled later this month.

**Bangladeshi primary teacher recruits continue protest over delayed appointments**

Tens of thousands of recommended recruits for Bangladesh's government primary schools began an indefinite sit-in at Shahbagh on Sunday to demand the government issue appointment letters and advance their official joining date.

Over 14,000 candidate teachers, who were recommended after the January 9 assistant teacher exam, gathered outside the National Museum to demand appointments by August. Protesters say they have completed all formalities but remain without final appointment letters, leaving them unable to plan for postings or training.

The action follows an April 26 demonstration at the same location where the state education minister assured them that the issue would be resolved. The teacher recruits began a protest after the government failed to honour a July 29 deadline.

On August 1, the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education announced a joining date of October 29. Protesting teacher recruits rejected that and demanded an office order that night. The next day the ministry revised the joining date to October 1 and said appointment letters would be issued in due course.

Recruitment began with an MCQ exam held in 61 districts on January 9 (excluding three hill districts). Some 69,265 candidates advanced to voice only exams with final district results published February 8 and recommending 14,384 teachers be given appointments. Teacher recruits warned they will continue the protest unless appointments are completed this month.

© World Socialist Web Site

**Pakistan: CDA workers demonstrate against privatisation**

Capital Development Authority (CDA) workers staged a massive demonstration outside the civic agency's headquarters on Tuesday to oppose privatisation of the sanitation directorate. The protest was organised by the CDA Mazdoor Union.

The CDA plans to outsource cleanliness and garbage collection across Islamabad and recently received an open financial bid for the 17.9 billion rupees ($US3 million) project. CDA has around 1,100 regular sanitation workers, who will be placed under the control of a private contractor.

Workers oppose privatisation demanding instead that sanitation and other departments be given modern machinery, vehicles, equipment and the required manpower to ensure effective operations of all civic facilities.

Union officials addressed protesters promising to protect all employees' rights. They said that Sanitation Directorate employees played a vital role in keeping Islamabad, the national capital, clean, green and beautiful. Privatisation, they warned, would ruin the livelihoods of thousands of families.

They demanded the chairman of the CDA and the administration immediately initiate negotiations with the elected representative union of the employees and withdraw the decision to privatise sanitation and other departments. They also called for the implementation of court decisions regarding the allotment of plots to employees as well as the immediate payment of pending dues including Eid and Easter allowances.

**Thousands of Victorian public hospital doctors to strike over pay and unsafe workloads**

Public hospital doctors at some of Victoria's busiest hospitals will stop work for three-and-a-half hours on August 13 after almost a year of enterprise bargaining negotiations with the state Labor government. It will be the first protected industrial action by Victorian public hospital doctors in 20 years.

While a protected action ballot returned overwhelming support for industrial action, with 97 percent of participating doctors voting to strike throughout the state, next week's stoppage will be limited to those employed at just seven facilities: Royal Melbourne Hospital, Royal Children's Hospital, Royal Women's Hospital, Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre, St Vincent's Hospital Fitzroy, the Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital and Parkville Youth Mental Health Service.

Doctors are seeking a 30 percent wage increase over four years, together with stronger fatigue protections, limits on excessively long shifts, caps on consecutive night duty, doctor-to-patient ratios and payment for overtime and on-call work.

The Australian Salaried Medical Officers' Federation (ASMOF) says negotiations began in August 2025 and the existing agreement expired in February this year. The union says junior doctors are routinely working excessive hours without adequate breaks, creating unacceptable risks for both staff and patients.

Alongside the August 13 stoppage, doctors have begun statewide work bans, including refusing unscheduled overtime, disrupting hospital billing processes and declining non-essential administrative work. Unless the state Labor government produces a substantially improved offer, ASMOF has indicated further industrial action is likely.

**Adelaide Arnott's workers launch first strike in more than 30 years over falling real wages**

About 160 production workers at Arnott's Marleston biscuit factory in Adelaide, South Australia stopped work for 24 hours on August 4, as part of a long-running enterprise bargaining dispute. It was the first industrial action at the site in more than three decades.

Members of the United Workers Union (UWU) walked off the job and marched outside the factory, which produces household biscuit brands including Tim Tams, Shapes and Iced VoVos.

The stoppage followed the rejection of the company's latest proposed enterprise agreement by an overwhelming majority of workers. The agreement offered a meagre 9.5 percent pay rise over two years. This falls far short of what workers need to keep up with the soaring cost of living, let alone make up for previous real-wage cuts. The last union-brokered enterprise agreement contained annual pay increases of just 2.5 percent over the past four years, during which inflation rose as high 7.8 percent.

