LABOUR NEWS

ISSUE 06, June 2024

BANGLADESH EMPLOYERS' FEDERATION

Bangladesh Employers' Federation

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CONTENTS

Labour News / June 2024/ Issue 6

ARTICLE

INDUSTRIAL FIRE PROTECTION AND WORKPLACE SAFETY

Workplace safety is a top priority for every commercial property manager, and industrial fire protection plays a crucial role in safeguarding both employees and assets. A well-designed and properly maintained fire protection system can help prevent devastating fires from causing extensive damage or injury.

In this blog post, we'll delve into the causes of industrial fires, the various types available, and effective prevention strategies to ensure a safe working environment.

Key Takeaways

- Industrial fires can be caused by a variety of factors such as electrical malfunctions, ignition sources, and poor housekeeping. It is crucial to understand these risks in order to implement effective fire prevention measures.
- Proper fire protection measures like fire safety plans, preventative maintenance of equipment, and effective training for employees can help reduce the likelihood of industrial fires occurring and ensure workplace safety.
- Commercial property managers have a responsibility to adhere to strict fire safety standards not only because it's required by law but also because diligent fire prevention can dramatically reduce the risk of significant property damage, costly downtime due to repairs or reconstruction efforts, legal liabilities, increased insurance premiums, and irreversible harm to professional reputation.
- Identifying potential fire hazards unique to each industrial setting like improper storage of flammable materials or inadequate ventilation within the work environment is essential in ensuring proper preparation with appropriate prevention techniques and measures that help ensure overall safety in the workplace.

UNDERSTANDING INDUSTRIAL FIRES

Industrial fires can be caused by a variety of factors such as electrical malfunctions, ignition sources, and poor housekeeping; it is crucial to understand these risks in order to implement effective fire prevention measures.

Common Causes And Consequences

The industrial workplace is a dynamic environment where various activities, including machinery

operations and material handling, take place simultaneously. While this nature of the industry has numerous economic benefits, it presents potential fire hazards that can cause catastrophic destruction if not appropriately addressed.

One common cause of industrial fires is electrical malfunctions resulting from overloaded circuits, damaged wiring, or improper use and maintenance of electrical equipment.

These incidents have severe consequences on both human resources and business operations. For instance, an uncontrolled blaze within your facility could lead to loss of life or injury among employees and visitors alike – a tragic outcome no manager wants to confront.

In addition to the direct physical harm caused by fires, they also result in substantial financial losses as buildings are destroyed along with valuable inventory and equipment.

Moreover, businesses often need to shut down temporarily during recovery efforts causing long-term setbacks due to lost productivity and reputational damage in their industry sector.

Importance Of Industrial Fire Protection In The Workplace

The importance of fire prevention in the workplace cannot be overstated, especially when considering the safety and well-being of employees, business assets, and overall operations.

One notable example highlighting this significance is an incident in 2019 where a major gas explosion at an industrial facility caused multiple fatalities and millions of dollars in damages; had a proactive fire prevention plan been in place with proper measures like regular equipment inspections and adequate emergency response training for staff members, such tragic consequences could have potentially been avoided.

Fire Hazards In An Industrial Workplace

In an industrial workplace, various fire hazards can pose significant threats to the safety of employees and property. One common hazard is improper storage and handling of flammable materials, such as chemicals, solvents, or combustible dusts.

Another prevalent concern is inadequate ventilation within the work environment. Proper air circulation helps dissipate heat and any potentially dangerous fumes; without it, a buildup of gases could lead to explosions or rapid spreading fires.

Additionally, poorly maintained machinery and electrical systems present considerable risks for sparking workplace fires if not inspected regularly and kept up-to-date. Human error also plays a role in many industrial fires – from carelessly discarded smoking materials to careless handling of hazardous materials – stressing the need for effective employee training programs to minimize incidents caused by negligence.

TYPES OF INDUSTRIAL FIRES

Industrial fires can be classified into three types: combustion fires, electrical fires, and chemical fires.

Combustion Fires

Combustion fires are the most common type of industrial fire. They occur when a fuel source comes into contact with oxygen and heat, resulting in flames. Some examples of fuel sources include wood, paper, plastics, and gases.

Preventative measures such as proper storage and handling of flammable materials can reduce the risk of combustion fires in an industrial setting. Additionally, implementing regular maintenance on equipment such as machinery and electrical wiring can help prevent sparks that could potentially ignite a fire.

It's crucial to address potential ignition sources before they become hazardous and to have adequate fire protection systems in place to mitigate damage or injury if a fire does occur.

Electrical Fires

Electrical fires are one of the most common types of industrial fires. These fires occur when electrical

equipment overheats, malfunctions or comes into contact with flammable materials in the workplace.

To prevent electrical fires, it is crucial to ensure that all electrical equipment is properly maintained and inspected regularly. This includes checking for frayed wires, overloaded circuits, damaged plugs and incorrect wiring.

In addition, employees should be trained on how to safely use and handle all types of electrical equipment.

Overall, taking preventative measures like regular maintenance and employee training can help minimize the risk of electrical fire hazards in an industrial workplace.

Chemical Fires

Chemical fires are a major hazard in industrial workplaces, particularly those involved in manufacturing or processing chemicals. These types of fires occur when hazardous substances come into contact with an ignition source such as heat, sparks, or flames.

To prevent chemical fires from occurring in your workplace, it's important to implement proper handling and storage procedures for hazardous materials. This may include ensuring that flammable liquids are stored in approved containers away from ignition sources and that employees are trained on how to safely handle these materials.

In addition, implementing regular maintenance checks on equipment used for handling chemicals is essential to reduce the risk of malfunctioning equipment causing a fire.

PREVENTATIVE MEASURES FOR INDUSTRIAL FIRES

Implementing fire safety plans, ensuring proper ventilation, storing flammable materials properly, providing effective employee training, and regularly maintaining equipment are key preventative measures to minimize the risk of industrial fires.

Implementing Fire Safety Plans

Implementing effective fire safety plans in an industrial setting is crucial to ensuring the safety of employees and reducing the risk of property damage. A fire safety plan should include measures for preventing fires, as well as procedures to follow in case of a fire emergency.

One example of a preventative measure would be conducting regular building inspections to ensure that equipment and machinery are functioning properly, electrical wiring is up-to-date, and there is no accumulation of flammable materials or debris.

Furthermore, having designated individuals responsible for various aspects of the plan can also increase its effectiveness; one employee could be responsible for checking all escape routes while others are designated with shutting off gas lines or electricity if needed during an emergency situation.

Ensuring Proper Ventilation

Proper ventilation is vital in any industrial workplace to prevent the accumulation of hazardous gases or fumes. Without adequate ventilation, toxic gases may build up and pose a risk to employee health and safety.

The exhaust system should be placed at the source of emissions, such as over spray booths and blending equipment, while supply air ducts should be installed where fresh air enters the building.

Airflow testing should also be conducted regularly to ensure proper function and identify areas for improvement.

Proper Storage Of Flammable Materials

Flammable materials can pose a serious threat to the safety of an industrial workplace if they are not stored properly. Storage areas should be designated specifically for flammable materials and should be located away from heat sources or other combustible materials.

In addition, it is important to make sure that any electrical equipment or machinery used near the storage area is spark-free. This means making sure there are no frayed cords or exposed wires, as well as ensuring that all equipment is grounded properly.

Effective Training For Employees

In order to prevent industrial fires, effective training for employees is crucial. This includes educating workers on the proper handling and storage of flammable materials, as well as providing them with knowledge on how to use fire protection equipment such as extinguishers and sprinkler systems.

Moreover, it's important for employers to create a culture of safety within the workplace by encouraging workers to report potential hazards and addressing any concerns immediately.

Regular Maintenance Of Equipment

To ensure that fire protection equipment is in good working condition and ready for use at all times, it's crucial to conduct regular maintenance checks. This includes regular inspections of fire sprinkler systems, fire alarms, smoke detectors, and other safety devices installed within an industrial workplace.

Regular maintenance not only ensures compliance with industry regulations but also helps reduce downtime due to faulty equipment. It can identify potential hazards early on and prevent costly damage to property or losses due to fires.

In addition, trained technicians can detect problems before they become emergencies by identifying signs of wear and tear such as corroded pipes or frayed wires.

FIRE PROTECTION EQUIPMENT FOR INDUSTRIAL SETTINGS

Install fire extinguishers, sprinklers, alarms, and clean agents in industrial settings to prevent and suppress fires.

Fire Extinguishers

In industrial settings, fire extinguishers are an essential tool in ensuring workplace safety. They come in different types and sizes to cater to various types of fires and hazards.

For example, Class A extinguishers work best for materials that burn at the surface like paper or wood.

It is imperative to educate employees on how to use a fire extinguisher properly. During training sessions, emphasize the PASS technique: Pull the pin, Aim at the base of the fire, Squeeze the trigger while holding it upright with both hands, and Sweep side-to-side until the flames are out.

Fire Sprinklers

Fire sprinklers are one of the most effective fire protection equipment available for industrial settings. These systems detect and extinguish fires automatically, without requiring human intervention.

To ensure that your property is appropriately protected, it's essential to have a professional install and maintain your fire sprinkler system regularly.

For example, high-hazard facilities like chemical plants or refineries may require dry chemical or foam-deluged systems while office buildings typically use wet pipe systems.

Your chosen contractor should be able to advise you on the best option for your unique needs.

Fire Alarms

Fire alarms are a critical component of industrial fire protection systems that can help detect and alert employees in the event of a fire. They come in various types, including ionization smoke detectors, photoelectric smoke detectors, heat detectors, and flame detectors.

Regular testing and maintenance of fire alarms are crucial for ensuring they function correctly. Property managers should also ensure that fire alarms are strategically placed throughout their buildings where they will be most effective at detecting fires early on.

This includes installing them near high-risk areas such as machine rooms or storage facilities containing flammable materials.

Understanding Clean Agents

Clean agents are fire suppression systems that use chemical compounds to extinguish fires in industrial settings. Clean agents work by interrupting the

chemical reaction between fuel, heat, and oxygen that fuels a fire.

These types of fire suppression systems are ideal for facilities with valuable assets like data centers or museums where water-based solutions could cause significant damage.

Additionally, clean agents can be used in environments where people are present since they do not release harmful chemicals into the air during deployment.

Fire Suppression Systems

Fire suppression systems are an essential part of industrial fire protection. These systems use different agents to extinguish fires and prevent them from spreading.

Another type of system is the water mist suppression system, which sprays fine water droplets over a specific area to cool down and suppress flames.

Having a proper fire suppression system in place can significantly reduce the damage caused by industrial fires and save lives.

Proper Placement Of Fire Alarms And Smoke Detectors

Proper placement of fire alarms and smoke detectors is crucial to ensuring that any signs of potential fires are detected quickly. The location should be selected based on the work environment, type of activities taking place, and potential hazards.

Fire alarm placement should also consider factors like ceiling height and building layout to ensure maximum coverage. In addition, it's important to avoid placing alarms in areas with high airflow or near ventilation ducts since this can delay detection.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLANNING AND EXECUTION

Establishing a clear emergency response plan is crucial in ensuring the safety of your employees and property during a fire. With regular training, communication, and assigning specific roles, you can confidently execute your plan and minimize damage.

Establishing Emergency Response Procedures

In industrial settings, it is essential to establish clear and effective emergency response procedures to ensure the safety of employees and property. These procedures should include designated evacuation routes, established communication protocols, and assigned roles for employees during an emergency.

An effective emergency response plan also includes regular drills and training sessions for all staff members to prepare them for potential emergencies.

Ultimately, establishing a well-defined emergency response procedure will help prevent chaos during emergencies with quick action that saves lives and minimizes damage.

Regular Fire Drills And Training

Regular fire drills and training are critical elements in ensuring industrial fire protection. It is not enough to have proper equipment and safety plans if employees do not know how to use them or respond appropriately during an emergency.

During these drills, managers can identify any areas that need improvement in their fire protection plan. Employees must also receive regular training on fire prevention techniques, including proper storage of flammable materials, identification of potential hazards, and safe usage of electrical equipment.

This education will not only prevent fires but also keep employees safe in case one does occur.

Communication During Emergencies

In case of an emergency, clear and effective communication is essential to minimize the impact of a fire outbreak. It is crucial to have designated individuals who are responsible for communicating with employees, occupants, and emergency responders.

This includes establishing a chain of command and ensuring that all parties are aware of how information will be disseminated during an emergency situation.

One way commercial property managers can enhance communication in emergencies is by using visual cues such as signage or colored lights to convey evacuation routes or provide warnings.

Clear instructions should also be provided through alarm systems if available and audible announcements via loudspeakers where appropriate.

Overall, clear communication during emergencies can make all the difference when it comes to minimizing harm to individuals and assets within an industrial setting.

Assigning Fire Safety Roles

Assigning fire safety roles is an essential part of any industrial fire protection plan. This ensures that the responsibilities are clearly defined, and everyone knows what to do in case of a fire emergency.

The roles can be assigned to different employees based on their experience and expertise.

It's also important to identify backup personnel who can take over these roles when necessary. In addition, all employees should receive training on their specific roles and responsibilities during a fire emergency.

This will help prevent confusion and ensure a coordinated response effort to minimize damage or injuries caused by industrial fires.

MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR OF FIRE PROTECTION SYSTEMS

Proper maintenance and repair of fire protection systems in industrial settings is crucial to ensuring workplace safety. Regular inspections, testing, and maintenance of equipment such as fire alarms, sprinklers, and extinguishers can help identify potential issues before they become a problem.

In addition to keeping up with regular maintenance schedules, it's essential to train employees on how to properly use fire protection equipment. This includes educating them on the different types of extinguishers and what kinds of fires they are suitable for, as well as proper storage procedures for flammable materials.

When it comes to preventing workplace fires from occurring at all, implementing the right preventative measures is key.

COMMON CAUSES OF INDUSTRIAL FIRES AND HOW TO AVOID THEM

To avoid industrial fires caused by electrical malfunctions, it is important to regularly inspect and maintain all electrical equipment, identify potential hazards such as overloading and overheating, and ensure proper grounding of equipment.

Electrical Malfunctions

One of the most common causes of industrial fires is electrical malfunctions. Faulty wiring, overloaded circuits and outdated equipment can all lead to electrical problems that could potentially result in a fire.

Property managers should ensure that proper electrical maintenance is performed regularly by certified professionals, ensuring that circuits are not overloaded and that all equipment is up-to-date and functioning properly.

It's also essential to make sure that employees are educated on proper usage of electrical equipment to prevent accidents and reduce the risk of fires.

Ignition Sources

In an industrial setting, ignition sources can come from a variety of different sources. Common examples include heat-producing equipment like boilers or ovens, static electricity discharged during manufacturing processes, sparks produced by welding and cutting tools, or even something as simple as smoking near flammable substances.

One way to do this is by implementing strict safety protocols around specific areas where combustion risks are higher than others. For example, in areas where you store flammable liquids or gases, it's important to prohibit open flames and other spark-producing activities altogether.

Likewise, fires caused by electrical malfunctions can often be prevented simply by ensuring that all

electrical equipment has been installed correctly and inspected regularly for signs of wear and tear before use.

Poor Housekeeping

Poor housekeeping is one of the most common causes of industrial fires. Neglecting to keep work areas free of clutter, debris and flammable materials such as oily rags or paper can quickly contribute to a fire outbreak.

To improve housekeeping standards, regular maintenance schedules should be established for equipment used in industrial settings. Facilities should also conduct routine checks on ventilation systems to ensure they are working efficiently and any blockages or clogs are addressed immediately.

Human Error

Human error is one of the most common causes of industrial fires. This can include anything from incorrect use of equipment to forgetfulness about basic safety procedures.

Simple mistakes can result in serious consequences, especially when it comes to fire safety.

To prevent human error from causing a fire in the workplace, proper training and education are key. Employees need to be fully aware of all potential hazards within their work environment and know how to handle them safely.

Additionally, communication is key when it comes to preventing human error related injuries or accidents. Encouraging employees to report any concerns or near misses related to fire safety can help identify potential problems before they become bigger issues that could lead to tragic results.

CONCLUSION: THE IMPORTANCE OF INDUSTRIAL FIRE PROTECTION IN ENSURING WORKPLACE SAFETY

In conclusion, industrial fires pose a significant risk to workplace safety and can cause irreparable damage. However, by implementing proper fire protection measures such as fire safety plans, preventative maintenance of equipment, and effective training for employees, the likelihood of industrial fires occurring can be greatly reduced.

It is also imperative to ensure that all fire protection systems are in good working condition regularly. By adhering to OSHA regulations, NFPA codes and standards, industry-specific regulations and identifying industry-specific needs, commercial property managers can rest assured that their workplaces are at minimum risk of dangerous industrial fires.

Source: https://csafire.com

BEF EVENT

TECHNICAL WORKSHOP ON SKILLS NEED ANTICIPATION AND EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT SERVICE IN BANGLADESH

BEF, in collaboration with the ProGRESS Project of ILO, Country Office for Bangladesh, organized and conducted a daylong "Technical Workshop on Skills Need Anticipation and Employment Support Service in Bangladesh" on 26 May 2024 at its Motijheel office.

HOME NEWS

REMITTANCE INCREASED BY 21.25% TO US$2.04 BILLION IN APRIL 2024

According to the Bangladesh Bank (BB) data, the inflow of remittance increased by 21.25 percent to US$2.04 billion in April 2024 from US$1.69 billion in the same month of the previous fiscal year. The inflow of remittance in April also rose by 2.30 percent from the previous month of US$2.00 billion (March 2024). This surge in remittances could be attributed to factors such as the occasion of Eid, the depreciation of Taka, and a new incentive scheme introduced by banks starting from 22 October 2023. This scheme allows up to 2.5 percent additional incentive on inward remittances, in addition to the existing 2.5 percent incentive provided by the government.

Meanwhile, the inflow of remittance in July-April of FY24 increased by 7.88 percent to US$19.12 billion from US$17.72 billion in the correspondent period in FY23.

Monthly Trends in Remittances

Month	Remittances (million US$)		Change (%)
	FY24[P]	FY23[R]	
July	1973	2096	- 5.87
August	1599	2037	- 21.50
September	1334	1540	- 13.38
October	1971	1526	+ 29.16
November	1930	1595	+ 21.00
December	1991	1700	+ 17.12
January	2113	1959	+ 7.86
February	2166	1560	+ 38.85
March	1997	2022	- 1.24
April	2043	1685	+ 21.25
Total of July – April	**19117**	**17720**	**+ 7.88**

Notes: P=Provisional; R=Revised
Source: Bangladesh Bank (BB)

CHINESE COMPANY TO CREATE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR 2,346 IN BEPZA EZ

A Chinese interlining and garments accessories manufacturing company is going to invest US$22.92 million at BEPZA Economic Zone (BEPZA EZ) creating employment opportunities for 2,346 Bangladeshi workers. The company will produce interlining, lace, TC pocketing/printing, granule and hot melt adhesive powder. Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority (BEPZA) recently signed an agreement with the company at BEPZA Complex.

PROJECT FOR SUSTAINABLE REINTEGRATION OF MIGRANT WORKERS LAUNCHED

The Governments of Bangladesh and Switzerland, together with the ILO, recently launched a new project on sustainable reintegration for returnee migrant workers.

Signed in December 2023, the project, *Reintegration for Migrant Workers Project: Enhancing Policies, Capacities and Systems for Inclusive and Sustainable Reintegration,* aims to strengthen the reintegration of returnee migrant workers through institutions and an effective coordination mechanism that can effectively provide employment and business development support services to the workers.

The project will also be implemented in partnership with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and the Parliamentary Caucus on Migration and Development.

YOUTH WORKFORCE SLIDES

Bangladesh's youth labor force is shrinking, as the total workforce has been estimated at 25.92 million in the first quarter of 2024. In the January to March period of the current calendar year, the youth workforce aged between 15 to 29 has fallen by 1.46 million compared to the same period in 2023, according to the Quarterly Labour Force Survey by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) released recently.

BANGLADESH WILL HAVE TO INCREASE ITS ANNUAL LABOR PRODUCTIVITY BY 1.5%

Bangladesh will have to increase its annual labor productivity by 1.5 percent to become a high-income country by 2050, according to a report of the International Labour Organisation (ILO). At present, the growth is 4.1 percent against an annual 6.0 percent required to become a high-income country by 2050, says the report titled 'The Asia Pacific Employment and Social Outlook 2024'.

"While Bangladesh currently has the potential to reap massive demographic dividends from a youthful labor force, and investments are needed for modern skills and access to quality employment, it is important also to recognize that the aging population is also increasing rapidly with estimates that the country will transform into aging society in 2048," ILO Bangladesh country director Tuomo Poutiainen said in a statement. Adequate investments in development of the care economy and social protection systems including pension schemes will become increasingly important, he added.

MTB SIGNS REMITTANCE DISBURSEMENT DEAL WITH DVIVE

Mutual Trust Bank PLC (MTB) and Dvive Financial Services Ltd marked a significant milestone with signing of a Remittance Disbursement Agreement for Wage Earners at the MTB Centre in the city recently. The agreement signifies a strategic collaboration between MTB and Dvive, aiming to streamline and improve the disbursement of wage earners and service remittance. The partnership is expected to bring about greater convenience for the beneficiaries of the foreign remittance and further strengthen the position of both organizations in the financial services sector. Md. Shafquat Hossain, Deputy Managing Director and Divisional Head of Retail Banking from MTB, and Anisul Islam, Director and CEO from Dvive, inked the agreement.

ILO NEWS

ILO DIRECTOR-GENERAL WARNS THAT MULTIPLE CRISES COULD JEOPARDIZE RECENT ADVANCES IN THE WORLD OF WORK

The Director-General of the ILO, Gilbert F. Houngbo, opened the 112th International Labour Conference (ILC) expressing a feeling of "ambivalence" at the current state of the world of work.

"All regions, to varying degrees, have returned to the level of economic activity seen in the pre-pandemic period. Effective action by central banks to curb inflation has also contributed to this positive development… This could, I very much hope, provide some relief for the recently battered purchasing power of workers," said Houngbo during his opening speech.

The Director-General recalled that ILO projections indicate a global unemployment rate of 4.9 per cent for both 2024 and 2025, marking a modest decrease from the 5 per cent recorded in 2023. However, he warned that, "crises that keep coming one after the other," could jeopardize these "positive and encouraging advances."

"At the same time… the sources of tension have intensified. The appalling situation in the Middle East has added to the existing crises. The shocking conflicts in Gaza, Yemen, Sudan, Haiti, Ukraine and the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo, to name but a few, remain major issues for humanity and, more particularly, for multilateralism," he added.

Presenting his report, *Towards a Renewed Social Contract,* the Director-General said, "the report does not impose preconceived ideas but aims to stimulate a productive and fruitful debate" about "making social justice the foundation of lasting peace, shared prosperity, equal opportunities, and a just transition."

The ILO annual conference brings together worker, employer, and government delegates from the ILO's 187 Member States to address a wide range of issues that have a long-term impact on the world of work.

GLOBAL UNEMPLOYMENT TO DROP SLIGHTLY IN 2024, BUT SLOW PROGRESS TO REDUCE INEQUALITIES IS "WORRYING"

New projections indicate that global unemployment will fall modestly this year even as inequalities in labor markets persist, with women in low-income countries particularly affected, according to a new ILO report.

The ILO's *World Employment and Social Outlook: May 2024 Update* predicts that the 2024 global unemployment rate will stand at 4.9 percent, down from 5.0 percent in 2023. The figure revises downward the previous ILO projection of 5.2 percent for this year. However, the downward trend for joblessness is expected to flatten in 2025, with unemployment remaining at 4.9 percent, the report says.

Despite this outlook, the report underscores a persistent lack of employment opportunities. The ILO estimates that the 'jobs gap' - which measures the number of persons without a job but who want to work - stands at 402 million persons in 2024. This includes 183 million people who are counted as unemployed.

Detailed figures from the report show that women, especially in low-income countries, are disproportionately affected by the lack of opportunities. The jobs gap for women in low-income countries reaches a striking 22.8 percent, versus 15.3 percent for men. This contrasts with high-income countries, where the rate is 9.7 percent for women and 7.3 percent for men.

These differences are just the "tip of the iceberg", as significantly more women than men are completely

detached from the labor market. The report finds that family responsibilities can explain much of the difference seen in women's and men's employment rates. Globally, 45.6 percent of working-age women are employed in 2024, compared to 69.2 percent of men.

Even when women are employed, they tend to earn far less than men, particularly in low-income countries. While women in high-income countries earn seventy-three cents compared to a dollar earned by men, this figure drops to just forty-four cents in low-income countries.

More generally, despite the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015, progress in reducing poverty and informality has slowed down in comparison to the previous decade. The number of workers in informal employment has grown from approximately 1.7 billion in 2005 to 2.0 billion in 2024. To achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, "a comprehensive approach" to reducing poverty and inequality is urgently needed, the report concludes.

ASIA-PACIFIC LABOR MARKETS SHOW RECOVERY AMIDST LOOMING DEMOGRAPHIC CHALLENGES

Asia-Pacific labor markets have recovered well since the global pandemic but face deep seated challenges that are being compounded by the region's rapidly ageing population according to the ILO's *Asia-Pacific Employment and Social Outlook 2024.*

Unemployment in the region is projected to remain roughly unchanged in 2024 and 2025, at 4.2 percent, which corresponds to 87.8 million out of work in 2024. While the unemployment rate for the region remains below pre-pandemic levels as a whole, significant variation exists between subregions and countries. The region's jobs gap, which shows the total unmet need for employment, amounted to 164 million in 2023. That figure includes for example women who would like to work but are unable to search for a job because of care obligations.

Persistent issues related to working poverty and informality remain, with a substantial proportion of workers still engaged in low-quality, informal employment despite decades of economic growth. Two in three workers were in informal employment in 2023, an improvement of only 2 percentage points over the course of 10 years.

The report also highlights how the Asia-Pacific region is undergoing rapid population ageing, with the ratio of people aged 65 years and above expected to double by 2050. This demographic shift will significantly increase the economic dependency ratio, posing challenges for sustaining economic growth. East Asia is projected to see the largest demographic drag on growth of 0.3 percentage points per year; South Asia is expected to see its demographic dividend decline a lot.

Despite ageing populations, the region should be able to achieve continued income growth per capita over the coming decades if strong productivity growth can be maintained. Labor productivity in emerging economies in Asia and the Pacific stands at less than a third of that in high-income countries in many sectors, highlighting the large potential for efficiency and income gains. To realize these gains, structural barriers and a lack of training opportunities need to be overcome to allow the region's large pool of workers who are ready to take up better jobs at higher productivity and pay to meet their potential.

Significant policy reforms and better implementation of existing standards are also needed to reduce inequalities, improve labor market prospects for older workers and ensure equitable pension systems to address the impending demographic changes.

The report also underscores the need for robust social dialogue involving workers, employers, and governments to address these multifaceted challenges. Initiatives such as the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions are highlighted as essential steps towards advancing social justice in the region.

CONSUMER PRICE INDEX: NATIONAL

(Base: 2005-06=100)

Period	General Index	1. Food	2. Non-Food	Index by expenditure group						
				I. Clothing & Footwear	II. Fuel & Lighting	III. Household Equipment	IV. Health	V. Transport & Communication	VI. Recreation, Entertainment,	VIII. Mise. Goods & Services
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	**288.44**	**313.86**	**255.85**	298.14	228.29	298.15	247.86	271.45	193.61	288.53
2021-22	**306.18**	**332.86**	**271.98**	320.14	232.43	320.30	253.62	313.00	202.60	312.28
2022-23	**109.02**	**108.71**	**109.39**	106.71	108.25	109.68	114.09	109.67	108.58	112.05
2023										
December (base:202122=100)	**118.40**	**117.48**	**119.16**	116.22	118.51	124.95	120.93	118.05	123.63	122.09
January (base:202122=100)	**119.60**	**118.30**	**120.66**	117.37	119.76	125.92	122.38	119.21	125.90	125.89
February (base:202122=100)	**120.09**	**119.07**	**120.92**	117.40	120.38	125.95	122.39	119.31	126.00	125.96
March (base:202122=100)	**121.60**	**121.50**	**121.69**	117.96	122.03	126.26	122.84	119.20	126.59	127.38
April (base:202122=100)	**122.30**	**122.63**	**122.02**	118.30	122.78	126.70	122.84	119.17	126.59	127.35

Source: Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics

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

Period	General Index	Index by expenditure group								
		1. Food	2. Non-Food	I. Clothing & Footwear	II. Fuel & Lighting	III. Household Equipment	IV. Health	V. Transport & Communication	VI. Recreation, Entertainment,	VIII. Mise. Goods & Services
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	**286.37**	**306.40**	**254.51**	298.86	220.23	286.65	264.04	234.11	214.52	305.80
2021-22	**304.76**	**326.34**	**270.42**	318.29	223.88	308.52	269.97	274.69	225.50	332.14
2022-23	**109.08**	**108.79**	**109.54**	106.63	109.32	108.99	116.61	108.62	108.10	111.24
2023										
December (base:202122=100)	**118.55**	**117.70**	**119.36**	114.40	121.25	125.20	124.30	119.15	121.89	119.71
January (base:202122=100)	**119.64**	**118.42**	**120.79**	115.80	122.52	125.78	125.76	120.33	124.23	122.76
February (base:202122=100)	**120.16**	**119.30**	**120.98**	115.84	122.96	125.79	125.76	120.38	124.23	122.81
March (base:202122=100)	**121.81**	**121.89**	**121.74**	116.09	124.55	126.08	126.21	120.28	124.96	124.31
April (base:202122=100)	**122.61**	**123.14**	**122.11**	116.42	125.35	126.56	126.21	120.21	124.96	124.29

Source: Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics

CONSUMER PRICE INDEX: URBAN

(Base: 2005-06=100)

Period	General Index	Index by expenditure group								
		1. Food	2. Non-Food	I. Clothing & Footwear	II. Fuel & Lighting	III. Household Equipment	IV. Health	V. Transport & Communication	VI. Recreation, Entertainment,	VIII. Mise. Goods & Services
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	**292.27**	**332.08**	**257.64**	296.78	237.63	318.36	220.17	312.59	171.05	267.20
2021-22	**308.81**	**348.75**	**274.07**	323.66	242.32	341.00	225.63	355.22	177.90	287.76
2022-23	**108.87**	**108.52**	**109.13**	**106.87**	107.07	110.75	108.92	110.56	109.33	113.16
2023										
December (base:202122=100)	**118.00**	**117.05**	**118.59**	119.73	115.29	124.49	114.33	117.63	125.34	124.28
January (base:202122=100)	**119.37**	**118.08**	**120.17**	120.39	116.51	126.17	115.74	118.71	128.06	128.94
February (base:202122=100)	**119.82**	**118.63**	**120.56**	120.41	117.36	126.25	115.75	118.87	128.71	129.12
March (base:202122=100)	**121.10**	**120.69**	**121.35**	121.58	119.08	126.58	116.20	118.67	129.25	130.39
April (base:202122=100)	**121.61**	**121.59**	**121.63**	121.94	119.76	126.95	116.20	118.67	129.25	130.33

Source: Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics

WAGE RATE INDEX BY SECTORS: BANGLADESH

(Base: 2010-11=100)

Sector	2020-21	2021-22	2022-2023	February '24	March '24	April '24
General	180.83	191.80	205.30	117.30	118.00	118.21
percentage change (Point to Point)	6.12	6.06	7.04	7.78	7.80	7.85
percentage change (over previous month)				1.02	0.60	0.17
1. Agriculture	**181.16**	**192.21**	**205.69**	**117.75**	**118.50**	**118.70**
percentage change (Point to Point)	6.39	6.10	7.01	8.16	8.19	8.25
percentage change (over previous month)				1.03	0.64	0.17
i) Agriculture	181.23	192.39	205.98	117.99	118.76	118.95
percentage change (Point to Point)	6.41	6.16	7.06	8.30	8.42	8.40
percentage change (over previous month)				1.06	0.65	0.16
ii) Fish	177.84	1183.06	191.07	113.77	114.18	114.55
percentage change (Point to Point)	5.49	2.95	4.37	8.38	8.42	8.48
percentage change (over previous month)				0.55	0.36	0.32
2. Industry	**177.52**	**187.83**	**201.01**	**116.52**	**117.17**	**117.37**
percentage change (Point to Point)	5.51	5.85	6.97	7.31	7.32	7.36
percentage change (over previous month)				0.97	0.56	0.17
i) Construction	167.24	174.62	184.35	116.01	116.62	116.82
percentage change (Point to Point)	4.42	4.41	5.57	8.53	8.61	8.68
percentage change (over previous month)				0.93	0.53	0.17
ii) Production	198.37	214.87	234.79	120.13	121.04	121.28
percentage change (Point to Point)	7.43	8.30	9.28	7.86	7.92	7.96
percentage change (over previous month)				1.26	0.76	0.20
3. Service	**185.99**	**199.42**	**212.23**	**118.26**	**118.97**	**119.21**
percentage change (Point to Point)	6.07	6.32	7.31	8.34	8.40	8.45
percentage change (over previous month)				1.17	0.61	0.20

Source: Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS)

WAGE RATE INDEX BY SECTORS: DHAKA DIVISION

(Base: 2010-11=100)

Sector	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	February '24	March '24	April '24
General	179.99	189.42	199.93	114.87	115.46	115.58
percentage change (Point to Point)	5.93	5.25	5.54	7.44	7.36	7.41
percentage change (over previous month)				0.92	0.52	0.10
1. Agriculture	**181.52**	**190.78**	**201.30**	**114.59**	**115.45**	**115.55**
percentage change (Point to Point)	6.41	5.11	5.51	7.18	7.20	7.25
percentage change (over previous month)				0.87	0.75	0.09
i) Agriculture	181.51	190.80	201.36	114.59	115.45	115.55
percentage change (Point to Point)	6.41	5.13	5.53	7.16	7.18	7.23
percentage change (over previous month)				0.87	0.75	0.09
ii) Fish	182.40	187.35	193.85	114.45	114.77	114.91
percentage change (Point to Point)	6.38	2.74	3.47	9.92	9.96	10.02
percentage change (over previous month)				0.26	0.28	0.12
2. Industry	**173.94**	**182.93**	**193.18**	**115.23**	**115.69**	**115.83**
percentage change (Point to Point)	5.03	5.17	5.60	7.76	7.75	7.79
percentage change (over previous month)				0.96	0.41	0.12
i) Construction	167.38	173.84	181.65	114.91	115.35	115.49
percentage change (Point to Point)	4.41	3.86	4.50	8.74	8.79	8.84
percentage change (over previous month)				0.97	0.39	0.12
ii) Production	187.79	202.14	217.53	118.03	118.70	118.85
percentage change (Point to Point)	6.22	7.63	7.63	8.07	8.11	8.14
percentage change (over previous month)				0.90	0.57	0.13
3. Service	**188.95**	**200.28**	**211.37**	**113.97**	**114.52**	**114.61**
percentage change (Point to Point)	6.11	6.00	5.54	6.63	6.66	6.69
percentage change (over previous month)				0.88	0.48	0.08

Source: Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS)

PRODUCTION OF SOME SELECTED INDUSTRIAL ITEMS ON LARGE SCALE (BASE YEAR : 2015-16)

Description of items of industry	Unit	No .of reporting industries (selected)	2021-22 (R)	2022-23 (R)	Feb-23	Jan-24 (p)	Feb-24 (p)
Manufacture of Food Products							
Processing and preserving of meat	M.T.	2	1050	1146	1182	1641	1337
Processing and preserving of fish, crustaceans and molluscs	M.T.	*	4630	3964	2542	3243	3354
Processing and preserving of fruit and vegetables	000 Litre	3	32317	26233	1649	3578	2365
Mfg of vegetable and animal oils and fats	M.T.	2	153570	155079	169113	140753	218627
Mfg of dairy products	000 Kg	*	6740	6516	4500	7983	8153
Mfg of rice / rice milling	M.T.	2	210	198	212	208	212
Mfg of bakery products	M.T.	1	2940	2973	2951	3071	3215
Mfg of sugar, cocoa, chocolate and sugar confectionery	M.T.	16	4760	1729	243	14569	5116
Mfg of macaroni, noodles, couscous and similar farinaceous products,	M.T.	*	59	58	60	77	82
Mfg of processing of tea and coffee	M.T.	3	8179	8329	410	175	42
Mfg of other food products n.e.c. (Salt)	M.T.	*	305	403	195	228	331
Mfg of Prepared animal feeds	M.T.	2	95064	83709	84845	84225	99322
Mfg of Beverages							
Mfg of soft drinks	000 Doz Bottle	4	13027	19294	14560	15907	13143
Mfg of Tobacco							
Mfg of tobacco products (cigarettes & others	Million No	2	8084	12085	57510	65291	65269
Mfg of bidies, Zadra and quivam, Tobacco manufacture n.e.c.	Million No	5	1750	2093	1962	1922	1801
Mfg of Textile							
Preparation and spinning of textile flbres	M.T.	7	2540	2879	3110	2315	2442
Weaving of textiles, Silk & Synthetic	000 Mitre	4+	1141295	1169618	1225410	992912	1093990
Finishing of textiles (dying, bleaching etc.)	000 Mitre	*	12358	16196	13941	17955	15595
Mfg of Jute textiles, Pressing and baling of jute and other fibres, spooling and thread ball	M.T.	95	43611	20307	22550	24421	26636
Mfg of Knitted and crocheted fabrics, made-up textile articles, except apparel, carpets and rugs, cordage, rope, twine and netting other textiles n.e.c.(Goods designer, embroidery)	M.T.	*	752075	1605885	971177	957159	937845
Mfg of Wearing Apparel (Ready made garment)							
Mfg of Wearing apparel, except fur apparel	Million TK	*	165659	167189	153713	195344	173434
Mfg of Knitted and crocheted apparel, articles of fur and crocheted apparel	Million TK	*	177027	195618	184354	262471	211822
Mfg of Leather and Related products							
Tanning and dressing of leather; dressing and dyeing of fur	000 Sq. M	*	13747	5228	2305	1865	2871
Mfg of luggage, handbags and the like, saddlery and harness	Dozen	3	1540	1598	1731	1863	1961
Manufacture of footwear	000 Pair	5	319	558	523	596	378

Description of items of industry	Unit	No .of reporting industries (selected)	2021-22 (R)	2022-23 (R)	Feb-23	Jan-24 (p)	Feb-24 (p)
Mfg of Wood and Products							
Sawmilling, wood-based panels, wooden containers, bamboo & cane Products, other products of wood & articles of cork, straw & plaiting materials	000 sq. M	3	195708	179774	188121	186358	166152
Mfg of Paper and Paper Products							
Manufacture of pulp, paper and paperboard	M.T.	2	6250	4368	4202	3702	3859
Mfg of other articles of paper and 'paperboard	M.T.	2	9507	12553	12784	12570	12208
Printing and Reproduction of Recorded Media							
Printing, Service activities related to printing, Reproduction of recorded media	000 No	2	7180	9195	9387	9526	9584
Manufacture of Coke and Refined Petroleum Products							
Manufacture of refined petroleum products	M.T.	1	114781	127225	123840	127913	126340
Manufacture of Chemicals and Chemical Products							
Manufacture of basic chemicals (Compressed Liquid Gas)	C. No	1	1210	1118	1611	466	1169
Mfg of fertilizers and nitrogen compounds; plastics & synthetic rubber in	M.T.	3	100044	93100	41073	118635	57563
Mfg of paints, varnishes and similar coatings, printing ink and mastics, Pesticides & other agrochemical products	000 Litre	2	179	196	225	250	251
Manufacture of soap and detergents, cleaning and polishing preparations, perfumes and toilet preparations	000 TK	2	102752	84321	110032	89591	92370
Matches/Fire fox, manmade fibre, other chemical products	000 Gross	2	3622	3971	4208	4147	4141
Manufacture of Pharmaceutical							
Manufacture of pharmaceuticals, medicinal chemical and botanical products	000 Tk	10	12507873	10195155	9166073	10694665	10069605
Mfg of unani& Ayurovedic, homeopatic & biochemical medicine, Medicinal chemical products	000 Tk	2	105393	115900	116434	152943	143973
Manufacture of Rubber and Plastics Products							
Manufacture of rubber tyres and tubes; retreading and rebuilding of rubber tyres	Dozen	2	128478	176128	186008	186253	197746
Manufacture of plastics products	M.T.	2	2830	3257	3743	3635	2676
Manufacture of polythene products	000 Doz	1	13242	13229	13306	14560	13575
Manufacture of Other Non-metallic Mineral Products							
Manufacture of glass and glass products	000 Sq.ft	2	10676	11135	11978	14004	14424
Manufacture of clay building materials,	000 SMit	1	1079	1201	1132	935	834
Manufacture of other porcelain and ceramic products		2	1592	1681	1780	2160	2172
Manufacture of cement, lime and plaster; article of concrete cement &; cutting, shaping & finishing of stone	M.T.	8	831551	1068771	837157	966146	969795
Manufacture of bricks	000 ' No	3	48	53	54.250	59.250	56.022
Manufacture of basic metals							
Manufacture of basic iron and steel; basic precious & other non ferrous metals; casting of non-ferrous metals Manufacture of fabricated metal products, except machinery and equipment	M.T.	6	117598	128513	135606	152662	164177

Description of items of industry	Unit	No .of reporting industries (selected)	2021-22 (R)	2022-23 (R)	Feb-23	Jan-24 (p)	Feb-24 (p)
Manufacture of cutlery, hand tools and general hardware	2	4069	4580	4128	4286	4274	4081
Manufacture of other fabricated metal products n.e.c.	2	102	112	114	119	120	165
Manufacture of computer, electronic and optical products							
Mfg of communication equipment; electronic components & boards; computer & peripheral equipment;	No.	2	69774	59056	70422	75837	78970
Mfg of electrical equipment							
Mfg of Batteries & Accumulator	000, No	2	62	54	51.00	69.39	60.88
Mfg of Fibre optics cables; other electronic and electric wires and cables; wiring devices	M.T.	2	6782	8010	8602	11565	7031
Mfg of domestic appliances; other electrical appliances	No.	1	396724	384275	372154	438856	406784
Mfg of machinery & Equipment							
Mfg of metal-forming machinery and machine tools; machinery for metallurgy; machinery for food, beverage & tobacco processing, machinery for texitile, apparel & leather Production	No.	EPB	1015	1117	1161	1156	1139
Mfg of motor vehicles, trailers and semi-trailers							
Mfg of motor vehicles ; bodies (coachwork) for motor vehicles, trailers & semi-trailers;	No.	2	474	507	498	402	389
Mfg of other transport equipment							
Building of ships and floating structures; ship breaking & dismanting; railway locomotives	M.T.	8	5965	6703	6602	3553	3043
Mfg of Motor vehicles	No.	1	1589	1584	1589	1941	2128
Mfg of bicycles and invalid carriages	No.	1	1945	2182	2293	2450	2623
Mfg of Furniture							
Mfg of wooden furniture and fixture	No.	3	13112	22146	17547	17041	15225
Mfg of plastic furniture and fixture	No.	2	1917095	1909674	2752522	2227640	2337863
Mfg of packaging materials	No.	2	424	433	536	545	519
Other Manufacturing							
Mfg of sports goods	Million Tk	EPB	129	120	104	141	137

Note: P= Provisional, Source: Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS)

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