

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.

Industrial Development Bank of India workers plan two-day strike against privatisation

Employees of the Industrial Development Bank of India (IDBI) plan to hold a two-day nationwide hunger strike on November 2–3 to protest the proposed sale of the bank to Fairfax Financial Holdings. The protest has been organised by the United Forum of IDBI Officers and Employees (UFIOE).

Workers are demanding that the government retain at least 51 percent ownership in IDBI, including acquiring additional shares if necessary. They are seeking written assurances protecting employee service conditions, welfare measures, pension benefits, reservation policies and industry-level wage revisions.

The union argues that privatisation could affect depositors, farmers, small borrowers and the bank's role in government welfare and financial inclusion programs.

While the UFIOE warned protests could escalate into a longer or indefinite strike if workers' concerns are not addressed, it is seeking to hold backroom discussions with the government and bank management.

In the event the sale proceeds, the union is demanding an option for existing employees to transfer to public sector banks while preserving their pay, seniority, and retirement benefits. The union also wants outsourced and contract workers at the bank to be absorbed into regular employment.

Karnataka: Workers in Kolar factory protest following co-worker's death

Employees are demanding accountability after the death of a young worker at Tata Electronics (TESS) in Kolar. Gundy Srimathi, a 23-year-old employee, suffered a medical emergency, was treated at the company's health centre, later shifted to a hospital and subsequently died. Workers believe there may have been negligence or inadequate medical treatment, and they blamed lapses in the company's response.

Hundreds of employees gathered outside the factory and launched a protest. The demonstration grew as more workers joined, creating tension in the Vemgal Industrial Hub. Their main demand was a proper investigation into the circumstances surrounding the employee's death and any possible negligence.

Telangana: National Health Mission workers hold indefinite strike for

permanent jobs and better pay

National Health Mission (NHM) contract and outsourced employees began an indefinite strike across Telangana on October 13, with workers in Warangal among those taking part. They are demanding permanent jobs for around 17,000 NHM employees across the state, equal pay for equal work, health and life insurance, job security and 180 days of paid maternity leave for women employees. Union representatives say some workers have served for nearly two decades without permanent employment status.

Maharashtra: Garment workers protest in Surat

Around 100 women workers employed at a garment manufacturing unit operated by the Laxmipati Group in Sachin GIDC, Surat, staged a protest and briefly stopped work over concerns about salary delays and wage-related issues on October 15.

The workers gathered outside the factory, alleging that their pay was not being disbursed on time and that their concerns had not been addressed by management. The protest ended after police intervened and discussions were held between workers and management. The workers subsequently returned to work.

The workers protested for timely and full payment of wages, while management argued that the reduced take-home pay resulted from mandatory provident fund deductions under new labour regulations.

Punjab Roadways, PRTC staff launch indefinite strike

Thousands of employees of Punjab Roadways, PUNBUS, and Pepsu Road Transport Corporation (PRTC) launched an indefinite strike on October 21, which is expected to keep more than 3,000 state-run buses off the roads. Drivers and conductors stopped operating night services and returned buses to their depots before the full strike began.

The workers' main demands were job permanency of contractual drivers, conductors, and workshop mechanics under department service rules, direct employment contracts for outsourced workers, abolition of private recruitment agencies and the withdrawal of charges filed against transport workers during earlier protests.

The Punjab Roadways, PUNBUS, and PRTC Contract Workers Union says it called the strike after more than 70 meetings with the state administration failed to achieve concrete results. Workers argue that the ongoing assembly session provides an opportunity for the government to amend service rules and address their demands.

The strike is expected to disrupt bus services across Punjab and Chandigarh, including interstate routes to New Delhi, Haryana, Rajasthan

and Himachal Pradesh, affecting commuters, students, daily wage workers, and women using the state's free travel scheme.

Pakistan: Sindh Teachers stage token hunger strike over service structure

Members of the Primary Teachers Association (PTA) in Sukkur city staged a protest and observed a token hunger strike on Wednesday October 14, demanding that the Sindh government approve their service structure and address their longstanding demands.

Teachers chanted slogans opposing the provincial government and demanded measures to protect their employment rights and resolve their outstanding issues.

Bangladeshi garment workers defy police repression to demand living wage and payment of arrears

Garment workers in Dhaka and Gazipur have staged repeated road blockades and protests over the past week, opposing poverty wages, unpaid salaries and arbitrary management abuse. Police attacks on the protest have injured 50.

In Dhaka's Uttara district, workers from several apparel factories blocked the Dhaka-Mymensingh Highway in the Azampur and Rajlakkhi areas for four consecutive days from October 15, with more than 1,000 workers joining the protest. They demanded a minimum basic monthly wage of 30,000 taka (\$US243), payment of wage arrears, and relief from the soaring prices of essential goods. Police attacked the demonstrators with batons and sound grenades, dispersing the blockade. Around 50 people, including about 18 police, were injured. Five factories were closed indefinitely.

