# Workers Struggles: Asia, Australia and the Pacific

**13 November 2026**

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

**India: Punjab health mission workers continue statewide strike**

About 8,000 National Health Mission contract workers across Punjab began a statewide strike on November 11, affecting diagnosis and treatment, immunisation, laboratory testing, counselling and other public-health services.

The walkout involves medical officers, community health officers, staff nurses, auxiliary nurse midwives, laboratory technicians and other employees working in hospitals, health centres and village-level programs. They are demanding a permanent service policy, regularisation of long-serving workers, a salary increase, equal pay for equal work and resolution of other service-related grievances.

Following a state-level protest outside the National Health Mission headquarters in Chandigarh, officials scheduled a welfare committee meeting for November 17. Union leaders said the complete work stoppage and district-level demonstrations would continue until the meeting. They warned that, unless the government provided a written settlement, workers would begin an indefinite protest outside the health minister's residence in Patiala on November 18.

**Coimbatore sanitation workers suspend strike after wage assurances**

More than 4,000 contract sanitation and allied municipal workers employed by the Coimbatore City Municipal Corporation began an indefinite strike on November 9 over a 32-point charter of demands. They want job regularisation, an increase in the daily wage from 681 rupees ($US7.20) to the district collector-set rate of 798 rupees, payment of statutory bonuses and wage arrears, proper safety equipment, social-security coverage and compensation for workers killed on duty.

The stoppage disrupted waste collection across the city following Deepavali, with household and firecracker waste accumulating in many neighbourhoods.

The workers suspended the strike on November 11, after talks with corporation officials. Union representatives said they had received assurances of a time-bound process addressing the wage increase and job regularisation, with the corporation indicating that changes would be finalised by January 2027. Workers resumed duties to clear the accumulated waste, but the principal demands remain dependent on implementation of the assurances.

**Madhya Pradesh sanitation workers end statewide strike after agreement**

State-wide strike action by Madhya Pradesh sanitation workers ended on November 7, following late-night talks with Chief Minister Mohan Yadav. The government agreed to begin regularising workers employed for 29 days a month and daily-wage employees. It also said it would increase the monthly pay of those employed for 25 days from about 10,500 rupees ($US111) to between 18,000 and 20,000 rupees. A committee including union representatives is to complete the process within one month and examine pending compassionate appointments and the unions' demand to end contract employment.

The stoppage severely disrupted garbage collection. An estimated 2,550 tonnes of waste accumulated in Bhopal, more than 400 collection vehicles remained idle and tanker water supplies were interrupted in some localities. Workers had originally demanded a monthly wage of 25,000 rupees, permanent jobs and improved employment protections.

**Jawaharlal Nehru University contract workers remain on strike**

Contract workers at Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi are continuing strike action over unpaid statutory bonuses and other labour-rights violations. The action began on November 2 with workers from sanitation, mess services, gardening, security and other campus operations. By November 10, around 650 sanitation workers remained off duty, leaving garbage uncollected in hostels and other areas of the campus.

The workers, organised by the All-India General Kamgar Union and supported by the All-India Central Council of Trade Unions, are demanding payment of outstanding bonuses, an end to unlawful wage deductions, adequate staffing, earned and casual leave, maternity benefits, safety equipment, reinstatement of suspended and retrenched workers, a grievance procedure and equal pay for equal work. Conciliation proceedings secured agreement on paid leave and a grievance cell, but the bonus and staffing demands remained unresolved. A further hearing was scheduled for November 20.

**Greater Noida mobile-phone employees protest over festival bonus confusion**

Around 300 workers at the Oppo mobile-phone factory in Greater Noida's Ecotech-1 industrial area briefly stopped work and protested on

© World Socialist Web Site

November 4 over fears that they would not receive a Deepavali bonus. The dispute was intensified by a fabricated social-media claim that the Supreme Court had ordered companies to pay every worker a 5,100-rupee ($US54) bonus and provide one kilogram of sweets.

Labour officials explained that no such court order existed and that statutory bonus eligibility depended on employment during the previous financial year, meaning some recent recruits were not yet eligible. Police and labour department officials mediated discussions with management, after which the workers returned to their duties.

**Bangladesh: Garment workers renew protests for higher minimum wage**

Garment workers in Ashulia, Savar and Gazipur renewed mass protests from November 10 to 12 to demand the monthly minimum wage be raised from 12,500 taka ($US100) to 30,000 taka. Workers say steep increases in food, rent, transport and healthcare costs have made the existing wage unliveable.

