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## BILS research report demanding to ensure the rights of migrant workers



*BILS Advisory Council Member, Israfil Alam, MP, Presided the Roundtable*

BILS in association with Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) organised a research report presentation and discussion meeting on "Review of Migration-Related Policies and Laws: Perspective of Human Rights,

Labour Rights and Women Rights" on March 10, 2020 at The Azimur Rahman Conference Hall, Daily Star Centre, Dhaka.

BILS Advisory Council Member Israfil Alam, MP, Presided and BILS

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## Workplace Situation Report 2019

Considering the workplace situation and labour market, BILS publishes a survey report on the basis of news published in different national newspapers regarding workers' unrest, violence

and workplace accident. Regarding this, analysing the workers condition at workplace in 2019, workers' unrest in RMG sector has become the crucial fact. We tried to highlight the issues in

Workplace Accident (Last Five Years)		
Year	Death	Injured
2019	1200	695
2018	1020	482
2017	784	517
2016	699	703
2015	363	382
<b>Total</b>	<b>4066</b>	<b>2779</b>

*Source: BILS Survey based on national dailies*

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## **Demands to ensure the rights of migrant workers**

(After Page-1)

Joint Secretary General Dr. Wajedul Islam Khan moderate the programme. Ministry of expatriates and to Expatriates' Welfare Additional Secretary Khadiza Begum was present as chief guest. Manusher Jonno Foundation Executive Director Shahin Anam present as a special guest and BILS Secretary General Nazrul Islam Khan delivered welcome speech. while Sramik Karmachari Oikya Parishad (SKOP) Joint Coordinator Naimul Ahsan Jewel, ILO Chief Technical Advisor Laetitia Weibel Roberts, Warbe Development Foundation Chairman Syed Saiful Haque, National Domestic Women Workers Union Advisor Abul Hossain, BILS Executive Council Member Abdul Wahed, Shakil Akhter Chowdhury, Umma Hasan Jhalmal, Pulak Ranjan Dhar, BLAST Deputy Director Adv. Borkat Ali, Solidarity Center Bangladesh Program Officer Adv. Nazrul Islam were present. SKOP affiliated and BILS associated national trade union federations leader, Working civil society organisation on Migration Workers, Govt. Official, Researcher, Private organisation and media personel were present at the program.

Speakers at a discussion said the government needs to recognise intermediaries, locally known as "dalal", by bringing changes to laws to hold them accountable for malpractices in the country's labour migration sector. They said the intermediaries are mostly responsible for irregularities and high migration costs and their presence is rampant at different tiers of the recruitment process, but inadequate government initiatives have left them unaccountable.

Presenting a research paper, BILS Deputy Director (Research) Manirul Islam said that, International policy instruments are very broad on labour migration as well as have established comprehensive policy guidelines to address labour rights, human rights and women rights. Out of ten (10)

international policy instruments are reviewed, eight (8) have given particular emphasis to ensure just and favourable condition of work. At least, five (5) of the policy instruments have covered comprehensively the right to trade union. Protection of irregular migrants is also specified. A politically agreed comprehensive global governance framework to effectively address labour migration is though missing. Numerous conventions and recommendations are obtained internationally, but none of them is a binding treaty. The status of ratification of the international conventions/treaties is one of the lowest. The status of implementation of internationally agreed labour and human rights is rather poor particularly in the Middle-Eastern labour receiving countries. Instead, they have developed their own system such as 'kafala system' to govern labour migrants in which workers mostly perform as bonded labourers. As such, labour rights have gone a restricted one. The right to trade union exists only in paper and is never a practice.

Bangladesh is the sixth highest labour sending country in the world. Remittance earning is an essential contributor to the GDP. It was desirable that Bangladesh has a proactive and an ideal migration policy regime to follow. National migration policy regime is though reviewed followed reactive responses to crisis management and is comparatively incomplete and disorganised. It is only in 2006 that the migration policy is formulated first. Until then, there were no defined set goal and target to act on and to achieve. It was basically an act (framed in British India in 1922) and an ordinance (came in force in 1982) driven control and governance of labour migration. A second new policy is formulated in 2016. This policy is reportedly a more comprehensive one. Apart from this, a number of supplementary Acts and Rules also are formulated and enacted onward 2006. The Overseas Employment and Migration Act 2013, the Prevention and Suppression of

Human Trafficking Act 2012, the Wage Earners Welfare Board Act 2018 and the Overseas Employment and Migration Management Rules 2017 are of them worth mentioning. Our review further suggests that there is persistent serious inconsistency and incoherence between and among different policy instruments. Mostly, Acts and Rules are formulated independently and followed the 1982's ordinance. Objectives and directives are set in the policies, not smart enough. Authority and accountability are not defined properly in most of the cases. 'Labour rights' is a poor focus. The 'right to TU' is a lost case. Policy/law implementation is rather poor.

Proper implementation of policies and agreements can end sufferings of female migrant workers, said BILS Secretary General Nazrul Islam Khan. He alleged those who are entitled to implement the laws lack the capacity to do so.

Laetitia Weibel Roberts, said her organisation has been providing technical support to the Bangladesh government to ensure safe and orderly migration.

