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UPDATE FROM PARTNERS:

**ANROEV Activities (April- June 2020)**

- Organize Asian Sub Regional Workshop on Factory Inspections and strategy meeting May 12 and 14.
- Organizes series of Zoom Meeting on Vizag Gas Leak issues of Andhra Pradesh, India.
- Celebrate IWMD and May Day 2020
- Issue Statement and Press Releases on IWMD, Vizag Gas Leak Industrial incidence.
- Organize VIZAG Global Solidarity Actions on June 5th 2020
- Host online Press Conference and Protest Rally in India and Korea on Vizag gas Leak Issues etc.
- Support members, share information and updates

**Hong Kong**

Several ANROEV members from Hong Kong participated in celebrating IWMD and May Day 2020.

Participated in the solidarity action for Vizag, Visakhapatnam LG Polymer Gas Leak victims on 5th June 2020.

ARIAV has continue its advocacy campaign for ensuring availability of all PPEs to the workers including recognition of the COVID 19 as the Occupational Diseases in Hong Kong.

**Nepal**

Center for Public Health and Environmental Development (CEPHED) Nepal with the support of New Ways to Work Palo Alto (NWTW) through Developing World Outreach Initiative (DWOI) carrying out a project entitle” Prevent Occupational Mercury Exposure through Environmental Monitoring and Awareness raising in Nepal” from 1st January 2020 to 30th September 2020 aims to do monitoring of soil and waste water for mercury contamination and disseminate results through organizing an awareness raising workshop among gold plating workers and concerned stakeholders in Nepal.

CEPHED able to collect the waste water samples and tested for the Mercury level. Reports were prepared and ready for the dissemination. The level of mercury in the waste water discharging from Metal plating workshops were found to be high.

The mercury contamination in waste water samples were analyzed using standard methodology of American Public Health Association, Standard Method for the Examination of Water and Waste Water (3111 C APHA. 23rd Edition). The results thus obtained from the laboratory analysis were analyzed and compared with the international standard for the same and interpreted with the help of Microsoft office software based tools like Excel, Table etc.

The following section explained the laboratory test results, its analysis and interpretation of the results along with its comparison with the WHO guideline Value, Nepal Standards for Drinking Water and Nepal Generic Standard of Waste.
Water effluent for Water ways as well as effluent standard in land.

**Table: Laboratory results of Mercury in waste water samples.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample Id</th>
<th>Mercury (mg/L)</th>
<th>Times more than Standard WHO GV (mg/L)</th>
<th>Times more than Standard NDWQS (mg/L)</th>
<th>Times more than Standard Nepal Standard of Waste Water (mg/L)</th>
<th>Remarks (Times more than Standard)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NPL - 01</td>
<td>0.893</td>
<td>893</td>
<td>893</td>
<td>89.3</td>
<td>89.3 to 893</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPL - 02</td>
<td>114780000</td>
<td>1147800000</td>
<td>1147800000</td>
<td>11478000000</td>
<td>1147800000 to 1147800000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPL - 03</td>
<td>1.822</td>
<td>1822</td>
<td>1822</td>
<td>182.2</td>
<td>182.2 to 1822</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPL - 04</td>
<td>0.627</td>
<td>627</td>
<td>627</td>
<td>62.7</td>
<td>62.7 to 627</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPL - 05</td>
<td>2.791</td>
<td>2791</td>
<td>2791</td>
<td>279.1</td>
<td>279.1 to 2791</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: CEPHED 2019, Laboratory test results.

From above table, it is clear that the environmental load of mercury from the each metal plating workshops were enormously high. 100 per cent of the samples of waste water (5 out of 5) collected from five different metal plating workshop from Lalitpur exceeds the mercury level prescribed both in Nepal Drinking Water Quality Standards (0.001 mg/L) as well as Nepal Generic Standard of Waste Water effluent for Water ways/in land (0.01 mg/L). The lowest mercury level in waste water discharged from metal plating workshops were found to be 0.627 mg/L which is 62.7 times more than the Nepal Generic Standard of Waste Water effluent for Water ways/in land (mg/L). The highest mercury level in waste water discharged from metal plating workshops were found to be 11478 mg/L which is 114780 times more than the Nepal Generic Standard of Waste Water effluent for Water ways as well as standard for in land (mg/L). When we compare with the Nepal Drinking water standard or WHO Guideline Value, the level of mercury release were even much higher. These results clearly substantiate the results of Minamata Initial Assessment (MIA) of Nepal 2019 about the mercury release into the water (1,250 Kg Hg/y) and soil (460 Kg Hg/y).

**Conclusion**

Very high level of mercury release into the environment through the untreated waste water discharged from the metal plating workshop in Nepal contributing to maximum environmental load of mercury in addition to continue occupational exposure among the metal plating workers.

**Recommendations**

1. Large study of mercury contamination in waste water and soil needs to be carried out by the Ministry of Forest and Environment and Department of Environment.
2. To reduce the environmental load of Mercury from gold plating workshops, alternative practices of the gold plating should be promoted and mercury based gold plating should be discouraged.
3. Capacity building and awareness program among the metal plating workers about mercury, its impacts on health and environment.
4. Full PPE (Personal Protective Equipment’s) should be given and used by all workers in the gold metal plating.
5. Government of Nepal, Ministry of Forest and Environment (MoFE) focal ministry to the Minamata Convention on Mercury should initiate process and communication with the Convention secretariat to include mercury based gold metal plating process into the Convention and request to arrange required technical and legal framework.
Figure 1. Gold Metal plating work in progress without using any PPEs

Figure 2. Gold plated metal idols

Figure 3. Metal plating ongoing without using PPE by the workers during the sample collection
CEPHED Nepal on 14th April, 2020 wrote a formal letter to the Government of Nepal (Prime Minister; Minister of Labour, Employment and Social Security as well as Minister of Health and Population) requesting to recognize the COVID-19 as an Occupational diseases; enlist them under the list of Occupational diseases required to be published by the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security (MoLESS), Government of Nepal under Labour Act and Regulation of Nepal and also demanded for ensuring the adequate Security, Personal Protective Equipment’s (PPEs) and Compensation appropriately and timely manner to all front line workers like Doctors, Nurses, paramedical, waste workers including officials and associated millions of workers working in meeting other essential services like laboratory testing, ambulance services, mortuary, crematoria, production sales and distribution of medicine, food supply, drinking water supply, fuel, transport, security and media during such pandemic and emergency situation. Also demanded for the ratification and effectively implementation of the ILO Convention 155 on Occupational Safety and Health.

CEPHED also organized a virtual training program on Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) and Factory Inspections organized by CEPHEDE in collaboration and coordination with GON, Department of Labour and Occupational Safety (DoLOS) and OSH Center well participated by some 45 representatives from concerned MOFE ministries, Labour and Occupational Safety departments, Custom Department, Labour and Employment Offices, OSH centers, WHO, ILO, FNCCI, FNCSI, GEFONT, NTUC, FHAN, FGSFN, Nepal Open University, Industries, TU, OSH inspectors, Labour Inspectors, different Government officials, NGOs and media personnel.
CEPHED Nepal has also distributed about 50 set of PPEs (Personal Protective Equipment’s) to the front line Health Care waste workers in Hospital and Municipal waste management work during the COVID pandemic.

Massive media coverage on this events were achieved listed here.

https://www.setoghar.com/archives/63692?
https://www.nawayug.com/?p=61382
https://gorkhapatraonline.com/open/2020-06-29-17483
https://www.khabarhub.com/2020/29/178858
https://shilapatra.com/detail/33366
https://yeskhabar.com/2020/6/10486?
CEPHED Nepal on 14th April, 2020 wrote a formal letter to the Government of Nepal (Prime Minister; Minister of Labour, Employment and Social Security as well as Minister of Health and Population) requesting to recognize the COVID 19 as an Occupational diseases; enlist them under the list of Occupational diseases required to be published by the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security (MoLESS), Government of Nepal under Labour Act and Regulation of Nepal and also demanded for ensuring the adequate Security, Personal Protective Equipment’s (PPEs) and Compensation appropriately and timely manner to all front line workers like Doctors, Nurses, paramedical, waste workers including officials and associated millions of workers working in meeting other essential services like laboratory testing, ambulance services, mortuary, crematoria, production sales and distribution of medicine, food supply, drinking water supply, fuel, transport, security and media during such pandemic and emergency situation. Also demanded for the ratification and effectively implementation of the ILO Convention 155 on Occupational Safety and Health. Also made a press release on the same, well covered by the media.

GEFONT (General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions) memorandum to Government of Nepal on COVID 19.

1. GEFONT celebrated May Day 2020 through virtual media. The slogan of this May Day was: Let's Stand to Fight the Corona Pandemic Together! Ensure Jobs, Earning and Social Protection for all Workers! As decided by GEFONT national committee's virtual meeting on 27 April, on behalf of GEFONT, President Mr. Binod Shrestha delivered our stand point via national broadcasting agency, Nepal Television. The program also aired by more than 50 FM station throughout the country. The program views by thousands of workers via face book live as well.

2. Before May Day, Based on the decision of GEFONT National Committee, held on 12 March at Butwal, submitted its suggestion to the Deputy Prime Minister and Chief of Central Corona Management Committee on 20 March. The Government of Nepal responded to the demand of GEFONT and issued relief package to workers affected by Corona virus pandemic on 29 March 2020:

3. GEFONT conducted a brief study on the problems faced by Nepali workers due to COVID-19. The study shows that the
condition of Nepali workers has deteriorated and needs to be addressed immediately.

4. GEFONT has organized one day Training on Mental Health & its Management caused by COVID-19. GEFONT Leadership and affiliate union's presidents and General Secretaries were participated in the training. Psychologist Dr. Basu Acharyya gave information about depression, anxiety and its symptoms and prevention.

5. GEFONT Support Group Malaysia has informed that relief materials worth 1,500 ringgit per person have been distributed to the migrant workers who did not get salary during the lockdown in Malaysia after the COVID-19 epidemic.

6. GEFONT has organized training on Mental Health & Stress management training for its youth leadership caused by COVID-19 to the youth leaders of union also. Psychologist Ms. Jamuna Maharjan has facilitated the session.

7. GEFONT has organized interaction program about impact reduction and control caused by COVID-19 on labor market and labor on June 16, 2020.

