



## 5 boiler explosions in 3 months

Two workers were killed and nine others were burnt seriously in boiler explosions at five factories between January and March this year. Some 11 workplace explosions and fires have occurred during this period. Three rice mills, a steel mill and a jute mill witnessed boiler explosions. Two shoe factories, a furniture factory, an engineering workshop, a fuel filling station, and two restaurants witnessed fire. There is allegation that boilers were expired and also have no fire fighting equipments.

## Workplace accidents kill 294 workers in three months

294 workers (68 in formal industry and 226 in informal industry) were killed and 101 workers (45 in formal industry and 56 in informal industry) were injured in different workplace accidents from 1st of January to 31st March 2017.

OSHE foundation has revealed quarterly workplace accident report after analysing fifteen prominent national dailies and gathering field level information from its staff during the said period.

According to the report, the highest 142 workers were killed in transport sector, 40 day-labourers, 27 were killed in construction sector, 16 mining workers, 9 agriculture workers, 6 garment workers, 6 domestic workers and 5 shipbreaking workers were killed.

The major causes found for these deaths and injuries are road accident, landslide, factory fire, electrocution, fall from height and collapse of establishments.

## 1695 construction workers killed in last 12 years

A total of 1695 workers were killed and 1618 others were injured in various workplace accidents in construction sector during last 12 years.

The survey conducted by OSHE foundation, was prepared based on news ran by 15 leading national dailies and information gathered by OSHE investigation team starting from 2005 to 2016.

According to survey report, 147 workers were killed during 2016. Mostly of them were informal workers while only 6 were working at formal sector.

Major causes found for these deaths and injuries are fall from height, electrocution, suffocation and establishment, roof or wall collapse.

## Tampaco fire victims get humanitarian aid from OSHE foundation

Specialized labour institution Bangladesh Occupational Safety, Health and Environment Foundation (OSHE) distributed financial aid to the victims of Tampaco Foils Limited on 13 March at Habiganj.



The distribution program was organized at Habiganj district administrations' conference room with the presence of deputy commissioner Sabina Alam as chief guest.

The program was also attended by additional deputy commissioner (general) Md. Emran Hossain, OSHE foundation executive director A R Choudhury Repon and OSHE vice chairperson Dr. S M Morshed. Sabina Alam handed over the financial help and special food voucher to the victims who were victimized at Tampaco factory fire and collapse on 10 September last year at Gazipur's Tongi.

22 deceased families and injured workers got Tk 10, 000 allowance for medical treatment and food cost from OSHE foundation. 41 workers were killed in the factory fire and 43 others injured in the factory blaze and collapse.

## 180 workers killed at shipbreaking yards in 12 years

A total of 180 workers lost their lives and 250 others were injured at shipbreaking yards in last 12 years due to unsafe workplace. At least 15 shipbreaking workers were killed every year.

The statistics was revealed in a survey report which was formulated based on monitoring 15 national dailies and OSHE sources from 2005 to 2016. At this time, 430 workplace accidents took place.

Five workers lost their lives and six others were injured at shipbreaking yards in 3 months due to occupational accidents. The survey report was formulated based on monitoring 15 national dailies and OSHE sources from January to March.

Workers casualties have been occurring as proper safety measures have not been taken yet. According to OSHE's investigation team, within the last 3 months of 2017 (January, February and March), 5 shipbreaking workers have been killed and 6 others have been victimized with severe injury.

According to the survey, 23 shipbreaking workers were killed and 31 were injured severely in 2016. 54 workplace accidents have taken place within the year. The main reason behind the accidents are fall from height, hit by iron bar and gas cylinder explosion.

## International Women's Day observed

40th International Women's Day was observed by OSHE foundation calling for end to violence against women and discrimination at workplaces. OSHE organised different programs including seminar, discussions and human chains in the capital on 8 March to mark the day.



'Sensitization and Awareness Raising Seminar on Gender Equity' was hosted at Union Multipurpose Hall at Mirpur where chairperson Saki Rezwana was present as chief discussant. She said 89 women workers lost their lives throughout 2016 due to workplace accidents and violence while 36 were killed at 2015. She added that more than 20 lakhs homebased workers are working inside very unsafe workplaces. The suppliers and buyers are responsible for homebased workers' safety and health problem. The government should take effective measure by recognizing them as workers. This recognition will empower them to claim their due rights, compensation and living wage.