Addressing the event as chief guest, Khadiza Begum said the ministry is committed to bringing changes in the laws and modernise those in the changing context of labour migration sector.

Presence of the intermediaries could be seen from rural areas to the offices of recruitment agents in Dhaka, said Israfil Alam, MP chairman of Bangladesh National Parliamentarians' Caucus on Migration and Development. However, they do not have any accountability. They neither exist in law nor do they abide by any code of conduct or policy, he said while chairing the discussion.

Israfil said although they have repeatedly urged recruitment agents to provide intermediaries with identity cards, the agents did not comply with such requests. "The government also failed to hold them accountable."



## International Women's Day observed by securing Rights Project



*Participants at the event*

BILS with the support of Oxfam Bangladesh organised a half day event of the occasion of International Women's Day 2020 on March 15, 2020 at Monipuripara, Tejgaon, Dhaka.

An art competition was organised for the school going children, along with a discussion meeting with the community people to raise awareness regarding domestic workers' rights and a street drama focusing on the

vulnerabilities and claims of rights of the domestic workers.

The programme was presided by local community leader Mahfuzul Alam, while General Secretary of Monipuripara Welfare Society Sajjadul Islam was present as chief guest. DWRN Member Promila Podder moderated the programme. Among others, Md. Yousuf Al-Mamun, project

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## Periodic pre-departure training held



*Participants in the training*

BILS under Migrant-WEP Project Organised two pre-departure training collaboration with TTC on March 11, 2020 and January 22, 2020 at TTC Seminar Hall, Manikgonj.

Main objective of this training are To provide information about

country specific information to the workers and due respect to the laws of the destination country. Providing Information on travel preparation, immigration process, and support of Labor Welfare Wing.

Sheikh Mustafizur Rahman, AD,

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## BILS mourns the death of its Vice Chairman Alhaj Sukkur Mahamud



*Alhaj Sukkur Mahamud*

Vice Chairman of Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies-BILS, former President of Jatiya Sramik League and eminent trade union leader Alhaj Sukkur Mahamud passed away at his residence in Narayanganj on January 28, 2020 at 1.30 am. (Innallillahe Wa Innailahe Rajeun).

BILS Chairman Md. Habibur Rahman Shiraz, Secretary General Nazrul Islam Khan and Executive Director Md. Zafrul Hasan expressed their deep condolence

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## Demand for enactment of law to prevent sexual harassment at workplace



*TU leaders present in the human chain in front of National Press Club*

On the occasion of International Women's Day 2020 under the slogan "Let the generation be equal, Rights of All Women" Sramik Karmacary Oikya Parishad (SKOP) and IndustriAll Bangladesh Council-IBC organised a human chain in front of the National Press Club on March 8, 2020.

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## Workplace Situation Report 2019

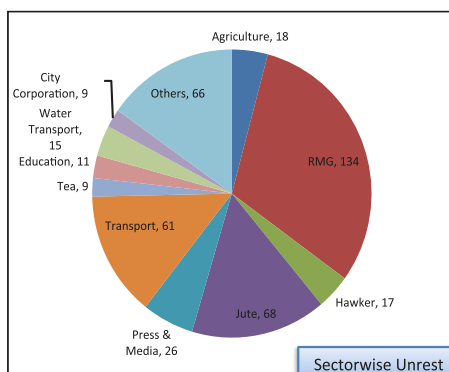
(After Page-1)

our report as how much unrest occurred in which sector and the reasons behind the unrest. Besides, we also tried to focus the issues of violence and accident at workplace.

### Industrial relations and workplace unrest

In 2019, a total number of 434 workplace unrest were occurred in different sectors. The highest number of unrest was occurred in RMG sector which was 134 and the reason behind the unrest was Due wage issue. 68 were occurred in Jute Mill sector, 61 were in Transport sector, 26 were Press and Media, 18 in Agriculture sector, 17 in Hawker, 15 were Water Transport Worker, 11 were Education sector, 9 were Tea Garden Worker, 9 were City Corporation and 66 others were occurred in others sector.

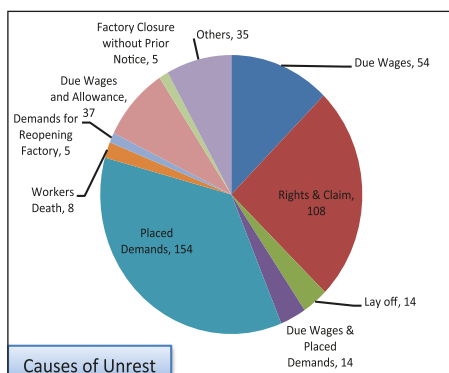
In last year, one worker was died due to unrest in RMG



Sectorwise Unrest	
Sector	Number
Agriculture	18
RMG	134
Hawker	17
Jute	68
Press & Media	26
Transport	61
Tea	9
Education	11
Water Transport	15
City Corporation	9
Others	66
Total	434

sector while 247 workers were injured and among them 184 workers were men and 63 were women worker. Moreover, the highest number of workers was injured in RMG sector due to unrest whereas 187. 124 were men and 63 were women workers. 40 workers were injured in Jute Mill and 20 were Injured in Electricity sector due to unrest in 2019.