8. GEFONT has organized interaction program about impact of COVID-19 on transport sector and its workers on June 21, 2020,


11. GEFONT has organized interaction program about labor disputes and social security in current situations with uni-trave on June 30, 2020,

Public Health and Workers Welfare friendly decision of GON

Government of Nepal taken decision about leaves announced as per the directives issued in concurrence with the provision of the Contagious Disease Act 2020 (1963 ) Article 2 on 2076/12/9 (22nd March 2020) and thereafter at different dates. According to this decision all those leaves given by government offices, agencies or Industry to their OFFICIALs or WORKERS has been decided to convert as PUBLIC HOLIDAY by their concerned Chief Official so as to receive SIMILAR SALARY AND ALLOWANCE as notified by publishing this gazette notice.

India

Numbers of ANROEV member’s organizations from India Viz: People Training & Research Center (PRTC), Environics Trust, Cividep India, Sambhavna Trust Bhopal as well as Associated Members Dr. Ashish Mital, Dr. Murlidhar Vekitesharan has raised numerous concerned and contributed to the issues of several industrial incidence in India that took place within this period especially during the lockdown. The major industrial incidence was Vizag Gas Leak.

LG Polymer Gas Leak Industrial Incidence, May 7th Morning 2020

An unprecedented tragedy occurred on the 7th of May, when styrene leaked from the Korean-owned LG Polymers plant during the early hours of Thursday, 7th May 2020, when families in the surrounding villages were asleep. This chemical factory located into the village called Vizag, Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh in southern India has killed at least 15 people so far and led to thousands being taken to hospital, amid fears that the death toll could climb higher.

Gas called styrene was leaked is derivative of benzene and is a colorless oily liquid. Health effects of styrene include irritation of the skin, eyes, and the upper respiratory tract. Long exposure can also lead to cancer. Styrene is Group 2A Carcinogen by IARC under the WHO.

These kind of repeated tragedies should be stopped due to negligence of the LG Chemicals, and victims should be immediately and fully compensated and survivor should be fully treated and rehabilitated with due diligence.

Investigation of the disaster and bio-monitoring of all those exposed should be immediately done without any further due. Due diligence must be implemented to ensure workplaces are safe after the lock down measures. There must be stronger regulatory and workplace safety systems in place.

If the exposure leads to chronic health conditions, such as kidney, liver failures or airway hypersensitivities. But I suspect, the more important issue will be the social and medical necessities that will make the social distancing difficult for those residents who are affected.

Additionally, there are number of industrial incidence during the lockdown period in India causing huge damage to lives and properties. Known incidence has been listed here.

- a) LG Polymer Gas leak :7 May 2020; 15 Dead
- b) Paper Mil Gas Leak, Chattishgadha: 7th May; 7 Hospitalized
- c) Boiler Exploded into flame in Coal mine, Tamilnadu, 7th May 2020
- d) Cardinal decries migrant death, industrial accident in India, 12 May 2020
- f) Yashashvi Rasayan Pvt. Ltd., Dahej, Barunch districts, June 3, 2020, 10 Killed
- g) Viveklene Industries Pvt., Ltd., Seven injured as machine explodes in dyeing factory, Palsana, Surat, June 8, 2020
- h) Oil refinery related fire causes 2 Workers died in ASAM, 10th June 2020
i) Construction of diamond bours, Soil caved in burying seven workers and out of 2 died, 10 June 2020
j) Second fire incidence in a week, Labourere killed in Ankleswar, India
k) One killed and 4 injured in Ammonia Gas leak in SPY Agroindustry’s Limited at Nandyal in Kurnool District of Andhra Pradesh, 27 June 2020
l) Two workers died and four others were hospitalised following benzimidazole gas leakage from the Sainor Life Sciences pharma company 29, June 2020.
m) 4 Dead, 13 Injured In Boiler Explosion At Tamil Nadu Thermal Power Plant in the Cuddalore district of Tamil Nadu, 1st July 2020

On May 31st 2020.OHENI also submitted a set of questionnaire to High Power Commission on Vizag Gas Leak issues responding their call for submission.

On 20th June, Remembering to Mr. Vijay Kanhere, one of the pioneer OSH advocates in India, a memorial days has been celebrated through organizing a zoom meeting by PTRC India. About 35 representatives from different organizations association with the OSH sectors have actively participated and shared their views as well as remember Mr. Vijaya differently about his personal and professional associations with him was found to be true and real attribute to him.

Occupational and Environmental Health Network of India (OEHNI) on 12 April 2020 wrote to Honorable Minister Labor and Employment, Government of India for enactment, improvement and/or inclusion of the provision of supplying PPE mandatory to the health workers, passing of OSH Code or OSH Act including ratification of ILO Convention C 155 for OSH.

Pakistan

National Trade Union Federation (NTUF) Pakistan organized a pre-budget discussion session on COVID 19 Workers Situation and State Response. 3rd June 2020. Speakers of this discussion was Dr. Shershah, Former General Secretary, Pakistan Medical Association (PMA) and Faisal Edhi, Head of Edhi Foundation.

Training workshop on “Handling the Personal Safety in COVID-19”

Labour Education Foundation (LEF) has organized two training sessions on the topic “Handling the Personal Safety in COVID-19” at 11th and 18th of June 2020.
Total 73 garment and textile workers, HBWs, brick kiln workers and Community Activists attended these sessions. These participants were from two districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa “Mardan, Charsadda” and three districts of province Punjab “Lahore, Sheikhpura, Faisalabad”.

Dr. Huma Tabassum was the facilitator of these sessions. She is an Occupational Health and Safety expert in Pakistan. Below are the main points shared by Dr. Huma.

- What is Covid-19
- What leads to Covid-19, Causes of this infection
- What are the Symptoms of COVID-19?
- What are the remedies to combat it at Home, travel, Community and at workplace?
- What is home quarantine and home isolation?

What is Covid-19?

Dr. Huma shared that coronavirus outbreak was first documented in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China in December 2019. The COVID-19 infection is spread from one person to others through droplets produced during coughing or sneezing. The time from exposure of symptoms is usually between two and 14 days, with an average of five days.

What leads to Covid-19, Causes of this infection?

Coronaviruses are a large family of zoonotic viruses that cause illness ranging from the common cold to severe respiratory diseases. Zoonotic means these viruses are able to be transmitted from animals to humans. There are several coronaviruses known to be circulating in different animal populations that have not yet infected humans. COVID-19 is the most recent to make the jump to human infection.

What are the Symptoms of COVID-19?

Common signs of COVID-19 infection are similar to the common cold and include respiratory symptoms such as dry cough, fever, shortness of breath, and breathing difficulties. In more severe cases, infection can cause pneumonia, severe acute respiratory syndrome, kidney failure, and death.

What are the remedies to combat it at home, travel, community and at workplace?

- Stay home and stay safe is the best solution for avoiding to this virus.
- Social distancing at least 6 feet distance from one person to other at work place.
- Use mask to cover your nose and mouth and its very necessary while sneezing or coughing.
- Must inform to your colleagues if you have any symptoms of this virus. The employers are bound for paid leave at least 28 days.
• Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. The best way is frequently washing hands with soap at least 40 seconds.
• Avoid close contact with anyone who has a cold or flu-like symptoms. Avoid crowded places.

What is home quarantine and home isolation?
If a person met with this virus with less severe condition, he or she can adopt home quarantine. His or her eating pots should be separated, he or she should be stayed in separate room and the room should be ventilated with windows. No air-conditioner is allowed for the patient of this virus. Homemade lemonade just to take Vitamin-C is very essential. The relatives of the patient will not meet the patient who is in quarantine. The room of patient will be cleaned with chlorine mixed water, all handles of doors and windows must be cleaned with chlorine mixed water. The spray of this mixed water is also very useful to kill this germ.

German brand's garments supplier fire upon workers in Pakistan
Kassim Garments at national highways sacked 35 workers today (June 8th 2020).
Workers protest against their dismissals, the factory guards fired upon workers, four workers injured, 12 workers were arrested and locked up at Shah Latif police station, district Malir.
Kassim Garments has numbers of units producing different apparels for international brands including “TOM TAILOR JEANS” of Germany head office in Hamburg (Germany).
The NTUF had filed a complaint with the Labour department and also made contact with police department officials.
Bangladesh:

Bangladesh Occupational Health, Safety and Environment foundation (OSHE) urges the government to declare the Covid-19 as an occupational disease under the labour law of the country.

OSHE Bangladesh has also provided food, safety and wash materials to the workers working in thousands and 'saver' in the tablet industry on 26th June 2020.

Philippines:

The Institute for Occupational Health and Safety Development (IOHSAD – Philippines) marked this year’s Workers’ Memorial Day (April 28) with an online tribute concert for the Filipino doctors and health workers who died due to COVID-19. IOHSAD partnered with the Concerned Artists of the Philippines (CAP), Altermidya (Alternative Media), Alliance of Health Workers, All-UP Workers Union-Manila Chapter, to gather various artists and pay tribute to the fallen health workers and push for mass testing, provision of personal protective equipment and rightful compensation.

IOHSAD also encouraged the public to light candles to remember all workers who have died due to work. Workers lighted candles in their communities while health workers in hospitals also participated in the activity.

IOHSAD launched its online campaign for safe workplaces amid the COVID-19 health crisis. It initiated a Back-to-Work hotline, via mobile phones and social media platforms, where workers can report their complaints with regard to occupational safety and health practices in their workplaces. IOHSAD also pushed for 10 demands to ensure workers’ health and safety as they reported back to work amid the threat of coronavirus. Its demands include free mass
testing in workplaces, formation of occupational safety and health committees, transportation and accommodation for workers, strict monitoring and inspection of workplaces by the Labor Department. It also reminded the workers, both organized and unorganized, that company health protocols for the prevention and control of COVID-19 in workplaces should be agreed by the workers and the management.

IOHSAD is currently pushing for the passage of the proposed Free Mass Testing Bill or House Bill 6848 which will provide free COVID-19 testing to all suspect cases, close contacts of probable and confirmed cases, high risk communities, and health workers, other vulnerable sectors and groups. Here are some campaign photos:

IOHSAD demands for the classification of COVID-19 as an occupational disease. Although the Employees Compensation Commission has announced that workers who get sick of COVID-19 in the workplace shall receive assistance, IOHSAD still pushes for a board resolution from the Commission that will officially list COVID-19 as a compensable disease.

