

**Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Ministry of Labour and Employment**

8th Implementation Status of National Action Plan (NAP) on the Labour Sector of Bangladesh (2021-2026)

At the 9th session of the EU-Bangladesh Joint Economic Commission in October 2019, Bangladesh committed to implementing an Action Plan to uphold labour rights and workplace safety. Consequently, the National Action Plan (NAP) on the Labour Sector of Bangladesh (2021–2026) was developed in consultation with the EU and shared on 1 July 2021. The NAP outlines the government’s commitment to legal and administrative reforms and practical measures aimed at improving working conditions and protecting workers' well-being. Its specific objectives include:

- Aligning Labour Laws with International Labour Organization (ILO) standards.
- Eliminate child labour by 2025.
- Preventing violence, harassment, unfair labour practices, and anti-union activities.
- Promoting social dialogue.
- Enhancing trade union activities.
- Reducing the backlog of cases in labour courts.
- Streamlining complaint management systems.
- Increasing the number of labour inspectors to ensure the full functionality of the labour inspectorate.
- Ensuring workplace safety.
- Ratifying ILO instruments.

In line with the agreement with the European Union, the Ministry of Labour and Employment publishes the implementation status of the National Action Plan (NAP) biannually, in April and October. The NAP highlights the importance of engaging tripartite stakeholders and, the ILO and development partners for its implementation. To ensure effective execution, the Government of Bangladesh established a Tripartite Implementation and Monitoring Committee (TIMC) through a circular on 11 August 2021. The TIMC is responsible for monitoring progress on the time-bound actions outlined in the NAP and providing overall guidance. As of now, ten TIMC meetings have been held with the latest one held on 26 October 2025. The progress on National Action Plan (NAP):

Action 1 Bring Bangladesh labour laws in compliance with ILO standards on freedom of association and collective bargaining

Action 1.1 Amendment of Bangladesh Labour Rules (BLR), 2015

The Bangladesh Labour Rules, 2015 were amended and published via gazette notification on 1 September 2022 (S.R.O No.-284-Law/2022), incorporating recommendations from the ILO Committee of Experts.

Action 1.2 Amendment of the Bangladesh Labour Act, 2006 (as amended in 2018)

To align the Bangladesh Labour Act, 2006, more in line with international labour standards, the Tripartite Law Review Committee (TLRC) and the Tripartite Consultative Council (TCC) held a series of meetings.

Both employers and workers sides engaged in constructive debates in those sessions. While the CEACR recommendations on Convention 81, 87 and 98 were the main focus, the TLRC and finally the TCC considered addressing some additional issues including the maternity benefits, forced labour and sexual harassment at workplaces.

The draft of the proposed amendment was presented before the Advisory Council in the Cabinet Division on 23 October 2025. The proposed amendment was approved by the Advisory Council subject to vetting by the Legislative Division of the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs. The draft has been sent to the Legislative Division. It will be sent to the President office soon. The promulgation of the ordinance for amending the BLA is anticipated to be completed before the next ILO Governing Body meeting in November 2025.

Action 1.3 Amendment of Bangladesh Labour Rules, 2015, after BLA amendment

Further amendments to the Bangladesh Labour Rules 2015 (as amended in 2022) will be initiated after completion of the ongoing amendment of BLA 2006.

Action 1.4 Adoption of Export Processing Zone (EPZ) Labour Rules

Bangladesh EPZ Labour Rules, 2022 had been published through gazette notification on 4 October 2022 (S.R.O No.-295-Law/2022 dated 4 October 2022). It contains provisions for-

- Safeguarding against discrimination and anti-Workers Welfare Association (WWA) activities, and upholding collective bargaining rights
- Formation of federations and employers' associations
- DIFE inspections within EPZs
- Prevention of misconduct, including sexual harassment and violence, against female workers.

Action 1.5 Amendment of Bangladesh EPZ Labour Act, 2019

The Government has been reviewing the EPZ Labour Act to ensure its alignment with international labour standards. In support of this effort, the Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority (BEPZA) continues to collaborate closely with the International Labour Organization (ILO) to enhance labour standards in the EPZs. Significant progress has been made in this regard. Notable developments include:

- **15 January 2025 (Reformation of TSC):** A 16-member Tripartite Standing Committee (TSC), which was reformed on 15 January 2025, is actively reviewing the amendment proposals. As of June 2025, the Committee has convened three meetings.
- **30 January 2025 (Zone visit):** ILO representatives (Labour Law and Labour Standards Specialists from the Decent Work Team South Asia and the ILO Technical Officer in Dhaka) visited Adamjee EPZ on January 30, 2025. During their visit, they discussed labor rights, existing benefits, Workers Welfare Association (WWA) formation, and collective bargaining processes with WWA members and management of two industries. They also reviewed Charters of Demands and Collective Bargaining Agreements and exchanged views with BEPZA inspectors on the inspection mechanism in the EPZs.
- **16 February 2025 (3rd TSC meeting):** On February 16, 2025, ILO representatives including member of Technical Committee attended the third TSC meeting and exchanged views with the Tripartite Committee working on the amendment of the EPZ Labour Act.

- **19 May 2025 (Two-Year Action Plan):** BEPZA and ILO signed a Letter of Intent on 19 May 2025 to implement a two-year action plan (2025–2027) focused on labour reform. The plan also includes technical collaboration in three key areas: Labour Administration; Responsible Business Conduct; Employment Injury Scheme. As part of this collaboration, a zero draft will be developed with the technical assistance of ILO to amend the EPZ Labour Act to align it with international labour standards (ILS). The process involves:
 - **Conducting technical dialogues** with the Tripartite Committee to review and refine the proposed legislation.
 - **Facilitating high-level consultations** with BEPZA and other key stakeholders to present the draft text and address the comments of the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CEACR).
- **14 August 2025 (Follow up Meeting):** A follow-up meeting between BEPZA and ILO Dhaka was held on August 14, 2025 to review a draft Concept Note for implementing the Two-Year Action Plan. The ILO confirmed that the "Zero Draft" would be shared shortly and then presented to the Tripartite Committee.

