



# OSHA RIGHTS NEWSLETTER

## ISSUE - 45

### JULY-DECEMBER 2019

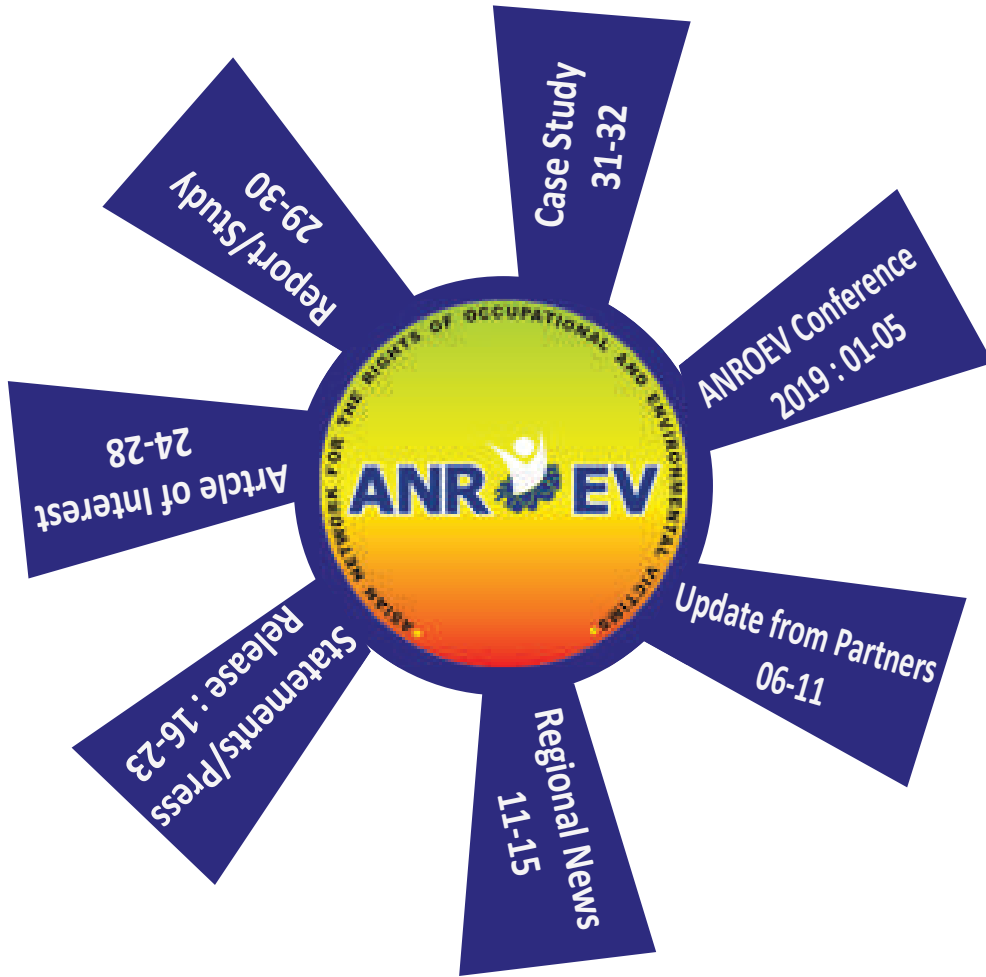
Asian Network for the Rights of Occupational and Environmental Victims (ANROEV)

## Speech from Secretariat

It is our pleasure to produce OSH Newsletter, issue no-45 on Occupational Safety and Health in Asia has prepared by the ANROEV Secretariat.

ANROEV Secretariat conducts research on OSH, share the updates on OSH and occupational and environmental victims, social media activities, campaign and events. ANROEV newsletter is the part of its regular intervention. Your support and kind cooperation will encourage us to way forward.

## Inside the Issue





## ANROEV Biennial Conference 2019

### Opennig Session

Domyung Paek, Seoul National University, Asian Citizen’s Center for Environment and Health and Chairman of the local organizing committee gave his welcome speech while Omana George, Program Coordinator, Asia Monitor Resource Centre (AMRC) moderated the session. As the chair of the local organizing committee, Mr. Domyung welcome the victims, their families and activists from over 20 countries who attended the event to share their wisdom over various topics including migration, employment practices and cultural belief of younger generation. He said, there are people who experienced accidents, diseases or injuries at work and then rise up to fight against the causes of the disease, the social biases or evil practices at work. He also said, In 2019, Seoul, ‘we will hear the stories of victims stories and discuss how we can help them so that they may play their roles in their family, work, and community.



### Congratulatory Remark : Bishop Yob

In his congratulatory remrj, Bishop Yob said, labor is fundamental to our individual accomplishments and social development. It is our duty to create a society where the stabilization of employment is considered a top priority. For a true advancement of our time, economic and technical development is not sufficient. The most valuable resource is human; it is and should be the center and purpose of all economic and social activities. Thus all life, the disabled and the victims of environmental disasters in particular, should be respected as a unique and independent being.



### Kim Myung-hwan, Chairman of the Korean Confederation of Trade Union (KCTU)

He said to the audience, “We have a common goal to stop the loss of life at work, but the overall picture is very discouraging. All workers around the world should come together and join efforts to fight against evil practices.”





## Opening Address

(Moderator: Domyung Paek)

Ms. Kim Mi Sook (Mother of Mr. Yong-Kyun Kim Foundation, Korea)

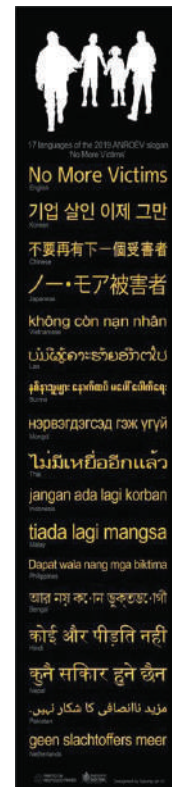
My son Kim Yong-kyun worked for a subcontractor of a power plant. After his death, I heard from his company that Yongkyun had died because he had not followed work procedures. In truth, however, the employer pushed him into the dangerous workplace without proper safety education and necessary protective equipment and he died even though he followed all the procedures. With the help of many activists, I fought against the government and the power plant and succeeded to sign an agreement. A few days before Yongkyun Kim Foundation launched to make safer workplaces and fight against social injustice.

Ms. Cho Soon Mi (Humidifier Disinfectant Victim Group, Seoul, Korea)

I became a victim while using HD products from 2008 to 2010 and have suffered from serious symptoms for about ten years. The government and HD companies were not eager to solve the problem at first and the victims, as patients themselves, could not come forward while more and more victims are dying. Humidifier Disinfectant has widely used in Korea from 1994 until 2011, especially for babies and patients. It caused various types of fatal diseases. As of now, reported victims are numbered 6,578 and death cases about 1,450. However, about only 670 cases are accepted as HD victims. The number of reported cases is only the tip of the iceberg considering the amount of HD products sold. I visited Hong Kong and other countries for demonstration to announce the danger of HD and other chemical products. We all should pay more attention and help each other.

Ms. Shinobu Sakamoto (Minamata, Japan)

I was poisoned by mercury in my mother's womb and was born with fetal Minamata disease. My mother filed a lawsuit against Chisso Corporation, the culprit of Minamata. My mother and I participated in the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in 1972 to let the international community know Minamata disease. We also visited Vietnam to support defoliant(agent orange) victims. Minamata disease is incurable. Some say the disease is over, but it is not. The victims' health conditions deteriorate day by day. Some of them are still in lawsuits. My mother testified as a witness at the court at the age of 94. She used to say that the victim should never lose heart. She passed away on October 13 this year. Just as she said, I believe that the victim should not lose heart. I hope you all take my mother's message to heart.



- 2019 ANROEV program**
- Venue: Hoam Faculty House, Seoul National University.
- Oct 27, Sunday - ABAN**  
 09:00-10:20 ABAN 10th anniversary Report  
 10:40-12:00 Young Mesothelioma Warrior Empowerment & Action  
 13:30-15:20 Brazil and Geneva Mission  
 15:40-17:00 Strategy Discussion
- Oct 28, Monday - ANROEV 1st day**  
 09:00-10:20 Opening  
 10:40-12:00 Country report  
 13:30-15:20 workshop1  
 -occupational health workshop1: Outsourcing and Transfer  
 -occupational health workshop2: Young (Intern) Workers1  
 -environmental health workshop1: Air pollution Health and Safety  
 15:40-17:00 workshop2  
 -occupational health workshop3: Migrant Work  
 -occupational health workshop4: Young (Intern) Workers2  
 -environmental health workshop2: Industrial Complexes and Community Safety
- Oct 29, Tuesday - ANROEV 2nd day**  
 09:00-10:20 workshop1  
 -occupational health workshop5: Karoshi (overwork death)1  
 -occupational health workshop6: Electronics campaign1  
 -environmental health workshop3: Environmental Disasters (Minamata, Bhopal)  
 10:40-12:00 workshop2  
 -occupational health workshop6: Karoshi (overwork death)2  
 -occupational health workshop6: Electronics campaign2  
 -environmental health workshop6: Living Environment Chemical Safety  
 13:30-15:20 session rapporteur report  
 15:40-17:30 victim empowerment discussion & closing: Seoul Declaration
- Oct 30, Wednesday - ANROEV 3rd day**  
 1. Field trips  
 -Labor field trip: Seoul  
 -victim activist cemetery  
 -green hospital  
 -Environment field trip: Hongseung asbestos mines  
 2. Demo & Action  
 -17:00 - Kangnam station, Samsung Headquarter Demo  
 -20:00 - Yeouido, Oryoukett Bencluser Headquarter action
- Occupational and Environmental Health **Ruohu** Victims take the lead for OEH Rights in Asia



## Country Report for Networking

Moderator: Repon Chowdhury - Coordinator, ANROEV



### Essence of Recent Developments

Asia is a rapidly developing region where diseases, dangerous work, evil labor practices, and environmental threats have emerged as critical issues. In particular, toxic materials have killed numerous people. This year we celebrate ANROEV's 20th anniversary. For 20 years, this institution has contributed to the promotion of the victims' rights and the improvement of our society's health and safety through the active participation of numerous civic groups. Last conference, the 16th ANROEV was held in Nepal in 2017 with 120 delegates from 18 countries. During the gathering, participants made meaningful discussion and suggestions for the enhancement of victims' right on OSH in Asia. They pledged mutual support and created a clear roadmap. At the convention, the following actions were made: training for medical and legal training for activists (South Asia), training for local doctors (South East Asia), Campaign in East Asia in overwork, stress and suicidal issues, medical camp for South Asia and China on different work related diseases, launching of OHS law (South East Asia), comparative study on diagnostic criteria (China), and research on chemicals and impact of lead and benzene (East Asia). Other key actions (2017-2019) include News Letters (OSH Right Issue # 41-44), e-mail based active information sharing services, active social media sites (Facebook and Twitter), and mobilization of campaign on 28 April with ANROEV Statements (2018 and 2019). After Nepal, three regional events were held: South Asia meeting on OSH in Negombo, Sri Lanka on Jul 12-13, 2019; South East Asia strategy meeting on OSH held in the Philippines; and East Asia OSH strategy meeting on Sep. 18-20, 2019 in Hong Kong.