OSHE chairperson said unending working-hour, low wage, maternal health complication, sexual violence and poor transportation are the major cause of violation of working women's rights.



Meanwhile, OSHE's 'Decent Work for Homebased Workers at Garments and Textile Supply Chains' project formed a human chain in Mirpur demanding living wage, weekly holiday and maternal leave for homebased workers. To ensure women-friendly workplace, speakers urged the concerned authorities to enact a sexual violence protection law in line with the High Court directives. The programs was participated by different labour rights activists, trade unionists and home-based workers from different part of the city. A committee was formed at the program to protect violence against women.



# RIGHT TO INFORMATION

# Workers have the right to know



## Workplace accidents kill 27 construction workers in three months

Some 27 construction workers were killed in workplace accidents in the first three months (1st of January to 31st March 2017) this year. Most of the dead workers were working at informal sector. OSHE foundation has revealed quarterly workplace accident report after analysing fifteen prominent national dailies and gathering field level information from its staff during the said period.

## First aid training for shipbreaking workers

First aid training for shipbreaking workers was held at OSHE Shipbreaking Workers Training and Welfare Centre situated at Chittagong's Bhatiary on 21 March 2017. Senior station officer Abdullah Harun Pasha and officer Md. Mamun Khan from Kumira Fire service and Civil Defence Station conducted the training. OSHE program manager Taherul Islam inaugurated the program while labour leader Abdur Rahim Master was present. The training topics covered introduction to first aid, observation of injuries, initial steps for patients' remedy and emergency rescue process for minimising health hazards. A total of 24 participants took part in the training.



## Orientation on Right to Information (RTI) for rights activists

An orientation program on Right to Information for rights activists was organised by OSHE foundation on 13 January at Mirpur in the capital.

Trade union leaders from Bangladesh Free Trade Union Congress (BFTUC), Federation of Garments Workers (FGW), Chunarughat Krishi Shromik Union, Madhabpur Krishi Shromik Union, group leaders of Homebased Workers, representative of wastepickers' community took part in the orientation.

OSHE chairperson Saki Rezwana inaugurated the program. OSHE program officer Asad Uddin, communication officer Abdur Rashid and assistant project coordinator Tasmin Jahan facilitated the program.

The program included multimedia discussions on overview of RTI act, Labour Law in relation to RTI and hands-on exercise in the use of RTI application form to facilitate participants. Participants learned about the procedure of seeking information, how to contact with the designated officer,

how to fill application form, how to send it, what is the role of designated officer and how can he/she perform in line with the RTI Act 2009. They also learned about the implications or prospects in relation between RTI Act 2009 and Labour Act 2006, how seeking information from labour rights related offices can bring fruitful result to meet workers demand.



They knew how RTI Act can be a tool to bring accountability and transparency in the factory level where many workers are deprived of rights, decent work, safe workplace, appointment letter, health support and living wages.

The participants received such kind of orientation for the first time. They appreciated the initiatives and acknowledged that, they will be highly benefited from it. They suggested OSHE to organize such training engaging more root level workers, unionists, labour rights activists and labour organisations. They believe such orientation will help workers decrease deprivation of their due rights by seeking information from the relevant offices.

## ToT on labour law for shipbreaking workers

Training of Trainers (ToT) on labour law for ship breaking workers was held at OSHE Shipbreaking Workers Training and Welfare Centre situated at Chittagong's Bhatiary on 17-18 March 2017.



Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments (DIFE) inspector Md Shah Alam, OSHE program manager Taherul Islam Taher and program officer Md. Shazzad kabir Bhuiyan conducted the training sessions. OSHE program manager Taherul Islam inaugurated the program while labour leader Abdur Rahim Master was present.

The training topics covered introduction to Bangladesh Labour Act 2006 and Labour Rules 2015, rights for shipbreaking workers, steps of curriculum design, training methodology and teaching aids, and introduction to safety committee. A total of 24 participants took part in the training.

## ToT on occupational safety and health for shipbreaking workers

Training of Trainers (ToT) on occupational safety and health for shipbreaking workers was held at OSHE Shipbreaking Workers Training and Welfare Centre situated at Chittagong's Bhatiary on 19-20 March 2017. OSHE program manager Taherul Islam Taher and program officer Md. Shazzad kabir Bhuiyan conducted the training sessions. OSHE program manager Taherul Islam inaugurated the program while labour leader Abdur Rahim Master was present.

The training topics covered identification of risk and danger at shipbreaking yards, precautions for hazardous work and lethal materials, steps of curriculum design, training methodology and teaching aids, and introduction to safety committee. A total of 24 participants took part in the training.



## Rights activists vowed to resist gender-based violence at workplaces

Global and local labour rights organisations vowed to resist gender-based violence at workplaces through conducting social dialogue and awareness campaign in the country. OSHE foundation organised a day-long south-south exchange meeting at Daily Star Centre on 25 January 2017.



Through this collaboration program Dutch Federation of Trade Unions-FNV, IndustriALL, Fair Wear Foundation, OSHE foundation, BILS, BLF, AWAJ Foundation and Karmojibi Nari joined their hands to eliminate gender based violence at every industrial sectors in Bangladesh. Focusing standing against gender based violence at export, domestic and homebased workers at RMG sector, OSHE, BILS, BLF, IndustriALL, KN and AWAJ will promote social dialogue and awareness campaign through visiting Tirupur of Tamilnadu in India to experience Indian trade unions' practice in this regard. OSHE foundation chairperson Saki Rezwana presided the program while FNV policy officer Wilma Roos, FNV regional coordinator Prabhu Rajendran, IndustriALL regional secretary Apoorva Kaiwar, SAVE India's Geeta Menon, Jahangirnagar University Anthropology professor Ainoon Naher, BILS executive director Syed Sultan Uddin Ahmmed, labour leader Nazma Akter, KN executive director Rokeya Rafique, BLF executive director Ashraf Uddin, Fair Wear Foundation country representative Bablur Rahman and Indian trade unionists and rights activists were present among others.



## Homebased workers' project Aspiring journey to be united

While marginalized homebased workers' fate are darkening with lingering deprivation of decent work and living wage, OSHE's homebased workers' project is believed to be the platform where all deprived will get into a safeguard that intend to protect them from all disparity through strengthening their collective voice and social dialogue.

OSHE's 'Decent Work for Homebased Workers at Garment and Textile Supply Chain' (HBWs) project believes that marginalization of certain groups within the community may lead to social unrest.

To flourish the homebased workers by strengthening their collective voice, HBWs project recently formed several field-level meetings in the capital.

As part of the initiative, a field level meeting was organized at the city's Jatrabari area on 9 February.

### 'Do you have anti sexual harassment committees at factory level?'

The question raised in a meeting while a women rights activist's team from India visited OSHE headquarter in Dhaka on 27 January to exchange and gather experiences of workplace violence against women in the country. The team comprising Geeta Menon, Mary Viyakula and Felix Jeyakumar sat with OSHE officials led by OSHE chairperson Saki Rezwana to discuss further about the present practice and working condition of women at work. Geeta Menon from Stree Jagruti Samiti asked whether Bangladeshi factories have any sexual harassment committee to protect workplace violence against female workers or not. Responding to her query, Saki Rezwana replied that safety committee is being formed after continuous pressure from rights bodies but functional level is very poor. 'But an anti-sexual harassment committee has not established at all workplaces despite high-court guidelines to form such committees,' she added. Discussions on trade union registration and operation, unionization of agriculture workers, workers' social security, domestic workers rights and their legal safeguard, implementation of high-court guidelines and health issues took place.

OSHE chairperson and national coordinator of HBWs project Saki Rezwana visited the meeting while project coordinator Mocklasur Rahman and assistant project coordinator Kaniz Rabeya were present.

Saki Rezwana explained the aims and objectives of the project and how they will be benefited through this.

Project Coordinator Mocklasur Rahman shared the future plan after fulfilling the target activities. The meeting was moderated by homebased workers' group leader Lajju Begum.

After finishing the meeting they visited nearby small factories to talk with some handicraft and ballpress workers.