IOHSAD’s Back-To-Work Hotlines were launched in May to serve as a means for the workers to send their back-to-work complaints, questions and reports with regard to OSH issues and COVID-19 prevention and control measures in their workplaces.
United Kingdom
Activities of the International Ban Asbestos Secretariat (IBAS)

The UK, like many other countries, was in lockdown over the last quarter (April to June 2020). During this time, many of our medical colleagues were engaged on the frontline in fighting the coronavirus with some of them contracting Covid-19 as a result. Our thoughts were with all of them during those horrible weeks including medical oncologist Dr. Federica Grosso in Italy and Pneumonologist Dr. Ubiratan de Paula Santos in Brazil, both of whom are now thankfully in recovery.

Reacting to the news in May, 2020 that the U.S. pharmaceutical giant Johnson & Johnson was withdrawing talc-based baby powder from sale in North America but planning to continue to market it elsewhere, IBAS worked with its partners – the Occupational and Environmental Network of India (OEHNI), the Indian Ban Asbestos Network (IBAN) and the Brazilian Association of the Asbestos-Exposed (ABREA) – to issue a formal press release denouncing the double standards which prioritized the lives of Americans over those of other nationalities.¹

During the lockdown, IBAS has continued to fulfill its research role, updating key online resources and creating news ones such as Asbestos Profiles for Russia, Belgium and South Korea. Work on identifying new sources of funding came to fruition with agreement achieved with a major donor for contributions to projects to identify and support asbestos victims in: Indonesia, Vietnam, Thailand, the Philippines, Laos, Fiji, South Africa and Brazil. Work on these projects will get underway as soon as possible.

Scotland

Scottish Work Hazards Network has opened a helpline for the OVID 19 risk group of workers this time they will continue to prevent work-related injury and illness by providing health and safety advice and support to workers although we anticipate an increased number of calls related to people returning to work after, or working through, this global pandemic and needing advice on risk assessment, social distancing, work hygiene and all COVID 19 health and safety concerns.

If you have any problems relating to COVID 19 risks in your work place and are not in a trade union, please get in touch with our helpline, phone 0800 0015 022 or by e-mail through the link on our website. BBC Scotland covered the launch of our COVID 19 helpline on 28th April 2020 morning on Good Morning Scotland program. Scottish Hazards has compiled some useful resources on Covid 19 from trade unions, UK Hazards, the HSE and other organizations. We hope this page will be provide useful information for anyone in doubt about what their employer is, or should be doing to prevent you from exposure to Covid 19.

https://www.scottishhazards.org.uk/scottish-hazards-covid-19-helpline/


Hazardous Campaign group in UK has campaign for different issues related with COVID 19 and Workers Safety.

(a) YOUR DISTANCE: Is two metres too far or not far enough to protect from COVID-19 and who benefits and who loses if it is reduced?  

(b) Release a press statement about “No going Back to Work Unless Workers Say it is Safe! 7th May 2020.

(c) Hazards Campaign – Going Back to work safely or not at all! No easing of the Lockdown until seven pre-conditions are met. What we need at work to Go Back and Move Forward! 6th May 2020.  
http://www.hazardscampaign.org.uk/blog/hazards-campaign-we-go-back-to-work-safely-or-not-at-all

(d) Hazards Campaign news release 27 April 2020 about 28 April is International Workers Memorial Day #IWMD20 Remember the Dead Fight for the Living. Hazards Campaign supports the 11am one minute’s silence.

To Remember the Dead – those dying from Covid19 and all work hazards.  At home hold up a Heartbroken poster, stand by your door, gate or in the street. At work hold a safe physically distanced outdoor vigil.  In Fighting for the Living, we call for Government and employers to  

pandemic at work’ by: Closing all non-essential workplaces

(e)As a part of our International Workers’ Memorial Day 2020 call to action the Hazards Campaign has produced a series of social media graphics (below) for you to share in your networks.

(f) Hazards Campaign Statement – 6 April 2020 about “Deadly failures have placed millions of workers at unnecessary coronavirus exposure risk”

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**Distressing Failure**

We all deserve respect at work. When working fits safety and supported it is better performance. Building awareness and engagement are directives to employers, mental, and physical health care services. We should not take risks to workers health and safety.

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**Exposed at Work**

Working in the fields at work is another New York. Smoking and alcohol should be prohibited. Workers should not be on the site safety, workplace with proper treatment and access to water, and physical risk. These conditions trend. Farmers and employees should be treated like a

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**Heartbroken**

Every family loss people who die brutally. This is the story of a loved one. According to prevention and population management failure causes emotional heartbreak. We should be respected.

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17
Hazardous Campaign news release on 6th April 2020. Hazards Campaign demands action to save workers’ lives. Hazards Campaign has written to MPs and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) calling for the HSE to close down organizations which continue to place profits before people by exposing workers to unacceptable risks.

Workers are being forced to face foreseeable and preventable risk of exposure to Covid-19 at work and it is the HSE’s duty to intervene to protect them, when employers are breaching their legal health and safety duties to prevent those risks. The Government’s contradictory policy on preventing transmission and spread of Covid-19 at work is causing deaths and is nothing less than ‘social murder’.

http://www.hazardscampaign.org.uk/
South Korea

The Korean members under the leadership of KEFM has taken the lead of propounding the Vizag Gas Leak issues of India by a Korean Subsidiary company in South Korea. A series of activities were planned, prepared and successfully executed right from organizing series of zoom preparatory meeting, meeting with Korean Media, LG Officials, preparing of poster, press statements, protest in front of LG Company even during the COVID pandemic situation. Also raised concerned on the explosion in LG Chemicals plants in Korea Killed 1 laboratory personnel and 2 workers today (19th May 2020)
Timeline of the LG Tragedy in India

Joe DiGangi, PhD
Senior Science and Technical Advisor, IPEN

About LG Chemical
LG Chemical is one of the top 10 chemical companies in the world. The company has 11 manufacturing facilities in South Korea along with factories in China, India, Poland, USA and Vietnam. Its business areas include petrochemicals (polystyrene, polyolefin, PVC, plasticizers, ABS, rubber, acrylates, SAP, special polymers), batteries (automotive and others), advanced materials (automotive, IT and industrial) and life sciences. LG Chemical is one of 70 subsidiaries of LG Group. In 2019, LG Group had 250,000 employees and sales of US$137.2 billion.

2020.06.28: ANROEV PRESS RELEASE on LG Chemical Personnel Run Away from India. Korean personnel’s mission clashes with community realities.

2020.06.25: The Andhra Pradesh High Court rules that South Korean LG personnel can leave India. LG’s legal representative, Mr. Mukul Rohatgi, argues that they should not be required to appear in India in any future investigation stating that “It is neither required nor feasible.” The Court disagrees and permits the departure of the South Korean personnel only if they file affidavits stating that they agree to respond to any investigation inquiries and present themselves in India if required by the Court.

2020.06.23: South Korean nationals from LG headquarters file a petition with the Andhra Pradesh High Court complaining that they are not allowed to leave India. The State argues that their inputs are important for the investigation and that if they want to leave India, they should file affidavits stating that they would return to India when required for purposes of the investigation. The High Court delays decision on the matter. Ironically, in mid-June, LG’s legal representative, Mr. Mukul Rohatgi, told the Supreme Court that the Korean passports should be returned because, “We are not criminals that we will run away.”

2020.06.20: A possible role of lax oversight by the financial sector in the LG tragedy emerges. LG Chemical’s long-term borrowing includes Standard Chartered Bank, BNP Paribas, ING, Mizhuo Banking Corporation, Bank of America, Bank of China, and HSBC and Indian banks such as IDBI and ICICI. Many of these are signatories to the UN Principles of Responsible Banking which require measures to determine “positive and negative impacts on societies...”
2020.06.20: The National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (NEERI) gives a green light for use of water from the Meghadrigedda reservoir which is located close to the LG plant. However, civic officials announce plans to conduct another round of testing.

2020.06.20: The District Collector for Visakhapatnam, Mr. V. Vinay Chand, instructs the management of oil and petrochemical industries to conduct a safety drill every three months as a result of the LG tragedy. The measure does not include emergency evacuation training for the community which the National Green Tribunal cited as a key failure of LG. Mr. Chand also announces a new requirement for companies to provide detailed information about storage, manufacturing process and safety management.

2020.06.17: The High Power Committee established by the Andhra Pradesh government to investigate the LG tragedy announces that LG has not yet responded to questions from the Committee. The State Government objects to calling the tragedy an accident noting that, “We all know it was not an accident. The styrene leak was a result of a series of safety failures.”

2020.06.15: LG petitions the Supreme Court to stop disbursement of the interim fine of ₹50 crore (~US$6.6 million, ~₩8.1 billion) for compensation and restoration. LG also notifies the Court that it will challenge the National Green Tribunal (NGT) report critical of the company’s safety measures. The Supreme Court ordered a 10-day delay in the use of LG’s fine but noted that “there is no substantive challenge” of the NGT order. LG also pushed the Court to de-seal the factory and return passports to company executives. LG said the passports should be returned because, “We are not criminals that we will run away.” The Supreme Court response was, “We say nothing...” and it turned these and other matters over to the Andhra Pradesh High Court and ordered a decision by the end of the following week, noting that the gas leak was the fault of LG. Mr. Mukul Rohatgi, the former Attorney General of India, represented LG in the case.

2020.06.14: Residents show political leaders and news media contaminated ground water and demand an investigation by the Central Bureau of Investigation into the tragedy, noting that LG did not inform the community of hazardous chemical use or evacuation procedures.

2020.06.13: The first news report critical of LG’s safety measures appears in Korean media, citing findings of the 28 May National Green Tribunal report. LG Chemical does not respond to the critical Indian government report but questions the causal relationship between its styrene release and additional deaths and claims it is “taking a responsible attitude.” The company suggests that residents want the company to continue operating but local residents state that “At the meeting held by the state government on June 7th, all the survivors, residents, and political parties unanimously agreed to request that the LG plant be moved.”

2020.06.10: Criticism emerges of the Andhra Pradesh High Power Committee as the investigative committee includes members such as Vivek Yadav that recommended state permits for LG even though the company did not
have an environmental clearance. “This is like the APPCB [Andhra Pradesh Pollution Control Board] investigating itself. It generates doubts about the objectivity of the probe.”

2020.06.09: Reports emerge of new deaths allegedly linked to the LG’s tragedy including Kadali Satyanarayan on 8 June (age 58), Yelamanchili Kanaka Raju on 1 June (age 45), and Pala Venkayamma on 29 May (age 73).