Arnott's, which has been owned by private equity giant KKR since 2019, claims it has negotiated in good faith and remains committed to reaching an agreement that supports both employees and the long-term viability of its Adelaide operations. The UWU says further industrial action remains possible if Arnott's does not return with a significantly improved wage offer.

**BHP Pilbara port workers escalate industrial campaign with two-day strike**

Workers at BHP's Port Hedland iron ore export operations will impose a 24-hour ship-loading ban on August 8 followed by a full 24-hour strike beginning on August 9 after negotiations over a new enterprise agreement again failed to produce a settlement.

Members of the Electrical Trades Union, Australian Manufacturing Workers Union and Australian Workers Union employed across BHP's Pilbara port operations voted to proceed with the action despite further talks before the Fair Work Commission. Around 150 workers are expected to participate in the stoppages, with separate action also planned by high-voltage electrical workers covered by another agreement.

The unions say workers are seeking improved base wages, stronger career progression, fair classifications and better working conditions. They accuse BHP of delaying negotiations and attempting to push through an agreement that fails to reflect the company's enormous profitability or the demanding conditions faced by workers in remote Western Australia.

BHP says it has offered a 16 percent wage increase under a four-year agreement together with improved allowances and a simplified pay structure.

The August stoppages will be the second major strike at Port Hedland in less than a month and could delay numerous iron ore shipments through the world's largest bulk export port, despite the company's brazen recruitment of strikebreakers and its declaration that managers will cover the duties of striking workers.

**Brisbane CityCat ferry workers to strike again as pay dispute with RiverCity Ferries escalates**

Brisbane CityCat ferry crews stopped work for two hours on the

© World Socialist Web Site

morning of August 7. Members of the Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) and the Australian Maritime Officers Union (AMOU), employed by RiverCity Ferries to operate Brisbane's CityCat network, walked off the job between 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m., halting ferry services across the Brisbane River during the morning peak. The stoppage followed an earlier two-hour strike on July 31.

Workers say the dispute centres on wages, fatigue management and work-life balance. The unions accuse RiverCity Ferries of refusing to improve on its below-inflation wage increases, while senior executives have received substantial salary increases. The company has also failed to improve rostering arrangements, contributing to fatigue and long working hours.

**University of Sydney staff begin industrial campaign as enterprise bargaining stalls**

Academic and professional staff at the University of Sydney will begin industrial action next week with a two-hour stop-work meeting on August 10. Enterprise bargaining began in April after, the National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) says, university management delayed negotiations for six weeks.

Workers are seeking improved protections for academic freedom, stronger safeguards around organisational change, greater job security, clearer rules governing the use of artificial intelligence in teaching and research, and better conditions for teaching associates and other insecure employees.

The August 10 stoppage was endorsed at a union meeting on July 21, with 235 members voting in favour, 66 against and 19 abstaining. According to the student newspaper *Honi Soit*, many who opposed the motion favoured stronger action, including a proposed 24-hour strike later in August, reflecting growing frustration among staff over the pace of negotiations.

The NTEU says the stop-work meeting is intended to determine the next phase of the industrial campaign rather than conclude it.

**Victorian allied health workers to stage statewide strike over pay and staffing**

Thousands of Victorian public sector allied health workers will stop work for 24 hours on August 11. Members of the Victorian Allied Health Professionals Association (VAHPA), including physiotherapists, occupational therapists, speech pathologists, psychologists, radiographers, podiatrists and social workers, will strike at public health services across the state, before rallying outside Melbourne's Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre.

The industrial action follows a previous statewide strike in June and weeks of workplace rallies across Victoria. Workers argue their wages have failed to reflect the professional responsibilities they carry or recent Fair Work Commission findings that allied health occupations have been historically undervalued. The union is seeking wage increases of around 36 percent over three years, together with improvements to staffing and career structures.

Workers say continuing staff shortages, increasing workloads and recruitment difficulties are placing growing pressure on health services and affecting patient care.

**Pacific National train crews expand industrial action in enterprise bargaining dispute**

Train crews employed by freight operator Pacific National have expanded industrial action after enterprise bargaining negotiations failed to resolve disputes over rostering, safety and wages. Members of the Rail, Tram and Bus Union (RTBU) began a 48-hour overtime ban on August 1 before introducing a 24-hour ban on "Lift Up" and "Lay Back" roster changes on August 3.

The dispute centres on Pacific National's rostering practices, which allow management to alter shift start times to respond to operational disruptions. The union argues these arrangements undermine work-life balance, contribute to fatigue and create unnecessary safety risks. Workers are also seeking more weekends off, stronger disciplinary protections, tighter controls on unsafe driving practices and annual wage increases of 5 percent.

