LABOUR NEWS

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WORKPLACE SAFETY: HOW TO KEEP EMPLOYEES SAFE

By Kristina Martic

Safety of workers (also known as worker safety and occupational health and safety) refers to the provision of a safe working environment, safe equipment, policies, and procedures in order to ensure workers' health and safety.

Workplace safety has now become one of the main concerns for many employers. Not only the COVID-19 pandemic is resulting in more illnesses, but the emergence of remote work and dispersed workplaces is making it harder for employers to reach their frontline and deskless employees.

A national survey by The Hartford Financial Services Group found that 58% of blue-collar households have "a family member who has been injured on the job, requiring medical attention. While organizations have a moral obligation to ensure safe working conditions, unsafe workplaces can also have serious legal and financial consequences for employers.

The Importance of Keeping Your Workplace Safe

Let's now take a deeper dive into the importance of workplace safety.

Employee retention

Employees appreciate safe working environments as this is a sign that their employer cares about their wellbeing. Therefore, employees who feel safe at work are also more loyal to their employers and stay longer within their organizations. On the other hand, those who don't feel safe or have experienced workplace accidents, are much more likely to search for new employers.

Company finances

The Liberty Mutual Workplace Safety Index reported that for every $1 a company invests in workplace safety, the result amounts to a $4 return on investment.

This is not surprising as a company could run into serious financial trouble if an employee gets injured at work. The federal Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) requires all employers to follow specific guidelines in creating safe workplaces. Not following OSHA's rules and guidelines can lead to serious legal and financial losses.

Employee productivity

Employees who feel safe in their working environments are also more productive than the ones who have been injured in that past and, therefore, have developed a certain level of anxiety and fright. Eliminating workplace hazards enables employees to stay invested in their work and do their best.

Company reputation and Employer Branding

Companies that don't invest in workplace safety quickly develop a reputation of an unsafe employer

which has a big impact on employer branding and talent attraction efforts. Moreover, the company's customers, competitors and the general public often perceive such companies as unprofessional. As a consequence, fewer employees apply for jobs, and the most skilled workers often search for jobs elsewhere.

12 Workplace Safety Best Practices

Organizations with employees who are at high risk of getting injured, often have structured and well-designed workplace safety strategies in place. As they are aware of the consequences of neglecting workplace safety, they understand that having a good plan can significantly improve employees' health, safety and wellbeing.

Let's now take a look into some best practices for ensuring safe working conditions.

1 Identify all the workplace safety hazards

Before you even start building your workplace safety plan, it is important to define and understand all the potential sources of hazard in the workplace.

Identifying those safety hazards and issues is the first step in protecting employees in the workplace. Some of the most common hazards often include ergonomics, hazardous chemicals, mechanical problems, noise pollution, restricted visibility, dangers of falling and weather-related hazards.

2 Define safety policies and remind employees to follow them

After identifying all the possible workplace hazards, the next step is to define safety policies and procedures. Many organizations have safety handbooks that employees can use as a reference every time when in doubt.

However, just creating such materials is not enough if your employees don't consume and follow them. It is the employers' job to continuously remind employees on the importance of following safety guidelines. Moreover, under OSHA regulations, employees are required to comply with the standards, rules, and regulations put in place by the employer.

3 Keep employees aligned to foster the culture of safety

If you are trying to build an employee-centric workplace, ensure positive employee experience and foster a culture of safety, all your employees, including leaders and managers, need to be aligned and on the same page. Here, employers often neglect the importance of open and transparent workplace communications.

Besides just having a clear plan and safety trainings, organizations need to find ways to embed new employee behaviors by delivering inspiring safety stories, communicating new safety programs and sharing company's successes.

4 Build a safety communication plan

Many organizations are now implementing safety communications as a core company value. This focus towards a safety-centric workplace improves not only employee morale, but also the bottom line.

In order to build a strong culture of safety in the workplace, organizations need to build safety communication plans. In other words, your workplace safety strategy will be as successful as you manage to communicate it properly.

Safety communication plan should consist of a set of materials, important company updates, messages and other internal campaigns that need to be communicated to the right employees at the right time.

Besides timeliness, creating engaging and relevant content is crucial here. When creating your safety communications plan, always ask yourself these questions:

1. What are the main messages we want to communicate?
2. What are the important safety updates to be shared with employees?
3. How and where important documentation should be stored and shared with employees?

4. Which employees should be reached?
5. How will we segment internal audiences to make sure that the right employee gets the right message at the right time?
6. What type of content should we distribute to ensure high engagement?
7. Which communication channels should we use to distribute the messages?
8. Can we reach employees on their mobile phones in a matter of seconds?
9. How will we recognize those who follow the guidelines in order to ensure better compliance among other employees?
10. How will we measure the impact of our communication campaigns?

5 Involve leadership and encourage employees' share of voice

Creating safe workplace environments start at the top. Without the leadership's buy-in, it is impossible to amplify the safety messages and encourage employees to follow them.

Senior leadership must set the communication standard by providing an open and transparent environment. Such environments facilitate and drive discussions that allow employees to offer suggestions, report concerns and feel empowered to contribute to the workplace safety programs.

6 Designate a health and safety representative

As some employees are reluctant to share their safety issues with their direct managers, some organizations appoint designated health and safety representatives.

By doing so, employees can confidently and discreetly discuss their concerns with the representatives who act as trusted intermediary between managers and employees.

However, employers are responsible for enabling these representatives to always be connected with employees, and making sure that they can reach out to them in a timely manner. Yet, many companies still don't have access to the right technology that enables them to do so.

7 Build trust and be consistent

Fostering a safety-centric workplace environment begins by building trust in the workplace. Workers must be able to trust that their leaders' number one priority is keeping their employees safe, and that they can report to them if they notice any unsafe activity.