2020.06.09: Industry experts note that best practice mandates pumping a chemical inhibitor of styrene polymerization from the mid-level of the tank to prevent gas release. However, the LG tanks were modified in 2019 to pump the chemical in from the bottom, risking a reaction in the upper part of the tank and possible release of styrene. LG made the change “without the approval of the authorities concerned including the Department of Factories.”

2020.06.08: The Government High Power Committee investigating the LG tragedy meets with the company and people from affected villages and political party leaders. Committee Chairman, Neerabh Kumar Prasad, promises regular health checkups will be carried out for residents by specialist doctors.

2020.06.05: A protest in Vizag, the community affected by LG’s styrene release, ends with more than 150 arrests. Mr. Rao, a community member who spoke virtually at the event in Korea asks the newspaper, “Why should we be arrested for the negligence of an MNC?”

2020.06.05: The Asian Network for the Rights of Occupational and Environmental Victims (ANROEV) organizes Asian groups to participate in actions on World Environment Day calling on LG to “Be Responsible.”

2020.06.05: Eight organizations organize a press conference in front of LG headquarters in Seoul, calling the tragedy, “Another Bhopal” and demanding that LG take full responsibility.

2020.06.03: The National Green Tribunal states that LG has absolute liability in the tragedy. The legal body directs formulation of a restoration plan; rejects LG’s review of its interim financial penalty; and directs state government officials to identify and take appropriate action against persons responsible for permitting the company to operate without required permits.

2020.06.02: IPEN summarizes the results of the 168-page National Green Tribunal report, noting how it identifies irresponsible lapses in safety. The summary also notes weaknesses including: Acceptance of government compensation rather than LG being fully accountable; Trusting LG to conduct a risk assessment study of its own accident; Recommending only a short time period of five years for monitoring cancer in a population exposed to high levels of a probable human carcinogen; and Ignoring the responsibility of the parent company, LG Chemical.

2020.06.01: A Government investigation finds that LG’s styrene leak has damaged crops making them unfit for consumption.

2020.05.28: The National Green Tribunal Investigative Committee releases its report which sharply criticizes the company’s inattention to safety calling it “gross
human failure”. Key findings in the report include:

- 800 tons of styrene escaped from an old tank without any alarm. Community residents alerted police to the toxic gas release, not company personnel.
- No temperature sensors were present in the middle and top parts of the tank, reflecting a “clear cut case of negligence.”
- No automated sprinkler arrangement for vapor loss existed “as this had never been anticipated.”
- A chemical used to inhibit polymerization and release had not been added to the styrene tanks since 1 April 2020, “Since there was no stock at the site.”
- Once the styrene temperature rises above 52°C, the usual chemical inhibitor is not effective, however, “It seems LG Chem did not consider this possibility.”

**2020.05.28:** BBC reports that government inspection reports by the Department of Factories showed “evidence of poor maintenance in the factory.”

**2020.05.28:** A former LG Polymers employee tells BBC that the emergency siren to warn of a toxic chemical release had not worked for a long time; “We raised the issue during an inspection but the officer laughed it off.”

**2020.05.27:** City police stop LG officials from leaving India as they prepare to take a charter flight to Korea.

**2020.05.26:** LG Chemical issues a statement in South Korea stating that they will inspect 40 of their manufacturing plants (17 in South Korean and 23 outside the country) by the end of June. The company claims that they “will also consider pulling out its ongoing businesses if it is difficult to secure their environmental safety.”

**2020.05.24:** The Andhra Pradesh High Court orders the State Government to seize the premises of LG Polymers and prohibits company executives from leaving the country. The Court extends the vulnerable zone to 6.3 km from the plant and notes that several hospitals, educational institutions, places of worship, railway stations and an airport are within the zone which also includes a large residential area.

**2020.05.19:** The Korean Ministry of Employment and Labor downgrades the safety rating of LG’s Chemical Catalyst Center in Seosan to M-, the lowest level.

**2020.05.19:** A fire at an LG Chemical catalyst plant in Seosan, South Korea, kills one worker and injures two others.

**2020.05.19:** LG hires Mr. Mukul Rohatgi, the former Attorney General of India, to petition the Supreme Court of India to reduce the number of investigative committees researching the causes of the tragedy. LG pushes the Supreme Court to remove the National Green Tribunal from investigating the tragedy. The Supreme Court rejects the company’s argument.

**2020.05.18:** LG completes removal of all remaining styrene at the LG Polymers plant and ships it to South Korea.

**2020.05.17:** The National Green Tribunal Committee investigating the LG tragedy issues an interim report, identifying, “Gross human failure and negligence of the Person in-Charge...”
of the plant and maintenance personnel of the storage tanks.”

2020.05.16: CCTV footage of the LG tragedy emerges, showing thick clouds of gas and people collapsing as they tried to escape.

2020.05.15: The Asian Network for the Rights of Occupational and Environmental Victims (ANROEV) holds a virtual press conference which includes two residents of the affected community calling on LG to take full responsibility for the accident.

2020.05.15: Three state government investigators identify a temperature surge in a styrene storage tank due to a clogged cooling system as the likely cause of the styrene release.

2020.05.14: The Government of Andhra Pradesh makes arrangements with LG Polymers to remove 13,000 tons of styrene remaining at the plant for shipment to South Korea.

2020.05.14: UN Special Rapporteur on Toxics, Baskut Tuncak, issues a statement noting that, “It is yet another preventable disaster within the chemical industry that has caused horrific suffering among innocent workers and local communities in India and is yet another reminder that around the world, mini-Bhopal chemical disasters continue to unfold with shocking regularity.”

2020.05.14: LG Chemical issues a press release noting the arrival of the technical team and announcing support measures. The company states that, “We will soon set up specialized institutions to conduct surveys on health and environmental impacts and disclose the results transparently.”

2020.05.14: A technical team from LG in South Korea arrives in India to “resolve the situation and assist with real-time remedial and rehabilitation measures.”

2020.05.13: Vivek Yadav, second-in-command at the Andhra Pradesh Pollution Control Board, tells Associated Press that the agency was “examining the issue in detail” in response to revelations that the agency could have fined LG or denied its permit until it received the federal environmental clearance, but never did so.

2020.05.13: LG Chemical spokesman, Choi Sang-kyu, tells Associated Press that the 2019 affidavit, “was a pledge to comply with the law in the future and not an admission of any violations.” Associated Press reported that the company expanded its operations five times between 2006 and 2018, but it never received the required federal environmental clearance. The LG affidavit states that, “As on this date our industry does not have a valid environmental clearance substantiating the produced quantity, issued by the competent authority, for continuing operations.”

2020.05.11: A report written by Sagar Dhara (consultant to UNEP and Government of India) and K Babu Rao (Indian Institute of Technology) noted that if LG had sounded a siren as soon as the temperature began rising in the tanks, and if the residents were trained in emergency response, “all 12 deaths could have been avoided and injury could have been minimized.”

2020.05.11: LG refuses to comment on Guardian UK reporting that the company “was
operating its polystyrene plant without the mandatory environmental clearance from the Indian government.”

2020.05.11: The Andhra Pradesh Forensic Science Laboratory determines that the styrene storage tank at LG Polymers was not maintained below 20°C as required.

2020.05.09: Protests erupt in the community surrounding LG Polymers with demands to take action against company officials and prevent restarting the plant.

2020.05.08: LG Chemicals releases an apology on its English language Korean website promising “to do our best to handle the situation and prevent any incident in the future.”

2020.05.08: The Human Rights Forum calls for criminal prosecution of LG management and officials of regulatory bodies for negligence.

2020.05.08: The Asian Network for the Rights of Occupational and Environmental Victims (ANROEV) issues a statement on the LG tragedy emphasizing the need for corporate accountability.

2020.05.08: The National Green Tribunal directs LG Polymers to deposit an interim fine of ₹50 crore (~US$6.6 million, ~₩8.1 billion) due to “damage to life, public health and environment” and forms a committee to investigate the tragedy.

2020.05.07: Indian police file a culpable homicide and negligence complaint against LG Polymers.

2020.05.07: LG Polymers, a polystyrene manufacturing plant owned by South Korea’s LG Chemical, releases toxic styrene gas into the nearby residential area in Vishakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh, killing 14, sending hundreds to the hospital, and causing the anxious evacuation of thousands of people.

2020.01.08: An Environmental Health and Safety newsletter from LG Polymers calls attention to risks from explosions but fails to mention styrene, the plant’s main chemical, which is explosive.

2019.05.10: LG Polymers in India admits in an affidavit that, “As on this date our industry does not have a valid environmental clearance substantiating the produced quantity, issued by the competent authority, for continuing operations.” The environmental clearance is a required federal government permit to operate.

2019.05.08: The Korean Ministry of Environment catches LG Chemical altering and even fabricating pollution release data.

2019: LG Group reports 250,000 employees and sales of US$137.2 billion. LG Chemical is one of 70 subsidiaries of LG Group.

2018.11.09: LG chemical announces appointment of Mr. Shin Hak Cheol as Vice Chairman & CEO of LG Chemical. Mr. Shin formerly served as Vice Chair and Executive Vice President of 3M.

1997.07: LG Chemical takes over Hindustan Polymers and renames it LG Polymers.

