

# Minimum wage eludes shipbreaking workers

MOSTAFA YOUSUF, Chattogram

At the end of 2019, Belal Uddin (18), came to Sitakunda from Kurigram in search of work. With a three-member family to feed back home, he was desperate to make ends meet. Soon, he started life as a novice shipbreaking worker at a yard at a daily wage of Tk 220 for an eight-hour day.

In 2020, his salary increased a little bit, now standing at Tk 300. This took his monthly earning ceiling to Tk 9,000. However, this is still a whopping Tk 7,000 less than the government declared minimum wage of Tk 16,000, a gazette the government issued in 2018.

This isn't just limited to Belal. The same story of hardship and underpayment applies for thousands of workers like him.

"I don't know about the minimum wage. All I know is that I'm struggling to meet basic needs of my family, and I don't have the chance to switch to other jobs as I don't have any other skill," he told The Daily Star.

Some 15,000 workers are currently engaged in this profession, where death and danger can come at you anytime unless you

are cautious and have safety gears.

Sitakunda is home to many of them. In 1990, a stretch of Sitakunda coastal area had been declared a dedicated shipbreaking zone. More than a hundred yards carry out their ship dismantling operations here.

The 2018 government gazette made it mandatory for shipbreaking yards to pay their workers the minimum wage of Tk 16,000, which includes a four grade payment system.

Apprentice workers, categorised in grade four, are entitled to the minimum wage, while grade three workers Tk 21,250, grade two Tk 24,250, and grade one Tk 31,750.

However, the implementation of this wage scale is nowhere to be seen in the shipbreaking industry. Tapan Dutta, president of Shipbreaking Trade Union Forum, told The Daily Star that not a single yard executed the wage structures, outright ignoring labour laws.

He blamed this on the parsimony of yard owners, absence of strong workers unions, and negligence of factory inspection from concerned authorities. All of this comes

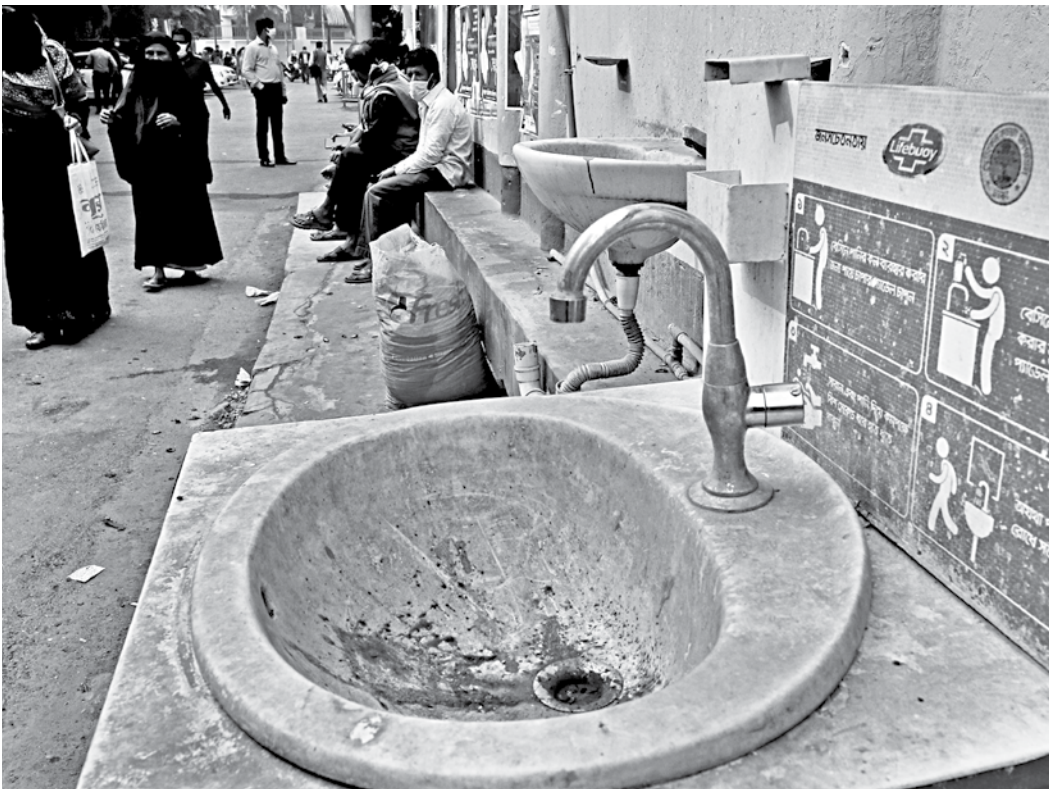
together to deprive the workers -- who regularly risk their lives on this dangerous craft -- from fair wages, he said.

Contacted, Abu Taher, president of Bangladesh Ship Breakers and Recyclers Association, claimed these allegations as baseless and said they actually pay more than the minimum wage.

However, when asked about a recent government ultimatum to implement the wage board within a month, he said it was applicable for overall affairs of shipbreaking yards and not just wage board. He abruptly cut off the phone call after saying this.

The one-month ultimatum was issued recently. Abdullah Al Sakib Mubarrat, deputy inspector general of Chattogram Directorate of Factory Inspection, told The Daily Star they met with yard owners on Monday about execution of the wage board.

"Yard owners sought one month to implement the wage scale. They also promised to issue appointment letters for workers. If they fail to execute these, we will move to the labour court on this issue," the official confirmed.



With no soap or water in sight, the sinks in front of Dhaka Medical College have essentially become spittoon bowls. Lack of maintenance and an indifference towards health precautions resulted in an otherwise valuable facility gone to waste.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## Prompt to the call of duty

### Shariatpur UNO rescues woman in despair

EMRUL HASAN BAPPI

Last week in Shariatpur's Dewbhog area, a woman, aged above 60, was seen lying on the cold concrete of the streets. She had been lying there for a few days, groaning in pain, yet nobody came to her aid, fearing she might be infected with Covid-19.

Fortunately for her, the new upazila nirbahi officer (UNO) of the area stood by her side and helped her find rehabilitation.

"None came forward to help the woman in fear of Covid-19, until UNO Mondip Gharai did," eyewitnesses told this correspondent.

"The woman had been lying on the Palong-Burirhat road at Dewbhog for few days," said Anowar Hossai Shahin, the person who contacted authorities after coming across the information from a local boy named Arif.

"After hearing of the matter, I called 999 and was able to talk to Shariatpur Deputy Commissioner Parvez Hasan. The DC then gave me the UNO's number and suggested I contact him," he said.

On information, the UNO rushed in, picked the woman up on his lap, and carried her to an ambulance, Anowar added.

Kazi Moniruzzaman, a local journalist, said, "Such a humanitarian act inspires others to do more for people in need."

Talking to The Daily Star, UNO Mondip Gharai said, "As soon as I came to know about the incident over phone, I rushed to the spot."

"She is now undergoing treatment at Shariatpur Sadar Hospital. However, we are yet to identify her due to her debilitated state," he told this correspondent.

Official procedure to transfer the woman to a rehabilitation centre in Gazipur has started, said the UNO yesterday.

However, she is still not out of danger. Hospital Superintendent Dr Munir Ahmed said, "Though her physical condition is improving, she has some infections. We're hoping she will soon be back on her feet."

Mondip Gharai, an admin cadre of the 31th BCS, joined as Shariatpur sadar UNO on December 7, official sources said.

## RHD takes

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"They have conducted the survey considering the existing conditions but the guideline would be formulated considering ideal conditions," the official said.

Awal Molla said they are also considering paying contractors for taking measures to prevent pollution while implementing projects.

CEGIS will also suggest how contractors can be paid for this work and in future this would be incorporated in RHD's rate schedule, he said.

He said they will also carry out similar studies across the country and CEGIS will prepare development project profile (DPP) for it.

Bangladesh is seventh among the 10 countries worst hit by extreme weather events, according to Global Climate Risk Index 2020 that analysed data from 1999 to 2018.

Under the RHD, there are 22,096 km of national and regional highways and district roads, of which, 3,906km are national highways. Besides, it has 4,404 bridges, 14,814 culverts and 39 ferry terminals under its network, according to its 2018-19 annual report.



Rather than selling onions and the leaves separately, sellers are now lumping them together and selling new spring onions in bundles. This photo was taken New Eskaton Road recently.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## Parampara

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but also provides an understanding of what sacrifices the freedom fighters had to make."

According to the volunteers, after entering a ward, they stay there for three days, and locals visit the libraries while passing by. Young people -- some in groups, others alone -- pay visits throughout the day. However, afternoon is the peak hour, when they get the most readers.

"We're overwhelmed by the readers and their interest. We saw people picking and reading books for hours straight, standing in front of the mini-truck. Those who couldn't buy the books immediately took our numbers and contacted us later to find the vehicle and buy the books," said Shamzid Shahriar, leader of one of the volunteering teams.

As DNCC is involved with this initiative, before entering a ward, the ward-councillor concerned is informed beforehand. The councillor's staff then arranges a spot for the library vehicle to attract attention. Recently, the library visited Ward-11. DNCC Ward-11 Councillor Dewan Abdul Mannan said, "As most youngsters now spend time on social media, they rarely read physical books. Even for a while, if youths or schoolchildren leaf through the books, it'll help them grow a good reading habit."

