

Workers Struggles: Asia and Australia

16 October 2026

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

India: Mumbai's locked-out National Textile Corporation workers continue indefinite hunger strike

Workers from closed National Textile Corporation (NTC) mills in Mumbai are continuing an indefinite relay hunger strike—began October 6—demanding payment of long-pending wages and retirement benefits.

Workers say thousands remain unpaid for months of salary and pension dues and have warned of escalating protests if the government fails to resolve the issue.

Of NTC's 15 mills only four—Tata Mill, Indu Mill No. 5, Podar Mill and Digvijay Mill—are currently operational. The workers, covered by the National Mill Mazdoor Union, have been picketing the gates of those mills since September 7.

Rajasthan sanitation workers strike

Sanitation workers, including hopper helpers and drivers in Jaipur's Kishanpole zone, went on strike on October 9, 2026, citing delays in receiving experience certificates required for Rajasthan sanitation worker recruitment before the October 13 application deadline.

The union, Sanyukt Valmiki Evam Safayi Shramik Sangh, accused local officials of not cooperating and said the strike would continue until the certificates were issued. Officials denied the allegations, explaining that certificates can only be issued after verification of salary, Employees' State Insurance (ESI) and Provident Fund (PF) records, which has caused delays in processing applications.

Uttar Pradesh: National Health Mission Workers picket for their demands in Lucknow

More than 50,000 contract healthcare workers protested in the state capital on October 14, demanding permanent employment, equal pay for equal work, and better recognition. They say they perform the same duties as permanent staff, but receive significantly lower salaries and face growing workloads.

Contract nurses, doctors and health officers are paid substantially less than permanent staff. A contract worker's wage is 40,000–45,000 rupees (\$420–472), while a permanent worker's wage is 200,000 rupees (\$2102) per month.

Chandigarh: Panjab University support staff protest delayed wages

Multitasking employees protested on October 14 against delayed wages, low pay, and decades of contractual employment without job permanency. Their wages are as low as 10,000–15,000 rupees (\$101–158) per month.

India: Tamil Nadu: Multipurpose health workers protest over job security and other demands

More than 2,500 daily-wage multi-purpose health workers employed in Tamil Nadu government hospitals launched a protest October 12, including a hunger strike, demanding action on their long-pending demands, including concerns over employment conditions and job security.

Police detained more than 200 protesters in Chennai, while reports indicated restrictions on workers attempting to join the protest from other districts.

K. G. Arunraj, Tamil Nadu's Health Minister, urged workers to give the government time to assess their demands, stating that discussions were underway, and implementation would require a phased approach.

Bangladesh garment workers block Dhaka roads demanding higher wages

More than 1,000 garment workers from several factories blocked roads in Uttara, Dhaka on Wednesday, demanding a 30,000 taka (\$US243) monthly minimum wage, payment of outstanding entitlements and wage increases amid rising living costs.

The workers blocked the Dhaka–Mymensingh Highway in the Azampur and Rajlakkhi areas from around 11 a.m., spreading their protest to the airport road and nearby streets. The blockade lasted for a few hours, causing severe traffic delays. Police and traffic officials negotiated with protesters before the roads reopened at about 1:30 p.m.

The demonstrations marked the third consecutive day of protests. Workers said their wages were insufficient to meet the rising cost of essential commodities. “Lower the prices of essential commodities or raise our wages,” was among the slogans chanted during the action.

The protests highlight mounting cost-of-living pressure on Bangladesh's garment workers. They have warned that they will continue their protests until their demands are met.

Bangladesh port workers threaten fast-unto-death against DP World concession

Chattogram port workers resumed a symbolic mass hunger strike on Monday, demanding guaranteed job security and the cancellation of a 15-year concession agreement handing operation of the New Mooring Container Terminal (NCT) to Dubai-based DP World.

Port Protection Struggle Council and Chattogram Bandar Jatiyatabadi Sramik Dal (a trade union affiliated with the ruling party Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)) organised the protest, which took place outside the port's One Stop Service Building.

Workers threatened to begin a fast-unto-death on October 19 unless the government opens negotiations by October 18.

Union officials condemned the lack of transparency surrounding the agreement signed by the Chittagong Port Authority and DP World.

The latest action follows a September 22 human chain and a September 27 protest procession. Workers have also demanded the withdrawal of cases against 15 workers and activists, the filling of vacant posts and consultation with workers' representatives before finalising the concession.

The government maintains that the deal will increase port capacity, attract foreign investment and improve efficiency. Workers fear for their job security and oppose the transfer of a major national trade facility to a foreign corporation under a non-disclosure agreement.