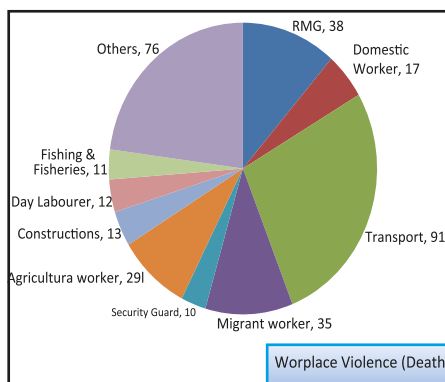
According to the survey report 2019, 154 incidents were occurred placed demands. 108 were occurred rights and claim, 54 were occurred demanding due wages, 37 were occurred Due Wages and Allowance, 14 for Lay Off, 14 for Due Wages and Placed Demands, 8 were occurred for Workers Death, 5 were occurred for Factory Closure without Prior Notice and 35 for others issues.



Causes of Unrest	
Sector	Number
Due Wages	54
Lay off	14
Due Wages and Allowance	37
Due Wages & Placed Demands	14
Rights & Claim	108
Placed Demands	154
Workers Death	8
Demands for Reopening Factory	5
Factory Closure without Prior Notice	5
Others	35
Total	434

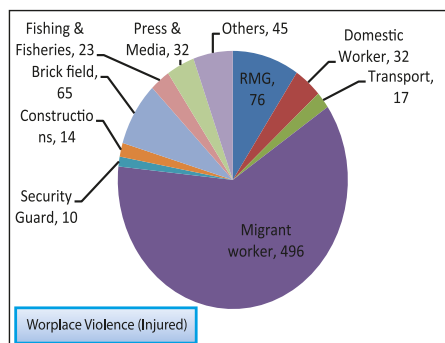
### Workplace violence

According to the workplace survey report it is found that, in last year 1292 workers were victim of violence in different sectors, while 332 workers were death, 810 workers were injured, 67 workers were missing and 26 workers committed suicide.



Workplace Violence Death	
Sector	Number
RMG	38
Domestic Worker	17
Transport	91
Migrant worker	35
Security Guard	10
Agricultural worker	29
Constructions	13
Day Labourer	12
Fishing & Fisheries	11
Others	76
Total	332

The highest number of workers was victim in Migrant sector which was 578, in where 35 workers were death, 496 were injured, 1 suicide and not mentioned 46. The second highest number of workers was in RMG sector which was 126, in where 38 workers were murdered, 76 workers were injured and 5 worker was missing and 7 workers committed suicide. In Transport Sector 117 casualties were occurred whereas 83 workers were death, 17 workers were injured, 3 workers committed suicide and 6 workers were missing. In Fishing and Fisheries sector, 80 casualties were occurred in where 11 workers were murdered, 23 were injured, 46 were missing. 51 casualties were occurred in case of domestic workers whereas 17 domestic workers were death, 32 were injured and 1



Workplace Violence Injured	
Sector	Number
RMG	76
Domestic Worker	32
Transport	17
Migrant worker	496
Security Guard	10
Constructions	14
Brick field	65
Fishing & Fisheries	23
Press & Media	32
Others	45
Total	810

committed suicide and 1 worker were missing.

### Workplace accident and OHS

According to the survey report, 1200 workers were killed in workplace accident, while 1193 were men and 7 were women workers. Conferring to the other sector, the death toll was high in transport sector which was 516, whereas all of them were men. The second highest number was counted in construction sector, which was 134 and 133 are men and 1 were women worker. The third highest death toll, counted in agricultural sector, was 116. Apart from



## Training Workshop on increasing the ability to prevent gender-based violence in the workplace



*Trainers and participants in a group photo*

BILS, with the support of Mondiaal FNV organised a training workshop titled, "Training workshop on Increasing the ability to prevent Gender base Violence at Workplace in RMG Sector" on January 16, 2020 at BILS Seminar Hall, Dhaka.

The training was organised aiming to set activities of trade union for protesting gender base violence at workplace and to build capacity of

area based trade union leaders on gender policy.

Main objectives of the training were to build capacity of the participants for analyzing gender, gender base violence and gender discrimination, analyzing behavior on sexual harassment, existing laws and punishments against sexual harassment according to national and international law, declaration

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## Seminar on Decent Work Status Reporting



*BILS Vice Chairman Amirul Haque Amin chaired the seminar*

BILS, with the support of Mondiaal FNV organised a seminar on Decent Work Status Reporting-2019 on February 27, 2020 at BILS Seminar Hall, Dhaka. Main objective of the seminar are present the annual report on decent work in the garment industry to the national level trade

union leaders and receiving the views and recommendations of the leaders through discussion. The participants recommended for a review of the Decent Work Report-2019 and making it more labour friendly.

BILS Vice Chairman Amirul Haque

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## BILS-FNV Project Advisory Committee meeting held



*Participants in the meeting*

A Project Advisory Committee meeting held under BILS-Social Dialogue, Gender Equality and Decent Work Project on February 13, 2020 at BILS Seminar Hall, Dhaka.