Police used tear gas and sound grenades against a garment workers' road blockade in Jamgora on November 10. Two Sterling Style Limited workers—Alamgir Hossain and Rafia Begum—were injured in the police attack. Hospital staff said their injuries appeared consistent with rubber bullets, although police denied using them.

By November 12, more than 200 factories had suspended production in Ashulia, Savar and Gazipur, while nine factories employing about 20,000 workers had been closed indefinitely. The protests began on October 31 and continued despite the formation of a six-member wage board. While the board agreed that a revised wage structure would take effect in December it has not announced the amount of the increase.

**Gazipur footwear workers halt production over 14 demands**

Workers at Apex Footwear Limited and Zenith Footwear Limited in Gazipur stopped production and demonstrated on November 8 over a 14-point list of demands. These included higher wages, a monthly attendance bonus of 1,000 taka ($US8.00), a 40-taka meal allowance, an end to layoffs, full leave benefits, round-the-clock medical services and construction of a pedestrian footbridge near the workplaces.

Workers also demanded an investigation, and justice, over a worker's death, action against two officials accused of assaulting and mistreating employees, and greater recognition of elected worker representatives. Apex management declared a general holiday after the protest began. Police and other security agencies were deployed into Gazipur, a heavily industrial area about 25 km north of Dhaka.

**Sri Lankan development officers hold national sick-leave protest**

Tens of thousands of development officers across Sri Lanka reported sick on November 9 in an island-wide action over salary, promotion and service-structure grievances. The protest was organised by an alliance of 12 unions representing the central government and all nine provincial councils.

The officers are demanding salary revisions, a formal career and promotion structure based on qualifications and experience, and resolution of employment issues repeatedly submitted to government ministries.

Union representatives estimated that over 100,000 would participate in the action. Development officers can often wait 30 years to reach Grade I, compared with about 12 years in some other public services.

The action affected work at ministries, government departments, provincial councils, immigration and registration offices, and accounts and land divisions. The unions warned that stronger action would follow if the government continued to refuse negotiations.

**Sri Lankan government doctors protest pay cuts and staff shortages**

Thousands of Government Medical Officers' Association members from district and provincial branches demonstrated outside the Colombo National Hospital on November 10. The protest was not a strike, and the association said patient services would continue. The doctors are demanding solutions to salary and allowance disputes, problems with official accommodation and severe staffing shortages. They also called for restoration of one-third of overtime and holiday allowances withheld under the 2025 public-sector salary revision.

The association said fewer than 25,000 doctors were in active service under the Health Ministry and that authorised staffing levels had not undergone evidence-based revisions since 2015 despite the expansion of health services. It warned that the protest was the first stage of a broader campaign if the government failed to address the demands in the 2027 Budget.

Joint Health Workers' Union members held separate protests at hospitals across the country on November 10, calling for budget measures to resolve outstanding allowances and other service conditions.

**Worsley Alumina refinery workers strike for 48 hours**

More than 100 maintenance workers at South32's Worsley Alumina refinery, about 200 kilometres south of Perth, began a 48-hour strike on November 10, setting up a picket line on the refinery's entrance road. The workers are members of the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union (AMWU) and the Electrical Trades Union (ETU).

They are demanding pay and conditions equal to those of workers doing the same jobs at Alcoa's refineries. US-based Alcoa announced in July that it would buy South32's bauxite mine and the Worsley refinery in a deal worth more than $8 billion, with the change of ownership expected in the first half of 2027. The unions say South32 workers are paid less and work longer hours than Alcoa's workforce.

Workers also want bonuses, which make up as much as 10 percent of overall pay, and which South32 pays under a company policy it can change or cancel, written into the enterprise agreement.

One worker with 15 years at the refinery told the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) newer workers received inferior pay and conditions for identical work. Another said conditions had been steadily eroded since BHP spun off South32 in 2015.

**Tasmanian nurses and midwives walk out against state government offer**

© World Socialist Web Site

Hundreds of nurses and midwives at the Royal Hobart Hospital and the Hobart Repatriation Centre walked off the job on Saturday, November 7, and rallied outside state parliament, after resoundingly rejecting a real-wage slashing offer from the Tasmanian state government.

The workers are covered by the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (ANMF) and the Health and Community Services Union (HACSU).

The Liberal government of Premier Jeremy Rockliff has offered a nominal pay rise of 3 percent in the first year of a three-year agreement, 2.75 percent in the second and 2.5 percent in the third, under conditions where inflation in Hobart is the highest in the country, at 5.3 percent.

The offer would deliver five extra "personal impact" leave days, for dealing with trauma at work, but only to staff in emergency departments, intensive care and mental health.

Nurses at the rally said they were working double shifts of 16 to 20 hours as a result of chronic understaffing. ANMF Tasmanian branch president James Lloyd said more than 20 positions can go unfilled on early shifts at the Royal Hobart.

Tasmanian nurses, along with other public sector workers, also face the imminent prospect of job cuts. On Tuesday, November 10, HACSU nurses at the Royal Hobart Hospital's specialist Wellington Clinics walked off for an hour and marched to the Health Secretary's office. The union says about half of the clinics' nurses do not know whether they will have a job next year.

**Federation University staff strike for 24 hours**

Around 450 National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) members at Federation University in regional Victoria struck for 24 hours from midday on Monday, November 9, holding rallies at the Mt Helen campus in Ballarat and the Churchill campus in Gippsland. The ABC reported that more than 50 staff walked off the job at Ballarat.

Staff are seeking a pay rise, job security, manageable workloads and consultation over major changes. The NTEU says management has not made a pay offer after 25 bargaining meetings over eight months.

Two weeks before the strike, some staff were told at a meeting called at 10 minutes' notice that 87 percent of arts subjects and the Bachelor of Criminal Justice would be cut. The university later called this a "miscommunication."

NTEU branch president Mathew Abbott said there had been "mass redundancies almost every year" under the current vice-chancellor, with more than 25 restructures and hundreds of jobs lost. Staff told the ABC that they would hold three more stoppages next week, during the release of student results.

**Healthe Care nurses strike on the Central Coast**

NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association (NSWNMA) members at Healthe Care facilities on the NSW Central Coast struck on Wednesday, November 11. Healthe Care runs three hospitals on the Central Coast, including Gosford Private Hospital. It is owned by private equity firm Pacific Equity Partners, and the union describes it as the country's second-largest private hospital operator.

The strike followed stoppages in the Hunter on November 4 and the Illawarra on October 22. The union also imposed overtime bans at Healthe Care hospitals across NSW from November 10 to 12, and bans on non-essential paperwork on November 11 and 12. Nurses are demanding enforceable nurse-to-patient ratios and pay in line with the public hospital system. Healthe Care has offered a sub-inflationary 3.5 percent pay rise for 2026.

**Virgin Australia airport workers escalate action as cabin crew vote to strike**

Australian Services Union (ASU) members in Virgin Australia's Guest Services division, who handle check-in, boarding, gate operations and passenger assistance, stepped up protected industrial action at Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Adelaide airports on Friday, November 13. They refused to make boarding calls, gate change announcements and final calls, waived excess baggage, seat change and late fees, stopped performing lounge check-in duties, and queued in standard passenger security lanes. Safety, security and welfare announcements continued.

On Monday, November 16, the workers plan to hold back boarding until 15 minutes before scheduled departure times and stop work for two one-hour periods at each airport.

On November 6, ASU members withdrew priority boarding and other premium services at the gates, refused to accept baggage at gates and waived sales-related fees. The action began on October 28, after negotiations before the Fair Work Commission failed.

Workers oppose Virgin's meagre pay offer and its push to introduce nine-hour shifts and cut days in lieu. Virgin says it has offered 5 percent in the first year of a three-year agreement and 4 percent in each of the following two years, along with higher shift loadings.

ASU Assistant National Secretary Scott Cowen said workers had "carried the airline through the COVID pandemic, when thousands of jobs were cut and remaining staff accepted a wage freeze," and had since been asked to do more with fewer people despite the airline's vast profits.

The Transport Workers' Union (TWU) announced on November 12 that the Virgin cabin crew it covers had overwhelmingly voted for protected industrial action. Cabin crew are demanding fairer rosters to end exhausting duties, progression through pay classifications and longer minimum rest periods.

A separate Flight Attendants' Association of Australia ballot of Virgin cabin crew closes on November 19.

**Gold Coast council workers' stoppage postponed**

Unions covering almost 1,000 City of Gold Coast council workers called off a stoppage and march planned for Tuesday, November 10, and say they will now take action on Wednesday, November 18. The Services Union said the council had threatened to lock out workers who took part until the following day. The union also cited a technical issue that could have stopped some members outside the council's Bundall offices from taking part.

The union says the council's offer would freeze wages until July 2029; the unions are seeking a 13 percent pay rise.

To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

© World Socialist Web Site

**wsws.org/contact**

© World Socialist Web Site