It is expected that the entire process of amending the Bangladesh EPZ Labour Act, 2019 will be completed in consultation with the ILO.

Brining SEZs under Bangladesh Labour Act, 2006:

To bring SEZs under the Bangladesh Labour Act (BLA) 2006, the Section 34 of the BEZA Act was amended in November 2023. This amendment extends the BLA 2006 to SEZs, ensuring labour rights such as trade union formation, collective bargaining, and inspections by DIFE.

Action 2 Eliminate child labour in all its forms by 2025

Action 2.1 Regulatory and policy framework for the elimination of child labour

Bangladesh ratified the ILO Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138) on 22 March 2022. Accordingly, the hazardous work list was expanded to include five sectors: fish drying, street-based informal work, brick or stone production, informal tailoring and garment production, and waste management. The revised list, covering 43 sectors, was published on 29 April 2022. Additionally, the National Plan of Action (NPA) for eliminating child labour (2021–2025) was revised and published on 12 December 2021, with the Bangla translation released in January 2024.

2.2 Strengthen investigations and increase the number of convictions for child labour

To strengthen child labour inspections, the number of labour inspectors is gradually increasing, as outlined in Section 7. A Special Yearly Plan of Action, active since 2022, targets child labour in high-risk areas. As of September 2025, 602 child labour cases have been filed with the Labour Court, with 220 resolved. Information on last two year cases of child labour elimination is given below:

Fiscal year	No. of cases filed at labour court	No. of cases resolved	Amount of fine
2023-2024	18	5	42,000 BDT
2024-2025	16	7	29,000BDT

The Ministry of Labour and Employment works with public authorities, NGOs, and civil society to combat child labour. Regular meetings of the National and Divisional Councils, along with District and Upazila Committees, monitor progress. As of September 2025, 13 meetings of the National Child Labour Welfare Council, 96 of the Divisional Councils, and 420 District Level Committees have been held.

2.3 *Projects on (hazardous) child labour/child labour survey*

2.3.1 *Implementation of a Government funded project*

The implementation of the government-funded project "Eradication of Hazardous Child Labour from Bangladesh (4th Phase)" was completed in June 2024. The initiative successfully removed 100,000 children from hazardous work, providing six months of non-formal education, four months of skill development training, and a monthly stipend of Taka 1,000 for ten months, paid via mobile banking. Additionally, each child received Taka 13,000 as seed money to start small businesses.

2.3.2 *Conduct a child labour survey by Bangladesh*

The National Child Labour Survey 2022, conducted by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) with ILO support, was published in March 2024. The survey revealed a decrease in hazardous child labour, from 1.280 million (3.2%) in 2013 to 1.068 million (2.7%) in 2022. However, the total number of children aged 5-17 engaged in child labour slightly increased, from 1.698 million (4.3%) in 2013 to 1.776 million (4.4%) in 2022. This survey helped the government understand the trends of child labour and take appropriate measures accordingly.

2.3.3 *Design and implement programmemes of action*

A feasibility study for a new project to eliminate child labour across all sectors of the economy was completed in June 2023, with the findings shared during a workshop on 19 July 2023. Accordingly, the Ministry of Labour and Employment (MoLE) plans to implement the 'Elimination and Rehabilitation of Child Labour' project with an estimated budget of 1,000 crore BDT. The Development Project Proposal (DPP) has been prepared, and the administrative process for project approval is underway.

In January 2024, the International Labour Organization (ILO) launched a new project, "Advancing Decent Work in Bangladesh," which includes a component focused on reducing hazardous child labour. Additionally, other relevant ministries and departments are running supportive programmes to contribute to the elimination of child labour.

2.3.4 *Enhance Child Labour Unit of MOLE*

The Child Labour Unit of MOLE has been strengthened with additional manpower headed by a Deputy Secretary along with required support staff.

2.4 *Awareness raising action and process*

Awareness-raising activities are being conducted on a regular basis, with financial allocations made from the Ministry of Labour and Employment's (MoLE) regular revenue budget to support Divisional and District level committees in organizing meetings, seminars, and workshops. Between October 2023 and June 2024, eight workshops, supported by UNICEF, were held.

Action 3 Combat violence against workers, harassment, unfair labour practices and anti-union discrimination

Action 3.1 Preventive measures

3.1.1 Conduct regular training for awareness rising for responsible factory security staff, police and employers to prevent violence, harassment, unfair labour practices and anti-union acts

The Department of Labour (DOL), the Industrial Police, and the Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority (BEPZA) regularly conduct awareness-raising programmes for factory security staff, police, and employers to prevent violence, harassment, unfair labour practices, and anti-union activities.

From July 2020 to 30 September 2025, the DOL has trained 55,032 workers, management staff, and government officials through five-day "Workers' Education" and four-week "Industrial Relations" courses at its Industrial Relations Institutes (IRIs) and Labour Welfare Centres (LWCs), with nearly 41% of participants being female. Additionally, sensitization workshops were arranged for Industrial Police officials from Narayanganj, Gazipur, Chittagong, Khulna and Dhaka, focusing on the use of minimum force and respect for workers' rights during labour protests. From January 2023 to September 2025, the Industrial Police trained 1043 of its personnel.

BEPZA conducts regular trainings & awareness programmes for workers, employers/management, security staff and Industrial Police of Bangladesh. From January-September, 2025, BEPZA has provided training to total 12,162 participants including workers, employers/management, security staff and Industrial Police on Bangladesh EPZ Labour Rules, 2022, Unfair Labour Practices, Decent Work, Prevention of discrimination against anti WWA activities, Prevention of Violence & Harassment, Social Dialogue, Effective Workplace Co-operation, Fire Safety, Health & Hygiene, etc.