The RTBU says additional industrial action remains an option if Pacific National fails to address workers' key claims during the next round of negotiations.

**Downer rail maintenance workers expand rolling strikes over wages and roster protections**

Rail maintenance workers employed by Downer at Melbourne's Pakenham and Calder Park rail depots are continuing rolling industrial action after negotiations for a new enterprise agreement failed to produce a settlement. Members of the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union (AMWU) and the Electrical Trades Union (ETU) began protected stoppages on July 29 as part of a dispute covering employees responsible for maintaining Victoria's High Capacity Metro Trains fleet under Downer's long-term maintenance contract, which runs until 2053.

Workers say they are seeking industry-standard wages and conditions that match those received by employees performing the same work at Metro Trains Melbourne and V/Line. The unions also want stronger protections against changes to rosters, improved rights for workplace delegates and greater certainty over working arrangements. They argue Downer's current proposals would leave maintenance workers performing identical work for significantly lower pay than comparable employees elsewhere in Victoria's rail network.

**Acciona rail and infrastructure workers continue indefinite strike**

Mechanical and electrical workers employed by Spanish infrastructure giant Acciona have entered an indefinite strike after negotiations for a new enterprise agreement broke down. Members of the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union (AMWU) working in Acciona's Mechanical and Electrical division have been taking industrial action since July, with the Victorian branch announcing on July 30 that the campaign would escalate into an open-ended strike.

The dispute involves workers employed on major infrastructure and renewable energy projects across Victoria. The union says employees are seeking improved wages and conditions through a new enterprise agreement and accuses Acciona of delaying negotiations rather than resolving outstanding issues. Workers rallied outside the company's South Melbourne offices on August 3 to demonstrate support for the

© World Socialist Web Site

escalating campaign.

Acciona is one of the world's largest infrastructure contractors and has major interests in transport, renewable energy and public infrastructure projects in Australia.

The AMWU says workers will remain off the job until Acciona returns to "meaningful" negotiations and presents an acceptable offer.

**ACT government forensic scientists strike for the first time**

Forensic scientists employed at the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) government's Analytical Laboratory have staged their first-ever industrial action, fighting for improved pay and recognition of the hazardous nature of their work.

Members of Professionals Australia walked off the job for two hours on July 29 before marching to the ACT Legislative Assembly, following a month of workplace bans.

The scientists analyse evidence used in criminal investigations and court proceedings, work that frequently involves hazardous chemicals, biological materials and other potentially dangerous substances. Workers say the government's latest offer fails to recognise the specialist skills required for forensic science or the risks associated with laboratory work. A central claim is the introduction of a hazard allowance alongside improved wages and other conditions.

**Victorian transport incident response workers continue campaign against roster and conditions cuts**

Incident response workers employed by Victoria's Department of Transport and Planning are continuing industrial action as they resist proposed changes to working conditions during enterprise bargaining negotiations. Members of the Australian Workers' Union (AWU) began protected action on July 23 after the department proposed major changes to rosters, rostered days off and penalty rates affecting employees responsible for responding to crashes, vehicle breakdowns and hazardous incidents on Melbourne's arterial road network.

Workers are conducting industrial action between 7 a.m. and 10 a.m. and again from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. on weekdays. During these periods, crews attending traffic incidents are closing all but one lane of affected roads while carrying out their work, slowing traffic but maintaining safe operating procedures.

The union says workers have been told the department plans to move to a 24/7 roster, slash 13 rostered days off per year and cut public holiday penalty rates. The AWU argues the proposed changes would significantly reduce long-standing conditions while increasing flexibility for management at workers' expense.

**Scope disability support workers' industrial action halted by Fair Work Commission**

Industrial action planned by disability support workers at Scope has been halted after the Fair Work Commission ordered the campaign to cease before it commenced. Members of the Health and Community Services Union (HACSU) had notified Scope that protected industrial action would begin on August 4 and continue until early September as negotiations over workplace issues intensified.

The more than 1,000 workers had planned to impose bans on completing vehicle logbooks, transport transition plans, using personal vehicles and mobile phones for work, copying management into workplace emails and wearing campaign material.

On August 3, however, the Fair Work Commission issued an order under section 418 of the Fair Work Act requiring the industrial action not to occur. Section 418 allows the Commission to stop industrial action that is considered unprotected under the legislation. The precise reasons for the order have not been publicly explained.

To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

**wsws.org/contact**

© World Socialist Web Site