

BROKEN DREAMS: A REPORT ON THE RANA PLAZA COLLAPSE



Fact finding report
Odhikar
Report released on 19 June 2013

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INTRODUCTION

Since the 1980s, starting as a response to adjust the economy and resolve the balance of payment deficit; export oriented readymade garment industries have been growing fast. The processes of underdevelopment, coupled with the failure to constitute a democratic state, contributed to the rapid pauperization of the rural areas, releasing cheap labour and forcing people - mainly young girls in their teens - to leave their localities and homes in search of a livelihood to survive. The social and economic atmosphere created conditions to coerce them into work places with meager wages and unsafe working conditions. At present, about 40 hundred thousand people work for almost 4700 industries, where at least 80% of workers are women.¹ It is still debatable as to what extent Bangladesh workers gained in social and developmental terms, from the implementation of an economic model that is basically built on the exploitation of the population, particularly of young women. By this, much foreign remittance is earned that keeps Bangladesh's economy stable. The remittance received is around 20 billion US Dollars per year.²

Labour is cheap in Bangladesh, attracting buyers/investors from all over the world, taking advantage of the cheap cost of production. The industry owners often violate the workers human rights. According to the Minimum Wage Board 2010, the average wage is Taka 3000/- which is comparatively, extremely low.³ Moreover, it is a regular practice of owners to dismiss workers from their jobs, in contravention to labour laws. Due to the lack of security in the garment industries, the workers are often victimised. For example, although the public sector workers are entitled to enjoy six months (24 weeks) maternity leave, the BGMEA introduced 16 weeks of maternity leave for female workers in the garment factories, even after the Labour Ministry's suggestion to amend the Section 46 of the Labour Act, 2006.⁴ Workers are also not allowed to form trade unions as prohibited by the owners of the garment industries.⁵ Apart from exploitation in the hands of factory owners and managers; police, industrial police and other organs of the government forcefully bar the workers from raising any protest against poor working conditions. The government always seems to be taking the owners side. The latest installment of

¹ Md. Rafiqul Islam, Joint Secretary, BGMEA, interviewed by Odhikar over telephone on 19 June 2013.

² Report from Export Promotion Bureau, Bangladesh, Ministry of Commerce. <http://www.epb.gov.bd/index.php>

³ Sultan Uddin Ahmed, Executive Director, BILS, interviewed by Odhikar on 19 June 2013.

⁴ The daily New Age, June 2, 2012

⁵ Information collected from Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies (BILS)

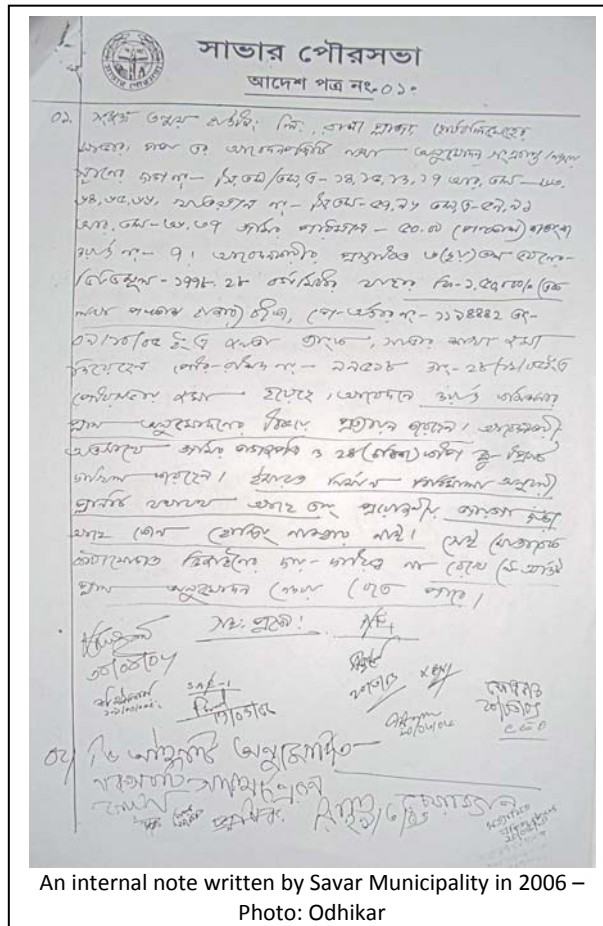
human tragedy in the garments sector is the collapse of the building 'Rana Plaza' in Savar, Dhaka, on 24th April 2013.

HISTORY OF RANA PLAZA: EVIDENCE OF CORRUPTION

Upon inquiry by Odhikar it was found that corruption was present at every step of constructing Rana Plaza. On 18th September 2003, Sohel Rana, along with his father Abdul Khaleq and mother Morjina Begum signed a 29-clause contract with Kazi Saiful Islam, the director of a real estate company named Tonmoy Housing Limited, for the purpose of constructing a ten storied building on land at the east side of Savar bus-stand. The contract mentioned that Tonmoy Housing Limited, from its own fund, would construct the basement and five floors above it. However it also mentioned that the foundation of the building would be for ten stories. Tonmoy Housing Limited would get a share of 61% of the building, while Sohel Rana and his parents would get 39%. The contract mentioned that after the basement was completed and primary filling of the rooftop was done, Sohel Rana and his parents would transfer 61% to Tonmoy Housing Limited's Kazi Saiful Islam, signing a deed of sale. In 2005, Tonmoy Housing Limited had sent a proposal to Savar Municipality in order to construct a six storied building, instead of taking permission from RAJUK, and using Abdul Khaleq's political clout. Their application was numbered 557, dated 06/07/2005. On 10th April 2006 Savar Municipality gave permission to Sohel Rana to construct the building without being responsible for the structural design of the building. It was learnt that right after the construction of the first floor, Sohel Rana breached the contract and compelled Tonmoy Housing Limited to leave. Kazi Saiful Islam was threatened by Sohel Rana many times, while Sohel Rana made his own arrangements for building more floors, i.e., till the eighth floor.

According to a hand written paper of the Rana Shopping Complex application form and Savar Municipality 2006 and 2008, it has been learnt that Mayor Refat Ullah and related officials give the permission to build Rana Plaza without considering its structural design. On 25th March 2008, on the basis of another application, the Mayor and related authorities gave permission to Rana Plaza to increase its structure from the 5th floor to 9th floor. It is clearly mentioned in the Detailed Area Plan (DAP) 1995 and Detailed Area Plan (DAP) 2010 that if anyone wanted to build a building related to business, he must have to take permission from RAJUK⁶.

⁶ RAJUK: Rajdhani Unnoyan Kortipokkho (Capital Development Authority)



It is important to note that, Rana Plaza was made without taking permission from RAJUK.