### Highlights of Country Report (19 countries)

**Bangladesh (OSHE Foundation):** Report on poor enforcement of OSH-related laws at workplaces, weak labor inspection, increasing occupational accidents and diseases, and improper safety and health culture.

**Cambodia (BWTUC/SC Cambodia):** Problems in compensation system and poor medical service. There has been effort to improve key OSH challenges at national levels.

#### China (CLSN)

Weak monitoring in corporate occupational safety and only 2.7% of industrial disasters reported. Insufficient laws and regulations as well as poor enforcement rate and lack of public awareness

#### Hong Kong (ARIAV)

Number of injury decreased. Issues of Karoshi and safety remain.



# ANROEV Biennial Conference 2019

## **India (PTRC/Environics Trust/Cividep)**

In 2019, the government produced its first extensive plan to support the mine victims and to help their rehabilitation. However, there still remain challenges which include lack of accurate data and well-trained medical professional as well as inactive participation of trade unions due to their political interests.

## **Indonesia (FSPMI/LION/LIPS)**

difficulty in finding and supporting OHS victims.

## **Japan (JOSHRC)**

A five-year plan and the regulation on working hours launched. Power abuse prevention law at workplace is weak by ILO standard. Malaysia (HASAC): Industry code of practice on chemical classification introduced and the noise regulatory requirement enhanced in recent two years. However, employer-centered work environment entrenched and safety issues at construction sites.

## **Malaysia (HASAC)**

Industry code of practice on chemical classification introduced and the noise regulatory requirement enhanced in recent two years. However, employer-centered work environment entrenched and safety issues at construction sites

## **Nepal (GEFONT)**

OSH law draft recently submitted to parliament for discussion. Lack of awareness, implementation, inspection, and effective coordination.

## **The Philippines (IOHSAD/WAC)**

When a tragic fire at a workplace broke out claiming the lives of 38 workers in 2017, the government was forced to pass the first occupational safety and health law. It was a positive step forward in our campaign because the law stipulates several important OSH rights provisions such as their right to know, right to refuse unsafe work as well as right to use personal protective equipment. Besides the OSH law, two important laws passed; one is the expanded maternity leave law, permitting 60-105 days of paid leave to the mother and the other is the Philippines mental health law requiring workers mental health programs.

## **Republic of Korea (SHARPS)**

In spite of Samsung's repeated attempts to interrupt in the legal process and the government's lack of attention, we achieved very promising results from the court. First, the evidence to prove work relatedness is no longer the worker's responsibility. Second, Cancer is now included among the causes of occupational diseases. Third, a judge acknowledged a certain case as an occupational disaster after finding out that the investigation of the case neglected workers' testimonies. The rate of approved occupational cancer cases has been rising. Thanks to the raised voices of unions, civic groups and workers demanding compensation. According to a recent governmental research, there was a great improvement in acceptance number. we have never been defeated or bribed. We will continue to monitor Sumsung's implementation of its promises including the promise of donation in the construction of a special center for electronic workers health.

## **Sri Lanka (Ceylon Workers Red Flag Union)**

Workers' OHS not considered as a priority. Taiwan (TAVOI): improvement in occupational disease rate but insufficient compared to that of UK, Japan, Germany, and US. OSH accidents decreased but prevention measures and medical advancement still required.

## **Taiwan (TAVOI)**

Improvement in occupational disease rate but insufficient compared to that of UK, Japan, Germany, and US. OSH accidents decreased but prevention measures and medical advancement still required

## **Thailand (WEPT)**

Problems in law enforcement, lack of justice in legal implementation, and poor compensation system. Workers' 16 demands submitted to the government.





## Seoul Declaration



Before the announcement of the Seoul Declaration, participants had time to pay a tribute to the late Mr. Chan Kam HONG and his commitment to OSH rights, victims, and their families. The Bhopal representative urged participants to pay attention to the tragedy happened in Bhopal. A participant from Hong Kong told that she, along with other activists, has worked for migrant workers with unapproved occupational diseases and three activists (Yang Zhengjun, Wei Zhili, Ke Chengbing) have been in jail without access to their family and lawyers. Even though the government announced the national policy for the prevention of pneumoconiosis, it still has a long way to go to create a healthy environment for workers.

The moderator informed the participants that the document will be distributed to the press after participants review and confirm the draft. A participant suggested adding phrases, 'including states' in Number 6 or 'adopted and learned by states' in Number 1 to hold the states accountable. Some participants suggested adding more phrases regarding safety, such as 'occupation diseases'.

In response, the moderator replied that 'social system' connotes both companies and states and he agreed on the need for engaging the states as responsible agents. The participants read the Seoul Declaration together and a picture of participants holding pickets written 'No Flexible Working Hours System' was taken. The conference was closed after the coordinator, on behalf of the Secretariat, delivered plaques of appreciation to Prof. Baek, Omana George, and Dr. Choi in recognition of their contributions and hard work.

# No More Victims



# Update from Partners

## Bangladesh Occupational Safety, Health and Environment Foundation (OSHE) Special Training of Trainers on OSH



To create a pole of master trainer on OSH, OSHE foundation trained 29 and 30 masters trainers respectively in 2017 and 2018 and provided them 20 days long special ToT that included basic ToT, Basic OHS, Risk Assessment, Workplace Ergonomics, Fire & Chemical Safety, Conflict Management & CBA, Gender & OHS and Human Rights as well as Workers Rights. These Trainers are now conducting their own training to the rank & file worker at the Garments Industries. Consequently, OSHE trained another 29 trainer (3rd Batch) in 2019 in the OHS Trainers pool with an aim to enrich their capacity as an OHS Master Trainers. The objectives of the training is to expand the OHS knowledge and Training quality of the participants so that end of the course they have will effectively organized OHS training for the targeted workers. It was 20 days long special ToT course. The course was divided in 2 phases: 1st phase was 5 days long residential, held at the PHA Training Centre of Gonoshasthaya Kendra (GK), Savar, Dhaka, from 23 to 27 June 2019. Another part the 2nd phase was day wise training sessions. It was 15 days long in different subject related to OHS that's started from 03 July, 2019 and end 21 September, 2019.

### Awareness Raising Activities for Garments Workers'

- There were 2 Orientation on OSH and workers rights among the garments workers on 13 september and 29 November 2019. A total of 40 workers participated.
- A Medical Campaign organized on 26th July 2019 and 28 garments workers receive medical treatment. Every patients were examine, advices and provided treatment through this campaign.
- A daylong training on collective bargaining and negotiation conducted on 06 September 2019. The aim of this training was to inform and learn the workers on collective bargaining and negotiation.
- A day long training on leadership and organizing for the leaders of Workers groups under BSW on 30 August, 2019. The aim of this training was to organize the unorganized workers and develop their leadership skills. ■

## Awareness on OSH for Leather Supply Chain



To Improve and facilitate better understanding and raise awareness on occupational health and safety, strengthening capacity on OHS and other cross-cutting issues according to Bangladesh Labor Law among workers and mid-level management in leather supply chain Bangladesh Occupational Safety, Health and Environment Foundation (OSHE) conducted following events :

1. Training of Trainer (ToT) on OHS for mid-level management in tannery, leather goods and footwear supply chain on 25-26 November 2019 at YMCA Training Centre, Savar, Dhaka with 18 mid-level management from different factories parti, functions and responsibilities of the members. Mr. Alam Hossain facilitated the event with welcome speech and overview of the project.
2. Training of Trainer (ToT) on OSH for factory workers in in leather supply chain on 30-31 December 2019 at OSHE conference Hall, Dhaka 16 workers.
3. 6 nos. Awareness raising training on factory level workers, local workers and union representatives.
4. Six (6) no awareness raising training on OSH and labour law has been conducted among the factory level workers from July to November 2019.







## Updated status of the network- iBAN

### Engagements over last six months are as below-

#### 1. National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM)

This year iBAN tried to engage with the NIDM to take necessary steps to treat asbestos as a hazard in disaster scenarios. A draft has been prepared, and in process of finalization after getting inputs from members.

#### 2. Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS)

As iBAN had written letters to BIS in August 2019, seeking them to withdraw/revoke certification on any asbestos-containing material. They included iBAN's request in their quarterly meeting's agenda held on December 2019. It came to our understanding that the focus of the discussion should be on consumer safety to promote ban rather than focusing on occupation health aspects.

#### 3. Victim's Trust

Kymore Victim's Trust has been registered at Secretariat's address.

#### 4. Engagement with Thermal Power Plant (TPP) workers in Chhattisgarh

The secretariat has been engaged in various coal mining and Thermal Power plant areas and as Chhattisgarh has high numbers of the same, it was a good opportunity for the network to get associated with the TPP workers. Members working on similar issues attended a gathering in Korba, Chhattisgarh and discussed the possibility of future engagements, awareness on the issues among them.

#### 5. Paper Published in Corporate Responsibility Watch

A chapter on Deplorable cost of the corporate greed of the asbestos industry was published. The chapter talks about the lack of industry's willingness to address the issue of due diligence.

Link [http://www.corporatewatch.in/images/CR\\_Report\\_2019\\_\\_CH\\_11.pdf](http://www.corporatewatch.in/images/CR_Report_2019__CH_11.pdf)

#### 6. Engagement in Rajasthan at the local level

A meeting was organized at a location where one of the big asbestos plant is located and a discussion was organized to find more information on these plants and victims of asbestos. Since

Rajasthan had been mining asbestos in the 80s, many secondary/ environmental victims are present, but local people barely has information about the industries that are using raw asbestos fibre to make asbestos cement products.

#### 7. ABAN/ANROEV Meeting

The opportunity that ABAN/ ANROEV provided to meet the victims and several working groups from different parts of the world, was exciting. Various learning from victim's struggle was shared. The key point of discussion was the reclamation of abandoned asbestos mines/ dumps done in Korea. A learning that will help with the NGT case in India.

#### 8. Meeting with Government officials, Industry Safety

and Health officers workers and Medical Camp Preparation- The workers working in thermal power plants (especially from the areas where asbestos-containing materials are used for insulation purpose) in Korba were approached to discuss and organize the medical camp. Two plants were identified - NTPC (public sector) and BALCO (private sector) for the camps. Various meetings with officials from Industrial Health and Safety, BALCO, ESIC, State labour Department, Trade Unions and workers were done. But due to the upcoming election, it had to be postponed. Since there is an ongoing case in Supreme Court of India filed which ordered state High Courts to evaluate the status of the occupation health, it is important to take the lead and find more victims. Chhattisgarh High Court currently is hearing the case and this visit will help to document the status.

#### 9. Engagement on Asian Development Bank on policy change

With Australian and Vietnamese Ban Group, iBAN is endorsing the policy change in ADB with the help of APHEDA. We plan to propose case studies on how ADB investments are being indirectly used in the asbestos industry.

#### 10. Asbestos Air Sampling

The secretariat has been engaged in building its capacity for asbestos sampling. It was received a donation of air samplers and look forward to doing ground study at a different location along with building capacity of other members in coming years. ■



Members – 32 (5 female)  
States – 13  
No. of Victims Identified so far – 1839  
No. of Consignments imported in 2018– 2076  
No. of Active Ports for trade– 21





# Update from Partners

## International Ban Asbestos Secretariat

Between July and December 2019, the International Ban Asbestos Secretariat (IBAS) consulted and implemented asbestos campaigning activities with colleagues from the Asian Ban Asbestos Network (ABAN). IBAS was a key supporter of the 2019 ABAN conference which took place in Korea in October. Partnering with colleagues from Australia's Union Aid Abroad (APHEDA), IBAS helped facilitate the attendance of delegates from Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia at the November 2019 conference of the (Australian) Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency (ASEA).



International Speakers, APHEDA representatives and ASEA CEO and Directors at Parth Asbestos Conference November 2019

Participation by ABAN Coordinator Sugio Furuya at the Building and Woodworkers Global Occupational Safety and Health Conference in Freemantle, Australia afforded the opportunity for Sugio to accompany IBAS Coordinator Laurie Kazan-Allen to meetings with personnel from the Asbestos Diseases Society of Australia and the National Centre for Asbestos Related Diseases in Perth during November. As a result of the information conveyed at these meetings and the strategic discussions which ensued, initiatives were developed for supporting asbestos victims in Asia and for eradicating the asbestos hazard in the region.

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## Hearing on Ban-Asbestos in Korea

On July 3 the Ban Asbestos Network of Korea organized a hearing at the congressional office building in Seoul. Participants including officials from 4 relevant ministers heard testimonies of asbestos victims from all over the country. One of the witnesses was a 29 years old male mesothelioma and a Japanese meso warrior sent solidarity video message ■





## Center for Development and Integration (CDI), Vietnam

Review and assess the status of compliance with occupational safety and health in the electronics industry

Ram Charitra, Nepal, shared cases of victims and introduced the Center for Public Health and Environmental Development (CEPHED)'s efforts that have led to significant achievements. The achievements include; the ban on asbestos in 2014; the adoption of the cosmetics standards after their research on the lead content in lipstick (ppm) and mercury content in whitening creams; the ban on the import, purchase, and use of all mercury-based equipment in health industries and the use of mercury dental amalgam; and reduction in lead content in paints and enactment of lead paint standard by Government of Nepal; and development of educational material to help students understand the danger of toxic chemicals.

Kim Taejong, Korea, shared the story of his wife who has been suffering from a serious lung disease caused by the humidifier disinfectant (HD) containing CMIT and MIT. Nevertheless, she was not recognized as a victim by the company due to the difficulty of proving the causal relationship between her disease and HD. Although she receives another form of compensation, it does not cover the medi-

cal cost for treatment not directly related to lung condition and is not enough to make a living.

As a victim of the radon-emitting mattresses, Ho, Byung-Sook, Korea introduced the victims of 28 types of mattresses containing the first-class carcinogen, radon. The company has done nothing except recalling the products, and the government hasn't also taken any proper measure to support the victims.



Choi Yeyong, Vice Commissioner, Korea, introduced about the activities of the Special Investigation Commission on Humidifier Disinfectant. The previous administration had conducted almost no investigation into the

cases of humidifier disinfectant victims.

However, after President Moon took office, the Commission was founded and has been conducting public hearings and investigations on the relevant companies. However, compensation for victims and ensuring sustainability of activities of victims and activists are still remained as challenges.

## Consultation workshop with stakeholders about OSH app

Based on workers' working conditions in the garment and electronics factories into Vietnam's context, CDI thinks of an initiative to build an app that could help to find the evidence of the relationship between workers' health status and their working conditions, providing some support services for workers as well. After 2 years of developing the initiative, working with core workers in each sector and receiving supports from national, international experts and international volunteers, our very first app demo named "My OSH app" has been created.



On December 2019, CDI has organized 3 consultation workshops on the app with more than 80 participants, of those the first workshop has been done with 30 electronics workers, the next workshop has been done with 30 garment workers and the last one has been done with over 20 occupational safety and health

(OSH) professionals, universities and OSH personnel of the garment companies. In every workshop, by applying the participatory technique and create space for all to raise their voice and be listened to, CDI has received the attention and much feedback from the participants. Almost all have the same thinking that

"The idea of the app is good, fit for the context of Vietnam.

When it comes into effect, the app may bring benefits for workers in the electronics and garment industries." However, the way that CDI

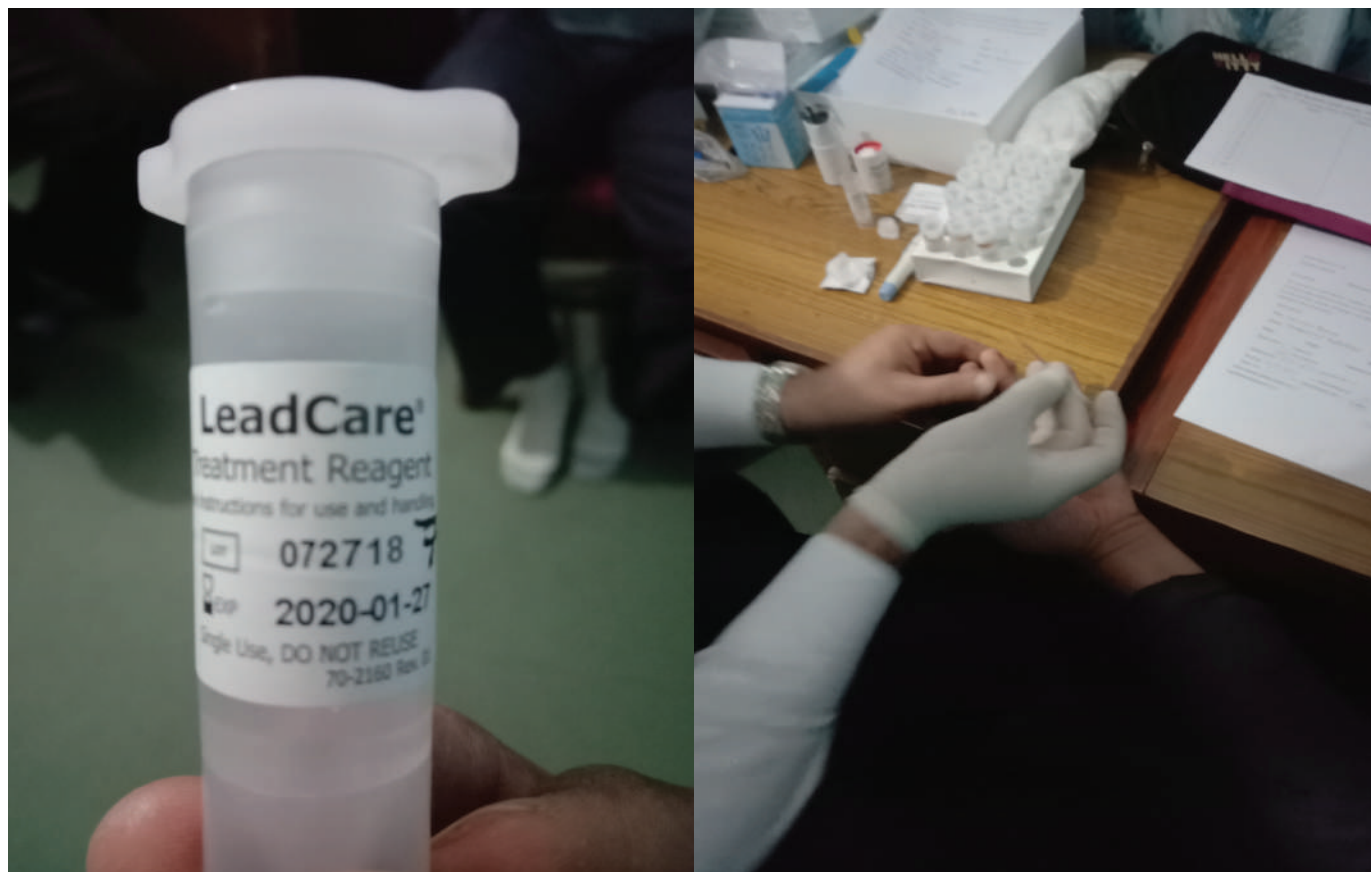
builds up the app needs revising. Simple, convenient, and responsive to the needs of workers are the important factors that CDI needs to consider in the app development process. Thank the comments and feedback, CDI has a chance to review the app and continue to finalize it in the near future. ■





# Update from Partners

## Center for Public Health and Environmental Development (CEPHED) campaign for OHS for Painters in Nepal



Center for Public Health and Environmental Development (CEPHED) Nepal has carried out Blood Lead Level (BLL) testing among Painters working in Kathmandu Valley during the first week of November 2019. Some Seven Painters were tested for their Occupational Exposure to Lead (Pb) that might contained in the paints that they daily dealt with and use for painting. Series of CEPHED studies have shown that though there has been a great improvement of the compliance of mandatory standard of 90 ppm of Lead in Paint enacted by Government of Nepal in 2014, paints found in the market shelve still have very high lead content, one of the major Occupational exposure to toxic lead to the Painters. The BLL test revealed the low level of BLL among the painters ranges from 3.3 to 6.6 micro-gram per deci-liter which is less than the US CDC reference level of 5 micro-gram per deci-liter.

Painters are coordinated through their leaders and briefed about the Lead Exposure during the painting process. Self motivated painters were participated into the BLL monitoring program that CEPHED has been able to carried out at small scale with the help of Dr. Keyoor Gautam, CEO of Samyak Dignostic Pvt. Ltd. laboratory.

Government of Nepal has enacted Mandatory Lead Paint standards of 90 ppm for all kinds of paint imported, produced, sale, distributed and used in Nepal on December 2014 based on CEPHED research based campaign and we are now advocating for National BLL screening program through our research based advocacy with the Government of Nepal , Ministry of Health and Population to ensure chemical safety and Occupational Health and Safety for the workers. ■



## IOHSAD Philippines Organizational Update October-December 2019



IOHSAD conducted a National OSH Consultation among labor union and workers' organizations leaders last October 14, 2019 in Quezon City. Almost all trade union centers from the major regions of the country were represented in the said meeting to discuss the most pertinent issues on occupational health and safety. Workers from different sectors such as mining, agricultural and plantation, transportation, manufacturing and business process outsourcing (BPO) shared their particular OSH situations. Some regions also reported that communities near their workplaces are also affected by the gross health and safety violations committed by the companies. Here are some highlights from the reports shared by the labor leaders that show how companies neglect the workers' health and safety. There are no doctors or nurses during night shifts to attend to medical emergencies. There are no clinics in large plantations. During peak seasons, bus drivers work for 12- 16 hours or sometimes three straight days without rest. Workers are forced to work extra hours without pay to reach production quotas. The consultation ended on a high note as everyone pledged to continue to gather concrete OSH issues in workplaces, spread OSH awareness among the workers and hold companies that are proven to have violated OSH standards accountable.

As part of IOHSAD's campaign to raise awareness on OSH rights, a group discussion on the major provisions of the new Philippine OSH Law was conducted among BPO employees on October 20, 2019.

OSH has become a major issue among BPO employees. Based on the government's 2015 data, the highest number of occupational diseases such as hypertension, back pain, occupational lung diseases and asthma were recorded in the BPO sector. There are already more than a million Filipinos working in the BPO industry and the cases of workrelated diseases continue to rise as well. The discussion ended with a resolution that IOHSAD will work closely with the BPO Industry Employees Network (BIEN) in planning and implanting OSH programs that will uphold the employees' right to health and safety at work. IOHSAD Philippines and Pepmaco workers join the people of Bhopal in their fight for justice. We stand with the victims and survivors of the Bhopal tragedy in their fight for justice and corporate accountability. The Bhopal chemical gas leak is considered as the world's worst industrial disaster. Thousands of people were killed on that tragic night in Bhopal 35 years ago. A lot more people are suffering from fatal illnesses and lifelong disabilities until now. Pepmaco workers identify with the struggle of the Bhopal people. They are also victims of their company's gross violations of OSH standards, labor and human rights. They have been exposed to unsafe working conditions and are now suffering from various respiratory, vision, skin and other health problems. Pepmaco workers take inspiration from the Bhopal people's long and ongoing struggle for justice and corporate accountability. The workers are resolved to fight until they get the justice they truly deserve. ■





## Fight to Ban Asbestos Boosted in Cambodia



In Cambodia, the fight to ban asbestos has taken a major step forward with the launch of the National Asbestos Profile. The National Asbestos Profile helps decision-makers, workers and consumers safeguard their health and safety by identifying the dangers of asbestos in their workplaces and communities.

Protecting workers from harm Speaking to over three hundred people gathered at the launch of the National Asbestos Profile, Mr. Sok Kin, President of the Cambodian Building and Wood Workers' Trade Union Federation and Convener of CAMBAN, said that asbestos awareness is a new challenge for Cambodians. "There are very few workers aware of the dangers of asbestos and they don't know what materials contain asbestos. We are working with support from Union Aid Abroad-APHEDA to raise awareness among our members and we urge rapid government action to phase out use and protect workers and consumers."

### Working for a future free of asbestos

The National Asbestos Profile is the fruit of years of close cooperation between government and civil society. Union Aid Abroad-APHEDA has worked with the Ban Asbestos Network in Cambodia (CAMBAN) to bring about this joint effort between the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training and trade unions, employers, and a number of other ministries.

Speaking at the launch, the Minister of Labour Vocational Training His Excellency Minister Ith Samheng urged rapid action to move forward on asbestos hazard awareness and regulation. Mr. Leng Tong, Advisor to the Ministry of Labor and Employment Training, said he was looking forward to the day that Cambodia bans asbestos: "Cambodia is still allowing asbestos use because we do not have tools for checking this substance, but in the future, Cambodia will prepare to erase asbestos, to implement an asbestos ban".

Asbestos fight brings global benefits The Deputy Head of Mission at the Australian Embassy, Mr. Luke Arnold, said the Australian government was pleased to support the work of eradicating asbestos through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP). He highlighted the world-wide benefits of restricting trade on asbestos in South East Asia, saying: "Minimising the trade in goods containing asbestos in South East Asia will reduce demand for asbestos products internationally. It also makes communities in Cambodia and in our region safer."

In the coming years Union Aid Abroad-APHEDA will continue working with its partner unions and organisations to promote asbestos awareness, combat misinformation, and advocate for the elimination of the scourge of asbestos in Cambodia. By fighting for a ban on asbestos, Cambodian workers and communities can safeguard their health and well-being.



## In South Korea's dangerous shipyards, subcontracted workers are most at risk

REUTERS : Oct 30, 2019

GEOJE, South Korea - Park Chol-hee was working the holiday shift at Samsung Heavy Industries' Geoje shipyard on Labour Day, 2017, when a giant crane collided with another and crashed to ground, killing six people, including Park's younger brother. "It was as if a bomb was dropped," Park said. "Bodies were too damaged to describe."

Park and his brother Sung-woo were among nearly 1,500 subcontracted employees - 90 per cent of the shipyard workforce that day - building an oil and gas platform for French energy giant Total. All six killed and 25 workers who were injured were subcontractors, who receive lower pay, fewer employment protections and less training compared to full-time employees.

Samsung and other big Korean conglomerates acknowledge they rely increasingly heavily on subcontractors and temporary workers to cut costs and increase labour flexibility, but they bear little responsibility for workplace accidents, according to

interviews with about two dozen workers, subcontractor executives and experts. And according to a 2018 government-commissioned report, lenient sentences for companies and officials are hampering attempts to reduce occupational accidents in South Korea, which has the third worst industrial safety record among countries in the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

More than two years after South Korea's worst shipyard accident in at least a decade, Park says he is suffering from depression and post-traumatic stress disorder which worsened after a court in May ruled that no Samsung officials will serve jail time over the accident.

In an emailed response to Reuters' questions, Sam-

sung Heavy said it regretted the casualties caused by the accident but could not elaborate further because of the appeal trial.

Samsung's email sign-offs read: "Safety is the No.1 value in management."

Total and Park's direct employer Haedong both declined to comment on the story.

Haedong, which remains as a subcontractor for Samsung Heavy, was not prosecuted in the criminal trial, court documents showed.

### MULTI-LAYERED SUBCONTRACTING

South Korean conglomerates like Samsung have been the backbone of the country's rapid economic transformation since the devastation of the Korean War into

a global manufacturing and engineering powerhouse. But as competition has increased and growth slowed, the groups known locally as chaebol have increased hiring of temporary and subcontracted workers to cut costs, boost production and make it easier to dismiss staff when demand fluctuates, experts and industry officials say. Temporary workers accounted for 21.2 per cent of all the

workers in South Korea in 2018, nearly double the OECD average of 11.7 per cent.

Workers at South Korea's subcontracted firms earned 3.4 million won (\$3,900) per month, only 62 per cent of what their peers at prime contractors made, the state-funded Korea Labor Institute said in a report last October.

"This is not just a problem of Samsung, but Korea Inc," said Lyou Sung-gyou, a labour attorney and a member of a presidential labour advisory body. "Conglomerates take profits, but they escape legal responsibility by creating a multi-layered subcontractor structure."

See More at : <https://www.asiaone.com/asia/south-korea-s-dangerous-ship-yards-subcontracted-workers-are-most-risk>



South Korea





## Taipei Court orders RCA to pay NT\$2.3bn



### Taiwan

The Taipei District Court ordered Radio Corp of America (RCA) and its affiliates to pay NT\$2.3 billion (US\$76.15 million) to 1,120 former employees and family members over exposure to toxic materials. The ruling, which could still be appealed, follows a separate judgement last year by the Supreme Court, which upheld a previous order for General Electric (GE) and Thomson Consumer Electronics (TCE) to pay 262 former employees and affected family members NT\$564.45 million. The plaintiffs in ruling were not a part of that lawsuit, choosing instead to file their own complaint. Earlier rulings on the matter found that RCA was liable for the cancer and illnesses its employees contracted while handling solvents that were later determined to be carcinogenic at an RCA factory in

then-Taoyuan County. Investigators also found that toxic waste was dumped around the factory, contaminating soil and groundwater. Former employees said that more than 200 people have died due to exposure to toxic chemicals. RCA, which operated in Taoyuan, Hsinchu and Yilan counties from 1970 to 1992, employed tens of thousands of people in the manufacture of televisions and other electronics, during which it used up to 31 organic solvents, including trichloroethylene and tetrachloroethene, exposure to which increases the risk of cancer, a previous verdict said. The RCA Self-Help Association, made up of former RCA employees and family members, started protesting in 1998 and filed a lawsuit in 2004 after more than 1,300 were diagnosed with various types of

cancer. It has since become one of the nation's longestrunning legal battles between a corporation and its employees. In 1986, RCA was absorbed by US giant GE, which two years later sold RCA's consumer electronics department to TCE, the US arm of a French firm now known as Technicolor SA. In last year's ruling, judges said that RCA had deliberately transferred a large portion of its assets out of Taiwan to reduce its financial liability when GE sold it to TCE, and executives then transferred US\$150 million into overseas bank accounts. After the contamination was reported at the Taoyuan site in 1991, the company sold the building and land for about NT\$1.9 billion the following year, the Supreme Court said.



## Colombia Bans Asbestos!



### Colombia

On July 11, 2019, Colombian President Iván Duque Márquez signed into law asbestos prohibitions endorsed by both houses of Congress in a frantic rush to beat the June 20, 2019 adjournment of Congress after which all proposed legislation would have been vacated.<sup>1</sup> The ban, which prohibited not only the mining,<sup>2</sup> commercialization and distribution of all types of asbestos – including chrysotile (white) asbestos – in Colombia also banned the export of asbestos. This is the first time that asbestos prohibitions have been approved by a legislature in an asbestos mining country; in 2017, the Brazilian Supreme Court, in the face of continuing federal support for the asbestos industry, declared the commercial exploitation of asbestos unconstitutional.<sup>3</sup> The new Colombian law will take effect on January 1, 2021 and permits a five year transition period for companies currently using asbestos.<sup>4</sup> The fact that this law managed to overcome substantial political as well as legislative hurdles with just days to go before Congress adjourned was testament to the determination of civil society groups, politicians and ban asbestos campaigners who mounted a high-profile nationwide campaign to mobilize support for an asbestos-free future.

Various ban asbestos ban bills had been debated in the Colombian Congress over the last 12 years; the one which succeeded was named after Ana Cecilia Nio, a journalist who died of the asbestos cancer mesothelioma in 2017 aged 42; as a child she had lived in the city of Sibaté, home to Colombia's first asbestos-cement factory.<sup>5</sup> Although she had never worked with asbestos, she was exposed to deadly fibers liberated by the factory. Despite undergoing major operations and extensive radiotherapy and

chemotherapy following her 2014 diagnosis, Ana Cecilia campaigned assiduously for Colombia to ban asbestos. In 2016, she and her husband brought a lawsuit against the Colombian State before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights for failing to protect citizens from the asbestos hazard.<sup>6</sup> Over the last 50 years, 1,700 people have died from asbestos-related diseases, including lung cancer and mesothelioma, in Colombia.<sup>7</sup>

The Ana Cecilia Nio Ban Asbestos Law was adopted months after the Administrative Court of Bogotá (March 4, 2019) ordered the State to implement a policy phasing out the use of asbestos within five years. The Court issued orders that the Ministries of Health and Labor implement specific measures to ensure that the switch to safer technologies was progressed including the right to impose criminal and administrative sanctions, such as substantial financial penalties, for non-compliance.

Commenting on the achievement of securing the asbestos ban, Senator Nadia Blel, the Cartagena Congresswoman who sponsored The Ana Cecilia Nio Ban Asbestos Bill, said:

"Asbestos is in our homes, in hospitals, in schools, in brake pads for vehicles, in everyday products and we wanted to pay tribute to Ana with this law for that voice, that woman who despite difficulty breathing accompanied us to the Congress to lead this initiative." Senator Blel stressed that Ana and other asbestos victims who had fought for a "Colombia without Asbestos," had done so to protect future generations.

July 12, 2019





## A Letter from a regional OHS network to call on the release of Labour activists YANG Zhengjun, WEI Zhili, and KE Chengbing

To: Song Yiya, Director of Shenzhen City Pingshan District Security Bureau, Wang Shiangyang, Prosecutor General of Pingshan District Shenzhen City People's Procuratorate, Wang Dongming, Chairman, All-China Federation of Trade Union 29th July 2019

On January 8th, the police stormed an urban village residence and detained "iLabour" website editor Yang Zhengjun. Three months later, on March 20th, police detained another two editors —Wei Zhili and Ke Chengbing. The three activists collaborate to produce "iLabour", an independent online labour rights media platform. They have covered worker stories and provided workers with a platform for legal consultation. At the time of their arrest, they were reporting and supporting a struggle of construction workers from Hunan, who have been working in Shenzhen to do blast hole drilling in Shenzhen in the 1990s, to claim their compensation where many of them were diagnosed with pneumoconiosis when return to their hometown.

2019年1月8日, 警察入城中村位, 抓捕“新生代”网站君。三个月不到, 3月20日, 警察又再抓捕 另外两名“新生代” 危志立和柯成兵。三位者期合力权自媒体平台“新生代”, 工人相关的新和故事, 并且提供权法律。“新生代”三位者被抓捕, 正密和支持湖南建筑工人追的斗争, 些建筑工人于1990年代在深圳从事爆破和的工作, 但回到家后却断出患上肺病。

The three "iLabour" activists began supporting pneumoconiosis workers' struggle in early 2018 by providing them with labor law consultation and sending out updates of the struggle in Shenzhen online, where to petition for more than 10 times, to make their plight visible to the public. Harassment and suppression of the iLabour editors began as early as June 2018, when Ke was summoned by police for questioning about a piece on the pneumoconiosis struggle. In the same month, Yang was apprehended by police at the scene of the pneumoconiosis protests and taken in for questioning. The editors received other threatening calls from police as they continued to report on the case. On January 8th, one day after fifty pneumoconiosis workers who were forcibly sent back to Hunan police after another attempt to petition to the Shenzhen government, Yang Zhengjun was arrested in Guangzhou. After Yang's arrest, Wei Zhili and Ke Chengbing continued to help the workers and provided them with legal advice. On March 20, Wei and Ke were also arrested in Guangzhou.

由2018年年初开始, 数百位湖南肺病工人了他他的境大众所知, 至深圳上超十次, 三位“新生代”亦由2018年年初开始透他的权的即消息, 以及提供法的。然而自2018年年中, 当局 就开始打和“新生代”的者, 6月, 君被警察强制并一篇关于肺病权的文章是否出自于他的手笔, 又在肺病工人抗的被抓捕和接受。1月8日, 五十位肺病工人在深圳上后被强行送回湖南之 后一日, 君被捕。危志立和柯成兵由于支持湖南的工人, 也于3月20日被捕。 The local police told Yang and Wei's families that they were arrested for helping pneumoconiosis workers. Three of them were detained at the Shenzhen No. 2 Detention Center for "picking quarrels and provoking trouble", and transferred to "Residential Surveillance at a Designated Location" (hereafter RSDL[1]). All of their lawyers' requests for meetings have been refused, and basic civil and political rights were being taken away. Their families are very concerned about their personal safety and well-beings in such a secret detention.



## A Letter from a regional OHS network to call on the release of Labour activists YANG Zhengjun, WEI Zhili, and KE Chengbing

警察告[ ]和危的家人, 他[ ]是因[ ]参与[ ]肺病工人的[ ]权而被刑拘。最初“新生代”三人涉嫌“[ ]衅滋事罪”被刑拘于深圳第二看守所, 而后将强制措施[ ]“指定居所[ ]居住”(下称“指[ ]”)自“新生代”三人被指[ ]后, 他[ ]的律[ ]从未成功与其会[ ], 他[ ]的家人十分担心他[ ]的人身安全和健康

We would like to address that helping pneumoconiosis workers to fight their compensation shouldn't be a crime. The local government should not arbitrarily detain the “iLabour Three” due to their promotion of worker' rights to health, a dignified life, and freedom of peaceful assembly through online platform. The poor situation of the pneumoconiosis workers is indeed the consequence of corporate violations against the labour law, and a reflection of local government ineffective enforcement of labour rules and regulations who fail to protect the health and basic rights of the workers. Instead of suppressing the voices of workers and activists by violence act and arbitrary detentions, the local government should ensure basic human rights will be in place as follow:

我[ ]在此重申, 帮助[ ]肺病工人追[ ]他[ ]的[ ]是无罪的。地方政府不[ ]因[ ]他[ ]在网上自媒体平台[ ] [ ]工[ ]权、推广工人健康权利和和平集会的权利[ ]由任意将其拘留。[ ]肺病工人悲惨的[ ]境正反映了企[ ]反 [ ]法、地方政府不[ ]正[ ]行[ ]工相关[ ]定以保[ ]工人健康和基本权利的[ ]。地方政府[ ]立即停止用暴力和任意拘留打[ ]工人和行[ ]者, 并且采取以下行[ ]来保障基本人权:

Release Yang Zhengjun, Wei Zhili and Ke Chengbing immediately and unconditionally;

立即无条件[ ]放[ ]君、危志立、柯成兵;

Ensure that they are free from any forms of torture or cruelty, inhumane and degrading treatment, and have regular access to their family and lawyer of their choice;

确保[ ]君、危志立、柯成兵免于遭受酷刑、侮辱和非人道的待遇;能[ ]律的会[ ]他[ ]的家人和其自由委托的律[ ];

Resume the negotiation with the pneumoconiosis workers and carry out adequate compensation plan which workers voice are included.

重启和[ ]肺病工人的[ ]商, 并在充分[ ]入工人意[ ]的原[ ]下[ ]行适切的[ ]方案





# Statement/Press Release

## 35 years – Still no Justice Justice for Bhopal Victims



### REFERENCE:

ANROEV: [anroev@gmail.com](mailto:anroev@gmail.com)

OEHNI: [oehni.del@gmail.com](mailto:oehni.del@gmail.com)

iBAN: [ibancoordinator@gmail.com](mailto:ibancoordinator@gmail.com)

02 December 2019

The Asian Network for the Rights of Occupational and Environmental Victims (ANROEV), India Ban Asbestos Network (iBAN) and Occupational and Environmental Health Network India (OEHNI) expresses its deep sadness and outrage at continuing denial of justice to the victims of gas tragedy which took place in Bhopal on 3 December 1984. For 35 years, the victims and their family members have been denied just compensation and rehabilitation.

ANROEV is a network of victims and grass root organisations who work on safe working conditions and environmental impacts due to factories and mines in Asia. ANROEV combines the OSH rights struggle in different Asian countries into a one united struggle and demands better health and safety for the workers across the region.

iBAN is a coalition of labour organizations, public health groups, environmental groups, academicians, scientific experts, concerned citizens, victims and their families. The aim of the network is community well-being and ensuring that communities, workers and residents remain safe from the exposure to Asbestos fibre and diseases caused by this dreaded fibre.

# Statement/Press Release

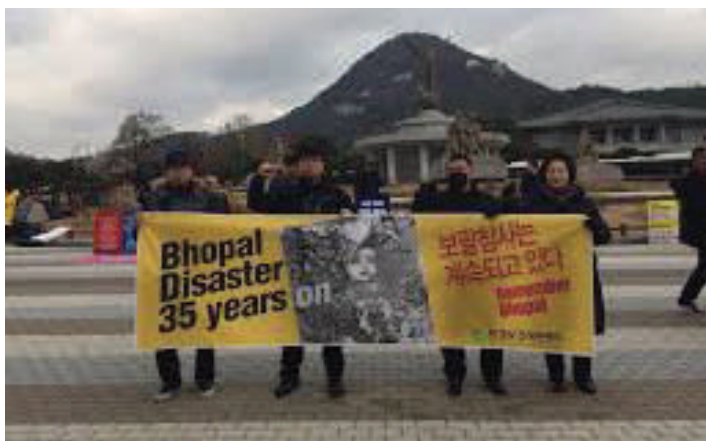


Occupational and Environmental Health Network India (OEHNI) is National network of grassroots organizations working on OHS rights.

The gas tragedy which took place just after midnight on that fateful night at the factory owned by Union Carbide (now owned by Dow Chemicals) left more than 8000 people dead in the first week. The current death toll is estimated to be more than 20,000. Countless others are still battling chronic illnesses brought about by the gas tragedy, ranging from skin diseases, vision impairment, cancers. Genetic mutations have taken place, and many children with disabilities are being born.

The Indian Government let off the perpetrators of this heinous crimes. Till date, no government agency has tried to present the correct figures for the number of people who have died or have been injured due to the tragedy. Without this accurate figure, the amount of compensation which should be rightfully claimed from the company remains inadequate. Many victims and family members are still seeking for compensation, rehabilitation and justice after 35 years have passed. The Indian government refuses to acknowledge them as a victim.

None of the senior leaders (previously Union Carbide) have been tried in court or otherwise held accountable for these murders, even though internal memos show that they knew the safety systems at the factory were inadequate and government has failed to deliver the summons to them to appear in the court to be held accountable for their



ership of Dow Chemicals (now owned by Dow Chemicals) have been held accountable though internal memos show that they knew the safety systems at the factory were inadequate. The Indian government has failed to put enough pressure on the Indian government to force Dow Chemicals to force Indian court and be held accountable for their actions.

The factory site still contains a large amount of waste from the time of operation which continue to contaminate the ground water. No concrete plans have been made for disposing this waste, by either the government nor by the company.

It is clear that the system has failed to hold multinational corporations accountable for their crimes and violations of human rights, and that our governments are not interested in change and instead the people of Bhopal have been left to fight for clean-up of the toxic waste, adequate healthcare, clean water, fair compensation, and corporate accountability.

Bhopal remains the worst industrial disaster ever recorded. The commitment, strength and endurance of the Bhopalies provide inspiration to all of us to continue our struggles for safe workplaces and clean environments in Asia and throughout the world. All of us stands along with the people of Bhopal for as long as necessary to fight for justice.

लड़गे - जीतगे  
(We will fight, we will win!)

(No More Victims)  
कोई और पीड़ित नह







# Statement/Press Release

Joint statement: Strengthen EU chemicals policy to protect workers and environment | ETUC



Dear President von der Leyen, Dear Executive Vice-President Timmermans,

We, the European Consumers Organisation (BEUC), the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), and the European Environmental Bureau (EEB), representing the voice of consumers, workers and the environment, have come together to call on you to build a Europe that protects people and ecosystems against chemical pollution.

On 4 December, the European Environment Agency (EEA) released the 2020 State of the Environment Report highlighting that Europe faces environmental challenges of an unprecedented scale and urgency. The report documents that ongoing exposure to chemical pollution continues to negatively affect human health and the environment. Latent and irreversible damage to human health is of particular concern.

The European Green Deal presents a unique opportunity to radically scale up and speed up actions to protect citizens and ecosystems. EU decision-makers must seize this opportunity to set Europe on the road to a non-toxic economy and a healthy future.

Please find attached to this letter our joint recommendations for how the European Green Deal that could revitalise EU chemicals policy to better protect EU citizens and the environment. If these recommendations are integrated into an EU chemicals strategy to 2030, the Zero Pollution Ambition outlined in President von der Leyen's political guidelines can be achieved as far as chemicals policy is concerned and will support the credibility of the European Green Deal as a transformative agenda that helps establish a new social contract for Europe.

We thank you for consideration of this important matter. We are looking forward to further discussing it with you.

Yours sincerely,

Monique Goyens, Director General of the European Consumers Organisation (BEUC)

Per Hilmersson, Deputy General Secretary of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC)

Jeremy Wates, Secretary General of the European Environmental Bureau (EEB)



Media Release

13 August 2019

Lane Xang Hotel, Vientiane, Laos

Today in Vientiane, international scientific experts from UN agencies and many countries in the region are joining with Lao experts to share experiences on causes of workplace cancer in Laos and to urge quick action to stop using chrysotile asbestos in the country.

International experts from the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Geneva Switzerland, World Health Organisation (WHO) Manila Philippines, Australian Government Asbestos Safety Eradication Agency (ASEA) as well as Vietnam, Korean and Japanese occupational health agencies today applauded the Lao Government for recent completion of its National Action Plan to Eliminate Asbestos Related Diseases. They also urged quick action to stop the import and use of chrysotile asbestos in Lao PDR in 2020, as proposed in the Ministry of Health approved plan. Lao would then join 66 other countries around the world who have banned chrysotile asbestos.

Today's workshop is hosted by the National Assembly of Lao's Committee of Social Cultural Affairs and the Ministry of Health. Speakers from the Lao Trade Union, Ministries of Health, Labour and Social Welfare and Industry and Commerce will join international scientists and independent experts in the workshop.

Speaking before the workshop, Mr Nick Miller Director of, the Asbestos Eradication Agency in Australia, expressed strong concern for future rates of asbestos related cancers that are likely among Laos workers in asbestos roof sheet factories, nearby communities and consumers who buy asbestos containing materials unless action is taken quickly.

'We are alarmed that Laos has in recent years been the heaviest user of chrysotile asbestos in the world per head of population, according to the Lao government's National Asbestos Profile. This suggests a big spike in lung cancers and some other asbestos diseases in coming decades unless chrysotile asbestos is banned. What is most concerning is that Laos is a recent large importer of the fibre - since 2009 imports increased rapidly, well after many other countries have already banned' he said. 'We used chrysotile asbestos extensively last century before we banned it in 2003. We are paying the price now. Australia now has an estimated 4000 deaths a year from asbestos diseases and its costing the country over \$500 million a year in medical costs and in remediation. Laos can minimize future costs like this by banning as soon as possible' he said.

Disturbingly, the meeting heard of the first two diagnosed cases of mesothelioma in Laos via a recent study of lung cancer patients by a PHD student at the Health Science University of Laos. Mesothelioma is a specific hard to detect cancer of the lining of the lung and other organs and can take 20-40 years to develop from when people are exposed to the chrysotile fiber. It's only known cause is exposure to asbestos. The workshop is supported by the Asbestos Safety Eradication Agency Australian Government, Australian Embassy Direct Assistance Program and Union Aid Abroad – APHEDA.

For Further Information:

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Nick Miller Director Asbestos Safety Eradication Agency Australia +61438304233





# Statement/Press Release

## URGENT APPEAL TO BRAZILIAN SUPREME COURT JUSTICES

Supreme Court  
Brasília, Brazil

August 22, 2019 Justices Supreme Court

Dear Ministers:

We understand that on September 4, 2019 the Supreme Court will issue its ruling regarding a request for an exemption to allow asbestos mining operations to recommence for export purposes in contravention of the landmark Supreme Court decision (2017) which declared the commercialization of asbestos unconstitutional throughout the country.

Earlier this year, members of the organizations listed above took part in the Asian Ban Asbestos (ABAN) Mission to Brazil to inform citizens – including the President of the Supreme Court Jose Antonio Deas Toffoli, Justice Rosa Webber, Federal Prosecutors, Federal Deputies, Federal Advisors, trade union leaders, union members, asbestos victims and municipal politicians – of the daily reality of asbestos use in India and Indonesia, formerly the largest markets for Brazilian asbestos, where asbestos is regarded as just another raw material and sacks of SAMA chrysotile asbestos fiber are supplied with warnings in Portuguese and English, languages not understood by many workers in India or Indonesia.<sup>1</sup>

Siti Kristina, a member of the ABAN delegation, is an Indonesian textile worker who contracted asbestosis as a result of occupational asbestos exposure. During her visit to Brasília, she informed Supreme Court Justices that:

“In Indonesia, there is widespread ignorance about asbestos; most workers do not have access to information about asbestos. Medical testing is expensive and out of reach for most workers so people live and die with asbestos conditions. This is the situation for many of my friends. They cannot be here so I am representing them when I call for solidarity from our brothers and sisters in Brazil who know very well about the human sacrifices demanded by asbestos stakeholders; our deaths are the price paid for their profits.”<sup>2</sup>

According to Pooja Gupta, Coordinator of the Indian Ban Asbestos Network, 120 people with asbestos-related diseases have been identified in one Indian city where Brazilian asbestos was being used; they had never worked with asbestos, but had been exposed to toxic dust brought home on the work clothes of family members.

Commenting on the impending Supreme Court decision, delegation leader, ABAN Coordinator Sugio Furuya said: “Brazil is the world’s fourth largest democracy and the Supreme Court is widely esteemed and respected throughout the world. We were grateful for the reception we received in April 2019 from the Supreme Court President and Justice Rosa Weber and would urge that the members of the Court reconfirm their 2017 historic verdict and uphold the right of all humanity to live a life free from deadly exposures to asbestos. The world is watching!”

Signed:

Sugio Furuya, on behalf of the Asian Ban Asbestos Network (ABAN), Japan<sup>3</sup>

Eliezar João de Souza, on behalf of the Associação Brasileira dos Expostos ao Amianto (ABREA), Brazil<sup>4</sup>

Firman Budiawan, on behalf of the Indonesian Ban Asbestos Network (INA-BAN), Indonesia<sup>5</sup>

Pooja Gupta, on behalf of the Indian Ban Asbestos Network (IBAN), India<sup>6</sup>

Laurie Kazan-Allen, on behalf of the International Ban Asbestos Secretariat (IBAS), UK<sup>7</sup>



## 50 million companies and 207 million workers urge governments to accelerate SDG action

The International Organisation of Employers (IOE) and the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) jointly call on governments to intensify their efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Progress is far too slow on meeting SDG targets according to current UN data. To advance global action, ITUC and the IOE appeal to governments to increase efforts on all SDGs, but also in particular on SDG 8. SDG 8 promotes sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.

Both IOE and ITUC want governments to shape labour markets that promote job creation and decent work together with responding to technology-driven future of work challenges.

IOE represents more than 50 million companies through its member network in 147 countries. ITUC is the world's largest trade union confederation representing 207 million workers. This joint call by the two organisations aims to raise alarm at the slow pace of government and multilateral action on meeting SDG targets especially linked to the world of work.

Little progress has been made on meeting SDG 8 targets, from increasing employment opportunities, especially for young workers; reducing informal employment, labour market inequality and gender discrimination; improving resource efficiency in consumption; promoting safe and secure working environments; and improving access to financial services.

Both organisations are willing and ready to engage further to ensure better support for the achievement of the SDGs with more ambition, based on their proven experience to improve jointly employment conditions and business environment. For this purpose, they need to engage more regularly in relevant global initiatives and have each requested UN Observer Status. IOE and ITUC will provide invaluable insight, largely absent until now, on how UN decisions can better impact the workplace.

The International Labour Organization has already welcomed the possibility of this application.

For more information, please contact the ITUC Press Department on +32 2 224 02 53 or by e-mail: [press@ituc-csi.org](mailto:press@ituc-csi.org)







## Hardlook: Silicosis Threat

Workers in ceramic factories fall prey to deadly disease caused by silica dust accumulation in their lungs while working but benefits don't reach them or their families as the factories allegedly disown them. The Indian Express takes stock of the situation in the sanitaryware hubs of Thangadh and Morbi

Shantaben Parmar reminds her daughter-in-law it was time to report for her shift at the ceramic kiln. Obliging, the 38-year-old daughter-in-law, who was widowed in August, mops the floor, has lunch and leaves for work at a ceramic factory on the outskirts of Thangadh, a town in Surendranagar district and known as the hub of sanitaryware industry. While working in one such ceramic factory, her husband Haresh Parmar had developed silicosis, an incurable lung disease which eventually led to his death.

Silicosis killed two ceramic workers in the past two months, Haresh being one of them. Activists claim it was the fourth silicosis death in Surendranagar this year and the eighth since 2016. Three others died of the same in Morbi over the past three years. Under-reporting of workers on rolls by the factories have denied the victims benefits of insurance cover by the Employees State Insurance Corporation (ESIC), say activists working with those affected. Lack of awareness on preventive measures is leading to deaths, they add.

Shantaben's son Haresh, 46, was riding pillion on his younger brother Mahesh's motorbike, to the community health centre (CHC) in Thangadh on August 23 when he vomitted blood and fell unconscious. He was declared dead on arrival at the health centre.

The death ended Haresh's struggle with silicosis, an occupational disease he was diagnosed with in 2014. His medical papers record that he developed silicosis due to exposure to silica dust while working in ceramic factories.

Haresh, who has left behind wife and sons — Deepak (18) and Umesh (12), was working as a glazer since 2000 and had worked at Uday Pottery even four days before his death. "As his health deteriorated, he stopped doing glazing work and instead took up painting of ceramic items," says Haresh's widow who has studied till Class VIII. Glazing is the process of spraying silica-based material like fritt and other chemicals on sanitaryware item to give it a lustrous surface. Spray dyeing of these chemical compound is mostly done manually because of irregular shapes of the sanitaryware products. However, glazing on tiles is mostly a mechanical process.

Silicosis is the result of accumulation of silica dust in the lungs. Workers in quarries and mines, spray dyeing units of ceramic factories and foundries where sandblasting is used are at high risk of developing this disease, says Jagdish Patel, director of Peoples' Training and Research Centre, a Vadodara-based NGO working on industrial safety and occupational health.

The disease affects the functioning of lungs, often leads to infections like tuberculosis (TB) and eventually causes death. Silicosis is preventable yet incurable. Patel, whose NGO has been fighting cases of silicosis-affected workers in Panchmahal, Khambhat and Jambusar, started working in Saurashtra recently.

He says they have identified at least 25 ceramic workers in Surendranagar and three in Morbi who are still battling silicosis. In Surendranagar, most of the deaths due to silicosis happened in Thangadh taluka. A majority of the silicosis patients in the district are concentrated in the ceramic town that has around 200 sanitaryware factories.

"Twelve workers have died due to the disease in recent years. Of the total 40 cases, 34 were from Thangadh, while six were reported from Morbi," says Patel.



## **No benefits**

Located in Amrapar area of Thangadh, Uday Pottery where Haresh worked for years, manufactures ceramic sanitaryware items, has disowned him. When he was diagnosed with silicosis, he got no benefits from the factory, his family members complain. Nor was he getting any social security benefits from the Employees State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) as he was not a subscriber to ESI Scheme. His family also did not get any kind of compensation after his death.

Sources say dozens of people work at Uday Pottery. However, factory owners say less than 10 persons are employed by them and, therefore, the ESI Act is not applicable to them. "No person named Haresh Parmar was working here. Neither are we aware of any person working here having died recently," Ronak Khatri, one of the partners of Uday Pottery said when The Indian Express asked about Haresh's death.

When asked about safety measures for workers in Uday Pottery, Khatri said that local federation of ceramic units would be in a better position to respond.

Less than three weeks after Haresh's death, his wife took up the same work of applying paint to ceramic products at another factory in the town. "I am not doing glazing work that my husband used to do. However, I am aware there is some risk in this work also. But what other work is available in Thangadh? I want to give decent education to my children. Now that my husband is not around and the source of income for my family has dried up, I have to work," the mother of two says, requesting anonymity for fear of losing her job.

## **Industry denies**

Mahendra Kushal (49), who had been working in ceramic factories in Thangadh for the past 10 years, was diagnosed with silicosis in July this year at the civil hospital and died on September 28.

Morbi and Thangadh is the largest ceramic cluster of India which produces around 90 per cent of ceramic products of the country. Thangadh is the cluster of sanitaryware product manufacturing. There are around 200 ceramic units producing sanitaryware items in Thangadh taluka. Panchal Ceramic Association Vikas Trust (PCAVT), a chamber of ceramic factories in Thangadh says that around 10,000 people work in these factories, but denies prevalence of silicosis.

Suresh Sompura, managing trustee of PCAVT, says, "Ceramic industry established in Thangadh in 1915 is among the oldest ceramic clusters in India. One silicosis case came to light two years ago. Many labourers here have the habit of consuming alcohol and don't give priority to nutrition. Silicosis cases are reported in big numbers from Godhra..."





## Hardlook: Silicosis Threat

In Morbi, silicosis is not an issue, claims Kirit Patel, president of Morbi Sanitaryware Association, an organisation of around 80 sanitaryware factories in that district where around 16,000 workers work.

“We use chemicals in liquid forms for spray dyeing and therefore dusting is not as high as, say, in cement factories. Whatever dusting is generated during spray dyeing is directed towards a chamber through exhaust fans. Plus, factory owners get medical screening of their employees done at every six months and silicosis has not emerged as a disease among them. However, ESI coverage is low as factories only near Morbi town are covered under ESI Act. In fact, we are protesting against the ESI Act as ESI Corporation is not providing any facilities though they are collecting contribution. They don’t have any hospital in Morbi,” Kirit Patel adds.

Sompura also alleged that some workers were trying to get themselves certified as silicosis patients “to get Rs 6,000 monthly pension”. According to him, “Glazing booths in factories now have exhaust fans that fans suck up the harmful dust. These fans have been there at least for 15 years. Glazers also mask their face with cloth while working.” Workers contend that not every glazing booth in factories in Thangadh have exhaust fans.

Sompura concedes that of the 10,000 people working in Thangadh, only about 2,500 have ESI cover because “not all the factories fall in the area that comes under the ESI Act. Only Thangadh and Amrapar are covered under it”, he says.

### Officials speak

Deepak Kumar Chourasia, deputy director at ESIC regional office in Ahmedabad says no silicosis case has been referred to them from among subscribers in Thangadh and Morbi. “No silicosis case has been brought to our notice from Thangadh or Morbi. But we are ready to help people. They can contact our branch office in Wankaner or to me,” he says.

Chourasia adds ESIC inspectors are no longer authorised to visit factories located in areas not notified under ESI Act. “The government has restrained inspectors from surveying factories. Regularly survey is not allowed of late,” he adds.

Officers of labour and employment department of state government also plead ignorance about silicosis cases. “I am not aware if 34 cases of silicosis have been reported from Thangadh. Two-three cases were reported earlier. We are directing factory owners to do medical check up of their workers regularly. They had conducted medical camps two-and-a-half-years ago. But they are not doing it regularly. As a safety measure, we are suggesting factory owners to install common ducting and scrubbing system (to reduce air pollution inside factories),” says BK Patel, assistant director of Industrial Safety and Health in Surendranagar.

See more at : <https://mail.google.com/mail/u/1/?pli=1#inbox/FMfcgxwDrwtwql->



## Vaping-Induced Lung Injury

A number of environmental agents are known to cause acute or subacute inhalation injury to the lung parenchyma. Indeed, emergency response guidelines for medical personnel describe toxic inhalation pneumonitis as a heterogeneous group of chemically induced injuries to the lung parenchyma as well as to the upper respiratory tract. The manifestations of such injury depend on the characteristics (e.g., solubility, composition) and the amount of the toxic compound or compounds inhaled.

Much of what we know about toxic inhalation syndromes derives from high levels of exposure in either occupational settings (e.g., exposure to metals, solvents, acids, bases, ozone, phosgene, or chlorine dioxide) or community settings where fires or accidents may occur (e.g., factory explosions, derailments of chemical-bearing train cars, and overexposure to household cleaning agents). Depending on the type of chemical agent and the amount of material inhaled, patients may experience symptoms ranging from minor respiratory tract discomfort to acute airway injury and damage to the parenchyma with pneumonitis, alveolar edema, respiratory failure, and death. A common pathophysiological pathway includes inflammation, edema of airways with epithelial sloughing, alveolar inflammation, and edema with hypoxemia.

Now report in the *Journal* a cluster of cases from Illinois and Wisconsin in which patients presented with acute, severe respiratory distress after using e-cigarette (vaping) products. Two letters also published in the *Journal* add further support to vaping-induced respiratory distress: a 6-case cluster from Utah and a report of imaging changes seen in a range of cases.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported in late August 2019 that at least 215 acute, severe respiratory distress cases have been identified, spanning 25 states, and as of this writing at least 2 deaths have occurred. Although more inves-

tigation is needed to determine the vaping agent or agents responsible, there is clearly an epidemic that begs for an urgent response. The cases demonstrate a heterogeneous collection of pneumonitis patterns that include acute eosinophilic pneumonia, organizing pneumonia, lipoid pneumonia, diffuse alveolar damage and acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS), diffuse alveolar hemorrhage, hypersensitivity pneumonitis, and the rare giant-cell interstitial pneumonitis. Though the precise manifestations of the respiratory injury may be diverse, there are clues to the precipitants that warrant attention.

About 80% of the persons who vaped and became ill reported having used both nicotine products and tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) or cannabidiol (CBD) products. Active infection (which would include live bacterial contamination of e-cigarette fluids) does not appear to explain the clinical presentation, but acute toxic lung injury does seem to fit. Mixing of multiple ingredients with primary compounds and potential contaminants may result in *in vitro* (or even *in vivo*) production of new agents that may be toxic. E-cigarette fluids have been shown to contain at least six groups of potentially toxic compounds: nicotine, carbonyls, volatile organic compounds (such as benzene and toluene), particles, trace metal elements according to flavor, and bacterial endotoxins and fungal glucans.<sup>8</sup> Two flavorants alone, diacetyl and 2,3-pentanediol, have been shown to perturb gene expression pathways related to cilia and cytoskeletal processes in normal human bronchial epithe

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## Asbestos: a bloody anniversary

Twenty years ago of August, the use of asbestos was banned in Britain — but still thousands die every year from contact with the deadly mineral, writes LAURIE KAZAN-ALLEN

AUGUST 24, 2019 marked the 20th anniversary of the British ban on asbestos, a substance which remains the cause of the country's worst-ever occupational epidemic, killing thousands every year.

The Asbestos Prohibitions regulations signed by deputy prime minister John Prescott were implemented against a backdrop of a landmark World Trade Organisation dispute over a French asbestos ban and aggressive lobbying by British and international vested interests.

Legislation was laid before Parliament a month after the European Union had adopted similar legislation and during the dog days of the summer parliamentary recess.

The British legislation had come 100 years after a British Factory inspector had first warned of the “evil effects of asbestos dust,” and decades too late for generations of workers whose lives had been sacrificed for the profits of asbestos companies such as Turner and Newall Ltd., the Cape Asbestos Co. Ltd. and others. The tragic legacy of Britain's love affair with asbestos continues to haunt the country today with widespread contamination of public buildings, commercial premises, private residences and social housing.

MPs have categorised the asbestos remaining in most of the country's schools as a “national scandal.” Asbestos waste dumped decades ago on sites near derelict factories remain a blight to urban development; the former 72-acre Rochdale site of the Turner Brothers Asbestos Company — once the largest asbestos textile factory in the world — remains un-remediated and undeveloped because of the industrial pollution.

The human cost of the asbestos industry's profits are measured annually by the Health and Safety Executive which noted in July, 2019, that the number of deaths from the signature cancer caused by asbestos exposure, mesothelioma, were 2,595 (in 2016) and 2,523 (in 2017); when other asbestos-related deaths are added, the total of avoidable asbestos deaths per year were over 5,000. Despite what the Guardian termed a national “crisis,” the Tory government remains disinclined to take any action on the hazardous conditions in schools.

The anxiety this situation causes both parents and staff is understandable as is their outrage over the prioritisation of asbestos removal from the Kensington Palace residence of the Duke of Cambridge, paid for by British taxpayers, and the high-profile attention given to asbestos contamination of the Palace of Westminster. Global asbestos dealers based in Britain continue to profit from the commercial exploitation of asbestos using legal loopholes such as limited partnerships which allow them to operate behind the scenes.

In 2015, almost half of all the asbestos mined in Russia — the world's biggest asbestos producer — was traded by British-registered companies or businesses associated with them including Astrade Solutions LP, registered at a Leith address since 2013, and Minerals Global Trading LLP, formerly based at an industrial estate in North London.

It seems that as long as there is money to be made, Britain is willing to provide a favourable climate for even the most heinous of businesses to flourish.

Laurie Kazan-Allen is coordinator of the International Ban Asbestos Secretariat and the former editor of the British Asbestos Newsletter.





## 945 workers lost lives due to workplace accidents in 2019 in Bangladesh



A total of 945 workers lost lives and 266 got serious injury due to hazardous work and workplace accidents during January to December 2019 in Bangladesh. Bangladesh Occupational Safety, Health and Environment Foundation (OSHE) conducted the survey and came up with the statistics at a press conference in Dhaka. The survey has been prepared based on published reports in leading newspapers and own sources of OSHE Foundation.

According to the reports, 269 workers were lost lives in formal sector, while 676 others in informal sector. The highest 294 workers lost lives in transport sector, 156 in construction sector and 98 at Agriculture sector. Besides, 49 death victims are Day Laborer, while 49 were fishermen.

OSHE foundation recommended to strengthen monitoring mechanism on workplace safety, enforcement of Labour Act, Formation of safety committee at factory level, Establishment of Health and Safety Unit in the Ministry of Labour and Employment, Increase Institutional Capacity of Boiler Inspection Office, Introduce provision for compensation to missing workers due to workplace accident and implementation of National Occupational Safety and Health Policy .

### **22 killed and 23 were critically injured in Ship-breaking sector**

Ship breaking industry is one of the most highly risky industries in Bangladesh. Ship breaking activities in Bangladesh is concentrated in Sitakunda (Bhatiary to Kumira), just north of Chittagong city on the Bay of Bengal. Working in the ship breaking yards is a very dangerous job, which involves many human health risks.

A Large number of people facing accident while working in this industry every year. Some of them were loss their lives, many of them were injured and permanently defamed. The field level information collector of OSHE is found that in the last year 22 were killed and 23 were injured which is higher than the previous year.



## Samsung Elec avoids disclosure of working environment report following court ruling

Samsung Electronics Co. does not have to open its sensitive work environment-related information to the public after a South Korean court has ruled in favor of the company in a lawsuit filed by the tech giant against the government.

Suwon District Court ordered Gyeonggi District Employment and Labor Office under the Ministry of Employment and Labor to cancel a decision to disclose information on Samsung Electronics' working environment measurement division, processing, and operations location, siding with the company in a lawsuit raised by the company against the ministry.

The court cited a lack of strong proof that "people's rights to know" of details about Samsung Electronics' semiconductor processing, manufacturing process, and fundamental operation location is more important than the benefits of the profit-making plaintiff that should be protected from competitors.

The court added that it also took account of the trade, industry and energy ministry's concern about any negative impact of the leakage of controversial and sensitive operational information not only on Samsung Electronics but also on the country's economy.

Samsung Electronics launched the latest lawsuit early last year when its former semiconductor factory workers suffering from leukemia or lymphoma cancer as well as families of ex-employees who died from the diseases called on the company to hand over the company's working environment report that could be used in proving a correlation between the work environment and the diseases.



A working environment report, drawn by a company, measures and evaluates the level of workers' exposure to toxic substances at a workplace. The report must be submitted to the regional office of employment and labor every six months.

The employment and labor ministry decided to disclose part of the information on the report but Samsung Electronics filed for an administrative trial with the central administrative appeals commission and requested for cancellation of the ministry's decision, citing confidentiality in the information that includes types and amount of toxic substances, measurement position, and toxic material removing technology. It also filed a lawsuit and requested for suspension of its execution.

The central administrative appeals commission accepted part of Samsung Electronics' appeals in July last year, and ordered the ministry to disclose only part of the information.

By Ji Hong-goo and Lee Eun-joo





## Silicosis Victim Haresbhai Parmar

Haresbhai Parmar, 46 worked for 20 years in a local ceramic unit in Than, Gujarat. He was a glaze worker. Glazing is a process to give luster but it takes away shine from the worker's life. In this process, the specially prepared liquid is sprayed on the object. it exposes the worker to silica. Over a period worker contract silicosis - fatal lung disease. He was diagnosed first by Medical College in Ahmedabad in 2014. Later the diagnosis was confirmed by Civil Hospital, Rajkot.

Haresbhai Parmar died on August 2019. He vomited blood at home and was rushed to local Public hospital (community health center; CHC) where he was declared "brought dead." When Jagdish Patel visited in July he invited them to have the meeting in his home. He and his wife Rekhaben were both very cordial. Several workers gathered at him home for the meeting. Than is a small town with 180 units of ceramic/pottery. Sanitary ware is the main product here. Though the ESI Act is applicable to several units, most workers are not covered under the Act and also Haresbhai. He is survived by his widow Rekhaben and two sons Dipak (18) and Umesh (12).



## 63 Year Old Victim's Life: Fetal Minamata Disease Case

AI attended the UN Conference on the Human Environment at Stockholm with my mother to draw support from the international community in 1972 and recently the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury (COP1) at Geneva, Switzerland in 2017. Minamata survivors are facing difficulties in every aspect of life such as walking and digesting food, and I also feel my body getting weaker and weaker every day. I recall how strong my mom was and I urge every survivor to A testimony of Minamata disease victim Presenter: Sato, Japan



I was born in a fishing village in 1955 and my father was a fisherman. I have 6 sisters. 3 of my husband's family members are also Minamata disease survivors and the condition of his mother is most serious. The cause of the disease was the waste water discharged from Chisso. However, the company has not taken any proper actions to fix this problem. My husband became the representative of the plaintiff of the trial against the company in 2007. The Kumamoto District Court approved 3 of the plaintiff as Minamata disease patients but 5 of them were rejected. My husband and I are still fighting to disclose the damage of mercury poisoning and will continue our





# Case Study

## Sufferings of Pravin Kumar : A silicosis Victim

He is Pravin Parmar, 34. He worked for different ceramic factories in Than for more than 15 years as a glazer. He had complaints of hemoptysis in June 2019. he went to a private hospital in Rajkot where after CT scan of thorax he was diagnosed suffering from Silicosis with Progressive Massive Fibrosis (PMF). No comorbidity was found. He was advised to stop working in Ceramic. He is now bedridden and has to be on Oxygen. He reported that he has to spend Rs.2,000/- a month on Oxygen. He cannot attend duty and hence has no means of income. Has 3 children - 2 daughters aged 13 and 10 and son aged 5. Government of Gujarat has no policy for rehabilitation of silicosis victims. National Human Rights Commission recommended to prepare a policy and in spite



## Bharat Mohan Parmar

Seen in the picture is Bharat Mohan Parmar, 46. He worked in Ceramic unit in Than (Gujarat) as glazer for 15 years, got exposed to silica dust and got silicosis. Since the last 3-4 years, he has developed disability which does not allow him to work anymore. He has no income. His brother is helping him, He has 5 children- 4 daughters and one son. He is breathless but has high spirit. He is our greatest supporter of our work in Than. He wants to do whatever he can for the silicosis victims. He wrote an appeal to the Chief Minister, Gujarat state to help him. He has received a reply that the Government of Gujarat has no scheme to help silicosis victims. ESI Act is applicable to units in Than but Bharat was not given coverage under this Act. Had he been covered he would have claimed disablement benefit for silicosis. However, we will be working to get him the benefits under this Act.



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