With a view to promoting decent work and ensuring the labour rights in the EPZs, BEPZA in collaboration with ILO Better Work Bangladesh, has trained 25 Inspectors (Social & Environmental, Doctors and Engineers & IR Officers) on ToT basis on the Workplace Cooperation and Communication, Grievance Handling procedures at Factory-Level & Collective Bargaining with the best IR Practices, and Promotion of Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Management Systems. The trainers will continue the ILO Better Work programme at the enterprises in EPZs. Noteworthy that, 17 Doctors from 08 EPZs received training on Employment Injury Scheme (EIS) Pilot 'Disability Assessment' on 29 May 2025 in collaboration with GIZ.

3.1.2 Develop and regularly update (online) databases to provide an overview of number and nature of training programmes as well as number of trainees among factory security staff, police, employers and workers

In March 2023, BEPZA established an online database (<https://bepza.gov.bd/training-database>) to record the information of the trainees segregated by name, designation, factory, WWA, age, sex etc. Simultaneously, the record of training is maintained manually.

3.1.3 Develop a compendium in Bangla language of all existing and relevant laws, rules and regulations (including the use of minimum force and applicable sanctions or penalties for any proven violation) in order to train and raise awareness among industrial police and relevant law enforcement agencies (LEAs)

On 1 December 2023, the Industrial Police published a compendium in Bangla, compiling all relevant laws, rules, and regulations regarding the use of minimum force, along with applicable sanctions and

penalties for violations. This compendium aims to enhance the understanding of normative measures among the Industrial Police and law enforcement agencies.

3.1.4 Continue to train and provide clear instructions to the industrial police and relevant LEAs on the use of minimum force, respect of human rights and labour rights, including on trade union rights and civil liberties during labour protests

The Department of Labour's Industrial Relations Institutes (IRIs) in Gazipur, Khulna, and Chittagong conduct training sessions for industrial police officials on workers' rights in the workplace. Since January 2025 IRIs have conducted five training sessions for industrial police and other law enforcement agencies. The IRIs continue to offer training on labour law and human rights-related legislation.

The Department of Labour (DoL) has been sensitizing industrial police personnel through seminars on using minimum force and respecting workers' rights during labour protests. Industrial Police personnel from Dhaka, Gazipur, and Narayanganj regularly attend these seminars. In collaboration with the ILO's "Advancing Decent Work in Bangladesh" project, the DoL organizes training, workshops, seminars, and focus group discussions to improve the investigation and resolution of violence, harassment, unfair labour practices, and anti-union activities. From January 2021 to June 2024, the Industrial Police conducted 33072 hours of training, attended by 6863 male and 786 female members. Detailed curricula and other information are available at <https://iphq.police.gov.bd/training>.

Action 3.2 Investigation of violence and harassment against workers, anti-union discrimination and unfair labour practices

3.2.1 Continue to provide regular training and clear instructions (including monitoring of instructions) for all DOL staff handling complaints on how to comply with the SOPs on anti-union discrimination and unfair labour practices against workers

Regular training and guidance are being provided to Department of Labour (DoL) staff responsible for handling complaints of anti-union discrimination and unfair labour practices.

To enhance institutional capacity for promoting fair labour practices and strengthening workers' rights to freedom of association, the Department of Labour, in collaboration with the International Labour Organization (ILO), organized two capacity-building workshops on Unfair Labour Practices (ULP) and Anti-Union Discrimination (AUD) from 26-28 June 2025 and from 15-17 August respectively.

The two workshops represent significant progress in strengthening institutional capacities within the Department of Labour to ensure fair labour practices and safeguard the fundamental right to freedom of association.

These initiatives were taken in the form of ILO's ongoing technical cooperation under the Advancing Decent Work in Bangladesh Project, aiming to align national enforcement mechanisms with international labour standards, particularly ILO Conventions Nos. 87 and 98.

3.2.2 Continue to provide regular information to all workers on their rights and to complain and access legal support in case those rights are violated/ abused

DoL officials regularly provide information on labour rights during general trade union meetings, including procedures for lodging complaints and legal avenues for redress in cases of violations. If an employer fails to comply with recommended remedial actions, a case may be filed with the Labour Court on behalf of the affected workers. Additionally, the DoL continues to conduct training for workers on complaints and remedial issues under the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for addressing unfair labour practices and anti-union discrimination.

3.2.3 Continue to sensitize managers/ employers, security staff on how they can support the investigations

The Department of Labour (DoL) provides training to factory security staff and managers/employers through its Industrial Relations Institutes (IRIs) and Labour Welfare Centres (LWCs), covering essential information on complaint management and investigations. The number of training programmes conducted by the IRIs and LWCs is detailed in Actions 4.2 and 3.1.1. The Industrial Police continues to engage with employers and factory management to sensitize security personnel on violence prevention and support investigations in cases of alleged violence and harassment. Data on these efforts can be found in Section 3.1.4.

3.2.4 Continue to provide regular training and clear instructions (including monitoring of instructions) for all personnel handling cases of alleged acts of violence and harassment against workers, including in cases of protests

The relevant ministries, including the Ministry of Labour and Employment, the Ministry of Home Affairs, and the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, oversee the activities of subordinate agencies in handling cases, including those involving alleged acts of violence and harassment against workers. The judiciary, prosecutorial services, and law enforcement agencies (LEAs) receive regular training to improve their capacity to efficiently manage these cases and complaints.

Moreover, gender-based violence and harassment (GBVH) in the world of work remains a key obstacle to achieving decent work and equality. Recognizing this, the Department of Labour, in collaboration with the International Labour Organization (ILO), organized a three-day workshop on Understanding Gender-Based Violence in the World of Work from 10-12 October 2025.

The three-day workshop successfully strengthened the knowledge and sensitivity of DoL officials on gender-based violence and harassment in the world of work. It marked a significant step toward building institutional commitment to gender equality, workplace dignity, and the principles of Decent Work.

In the ongoing amendment of the BLA, any kind of violence and harassment at workplaces has been prohibited, which symbolises the Bangladesh government's positive response to this end.