Global Solidarity Action against LG Gas Leak

**Global Standard Murderer**
LG Chem Killed 14 Indians & 1 Korean

- 14 Indians
  - Gandiboina Kundana Sreya 6 Female
  - Nagulapalli Greeshma 10 Female
  - Annepu Chandra Mouli 19 Male
  - Nibbarthi Nani 30 Male
  - Sivakoti Govindaraju 35 Male
  - Ravada Narayananma 35 Female
  - Pennopoli Varalakshmi 36 Female
  - Smt Yelamanchili Appala Narasamma 40 Female
  - Yelamanchili kanakaraju 45 Male
  - Pitta Sankara Rao 45 Male
  - Chinim Ganga Raju 48 Male
  - Rathnala Gangadhar 64 Male
  - Pala Venkayamma 65 Female
  - Meka Krishna Murthy 73 Male
  - 1 Korean
  - Lee Sang Hun 40 Male

**Justice for Victims of Vizag Gas Leak**
#NotoDoubleStandard

**LG, No To Double Standards**

**LG, Be Responsible**
#NotoDoubleStandard
Global Standard Murderer
LG Chem Killed 14 Indians & 1 Korean

14 Indians
Gandiboina Kundana Sreya 6 Female
Nagulapalli Greeshma 10 Female
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Sivakoti Govindaraju 35 Male
Ravada Narayanamma 35 Female
Pennupolu Varalakshmi 38 Female
Smt Yelamachili Appala Narasamma 40 Female
Yelamanchili kanakaraju 45 Male
Pitta Sankara Rao 45 Male
Chinni Ganga Raju 48 Male
Ratnala Gangadhar 64 Male
Pala Venkayamma 65 Female
Meka Krishna Murthy 73 Male

1 Korean
Lee Sang Hun 40 Male

Asian Network for the Rights of Occupational and Environmental Victims
On 5 June 2020, during the celebration of World Environment Day, with “Biodiversity” as the theme for this year’s actions were planned to be conducted in India and Korea to put more pressure to the LG Group, LG Chemistry, LG Polymer and the Indian government and regulatory bodies to make those responsible for the Vizag Gas Tragedy accountable. The main call for 5 June is “No to Double Standards”. As a global company, LG Polymer operating in India and part of the LG Group should be held to the same standards as their counterparts in Korea.

ANROEV member were called for support the 5 June Actions through Physical Demonstration: A group of supporter, advocacy, campaign, Victims groups or individual can organize a protest action in front of LG Polymer in India /LG Group in Korea as well as Korean and Indian Embassy in their member countries and physically handover the Petition/Letter (template will circulate soon) or email to these embassies. Members were also advised to participate in online action through posting in your social media account on 5th June 2020 photo/s of yourself or your group with posters Indicating the call:

- “LG, No To Double Standards”
- “LG, Be Responsible”

- “Justice for victims of Vizag Gas Leak”
- Use the hashtag #NoToDoubleStandard

Many ANROEV members joined the call for global action against LG polymer Gas Leak incidence calling for the absolute liability of the LG both in Korea and India on the Occasion of World Environment Day 2020 celebration. There has been demonstration in South Korea in front of the LG head Quarters and protest rally in India organized by the local trade union groups joined by ANROEVE members from Korea, India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Vietnam, Japan, Hong Kong, Philippines, Taiwan, UK etc.

150 people arrested for protest near LG Polymers plant

The protest was held as part of World Environment Day as also to demand the arrest of the LG management in the May 7 incident of chemical leak that killed 12 people.

About 150 people, including CPI (M) party leaders, local villagers and environment activists, were arrested when they tried to form a human chain near LG Polymers India plant at R.R. Venkatapuram, here on June 5.

The protest was held as part of World Environment Day as also to demand the arrest of the LG management. “It was a silent protest and we just wanted to highlight the damage caused to the environment and loss of human life by the LG Polymers India plant, but the police arrested us and disrupted the protest, which was part of a global protest,” said CPI (M) State secretariat member Ch. Narasinga Rao.
“It was part of a global protest and a silent human chain was formed in Seoul in South Korea, Singapore, Germany, Malaysia and other countries, and they were not arrested. Why should we be arrested for the negligence of an MNC,” questioned Mr. Rao.

About 150 persons were arrested and sent to different police stations. The left and environment activists said that their prime demand was arresting the management of the LG Plant and closure or shifting of the plant.

**IWMD 2020**

ANROEV together with all members celebrated the International Workers Memorial Days.

"Remember the Dead, and Fight for the Living"

**IWMD 2020**

Let us all close our eyes and offer a moment of thoughts and prayers to all those who are no longer with us because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Those who have left us: our sisters and brothers, mothers and fathers, wives and husbands, daughters and sons, friends and colleagues faced life head on, with zealous love for the future, for a world without danger to us and the environment.

Their commitment to life and love have sustained them throughout the fight against COVID-19. They may have breathed their last, but the lives they lived, and the fights they fought, are forever imprinted in our hearts and minds.

As we continue to grapple with the pandemic, as we continue to fight for a decent work, safe workplace and environment, we hold to our beacon and as the workers of the world commemorate International Workers Memorial Day (IWMD) 2020, we CEPHED as Secretariat and members of the Asian Network for the Rights of Occupational and Environmental Victims (ANROEV) will continue to "Remember the Dead, and Fight for the Living".

In remembrance of all known and unknown COVID 19 warriors around the globe.
Scottish Hazardous group also celebrated the IWMD 20 and have helped several victims and sufferers. Scottish Hazards has worked with, and supported, some amazing families over the years.

Numbers of ITUC members around the globes has also celebrate the IWMD 2020 through organizing different actions such as releasing of Press Statements, Video Messages, reminding its members of the health and safety protocols to avoid COVID-19 infection etc. ([http://28april.org/?cat=958](http://28april.org/?cat=958)).

May Day 2020

In this connection AMRC Hong Kong organized Online Celebration Open Mic where once can SING, Read POETRY, DANCE or any other performance to celebrate the victories of the workers.

Ted Smith from Electronics campaign share a lot of events pictures organized by Greenpeace from USA.
Korean Campaigner also protest against Samsung asking for justice for the Samsung victims

Successfully and historic Labour Day inline rally with labour unions, workers and people’s organization in Philippines
COURT CASES ON LABOUR ISSUES DURING THE COVID PANDEMIC

Bangladesh: Case filed over workers' death in BSRM factory accident

The iron re-rolling mill claims three workers died as molten iron fell on them, while victim families think otherwise

The family of one of the five workers, who died in an accident at BSRM factory, filed a case against the floor in-charge bringing allegation of negligence.

Abdur Rahim, brother-in-law of deceased BSRM worker Abul Kashem, filed the case with the Jorarganj police station in Chattogram.

Molten iron fell on the workers at the BSRM factory on Saturday, leaving three dead and another two injured critically.

The deceased are Nazrul Islam, 24, Gias Uddin, 24 and Abul Kashem, 62. Of them, Kashem died Saturday while being taken to hospital. The other victims died while being shifted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital burn unit from Chattogram Medical College Hospital early on Sunday.

The injured – Nur Hosen, 30, and Mohiuddin, 26 – are being treated in Dhaka.

The authorities have not been able to identify the cause, even 24 hours after the incident. Though police said the workers died of burn injuries sustained from molten iron, the families of the victims said the workers died in a factory explosion.

Meantime, though BSRM has formed a probe committee to investigate the matter, it has not included any fire service or factory inspection department representative in the committee. On top of that, BSRM has not given any specific account about how the workers died.

Joarganj police Officer-in-Charge (OC) Mofiz Uddin Bhuyan said they were investigating the complaint.

Assistant Manager (RP and Communications) of BSRM Omor Soyaib said their probe team is also looking into the matter.

"BSRM expressed condolence to the families and assured them of necessary assistance," he added.

Ranajit Barua, managing partner of High Tech Engineering who supplies workers to the iron re-rolling mill, said the deceased worker named Kashem was their recruit.

"This accident could have happened due to a technical fault. They talked to the high officials about compensation, and they assured the victims' families that they will get that," he added.
Factory inspection department yet to turn up at the scene

The Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments did not inspect the spot even after 24 hours until Sunday afternoon.

If any incident or accident takes place at any factory, it is the responsibility of the department to visit the spot immediately.

Chattogram Deputy Director General of the department Mohammad Al Amin said, "We were informed about the accident by BSRM. I promptly asked the officials to visit the factory and submit a report."

"You know the ongoing virus crisis and our manpower shortage," Al Amin replied as he was asked why none of the official turned up at the scene even 24 hours after the incident.

Shuvankar Das, the inspector tasked with the area, said he will submit the report after visiting the factory. "I could not go there as we have our weekly meeting Sunday," he added.

Meanwhile, fire service and civil defense Mirsharai station officer Mohammad Tanvir said BSRM told them the situation was under control as they went to the factory.

"The iron re-roller also said they had sent the injured to the hospital. But they did not specify the reason for the accident" he added.

https://tbsnews.net/bangladesh/crime/case-filed-over-workers-death-bsrm-factory-accident-90007

MORE INDUSTRIAL INCIDENCE

China:
10 killed, 117 injured in oil tank truck explosion in China, 13 June 2020

Beijing, June 13

Ten people were killed and 117 others injured when an oil tank truck exploded and veered off an expressway in east China's Zhejiang province on Saturday, local authorities said.

The explosion, which occurred around 4:40 pm near Liangshan village in Wenling city, has caused the collapse of some nearby residential houses and factory workshops along the Shenyang-Haikou Expressway.
Firefighters and rescuers are looking for possible missing persons in the debris, the state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

Lu Fang, who works at a nearby restaurant, told Xinhua that she heard a loud bang and thought it was a flat tire commonly heard along the expressway. But people immediately started sharing the news of the blast in WeChat groups. Some photos and videos showed the front of a row of houses collapsed in the explosion.

"The glass on the windows and doors of my home were all shattered. Luckily my mother and brother were unharmed," Lu said.

Video posted online by the state-run CGTN TV showed debris of the exploded vehicle flying all around, causing extensive damage to the neighboring residential units.

Several cars and vehicles around the area also caught fire following the explosion.

The accident occurred on the highway, leading to the closure of many entrances. PTI

**Afghanistan:**

20 workers dead in Afghanistan mine collapse

Miners were trapped since Tuesday noon after gas blast sealed off access tunnel

KABUL, Afghanistan

All 20 miners trapped in a coal mine that collapsed in Afghanistan’s northern Samangan province a day earlier have died, officials confirmed on Wednesday.

The workers were stuck inside the mine after a gas explosion at around noon (0730GMT) on Tuesday sealed off the access tunnel.

“Eight bodies have been retrieved and efforts are underway to find and take out the remaining 12 victims,” Siffat Ullah, the province’s deputy governor, told Anadolu Agency.

The tragedy raises questions over safety measures at mining operations in Afghanistan, where illegal mining remains rampant in many remote areas.

On Tuesday, Mohammed Hashim, acting chairman of the provincial council, said no rescue team had reached the site hours after the blast, with locals trying to help the trapped miners on their own.

However, the provincial police force disputed his claim, saying that teams had responded immediately, according to Salam Afghanistan radio.