However, this type of employee behavior doesn't happen over time, and successful transition to a employee-centric workplace culture takes time to build. Honest, consistent and transparent workplace communication as well as constant check-ins with employees are the key.

8 Encourage engagement and participation from employees

The Safety Culture Survey administered to hundreds of organizations by Safety Performance Solutions Inc. (SPS) indicated that 90% of respondents believe employees should caution others when they're operating at-risk. However, only 60% say they actually do provide this critical feedback.

In fact, 74% of respondents (from the SPS Safety Culture Survey) confirm they welcome peer observations for the purposes of receiving safety-related feedback. Yet, only 28% believe other employees feel the same way.

Encouraging employees' engagement, upward feedback, compliance and participation are key prerequisites in promoting and growing a positive safety culture in your workplace. Instead of leaving your employees out and just delivering safety guidelines one-way, consider involving your employees to directly participate in shaping a safer, risk-free working environment.

Here are a few tips for driving your employees engagement:

- Encourage your employees to suggest practical solutions and address their concerns in order to maximize safety.

- Enable and empower your employees to get involved in defining workplace policies and speak up about workplace safety issues.
- Ask them for feedback and urge them to report hazards and continuously.
- Continuously emphasize the importance of keeping themselves and their colleagues safe.

9 Enable easy access to important documents and information

Blue-collar workers are often the ones with the highest risk of getting injured at work. These employees spend most of their time outside of the company's offices, and they often don't have designated working spaces.

These, hard to reach employees, need to have instant access to all important safety materials and documentation available on their mobile phones. On the other hand, employers need to eliminate information overload.

Moreover, these employees should have access to personalized employee news feeds where they can consume content relevant to their job roles and potential hazards specific to their functions.

On the other hand, managers and safety representatives need to have a way to send instant updates, safety push notifications and the ability to automatically share content from credible safety sources such as OSHA.

10 Help managers and employees to always stay connected

It is important that you enable supervisors to keep employees informed about potential hazards or risks in the workplace. Managers should have the ability to create designated safety communication channels where they can share important information and communicate with their teams.

Similarly, when employees notice a potential hazard in the workplace, they should be able to instantly reach their fellow coworkers to inform and alarm them about the hazard.

11 Recognize those who follow the rules and regulations

In addition to keeping employees informed, it is important to praise and recognize those who regularly do their jobs safely. This builds a more open, positive safety culture and increases the likelihood that others will embed the same behaviors.

This culture of appreciation goes a long way when you want others to understand and support your plan. Share your employees successes and amplify positive examples, give public recognition and enable others in your organization to join the conversations.

12 Measure the impact of your safety communication campaigns

As mentioned earlier, communication in the workplace is the number one prerequisite for building and maintaining workplace safety. However, most organizations still don't have ways to measure the impact of their safety communication campaigns on employees' engagement and safety.

Luckily, employee communication solutions like Smarp, enable internal communicators to connect their communication efforts with specific business goals. Robust, AI-powered technology, helps employers understand the real impact of communication on employees' safety and also suggests some actionable insights and tips for improvement.

10 Common Workplace Safety Tips for Employees

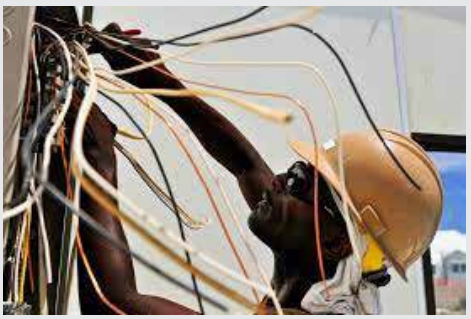
Even though every work environment is different and employees' functions vary drastically, there are some most common workplace safety tips that employers often share with their workforce:

- Be aware of your legal responsibilities.
- Stay committed to health and safety at work.
- Get familiar with all the potential hazardous situations in the workplace.
- Often review the latest safety policies and procedures.
- Stay informed with the company's safety updates.

- Identify, assess and manage hazards within the workplace.
- Inform, train and supervise your employees on safety practices.
- Ensure that incidents and injuries are reported, recorded and investigated.
- Share your concerns and feedback and suggest solutions for improvement.
- Ensure that you are planned and prepared for emergencies.

Top 10 Workplace Safety Threats by OSHA

Now that we have covered some of the best workplace safety practices and tips for employees, let's take a look into the most common issues that cause hazardous workplace environments. According to OSHA, the top 10 areas for which citations are issued include: Forklifts, Hazard communication, Electrical wiring methods, Electrical system design, Guarding openings, Exits, Mechanical power transmission, Respiratory protection, Lockout/tagout, Portable fire extinguishers.



Source: https://blog.smarp.com

BEF EVENTS

Bangladesh Employers' Federation (BEF) in collaboration with the Institute of Marine Technology , Bagerhat, and supported by Skills 21 project of the ILO organized a capacity building workshop with Partner Enterprises, Stakeholders, Members of IMAB and Employers at the Institute of Marine Technology , Bagerhat on 13 March 2021. The overall objectives of the workshop were to strengthen and maintain dynamic linkage between potential employers and institutes, support and give quality inputs to implement training as per labor market needs, provide necessary data on future trends in each occupations and employment. A total of 31 participants attended the workshop which was moderated by Mr. Ruman Istiak Rafeen, Consultant of BEF under Skills 21 project. Mr. Joha Jamilur Rahman, Senior Training Coordinator of BEF, gave his presentation at the workshop.