The meeting was organised aiming to present the activities of BILS-FNV Project and setting upcoming programs of the project. Discussants in the meeting took some decisions from the discussion of the meeting.

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## View exchange meeting on GBV Follow-up programme



*Participants in the meeting*

Follow-up view exchange meeting was organised so that the trainers can share their experiences, lesson learnt and farther expectations. Trainers urged for more series of field level follow up on these issues.

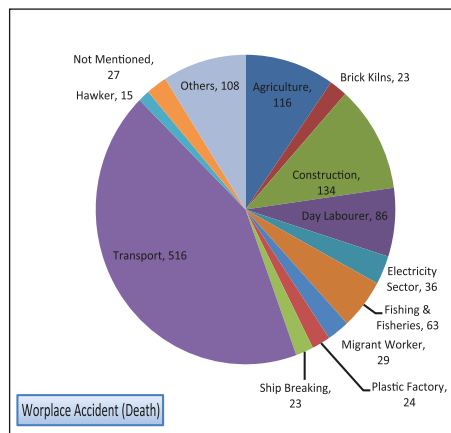
SKOP and IBC affiliated trade union leaders participate the meeting.

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## Workplace Situation Report

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this, 86 day labourers, 63 Fishing and Fisheries workers, 36 workers in electricity sector, 29 migrant worker, 24 Plastic Factory worker, 23 Ship Breaking worker, 23 Brick Kilns Worker, 15 Hawker were killed in 2019. Moreover, 108 workers were died in others different sectors during this

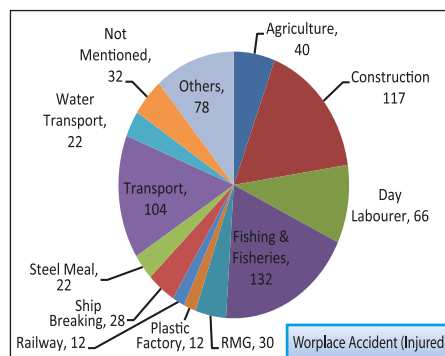


Workplace Accident Death	
Sector	Number
Agriculture	116
Brick Kilns	23
Construction	134
Day Labourer	86
Electricity Sector	36
Fishing & Fisheries	63
Migrant Worker	29
Plastic Factory	24
Ship Breaking	23
Transport	516
Hawker	15
Not Mentioned	27
Others	108
Total	1200

time, 27 more workers were killed in different areas, where their sectors were not mentioned in newspapers.

Comparing the survey report with one of 2018, it has been found that in 2019 the numbers of death were not only high in transport sector like the previous year but also it was increased more than the previous year. In 2018, 424 workers were killed in transport sector which was 516 in the next year. Similarly, in construction sector 161 workers were killed in 2018 which was 134 in 2019. Workers in construction sector are not aware of their risk of life and the owners are not taking initiatives as well as providing

Personal Protection Equipment among the workers to reduce the number of death.



Workplace Accident Injured	
Sector	Number
Agriculture	40
Construction	117
Day Labourer	66
Fishing & Fisheries	132
RMG	30
Plastic Factory	12
Railway	12
Ship Breaking	28
Steel Mill	22
Transport	104
Water Transport	22
Not Mentioned	32
Others	78
Total	695

In last year, 695 workers were injured whereas 678 were men and 17 were women. In 2019, the highest number of workers was injured in Fishing and Fisheries sector which was 132 and the second highest number was in Construction sector which was 117. Besides, 104 Transport worker, 66 day labourer, 40 Agriculture worker, 30 RMG Worker, 28 Ship Breaking Worker, 22 Steel Mill Worker, 22 Water Transport Worker, 12 Plastic Factory Worker, 12 Railway worker.

78 workers were injured in other sector including, Security Guard, Jute Mill, Manufacturer Industry, Metal Factory, Paper Mill, Rice Mill, Re-rolling Mill, Stone Quarry, Media and NGO while 32 more workers were injured whereas their sectors were not identified.

In case of occupational health and hazard The number of sick in Industrial Unrest causes of hunger strike- 268 (Jute) and The number of death in Industrial Unrest causes of sickness in hunger strike- 2 (Jute).

## International Women's Day 2020:

(After Page-3)

coordinator (SRDW Project); Shahariyer Hossen, Sr. Advocacy Officer and S. M. Kamruzzaman Fahim, Monitoring officer was present there. A total of 20 children took part in the art competition and drew a number of pictures for depicting the attitudes of the society/family/individuals towards the domestic workers. Creating a positive image of a domestic worker in the children's mind and demonstrating their thought towards the society were the objectives of the art competition. Afterward, a discussion meeting was organised with the community

leaders and employers of domestic workers' to make an effort to change the attitudes of the society towards the domestic work and the domestic workers and to establish a positive mind for them as well. In the discussion community leaders and the employers of the domestic workers said that domestic workers are one of the most vulnerable groups who are extremely deprived of their rights in the society. The role of a domestic worker in a family as an assisting person was recognised by almost everyone in the discussion. The discussants unanimously acknowledged that it is impossible for a city dwelling family to think without a domestic worker and that is why attitudes of the employers and the

society towards the domestic workers must be positive.