In the year 2006, Saiful Islam of Tonmoy Housing Limited had started the construction work with his own funds. In 2007, the second floor was completed. According to Clause 15 of the contract, Sohel Rana and his father Abdul Khalek were supposed to hand over a specific amount of the land to Saiful Islam by deed of sale soon after the completion of the 2nd floor. Instead of doing that, Sohel Rana illegally forced Saiful Islam out of the scene. Despite the fact that Saiful Islam, at various times, wanted to come to an understanding, yet Sohel Rana had threatened him so that he would not claim ownership⁷. Then Sohel Rana made arrangements to continue with the construction and eventually ended up building five floors. In 2008, Abdul Khalek asked for permission in order to raise the building till the 9th floor. Sohel Rana then used his political influence and managed to get permission from the concerned authority. On 19th August 2009, Member of Parliament, Murad Jong, inaugurated Rana Plaza in an opening ceremony.

⁷ Monirul Islam, brother-in-law of Kazi Saiful Huq, interviewed by Odhikar on 5 June 2013.

Till 2012, Sohel Rana managed build up to the 8th floor. In order to raise another floor rod, cement, bricks and other materials were stored on the top 'floor' in the year 2013.

THE TRAGEDY

The tragedy of the building collapse on 24th April 2013 in Savar, is one the whole world will remember. Situated under the jurisdiction of Savar Police Station on the east of Savar bus-stand in Savar, Dhaka, the eight-storied building 'Rana Plaza' collapsed at 8:58 am on that day. The building contained five garment factories where almost 5000 workers were employed. According to government statistics, 1131 amongst them lost their lives while around 2438 could be rescued, however badly injured. Most of them were garments workers. The government claimed that 1115 bodies have been recovered and 2438 people have been rescued with injuries. Till 19th June 2013 after being rescued, 16 injured workers expired at various hospitals while under treatment. In this incident five garment factories, a bank, ATM booths of the bank, a company, a market and the parking space, all in the Rana Plaza, were destroyed.

Right after the collapse, members of the Bangladesh Army, Fire Service and Civil Defence, Police, BGB, pedestrians and also members of various social welfare organisations had begun rescue operations. They also helped the injured to various hospitals, delivered dead bodies to the relatives, arranged for the burial of unidentified bodies and financially helped the affected.

It was learnt during the fact finding mission that in the morning of 23rd April 2013, three pillars of the factory in front of the cutting section (middle of the building) had two-inch deep cracks. Hearing this news, local journalists came to Rana Plaza. The building's security guards did not allow journalists to enter under the instructions of the building owner, Sohel Rana. A local engineer, Abdur Razzak, visited the place of occurrence and opined that the building was 'vulnerable'. He also suggested that the building be immediately inspected by engineers from the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) and Rajdhani Unnoyan Kortipokkho (RAJUK). Hearing this, the owner of the building, Sohel Rana, who is also a Jubo League⁸ leader, came to the place and said that a crack in the building was not a hazard. He told the journalists not to report it. That day, the owners of five garment factories declared their factories closed. On 24th April 2013, workers refused to work in the vulnerable building. It is alleged that, Sohel Rana was present at his office situated in the basement of the building and he was taking initiatives to bring people to work in order to defy the hartal that day, which had been called by the BNP; and for organising an anti-hartal procession. During this time, hearing of the refusal of workers to enter the building, Sohel Rana and the owners of the factories came out and forced the workers to enter the workplace. The building collapsed at 8.58 in the morning; and Sohel Rana was trapped in the

⁸ Youth wing of Awami League, the present party in power.

basement. He was rescued by his men and escaped with the help of Member of Parliament and Awami League leader, Talukder Mohammad Touhid Jong Murad (popularly known as 'Murad Jong'). It was learnt that on April 24, an anti-hartal procession led by Murad Jong was supposed to be brought out from Rana Plaza.

LEGAL ACTION

In light of the tragic event, a police officer, RAJUK⁹, a member of Dhaka Detective Branch of Police and the spouse of a deceased worker have filed five different cases in the Savar Police Station and also in the Court against Sohel Rana (the owner of the building) and the owners of the five garment factories. Twelve of the accused persons are in police custody to date.

After the collapse of Rana Plaza, a case (case no. 53, dated: 24/04/2013) against Sohel Rana was filed under Section 12 of the Building Construction Act, 1952¹⁰ by an authorised officer of RAJUK, named Helal Ahmed. On 24th April 2013, Sub Inspector Wali Ashraf, as the complainant had filed cases accusing Sohel Rana; his father Abdul Khaleq; Chairman of Phantom Apparels Limited Aminul Islam; the Spanish Managing Director of Phantom Tec, David Mayer Rico; Chairman of Ether Tec Limited, Anisur Rahman; and the Chairman of New Wave Button Limited and New Wave Style Limited, Bozlus Samad Adnan; and many more under Sections 337/338/304(A)/427/34¹¹ of the Penal Code, 1860. The case number is 55, dated: 24/04/2013. Sub Inspector Shahin Shah Parvez of the Detective Branch of Police filed a case accusing Sohel Rana under Section 19(a)¹² of the Arms Act, 1878, since the police recovered arms from Sohel Rana's brick field at Dhamrai, Dhaka. Another case was filed in the same police station under Section 25(b)¹³ of the

⁹ RAJUK: Rajdhani Unnoyan Kortipokkho (Capital Development Authority)

¹⁰ Section 12 of the Building Construction Act refers penalty to ¹ (1) Whoever commits an offence by-

(a) Contravening the provision of section 3; or

(b) failing to comply with any direction given to him by an Authorised Officer or a Committee under section 3B or by an Authorised Officer under section 4 or sub-section (1) of section 5; or

(c) designing or approving or implementing a building construction plan in contravention to any provision of the Bangladesh Building Code made under section 18A and the rules made under section 18; or

(d) constructing a building in contravention to any provision of the Bangladesh Building Code made under section 18A-

¹¹ Sections 337 and 338 of the Penal Code refer to causing hurt and grievous hurt by act endangering life or personal safety of others. Section 304A punishes for causing death by negligence. Section 427 refers to mischief causing damage to the amount of fifty taka. Section 34 punishes for acts done by several persons in furtherance of common intention.

file:///C:/Documents%20and%20Settings/Administrator/My%20Documents/Back%20up%20files/All%20Law%20File/BPC/print_sections_all.php.htm

¹² Section 19A of the Arms Act states: Notwithstanding anything contained in section 19, whoever commits an offence under clause (a), (c), (e) or (f) of section 19 shall, if the offence is committed in respect of a pistol, revolver, rifle ² shot gun or other fire-arm] be punished with ³ imprisonment for life or rigorous imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than ten years]

¹³ Section 25 (b) of the Special Powers Act: 25B. refers penalty for smuggling ¹ (1)] Whoever, in breach of any prohibition or restriction imposed by or under any law for the time being in force, or evading payment of customs duties or taxes leviable thereon under any law for the time being in force, (a) takes out of Bangladesh jute, gold or silver bullion, manufactures of gold or silver, currency, articles of food, drugs, imported goods, or any other goods; or

(b) brings into Bangladesh any goods, shall be punishable with death, or with ² imprisonment for life, or with rigorous imprisonment for a term which may extend to fourteen years and shall not be less than two years], and shall also be liable to fine.