According to the US Geological Survey, Afghanistan has reserves of oil, gas, lithium, and other rare metals and minerals worth trillions of dollars, most of which remain untapped due to the country’s volatile security situation.
The Impact of Covid-19 on Workers in Electronics Supply Chains

The Covid-19 crisis forces us to turn inward, worrying about our families' and communities' vulnerabilities to unprecedented public health and economic threats. Yet, even in this time of crisis—indeed because of it—we should turn outward as well. Never has it been clearer that the state of health and well-being of the people of this world are interdependent, that we cannot protect ourselves without protecting others. It is not therefore a question of choosing between maintaining supply chains of essential products and protecting vulnerable workers across the globe who make those products. We can and must do both as one depends on the other. For this reason, Electronics Watch intends to raise awareness of the impact of the Covid-19 crisis on the workers who are so central to our health and wellbeing. Following our mission, we focus on workers in the electronics supply chain and what public buyers can do to protect their rights and safety even, and especially, today. Please select from the menu options on the left.

To ensure the timeliness of these updates, we will be publishing them in English only. If it would be useful for you to have a particular resource in your language, please get in touch.


Samsung sends apology letters to father of leukemia victim from semiconductor factory

On Apr. 21, a letter arrived for Hwang Sang-ki, president of Banollim, the human rights watchdog group for semiconductor workers, and father of Hwang Yu-mi, who passed away from acute leukemia after working at a Samsung Electronics semiconductor factory. It was an apology sent by Samsung Electronics CEO Kim Ki-nam.

“The late Hwang Yu-mi and her family members endured suffering for a long time, and Samsung Electronics failed to provide its fullest care early on. Its efforts to share in that pain and resolve it quickly were inadequate. […] I offer my profound apologies to everyone who suffered.”

It was the first personal letter Hwang Sang-ki had received from Samsung in the 13 years since Yu-mi passed away on Mar. 6, 2007. Identical letters were also sent to other victims associated with Banollim.

To be sure, the letter was not the first apology by Samsung. In May 2014, then-Samsung Electronics Vice Chairman Kwon Oh-hyun (the semiconductor product division director) bowed his head to deliver a first official apology.
ARTICLE OF INTEREST

Bhopal to Vizag – A jurisprudential analysis of the tortious liability for companies

Wasim Beg *, Swarnendu Chatterjee**
& Kritika Khanna***

Published on June 15, 2020 by Devika

I. Introduction

“Tort” is a wrongful act or an infringement of a right leading to legal liability for which civil courts award compensation. The law of Torts is an un-codified law which is based on equity, justice and good conscience. In its incipient stage, the English legal system was haphazard and was conducted on a case-to-case basis. Judges were asked to travel in each relevant region to comprehend the local laws which had developed over two centuries. Subsequently, based on their findings, the English judiciary introduced and implemented the said laws, by way of judgments, into the English legal system, which are now called legal precedents. These precedents form a part of the Common Law system.

The law of torts in India is based on the principles of the English Common Law. However, it has been modified to meet the local requirements. Some of the important principles of torts include negligence, nuisance, trespass, vicarious liability, strict and absolute liability. In context of the present article, we shall focus upon the concepts of strict and absolute liability.
vis-à-vis the two notable industrial disasters in India.

a) Doctrine of Strict Liability
The doctrine of “strict liability” evolved in *Fletcher v. Rylands*[1]. In this case, Rylands hired contractors to build a reservoir on his land. While building it, the contractors discovered some flaws and left them unfixed. After some time, Rylands’s reservoir burst and flooded Fletcher’s adjoining mine causing £937 worth of damage. Blackburn, J. opined that any person who for his own purposes brings on his land and collects and keeps there anything likely to do mischief, if it escapes must keep it at his peril and if he does not do so, is prima facie answerable for all the damage which is the natural consequence of its escape[2].

b) Doctrine of Absolute Liability
The principle of “absolute liability” was first ever applied by the Supreme Court of India in *M.C. Mehta v. Union of India* [3](popularly known as Oleum gas leak case). In this case, oleum gas leaked from a fertilizer plant of Shriram Foods and Fertilizers, Delhi and caused damage to several people. A pending public interest litigation (PIL) by M.C. Mehta provided the opportunity to the Court to pass a series of orders dealing with the after-effects of gas leak. In this case, the Court disapproved the application of the principle of strict liability. The Supreme Court opined that:

“an enterprise which is engaged in a hazardous or inherently dangerous industry which poses a potential threat to the health and safety of the persons working in the factory and residing in the surrounding areas owes an absolute and non-delegable duty to the community to ensure that no harm results to anyone on account of hazardous or inherently dangerous nature of the activity which it has undertaken. The enterprise must be held to be under an obligation to provide that the hazardous or inherently dangerous activity in which it is engaged must be conducted with the highest standards of safety and if any harm results on account of such activity, the enterprise must be absolutely liable to compensate for such harm and it should be no answer to the enterprise to say that it had taken all reasonable care and that the harm occurred without any negligence on its part.”[4]

II. Bhopal Gas Tragedy
Union Carbide India Limited’s (UCIL) plant at Bhopal was designed by its holding company Union Carbide Corporation (UCC), USA and was built in 1969 for making pesticides, produced by reacting Methyl Isocyanate and Alpha Naphthol. An incident of gas leak took place in the Bhopal pesticide plant of UCIL on the night of 2-3 December, 1984 causing severe loss to the lives of people in the vicinity. People were exposed to this gas all around the city and the immediate effects were coughing, vomiting, severe eye irritation and a feeling of suffocation. Thousands of people died immediately, and lakhs of people sustained permanent injuries. The doctrine of “absolute liability” was invoked in this case. In cases, where absolute liability is considered, liability of the company can be fixed even if there is no negligence on the part of the accused company.

In addition to the aforesaid, the Indian Government filed a case in the US Court for a claim of $3.3 billion against Union Carbide Corporation. By 1986 all these litigations in the US District were transferred to India on the grounds of *forum non conveniens.[5]*
Meanwhile, the Bhopal Gas Leak Disaster (Processing of Claims) Act, 1985[6] was passed by Parliament to confer certain powers on the Central Government to secure that claims arising out of, or connected with, the Bhopal gas leak disaster, are dealt with speedily, effectively, equitably and to the best advantage of the claimants and for matters incidental thereto. This Act made the Union Government representative of the victims of the tragedy and allowed them to file suits on their behalf. Along with this, an out of court settlement between the Government of India and Union Carbide was arrived at, which fixed the liability of the company to pay $470 million as per the full and final settlement of all claims, rights and liabilities arising out of that disaster. All in all, it was a bad move, as the settlement limited the liabilities for the claims which were filed later. It is a hard fact, but it is as clear as broad daylight that $470 million dollars were not sufficient to compensate all the injured. In fact, it is hardly 15% of the original claim of $3.3 billion. The compensation awarded was around Rs. 1 lakh for the families of the people who lost their lives, Rs. 50,000 for permanently injured and Rs. 25,000 for temporarily injured.

III. Vizag Gas Tragedy
A similar incident of gas leak happened recently in Vishakhapatnam (Vizag), Andhra Pradesh on 7th May, 2020. Styrene gas leaked from the chemical plant owned by a South Korean company LG Polymers India Private Ltd. with similar repercussions on lives of the people living in the vicinity. The immediate worry was that this may be a repetition of the Bhopal Gas Tragedy of 1984. People in the neighbouring areas were evacuated immediately for preventing the damage. Even though this gas leakage was less dangerous than the leak at the Union Carbide factory in Bhopal, 13 people still lost their lives and many people were affected by it.

The Andhra Pradesh Government announced compensation of Rs. 1 Crore to the families of the people who had lost their lives, Rs. 10 Lakhs to the victims undergoing treatment on ventilators and Rs. 1 Lakh to the other victims who were hospitalised. It was made clear by the Government that the aforesaid compensation would be in addition to the compensation by LG Polymers.

Furthermore, the High Court of Andhra Pradesh took suo motu cognizance of the incident and vide order dated 07-05-2020[7], directed the State to take all necessary steps to mitigate the loss that may be caused due to this incident. Consequently, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) also took suo motu cognizance of the incident and directed[8] the company to deposit an initial amount of Rs 50 crores with the District Magistrate, Visakhapatnam. The Civil Appeal[9] preferred against this Order before the Supreme Court has been kept pending. However the Supreme Court neither issued notice nor, did it interfere with impugned order of the NGT.

The National Green Tribunal invoked the principle of ‘strict liability’ against LG Polymers for adversely affecting the public health and environment through its failures. However, in our opinion, considering the facts and circumstances of the case of LG Polymers, it is evident that the nature of the substance used and the activities of both the companies (UCIL and LGPI) are similar in nature, and thereby, the
principle of absolute liability should have been applied in this case too. The company had submitted an affidavit to the State Environment Impact Assessment Authority on 10th May, 2019 admitting that the unit did not have ‘environment clearance substantiating the produced quantity issued by the competent authority for continuing operations’ from the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF). That affidavit was transferred to the Centre by the State for consideration. The affidavit submitted by the company proves the fact that there was clear hobnobbing and negligence of the government officials who were involved and designated by the respective government departments to ensure compliance of the environmental laws, and thereafter issue commencement certificate. The affidavit also brings out the fact that LG Polymers did not have the requisite permissions and clearances right from the inception[10].

However, the chemical plant carried on the industrial activities without any mandatory clearance and the facts prove that the industry was even de-listed as it refused expansion as per the directions of the ministry, yet it carried on the production and the negligence of the authorities, both at the Centre and at the State, proved costly and thirteen precious lives were lost and it is historically proven since the Bhopal gas tragedy, such poisonous gases gets into the genes and affects future generations also.

In the instant case, the erring government officials should be taken to task immediately by the High Court and departmental inquiries should be initiated against such erring officials and it should be seen that the people responsible in our system along with the Directors of the Company, are awarded the maximum punishment for such deliberate negligent act, which claimed innocent lives. Only then, it can act as a deterrent for other erring officials and erring companies who act in such brazen defiance of the statutory norms. This incident proves the very fact that no matter how much we try, until and unless we raise our voice against corruption, innocent lives will continue to get sacrificed.

The Andhra Pradesh High Court in Poisonous gas leakage in Visakhapatnam v. State of Andhra Pradesh[11] vide order dated 22-05-2020 issued the following directions: The Government was ordered to seize the company premises of the LG Polymers chemical plant, Vizag and the directors were not allowed to enter the premises. In addition to this, assets, fixture, machinery and contents were not allowed to be shifted without Court’s permission. The Directors of the Company were ordered to surrender their passports and hence, they were not allowed to leave the country without the Court’s permission.