The event ended with a street drama which demonstrates the situation of violation of Rights and the role of a domestic worker to a city dweller family with a view to create a positive image of the workers towards the community people.



School children art the picture



## LRSC-Civil Society Network Meeting



Trade Union leaders and civil society network member present at the meeting

BILS, under the DGB-BW project organised a meeting of Sromik Shanghoti Forum Chattogram-SSFC (LRSC-Civil Society Network) that has been held on March 02, 2020 at BILS-LRSC seminar hall, Chattogram.

The meeting was presided over by the BILS-LRSC Coordination Committee Member-Secretary and Chattogram Labour Court member Md. Safar Ali. While BILS Vice

Chairman and BJSD Central committee president Anwar Hossain, BILS-LRSC Centre Coordination Committee president and BJSD Chattogram District Committee president A M Nazimuddin, BILS-LRSC Coordination Committee Member Tapan Datta, BFTUC Leader K M Shahidullah, JSJ leader A K M Mominul Islam, TUC leader Fazlul

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## Women's gathering, rally in Chattogram



International Womens Day Rally in Chattogram

To observe International Women's Day-2020, BILS, under the DGB-BW project organised a Women's gathering, rally and discussion meeting on March 8, 2020 at Chattogram.

The meeting was addressed among others by BILS-LRSC Coordination Committee Chairman A M Nazimuddin, BILS-LRSC Coordination Committee Member Tapan Datta, trade union leaders and female TU organizers and

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## Quarterly Meeting of the Centre Co-ordination Committee



Participants in the meeting

BILS, under the DGB-BW project organised quarterly meeting of the Centre Coordination Committee that has been held on February 18, 2020 at the BILS-LRSC seminar hall Chattogram.

The meeting was presided over by BILS-LRSC Centre Coordination

Committee president and BJSD Chattogram District Committee president A M Nazimuddin. The meeting was addressed among others by BILS-LRSC Coordination Committee Member-Secretary Md. Safar Ali, Member Tapan Datta, BILS Senior officer Pahari Bhattacharjee

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## Pre-decision training for Migration worker held



Part of the training

BILS under Migrant-WEP project organised three day long pre decision training on March 12, 2020, February 13, 2020 and January 16, 2020 at TTCM Seminar Hall manikgonj and Teota Union Parishad, Manikgonj.

Main objective of this training tre to

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## **BILS mourns the death of its Vice**

(After Page-3)

on behalf of the BILS family, adding that his death has caused irreparable damage to the trade union movement in Bangladesh. They prayed for the peace of his departed soul and said that the working people will never forget his contribution.

## **Experience Sharing Workshop with Different Groups**

(After Page-12)

plan of youth trade union organizers. Syed Sultan Uddin Ahmed, Workers expert, ILO, Tina Marie Blohm, Residential Representative, FES Bangladesh, Abul Kalam Azad, Joint general secretary, TUC, Shakil Akhter Chowdhury, Member, BILS Executive Committee, Kohinoor Mahmood, Director, BILS, Nazma Yesmin, Director, BILS, Josef Mechlaoui, FES Bangladesh, Arunduty Rani, Program Coordinator, FES Bangladesh, Khandoker A. Salam, Senior Trainer, BILS, Monirul Kobir, Sr. Program officer, BILS, Advocate Md. Muniruzzaman, Counselor, Quantum foundation and youth trade union organisers from different national federations were present in the workshop.

Tina Blohm, residential representative of FES Bangladesh said now the time when we should think about the future world of work. If we can't prepare ourselves, lots of workers are lost their jobs. I hope this youth team has been working for the organising of workers and raising awareness on the future world of work. I felt happy to present in the workshop and wish to success, she said during her inauguration speech.

Syed Sultan Uddin Ahmed said today's we do not discussing or exercising lots of things, we just concentrate on three things. (1) What we want as a youth trade union

organisers when we will celebrate 50 years of independents' of Bangladesh and when we celebrate 100 years of Bongobandu Sheikh Mujib. (2) How we could done community based activities for reducing accident. (3) Identify 10 areas and sector in Dhaka and develop plan for sharing opinion with local youth trade union organisers, DIFE officials and local councilor

On the base of above pillar the participants developed 2 plans and submitted to BILS for ensuring decent work place in Dhaka as well as in Bangladesh and organising youth trade union organisers.

## **Demand for enactment of law to prevent sexual harassment**

(After Page-3)

IndustriAll Bangladesh Council-IBC President Hedayetul Islam presided the human chain while Jatiya Sramik Jote working President Abdul Wahed, SKOP Naryanganj area Coordination committee coordinator Mohsin Bhuiyan, Bangladesh Textile and garments workers league president Z M Kamrul Anam were present at the program.