³ (2) Whoever sells, or offers or displays for sale, or keeps in his possession or under his control for the purpose of sale, any goods the bringing of which into Bangladesh is prohibited by or under any law for the time being in force shall be

Special Powers Act 1974, (case no. 4 dated 6/5/2013). Shiuly Akhter, the wife of garment worker Jahangir Alam filed a case in the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court against Sohel Rana; Chairman of New Wave Style Bozlus Samad Adnan; and the Chief Engineer of Savar Municipality, Imtemam Hossain Babu, accusing them under Sections 302/34/506¹⁴ of the Penal Code, 1860.

According to the government, it has handed over 840 bodies out of the 1131, to their families or relatives. 291 were buried in Jurain graveyard as unidentified. In order to identify the bodies, the Department of Forensics and DNA Profiling in Dhaka Medical College collected evidence from 316 bodies.¹⁵ The concerned authority could not tell Odhikar where the 25 extra bodies came from.

About Sohel Rana¹⁶

The son of Abdul Khalek and Morjina Begum, Sohel Rana was born in Joymondob village under the jurisdiction of Shingair Police Station in the district of Manikganj. Abdul Khalek was once a petty trader who would sell oil on the ferryboats. He moved to Savar's Moddhapara and continued the same trade. Rana studied till the eighth grade in Odhor Chandra Model High School. He became involved at a young age with a local gang of miscreants, the 'Rajib-Shamar Bahini'.

In the year 2000, Sohel Rana joined the Bangladesh Chhatra League¹⁷. In 2004 he was elected the Chhatra League's General Secretary of Savar Municipality. His father, Abdul Khalek was a dedicated activist of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) in Savar. On 29th December 2008 in the national election, Murad Jong became the Member of Parliament from the 19th constituency, representing the 14 party grand alliances (led by the Bangladesh Awami League). At one point when Sohel Rana was on good terms with Murad Jong, upon his orders, Sohel Rana was made the Joint Convener of Jubo League¹⁸ of Savar. Having the full support of Murad Jong, Sohel Rana established 'supremacy' in the area and got involved in criminal acts. His gang was involved in drug dealing, theft, robbery, extortion at industrial organisations and allegedly even murder. Rana was also involved in forcefully taking possession of land that belonged to members of the Hindu community. He got away with crime due to Murad Jong's protection. In a very short period of time, Sohel Rana and his father Abdul Khalek became very affluent people.

punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to seven years and shall not be less than one year, and shall also be liable to fine.

¹⁴ Section 302 of the Penal Code refers to punishment for murder: Whoever commits murder shall be punished with death, or ¹⁰²imprisonment] for life, and shall also be liable to fine. Section 34 punishes for acts done by several persons in furtherance of common intention. Section 506 refers to punishment for criminal intimidation.

¹⁵ Ashish Kumar Mojumdar, Scientific Officer, National Forensic DNA Profiling Department of Dhaka Medical College, interviewed by Odhikar on 20 May 2013

¹⁶ Information collected from local political activists, journalists and local inhabitants during fact-finding mission carried out by Odhikar

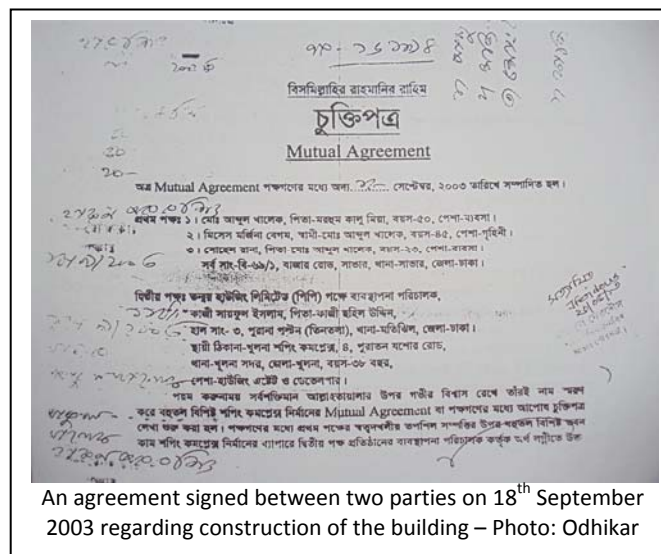
¹⁷ Student wing of the Awami League

¹⁸ Youth wing of the Awami League

NB: It was not possible for Odhikar to reach Talukdar Mohammad Tauhid Jong Murad (Murad Jong) in any way, in order to talk to him about Sohel Rana's political history.



Campaign poster with Sohel Rana (left) and Murad Jong (right)



An agreement signed between two parties on 18th September 2003 regarding construction of the building – Photo: Odhikar

Use of Rana Plaza:

The basement of Rana Plaza was used as a car park and Sohel Rana's personal office.

Ground floor - Market and ATM Booth of a bank

1st floor - Market and Savar branch office of BRAC Bank

2nd floor - Garments factory called 'New Wave Bottoms Limited'

3rd floor - Garments factory called 'Phantom Apparels Limited'

4th floor - Garments factory called 'Ethar Tex Limited'

5th floor - Garments factory called 'Phantom Tac Limited

6th and 7th floors - Garments factory called 'New Wave Style Limited'



Foreign buyers of the garment factories:

- Primark of Associated British Foods PNC
- Canadian Lob Locos Limited
- Spanish company 'Mango'

Foreign organisations have to date never paid any compensation, even during similar tragedies in the past.¹⁹

INTERVIEWS

Md. Ali Badhshah

Md. Ali Badhshah was the owner of shops 50 and 51 on the ground floor of Rana Plaza. He informed Odhikar that he had initially paid an advance of Taka 500,000/- and paid Taka 10,000/- per month as rent on the two shops, together called 'J&K Zone', that sold clothes. On 23rd April 2013, workers, with the use of megaphones, had warned everyone of the cracks that could be seen on the 3rd floor of the building. Thereafter some garment factories declared work closed for the day. However Ali Badhshah was informed on behalf of the owner of the building, that the cracks signified no risks at all. At 8:00 pm he closed the shop and went home. On 24th April 2013 at 8:30 in the morning, he went to Rana Plaza along with his employees Imon Saha, Tauhid Bin Fahad and Laila Akhter.

He observed that in order to protest against the hartal that BNP had called, Awami League activists had gathered near Rana Plaza and factory owners were forcing

¹⁹ Shahidullah Azim, Vice-President, BGMEA, interviewed by Odhikar on 20 May 2013

workers to go inside the factory. Tauhid Murad Jong was present there with his car, amongst the activists. Just when he was heading towards the building, he heard a loud cracking noise and the building collapsed in front of him. Hundreds were stuck inside the building, shouting and crying for help. The locals moved forward to rescue them. After around 20 minutes, Sohel Rana got out of the basement and climbing into Murad Jong's car.



Mosammat Karina Akhter (22)

Mosammat Karina Akhter is the wife of garment worker Md. Israfil. She told Odhikar that her husband worked on the 2nd floor of Rana Plaza for New Wave Bottoms Limited. On 24th April 2013 Md. Israfil went to work at 7:30 in the morning. After the tragic incident, Israfil could not be traced for 15 days. On 9th April 2013 she heard that her husband's body had been found in Odhor Chandra School field in Savar. While taking the body away, she received a compensation of Taka 20,000/- from the District Commissioner. However after that she received no other financial help. She is unemployed and has a two year old son.

Md. Amjad Hossain (22), injured worker, Phantom Apparels Limited, Rana Plaza, Savar, Dhaka

Md. Amjad Hossain informed Odhikar that his hometown is in the Ulipur upazila of Kurigram. For the last four months he has been working as a mechanic in Phantom Apparels Limited. He joined work at around 8:15 am on 24th April 2013. At 8:58 am, when a concrete slab fell on his legs, he lost consciousness. After he regained consciousness, he saw that he was in Dhaka Medical College Hospital. However after three days he was transferred to Apollo Hospital. Both his legs had to be amputated in order to save his life. He was then brought to the Centre for the Rehabilitation of Paralyzed (CRP) on 23rd May 2013. He is admitted there now, in

cabin no. 107 and under treatment. Amjad Hossain complained that other than medical treatment, he has received no monetary compensation.



Mohammad Amjad Hossain, whose legs had to be amputated, at CRP, Savar – Photo Odhikar



Front of the collapsed Rana Plaza, photo was taken from South side – Photo: Odhikar

Najma Akhter (22), injured worker, Phantom Apparels Limited, Rana Plaza, Savar, Dhaka

Najma Akhter told Odhikar that she is from Beradanga village of the Rajbari district. She had been working as an operator in Phantom Apparels Limited for four years. She went to the factory at around 8:00 in the morning on 23rd April 2013. At around 10:20 am, Imran who was an Assistant Production Manager, declared by megaphone that the workers were allowed to leave and asked them to return after lunch. She started down the stairs with the others, when she heard from a worker that there were visible cracks in the pillars on the 2nd floor and that leave was declared due to this. Right after lunch she went back to the factory and saw that the other factories were closed. However on the 3rd and 4th floors, higher officials of both the garment factories had asked the workers to return. Workers were

reluctant to continue their work. Although they were granted leave, to make sure they would return the next day (24th April 2013), their time cards were seized. Najma Akhter, on 24th April 2013 went to work inside the building at 8:00 in the morning. A colleague named Sabiha Akhter informed her that on 23rd April 2013, an engineer and journalists had visited the building for observation. Sabiha Akhter said that the engineer suggested the building be sealed and the factories closed down. However, Najma said, the factories would not be kept open if there was any risk. At 8:58 am she noticed that workers from the west side were rushing towards the gate on the east side, shouting at the top of their voices. When she joined others running in the same direction, a piece of brick from the ceiling fell on her head. She fell down bleeding, while cartons fell over her as well. However the cartons were removed by another worker who tried to help her. When she headed towards the staircase, she found that there was no stairs and that the place was dark. In the dark she noticed that a few workers had used the nearby window to jump to the ground from the 3rd floor. She did the same and got injured. Locals took her to the Lab Zone Specialised Hospital. Najma Akhter complained that, the hospital was taking advantage of the tragic accident, and charging the patients a very high fee. She was billed Taka 1750/- just for a bag of saline and a bandage on her head.



Lutfar Rahman (21), injured worker, New Wave Style Limited, Rana Plaza, Savar, Dhaka

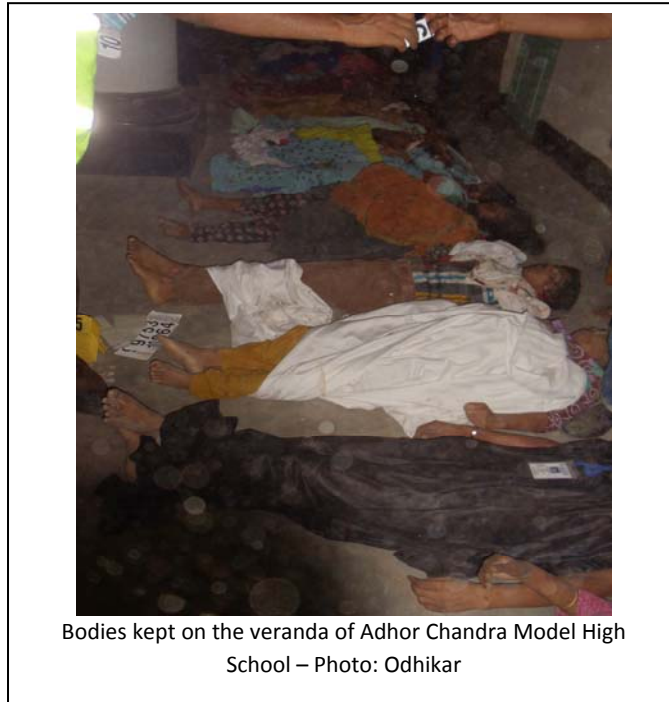
Lutfar Rahman informed Odhikar that he belonged to the Malgram area of Bogra district, and lives in a rented house at Savar. He had been working in the button section of New Wave Style Limited in the 6th floor of Rana Plaza for 2 years and 3 months. He went to the factory at 8:00 am on 23rd April 2013. At around 9:40 am

he heard that cracks could be seen on the pillars in the 2nd floor of the building. Robiul Hossain, who was the mechanic-in-charge then declared leave and asked everyone to exit the premises. Robiul Hossain mentioned that the workers would have to return after lunch. After lunch, the workers returned to the factory. Lutfar Rahman observed that a few journalists, along with many others were in front of the building. The Managing Director of the factory, Mahmudur Rahman Taposh told the workers that they could have the day off and return on 24th April 2013.

On 24th April 2013, around 400 women and 200 men started working in the factory from 8:00 in the morning. At 8:57 am there was a power cut and thus at 8:58 am, generators were turned on at every floor of the building. He said that there was a cutting section on the west side of the factory, in the middle was the sewing section and on the east was a button section. When a cracking noise was heard near the cutting section, the workers rushed towards the east. He saw the middle of the 6th floor collapse. When all the workers rushed to the east side, the building tilted towards the south. He was near a window and jumped out and fell on the roof of a warehouse. Then locals took him to Savar Lab Zone Specialised Hospital.



A rescue team with a wounded worker. Photo: Odhikar



Md. Shipon Sheikh (22), injured worker, New Wave Style Limited, Rana Plaza, Savar, Dhaka

Md. Shipon Sheikh informed Odhikar that his hometown is in the Alladipur village of Rajbari district. He had been working on the 6th floor of Rana Plaza in the sewing section of New Wave Style Limited.

