

BILS-DGB-BW Project launching program 2022-2024 held

BILS under its' DGB-BW project phase 2022-2024 organized the Project Launching Program of the ongoing phase 2022-2024 on June 4, 2022 at Hotel Saint Martin, Chattogram.

BILS Secretary General Nazrul Islam Khan was the chief guest while Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) Bangladesh office Resident-Representative Felix Kolbitz was the special guest. The program was also attended by Mesbahuddin Ahmed, Chairman of the Project Advisory committee of BILS. The project



inauguration meeting was presided over by BILS-LRSC Chattogram Centre Coordination Committee Chairman A M Nazimuddin. The meeting was addressed among others by invited GO-NGO-CSO and trade union representatives namely Md. Safar Ali of JSL, Tapan Datta of SKOP, Sheikh Nurullah Bahar of BJSD, Kazi Altaf of BMSF, Nurul Abser Bhuyian of BLF, Sabbir Bhuyan, Assistant Director of DoL and Shipon Chowdhury, Deputy Inspector of DIFE, Chattogram, Journalist Nazimuddin Shaymol, Uzzal Bishwash of JSL, Liton Chowdhury of Sangshaptok-an NGO and one of the ex. BILS-LRSC internship students of 2021 named Meheki Siraz. The meeting was conducted by Pahari Bhattacharjee on behalf of BILS.

An audio-visual presentation was done on the BILS-LRSC activities under the project by BILS program officer Rizwanur Rahman Khan at the beginning. Through the presentation, BILS-LRSC 2016-2018 and 2019-2021 phase accomplished activities and achievements were displayed. Besides, 2022-2024 planned activities were also briefed in short.

In his speech Chief Guest Nazrul Islam Khan said, though the workers of our country played a pivotal role in the national development and economic growth, but, in most cases, they are right-deprived. In terms of wages, leave, working-hour, overtime and other law-covered benefits, workers are being deprived every now and then. So, we have to work for the betterment of Bangladeshi workers home and abroad.

In his speech as special guest, FES-Bangladesh office Resident-Representative Felix Kolbitz expressed his hope that efforts to make workers right-conscious will continuously be done by BILS and the German cooperation in numerous BILS activities will continue in near future.

BILS Discussion Meeting on Historic May Day 2022

Call for accurate data on domestic workers in Labour Force Surveys

In order to determine the contribution of domestic workers to GDP, accurate statistics of domestic workers following the correct definition of domestic workers as per the Domestic Workers Protection and Welfare Policy, 2015 is essential. Therefore, trade union and civil society representatives called for strengthening the awareness of all parties including domestic workers, employers, enumerators, local government representatives in order



to ensure their correct information in the labour force survey. Speakers made this call in the discussion meeting titled "The spirit of May Day and the rights of domestic workers as workers in the informal sector" organized by Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies-BILS, Suniti Project and Domestic Labor Rights Establishment Network on May 29, 2022 at the Jahur Hossain Conference Hall of the National Press Club, Dhaka.

BILS Vice Chairman Anwar Hossain Chaired the meeting while President of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Ministry of Social Welfare Rashed Khan Menon, MP present at Chief Guest. In the chief guest's speech Rashed Khan Menon, MP said that if we ignore the interests of the workers and only talk about building owner-worker unity, it will not ensure the rights of the workers but ensure the fair rights of the workers. Industrial relations should be developed through it. He said, they should be more organised to bring forward the issue of the rights of domestic workers.

Mentioning as per the contribution of domestic workers to the GDP, they do not get proper status BILS Joint Secretary General Dr. Wajedul Islam Khan said, everyone should be aware of the rights of domestic workers as well as their health. He urged everyone to work unitedly to realize their rights.

Stating that there is no specific number of domestic workers, Jatiya Sramik Jot Bangladesh General Secretary Naimul Ahsan Jewel said, the census is going to start. In this, all the parties have to play a proper role to bring out the number of domestic workers correctly.

Domestic Workers Rights Network (DWRN) Acting Coordinator Abul Hossain, said domestic workers should be brought under the law and their work should be recognized. Domestic work should be recognized as a profession as soon as possible. For this, the cell of the Ministry of Labour should be made more active. Written contracts must be binding between domestic workers and employers. The existing policy should be converted into law.

Dhaka South City Corporation Ward Councilor Minu Rahman, BILS Director and DWRN Member Secretary Nazma Yesmin, Apps based domestic worker Fatema Begum, among others spoke at the event. Besides, Trade Union Leaders, Non-governmental organizations, Civil Society representatives, Journalists and leaders of various professional organizations were present in the meeting.

Roundtable held on Ensuring Safe Migration and Reintegration for Migrant Workers at Chattogram

BILS with the support of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) organised a roundtable on Ensuring Safe Migration & Reintegration for Migrant Workers on June 28, 2022, at Shapla Hall, Hotel Rose Garden, Chattogram.

The main objective of the roundtable is to discuss the issues of safe migration and reintegration with the concerned parties at the divisional level and to make recommendations for future action.



BILS Advisory Council Member A M Nazim Uddin chaired the meeting and Executive Council Member Shakil Akhter Chowdhury acted as a moderator. ILO Migration Programme, Bangladesh Representative Tanjel Ahsan delivered the welcome speech. Director of Department of Labour Chattogram S M Anamul Haque, Chattogram Mohila Technical Training Center Principle (In-Charge) Ashrifa Taznim, Bangladesh Employers Federation Joint-Secretary General Asif Ayub, BTUC Chattogram district President Tapan Dutta, Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training- BMET Chattogram District Employment and Manpower Office-DEMO Deputy Director Mohammad Jahirul Alam Majumder, BILS Director Nazma Yesmin were speaking on the

roundtable. BILS affiliated national Trade Union Federation representatives, Govt. Official, Civil Society Representative, and Migrant workers were also present at the roundtable.

BILS Advisory Council and Executive Council Joint meeting held

BILS Advisory Council and Executive Council Joint meeting was held on May 29, 2022 at BILS Seminar Hall, Dhaka.

Among BILS Advisory Council Members, Mesbahuddin Ahmed, Shahidullah Chowdhury, Quamrul Ahsan, Badal Khan and A. M. Nazim Uddin were present at the meeting.



BILS Chairman Md. Habibur Rahman Shiraz, Vice Chairman Amirul Haque Amin, Secretary General Nazrul Islam Khan; Joint Secretary General Md. Serajul Islam, Finance Secretary Rafiqul Islam Rafiq, Secretary Md. Kabir Hossain, Rowshan Jahan Sathi, Md. Alauddin Mia and Md Safar Ali, Executive Member Abdul Wahed, Md. Shakil Akhter Chowdhury, Umma Hassan Jhalmal, Pulak Ranjan Dhar, Nasrin Akter Dina and Shamim Ara were present from Executive Council. BILS Director Kohinoor Mahmood also attended the meeting from BILS Management.

BILS Discussion meeting on International Domestic Workers Day 2022

Demand for the ratification of ILO Convention 189 to ensure the rights, dignity and safety of domestic workers

Trade Unions and Civil Society leaders have called for the ratification of ILO Convention 189 to ensure the rights, dignity and safety of domestic workers. On the occasion of International Domestic Workers Day 2022 the speakers made this demand in the discussion meeting organized in BILS Suniti Project on June 16, 2022 at BILS Seminar Hall, Dhaka.

BILS Joint Secretary General Dr. Wajedul Islam Khan Chaired the meeting and Domestic Workers Rights Network (DWRN) Acting Coordinator Abul Hossain acted as a moderator. BILS

Deputy Director and Project Coordinator Md. Yusuf Al-Mamun highlighted the progress of BILS Suniti Project in the event.

Mentioning information of domestic workers is being taken in the census and as a result digital data will be available Ministry of Labour and Employment Former secretary Dr. Mahfuzul Haque said that the trade union leaders should come forward to highlight the issue of spending on the welfare of domestic workers from the fund that is available for the workers in the Workers Welfare Foundation.



Department of Labour Director Dr. Alpana Sarkar said, ensuring the rights of domestic workers require a change in the mindset of employers. There is considerable deficiency in this regard. Campaign in this regard should be intensified in the media.

Noting that 30 countries of the world have ratified the ILO Convention 189, International Domestic Workers Federation Asia Coordinator IP Fish, connected online from Hong Kong, said that the international trade union leaders hope that Bangladesh will also come forward to ratify this convention.

ILO Bangladesh National Project Coordinator Ani Drong said that the government has the will to ratify ILO Convention 189. But also has some predilections. It is expected that the government will take a timely decision in this regard.

Jatiya Sramik Jote Bangladesh General Secretary Naimul Ahsan Jewel said that the government should play a strong role in implementing all the guidelines mentioned in the policy for the protection of domestic workers until they are included in the labour law.

In the Chaired speech, BILS Joint Secretary General Dr. Wajedul Islam Khan said that the trade union should enter the field in a united movement to rescue the domestic workers from the dire situation. If the domestic workers policy is to be converted into a law, there must be an all-out movement.

Domestic Workers Rights Network (DWRN) Acting Coordinator Abul Hossain said Bangladesh is the only country in South Asia that has policies for domestic workers. But it is not implemented. Hope the government will pay attention to it.

BILS has been celebrating the International Domestic Workers Day since 2012 with the cooperation of Domestic Workers Rights Network; BILS Director Nazma Yesmin said in her

welcome speech that the inclusion of domestic workers in the labour law, the implementation of domestic worker welfare and protection policies, and the ratification of ILO Convention 189 were demanded. He mentioned that research, lobbying, advocacy, and campaigning programs were ongoing to implement the rights of domestic workers under the initiative of BILS Sunity Project even during the Corona period.

Other speakers at the meeting said that in recent years, incidents such as torture, murder and human rights violations against domestic workers have increased alarmingly. They demanded that the protection and welfare of domestic workers, by implementing the 'Domestic Workers Protection and Welfare Policy 2015', establishing their dignity, stopping torture and violence and ensuring fair wages, compensation and decent working environment as well as turning the 'Domestic Workers Protection and Welfare Policy' into law.

Jatiya Sramik Jote Working President Md. Abdul Waheed, Jatiya Sramik League Trade Union Affairs Secretary Firoz Hossain, Solidarity Center Bangladesh Program Officer Advocate Nazrul Islam, also spoke at the meeting. Besides, the leaders of BILS associate National Trade Union Federation, representatives of domestic workers' rights network, civil society representatives and representatives of Sunity Project's affiliated organizations, including domestic workers and employers from different areas were present.

Meeting between BILS and MJF representative held

A meeting between BILS Suchona Project team and the Manusher Janno Foundation team was held on April 27, 2022, at BILS Seminar Hall, Dhaka.

To discuss about BILS Suchona project activity and setting the upcoming program are the main objective of the meeting.

BILS Director Nazma Yesmin, MJF Deputy Manager Md. Monzurul Alam, Grant Team Manager Noor-e-Afza, Deputy Program Manager Nasrin Ahmed, BILS Sr. Accounts Officer Md. Jahangir Alam, Sr. Program Officer Chowdhury Borhan Uddin, and Project Coordinator Md. Syaduzzaman Mithu was present at the meeting.



Advanced Training for TU Leadership held

With the support of DGB-BW BILS organized a three days long `Advanced Training for Trade Union Leadership` on June 21-23, 2022 at Asian SR Hotel, Chattogram.

To enhance the TU leadership capacity is the main objective of the training. Separate issue-based sessions were conducted during this 3-days event including a panel discussion. Different NTUC's leaders are attending the training. All participants were awarded with BILS certificates for successfully concluding the training.

BILS LRSC Coordination Committee Chairman A M Nazimuddin chaired the closing session while BILS Vice Chairman Anwar Hossain, BILS-LRSC CCC Committee Member-Secretary Md. Safar Ali, Member Tapan Dutta, Professor of the Department of Law at Chittagong University Dr. Muhammed Shahin Chowdhury, Assistant Professor of the department of the Social



Work Mustafiz Ahmed, BILS Director and Project Coordinator Kohinor Mahmood, BILS-LRSC Information and Documentation Officer Pahari Bhattacharjee, Program Officer Rizwanur Rahman Khan, BILS Information Officer Mamun Or Rashid, BILS-LRSC Assistant Program Officer Fazlul Kabir Mintu were attend and conducted the several session.

On the opening day BILS Program officer Rizwanur Rahman Khan briefed the participants on the aim and object of this training program. Then, BILS Director and Project Coordinator Kohinor Mahmood conducted a session on “Future Trade Union Challenges: Role of Activists”. Then, a session on “Labour Scenario: Recent Appointment Tendency, Gig Economy & Outsourcing” was conducted by Assistant Professor of the department of the Social Work Mustafiz Ahmed. Another session on “4th Industrial Revolution” was also conducted by him.

On the Second day, a session on “National Work Plan on Labour Issues 2021-2026” was conducted by BILS director and project coordinator Kohinor Mahmood. Then, BILS Assistant Program Officer Fazlul Kabir Mintu conducted a session on “Social Dialogue”. A session on “Collective Bargaining” was conducted BILS Program Officer Rizwanur Rahman Khan.



On the third day, a session on “Effective Communication: Listening and Writing Skill and Speech” was conducted by BILS Information and Documentation Officer Pahari Bhattacharjee.

Later, another session on “Use of Social Media & Networking” was conducted by BILS Information Officer Mamun Or Rashid.

A panel discussion on “Trade Union Chalanges : Way Out” was presided over by BILS-LRSC Chairman Labour leader A M Nazimuddin. Member-Secretary, CCC Committee of BILS-LRSC Md. Safar Ali delivered the opening speech. In this panel discussion, BILS Vice Chairman Anwar Hossain, labour leader Tapan Datta, Professor Muhammed Shahin Chowdhury, Journalist Osman and Md. Jahangir took part in the discussion while it was moderated by BILS Information & Documentation Officer Pahari Bhattacharjee.

Lobby meeting with DIFE Chattogram held

A lobby meeting with the Department of Inspection and Factory Establishment (DIFE), Chattogram was held regarding ensuring the workplace safety of workers on June 15, 2022. Later, a deputation was handed over to DIG, DIFE, Chattogram Mr. Abdullah Al Shakib Mubarrat on behalf of Sromik Kormochari Oikya Parishod-SKOP leadership and BILS officials of Chattogram with the support of DGB-BW.

It is to be noted that, a severe workplace blast and fire occurred at B M Container Depot, located at Sitakund, Chattogram on the night of 4th June 2022 in which 42 workers died and three to four hundred others got severely injured.

In the following days, biggest TU alliance of the country Sromik Kormochari Oikka Parishod-SKOP leadership Chattogram with the support of BILS-DGB-BW went to see the injured workers at local hospitals, issued joint statement to local dailies and organized a press briefing on this issue on 13th June 2022 at Chattogram Press Club. Later, on 15th June 2022 the lobby meeting with the DIFE, Chattogram was held.



During the lobby meeting and handing over the deputation regarding the accident to DIFE, Chattogram DIG Abdullah Al Shakib Mubarrat, SKOP leadership and BILS officials namely A M Nazimuddin of BJSD, Md. Safar Ali of JSL, Nurul Absar Bhuyan and Abu Ahmed of BLF, Md. Mamun of BTS, Md. Mohinuddin of SLF, Rizwanur Rahman Khan of BFTUC and Fazlul Kabir Mintu of BTUC were present.

During the lobby meeting SKOP and BILS leadership said that there is a huge responsibility of DIFE to ensure workplace safety. Negligence in it is needed to be finding out. They mentioned that apart from B M Container Depot, two other accidents happened at Sagorica Ship Breaking and H M Ship Breaking yard at Sitakund in which 3 workers got severely injured and 1 of them

died. Container yards and ship breaking yards security in and around the city is, thus, now-a-days, at severe risk.

In the submitted deputation SKOP and BILS leadership claimed that workers of B M Container Depot and aforesaid ship breaking yards should be compensated as per ILO convention 121.

DIG DIFE Chattogram Abdullah Al Shakib Mubarrat received the deputation and discussed on the issue with SKOP and BILS leadership. He, on behalf of DIFE, assured to take necessary steps in this regard.

SKOP Press Briefing on B M Container Depot accident held

A severe workplace blast and fire occurred at B M Container Depot, located at Sitakund, Chattogram on the night of June 4, 2022 in which 48 workers died and three to four hundred others got severely injured.

In the following days, biggest TU alliance of the country Sromik Kormochari Oikka Parishod-SKOP leadership Chattogram with the support of BILS-DGB-BW went to see the injured workers at local hospitals, issued joint statement and finally organized a press briefing on this issue on June 13, 2022 at Chattogram Press Club.



SKOP leadership, Chattogram through this press briefing demanded exemplary punishment of the B M Container Depot authority and the owners. Besides, adequate treatment facilities for the injured workers as well as proper compensation were also claimed for the injury victims. The TU leadership in the press briefing stated that police filed a case in which surprisingly Depot owners were not accused instead 8 employees of the Depot was charged for the accident. They claimed it as a farce.

In a written statement read out during the press briefing Md. Safar Ali, Member-Secretary, CCC Committee of BILS-LRSC and SKOP & JSL Leader claimed that no employers were ever punished in such accidents. Moreover, citizens are forced not to oppose such accidents in our existing socio-political culture. It is to be mentioned that, SKOP wanted to organize a human chain in protest of this accident on 8th June 2022 but failed due to non-cooperation of local police department. Also it is sad to say that, protesting in any right-violation is guaranteed by the constitution of the country from which we are being-denied the speakers in the press conference stated. The undemocratic characteristic of the state is being exposed by such matters-they said.

It is to be noted that, the B M Container Depot authority preserved chemical containers on falsehood and even they didn't informed it officially to local fire service & civil defense authority. TU leadership claimed compensation for the container depot workers as per local law , ILO and other international conventions and standards.

The press briefing also demanded immediate transfer of other container depots from the city territory.

Tapan Dutta, Member-CCC Committee of BILS-LRSC as well as SKOP Chattogram convener & TUC leader, A M Nazimuddin, Chairman- CCC Committee, BILS-LRSC as well as SKOP & BJS leader and other SKOP leaders and BILS-LRSC officials were present during the event.

SNF Discussion meeting on commemorating nine years of Rana Plaza accident

Call for formulation of criteria for determining compensation for workers casualty in workplace accidents

Speakers called for the amendment of the labour law and the formulation of standards for determining the compensation of workers casualty in workplace accidents according to ILO Conventions 102 and 121. speakers made this call at a discussion meeting titled "9 years of Rana Plaza accident: What should be done to ensure that workers get proper compensation" organised by the Sramik Nirapottya Forum (SNF) to commemorate nine years of the Rana Plaza accident on April 26, 2022 at Tafazzal Hossain Manik Mia Hall of Jatiya Press Club, Dhaka.



Mentioning Workplaces should be made safe so that accidents like Rana Plaza do not happen again In the speech of the honorable guest, Member of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Ministry of Labour and Employment, Shamsunnahar Bhuiyan, MP said that if the workplace is safe, the workers are safe as well as the owners. Therefore, the safety of the workplace must be ensured by the owners. Workers should also be aware of this. They should raise their rights in unison. She also said that workers should unitedly point out that the labour law needs to be amended somewhere. Meanwhile, she emphasized on creating a database of how many workers were deprived of medical treatment in the Rana Plaza accident.

In the speech of the president, prominent human rights activists and the convener of the Sramik Nirapottya Forum Hamida Hossain said that there should be a standard for determining workers' compensation. So that the casualty workers do not have to go from door to door for compensation. She said that those who are in charge should be aware of their responsibilities. She urged the members of the safety committee to be more active.

BILS Joint Secretary General and Bangladesh Trade Union Center General Secretary Dr. Wajedul Islam Khan said that compensation cannot be solved in terms of money. For this, ILO Conventions 102 and 121 have to determine compensation equal to the worker's lifetime earnings. Mentioning that workers are being deprived of the minimum rights they have in the labour law, he said, workers must be united to get their rights.