3.2.5 Rapid and thorough investigation of alleged cases of violence and harassment of the police against workers, including in cases of legal protests

Complaints related to anti-union discrimination are addressed according to a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) with a specified time frame. The Ministry of Home Affairs provides training to the industrial police and relevant Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) to raise awareness of issues related to violence and harassment against workers, ensuring thorough investigations, including those arising from legal protests.

A CFA Case Monitoring Committee, established on 23 January 2023, identifies long-pending cases to expedite the provision of remedies. To date, the Committee has held five meetings. Additionally, the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs actively facilitates the expeditious resolution of pending cases.

Action 3.3 Ensure timely and dissuasive sanctions/convictions and related information

3.3.1 Review for possible upward revision of fines for employers for anti-union discrimination and unfair labour practices in the BLA

The Government of Bangladesh prioritizes implementing dissuasive measures against anti-union discrimination and unfair labour practices. Following extensive discussions within the Tripartite Consultative Council (TCC), a consensus was reached to amend Section 291(1) of the Bangladesh Labour Act, 2006. The proposed amendment aims to increase fines by three times, underscoring a strong commitment to enhancing enforcement and promoting fair labour practices.

3.3.2 Compile and regularly update statistics on complaints received and of alleged incidents of violence and harassment, their follow-up including remedies for victims and sanctions/convictions imposed

All complaints regarding anti-union discrimination and unfair labour practices are addressed within the timeframe specified in the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP). From January 2020 to 30 September 2025, a total of 123 complaints were submitted to the Department of Labour (DoL). Of these, 118 have been resolved: 116 were amicably settled, and 2 cases were filed in Labour Courts. Investigations are ongoing for the remaining 05 complaints. A comprehensive record of proceedings related to these cases is maintained in a publicly accessible database managed by the DoL, available at <http://103.48.18.197/en/antiunion>.

Action 3.4 Promoting Social Dialogue

3.4.1 Developing institutional mechanism and capacity building for national and sectoral Tripartite Consultative Councils (TCCs)

The self-assessments for the National Tripartite Consultative Council (NTCC) and the Ready-Made Garment Tripartite Consultative Council (RMG-TCC) has generated a report titled “Assessment of the Effectiveness and Inclusiveness of the National Tripartite Consultative Council (NTCC)”, along with recommendations and an “Action Plan to Enhance the Effectiveness and Inclusiveness of the National TCC.” The ILO Country Office is set to mobilize technical assistance to support the implementation of this Action Plan.

3.4.3 Develop and implement a roadmap on social partners’ awareness and capacity building for social dialogue and collective bargaining at all levels, including sectoral and national levels

On 8-9 October 2025, the two-day high-level tripartite conference, jointly organized by the Ministry of Labour and Employment and the International Labour Organization, served as a national platform to promote effective, inclusive, and sustainable social dialogue in Bangladesh.

The conference aimed to:

- Strengthen institutional mechanisms for tripartite dialogue;
- Share regional and international best practices on collective bargaining and workplace cooperation;
- Identify priorities and practical recommendations for advancing social dialogue as a driver of decent work and sustainable labour reform.

Closing remarks from BEF, NCCWE, MoLE, and ILO reaffirmed the shared commitment to strengthening Bangladesh’s labour governance system. The conference concluded with a consensus to develop an implementation roadmap for the proposed National Tripartite Social Dialogue (NTSD) Forum and to convene regular review meetings under the Advancing Decent Work in Bangladesh (ADWIB) project framework.

Action 4 Increase the success rate of application for registration (paper & online)

Action 4.1 Explore and implement ways of further simplifying the registration process through tripartite consultations

4.1.1 Overhaul the existing online Registration System

As part of this broader effort, the Department of Labour (DoL) introduced online trade union registration services through myGov in 2021. However, during implementation, several operational and technical challenges were identified, including data integration issues, and constraints in aligning the system with the specific administrative workflow of DoL's registration processes.

To address these challenges and ensure a more efficient and user-friendly service, the Department of Labour, with technical support from the International Labour Organization (ILO) has initiated the development of a dedicated DoL software platform for online trade union registration and monitoring.

The development of a dedicated online trade union registration system marks a major milestone in modernizing TU registration System in Bangladesh.

With continued support from the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Department of Labour remains committed to strengthening freedom of association in Bangladesh.

The ability of workers to freely organize and register trade unions is a key pillar of freedom of association. Recognizing the importance of ensuring a fair, transparent, and efficient trade union registration system, the International Labour Organization (ILO) commissioned an independent consultant to conduct an assessment of the current Trade Union Registration and Practices in Bangladesh.

The assessment was undertaken in close consultation with the Department of Labour (DoL) and involved participation from trade union leaders, registration officials, and relevant stakeholders. The Independent Assessment of Trade Union Registration and Practices provided a comprehensive and evidence-based understanding of the current challenges and opportunities for improvement in Bangladesh's trade union registration system.

The findings and recommendations will serve as a foundation for future reforms, digital innovations, and policy alignment efforts, ensuring that the trade union registration process becomes more accessible, transparent, and consistent with international good practices.

The Department of Labour, in partnership with the ILO and other development partners, remains committed to taking forward these recommendations as part of its broader agenda to strengthen freedom of association, social dialogue, and decent work governance in Bangladesh.

Department of Labour (DoL), with technical support from the International Labour Organization (ILO) under the Advancing Decent Work in Bangladesh Project, organized a Dialogue between DoL and Trade Union Federations on Simplifying Trade Union Registration on 18 August 2025.

The event aimed to bring together government officials, trade union representatives, and development partners to jointly identify challenges, exchange perspectives, and explore practical measures to make trade union registration more streamlined, transparent, and consistent with international labour standards.