At 9:45 am on 23rd April 2013, an official of the factory, using a megaphone, declared that the factory would be closed till lunch. At around 2:00 pm, he went back to work. Supervisor Mehedi Hasan had told him that he saw cracks on the building on the 2nd floor and also told him to take the day off. On 24th April 2013 at around 8:00 in the morning, he went to work. At around 8:30 am, Jubo League leader and owner of Rana Plaza Sohel Rana, had taken him and 30/40 other workers to the 1st floor of the building. Sohel Rana asked them to join a movement against the BNP-called hartal and if they refused, he threatened to dismiss them from work. A few seemed reluctant to abide by his order, including Shipon Sheikh. Shipon Sheikh went back to the 7th floor to work. At 8:45 am, production manager Md. Rana notified everyone that the cracks had been fixed and that there were no more risks. A noise could be heard at 8:58 am and the finishing section of the 7th floor collapsed. The workers cried in fear and in order to save themselves, they started jumping out of the building. He also jumped from the window that was in the south side and fell on pile of dust, suffering injuries. Shipon Sheikh informed Odhikar that it was a regular practice for Sohel Rana to use workers to combat hartals called by BNP. On 24th April 2013, Sohel Rana had gathered workers for a rally to protest the BNP-called general strike.



Workers trapped in the wreckage – Photo: Odhikar

Shutlal Das, husband of missing Dolly Rani Das, Village: Bilpul, Police Station: Shalla, Shunamganj

Shutlal Das informed Odhikar that his wife Dolly Rani Das worked in New Wave Bottoms Limited on the 2nd floor of Rana Plaza. His wife went to the factory at around 8:00 in the morning on 24th April 2013. After the collapse, her whereabouts are still unknown and her body cannot be traced.

For the purpose of identifying the body, his brother in law Utpol Das gave a blood sample to the Dhaka Medical College for DNA test on 12th May 2013. Shutlal Das filed a General Dairy (GD) at Savar Police Station (GD number was 1285, dated 25/05/2013) with regard to his missing wife. He complained that he had not received any compensation as yet.



Relatives looking for the missing workers – Photo: Odhikar

Jabed Mustafa, Staff Reporter, the daily Jugantar

Jabed Mustafa informed Odhikar that he was called by a factory worker on 23rd April 2013 at around 11:00 am, who informed him about the cracks on the pillar. He visited to the building to examine the 2nd floor, however the guard stopped him saying that the owners had ordered that no journalist should be allowed entry. Minutes later, Savar's local engineer Abdur Razzak reached Rana Plaza. He entered the 2nd floor along with the engineer. The Director of New Wave Bottoms Limited, Mahmudur Rahman Taposh notified him that no journalists were allowed when he was on the 2nd floor. At one point when Taposh got into a quarrel with Jabed Mustafa, guards were called to take the latter away. He came out of the building and informed journalists at the Savar Press Club of the matter.

Soon after, 25/30 journalists showed up and when electronic media journalists wanted to take photos, the owner's refused. The workers came out of the building. At 11:45 in the morning Sohel Rana stood in front of the building. He took the journalists to his office in the basement and said that a crack on the pillar was not a big accident and that there should be no news in the media. Jabed then informed Sohel Rana that he took a picture with the help of a worker and he thinks that the building is at great risk of collapse. Sohel Rana informed him that all the factories in the building would be declared closed. He also asked the journalists not to publish the news.

With regard to engineer Abdur Razzak, Jabed said that he had declared the building to be at risk and asked those responsible to call experts from BUET²⁰ and RAJUK²¹ to take the matter into consideration and come and examine the building.

Jabed was informed by the workers that they had got the day off. Then he went to the office and sent the news - 'Leave granted to workers due to visible cracks on the pillars of a building in Savar'. The news was printed in the daily Jugantor on 24th April. On 24th April 2013 at 7:30 am, a man named Sohel Mia called him on behalf of Sohel Rana. Sohel Rana wanted to know why Jabed had given the information to the news; and that Sohel Rana did not appreciate it. At 8:00 in the morning, Sohel Rana called Jabed and asked him to come and cover a rally, that had been arranged against the BNP-called hartal. Sohel Rana further told him that Member of Parliament Tauhid Jong Murad would be present. Jabed was heading towards Rana Plaza when he heard the news of the collapse of the building at 9.00 am. He immediately called Tauhid Jong Murad, who said he was on his way as well. When he reached Rana Plaza he heard that Sohel Rana was stuck in the basement of the building. Sohel Rana's men helped him escape from a window at the north side. Soon, thousands had gathered along with members of law enforcement agencies and social welfare organisations, to help rescue the people. He himself observed the deceased bodies and the injured workers who were rescued.

²⁰ Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology

²¹ Rajdhani Unnoyan Kortipokkho (Capital Development Authority)

Jabed Mustafa also told Odhikar that Soheli Rana would always gather workers and misuse them for political movements, meetings, rallies etc.

Rabindranath Sarker (67), Khosru Bagan, 39B, Mojibpur, Savar, Dhaka

Rabindranath Sarker informed Odhikar that he lived in the house on the south of Rana Plaza. Land at Mouza 15/16/17/23 in Choto Bolimey, Savar had been purchased by Soheli Rana's father Abdul Khalek jointly with Rabindranath Sarker in 1989 from Gonoforum Secretary General Mustafa Mohsin Montu. The land was south of the Savar Bus Stand. He became the owner of a larger amount of the land than Abdul Khalek. Out of his share of the land, he sold plots to different people. In 2001, Soheli Rana illegally possessed some of the land that belonged to him. He filed a case against Soheli Rana for this. Since at that time it was the BNP regime, Abdul Khalek had much influence; and Rabindranath was forced to leave his own property and lived at relative's or friend's places for six months. He eventually managed to come back home, and was left with no other choice but to lose all hope of gaining back the property that was illegally possessed by Soheli Rana. In 2007 when the military led caretaker government came to power, Rabindranath complained about the matter to the army. In 2008 he got that portion of land back. In 2008, he and Abdul Khalek, decided on partition of the property, after being joint owners for so long.

While doing the partition, Soheli Rana illegally possessed a smaller amount of the land in the east and another amount in the south of Rana Plaza, that belonged to Rabindranath. Since Rana was a Jubo League leader and close to Member of Parliament Tauhid Jong Murad, Rabindranath was unable to protest or take legal action.

On 24th April 2013, he was residing at his house which is located south of Rana Plaza. At 8:58 in the morning, Rana Plaza's north wall broke apart and fell towards his house. Rabindranath's wife was hurt from bricks that fell over her. They rushed outside. At around 12:00 noon, he tried to enter his house in order to get his wife's valuables from the wardrobe. He was stopped by Soheli Rana's men who said the building was shaking and asked him to leave. Then he learnt that his maid Shukla Sarkar, who was standing on the staircase of the house and his employees Abdus Salam, Nishad and Jafor Sadek, who worked in his warehouse adjacent to the south of Rana Plaza, had died during the building collapse. On 25th April 2013 when he went back to his house, he saw that the wardrobe had been broken into and the valuables were gone. With regard to this he filed a General Diary (GD) at Savar Police Station. He had a shop beside Rana Plaza that was destroyed as well. Since the Rana Plaza collapse, he has suffered a financial loss of around Taka 6 crores in total.

Jannatul Ferdous, City Planner of Savar Municipality, Savar, Dhaka

Jannatul Ferdous informed Odhikar that in 2005, Tonmoy Housing Limited was given permission to construct a 6 storied building and in 2008, Abdul Khalek was granted permission to raise it up to 10 floors. However according to the Detail Area Plan (DAP) of 1995 and RAJUK during 2010, the plot on which Rana Plaza was built was reserved for residential type buildings.