In Gazipur, more than 1,000 workers from C-Stage (BD) Ltd blocked the highway at Sreepur's MC Bazar for an hour on October 17, demanding unpaid September wages. Police used sound grenades after workers refused to leave.

On October 20, workers from International Trading Service Ltd, a Standard Group facility in Jorun, Konabari, blockaded the Konabari-Palli Bidyut road for two-and-a-half hours. They demanded an extra Durga Puja holiday (a Hindu festival), a resolution of charges for withdrawing wages paid through bKash, Friday overtime pay, an end to unpaid overtime, protection from victimisation and dismissal, medical access, and removal of three managers.

Meanwhile, Keya Group laid off 739 workers on October 20 at four Gazipur plants—its Knit Composite, Spinning and Cotton divisions and Keya Yarn Mills—following 627 layoffs on September 8. Workers demanded immediate payment of all outstanding entitlements and compensation.

Victorian allied health workers escalate bans after rejecting Labor's offer

Allied health workers in Victoria's public hospitals, covered by the Victorian Allied Health Professionals Association (VAHPA), imposed escalated indefinite work bans from Monday, October 19. The bans

include 24-hour delays to admissions and discharges, and refusals to carry out discharge assessments and NDIS reports until midday. Urgent and emergency patients are exempt.

The workers include radiographers, physiotherapists, podiatrists, pharmacists, speech pathologists and occupational therapists. Their dispute has run for more than a year, and they have held three 24-hour statewide strikes, most recently on October 1.

On October 16, the Labor state government put a memorandum of understanding to the union in place of an enterprise agreement. It offered a nominal pay rise of 6 percent and a \$2,000 cash payment, in exchange for a five-month delay to bargaining and a 12-month ban on protected industrial action. Members rejected it by 92.31 percent. With official inflation at 4 percent, the offer would have locked in further real wage cuts, while the ban would have stopped workers fighting back.

The government has frozen bargaining until after the state election, citing the caretaker period that begins on November 3. VAHPA is seeking a 36 percent pay rise over four years and measures against excessive workloads.

University of Sydney staff strike for 24 hours

Hundreds of National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) members at the University of Sydney struck for 24 hours on Thursday, picketing campus entrances from 7 a.m. and rallying on the Quadrangle lawns at 1 p.m. It was their second strike this year, after more than 500 walked out on September 2.

Management is offering 11.52 percent over three years: 3.8 percent in 2027, 3.7 percent in 2028 and 3.6 percent in 2029. The union is seeking 20 percent over 3.25 years. Staff are also demanding protections against the use of artificial intelligence to cut jobs, no forced redundancies, equal redundancy pay for professional and academic staff, and an end to management's plans for new teaching-focused roles.

Fair Work Commission suspends energy market control room bans

On October 20 the Fair Work Commission ordered the suspension of work bans by control room operators at the Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO), who are members of Professionals Australia. The interim order, made on AEMO's application, took effect at 11 a.m. on October 21 and remains in force until the Commission decides whether to suspend or terminate the action outright.

The bans covered internal meetings and the processing of planned outages and enquiries from electricity market participants, from October 13. Workers are seeking wages that keep pace with inflation, protections against artificial intelligence and a four-day week.

ACT public school educators hold rolling stoppages

Australian Education Union (AEU) members in ACT public schools held rolling one-hour stoppages from 8:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. at different schools each day this week. The Education Directorate asked families to keep children at home until 9:30 a.m. where possible.

The educators rejected the ACT Labor government's real wage cutting

offer of 9 percent over three years at a members' meeting on September 11. They are also opposing heavy workloads, staffing shortages and large class sizes, and are demanding more support staff and access to school psychologists.

Melbourne council workers stop work in Hobsons Bay

Australian Services Union (ASU) members at Hobsons Bay City Council in Melbourne's west held a one-hour stoppage and rally on October 20, with a further stoppage expected on Friday.

Hobsons Bay is one of eight metropolitan Melbourne councils in the ASU's campaign, which included strikes at Merri-bek and stoppages at Hume last week. Management at the eight councils has offered a 2.75 percent pay rise from January 1, 2027. The union is seeking 22 percent over four years.

Tasmanian aged care workers walk off the job

Health and Community Services Union (HACSU) members at Corumbene, an aged care home at New Norfolk in Tasmania, walked off the job on Friday, October 16. The workers are carers, cleaners and general staff.

According to the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation, which also covers Corumbene staff, care workers there are paid up to 7 percent less than their counterparts at similar facilities. The workers are also demanding 14 weeks of paid parental leave instead of six, and 20 days of personal leave a year instead of 13.

Hobart youth mental health nurses stop work

HACSU members at the Child and Youth Mental Health Service in Hobart stopped work on October 21. The nurses want wage rises that match those for allied health workers and nurses on the mainland. They are also seeking parity in professional development allowances: nurses receive \$500 a year, while their allied health colleagues receive \$1,200.



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