The outcomes of this dialogue will guide future collaboration towards creating a more transparent and efficient trade union registration system in Bangladesh

These efforts are geared towards creating a more inclusive, transparent, and efficient system for trade union registration in Bangladesh. From October 2021 to September 2025, a total of 2095 applications were processed. Among these, 1126 applications were registered as trade unions, 257 applications were rejected, and 787 applications were disposed of according to Section 182(2) of the Bangladesh Labour Act, 2006. This section states that if any essential information is missing in an application, the Director General must notify the trade union within twelve days, and the union has fifteen days to respond. If no response is received within the stipulated time, the application is disposed of.

In the ongoing BLA amendment, the TU registration has been made simpler so workers can enjoy freedom of association. The least number of workers required for forming a trade union is now 20 instead of 20%. The highest number of TU has been made five from three. Required number of documents, personal information and meetings have been reduced. The confidentiality of workers involving TU has been upheld and providing the information on the number of workers in an establishment has been made mandatory.

4.1.2 Establish a pre-application service at the Department of Labour (DOL)

The pre-application service desk, established in January 2021 at the Registrar of Trade Unions (RTU) under the Department of Labour (DoL), provides technical support to applicants using the online registration portal. From January 2021 to September 2025, it assisted 2,970 applicants, ensuring a more transparent and user-friendly registration process. A key recommendation from the 13 January 2025 and the 18 August 2025 dialogue was to extend digitization to cover all aspects of the trade union registration process, further enhancing efficiency, transparency, and accessibility.

4.1.3 Continuing with the provision for offline registration system

The offline registration system remains operational alongside the online system. The Department of Labour (DoL) promotes online registration through awareness activities and support, resulting in an increase in trade union registrations from 60% in 2013 to 89.24% by September 2025. As of 30 September 2025, 10,051 trade unions have been registered, representing approximately 3.4 million members. In the Ready-Made Garment (RMG) sector, the number of trade unions has grown from 132 in January 2013 to 1494 by 30 September 2025.

Action 4.2 Training workers and employers on Trade Union Registration Process

Training on the trade union registration process is regularly conducted by the Department of Labour (DoL) through its Industrial Relations Institutes (IRIs) and Labour Welfare Centers (LWCs). From July 2020 to September 2025, the DoL trained 55032 individuals, including workers, employers, and government officials. In collaboration with the Software Company, the DoL will hold three day-long workshops on the DoL's dedicated Trade Union Registration management System (TU-RMS) in October 2025 for DoL officials. Additionally, DoL registrars and officers from divisional and regional offices participate in regular in-house training programmes, which focus on efficient registration practices for both offline and online platforms.

Action 4.3 Publicly accessible online database on registration to be made fully operational and regularly updated

The publicly accessible online database for trade union registration has been operational since September 2021. Designated officials from the Department of Labour (DoL) are responsible for regularly updating the database, with training provided to ensure efficient management. Statistics on trade union applications- granted, filed (because no action can be taken for being non-responsive), and rejected- are consistently updated. The database will be fully integrated with the dedicated DoL software for online trade union registration, currently under development, ensuring real-time

synchronization and data consistency between internal administrative processes and public information access.

Action 5 Eliminate the backlog of cases at labour courts, including in the Dhaka Metropolitan Area

5.1 Take steps to make the three newly established Labour Courts fully functional

The three labour courts established in 2019 in Sylhet, Barishal and Rangpur have been made fully functional. Judges have been appointed, and representatives from both employers' and workers' groups have been nominated.

5.2 Establishment of new labour courts in Narayanganj, Gazipur, Cumilla and Faridpur districts

New labour courts have been established in Narayanganj, Gazipur, and Cumilla which are now fully operational. Although the proposed Labour Court in Faridpur was deemed unviable, a new Labour Court in Mymensingh is under development, despite not being part of the original NAP.

5.3 Deployment of one Additional Judge (Member) to the Labour Appellate Tribunal

On 31 August 2022, the Ministry of Public Administration approved the creation of an additional Judge (Member) position for the Labour Appellate Tribunal, along with the required support staff. The latest proposal for deploying the new Judge and recruiting three support staff was sent to the Cabinet Division on 03 March 2025. It is expected that the proposal will be approved soon by the Committee of Secretaries for Administrative Reform.

5.4 Establish pilot processes to classify cases in consultation with the Judges of the Labour Courts with a view to addressing case backlogs

The ILO has launched the "Advancing Decent Work in Bangladesh" project, which focuses on improving the efficiency of judicial bodies in handling cases. This includes the development of an Online Case Management System and capacity-building initiatives for courts through additional training. A prototype version of online case management system in one or two labour courts will be introduced by December 2025. Also, to enhance court facilities, the Ministry of Labour and Employment (MoLE) has moved the Labour Courts from temporary spaces to permanent locations. This effort has significantly upgraded the court facilities.

5.5 Independent conciliation and arbitration system as a means of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)

5.5.1 Establish a Conciliation and Arbitration Cell at DoL to provide secretariat service and monitor individual cases as need be

The Department of Labour (DoL) established a three-member Conciliation and Arbitration Cell on 29 September 2021 to provide secretariat services to both conciliators and the arbitration panel. From 2013 to September 2025, the DoL received 116 conciliation applications. Of these, 113 disputes were successfully resolved, and 3 applications remain under consideration.

It is mention that after amendment of BLA incorporate a provision for a comprehensive Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanism to ensure workers have access to remedies. The detailed framework for this ADR mechanism will be outlined through the upcoming revision of the Bangladesh Labour Rules (BLR).

5.5.2 Develop an SOP for conciliation system through tripartite consultations

Following multiple tripartite consultation meetings and workshops held between 2021 and 2023 with ILO support, the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for Conciliation was finalized by the National Tripartite Consultative Council (NTCC) on 2 February 2023. The Ministry of Labour and Employment

(MoLE) has notified the SOP on 16 July 2023. Industrial disputes are now being settled by conciliators in accordance with the timeframes and procedures outlined in the SOP.

5.5.3 Appointment of conciliators through gazette notification

On 10 March 2022, the MOLE, through a gazette notification, assigned 15 conciliators with a view to settling industrial disputes.

5.5.4 Develop an SOP for arbitration system through tripartite consultations

The Department of Labour has signed an implementation agreement with the ILO, which includes technical assistance in developing the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP). The draft SOP was shared with the ILO, and their technical feedback was incorporated to enhance and finalize the document. A workshop focused on alternative dispute resolution processes, including the finalization of the SOP on arbitration, was held in January 2025. The draft SOP will soon be placed in the Tripartite Consultative Council (TCC).

5.5.5 Establish an arbitrators' panel

The "Guideline for Arbitrators in Industrial Dispute Settlement" was developed by the Department of Labour (DoL) in consultation with its field offices. The draft was shared with the ILO Country Office in Dhaka for feedback. The Ministry of Labour and Employment is currently reviewing the ILO's comments and technical inputs. Following approval, steps will be taken to appoint the panel of arbitrators.

5.5.6 Promote conciliation and arbitration system as ADR

To promote conciliation and arbitration in labour dispute resolution, the ILO's "Advancing Decent Work in Bangladesh" project convened an academic discussion titled "Exploring the Role of Conciliation and Arbitration in Resolving Labour Disputes in Bangladesh" with tripartite plus constituents on 13 May 2024. Participants agreed that while conciliation and arbitration are crucial, their effectiveness depends on systemic reforms, capacity building, and stronger enforcement. Strengthening these mechanisms would support a more stable industrial environment for both workers and employers.

Key recommendations came out from the discussion included establishing a monitoring body for pending trade union registrations, unfair labour practices (ULP), and anti-union discrimination (AUD); developing a digital case management system; amending the Bangladesh Labour Act (BLA) to permit arbitration for individual disputes; and appointing dedicated conciliators within the Department of Labour (DoL) for individual and industrial cases.

As part of the same project, the DoL conducts sensitization seminars, focus group discussions, and other initiatives to encourage out-of-court settlement of industrial disputes. On 1 December 2024, the Ministry of Labour and Employment (MoLE), together with the social partners (NCCWE and BEF), signed a tripartite Joint Declaration reaffirming their commitment to building an improved and harmonious national industrial relations system. Signed in the presence of the ILO's Assistant Director-General, the declaration commits to overhauling the alternative dispute resolution framework and establishing well-resourced, capacitated mechanisms for conciliation and arbitration through legislative and institutional reforms, in line with international labour standards.

In October 2025, the fourth session of the High-level Tripartite Conference on "Effective Social Dialogue as a lever for Inclusive and Sustainable Labour Reforms in Bangladesh" focused on comparative experiences in developing effective labour dispute resolution systems. The session

highlighted lessons from international models and their relevance for strengthening Bangladesh's own alternative dispute resolution (ADR) framework.

Ministry of Labour and Employment (MoLE), outlined Bangladesh's newly adopted ADR mechanism. The proposed mechanism aims to introduce a systematic, transparent, and participatory process for conciliation and mediation within the labour administration framework, aligned with international best practices.

5.5.7 Provide information sessions on the conciliation and arbitration system to workers, employers and DOL officials

In September 2025, the Certification Course on Conciliation and Mediation of Labour Disputes Organized jointly by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Ministry of Labour and Employment (MoLE), the training aimed to promote fair, efficient, and participatory dispute resolution practices, thereby contributing to harmonious industrial relations and decent work in Bangladesh.

Through the combined efforts of MoLE, DoL, DIFE, and ILO, the initiative contributes to building a professional pool of 24 conciliators and mediators capable of fostering industrial harmony, social justice, and sustainable labour relations in Bangladesh.

Action 6: Set up an efficient system to follow-up complaints received through helpline

6.1 Continuation of the helpline (16357) under revenue budget of DIFE

The helpline, established in June 2020, remains operational, receiving ongoing complaints. Recently, the helpline was revamped to ensure its effectiveness. A team of six Labour Inspectors manages this service. From July 2024 to June 2025, the helpline received 5,214 complaints. From July 2025 to September 2025, the helpline received 1,431 complaints. Currently, 760 complaints are awaiting necessary actions within a reasonable timeframe. The Department of Inspection for Factories and The Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments (DIFE) has been focusing on improving the remedy rate while ensuring the quality of redressals, which may require additional time.

6.2 Establishment of a complaint management cell to follow up the cases directly by the labour inspectors

A Monitoring and Evaluation Unit was established at the Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments (DIFE) in September 2022, consisting of three Labour Inspectors and two additional officials to monitor complaint resolution progress.

6.3 Develop a database of the complaints covering relevant information

A comprehensive database for tracking complaints received via the helpline was established in December 2021, integrating information from both online and offline sources. From July 2024 to June 2025, a total of 6,569 complaints were received. From July 2025 to September 2025 a total of 2,458 complaints were received through the online website, helpline, emails and offline methods. A total of 1,204 complaints have been resolved, while the remaining cases are currently being processed.

6.4 Organise regular training programme for all service personnel/officials receiving complaints via the helpline on SOP on grievance handling

Regular training sessions, including international opportunities, are organized for inspectors handling complaints. A three-day workshop on "Data Management System and Helpline" was held from March 5 to 7, 2024, with 23 participants. In the 2024-25 fiscal year, two additional trainings were conducted for 70 inspectors, focusing on the helpline and data management system to enhance their ability to follow up on cases directly.

6.5 Establishment of the Helpline for all workers in EPZs

On March 28, 2021, BEPZA has launched BEPZA Helpline 16128 with a view to ensuring labour rights and strengthening the existing grievance redressed system as well as ensuring prompt services for the workers in the eight EPZs under BEPZA. The helpline provides 24/7 hours services to the workers and employees in EPZs. The calls, so far received through helpline, relate to arrears of wages, provident fund, earned leave encashment, leave & holiday and information regarding plots, investments, etc.

As of September 2025, total 16,003 calls/complains have been received since the helpline was launched of which 15,943 have been resolved and rest 60 are in resolving process.