IV. Conclusion
On an analysis of the given circumstances, it is proved that the management of the company (LG Polymers) did not comply with the necessary environmental laws which were necessary for a Grade-A chemical plant and the affidavit submitted on 10.5.2019 to the State Department is a blatant admission of the same. The chemical plant was functioning even after de-listing from the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MOEF). It restarted its functions without the clearance from MoEF and the requisite permissions and licenses. Moreover, the government department and officials
concerned who were entrusted and empowered to give such clearances did not scrutinise the very fact that the Company was de-listed for non-compliance and the affidavit dated 10.05.2019 admits such default on the part of the company and yet the plant started its operations. This act is nothing but a glaring example of corruption and scant regard for the rules, regulations or the safety of people.

Furthermore, the Constitution of India ensures checks and balances on the part of executives and citizens of the country. The Directive Principles of State Policy in Part-IV of the Constitution ensure that the necessary safeguards should be taken for environmental protection[12] and even the Supreme Court in a catena of decisions, has interpreted the right to clean environment as a facet of Article 21 of the Constitution of India. The legislations pertaining to environmental law ensure that necessary prerequisites are in place.

The situation as it existed in 1986 has not changed much even after thirty-four years. The attitude of big companies seems to be of non-compliance and the government officials appear to be turning a blind eye to such companies at the cost of human lives. The law must ensure that such cases are treated with the utmost seriousness and urgency and that all the erring officials and directors of the company, should be punished appropriately so that justice prevails and a zero tolerance attitude is cemented for such cases.

*Partner, L&L Partners, New Delhi
**Senior Associate, L&L Partners
***Intern, L&L Partners

[1] (1866) LR 1 Ex 265
[2] Fletcher v. Rylands, (1866) LR 1 Ex 265
[5] Forum Non Conveniens is a doctrine which allows a Court with jurisdiction over a case to dismiss it because the convenience of the parties and the interest of justice would be better served if the case were brought in a court having proper jurisdiction in another venue.
NGT vide order dt. 1-6-2020 [Gas Leak at LG Polymers Chemical Plant in Vishakhapatnam, In re, 2020 SCC OnLine NGT 129] has since directed the appropriation of Rs 50 crores deposited by LG Polymers, towards part liability and interim compensation to be spent for restoration of environment and compensation for victims.
Helping Our Healthcare Workers

By Dr. Shyam Pingle

Each incident of a doctor or nurse getting infected with coronavirus should be probed and the flaws immediately fixed.

The current global crisis due to the coronavirus has brought the healthcare community and its work-related problems into focus. While the prime minister has rightly lauded their contribution, the occupational health problems of healthcare workers have always been neglected not only by authorities but also by doctors themselves. They are the most vulnerable group on whose health the Covid-19 control strategy rests.

In current times the problem has become serious. According to FNOMCeO, Italy’s main doctors’ association, at least 100 doctors in that country have already died of Covid (as on April 9). In Spain, more than 10% of diagnosed Covid cases are doctors or nurses. The National Health Commission of China reported that up until February 24, 2,055 healthcare workers had been confirmed infected with Covid, with 22 deaths in that nation. According to reports, more than a dozen doctors have contracted the disease in five Indian states. Recent reports indicate that 48 healthcare workers including four doctors of two prominent hospitals in Mumbai have tested positive.

In a recent study of 4,357 healthcare workers in Wuhan, the main concerns reported by health workers were: infection of colleagues (72.5%), infection of family members (63.9%), protective measures (52.3%) and medical violence (48.5%). And 39.1% of healthcare workers had psychological distress.

The data on the morbidity and mortality experienced by healthcare workers in India is lacking as reliable statistics are not available. Even large teaching hospitals and medical colleges do not have an occupational health department. Hospitals are also not required to collect and report data on hospital-acquired infections in its staff. There is no specific legal requirement for comprehensive occupational health services in hospitals in India. Even the medical community and unions have seldom made demands for protecting their health and safety except for protection from violence in recent years. Workplace violence has emerged as an important threat in healthcare over the last few years. Though agitations by doctors forced the government to enact a nationwide law, it has failed to significantly change the situation on the ground so far.

Occupational health problems can be prevented with the help of universal precautions. The risk of infection increases due to lack of sufficient PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) and inadequate training further amplifies the risk of infection in healthcare workers. Proper PPE plays the most important role. It has been reported from Wuhan that the
Covid protective gear was so cumbersome and expensive that healthcare workers were forced to use adult diapers during their shift so that they do not have to take off the PPE.

Training and education of healthcare workers and extensive medical surveillance are very crucial. Long-time exposure to large numbers of infected patients directly increases the risk of infection. Also, pressure of treatment, work intensity and lack of rest indirectly increase the probability of infection. It is essential to identify, monitor and control exposures of healthcare workers and also offer them preventive immunisations on priority as and when available, e.g. for Hepatitis B.

Stress management plays a major role considering the enormous pressure to which healthcare workers are exposed. Videos coming out of Chinese and Italian hospitals are graphically showing how much more stressed health workers can be due to the overwhelming pandemic. Dealing with life and death, and round-the-clock work are the hallmark of healthcare jobs and both are stress generators. The development and implementation of mental health assessment, support, treatment and services are crucial in the health response to the coronavirus outbreak.

Our healthcare set-ups in the state sector are perpetually saddled with manpower shortage and perceived lack of support from the state. The new trend of outsourcing/on-contract workers in various industries has been extended to healthcare not only in the private sector but also in the government. The savings come at a tremendous cost in terms of quality of manpower and consequently the quality of care. There is a strong need to improve the monetary compensation and working conditions of staff in health facilities.

Besides respectable and attractive salaries, proper on-campus accommodation, timely promotions and non-monetary recognition are essential, and changes in the system are required. Every large hospital should have a dedicated and qualified occupational health professional. The occupational health of healthcare workers is not yet a priority for stakeholders. This has resulted in increased risk and decreasing attraction in medicine as a career.

Given our huge population and shortage of healthcare workers, the situation needs to be addressed by improving working conditions, using innovative human resource policies and structural reforms. Health departments should regularly report the number of infected and dead healthcare workers along with the total Covid-19 infections and deaths. Each incident of a healthcare worker being infected should be investigated and the flaws that led to it should be immediately fixed. This is essential for a healthy India.

Dr Shyam Pingle
Senior Occupational Health Advisor, Indian Institute of Public Health, Gandhinagar. Views are personal. Email: shyam.pingle@iiphg.org

ASBESTOS UPDATES

PRESS RELEASE

Death, Duplicity and Double Standards

May 25, 2020

The announcement last week that the American pharmaceutical multinational Johnson & Johnson (J&J) was withdrawing its talc-based baby powder from sale in the U.S. and Canada was widely reported: once stocks are gone, only cornstarch-based baby powder will be sold in North America. Having indicted both COVID-19 and falling consumer demand as the cause of its actions, the company nevertheless reasserted its confidence “in the safety of talc-based Johnson’s Baby Powder... [and pledged] to vigorously defend the product, its safety, and the unfounded allegations against it and the Company in the courtroom.”

Reacting to the news that the asbestos-tainted baby powder would remain on sale in countries outside North America, Sugio Furuya, the Coordinator of the Asian Ban Asbestos Network (ABAN), said:

“Americans will no longer be able to purchase this deadly product. Unfortunately, some consumers will have no option as J&J’s cornstarch-based baby powder is not sold in their countries. The use of the asbestos-tainted talc-based baby powder will continue to endanger the health of citizens in both developed and developing countries. In some countries – like Australia, Brazil, the UK, Malaysia and Japan – both cornstarch- and talc-based baby powder are available. In India, only the talc-based product is sold. ABAN is appalled by the lethal double standards of this supposed healthcare conglomerate and urges the company to rethink its marketing strategy and issue a global not just continental recall.”

Clarifying the situation in his country, grassroots activist Mohit Gupta from the Occupational and Environment Health Network of India said:

“Johnson & Johnson’s talc-based baby powder is sold in India and is very popular. In fact, it has a dominant share in India’s very lucrative market for baby products. It is very shameful that the company has decided to continue sales in India as if Indian lives don’t matter. This is yet one more example of corporations putting profit before the lives of people. Instead of replacing the toxic baby powder with one free of asbestos in India, as they are doing in North America, they are just pushing sales of this hazardous product in a market with weak regulatory mechanisms, few testing guidelines and low consumer awareness. Failure of manufacturers to warn potential users of hazards posed by use of their product is a crime but I cannot imagine Johnson & Johnson putting labels on the cannisters of baby powder stating that this product is no longer sold in US and Canada because of health concerns.”

Confirming the popularity of J&J’s talc-based baby powder in Brazil, ban asbestos activist Fernanda Giannasi was scathing in her condemnation of J&J’s hypocrisy saying:

“The fact that this deadly product has been withdrawn from sale will protect the lives of generations of North Americans; it is a tragedy that the company took so long to act. I am
appalled, however, that the lives of Brazilians are of so little import to this ‘healthcare’ colossus that it will continue selling its toxic baby powder in Brazil when the use of this product can and has caused lung cancers, ovarian cancers and mesotheliomas. The cowardliness of Johnson & Johnson’s announcing its amoral and inadmissible marketing strategy at a time when my country and many others are engulfed in a disaster of unquantifiable proportions is an abomination.”

It is noteworthy that articles about Johnson & Johnson’s actions have been spun by the asbestos lobby in Russia — the world’s largest producer of chrysotile (white) asbestos — to defend asbestos and attack anti-asbestos activists. The following extracts were taken from a Russian language article published last week:

- “chrysotile asbestos… [is] harmless if certain safety rules are observed when mining and working with this product.”
- “Chrysotile has been successfully used for decades and continues to be used in Russia, the CIS countries, Latin America and Southeast Asia. There is no ban on the use of chrysotile asbestos even in the USA.”
- “Spanish scientists have also confirmed the safety of chrysotile asbestos.”
- “At the same time, chrysotile asbestos poses the least danger to people… As far back as 1986, 143 countries represented in the International Labor Organization unanimously approved Convention 162 “Safe Use of Asbestos”, which advocates strict regulation of the use of chrysotile, and not its prohibition…”
- “who is the next of the industrial giants to fall under the pressure of the anti-asbestos campaign.”