Speakers at the human chain said that the contribution of women workers in the socio-economic development of Bangladesh is undeniable but still working women are being deprived of their rights. Therefore, first of all, all fair rights including afety, wages, leave, maternity benefits of women workers in the workplace must be ensured. They said one of the challenges of International Women's Day is to free women workers from exploitation, torture, harassment, violence and discrimination. At the same time, the speakers demanded the enactment of a law to prevent sexual harassment based on the judgment of the High Court to ensure women-friendly workplaces. The leaders also demanded ratification of ILO Convention 190 on the Elimination of Violence and Harassment in the Workplace.

## **Training Workshop on increasing the ability**

(After Page-5)

and standard, analyzing acquiring knowledge and activities on gender policy in trade union and describing defined activities of trade union on protesting gender base violence.

Gender and gender based violence, sexual harassment and protest, national and international documents, involving gender at workplace and defined participants and activities of organisations on protesting gender based violence at workplace were the discussed issues in the training.

Leaders of trade union at RMG of SKOP affiliated and BILS associated National Federations and organisers and trade union leaders of area based committee of IndustriALL affiliated Federations participated in the training.

## **BILS-FNV Project Advisory Committee meeting**

(After Page-5)

BILS-FNV Project Advisory Council Member Naimul Ahsan Jewel, Shamsunnahar Bhuiyan, MP, BILS Joint Secretary General and Executive Director Md. Zafrul Hasan and Lifetime Member Md. Touhidur Rahman, BILS Director and Project Coordinator Nazma Yesmin, Decent Work Desk Officer Fariba Tabassum and Programme Officer Saifuzzaman Mehrab were present in the meeting.

## **View exchange meeting on GBV Follow-up programme**

(After Page-5)

In earlier 17 January to 10 February 2020 a number of 29 follow-up workshop has been organised on gender-based violence issues. In the total 29 Follow-up there were participation of about 725 people.



## BILS Publication

- BILS Published 300 copies of English and 300 copies of Bangla Policy brief has been re-printed for the research titled "Determining Wage for RMG Workers: Basis, Situation and Considerations."



- BILS Published and distributed 5000 copies of RMG Minimum Wage brochure has been re-printed. The brochure has been disseminated among the Trade Union Federations, plant level TU leaders and RMG workers.



- To observe International Women's Day on 8 March 2020 BILS published and distributed 2000 copy leaflet titled "Let the generation be equal, rights of all women".



- BILS Designed COVID-19 Awareness Building Leaflet for Online Campaign.



- To create mass awareness among the community people as well migrant workers and their family members about COVID-19 specially focused on home quarantine BILS Migrant-WEP Project have been published 1500 copies Leaflet and 500 copies Poster and distributed and displayed on respective project area.



## Lobby Meeting with Chattogram Labour Court Practitioners

BILS, under the DGB-BW project organised a lobby meeting with the local labour court practitioners that has been held on February 25, 2020 at BILS-LRSC seminar hall, Chattogram.

The meeting was presided over by BILS-LRSC Centre Coordination Committee president and BJSD Chattogram District Committee president and ex. Labour court member A M Nazimuddin. The meeting was addressed among others by BILS-LRSC Coordination Committee Member-Secretary and Chattogram Labour court member Md. Safar Ali, Labour court member Tapan Datta, Senior lawyer Advocate Md. Jan-E-Alam, Advocate Ashish Kumar Datta, Chittagong University Law Department Professor Muhammed Shahin Chowdhury, BILS Senior officer Pahari Bhattacharjee and Rizwanur Rahman Khan, Assistant Program officer Fazlul Kabir Mintu and some other labour court practitioners.

The meeting briefly discussed on the issue of termination of 9 Ritzy Apparel workers recently and providing smooth legal support to the victim RMG workers of Chattogram in general. It is to be mentioned that, Ritzy Apparels Limited is a Ready Made Garments Factory, located at Sheikh Mujib Road, Agrabad, Chattogram, Bangladesh. This factory is being operated through the complete violation of national and international instruments in RMG sector. The factory workers are deprived of all legal benefits including payment of monthly wages, overtime, leisure, maternity leave, encashment of earn leave, bonus and even government declared minimum wages according to labour law.

Factually, a fabricated so called trade union in this factory was formed by the employer

## Seminar on Decent Work Status

(After Page-5)

Amin presided the seminar and BILS Executive Council Member Abdul Wahed moderate the seminar. While BILS Joint Secretary General and Executive Director Md. Zafrul Hasan delivered welcome speech. BILS Advisory Council Member Shah. Mohd. Abu Zafar, Bangladesh Trade Union Sanga General Secretary Chowdhury Ashiqul Alam, SKOP Joint Coordinator Naimul Ahsan Jewel, IndustriAll Bangladesh Council General Secretary Chaina Rahman, IBC Leaders Md. Hedayedul Islam, Z N M Quamrul Anam and Salauddin Shopon, Socialist Workers Front General Secretary Ahsan Habib Bulbul, BMSF Secretary Shahidullah Badal, BILS Executive Council Member Pulak Ranjan Dhar and SKOP and IBC affiliated Trade Union leaders attended the program.

## LRSC-Civil Society Network Meeting

(After Page-7)

Kabir Mintu were present at the meeting.