Participants at the workshop held at Bagerhat on 13 March 2021

Bangladesh Employers' Federation (BEF) in collaboration with the Khulna Mohila Polytechnic Institute, Khulna and supported by Skills 21 project of the ILO organized a capacity building workshop with Partner Enterprises, Stakeholders, Members of IMAB and Employers at the Khulna Mohila Polytechnic Institute, Khulna on 9 March 2021. The overall objectives of the workshop were to strengthen and maintain dynamic linkage between potential employers and institutes, support and give quality inputs to implement training as per labor market needs, provide necessary data on future trends in each occupations and employment. A total of 31 participants attended the workshop which was moderated by Mr. Ruman Istiak Rafeen, Consultant of BEF under Skills 21 project. Mr. Joha Jamilur Rahman, Senior Training Coordinator of BEF, gave his presentation at the workshop.

Participants at the workshop held in Khulna on 9 March 2021

HOME NEWS

WORLD BANK APPROVES $250 MILLION TO CREATE QUALITY JOBS IN BANGLADESH

The World Bank approved a $250 million credit to help Bangladesh create more, better, and inclusive jobs and protect more than 5 million jobs as part of the government's response to the COVID-19 crisis, while laying the groundwork to accelerate recovery and build resilience.

The Third Programmatic Jobs Development Policy Credit—the last in a series of three credits—is supporting the government of Bangladesh to develop a stronger policy and institutional framework to modernize the trade and investment regime; improve social protection for workers; and help youth, women and vulnerable populations access quality jobs.

This financing will support the government in its efforts to protect the earnings of workers affected by the COVID-19 crisis and enable firms to continue paying their workers' wages, while also supporting informal micro-entrepreneurs to recover from the shock by extending micro-finance facilities. The program will also help streamline business and investment services, reducing the cost of starting a business, and supports reforms to align the skills development sector with labor-market demands.

Meanwhile, the World Bank also approved $200 million to help Bangladesh provide support and services to the low-income urban youth impacted by Covid-19 and the involuntary returnee migrant workers in order to improve their earning opportunities. The Recovery and Advancement of Informal Sector Employment (RAISE) project will help about 175,000 poor urban youths and low-income micro-entrepreneurs enhance employability and productivity by helping them access services such as life-skills training, apprenticeship programs, counseling, microfinance, and self-employment support. The credit from the World Bank's International Development Association (IDA), which provides concessional financing, has a 30-year term, including a five-year grace period.

GOVERNMENT AND ILO SIGN DEAL TO PROTECT MIGRANT WORKERS AND DIGITIZE GOVERNANCE PLATFORMS

The Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment and the International Labour Organization (ILO) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on 27 March to roll out three online-based reporting platforms to help upskill and protect migrant workers. The launch unveiled three information management platforms: Online Complaints Mechanism, Labour Attaché Reporting System, and Recruitment Agents Information Management System. The data collected from the platforms will also help the government to shape better-informed policies for migrant workers.

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has further aggravated the plight of millions of migrant workers – be they potential, current or returnee workers. Hundreds of thousands of returnees have been laid off from their jobs overseas, posing a seismic challenge to Bangladesh's already strained labor market, which is already contending with millions of local workers who too have lost their jobs.

"The Government is putting their highest efforts to the recognition of skills and market-oriented skills training for the migrant workers"- said Mr Imran Ahmed, MP, Minister, Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment.

"In relation to the three online information systems that we launched today, the government also wants to build the capacity of the government officials so that they are able to analyze the data and contribute in the policy decision." he added.

ILO Country Director for Bangladesh Mr. Tuomo Poutiainen emphasised the large scale need for skills development and recognition of skills of the migrant workers. He said, "The lack of recognition of skills not only creates difficulties in getting the expected wages in the destination countries but also brings challenges for economic reintegration in the countries in origin".

KARMASANGSTHAN BANK DISBURSES TK 772.85 CRORE

On the occasion of the birth centenary of the father of the nation, Karmasangsthan Bank, under it's 'Bangabandhu Youth Credit programme' disbursed a total of Tk 772.85 crore among 50,918 trained unemployed youths till March 23 this year. The data was revealed in a discussion meeting titled 'Bangabandhu Youth Credit Program: Employment and Financial Inclusion' organized by Karmasangsthan Bank at its head office recently.

138 EXPATRIATE FAMILIES GET FINANCIAL AID

On the occasion of the birth anniversary of Father of the Nation, Probashi Kallyan Bank distributed cheque for Taka 4 crore to the families of 138 expatriate workers under 'Bangabandhu Immigrant's Large Family Loan'. Expatriate Welfare and Overseas Employment Minister Imran Ahmed as the chief guest distributed the cheque at a function organized by the Probashi Kallyan Bank at the conference hall of the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment. Secretary of the ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment and the chairman of Probashi Kallyan Bank Dr. Ahmed Munirus Saleheen presided over the function.

REMITTANCES SURGE TO $16.69 BILLION IN JULY-FEBRUARY PERIOD

The inflow of remittances in the first eight months of the current fiscal year (July-February of FY21) grew by 33.51 percent to US$16.69 billion from US$12.50 billion in the corresponding period of the previous fiscal year despite the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The government incentive and the latest policy support provided by the Bangladesh Bank (BB) have contributed to increase the inward remittances (Table 3).

Monthly Trends in Remittances

Month	Remittances (million US$)		Change (%)
	FY21[P]	FY20[R]	
July	2598	1598	62.58
August	1964	1445	35.92
September	2151	1477	45.63
October	2102	1642	28.01
November	2079	1555	33.70
December	2051	1692	21.22
January	1962	1638	19.78
February	1781	1452	22.66
Total of July - February	**16688**	**12499**	**33.51**

Notes: P=Provisional; R=Revised
Source: BB

In the last month of the period under review (February 2021), year-on-year, remittances registered a growth of 22.66 percent to US$1.78 billion from US$1.45 billion. But the inflow of remittances in February 2021 decreased by 9.23 percent from the previous month of US$1.96 billion (January 2021).

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

QATAR: NEW MINIMUM WAGE ENTERS INTO FORCE

Qatar's non-discriminatory minimum wage comes into force on 20 March 2021, applying to all workers, of all nationalities, in all sectors, including domestic workers. Qatar is the first country in the region to introduce a non-discriminatory minimum wage, which is part of a series of historical reforms of the country's labor laws.

Legislation adopted last year provided a six-month transition period for employers to prepare for the new minimum thresholds. In addition to the minimum monthly basic wage of 1,000 Qatari riyals QAR (275 USD), the legislation stipulates that employers must pay allowances of at least QAR 300 and QAR 500 for food and housing respectively, if they do not provide workers with these directly. More than 400,000 workers or 20 percent of the private sector will benefit directly from the new law.

AUSTRALIA: WAGE SUBSIDY STOPPED DESPITE JOB LOSS WARNINGS

Australia recently ended a pandemic wage subsidy scheme despite official warnings that up to 150,000 people could lose their jobs as a result. The so-called JobKeeper scheme, which initially saw Aus$1,500 (around US$1,150) a fortnight paid to staff via their employers, was announced last March after Australia imposed a nationwide shutdown that left thousands queueing outside unemployment offices.

Australia's unemployment rate fell to 5.8 percent in February — down from 7.5 percent in July — but the Treasury estimates between 100,000 and 150,000 jobs could be lost as a result of the change. Australia has been relatively successful in managing the coronavirus —recording roughly 29,000 cases and less than 1,000 deaths to date — with recent outbreaks linked to border quarantine facilities generally being quashed quickly. Its economy tipped into recession in the first half of 2020 but grew 3.1 percent in the September-December quarter.

PHILIPPINES: REMITTANCES DOWN 1.7% IN JANUARY 2021

Personal remittances from overseas Filipinos dropped by 1.7% to $2.895 billion in January 2021 compared to the $2.944 billion in the same month in 2020, latest figures from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) showed. The decline in personal remittances in January was attributed to the 2.4% drop in remittances from land-based workers with work contracts of one year or more to $2.2 billion. By country source, the United States registered the highest share to total remittances at 40.9%, followed by Singapore, Saudi Arabia, Japan, United Kingdom, Canada, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Malaysia, and Taiwan.

USA: JOB OPENINGS ROSE TO A TWO-YEAR HIGH IN FEBRUARY

US job openings rose to a two-year high in February 2021 while hiring picked up as strengthening domestic demand amid increased Covid-19 vaccinations and additional pandemic aid from the government boost companies' needs for more workers, according to the US Labor Department's monthly Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey(JOLTS) report.

Job openings, a measure of labor demand, increased 268,000 to 7.4 million as of the last day of February. That was the highest level since January 2019 and pushed job openings 5.1 percent above their pre-pandemic level.

There were an additional 233,000 job openings in the health care and social assistance industry. Vacancies in the accommodation and food services sector, one of the industries hardest hit by the pandemic, increased by 104,000 jobs. Arts, entertainment and recreation job openings rose 56,000. However, vacancies decreased in state and local government education as well as educational services and information.

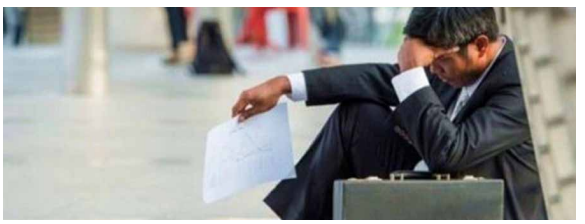
CANADA: 259,000 JOBS ADDED IN FEBRUARY

Canada's economy added 259,000 jobs in February 2021, whipping past expectations to pull the country closer to pre-pandemic employment levels, with young women staring at the longest road to recovery, Statistics Canada said.

One year into the pandemic, Canada's job market is 599,100 jobs short of where it was in February of last year, or 3.1 percent below pre-pandemic levels. The shortfall is higher for young workers at 10.2 percent, with young women between the ages of 15 and 24 the most affected group through this pandemic.

Statistics Canada said that young women are down 181,000 jobs from February 2020, or off 14.1 percent from pre-pandemic levels. For young men, the shortfall is 96,000, or 7.3 percent.

MEXICO: FORMAL JOB MARKET SEEN GETTING OFF TO SHAKY 2021 START



Mexico's job market is off to a shaky start in 2021 with formal employment continuing to show instability in January-February and a concerning trend of lower salaries, according to BBVA Research.

The formal labor market in February 2021 is still 792,000 lower than the 20.6 million workers enrolled in the same month of 2020, said the research unit of Spanish banking giant BBVA, who owns the largest bank in Mexico. Closing the job loss gap in 2021 would require unprecedented job creation, it added.

The ability of Mexico to close the job gap in a consistent way appears difficult given the current conditions of weak internal demand, the temporary shocks of uncertainty causing structural weakness in investment in addition to the slow start to the vaccination program, said BBVA Research.

Mexico managed to add 47,000 formal jobs in January 2021 but this was the lowest level of formal job creation since 2015, and far from signaling a real recovery, according to the report. Moreover, the 47,000 figure reflects the creation of 61,000 temporary positions and loss of 13,000 permanent jobs.

ILO NEWS

HOW WOMEN ARE BEING LEFT BEHIND IN THE QUEST FOR DECENT WORK FOR ALL

Even before the onset of the pandemic, gender equality in the workplace remained elusive. Now women are on the front lines of the COVID-19 crisis, as they make up the bulk of essential workers, including 70% of health-care workers. Yet, worldwide and across all regions and income groups, the pandemic has hit women's labor market opportunities hardest. This is likely to reverse some of the progress made under Goal 8, which aims to "promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all".

The labor market disruption in 2020 far exceeded the impact of the global financial crisis of 2009. Employment losses were not only unprecedented but also steeper for women (5.0 percent) than for men (3.9 percent). Moreover, as school closures due to lockdowns required more at-home supervision of children, women were much more likely to drop out of the labor force than men in order to provide such care. This is further increasing the longstanding gender gaps in labor force participation rates. In 2019, before the pandemic even began, labor force participation of prime-age men was 93.5 percent, compared to only 62.1 percent for prime-age women. The rate was even lower for partnered women with young children.

Meanwhile, the share of women in managerial positions decreased, sometimes significantly, from the fourth quarter of 2019 to the third quarter of 2020 in more than half of the 47 countries with available data. Social distancing measures, lock-downs and distorted supply chains and markets have exacerbated structural inequities and challenges that typically impede the performance and growth of women-owned businesses, and resulted in many closing down operations.

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY: URGENT NEED TO PROMOTE DECENT AND SUSTAINABLE WORK

Governments, workers' and employers' organizations from around the world agreed at the virtual ILO meeting that there was an urgent need to invest in education, training and lifelong learning for all in the automotive industry.

The COVID-19 crisis has placed massive economic strains on the industry and its workers. It has compounded existing challenges such as supply chain disruption, factory closures and a collapse in demand.

"The automotive industry has been severely disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, putting at risk the survival of enterprises. It will take years for the industry to return to pre-crisis levels of production and sales," said the Employer vice-chairperson, Ms Sawsen Ayari-Pouliquen. "There is an urgent need to build back an enabling business environment, stimulate aggregate demand and prepare to meet future skills needs of the industry going forward".

The ILO's centenary Declaration for the Future of Work (2019) and its human-centered approach provides a roadmap for shaping a future that works for all in the automotive industry and ensure that no one is left behind.

The meeting adopted conclusions that give governments, workers and employers a strong mandate to invest in people's capabilities and a just transition to decent and sustainable work.

LAOS: BUILDING RESILIENCE AND COVID-19 RECOVERY FOR MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES

Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSME) in Laos will benefit from a new initiative launched recently that will help them overcome the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The 'Supporting resilience of Lao MSMEs in response to COVID-19' initiative will be implemented by the ILO from December 2020 to May 2022 in collaboration with the Ministry of Industry and Commerce and the Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LNCCI), with funding from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises in Laos are the backbone for job creation and the economy, accounting for more than 80 percent of employment in the country. The COVID-19 pandemic has severely impacted the sector with considerable losses in working hours, jobs and incomes.

The new project will work with financial institutions to support formal and informal MSMEs to access cash, credit and other financial services. This is increasingly crucial as smaller enterprises typically have limited cash reserves and lower levels of productivity, putting them at risk from COVID-19 disruptions.

Simultaneously, it will provide reliable information related to COVID-19 support measures and entrepreneurship development for MSMEs. The program will also deliver business development services and training for owners and aspiring entrepreneurs, including in the informal sector, to build business and financial management skills, and stimulate innovative business ideas.

Ms. Joni Simpson, Officer-in-Charge of the ILO Country Office for Thailand, Cambodia and Lao People's Democratic Republic said, "Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises are at the heart of the Lao economy. By helping them to overcome the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic we can support a human-centred recovery that benefits workers, businesses and the economy alike."

TUNISIA: FORTER'ESS PROJECT TO PROMOTE DECENT WORK THROUGH WOMEN-LED SSEOs

ILO launches FORTER'ESS project to promote decent work through women-led social and solidarity economy organizations in Tunisia. The FORTER'ESS project is the result of a partnership between Global Affairs Canada (GAC) and the ILO that works in collaboration with the Tunisian Government and social partners to strengthen the resilience of women-led Social and Solidarity Economy Organizations (SSEOs) affected by COVID-19.

With nearly US$ 1.4 million in support from GAC, the two-year project will work with women-led SSEOs in two disadvantaged regions of Tunisia. This support will focus on improving workplace protections and the working conditions of women entrepreneurs and workers in women-led SSEOs to counteract the social, economic and health impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The project will benefit 200 women directly, working with 20 women-led SSEOs, the majority of which are less than three years old and have not yet reached a stage of development that would enable them to withstand crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

CONSUMER PRICE INDEX: NATIONAL

(Base: 2005-06=100)

Period	General Index	Index by expenditure group								
		1. Food & Beverage	2. Non-Food	I. Clothing & Footwear	II. Fuel & Lighting	III. Household Equipment	IV. Medical Care & Health Expenses	V. Transport & Communication	VI. Recreation, Entertainment,	VIII. Mise. Goods & Services
2012-13	**181.73**	**193.24**	**166.97**	179.66	155.61	195.33	159.66	159.34	157.23	182.54
2013-14	**195.08**	**209.79**	**176.23**	194.77	163.47	206.14	164.06	167.20	164.38	193.75
2014-15	**207.58**	**223.80**	**186.79**	204.50	171.80	214.45	180.77	181.78	168.02	204.21
2015-16	**219.86**	**234.77**	**200.66**	233.38	182.74	227.39	199.94	201.34	171.01	211.61
2016-17	**231-82**	**248.90**	**209.92**	243.56	194.01	235.85	206.70	210.78	177.56	217.51
2017-18	**245.22**	**266.64**	**217.76**	255.24	200.25	249.68	209.28	218.80	183.65	223.81
2018-19	**258.65**	**281.33**	**229.58**	277.64	206.98	265.25	215.31	235.23	186.72	239.87
2019-20	**273.26**	**296.86**	**243.00**	290.00	220.70	282.67	230.07	248.48	190.13	259.27
2020-21										
July	**278.27**	**300.75**	**249.46**	292.20	227.57	288.73	240.64	257.25	190.98	271.37
August	**282.11**	**307.20**	**249.95**	292.29	227.60	291.54	240.81	257.59	191.01	272.54
September	**288.12**	**316.11**	**252.24**	292.42	227.99	293.11	246.45	263.02	191.79	280.87
October	**290.91**	**320.94**	**252.40**	292.57	228.09	293.35	246.54	263.41	191.81	281.05
November	**288.71**	**316.41**	**253.19**	292.73	228.62	295.29	246.77	264.74	191.96	282.91
December	**287.41**	**313.59**	**253.85**	293.08	228.84	295.74	247.29	266.32	192.16	285.38
October	**290.91**	**320.94**	**252.40**	292.57	228.09	293.35	246.54	263.41	191.81	281.05
November	**288.71**	**316.41**	**253.19**	292.73	228.62	295.29	246.77	264.74	191.96	282.91
December	**287.41**	**313.59**	**253.85**	293.08	228.84	295.74	247.29	266.32	192.16	285.38
January	**290.03**	**315.81**	**256.97**	301.15	229.98	297.45	249.01	269.58	194.13	291.53
February	**290.30**	**315.35**	**258.18**	302.12	229.35	299.53	250.79	272.60	195.12	296.15

CONSUMER PRICE INDEX: RURAL
(Base: 2005-06=100)

Period	General Index	Index by expenditure group								
		1. Food & Beverage	2. Non-Food	I. Clothing & Footwear	II. Fuel & Lighting	III. Household Equipment	IV. Medical Care & Health Expenses	V. Transport & Communication	VI. Recreation, Entertainment,	VIII. Mise. Goods & Services
2012-13	**183.90**	**192.14**	**170.79**	184.54	157.40	186.40	164.63	160.98	174.07	187.05
2013-14	**196.90**	**207.72**	**179.69**	200.61	164.05	197.62	168.87	166.01	179.72	199.74
2014-15	**209.10**	**221.02**	**190.13**	214.07	171.34	209.29	187.18	174.09	183.84	212.34
2015-16	**220.10**	**230.31**	**203.86**	242.26	179.19	222.11	211.04	188.69	187.84	221.12
2016-17	**231.02**	**243.08**	**211.83**	253.51	187.45	229.57	219.35	193.71	194.81	226.47
2017-18	**244.17**	**259.86**	**219.21**	263.96	192.89	246.23	221.15	197.24	201.31	233.72
2018-19	**256.74**	**273.55**	**230.01**	282.76	198.99	261.30	225.86	207.51	205.05	253.71
2019-20	**271.20**	**289.08**	**242.74**	292.21	212.44	277.56	242.40	217.05	208.93	275.65
2020-21										
July	**275.13**	**291.87**	**248.49**	293.85	219.94	279.53	255.57	221.62	210.08	287.79
August	**279.26**	**298.38**	**248.84**	293.94	219.95	281.05	255.76	221.84	210.11	288.95
September	**285.77**	**307.48**	**251.22**	294.09	220.65	282.13	263.51	226.89	211.33	296.06
October	**289.30**	**313.16**	**251.34**	294.26	220.80	282.28	263.52	226.98	211.36	296.19
November	**286.55**	**308.38**	**251.82**	294.31	221.73	283.05	263.55	227.32	211.59	296.34
December	**285.25**	**305.88**	**252.43**	294.65	221.97	283.68	263.89	227.70	211.78	299.99
January	**288.33**	**308.97**	**255.50**	301.58	222.39	284.59	264.64	231.64	215.34	308.59
February	**288.70**	**308.85**	**256.63**	302.42	221.07	286.32	266.91	234.66	217.17	314.18

CONSUMER PRICE INDEX: URBAN

(Base: 2005-06=100)

Period	General Index	Index by expenditure group								
		1. Food & Beverage	2. Non-Food	I. Clothing & Footwear	II. Fuel & Lighting	III. Household Equipment	IV. Medical Care & Health Expenses	V. Transport & Communication	VI. Recreation, Entertainment,	VIII. Mise. Goods & Services
2012-13	**177.71**	**195.91**	**161.88**	170.39	153.55	211.03	151.15	157.53	139.06	176.96
2013-14	**199.73**	**214.85**	**171.61**	183.66	162.80	221.11	155.82	168.52	147.83	186.37
2014-15	**204.76**	**230.56**	**182.32**	197.93	172.33	223.53	169.80	190.26	150.95	194.16
2015-16	**219.31**	**245.66**	**196.39**	216.50	186.86	236.67	180.93	215.50	152.84	199.87
2016-17	**233.29**	**263.09**	**207.38**	224.66	201.60	246.87	185.05	229.59	158.93	206.45
2017-18	**247.17**	**283.19**	**215.83**	238.67	208.77	255.74	188.96	242.55	164.59	211.57
2018-19	**262.17**	**300.30**	**229.00**	267.92	216.22	272.20	197.25	265.77	166.95	222.78
2019-20	**277.06**	**315.83**	**243.34**	285.82	230.27	291.66	208.97	283.12	169.81	239.06
2020-21										
July	**284.09**	**322.42**	**250.75**	289.06	236.42	304.91	215.08	296.51	170.37	251.09
August	**287.38**	**328.71**	**251.42**	289.15	236.46	309.98	215.22	296.98	170.39	252.27
September	**292.47**	**337.17**	**253.60**	289.24	236.49	312.42	217.24	302.84	170.70	262.11
October	**293.88**	**339.94**	**253.81**	289.37	236.53	312.80	217.47	303.54	170.72	262.36
November	**292.70**	**336.02**	**255.01**	289.74	236.61	316.82	218.03	305.97	170.78	266.34
December	**291.41**	**332.42**	**255.74**	290.11	236.80	316.95	218.88	308.89	170.98	267.36
January	**293.16**	**332.50**	**258.94**	300.32	238.75	320.07	222.26	311.40	171.25	270.46
February	**293.25**	**331.20**	**260.24**	301.55	238.95	322.76	223.22	314.40	171.32	273.90

WAGE RATE INDEX BY SECTORS: BANGLADESH

(Base: 2010-11=100)