Action 7 Provide for new labour inspectors and ensure full functionality of labour inspectorate

7.1 Filling vacant posts of Labour Inspectors by recruitment and promotion

Since the submission of the NAP, 159 labour inspectors have been recruited, and 22 staff members have been promoted to the position of Labour Inspector. The total approved posts for inspectors have increased from 575 to 724. Currently, 432 inspectors are actively working, up from 314 at the outset of the NAP.

From 2023 to 2025, 44 Assistant Inspector General (AIG) were promoted to Deputy Inspector General (DIG) and 6 Deputy Inspectors General (DIG) were promoted to Joint Inspector General (JIG). In 2025, 15 Labour Inspector (Safety) have been promoted to Assistant Inspector General (Safety).

Additionally a requisition for 122 inspectors has been submitted to the BPSC for recruitment through the 43rd Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) non-cadre. To expedite the recruitment process, the Special Envoy to the Honourable Chief Adviser convened a special meeting with the relevant stakeholders, including the Ministry of Public Administration and the Public Service Commission (PSC). The key decisions taken on that meeting was to expedite the recruitment of the proposed 122 inspectors within short time.

7.2 Creation of new posts and recruitment of Labour Inspectors

Since the submission of the NAP, 8 new Deputy Inspector General (DIG) offices have been established, along with the creation of 136 labour inspector posts and 13 new labour inspector positions at the National Occupational Health and Safety Training and Research Institute (NOHSTRI). Consequently, the sanctioned manpower of the Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments (DIFE) has increased to 1,129, including 724 inspector positions. Additionally, the newly established field offices of DIFE in eight districts are now operational.

7.3 Full application of Labour Inspection Management Application (LIMA) digitalized labour inspection system in 23 DIFE offices

The Labour Inspection Management Application (LIMA) system, implemented with support from the ILO and GIZ, is now operational in the district offices of the Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments (DIFE). It is a platform to digitalize the collection, storage, and analysis of labour inspection data with the aim of better monitoring and transparency in labour inspection administration for inspection. Layout plan approval, license issue and renewal, occupational health and safety-related reporting from the factories, workers' grievance management etc. have also been made available online in LIMA platform. Between July 2024 and June 2025, a total of 1389 accident notices (Form

27 of BLR) were submitted through LIMA, marking substantial improvement compared to 177 notices submitted in the previous year. For example, in the Fiscal Year 2024-25 (from July 2024 to June 2025), a total of 43,265 inspections were conducted, 8,697 new licenses were issued, and 30,783 licenses were renewed. Additionally, 2,445 layout plans were approved through the LIMA system. From July 2025 to September 2025, a total of 9,923 inspections were conducted, 2,184 new licenses were issued, and 14,206 licenses were renewed. Additionally, 711 layout plans were approved through the LIMA system.

7.4 Developing competencies of Labour Inspection staff through regular trainings and capacity building measures and creating more senior positions

To enhance the competencies of labour inspectors, regular training programmes are being conducted. For the FY 2024-25 (July, 2024 to June, 2025), a total of 1,002 officials had already been trained in 31 training programmes and 185 officials have attended in 04 workshops (one inspector attended two or more training counted separately). From July 2025 to September 2025, a total of 239 officials have already been trained in 8 training programmes and 100 officials have attended in 03 workshops (one inspector attended two or more training counted separately).

- One official of DIFE participated in a 12 days training program in Malaysia in October, 2024 on occupational safety and health management for Asian countries.
- Two officials from DIFE completed 12 days training in Turin, Italy in November, 2024 on employment injury schemes and the prevention of occupational accidents and diseases.
- Two officials from DIFE completed 12 days training in Turin, Italy in December, 2024 on gender audit certification.
- Eight officials from DIFE completed five days training in Denmark in June, 2025 on occupational safety and health.
- Two officials of DIFE completed 5 days training in Turin, Italy in July, 2025 on elimination of child labour.

7.5 Promote an effective sector-specific labour inspection approach

In October 2024, nine priority sectors were identified, including readymade garments, tanneries, chemicals, plastics, rubber, jute, textiles, engineering workshops, automobiles, rice mills, brickfields, and cement industries, based on safety concerns, accident rates, and other relevant factors. The district offices of DIFE developed an annual Strategic Inspection Plan targeting 5 to 8 of these sectors. To enhance inspection efficiency, an internal tracking system was established to connect all DIFE offices for effective data compilation. From July 2024 to June 2025, a total of 28,995 inspections were conducted in accordance with the annual sector-specific Labor Inspection Plan. Additionally, a Legal Officer was recruited on December 28, 2023, to strengthen DIFE's legal unit, ensuring dissuasive penalties and follow-up on labour law violations.

7.6 Formulating DIFE inspection modalities for EPZs

In response to the Committee's recommendations, the Bangladesh EPZ Labour Rules, 2022 were published via gazette notification on 4 October 2022 (S.R.O No.-295-Law/2022), significantly streamlining the inspection process. Under the Rule 290, DIFE inspectors can now conduct both announced and unannounced inspections with only "intimation" to BEPZA, instead of prior approval. Notable inspection activities include:

- **As of September 2025**, DIFE has inspected 295 factories, out of these inspections 82 were announced, and 213 were unannounced. The IG, DIFE has inspected in six instances.

Inspection findings indicated general compliance, with recommendations for:

- Improving service book management;
- Maintaining first aid boxes properly;
- Updating safety committee register regularly, etc.

The aforementioned issues were duly addressed and resolved through official notices and meetings. Subsequent inspections confirmed satisfactory rectification, and therefore, no fines, penalties, or legal actions were required under the applicable law.

Additionally, during January-September 2025, BEPZA inspectors conducted 5,551 inspections across eight EPZs with overall compliance deemed satisfactory.

The inspection checklist used in EPZs was developed collaboratively with DIFE and is publicly available:

- EPZ Factory Inspection Checklist (PDF): <https://bepza.gov.bd/public/storage/upload/content-file/251013065427-7931EPZ%20Factory%20Inspection%20Checklist.pdf>
- BEPZA Portal- Labour Issues: <https://bepza.gov.bd/acts-policies>
- DIFE Official Page (**Link-3:<https://dife.portal.gov.bd/site/page/d60953be-00d2-4325-9637-f81d5a35f6e3>**).

Noteworthy, DIFE inspectors can carry out tests, examinations, or inquiries beyond the checklist if deemed necessary to ensure compliance with legal provisions.

7.7 Incorporating the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) on Labour complaints and investigation in the BLA

The required provision has been proposed in the ongoing BLA, 2006 amendment process.

Action 8: Ensure proper work for the Remediation Coordination Cell (RCC) and transition to Industrial Safety Unit (ISU)/Ensuring close cooperation of the RCC/ISU with the RMG Sustainability Council (RSC)

8.1 Remediation of factories under the national initiative for fire, electrical and structural safety

8.1.1 Complete development of a business plan outlining three categories of factories including timelines for remediation

The planning process was completed on 10 February 2021 by Remediation Coordination Cell (RCC), DIFE. Below are the category-wise factories under this initiative:

Category-1: Remediation of factories easily possible by factories owner considering their technical capacity- 173 Factories

Category-2: Remediation of factories possible- 346 factories

Category-3: Remediation of factories challenging- 1030 factories

8.1.2 Implement the business plan on remediation of factories

The business plan includes motivational seminars, design approvals, follow-ups, technical discussions with consulting firms, and an escalation process. In September 2023, the Industrial Safety Unit has completed visit to 173 factories of category 1 to make interim and final decisions regarding their status. In category 1, the number of factories currently in operation is 118. 45 factories have either closed or relocated to new locations and 10 factories have been shifted to

category 2 and 3. As of now DIFE has issued 74 initial Corrective Action Plan (CAP) completion certificates and cancellation letters for Utilization of Declaration (UD) to a total of 56 factories.

8.1.3 Continue to work on remediation of factories under category 2 and 3, including with support from relevant international development partners

Support from ILO under the project RMGP-phase II, to work on remediation under category 2 and 3 was over in May 2023. Currently the "Advancing Decent Work in Bangladesh" project entails establishing an Industrial Safety Framework, expanding the Industrial Safety Unit to priority sectors, and ensuring fire and chemical safety in logistics and storage. In Category 2 and 3 there are 274 factories. As of September 2025, Industrial Safety Unit has conducted visits to 109 factories of category 2 and 3. Overall, 1,157 out of 1,549 factories have been closed or relocated across all categories.

8.2 Enhancing quality control and transparency of the RCC

8.2.1 Develop a quality assessment mechanism for remediation being monitored by RCC and apply it.

In 2022, the ILO completed the risk ranking of all National Initiative (NI) factories. Based on this ranking, the factories were categorized for the process of Utilization of Declaration (UD) cancellation and the escalation protocol.

8.2.2 Ensure full application of Remediation Tracking Module (RTM)

The Remediation Tracking Module (RTM) has been updated with ILO's technical support. Assessment reports and Corrective Action Plans (CAP) for 666 National Initiative (NI) factories have been uploaded. Under the "Advancing Decent Work in Bangladesh" project, further revised reports will be added to the RTM with continued ILO support.

8.3 Establishing a transition plan to graduate RCC to ISU

8.3.1 RCC to handover the remediation work to DIFE Safety Unit

This action was completed in December 2021. Upon the completion of the RMGP Phase I project, the Remediation Coordination Cell (RCC) handed over the remediation work to the DIFE Safety Unit in December 2021.

8.3.2 Post Creation and Deployment of Labour Inspectors for the ISU

The Government of Bangladesh has established a dedicated Industrial Safety Unit (ISU). Currently, nine engineers from the Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments (DIFE) are assigned to the ISU.

8.3.3 Upon establishment of ISU, DIFE Safety Unit to handover responsibility to ISU

It is completed. Please refer to Action 8.3.2.

8.3.4 Capacity building and training of DIFE's existing Engineers on building safety (fire, structure, electrical, chemical, boilers etc.)

The DIFE Safety Unit, consisting of 24 engineers, completed capacity-building training in two phases: the first phase ended on 28 November 2021, and the second in June 2022, involving 23 engineers. These engineers have received specialized master training on structural, fire, and electrical safety with ILO support.

DIFE has eight OSH team comprising Machinery Safety, Accident Prevention, Chemical Safety, Construction Safety, Ergonomics, Boiler and Pressure Vessel, Labour friendly Dialogue, Cranes and

other lifting equipments. Each team has completed ToT training and provides training to DIFE inspectors and stakeholder through the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health Training and Research (NOSHTRI).

8.4 Development of a framework for coordination with RMG Sustainability Council

A Government Coordination Council (GCC) has been established under the Ministry of Commerce, chaired by the Additional Secretary (Export). The GCC includes representatives from MoLE, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Jute & Textile, Ministry of Industries, BEPZA, and BEZA.

A coordination framework between DIFE and the Ready-Made Garment Sustainability Council (RSC) was approved by the Ministry of Commerce on 20 October 2022. As of 31 July 2025, the GCC has convened eight meetings to enhance coordination. Five bilateral meetings between DIFE and RSC have been held to address remediation in factories.

Action 9 Ratify ILO Convention on minimum age and Forced Labour Protocol

9.1 Ratify Protocol of 2014 to ILO Convention on forced labour (P29)

Bangladesh ratified the Protocol of ILO Convention 29 on 20 January 2022, which officially entered into force on 20 January 2023.

9.2 Ratify ILO Convention 138 on minimum age (C138)

Bangladesh ratified the ILO Minimum Age Convention 138 on 22 March 2022, setting the minimum age for employment at 14. This ratification marks the achievement of a significant milestone, as Bangladesh has now ratified all eight ILO Fundamental Conventions.