Rizwanur Rahman Khan of BILS, Md. Rafiqul Islam of Sangshoptak, Kakon Barua of BLAST, Saiful Mahmud of OSHE Foundation, Farmin Elahi of BELA, Shahidul Islam of YPSA, Md. Ershadul Karim of BNPS also spoke on the occasion. BILS senior officer Pahari Bhattacharjee act as a moderator.

The meeting briefly discussed on Chattogram-based vital labour issues, especially, the termination of some local RMG workers, deprivation of construction, hotel, health, ship breaking and other workers of informal sectors in terms of wages, working hours, overtime, bonus and other law-cover benefits.

The meeting discussed on the issue of signing ToR (Drafted, Finalized, Signed by 5 organizations earlier) by rest of

the networking members and emphasised on the participation of member organisations in joint programs.

The SSFC meeting also reviewed the earlier activities of the Network in details. Later the speakers/meeting participants unanimously agreed to formally issue letters to BGMEA, DoL and DIFE seeking some information and steps and also decided meet with the Vice president of BGMEA, DIG-DIFE and Director-DoL regarding some workers issues to be addressed.

## Quarterly Meeting of the Centre Co-ordination Committee

(After Page-7)

and Rizwanur Rahman Khan, Assistant Program officer Fazlul Kabir Mintu, Accounts Assistant Yachin Arafat and Admin Assistant Rosy Devi .

The meeting briefly discussed on the ongoing activities of BILS-LRSC, especially, the activities of the year 2020. The speakers in the meeting emphasized on the timely implementation of the PIP activities, activating the LRSC-civil society network, providing legal support and assistance to the victim workers, observing international women's day-2020, arranging the safety fair-2020, developing the LRSC with collected books, documents and references helpful for the users of LRSC like workers, trade union leadership, academicians, media persons and students or interested anyone in labour issues.

## International women's day: Women's gathering

(After Page-7)

activists namely Iftekhar Kamal Khan of TUC, Shahenewaz Chowdhury of BJSD, Nasrin Akter of JSL, Rekha Rani Barua of BFTUC, Shahana Akter of JSJ, Nazma Akter of BMSF spoke on the occasion.

Speakers in the meeting said that, International women's day is always inspiring. It teaches us to fight against all sorts of deprivation and exploitation on women. In Bangladesh, female workers are being victimized by the employers in numerous ways. They are being deprived of basic and legal rights in terms of wages, leave, compensation, bonus and other benefits. The meeting unanimously gave a call to adopt the recent ILO convention No-190 to stop violence against women.

## Pre-decision training for Migration worker

(After Page-7)

provide knowledge and information about safe migration, legal procedure and country specific information to the potential migrant workers. Providing Information and activities on government institutions and services on migration issue.

In the training aspiring and potential migrant workers participated from respective project areas. The training conducted followed by the Pre-decision training manual. Beside the BILS-Migrant WEP Officials, DEMO and TCC officials also attend the training as resource person.

Sheikh Mustafizur Rahman, AD, DEMO, Manikganj, Noor Atayab Ahmed, Principal (In charge), TTC, Manikganj, Bipul Chandra Barman, Manager, Probasi Khallan Bank, Manikganj attend the training as a Resource person. Sarowat Binte Islam, Program Coordinator, MJF, and Md. Abdul Kader, Chairman, Teota Union Parishad, Shivalay Upozilla, Manikganj were attended a pre-decision training.

A total of 97 (Male-48, Female-49) participants received the Pre-decision training.



## International Womens' Day 2020: Demand Ratification

(After Page-12)

of the rally. While BILS Director Kohinoor Mahamood Moderate the opening session. while Jatiya Women Sramik League Working President Shamsunnahar Bhuiyan, MP, BILS Advisory Council Member and Jatiya Sramik League President Fazlul Haque Montu, BILS Vice Chairman and Jatiya Sramik Federation General secretary Amirul Haque Amin, Jatiya Sramik Jote General Secretary Naimul Ahsan Jewel, Jatiya Sramik Jote working President Abdul Wahed, Bangladesh Free Trade Union Congress Secretary Pulak Ranjan Dhar were present at the rally. BILS associated national trade union federations leaders, National Human Rights organisations leader, Civil society representative, BILS and Care Bangladesh representatives present at the rally.

Speakers at the pre-rally demanded implementation of the High Court's 2009 guidelines on prevention and protection of sexual harassment in the workplace, enactment of law, formation of a committee on prevention of sexual harassment in the workplace and ratification of ILO Convention 190 by the government.

BILS, in collaboration with CARE Bangladesh, has been working since 2019 to ratify ILO Convention 190 on the elimination of violence and harassment in the workplace, and has already implemented some activities. The rally was organised with the aim of creating an opportunity for all parties to be informed and participate in the part of the recommendations received from the activities already completed.

## Periodic pre-departure training

(After Page-3)

DEMO, Manikganj, Md. Shamiul Shakib, Instructor, TTC, Manikganj, Md. Zafar Hossain, District Manager, BRAC, Manikganj, Rijaoyana Arafin Khan, Instructor, TTC, Manikganj, Md. Nurujaman Sr. Instructor, TTC, Manikganj, Shabiha Islam Urmi, Instructor, TTC, Manikganj, Md. Zahorul Islam, District Coordinator, BILS were present as a resource person.