Odhikar's investigation team tried contacting Mayor Haji Refat Ullah to know, the basis on which he had permitted the construction of the building. However since the incident, he has been unreachable.

Engineer Md. Nurul Huda, Chairman, Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha (RAJUK), Dhaka

Engineer Md. Nurul Huda told Odhikar that, while the owner of Rana Plaza should have taken permission of RAJUK for constructing a multi storied building by following the National Building Code. Savar Municipality is under RAJUK as per the DAP but RAJUK did not maintain its activities in the Savar area because of insufficient manpower. Its activities are maintaining by Savar Municipality. The permission for making a 9-storied building was illegal. Savar Municipality was supposed to take proper steps in the building of Rana Plaza, but failed. RAJUK has filed a case in this connection.

Monirul Islam (40), Kazi Saiful Islam's brother in law, Moutola, Kaliganj, Shatkhira

Monirul Islam informed Odhikar that the Managing Director of Tonmoy Housing Limited Kazi Saiful Islam was his elder sister's husband. He is now deceased. Saiful had had entered into an agreement with Sohel Rana and his father Abdul Khalek for the purpose of constructing a building. Saiful had to sell a business at Khulna in order to start construction work of Rana Plaza. However after the first floor was completed, Abdul Khalek and Sohel Rana threatened and forced him to leave Savar. Saiful was deprived of his money and mentally broke down. Eventually he died on 23rd November 2009. After his death, his wife Mukima Sultana became the owner of his properties and thus had a share in Rana Plaza as well. She has tried in vain to contract Abdul Khalek for her late husband's share.

Anisur Rahman, Senior Project Manager, Asian Disaster Management Center (ADPC), Dhaka

Anisur Rahman informed Odhikar, that after the building collapsed on 24th April 2013, city planners and risk management experts had gone into the ruins and found out that the combination of building materials had not been made properly. In order to build a pillar or complete a roof, a proper mixing of one sack of cement, two sacks of sand and three sacks of lime is required. However in the case of Rana Plaza, the amount was less than half a sack of cement and 3 sacks of both lime and sand. A commercial building is required to be two or three times stronger than a

residential building. However while constructing Rana Plaza, that was not kept in consideration. At various floors, heavy generators were placed. Since it was a commercial building, the power would be cut at 8:30 pm every day. For the purpose of working over time, generators would usually be turned on all night. Thus on one side there was the weight of heavy sewing machinery, and on the other side the heavy generators. The poorly constructed building could no longer take the pressure and vibration and before the 9th floor could be constructed, the building collapsed.

Md. Moztafizur Rahman, BGMEA, Dhaka

Md. Moztafizur Rahman informed Odhikar that New Wave Bottoms Limited was established in 2008 and their BGMEA membership number was 4579; Phantom Apparels Limited was established in 1994 and their BGMEA number was 1819; Ethar Tex Limited was established in 2009 with membership number 4854; Phantom Tac was established in 2008 with membership number 4633; New Wave Style was established in 2003 with membership number 3679. Upon inquiry it was found that Phantom Tac, New Wave Bottoms Limited and Ethar Tex started their work at Rana Plaza as soon as the eight floors were completed. On the other hand, New Wave Style and Phantom Apparels had relocated to Rana Plaza from other places. Odhikar was informed that in order to establish a new industry, 20 clauses laid down by BGMEA have to be abided by. For the purpose of relocating a garment industry, 8 clauses are meant to be obeyed. However, all five garment industries inside the Rana Plaza did not abide by the clauses. The 17th clause is of great importance. According to this, MIEB certified engineers have to be appointed to inspect the plan of the new factory premises. This, too, was ignored.

Shahidullah Azim, Vice President, BGMEA, Dhaka

Shahidullah Azim informed Odhikar that the workers of the five garment industries were given their wages from 10th May 2013, after the collapse of Rana Plaza on 24th April 2013. Till 20th May 2013, wages were paid to around 2800 workers. He notified that the workers were paid in accordance to Section 20 of the Labour Act 2006. Whoever had worked less than a month, received a month's wage and for extra hours (60+ hours), another full month's wage was provided. Those who had worked for more than three months, received two month's wages and payment for extra hours. Those who had worked for more than a year, were provided with the monthly payment along with extra hours and also for the number of years they had worked, including payment while they were on leave (40 days).

Mosammad Amena Begum, Garment worker, New Wave Style Limited (7th floor), Rana Plaza

Mosammad Amena Begum informed Odhikar that she is from the Bashgori village of Bangharampur in the district of Brahmanbaria. She had been working as a sewing machine operator for six months on the 7th floor of Rana Plaza in the New Wave Style Limited. When the building collapsed on 24th April, she was stuck inside.

Later the rescuers got her out. Since she used to work extra hours, she would receive a total of Taka 8500/- every month. After the collapse of the building, the workers were provided with their wages by BGMEA. She received an amount of Taka 9500/-. However she complained that she received nothing extra from BGMEA. She said that if the labour laws were considered, her wages would amount to more than Taka 15,000/-. She complained that BGMEA was not actually efficient.



Major Md. Ruhul Amin, 9th Infantry Division, Savar Cantonment, Dhaka
Major Md. Ruhul Amin informed Odhikar that on 24th April 2013, he was informed by his superior that a 9-storied building had collapsed in Savar. Immediately after the incident, soldiers belonging to various corps within the 9th Infantry Division, including the medical team went to the site to conduct a rescue operation. Hundreds of civilians also joined them. According to him 3553 individuals were rescued till the end of rescue operations. Out of 3553, 1115 were deceased and 2438 people were alive, but injured. Major Ruhul Amin informed that in order to help the Army, RAB, police, BGB, Fire Service and Civil Defense and even social welfare organisations joined the rescue operation.

Information with regard to rescue, received from Bangladesh Army

Date	Rescued Alive	Rescued Dead
From 24-04-2013 to 26-04-2013	2397	327
27-04-2013	10	32
28-04-2013	30	4
30-04-2013	0	10
1-5-2013	0	30
2-5-2013	0	57
3-5-2013	0	54
4-5-2013	0	32
5-5-2013	0	64
6-5-2013	0	57
7-5-2013	0	79

8-5-2013	0	117
9-5-2013	0	138
10-5-2013	1	63
11-5-2013	0	40
12-5-2013	0	11
13-5-2013	0	0
14-5-2013	0	0
Total	2438	1115



The land of Rana Plaza after the rubble was cleared – Photo: Odhikar

Initially the rescue operation was carried out without using any sort of heavy machinery taking into consideration the people trapped inside. The second phase of operation started from 28th April 2013 when bulldozers, hydraulic hammers etc, were used. The rescue operation officially ended on 14th May 2013.