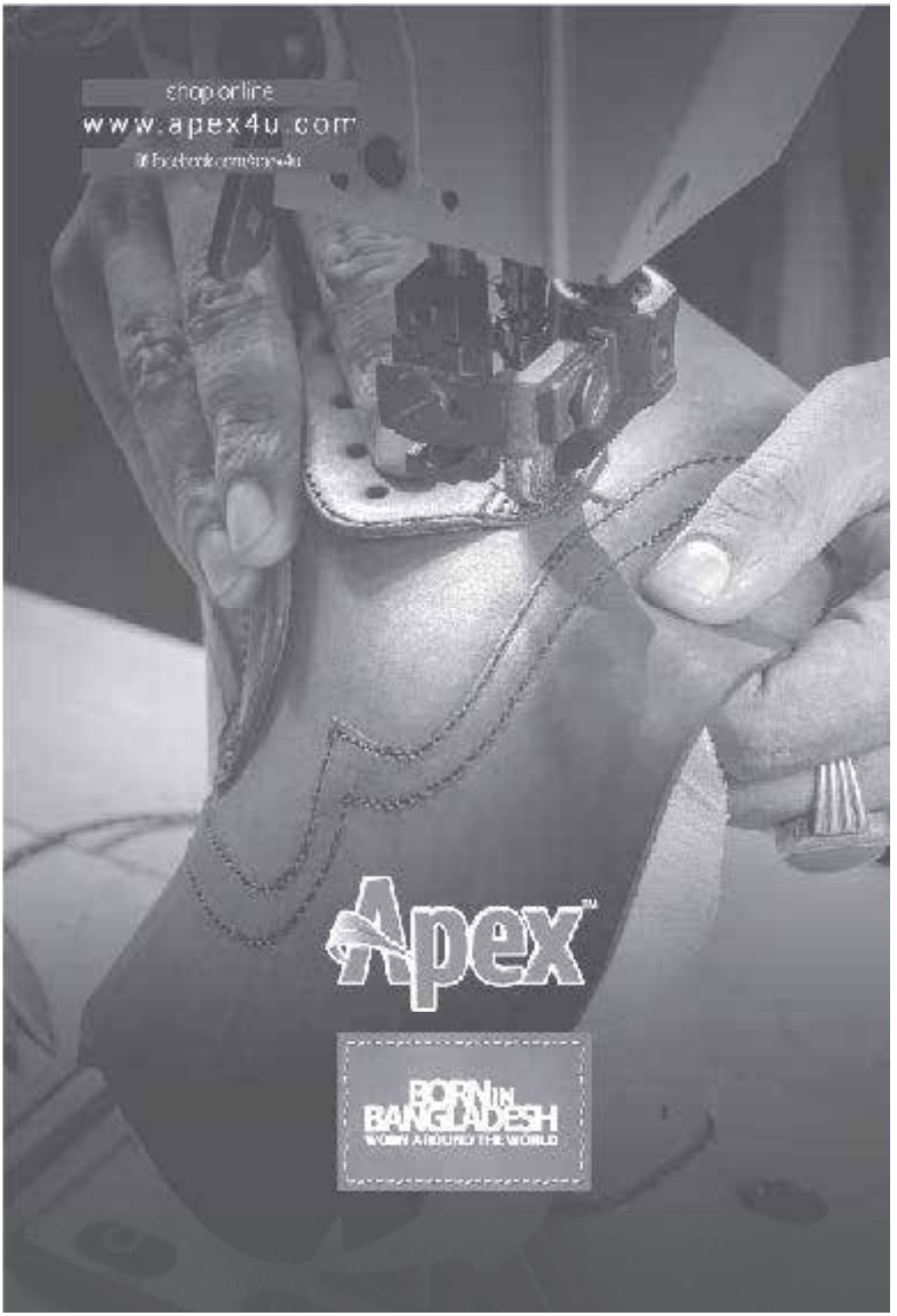
Sector	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	December '20	January'21	February'21
General	141.46	150.59	160.23	180.82	182.25	183.81
percentage change (Point to Point)	6.50	6.46	6.40	6.15	6.19	6.30
percentage change (over previous month)				0.54	0.79	0.86
1. Agriculture	**141.22**	**150.27**	**159.92**	**181.23**	**182.82**	**184.45**
percentage change (over previous month)	6.59	6.41	6.42	6.40	6.44	6.60
percentage change (over previous month)				0.54	0.88	0.89
i) Agriculture	141.19	150.23	159.91	181.29	182.89	184.52
percentage change (Point to Point)	6.60	6.40	6.44	6.41	6.46	6.62
percentage change (over previous month)				0.54	0.88	0.89
ii) Fish	143.19	152.63	160.59	178.01	179.34	180.68
percentage change (Point to Point)	6.37	6.61	5.22	5.67	5.70	5.89
percentage change (over previous month)				0.30	0.74	0.75
2. Industry	**140.27**	**149.45**	**158.74**	**177.37**	**178.50**	**179.84**
percentage change (Point to Point)	6.24	6.55	6.22	5.56	5.58	5.64
percentage change (over previous month)				0.53	0.64	0.75
i) Construction	137.43	145.32	152.86	167.33	167.88	168.72
percentage change (Point to Point)	5.37	5.75	5.19	4.56	4.57	4.54
percentage change (over previous month)				0.47	0.33	0.50
ii) Production	146.01	157.81	170.66	197.74	200.04	202.38
percentage change (Point to Point)	7.22	8.08	8.14	7.32	7.34	7.49
percentage change (over previous month)				0.65	1.16	1.17
3. Service	**145.01**	**154.44**	**164.78**	**185.90**	**187.15**	**188.88**
percentage change (Point to Point)	6.60	6.51	6.69	6.14	6.16	6.17
percentage change (over previous month)				0.57	0.67	0.92

AVERAGE RETAIL PRICES OF SELECTED COMMODITIES IN DHAKA CITY

SL. No.	Unit	2019-20	December '20	January '21	February '21
I. Cereals:					
1. Rice: Najershail/Minikat	Kg.	62.43	68.20	68.37	69.08
2. Rice: Pajam/Equiv.	Kg.	59.16	66.30	66.55	66.67
3. Rice: Irri/Boro	Kg.	45.51	52.28	52.78	53.19
4. Wheat (atta), white.	Kg.	40.00	40.00	40.30	40.83
II. Pulses:					
5. Moongdal (husked)	Kg.	130.54	134.30	134.20	133.70
6. Lentil (husked)	Kg.	111.61	122.50	122.30	122.10
III. Sugar & Molasses:					
7. Sugar (white)	Kg.	62.20	66.30	70.40	71.15
8. Molasses (sugarcane)	Kg.	104.53	112.00	110.00	108.00
IV. Protein Items:					
9. Fish-Rohu-cut piece	Kg.	430.56	410.00	395.00	392.00
10. Fish-Hilsa, medium size	Kg.	1388.75	1150.00	1150.00	1150.00
11. Prawn/Shrimp, about 3" long	Kg.	754.80	652.00	658.00	656.00
12. Barbel (Shing), about 50-gram weight each	Kg.	777.15	679.00	685.00	681.00
13. Beef, best quality	Kg.	524.34	551.00	553.00	556.00
14. Mutton, best quality	Kg.	743.54	740.00	748.00	751.00
15. Fowl, alive	Kg.	422.98	432.00	432.00	432.00
16. Egg (Hen), Farm	4 pcs	35.27	34.00	32.00	31.50
17. Egg (Duck)	4 pcs	60.00	58.00	55.00	54.20
V. Edible oil :					
18. Mustard oil, best quality	Liter	195.74	200.00	195.00	196.10
19. Soyabean oil, best quality	Liter	100.94	115.33	121.70	127.30
VI. Spices:					
20. Chilli (dry), best quality	Kg.	235.39	380.00	370.00	372.00
21. Onion (local)	Kg.	95.58	80.70	50.20	47.44
22. Garlic (Local)	Kg.	169.34	118.00	110.00	108.00
23. Turmeric (Local)	Kg.	158.18	165.40	170.00	171.00
24. Ginger (Local)	Kg.	171.01	162.00	140.00	137.00
25. Salt (fine)	Kg.	37.24	35.00	35.00	35.00
VII. Vegetable:					
26. Potato, best quality	Kg.	25.93	52.00	45.00	35.00
27. Brinjal, best quality	Kg.	60.09	65.15	60.10	50.20
28. Lady's finger, best quality	Kg.	54.96	55.37	52.60	54.00
29. Papaya (green)	Kg.	28.80	36.10	37.00	38.00
VIII. Milk:					
30. Milk (Milk vita packet)	Liter	80.15	80.70	70.00	70.20
31. Lactozen (full cream) (400gm)	Each	599.40	603.60	610.00	608.70
IX. Fuel & lighting :					
32. Firewood (gazari)	Quintal	527.04	492.77	490.15	490.15
33. Kerosene	Liter	82.63	91.65	65.00	68.30

SL. No.	Unit	2019-20	December '20	January '21	February '21
34. Matches (40 sticks)	Box	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00
X. Clothing:					
35. Long cloth (fine)	Meter	80.24	80.35	80.30	80.63
36. Long cloth (medium)	Meter	76.35	76.47	76.45	76.87
37. Saree (medium), white Tangail handloom: A451 80x80 count 5.5 yds.	Each	725.43	725.85	725.88	727.03
38. Lungi (medium.) 48" handloom 60X60	Each	798.40	798.79	798.81	799.22
39.Undershirt (genjee 100 c.m sleeveless)	Each	100.00	100.00	100.35	102.67
XI. Housing & Household Requisites:					
40. Cement (local)	Bag of 50 Kg.	458.75	450.20	445.00	446.00
41. Aluminum (Degchi)	Gram	0.42	0.43	0.42	0.43
42. Bamboo (muli) about 30 feet long	Each	175.61	189.75	190.15	191.77
43. Enamel plate	Each	70.00	70.20	70.40	70.85
XII. Miscellaneous:					
44. Coconut oil (unscented, imported)	Kg.	279.86	281.46	280.27	280.76
45. Cigarettes (Star)	10 Sticks	70.83	80.00	80.00	80.57
46. White paper	Quire	27.98	27.00	27.00	27.81
47. Blade-Sword (stainless steel)	Each	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.05

Source: Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS)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A BRIEF PROFILE OF BEF

Bangladesh Employers' Federation (BEF) is the national organization of employers. It represents all associations representing major industries in the country as well as established individual enterprises.

The objectives of the Federation are to promote, encourage and protect the interests of employers in industrial relations and, through such efforts, to establish good relations among employers and workers, which play a vital supporting role in the country's economic development.

BEF is well known as a progressive body, having a proactive approach on social issues. It is the only body of the employers recognized by the Ministry of Labour and Employment, and accordingly enjoys the sole representative capacity in the Tripartite Consultative Council, Labour Courts, Minimum Wages Board, National Wages and Productivity Commission, etc. It closely interacts with the Ministry of Labour and Employment on all policy issues. Similarly, it maintains close touch with other relevant Ministries of the Government on issues concerning industrial relations, enterprise efficiency, competitiveness, etc.

BEF's activities cover a wide range of issues besides industrial relations. Training and skill development is a major activity along with enterprise level programs for productivity improvement, safety and health, good management practices, etc.

BEF has taken major initiatives to foster close relationship with the trade unions and it enjoys their goodwill and confidence on many issues.

Bangladesh Employers' Federation