“Human beings are placed in mortal danger by exposure to asbestos-contaminated baby powder just as they are by exposure to asbestos-containing building products,” said Laurie Kazan-Allen, the Coordinator of the International Ban Asbestos Secretariat. “If J&J fails to withdraw sales of the tale-based baby powder, then national governments, regional authorities and intergovernmental organizations must act unilaterally to prevent further deaths.”

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Coronaviruses (CoV) are a large family of viruses that cause illness ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS-CoV).

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is a new strain that was discovered in 2019 and has not been previously identified in humans.

Coronaviruses are zoonotic, meaning they are transmitted between animals and people. Detailed investigations found that SARS-CoV was transmitted from civet cats to humans and MERS-CoV from dromedary camels to humans.

Several known coronaviruses are circulating in animals that have not yet infected humans.

Common signs of infection include respiratory symptoms, fever, and cough, shortness of breath and breathing difficulties. In more severe cases, infection can cause pneumonia, severe acute respiratory syndrome, kidney failure and even death.

Standard recommendations to prevent infection spread include regular hand washing, covering mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing, thoroughly cooking meat and eggs. Avoid close contact with anyone showing symptoms of respiratory illness such as coughing and sneezing.

SITUATION IN NUMBERS
Total cases in last on 30 June 2020 (10:43 GMT)
Globally confirmed: 10,432,846
Total Deaths: 508,803
Recovered: 5,691,958
countries/territories/areas: 213

Active Cases
| Mild Condition | 4,232,085 (99%) |
| Serious or Critical | 57,773 (1%) |
| Total Active | 638,930 (100%) |

Closed Cases
| Recovered /Discharged | 5,691,958 (92%) |
| Death | 508,803 (8%) |
| Total Outcomes | 220462 (100%) |

https://www.covidvisualizer.com/
Worldometer’s real time data
MEMORIES

It is with much sorrow that I share with you the news that Dr. Fernand Turcotte died of Covid-19 on May 16. He had been ill for some time. Fernand was a co-founder of the Department of Social and Preventive Medicine and Professor Emeritus at Laval University, Quebec. He was a leader in the fight against the tobacco industry and was a wonderful ally in our fight against the asbestos industry in Quebec. He was a man of great courage, integrity and humanity. Over many years he was always there to support our actions to challenge and defeat the asbestos industry and to stop the mining and export of asbestos from Quebec. He participated in events when the Asia-Quebec Solidarity Delegation came to Montreal.

He was an inspiring example of solidarity and integrity. He made a difference and he will be greatly missed.

With deep sorrow about the sudden death of the former Secretary General of the Construction Trade union of Nigeria Baba Dundee Leyde. He pass aware on June 13, 2020 and was buried on 14 June 2020 according to Islamic tradition.

The international Union of Construction and Timer Workers Unions in Africa and the Middle East along with ANROEV Secretariat extended their deepest condolences to the family members of the late and construction workers in Nigeria.

Sri Lankan Trade Union leader death

COLOMBO, The Chairman of the Lanka Self-Employed Professionals’ National Three-Wheeler Federation Mr. Sunil Jayawardana was killed in an assault in Mirihana.

The 53-year-old three-wheel driver was killed in an assault following a heated argument that broke out yesterday over the lease of a three-wheeler involving a leasing company, police said.

The federation secretary Mahinda Kumara said that a group of 10 people had pulled him out of a three wheeler when he had been travelling with the victim.

“The attack on us had been planned. They were carrying clubs. One of them was repeatedly shouting to beat us and kill us,” Kumara said recalling the horrific ordeal.

Asela Sampath, the convener of the Sri Lanka Restaurant Owners’ Association, expressed deep regret over the incident stating that he had lost a “comrade”.

“He died after standing tall against the leasing mafia which has left the people completely helpless,” Sampath said.

He noted that the leasing company, which is not a leading firm, had not provided the relief introduced by the government.

Eight suspects who were arrested in connection with the incident have been remanded until June 25.
Jin Sook Lee - The Passing of a True Workers’ Champion

Jin Sook Lee: Mother, Wife, Activist

A Statement from Her Family

Since Jin Sook left us, on 7 April, my daughters and I have been in a daze, trying to find our bearings in a new life without her. We are swimming in sorrow, trying not to drown, hoping to reach safe shore in due time. We are also remembering her and celebrating her struggles and accomplishments as an activist/organizer, made poignant by sincere and powerful words of tribute from her colleagues and friends around the world.

My daughters and I thank you for your words of comfort and remembrance of a fallen warrior. We felt through your words that our mother and wife had lived a noble life, though it was, at times, extremely difficult from our vantage point. And so, as a way of expressing our gratitude for your kind words and participating in a collective tribute to her, I would like to share some thoughts.

As it is true with all people, it’s difficult to describe Jin Sook Lee, let alone in few words. As her husband of 27 years and as her friend of 30 years, I’d like to remember her through several words: simple, complex, focused, and basic.

SIMPLE. Jin Sook laughed easily, belting out a roar, face turning crimson, hands clapping, after hearing a funny story or a good joke. Her tastes were simple. Like most people, she preferred simple home cooking and her own bed, especially after long travels. Our apartment was always clean, comfortable, and minimal. Her clothes dated back many years and sometimes decades, and her accessories were few (her most prized accessory being the zirconia earrings I bought for her in Frankfurt, Germany during the 2004 Book Fair). She liked bags but usually toted around things she had collected from labor events over the years. She liked being home, doing nothing. She enjoyed walks. Mostly, she enjoyed being around us, her family, even if we didn’t speak, didn’t do anything, just occupying the same space. Watching a movie at home or a murder-mystery serial was our usual entertainment.

COMPLEX. She was deeply immersed in major issues, such as changing geopolitics and resulting trends of impact on women and migrant workers; the difficulties of lending support to vulnerable workers with finite resources of time, funding, and people; evolving labor movements in South Korea, United States, Europe, and elsewhere. She was always seeking and absorbing information, analyses, and insights about moving variables that ultimately affect workers. Racking her brain, she tried to devise a road map for various situations, looking for actionable practice that would have an immediate impact and contribute to a longer-term goal. She often verbalized these thoughts to the family, mostly me, to just listen and occasionally react. After returning home from field visits or major events, she emptied her bag of experiences and observations as she emptied her luggage of goodies that she bought for the family. She always had many heartwarming or heartbreaking stories about the workers with whom she organized. She told many stories, some as ongoing saga, about her fellow activists/organizers. Ambet (Yuson), BWI colleagues in headquarters and the regions, Rita (Schiavi), Poo (Pei-Ohf Sjöö), Gail (Cartmill), Kirsty (Drew), Chidi (King), Bill (Street), Carmel (Ahua), Elizabeth (Ting), and many others have became famous names in our household.

FOCUSED. As her husband, I sometimes get upset with her, because I saw her running on empty, running on fume. I tried to be gentle, diplomatic, or forceful, asking, sometimes demanding, that she be selfish and put her health before anything else. But she was always focused on her work, which was almost always connected to workers struggling at their respective work sites.

Seven years ago, during her breast cancer treatment, which started with the gift of a cancer diagnosis on our 20th wedding anniversary, Jin Sook and I played hide-and-seek in our small apartment, where she often stuck away during family movie or TV time to make a call or email someone. Not understanding her motivation and always concerned about her health during that period of intense chemotherapy, I tried to coax her into surrendering her mobile phone and laptop, sometimes threatening her with an ultimatum: I would move the family to a remote mountain cottage without electricity if the phone and laptop remained turned on. This was playful initially but became a little heated after her calls became more frequent.
and her voice became more intense. Eventually, she explained to me about the preparations for World Cup 2022 in Qatar, about the significance and magnitude of launching a sports campaign to safeguard basic worker rights for thousands, about the immense challenge of building dialogue and cooperation with the Qatari government and FIFA while also coordinating with global trade unions and key leaders, and about the day-to-day struggles of migrant workers at the construction sites in Qatar. Her passion and sincerity silenced me, once again.

Early this year, when her endometrial cancer returned after the final treatment had ended just two-and-half months before, she struggled with intense pain and fear, plagued by the thought of another grueling round of treatment and the possibility that she might not be so fortunate this time. And yet, I saw her on the phone and typing away on her laptop. This time, I was angry. I demanded that she stop everything and rest. Clearly fatigued and struggling to maintain focus, she said migrant workers in Qatar were quarantined due to the Covid-19 lockdown. Their tight living quarters put every one of them in danger, so she searched for both solutions and people able to make a difference. In a frail voice, she said, “Who is going to protect these workers?”

BASIC. Oftentimes, Jin Sook’s words were few in describing her childhood, her upbringing. Over the years, she told me in bits and pieces about her mother’s death, which happened when she was age 13 and her sisters were ages 14 and 12. As a young teenager, who typically needs a mother’s warmth and care, she assumed the unenviable role of being surrogate mother to her sisters. Feeling empty and overwhelmed, everything was difficult, even cooking the next meal. And she carried a deep sorrow of losing her mother under difficult circumstances. But she worked hard on everything required of her as a sister, university student, young feminist/activist, grassroots organizer, and trade union campaigner, starting in Canada, then in the United States, South Korea, and Switzerland.

I think she saw pieces of herself in women and migrant workers. Of course, she acknowledged she was privileged, compared to workers toiling in foreign lands, earning meager wages that sustain their families back home. But she identified with the pain of family separation and one’s longing for a loved one. Through her own immigrant experiences in Canada, she understood some of their struggles, in trying to adapt to different cultures, languages, rules, and norms. Most of all, she saw them simply as people with families, as someone’s wife or husband, mother or father, sister or brother, no different from her or anyone in this world. To her, lending support to...
The newsletter contains information and news about the campaigns of the network on OSH, Environmental Health, Victims Organizing, Lung Diseases, and Electronics etc.

Articles and information in OSH Rights, Environmental Rights and focused on COVID 19, Due Diligence and Industrial Incidence as issues may be reproduced in non-profit publications with clear citations,

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Opinions and suggestions to the editor are encouraged. Please send enquiries to the Editor, e-mail: anroev@gmail.com

ANROEV Secretariat:

CENTER FOR PUBLIC HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEVELOPMENT (CEPHED)
Mahalaxmi Municipality-2, Lalitpur,
Kathmandu, Nepal
Tel/Fax: 00977-1-, 5201786,
Mobile: 00977-9803047621,
E-mail: anroev@gmail.com
www.anroev.org
www.facebook.com/Anroev
https://twitter.com/AnroevNetwork