Samajtantri Sramik Front President Razekuzzaman Ratan said that the amount of compensation for the workers killed in the accident is not consistent in the current reality, and the amount of compensation for the workers should be determined according to the ILO standards. In this case, the amendment of the labour law should specify the issue of compensation. He called for the introduction of employment injury scheme.

Sramik Karmachary Oikya Parishad (SKOP) leader Quamrul Ahsan said that workers are getting casualty in workplace accidents due to non-observance of the rules and regulations of those who built the factories.

Sramik Nirapottya Forum acting member secretary Sekander Ali Mina said that workers turn the wheels of the country's economy. But they are deprived of dignity. He said provident fund, gratuity, maternity allowance, overtime are all related to wages but there is no income related to compensation. So the workers should be compensated accordingly by fixing the compensation criteria.

Other speakers at the meeting said that it takes a lot of time to finish a case in the labour court. Sometimes it doesn't end even in 8/10 years. Arrangements should be made so that labour court cases can be disposed of in a short time. Otherwise, the harassment of workers in obtaining compensation will not be reduced. They called for strengthening the activities of the Department of Inspection of Factories and Establishment. The speakers emphasized on the safety of the workers and demanded construction of factory buildings according to safety rules, ensuring safe working environment for workers, inclusion of workers under social security.

BLAST Deputy Director (Law) Advocate Barkot Ali ascetd as a moderator and Bangladesh Employers Federation Acting Labour Adviser Habibur Rahman, Karmojibi Nari Executive Director Rokeya Rafiq Baby, Bangladesh Labour Foundation Executive Director AKM Ashrafuddin, Awaz Foundation President Mamtaz Begum, BILS Director Nazma Yasmeen and others also spoke at the meeting.

SNF paid homage to the deceased workers recalling Nine years of Rana Plaza building collapse

Demand for safe workplace and set compensation for workers injured in accidents in accordance with international standards

Leaders of the Sramik Nirapottya Forum (SNF) demanded a speedy trial of those responsible for the Rana Plaza accident and compensation for the victims in accordance with international standards and long-term treatment for the injured, including ensuring safe workplaces without fear of death. Speakers made this demand in the paid homage to the deceased workers at Jurain Graveyard and in front of Rana Plaza Savar and the human chain program in front of the National Press Club on 24 April 2022. In collaboration with Australian Aid and ActionAid Bangladesh Sramik Nirapottya Forum organised the program to commemorate the Nine years of the Rana Plaza accident.

Expressing deep sympathy for the deceased workers of Rana Plaza accident Leaders said that quick trial and exemplary punishment are yet not ensured while nine years of this incident already have passed. They urged to ensure trial and punishment of responsible person through proper investigation. Emphasizing building National culture in order to ensure workplace safety they urged to ensure long term treatment and rehabilitation of injured and victim workers. They also demanded that all formal and informal workers be brought under the purview of the Labour Law, national standards of compensation are set up, specialized hospitals be set up for the treatment of occupants suffering from occupational diseases and accidents, and special units be set up in hospitals.



Jatiya Sramik Jote President Mesbahuddin Ahmed, Jatiya Sramik Federation president Quamrul Ahsan, Bangladesh Jatiyatabadi Sramik Dal President Anwar Hossain, Sramik Karmachary Oikya Parishad (SKOP) Joint Coordinator and Bangladesh Trade Union Shangha General Secretary Chowdhury Ashiqul Alam, Jatiya Sramik Jote Bangladesh President Saifuzzaman Badsha, Jatiya Sramik Jote Working President Abdul Wahed, Jaitya Sramik Jote General Secretary Nurul Amin, Bangladesh Mukta Sramik Federation Acting General Secretary Shahidullah Badal, Trade Union Centre Office Secretary Shahida Parvin Shikha, Socialist Workers Front General Secretary Ahsan Habib Bulbul, Bangladesh Legal Aid, and Services Trust (BLAST) Executive Director Barrister Sara Hossain, SNF Acting Member Secretary Sekendar Ali Mina, BILS Director Nazma Yesmin,

Karmajibi Nari Director Sunzida Sultana, and Leaders from SKOP, G-SKOP, and national trade union federations participated in the program.

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