### OSHE team members join ILO workshop

A team of OSHE foundation took part in a workshop conducted by International Labour Organization (ILO) country office in the capital on 7 March 2017. The team comprising OSHE project coordinator Arifa As Alam, program officer Asad Uddin, assistant project coordinator Tasmin Jahan and communication officer Abdur Rashid participated in the workshop on 'Due diligence for responsible business conduct: from theory to practice'. Tandiwe Gross from the Bureau for Workers' Activities at the ILO, Geneva, delivered a presentation on OECD Due Diligence Guidance and structured group discussions on due diligence expectations towards global buyers. A group work was conducted collecting concrete examples of situations in which global brands have contributed to violations of labour rights in garment factories in Bangladesh.

## 33 out of 101 workers affected by Asbestosis

OSHE foundation has conducted Asbestos Lung Disease Check-up camps for shipbreaking workers at Sitakunda in Chittagong. 33 out of 101 workers are affected by asbestosis, an incurable disease caused by breathing the mineral in the form of dust or fumes. Of them, eight had 60% lung disabilities from the disease. OSHE came up with the disclosure while presenting the health survey at Dhaka Reporters Unity on 2 February. Dr Murlidhar presented the findings with OSHE chairperson Saki Rezwana in the chair.

101 rank and file shipbreaking workers and workers belonging to different unions with more than 10 years exposure complaining of chest pain, breathlessness or malaise were called by OSHE to attend the medical camps.

The camps were held in 2 phases 26-30 July 2016 and 28-29 January 2017. The team of 5 doctors and 3 research assistants led by international asbestos specialist Dr Murlidhar conducted the medical research.

The doctors were community health clinicians Dr Ahad and Dr Shubro, Dr Musnat, Dr Rashid and Dr Tapan. The non-medical staff-Laila Siddiqua, Shazzad kabir and Saiful Mahmud.



OSHE recommended establish a govt-run specialized hospital to diagnose and cure Asbestosis, training for doctors and nurses, and medicine support for shipbreaking workers with proper treatment.



SEWA met DSCC chief waste management officer MK Bakhtiar, additional chief waste management officer Khandokar Millatul Islam and assistant engineer (waste) AHM Abdullah Harun.



## Indian team SEWA calls on DSCC officials

An Indian technical team Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA) on 24 January called on the Dhaka South City Corporation officials in Dhaka for sharing experience of waste management and recycling process. The team met DSCC chief waste management officer MK Bakhtiar, additional chief waste management officer Khandokar Millatul Islam and assistant engineer (waste) AHM Abdullah Harun. The four-member team of waste recycling experts led by India's one of the largest

waste-recycling producers Shri Gitanjali Mahila SEWA Industrial Stationary Producers Cooperative Limited representative Minal Trivedi. They visited OSHE headquarter to learn about the wastepickers project which provides OSH support to wastepickers. OSHE invited the team expecting that it would inspire Bangladeshi experts involving with the waste management process through exchanging best practices of India's Ahmedabad.



## Bangladesh Occupational Safety, Health & Environment Foundation (OSHE)

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## Leadership Training for organizing homebased workers

OSHE's homebased workers project organized a leadership training for field level organizer with the aim of developing organizing and social dialogue capacity and flourishing unity among the workers.

The two days long training was held at U-Multipurpose Hall at Mirpur in the capital.



A total number of 20 organizers including 18 women under the project titled 'Decent Work for Homebased Workers at Textile and Garment Supply Chain' participated in the training.

OSHE chairperson Saki Rezwana inaugurated the program and briefed participants about the objectives of the training.

In her session she presented the current scenario of working women facing various workplace problems and risks.

The training components were among others- fighting workplace challenges, elimination of violence against women with effecting VAW committees, importance of being united, team building and mobilization strategies.

Project coordinators Md Mocklasur Rahman, Arifa As Alam and assistant project coordinators Nusrat Jahan, and Kaniz Rabeya facilitated the sessions.

The participants also took part in a session where they framed workplan of their respective areas for next three months. The workshop ended up with a commitment to fulfill their target what they mentioned in the workplan.

## Message

Bangladesh has made good progress in enhancing workplace safety in the RMG sector. But other sectors are being deprived of safety at workplace. According to OSHE survey, 2 workers were killed and 9 others were burnt severely as boilers of 5 separate factories of jute mill, rice mill and steel mill went off. Regulatory bodies should pay more attention to end these disasters.

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