Kazi Nuruzzaman, acting official, Fire Service and Civil Defense Headquarters, Dhaka

Kazi Nuruzzaman informed Odhikar that after collapse of Rana Plaza on 24th April 2013, a team of the Fire Service led by Brigadier General Ali Ahmed Khan went there at 9:08 in the morning. A total of 812 members of the Fire Service and Civil Defense worked the rescue operation in shifts. Other than Savar Fire Station, the following stations were involved as well - Fire Service Headquarter, Mirpur Fire Station, Tejgaon Fire Station, Fire Service and Civil Defense Training Complex, EPZ Fire Station, Mohammadpur Fire Station, Tongi Fire Station, Narayanganj Fire Station and Kurmitola Fire Station. At 12:45 pm on 14th May 2013, the rescuers retreated after the operation was officially called off.

Dr. Md. Moniruzzaman, Director, Enam Medical College Hospital, Savar, Dhaka

Dr. Md. Moniruzzaman informed Odhikar that from 9:15 am in the morning of 24th April 2013, injured workers were being brought to the hospital for treatment. 1695 injured workers were treated till 18th May 2013. 1020 of them were given primary treatment and released while 675 were admitted in the hospital. Three patients

died in the hospital. Their names were Rihat, Robiul and Sabrina with hospital registration numbers 2264, 2284 and 2349 respectively.

Ashish Kumar Majumdar, Scientist, National Forensic DNA Profiling Department, Dhaka Medical College, Dhaka

Ashish Kumar Majumdar informed Odhikar that, 515 relatives of missing workers had provided blood samples for DNA examination. On the other hand, DNA evidence from 316 unidentified bodies were taken by the government for examination. Among the deceased, DNA samples of 184 were taken from Dhaka Medical College Hospital and 132 from Salimullah Medical College Hospital. 291 unidentified bodies were buried as victims of the Rana Plaza collapse; but a total of 316 were there for DNA tests. Ashish Kumar said he did not know where the 25 extra bodies came from.

Md. Ekramul Haq, District Relief and Rehabilitation Officer, Dhaka

Md. Ekramul Haq informed Odhikar that till 12:45 pm on 14th May 2013, 1115 dead bodies were retrieved and 2438 persons were rescued alive. 15 people died while under treatment. 840 bodies could be identified and handed over to relatives. 10 bodies among those were buried; however the District Commissioners of the districts the bodies were buried in were asked to provide evidence of the bodies and those claiming them for DNA test. Evidence from 291 bodies were collected in total. He said 2984 people were treated at various hospitals in Savar. 1425 out of them required primary treatment and were released, while 1517 were admitted at various hospitals at different times. 969 were admitted in Enam Medical College; New Deep Clinic and Diagnostic Center admitted 15; Deep Clinic admitted 33; 49 were in Razia Clinic and Diagnostic Center; 71 were in Prime Hospital; two in Medi Aid Medical Service; 28 in Lab Zone Specialized Hospital (Unit 1); Lab Zone Medical Hospital admitted 40; 19 were in Sheba Clinic; Mukti Hospital admitted 15; 52 were in Shima General Hospital; Polash Hospital admitted 32; NC Hospital admitted three; 39 were in Roz Hospital; Super Clinic and Diagnostic admitted 68; Savar General Hospital admitted 30; Savar Modern Hospital admitted eight; one was admitted in Rumi General Hospital; Rabeya Clinic admitted 25; New Almadina Clinic admitted one; and Zamal Clinic admitted 17 patients. A list was made of unidentified bodies. Till now, 332 persons have been listed as missing.

With regard to compensation, he informed that families of the 840 deceased workers were compensated with an amount of Taka 20,000/- per family and Taka 5000/- was given to 981 injured workers.



Family carrying away the body of a worker on rickshaw – Photo: Odhikar

Major K.M Ariful Islam, Company Commander, RAB-4, Paikpara, Mirpur, Dhaka

Major K.M Ariful Islam informed Odhikar that on 24th April 2013 after the building collapsed, the Army and other organisations started rescue operations without delay. He informed that on 13th May 2013, members of RAB reached the basement of the building and Sohel Rana's office. RAB recovered 18 bottles of phensidyle²², 15 cans of beer, 8 large knife-like objects and one locker from the office. He said that the items were delivered to Savar Model Police Station.

The Officer in Charge of Savar Model Police Station refused to talk about the retrieved items to Odhikar.

Md. Asaduzzaman, Officer in Charge (OC), Savar Model Police Station, Dhaka

Md. Asaduzzaman informed Odhikar that on 24th April 2013 he was informed that Rana Plaza, beside the Savar bus stand, had collapsed. He went there and informed his superior with regard to the incident. Later, all police from Savar Model Police Station were ordered to join the rescue operation. Helal Ahmed, authorised officer of RAJUK had filed a case (case number 53, dated 24.04.2013) against Sohel Rana accusing him of the collapse. On 24th April 2013, S.I Wali Ashraf being the complainant, filed a case (case no. 55, dated 24/04/2013) against Sohel Rana; Chairman of Phantom Apparels Limited, Aminul Islam; Spanish managing director of Phantom Tac, David Mayer Rico; Chairman of Ether Tex Ltd; and the Chairman of New Wave Bottoms Limited and New Wave Style Limited, Bozluz Samad Adnan; and many more under Sections 337/338/304(a)/427/34 of the Penal Code 1860. Sub Inspector Md. Kaiser Matobbor investigated the case till 27th April 2013. Then on 28th April 2013 they were transferred to the Detective Branch of Police. Mir Shaheen Shah Parvez investigated the cases till 14th May 2013. Then on the 15th May 2013 the two cases were again sent to the Criminal Investigation Department (CID).

²² A cough syrup contains with Codine Phosphate, which is banned in Bangladesh.

S M Alamgir, Officer in Charge, Dhamrai Police Station, Dhaka

S M Alamgir informed Odhikar that Mir Shaheen Shah Parvez had filed a case (case number is 4, dated 06/05/2013) against Soheli Rana under Section 19(A)²³ of the Arms Act 1878. Another case was filed in the same police station under Section 25(b)²⁴ of the Special Powers Act, 1974. ASP Bijoy Krishna of CID is investigating the matter at present. Moreover, Shiuly Akhter, wife of a garment worker named Jahangir Alam had filed a case in the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court against Soheli Rana, managing director of New Wave Style, Bozluz Samad Adnan; and the chief engineer of Savar Municipality Imtemam Hossain Babu, accusing them under Sections 302/34/506²⁵ of the Penal Code 1860.

Bijoy Krishna Kar, Assistant Superintendent of Police, CID, Dhaka

Bijoy Krishna Kar informed Odhikar that he is currently responsible for investigating the cases filed with regard to the incident of 24th April 2013. 12 were arrested as accused in the cases. On 26th April 2013, chairman of New Wave Style Limited, Bozluz Samad Adnan and director Mahmudur Rahman Taposh were arrested from the BGMEA building. On 28th April 2013, RAB officials arrested Soheli Rana from the Benapole border area. He was brought to Dhaka. On 29th April 2013, Soheli Rana's father Abdul Khalek was arrested by Detective Branch of Police. The matter is under investigation and thus he was reluctant to say anything more.



On 28th April 2013, Soheli Rana was arrested from Benapole, Jessore while escaping to India – Photo collected from social media

²³ Section 19A of the Arms Act: Notwithstanding anything contained in section 19, whoever commits an offence under clause (a), (c), (e) or (f) of section 19 shall, if the offence is committed in respect of a pistol, revolver, rifle ²¹ shot gun or other fire-arm] be punished with ³¹ imprisonment for life or rigorous imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than ten years]

²⁴ Section 25 (b) of the Special Powers Act: 25B. refers penalty for smuggling ¹¹ (1)] Whoever, in breach of any prohibition or restriction imposed by or under any law for the time being in force, or evading payment of customs duties or taxes leviable thereon under any law for the time being in force, (a) takes out of Bangladesh jute, gold or silver bullion, manufactures of gold or silver, currency, articles of food, drugs, imported goods, or any other goods; or (b) brings into Bangladesh any goods, shall be punishable with death, or with ²¹ imprisonment for life, or with rigorous imprisonment for a term which may extend to fourteen years and shall not be less than two years], and shall also be liable to fine. ³¹ (2) Whoever sells, or offers or displays for sale, or keeps in his possession or under his control for the purpose of sale, any goods the bringing of which into Bangladesh is prohibited by or under any law for the time being in force shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to seven years and shall not be less than one year, and shall also be liable to fine.

²⁵ Section 302 of the Penal Code refers to punishment for murder: Whoever commits murder shall be punished with death, or ¹⁰²¹ imprisonment] for life, and shall also be liable to fine. Section 34 punishes for acts done by several persons in furtherance of common intention. Section 506 refers to punishment for criminal intimidation.

Shoaib Hossain (45), Imam, Jurain graveyard, Jurain, Dhaka

Shoaib Hossain informed Odhikar that from the morning of 24th April 2013, members of Anjuman Mofijul Islam, a voluntary organisation had started to bring bodies and bury them in the free graveyard. According to the graveyard authority, 291 unidentified bodies were buried there from 1st to 20th May 2013. 235 were women and 56 were men.

Who is Responsible?

Despite the fact that tragedies in garment industries are not new, the factory owners are hardly ever brought to justice. Factory inspectors responsible for monitoring the factory and other concerned government officials are also never brought to the courts of justice. Since these groups are never punished, negligent behaviour is not being addressed. Workers dismissed from their jobs without prior notice, has also become a common practice along with not providing wages on time. Thus the government and the owners are jointly responsible for all wrongs against the workers.

Odhikar's Statement

The tragedy of Rana Plaza brought to the forefront interrelated areas that are critical in defining, legislating and implementing the rights of the worker and their safety. These are: (1) the presence of a development policy that promotes numerically constructed, fictitious, abstract 'growth'; costing the lives, livelihood and dignity of a large part of the population particularly the young work force of Bangladesh, to benefit the few; (2) an economy subservient to the unequal, unregulated and oppressive global order where foreign buyers and factory owners forge an unholy alliance to exploit and bleed workers for profit (3) an undemocratic and anti-people state, denying through legislation, the right of the workers to unionise and bargain for the price of their labour (4) a criminal industrial culture that not only denies the workers safety but literally kills workers by turning work places into potential death traps and by putting them under lock and key during factory hours; (5) the non implementation of factory laws that may address the safety of the workers; (6) a lack of factory inspectors and other state personnel and the culture of corruption; (7) the formation and maintenance of Industrial Police by the state to protect factory owners from the mobilisation and protests by workers for their rightful demands. It also became obvious that the worker's safety is a more wider issue that is related to the laws of construction of buildings, legislations related to local municipality, and how to define criminal negligence. Forcing the workers to work in a knowingly unsafe building is a criminal act on several levels, not just criminal negligence.

While advocating remedy in these areas and actively working to raise public awareness on general issues, Odhikar demands the following with regard to the tragedy of Rana Plaza.

- 1) The concerned authority of Savar Municipality should be brought under the law for giving permission for the illegal construction of the building
- 2) People, including Sohel Rana who had forced the workers to get inside the building, knowing fully well that it was dangerous, should be accused of culpable homicide and a case is to be filed as such.
- 3) Sohel Rana, Abdul Khalek, RAJUK officials, Chairman of Savar Municipality, engineers and everyone concerned to have authorised the construction of the building have to be brought to justice. RAJUK's Chairman should resign due to his failure.
- 4) If RAJUK lacks employees and a sense of responsibility, it should not be given the duty to observe the construction of buildings. Legal actions are required to be taken against them too.
- 5) Odhikar urges the international community to consider responsibility of foreign investors/buyers, since they should be liable as well.
- 6) Garment Industries are required to be properly planned and constructed. The following are required to be upgraded and considered - abiding of Building Code, protection from fire and regular arrangements of fire drills; protection of workers in the work place; infrastructural problems etc. The workers have to be ensured with regular wages, healthy work environment and houses to reside. Creation of trade unions cannot be barred. The garment workers must be brought under a protected safety net which it should be regularly monitored by the government. When the government itself realises the necessity of the safety of the garments sector, only then the sector will be saved.
- 7) A proper list of the exact number of injured workers has to be provided. Moreover the government has to let the citizens know of where they are providing the workers with medical treatment and those workers are required to be reimbursed. Furthermore, the psychological impact of the tragedy on the survivors and all families need to be taken into account and appropriate counseling provided by the State.
- 8) Only Taka 100,000/- as compensation to the families of those who were deceased is not enough and the government and BGMEA has to take responsibility of their children who are under the age of 18. Moreover, ones who were dependant on the workers are to be provided with employment.

Annex-I

ABOUT RANA PLAZA

1. On September 18, 2003 a contract was made between Sohel Rana, his father Md. Abdul Khaleq, mother Morjina Begum; and Managing Director of Tonmoy Housing Limited, Kazi Saiful Islam for making a ten storied building.
2. Savar Municipality gave the permission to build the structure on April 10, 2006.
3. The building was about 17825.11 square meters in area.
4. The building opened on 19th August 2009.
5. It collapsed on 24th April 2013 at 8:58 am.
6. The official death tolled is 1131 persons.
7. After the incident till 14th May 2013, 1115 bodies were retrieved, while 2438 were rescued as severely injured, according to government source.
8. 16 lost their lives while under treatment at various hospitals, according to government sources.
9. 840 deceased were handed over to the relatives, according to government sources.
10. According to the government, 332 persons were missing (although workers fear that there are more)
11. Two rescuers lost their lives while many were injured.
12. 291 unidentified bodies were buried in the Jurain graveyard.
13. The National Forensic DNA Profiling Department of Dhaka Medical College listed 316 deceased persons (but the authority failed to notify the public of the 25 extra bodies).
14. District Administration of Dhaka gave five thousand taka each to the families of 840 deceased workers and 981 injured workers.²⁶
15. Many workers lost limbs.
16. After 17 days, on 10th May 2013, a worker named Reshma was rescued live.

²⁶ Mohammad Ekramul Huq, Relief and Rehabilitation Officer, Dhaka District. Interviewed by Odhikar on 20 May 2013