Tasmanian public servants rally against job cuts

Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU) members at the Department of Premier and Cabinet and Building Tasmania stopped work on October 9 and rallied outside the Executive Building in Hobart. They are opposing a restructure tied to the state government's target of cutting 1,700 state service jobs by 2029–30, including 250 at Building Tasmania.

Members are demanding proper consultation on the restructure. They voted no confidence in the process and in Liberal Premier Jeremy Rockliff.

Melbourne University staff strike, then implement teaching ban

National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) members at the University of Melbourne held a 24-hour strike on October 12, followed by a teaching ban from October 13–16.

Staff are seeking a 20 percent pay rise over three years, 17 percent superannuation for casual staff and limits on workloads.

Qantas engineers hold first strike in 16 years

More than 100 engineers at Qantas's Sydney head office, covered by Professionals Australia, imposed a two-hour total work ban on long-haul aircraft, including the 787 and A380 fleets, from 10 a.m. to midday on October 12. It was their first strike in 16 years.

The union is seeking a 13 percent pay rise in the first year, after years of wage freezes and below-inflation increases. Qantas is offering 3 percent a year. Members are voting on further action.

Air Radiators workers strike as data centre orders boom

Australian Manufacturing Workers Union (AMWU) members at Air Radiators in Victoria held a whole-day strike on Monday, October 12, their third in three weeks.

After workers voted near-unanimously last month to approve industrial action, the campaign began with a half-day stoppage on October 2.

Workers are seeking a 36-hour week and pay rises of 4 percent a year in a new enterprise agreement.

Air Radiators, based at Lara near Geelong, supplies cooling systems for data centres. It is owned by the ASX-listed Adrad Holdings. For the year to June 30, Adrad reported underlying earnings of \$19.5 million, up 10.8 percent, and an underlying net profit of \$7.9 million, up 9.7 percent.

Tasmanian nurses walk off the job at Repatriation Centre

Nurses covered by the Health and Community Services Union (HACSU) at the Repatriation Centre in Hobart walked off the job and protested outside the hospital on October 12. The action followed stop-works by Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (ANMF) and HACSU members across Tasmania in recent weeks.

Amid a deepening crisis of public health across the state, nurses and midwives are seeking higher pay, more annual leave, legislated nurse-to-patient ratios, and measures against violence and aggression toward staff. After six months of bargaining, the state government has not tabled an offer.

Energy market operator engineers impose indefinite bans

Professionals Australia members at the Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) escalated their action on October 13, with indefinite bans on approving non-critical outages and on software upgrades. Workers want wages that keep pace with inflation, protections against artificial intelligence, and a four-day week.

Victorian allied health workers escalate bans

The Victorian Allied Health Professionals Association (VAHPA) has notified 43 public health employers of escalating bans. They cover NDIS referrals and elective surgery data and coding, and will delay some scans.

In an enterprise bargaining dispute that has been ongoing for more than a year, these workers, who include radiographers, physiotherapists, podiatrists, pharmacists, speech pathologists, occupational therapists and other health professionals, have already held three 24-hour strikes, most recently on October 1.

Labor has offered workers a meagre 19–21 percent nominal pay rise over four years, barely higher than the current official inflation rate of 4 percent and far short of what is necessary to keep up with the real rise in living costs for workers. This will further entrench the losses incurred under the last union-Labor enterprise agreement, which slashed real wages for public sector allied health workers by 10 percent.

Moreover, Labor's offer would do nothing to address workers'

concerns over excessive workload, burnout and unsafe staff-to-patient ratios, or the staffing shortages that underly them. Workers have advanced a demand for a 36.18 percent pay rise over three years.

Merri-bek council workers strike over 2.75 percent offer

Australian Services Union (ASU) members at Merri-bek City Council in Melbourne's north began a 48-hour strike at the Hadfield depot at 5 a.m. on October 14. All ASU members at the council struck for 24 hours on October 15 and rallied at noon at Coburg Town Hall.

Merri-bek is one of eight metropolitan Melbourne councils in the ASU's campaign. According to *Green Left*, management at the eight councils has offered a derisory 2.75 percent nominal pay rise from January 1, 2027, with back pay to July. The union is seeking 22 percent over four years, including 10 percent in the first year, and has called the offer disgraceful.

Sydney Airport screeners strike twice in one day

Around 400 security screeners employed by Certis at Sydney Airport, members of the Transport Workers Union (TWU), struck from 6 a.m. to 10 a.m. and from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. on Friday, at the domestic and international terminals. The strikes followed failed crisis talks.

The workers want more full-time jobs, fairer rostering and no cut to minimum hours. The TWU says Certis plans to cut minimum hours by six a week. Certis says it made a fresh offer on October 15, but has not published its terms.



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact