



Taking the safety message to the streets of Dhaka

First World Safety and Health Day observed

The Government of Bangladesh held a range of activities across the country to mark World Day for Safety and Health at Work for first time on 28 April 2016.

The events were organized by the Department of Inspections for Factories and Establishments (DIFE) with the support of ILO's Improving Working Conditions in the Ready Made Garment Sector programme funded by Canada, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. An early morning rally saw almost 1,000 members of the labour inspectorate and Department of Labour join workers and the State Minister for Labour and Employment on a march through the streets of Dhaka to raise awareness of workplace safety. Later in the day the President of Bangladesh Abdul Hamid presided over a ceremony to mark World Day for Safety and Health at Work attended by high-ranking members of the government, trade unions, industry and development partners as well as brands and retailers. For more see [here](#)

ILO marks 3rd Rana Plaza anniversary

Remerging from the tragedy

To mark the third anniversary of the Rana Plaza collapse ILO supported a dialogue event held by the Centre for Policy Dialogue to discuss progress since the tragedy and to look at challenges still remaining.

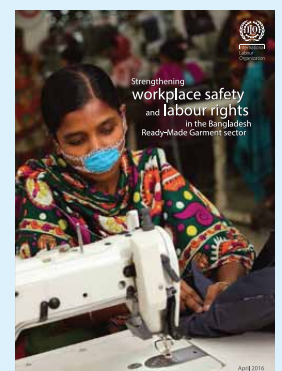
Full information on the event including presentations and the webcast can be found [here](#) or at <http://cpd.org.bd>

Strengthening workplace safety and labour rights in the Bangladesh RMG sector

An updated brochure has been produced highlighting ILO's activities in the RMG sector. [Download here](#)

Rana Plaza: what's changed?

A video captures changes made and highlights key areas where more work is needed. Watch it [here](#)



Where are the links?

This publication is designed to be read on screen. In order to facilitate readership a number of printed copies are also distributed. Unless otherwise mentioned all website links lead to www.ilo.org/dhaka

Business network to promote disability inclusion in the workplace

A 'Bangladesh Business and Disability Network' will give people with disabilities a better chance to join the workforce while contributing to economic growth, a workshop heard recently.

Inspired by the success of ILO's Global Business and Disability Network (GBDN) and other national networks, ILO aims to support the Bangladesh Employers Federation to increase the number of employers with people with disabilities in their workforce. During the event, a committee was formed to give shape to the Network and define its function and operation modality.

Given prevalent misconception about hiring those with disabilities, the Network will highlight experiences of champions - Bangladeshi employers who have hired disabled people - to encourage others to do the same. Donors, government stakeholders, business associations, disability organizations and others were also present to support the initiative. For more see [here](#)



State Minister for Labour and Employment Md. Mujibul Haque addresses the workshop

“Bangladeshi employers who have hired people with disabilities speak highly of their performance, loyalty, productivity, retention, regularity in attendance and overall workplace performance,” Salahuddin Kasem Khan, Managing Director, A.K.Khan & Companies and President of the BEF.



Opportunities mushroom for disabled in Bangladesh

Farming mushrooms is offering a valuable income stream for disabled people in Bangladesh, helping give them more confidence and control over their future. Read Kajal's story online [here](#)

The Ability Factor

Employing people with disabilities makes good business sense - watch the video [here](#)

The Ability Factor



ILO Bangladesh approach to disability inclusion

ILO is supporting the Government of Bangladesh in variety of ways to mainstream persons with disabilities into demand-driven education and training, thereby opening up pathways to decent employment.

Creating changes in demand and supply

ILO's approach to disability inclusion is to create systemic changes in the demand and supply of skilled persons with disability through activities and reforms within industry and training institutions. Three key pillars of ILO's skills approach are policy reform, strengthening the skills system and training institutions' capacity for inclusive practices, and promoting partnerships and networks.



Disabled workers who are proving valuable employees at a Dhaka furniture factory.

Promoting Inclusive Policies

The Government of Bangladesh formulated a National Skills Development Policy (NSDP) in 2012 with ILO support which puts disability inclusion center stage in the skills reform process. NSDP recommendations include establishing an admission quota of 5% for persons with disabilities at all Technical Vocational Education Training (TVET) institutions, providing stipends, hostel facilities and transport where necessary and designing reasonable accommodation and accessible training institutes. ILO has also supported the National Skills Development Council (NSDC) Secretariat to develop a National Strategy for Disability Inclusion.

Promoting Inclusive Practices

In order to ensure effective implementation of the 5% quota for persons with disabilities in TVET institutes, ILO is supporting the Directorate of Technical Education (DTE) to make its skills system and TVET institutes disability inclusive. The DTE has asked all TVET institutes (49 Polytechnic institutes and 38 Technical Training Centers) to establish partnerships with Disabled Persons Organizations and NGOs working with persons with disabilities. This will help increase the demand for skills training among persons with disabilities and to facilitate their access with assistive devices and reasonable accommodation support.

Promoting Partnerships and Networks

ILO is also supporting employers to establish partnerships with TVET institutes training people with disabilities. ILO brought together six Industry Skills Councils - tourism, agro-food processing, furniture, ceramics, pharmaceuticals and IT - to sensitize their representatives on disability inclusion. ILO's partner, the Bangladesh Employers Federation is now a member of the Global Business and Disability Network. BEF, with support from ILO, is establishing a Bangladesh Business and Disability Network to promote inclusion of persons with disabilities in the workplace.

For more information on ILO's Global Business and Disability Network see [here](#) or go to www.businessanddisability.org

Tears of joy mark completion of labour inspector training

A recently completed foundational training programme marks the latest step in the labour inspectorate reform process.

Md. Moniruzzaman could no longer contain his emotion as he received the award for best student on a comprehensive foundational training course for labour inspectors that came to an end recently.

At a ceremony held 9 March the inspector from Dhaka explained how since joining the Department of Inspections for Factories and Establishments (DIFE) in 2009 he had never received any formal training. Having the chance to be trained and then coming top amongst the 40 inspectors in his batch of the course reduced the 33-year-old to tears of joy.

The 40-day course entitled 'Foundational Training for Labour Inspection Officials' was developed by DIFE and the Bangladesh Institute of Administration and Management (BIAM) with the support of the the ILO's International Training Centre in Turin as well as the ILO's Improving Working Conditions in the Ready-made Garments Sector Programme funded by Canada, the Netherlands and the UK.

In total, 160 inspectors have completed the course, with the first batch commencing its study in August 2015. The foundational training programme has become an integral part of DIFE's capacity building actions and will be offered on a regular basis when new inspectors are recruited.

"I feel very proud. This was good training for all of us and will be very helpful in my service life. Now when I visit factories I am much more confident and know a lot more," Md. Moniruzzaman.



Md. Moniruzzaman receives his award from State Minister for Labour and Employment Md. Mujibul Haque



"I joined DIFE on 17 Feb 2015. I am a network engineer by training. I learned a lot of things on the course. Not only about my job but also a lot of personal development too. We need to implement the law but if we do not know it then we will not be able to do our job. None of us have a law background so we needed time to catch all these things. Everyone had so many questions."

Shanta Deb Mony Labour Inspector (Safety)

For more see [here](#)

Labour inspectorate reform process continues

Institutional reform of the Bangladesh Labour Inspectorate is continuing as it evolves into a more effective regulatory body.

Senior management of the Department of Inspections for Factories and Establishments (DIFE) joined ILO staff recently to discuss ongoing institutional reform of DIFE. A Labour Inspection Strategic Planning Workshop took place in Savar 7-8 March 2016. During the event the Labour Inspection Management Reform Roadmap was revised and updated. The DIFE governance structure and organogram were also discussed. This included roles and responsibilities as well as establishment of management processes and various technical units.

The reform roadmap to improve decent working conditions in Bangladesh through the strengthening of the labour administration and inspection system was first developed in 2014 by DIFE, with the support of ILO's RMG programme funded by Canada, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom.



DIFE inspector general Syed Ahmed with workshop participants

During the meeting, progress and challenges in implementing the roadmap were discussed. Emerging priorities and key medium and long-term activities were also considered in the context of recommendations from the October 2015 Committee of Experts Mission on Labour Inspection as well as the January 2016 Sustainability Compact Review. For more see [here](#)

“DIFE was originally responding to a disaster. Moving on, DIFE is now building an organizational structure that not only responds to crises but can also create a culture of prevention to improve compliance and to promote decent work. This is the evolution of an organisation as it matures.” Nancy Leppink, Chief of ILO's Labour Administration, Labour Inspection and Occupational Safety and Health Branch.



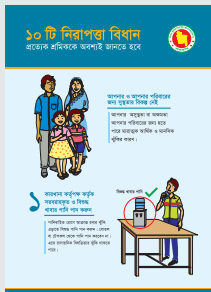
Labour Inspectorate report

The Department of Inspections for Factories and Establishments has produced a report detailing the developments and achievements of the labour inspectorate as well as challenges faced over the period May 2013-October 2015. The report can be downloaded at www.dife.gov.bd

Occupational Safety and Health Profile closer to completion

The Government of Bangladesh in collaboration with ILO is working on a National Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Profile for Bangladesh while a National Plan of Action to promote OSH in the work place will also be developed.

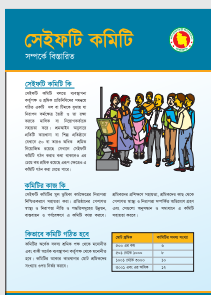
Basic OSH materials available



10 tips on OSH

10 tips on OSH gives simple information in Bangla on how to stay safe in the workplace.

Download [here](#)



About Safety Committees

This simple brochure gives basic advice on the formation and operation of Safety Committees.

Download [here](#)

A validation workshop for the Bangladesh National OSH Profile was held 3 April 2016 in Dhaka supported by ILO's Improving Working Conditions in the Ready Made Garment Sector programme funded by Canada, the Netherlands and United Kingdom.

A National OSH Profile is a diagnostic instrument which entails a systematic review and evaluation of the national situation in respect of occupational accidents and diseases as well as of the entire range of instruments and resources available nationally to implement a national OSH programme. The Ministry of Labour and Employment has formed a committee to review the OSH Profile and finalize the National Plan of Action on OSH implementation in Bangladesh.

Union trainers get OSH refresher

Members of the NCCWE and IBC trade union federations refreshed their Occupational Safety and Health skills during a four-day workshop in Dhaka during April.

The 30 union members had all previously been trained as OSH trainers by ILO through the support of ITC Turin and ACTRAV. The sessions helped the group refresh their skills and knowledge on the setting up and role of Safety Committees as well as providing general OSH training to RMG workers.



Union organizers brush up their OSH skills

The Better Work experience

Since October 2014, SQ Group, a leading RMG exporter, has been working with Better Work Bangladesh. Chief People Officer Md. Warisul Abid gives his impressions of the Group's Better Work experience to date.

Why did you choose to work with Better Work Bangladesh (BWB)?

We chose to work with Better Work primarily for its unique approach to provide advisory, assessment and training services. RMG factories in Bangladesh go through different audits by different brands at different times. Hence, we felt that a set of common standards would not only help avoid duplication of efforts, but also to achieve sustainable improvements in overall compliance at our factories.



SQ Group's Md. Warisul Abid

What changes did you notice in your factory since working with BWB?

After working for one year with Better Work Bangladesh, we are noticing changes in the mindset and perspectives of our people towards addressing compliance issues at the factory level. Unlike the conventional auditing system, our team is gaining more understanding and capacity in performing the self-assessments. With valuable guidance and cooperation from BWB Enterprise Advisors, we are now coming up with self-directed action plans for appropriate solutions to the issues.

What are your expectations from BWB?

We believe Better Work has global expertise and knowledge. We want them as a trusted partner so that we continue to find out better, workable and tangible solutions to challenges we face. We believe Better Work will help facilitate better workplace communication so that we can bring positive change beneficial to our shop-floor associates, factory management and global buyers.

Better Work breaks the 100 barrier

As of April 2016, Better Work Bangladesh was working with 101 RMG factories employing over 196,000 workers of whom 54% are women.

BWB buyers and stakeholders meet

Better Work Bangladesh held its first stakeholders and buyers forum in Dhaka on the 6 and 7 March 2016 during which it took stock of progress made and discussed the future.

The events saw dialogue take place on the Better Work programme and its partnerships, achievements and challenges as it seeks to improve working conditions and competitiveness in the Bangladesh ready-made garment sector.

For more see [here](#)

High-level tripartite mission visits Bangladesh

A mission comprising government, workers and employers representatives visited Bangladesh recently to assess implementation of ILO's Convention 87 on Freedom of Association.

From 17 to 20 April 2016 a high-level tripartite mission in relation to the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize Convention, 1948 (No.87) visited Bangladesh. The mission was undertaken at the request of the Committee on the Application of Standards (CAS) at the 104th Session of the International Labour Conference. During its visit the mission met a wide range of government, employer and worker representatives as well as development partners. The mission report is expected to be shared with the tripartite partners soon.



RMG union members meet. There has been a marked slow down in new union registrations since mid 2015.

Sustainability Compact reviews RMG progress

A joint conclusion adopted following the 2nd Review of the Bangladesh Sustainability Compact in January recognised progress made by Bangladesh towards improving factory safety in the garment sector while calling for additional emphasis to be placed on workers' rights issues.



The U.S. Department of Labor's Eric R. Biel; Bangladesh Foreign Secretary Md. Shahidul Haque; EU Ambassador Pierre Mayaudon; and ILO Bangladesh Country Director Srinivas Reddy.

The Compact Partners highlighted the need for additional progress to be made in areas including trade union registration, recruitment of labour inspectors and the remediation of RMG factories.

The Compact brings together the Government of Bangladesh, European Union, United States of America and the ILO, while Canada was also welcomed as a new partner at the recent meeting. The Partners will convene again in early 2017 to make a further review of progress.

The conclusions of the 2nd Compact review can be seen [here](#)

Short stories

Vocational training changed my life

Suma had been under the impression that only students weak in their studies chose vocational training. Luckily for her, a teacher with more awareness of job opportunities suggested she rethink her decision.

Read Suma's story [here](#)



On the fire safety frontline: Lessons from Bangladeshi fire fighters



Putting out fires is good, preventing them in the first place is even better. ILO through its US Department of Labor-funded Fire and Building Safety project is helping boost the capacity of the Fire Service to do just that.

Read about it [here](#)

Increasing Women's Access to Skills and Jobs

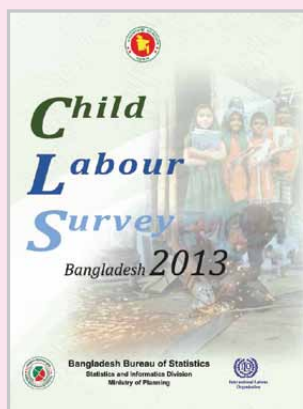
Around the world, women face challenges joining the labour force. ILO is supporting the Government of Bangladesh to develop and implement policies aimed at increasing the access for women to skills training.

Read about it [here](#)



All ILO Bangladesh feature stories can be found [here](#)

Child Labour and Labour Force Surveys



The Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics has produced two important new surveys with the support of ILO. The Child Labour Survey 2013 provides vital information on the current status of working children and child labour in the country while the Labour Force Survey 2013 provides a wide range of labour-related statistics. Both surveys can be downloaded from the website of the BBS at www.bbs.gov.bd

Labour inspectors gain child labour inspection skills



DIFE inspector General Syed Ahmed presents a certificate of completion to a participant

Twenty staff from the Department of Inspections for Factories and Establishments were trained as trainers in child labour inspection skills from 27–31 March 2016.

The five-day residential training session was organized by ILO's CLEAR project which is funded by the US Department of Labor. This marked the first time inspectors had received this type of training which involved classroom work as well as visits to the field.

National Child Labour Welfare Council meets

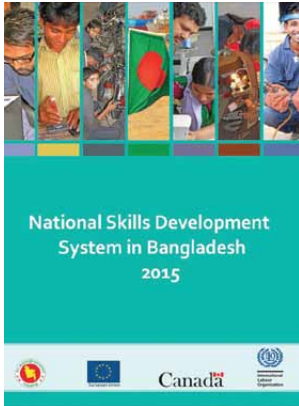
The second meeting of the National Child Labour Welfare Council took place on 13 April, 2016.

ILO provided support to the Ministry of Labour and Employment to organize the meeting through the US Department of Labor-funded CLEAR Project. The Council has a crucial role to play as it is the apex policy body to implement the National Plan of Action (NPA) in eliminating child labour from the country.

Key issues discussed included how to implement the NPA in light of the Sustainable Development Goal timeframe. The meeting also stressed the need to operationalize the committees at divisional, district and upazila level.



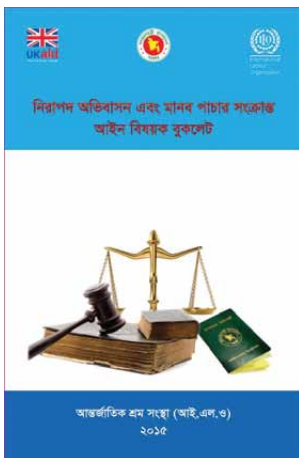
Labour Secretary Mikail Shipar addresses the council alongside State Minister for Labour and Employment Md Mujibul Haque.



The National Skills Development System in Bangladesh (2015)

The EU-funded 'Technical and Vocational Education and Training Reform in Bangladesh' project implemented by ILO helped develop strategies, tools and procedures envisioned in the National Skills Development Policy. This publication presents the main elements of this work that provide a foundation upon which future skills initiatives for Bangladesh will be built.

Download it [here](#)



Current Regulations on Safe Migration and Human Trafficking (Bengali)

Current Regulations on Safe Migration and Human Trafficking is an easy reference, Bangla-language guide for daily use by recruitment and law enforcement agencies which will help them to carry out their functions and duties in regards to safe migration and prevention of human trafficking.

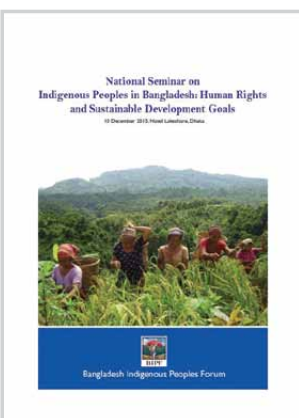
Download it [here](#)



Review of the government-to-government mechanism for the employment of Bangladeshi workers in the Malaysian plantation sector

The memorandum of understanding (MOU) between Bangladesh and Malaysia on the employment of Bangladeshi workers signed on 26 November 2012 established a state-managed recruitment system. The objective of this study is to make a preliminary assessment of the workings of the above arrangement with a view to identifying areas for improvement.

Download it [here](#)



Indigenous people in Bangladesh: Human rights and sustainable development goals

This keynote paper highlighting challenges facing indigenous peoples in Bangladesh and recommendations for future action was presented at the national seminar on Indigenous People in Bangladesh: Human Rights and Sustainable Development Goals held in Dhaka 10 December 2015 with the support of the ILO. It was published by the Bangladesh Indigenous People's Forum and the views expressed reflect those of the authors.

Download it [here](#)



Srinivas Reddy, ILO Country Director for Bangladesh, Shamima Nargis, Additional Secretary, ERD, Ministry of Finance and Beate Elsässer, Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of Switzerland in Bangladesh sign the project agreement.

Bangladesh, ILO and Switzerland launch new migration initiative

An initiative will contribute to the application of the overseas employment policy and support strengthening of public and private institutions to secure decent work for Bangladeshi migrant workers.

Launched in Dhaka on 2 May 2016, the Application of Migration Policy for Decent Work for Migrant Workers project, executed by the ILO and funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) will run until March 2018. A further three-year phase is then likely with the total budget standing at US\$7.25 million until 2021.

The new project will be implemented in close collaboration with the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment. It will help the Government of Bangladesh to operationalize policy and legal measures including the Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Policy 2016 and the Overseas Employment and Migrants Act 2013. For more see [here](#)

ILO's activities in Bangladesh take place with the support of:

Canada



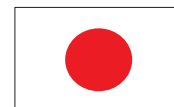
Kingdom of the Netherlands



SWEDEN



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confederation suisse
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From the People of Japan

For more information

See www.ilo.org/dhaka or contact Steve Needham, Senior Communications Officer at needham@ilo.org or call Tel: + 880 2 8881425 or 8881467

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