



Informal Sector Workers lack legal, social protection

Porimol Palma and Shaheen Mollah

Thirty-year-old Belal Uddin was clueless about the lurking danger.

With an iron rod, he was removing bricks at a construction site in Munshiganj's Gazaria area on January 13.

Accidentally, he hit a power cable with the rod and suffered an electric shock. His face, chest, shoulders, hands and abdomen were severely burnt.

As there was no hospital for treating burns victims in the area, the ill-fated worker was whisked off to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH). He was treated there for more than three months.

Doctors said it would take a few more months for him to recover fully.

The poor worker is in severe financial crisis, as he has already spent around Tk 3.5 lakh for treatment.

"The contractor provided only Tk 40,000. I had to borrow the rest of the money," Belal from Chapainawabganj's Char Alatulua village told The Daily Star.

He also contacted the building's owner, who had

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A construction worker stands on a frame of a pillar with sharp iron rods all around him. With no safety gear on, he can fall and hurt himself. Workers' rights come up in discussions organised to mark May Day every year but their safety is still largely ignored more than a century after the first May Day observed in 1886.

They toil for
12 hours a
day, not 8

Finds a survey on
Bangladeshi workers

Staff Correspondent

Workers in Bangladesh on average work for 12 hours a day, says a survey conducted by the Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies (BILS).

"This is blatant violation of the eight-hour working day recognised by the International Labour Organization," said BILS Assistant Executive Director Syed Sultan Uddin Ahmmed.

The May Day's main demand was eight hours of working day, but in most cases it is violated in

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HOLIDAY

The office of *The Daily Star* will remain closed today, the May Day. Therefore, the newspaper will not be published tomorrow. However, *The Daily Star* will continue to serve the readers through its online edition.

PHOTO: ANTSUR RAHMAN

INJURIES, DEATHS IN ACCIDENTS AT WORKPLACE

	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012
DEAD	1,240	951	465	1,727	233
INJURED	544	907	444	2,307	172

SOURCE: BANGLADESH OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY, HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT FOUNDATION

Free fertiliser, seeds for haor farmers

PM announces govt aid for flood-hit farmers for their next crop, says no chance of food crisis

UNB, Sunamganj

Issuing a warning that no one will be spared if any negligence is found in haor embankment construction, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said haor farmers would get free agricultural inputs for the next crop.

"The government is not only providing relief materials to the flood-hit people, it will also distribute all necessary agricultural inputs free of cost for their next crop," she told a public gathering in Sunamganj.

Hasina went there to see for herself

the flood-affected areas where Boro crops on over two lakh hectares of land were damaged, causing a colossal loss to the livelihood, fish and livestock of farmers.

During her speech at Shaheed Ali Model High School ground in Shalla upazila, the PM said, "If there is any negligence in embankment construction, we will surely take action against the people concerned. We are very much aware of that."

She said her government would provide seeds and fertiliser and other agri-inputs which are needed for the

next crop in the affected areas.

The PM also said the bank interest rate for the haor areas had been halved, and the repayment had been suspended.

Hasina said the government would appoint dealers at the union level in the haor areas to operate Open Market Sale (OMS) programme for food grains. "We will ensure food security with this system."

She asked the food minister to take immediate steps in this regard.

Assuring the flood-affected people

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Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina distributes relief materials among flood-hit people at Shaheed Ali Model High School ground in Sunamganj's Shalla upazila yesterday. A child, bottom left, trying to salvage some grains from damaged crops. Farmers loading, bottom right, partially ripe crops on a boat near Shanir Haor in Tahirpur of the district.

PHOTO: PMO/ MINTU DESHWARA/ COLLECTED



TOP!
QUOTE

"I call upon my fans and well-wishers to stand by the people of haor areas before I request them to watch my movie Save our real heroes and heroines."

FILM ACTRESS **PoRI MoNI**
ON HER FACEBOOK PAGE.

Heated debate over VAT law

Finance minister says govt to stop any agitation by businesses against VAT law

Staff Correspondent

Business leaders were involved in a heated exchange of words with Finance Minister AMA Muhith during a meeting between the FBCCI and NBR yesterday over the implementation of a new VAT law.

During the exchange, the leaders threatened to take to the streets and the minister, annoyed by this, said he would stop their agitation.

The meeting between the National Board of Revenue (NBR) and the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) at the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in the city was attended by representatives of various

trade bodies and senior government officials.

At one point, Abu Motalieb, general secretary of Byabosayee Oikya Forum, threatened to go for street agitation if the proposals and demands of small and medium businesses were not considered and met.

"If you do not accept the proposals of the FBCCI, then I think, businessmen will once again take to the street, like students, and this law will again fail. I think you will consider. There is still time. Implement the law taking all these into consideration," said Motalieb, also a director of FBCCI.

The government is planning to implement the new VAT law termed VAT and

No school for haor kids for nearly a month

Mintu Deshwara, from Tahirpur, Sunamganj

Children in flood-hit areas of Sunamganj have remained absent from school for nearly a month, mostly because there are waters all around making it difficult for them to travel and parents want them to help out in saving crops gone under water.

There is almost zero presence of students in 45 government primary schools located in and around Matian haor, Shonir haor and Tanguar haor, worst affected areas in Sunamganj, said Golam Rabbi, assistant education officer of Tahirpur upazila that has 133 primary schools.

One of them, Jaypur Primary School has 290 students.

Acting headmaster Md Hadiuzzaman said 150 of them would have to come to school by boat if they wanted to attend classes during floods.

"They are unable to come to school when the water in haors increases."

Besides, many students have been working with parents to process the damaged crops, Hadiuzzaman said.

Hiran Das, a student of class four of Ananda Nagar Primary School, was seen

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SEASON 6
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