"As there is no ward-based library, such an initiative is very commendable. We help find proper spots for the vehicles so youngsters can see it. We designated six different spots, including those near educational intuitions and colonies," the councillor said.

Talking about the libraries, DNCC Mayor Atiqul Islam said, "This initiative will help youths know about the Father of the Nation's contribution and legacy, and proper history of the Liberation War."

"We are primarily planning to keep the initiative running for six months, and hope to continue all year round if the project gets a good response," he said.

## Most mayoral

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When asked why they are going to hold the polls amid the pandemic, Mohammad Hasanuzzaman, regional election officer in Chattogram, said EC wants to hold it by February 5; otherwise, a new schedule will have to be prepared.

He said they are yet to receive the official order regarding CCC polls. "Once we get it, we will take steps accordingly."

A total of seven candidates for the mayoral post and 269 for 55 ward councillor posts including women reserved seats are going to contest the polls, EC sources said.

Meanwhile, Consumers Association of Bangladesh, in a statement on Tuesday, demanded deferment of all elections including CCC polls considering the second wave of coronavirus.

## Saudia fined

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For the second-time mistake, three such flights will be suspended; for the third time, it will be one-week; and at least four-week suspension will come in case of fourth-time mistake.

Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh in a circular on December 4 announced that anyone wants to come to Bangladesh from December 5 must need Covid-19 negative certificate within 72 hours of their flight schedule.

CAAB came up with the strict measure to contain the second wave of Covid-19 pandemic.

Sources at the HSIA said around 1,400 passengers came to Dhaka by different

airlines without having Covid-19 negative certificates since December 5.

Mobile court at the HSIA on December 13 fined Air Asia, a Malaysia-based budget airline, Tk 1 lakh for carrying an identified Covid-19 positive passenger who had Covid-19 positive certificate with him.

The mobile court on December 12 also fined Biman Bangladesh Airlines Tk 30,000 for carrying six passengers without having Covid-19 negative certificate through RT-PCR test.

Earlier on December 11, Maldivian Airlines was fined Tk 2,38,000 for carrying passengers to Bangladesh without Covid-19 negative certificate.

## India respects

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association with Youth Opportunities.

"Bangladesh's success is a land mark and lesson for everyone in the region including India," he said, adding that India is looking forward to the joint commemoration of 50 years of the war in 2021, which is also the 50th year of diplomatic relations between the two neighbouring countries.

Aroma Dutta, MP; Prof Muntassir Mamoon; Nasiruddin Yousuf Bacchu; and Julian Francis OBE participated in the discussion moderated by Shahriar Kabir.

The panelists interacted with a cross-section of Bangladeshi youths that included illustrators, radio professionals, and entrepreneurs.

The High Commissioner also launched a writing competition, titled 'What Liberation Means to Me?', conducted by the High Commission of India in association with Youth Opportunities.

Bangladeshi youth between the ages of 18-35 can participate in the competition by submitting entries in Bangla and English.

**Legal Notice**  
IN THE SUPREME COURT OF BANGLADESH  
HIGH COURT DIVISION  
(STATUTORY ORIGINAL JURISDICTION)  
**COMPANY MATTER NO. 272 OF 2020**  
IN THE MATTER OF:  
An application under Section 43 of the Companies Act, 1994.  
IN THE MATTER OF  
Md. Kamrul Hassan and others  
-VERSUS-  
Md. NRB Equity Managements Ltd and others  
.....Petitioners  
.....Respondents  
Notice is hereby given to all concerned that an application under Section 43 of the Companies Act, 1994 for the protection of the pecuniary interest in the company was filed on behalf of the petitioner before the Hon'ble High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh. Upon preliminary hearing, the Hon'ble Company Bench, comprising of his Lordship Mr. Justice K.M. Kamrul Kader vide order dated 02.12.2020 was pleased to admit the said application and fixed the matter for hearing on 03.01.2021.  
Any person or persons having interest in the said application may appear either personally or through duly authorized Advocate on or before the date so fixed. Copy of the said application may be obtained from the office of the undersigned on payment of required costs.  
Yours faithfully  
(Sumaiya Aziz)  
Advocate, Supreme Court of Bangladesh  
Barrister, Lincoln's Inn  
Legal Capital  
Room-7050, Shaheed Suhrawardy Building  
Supreme Court of Bangladesh, Dhaka-1000.

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IN THE SUPREME COURT OF BANGLADESH  
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**COMPANY MATTER NO. 273 OF 2020**  
IN THE MATTER OF:  
An application under Section 233 of the Companies Act, 1994.  
AND  
IN THE MATTER OF  
Md. Kamrul Hassan and another  
-VERSUS-  
Md. NRB Equity Managements Ltd and others  
.....Petitioners  
.....Respondents  
Notice is hereby given to all concerned that an application under Section 233 of the Companies Act, 1994 for the protection of the pecuniary interest in the company was filed on behalf of the petitioner before the Hon'ble High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh. Upon preliminary hearing, the Hon'ble Company Bench, comprising of his Lordship Mr. Justice K.M. Kamrul Kader vide order dated 02.12.2020 was pleased to admit the said application and fixed the matter for hearing on 03.01.2021.  
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**INVITATION FOR TENDER**  
**Pubali Bank Limited**, the largest Online Commercial Bank in Bangladesh is hereby inviting sealed Tenders from the eligible Tenderers who can participate in the following Tender as defined in the tender documents of the under mentioned work as per terms & conditions stated below:  
1. Notice Inviting Quotation for **Firewall and IPS with Anti Malware Protection (AMP)** at Data Center of Pubali Bank Limited.  
Please visit <https://www.pubalibangla.com/Tender.asp> for more details, Interested Parties may purchase their Tender document by **24 December 2020** duly filled up all requirements.  
(Md. Helal Uddin)  
GM & Division Head  
**পুবালা ব্যাংক লিমিটেড**  
**PUBALI BANK LIMITED**  
**ICT OPERATION DIVISION**  
Head office, 26 Dilkusha C/A, Dhaka.

**বাংলাদেশ রেড ক্রিসেন্ট সোসাইটি**  
জাতীয় সদর দপ্তর  
৬৮৪-৬৮৬, রেড ক্রিসেন্ট সড়ক, বড় মগবাজার, ঢাকা-১২১৭  
স্মারক এসজি/এজিএম-বিজি-১০০৪/২০২০ তারিখঃ ১৫ ডিসেম্বর, ২০২০  
**বাংলাদেশ রেড ক্রিসেন্ট সোসাইটির ৪৮ তম বার্ষিক সাধারণ সভা-২০২০ সংক্রান্ত বিজ্ঞপ্তি**  
বাংলাদেশ রেড ক্রিসেন্ট সোসাইটির ৪৮ তম বার্ষিক সাধারণ সভা (AGM) ২৭ ডিসেম্বর, ২০২০ তারিখ রবিবার সকাল ১০.০০ টায় ১, ইন্সটান গার্ডেন রোডস্থ হলি ফ্যামিলি রেড ক্রিসেন্ট মেডিকেল কলেজ মিলনায়তন, ঢাকায় অনুষ্ঠিত হবে (রেজিস্ট্রেশন শুরু হবে সকাল ৯.০০ টায়)। বাংলাদেশ রেড ক্রিসেন্ট সোসাইটির গঠনতন্ত্রের ১৪(১) ধারা মোতাবেক বার্ষিক সাধারণ সভার আলোচ্যসূচী নিম্নরূপ ঃ  
**আলোচ্যসূচীঃ**  
১। ৩০ ডিসেম্বর, ২০১৯ তারিখে অনুষ্ঠিত সোসাইটির ৪৭ তম বার্ষিক সাধারণ সভার (AGM) কার্যবিবরণী নিশ্চিতকরণ।  
২। সোসাইটির ২০২০ সনের বার্ষিক প্রতিবেদন অনুমোদনের জন্য উপস্থাপন।  
৩। সোসাইটির ২০১৯ সনের অডিট রিপোর্ট বিবেচনা ও অনুমোদনের জন্য উপস্থাপন।  
৪। সোসাইটির ২০২০ সনের সংশোধিত বাজেট (আয়-ব্যয়) পেশ ও অনুমোদনের জন্য উপস্থাপন।  
৫। সোসাইটির ২০২১ সনের বার্ষিক বাজেট অনুমোদনের জন্য উপস্থাপন।  
৬। বিবিধ ঃ  
সোসাইটির ম্যানেজিং বোর্ড-এর সম্মানিত সদস্য, ইউনিটসমূহের ডেলিগেট, অনারারী সদস্য, স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার কল্যাণ মন্ত্রণালয়, দুর্গোৎসব ব্যবস্থাপনা ও ত্রাণ মন্ত্রণালয়, সমাজ কল্যাণ মন্ত্রণালয় এবং প্রতিরক্ষা মন্ত্রণালয়ের প্রতিনিধিদের সমন্বয়ে গঠিত সোসাইটির জেনারেল বডি-এর সম্মানিত সদস্যবৃন্দকে উক্ত সভায় যোগদানের জন্য অনুরোধ করা যাচ্ছে।  
মোঃ ফিরোজ সোলাহ উদ্দিন  
মহাসচিব