A total of 229 (Male-222, Female-07) potential migrant worker received the training. In the training potential migrant workers participated from all upozillas in Manikganj.

## Rally and Discussion Meeting

(After Page-12)

from different organization has been provided their speech and express solidarity. S.M, Ferdus, DC, Manikganj, Nasrin Sultana, Deputy Director, Department womens Affairs, Manikganj, Lakshi Chatterjee, Chairman, Jatiyo Mohila Sangstha, Manikganj, Md. Zahorul Islam, District Coordinator, BILS-Migrant WEP, Bimol Das, Manager, Barsik, Manikganj, Md. Rafiqul Islam, ED, ASSED, Manikganj, Md. Akram Hossain, Correspondent, Bangla Vision, Manikganj, Md. Farid Khan, ED, PASSA, Manikganj, Md. Rafiqul Islam, ED, ASSED, Manikganj, Md. Zafar Hossain, District Manager, BRAC, Manikganj, Abu Bakkar Siddik, Nirbahi Officer, Jatiya Mohila Sangstha, Manikganj.

## Lobby Meeting with Chattogram Labour Court Practitioners

(After Page-9)

earlier. Even the common workers don't know who the president/secretary or the office bearers are of the aforesaid union. Workers are not aware of the existence of the so-called union. Some of the general workers, on 15th October 2019 unanimously, agreed upon and submitted an application to the DoL, Chattogram to get a trade union

registration and it was rejected on 9th December 2019. On 17th December 2019, Raful Uddin, Secretary of the proposed trade union was forcefully denied to give access to enter the factory. On that very day, 8 other workers who were also with the unionizing effort were called by the factory management to give signature in blank/white paper. They denied doing so. Thus, a show-cause notice was issued to each of them and simultaneously, the notice was hung in the factory notice board the next day. However, the workers gave reply of the notice. On 13th February 2020 the workers further applied to DoL for TU registration after fulfilling the demand and removing the objection raised by the registration authority. Unfortunately, hearing the re-submission of TU registration application to the concerned authority on 15th February 2020, 8 female workers were called once again by the factory management and did ill behave and even physically assaulted in presence of BGMEA officials and Industrial Police personals present during that time. On 16th February 2020 all 9 workers of Ritzy Apparels Limited including Rafuluddin and 8 other women were finally removed from job, even without following minimum procedure. As per sub-section 1 & 2 of Section 186 of Bangladesh Labour Law, management can't dismiss/terminate/remove a worker from job while the trade union registration process is on.

This is to be mentioned that, after reporting all the ill-activities of the factory management to DoL/Registrar of TU, in an issued letter mentioned that the Ritzy Apparels Limited authority did unfair labour practices and anti-TU activities. This is a drastic example of frustrating trade union activities in RMG sector in Bangladesh. We have to stand together against such illegal steps of the employers at national and international level in support of victim RMG workers-the meeting decided.

## Rally and Discussion Meeting in Manikgonj



Participants in the human chain

In observance of International Women's Day 2020 BILS participated the Rally organized by Department of Women affairs on March 8, 2020 at Shahid Rafiq Square, Manikgonj.

On the rally program following persons

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## BILS Working Team meeting held

BILS Working Team meeting held on March 7, 2020 at BILS Seminar Hall, Dhaka.

Main objective of the meeting are to discuss about the Bangladesh Labour Rules Amendment. In the meeting the attended trade union leaders and lawyers drafted a review of the Bangladesh Labour Rules-2015 and suggested a number of recommendation for amendment.

BILS working team members Anwar Hossain, Chowdhury Ashiqul Alam, Naimul Ahsan Jewel, Rajekuzzaman Ratan, Amena Akhter Dewan, Advocate Nazrul Islam, BILS Executive Director Md. Zafrul Hasan, Director Kohinoor Mahmood and Nazma Yesmin, Sr. Program Officer Monirul Kabir were present at the meeting.

## International Womens' Day 2020: Demand Ratification of ILO Convention-190



BILS Vice Chairman Shirin Akhter, MP, was present as a chief guest and announcing the inauguration of the rally

In observance of International Women's Day 2020 "Resolving Violence and Harassment in the Workplace ratify ILO Convention-190" With this slogan BILS and Care Bangladesh organised a colorful rally on March

08, 2020 at Dhaka University TSC to Central Shaheed Minar.

BILS Vice Chairman Shirin Akhter, MP, was present as a chief guest and announcing the inauguration

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## Experience Sharing Workshop with Different Groups of Youth Trade Union Organisers



FES Bangladesh residential representative Tina Marie Blohm addressed the workshop

With Support by Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) BILS Organised a one day Experience Sharing Workshop with different groups of youth trade union organisers took place on 01 March 2020 at Dhaka Ahsania Mission Auditorium in Dhanmondi, Dhaka.

Main objective of this program to analyze the recent work place accident especially on Keranigonj fire accident and role of youth trade union to mitigation, to share learning on last youth camps and study circles and to develop future

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Published by: BILS Information Department



www.bilsbd.org

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Printed by: Print Touch, 85/1, Fokirapool

Publication Support:

