

Primary Fact-Finding Report
ASK Investigation Unit

Subject: Collapse of Multi-Storey building in Savar, Bangladesh

Date of Fact-finding: 24-26 April 2013

Fact-finders: Mohammad Nur Khan, Mohammad Tipu Sultan, Abu Ahmed Fayzul Kabir, Anirban Saha, Md. Mahbubul Alam, Md. Liakat Ali

Relevant Information of the building:

Name of the building: Rana Plaza

Name of the owner: Md. Sohel Rana

Year of construction: 2010

Location of the building: Savar Bazar Bus Stand (Adjacent to Dhaka-Aricha Highway), Savar, Dhaka.

Description of the building: 9 storied building, shops in 1st floor, front side of the 2nd floor is BRAC Bank and other offices, from 3rd floor to 8th floor total 5 garments, 9th floor under-construction.

Name of the garments factories and their owners:

1. New Wave Style (7th-8th Floor) & 2. New Wave Buttons (3rd floor); Chairman- Bazlul Samad Adnan, MD- Mahbubur Rahamn Tapos, Delwar Hossain
3. Ethar Tex (6th floor); Owner: Anisur Rahman
4. Phantom Apparels (4th-5th floor); owner: Zafar Ahmed & David Mayar (Spain)
5. Phantom Tack (4th-5th floor); owner: Aminul Islam

Date & time of collapse: 24 April 2013, at around 8.30 am to 8.45 am

Number of workers in factory at time of collapse: about 4000/5000

Description:

On 24/4/2013 at around 8.30 am to 8.45 am, Rana Plaza, a nine storied commercial building located on Dhaka-Aricha Highway and near Savar Bus stand collapsed. At the time of collapse, about 4000/5000 workers were estimated to be working in the five factories.

1127 dead bodies have been recovered, 2224 were injured and many were reportedly still missing.

ASK was informed during its fact-finding mission that, on 23/4/2013, a day before collapse, cracks were revealed in some pillars of the building and the authorities of the garment factories declared shutdown for safety. Later that day, the garment authorities along with BRAC Bank informed Sohel Rana, owner of the building, about the cracks but he advised to carry on business.

It was reported that, on the day of the accident, workers did not want to join work but the garments owners forced them to do so.

On the day of the collapse (24/4/2013), *Daily Jugantor* published a report about the cracks on the building.

Shanta (20), ID No-857 | Sewing Operator of Phantom Garments, located at 4th floor of Rana Plaza.

She was severely injured and was admitted to Prime Diagnostic Centre and Hospital. She informed ASK fact-finders that, on 24/4/2013 at around 8 am, her factory manager phoned her and told her to report to work as soon as possible. She told him about the reported cracks and refused to join work, but her Manager assured her that he would also be working. Shanta got ready and joined work on fourth floor of Rana Plaza. After half an hour, the building collapsed.

"I felt as if the whole building crushed on me. My body was paralysed and I fell unconscious. I cannot remember anything else. Someone rescued me and brought me here. My hands and legs have been broken. Many of my colleagues have died. What is their fate? When I think of them, I do not want to live anymore."

When asked about her treatment, Shanta informed ASK that, though she has survived her right foot may need to be amputated. The doctors, nurses and the hospital authority were very sincere about her treatment.

Mr. Oli Ahmed (32) | Audit Officer, BEPZA, District Borguna was close to Rana Plaza at the time of collapse. He told ASK staff that, he stays on fifth floor of Ashirbad Bhaban, next to Rana Plaza. He had seen a large gathering waiting in front of Rana Plaza at around 8 am. They were in a dilemma whether to join work but at last they entered and joined work. At around 9 am they heard an explosion-like sound. Adjacent Ashirbad Bhaban building also shook. He hurriedly got down and rushed to a safe distance. He saw that, the under-construction nine stories Rana Plaza totally collapsed and piled on third floor like a pyramid..

ASK fact-finders went to Dhaka Pongu Hospital to talk with the injured.

Sabina (21) | Worked in D-line finishing in New Wave Style on 7th Floor

At around 9 am suddenly pillars of the building started collapsing. She was on the 7th floor. She was rescued a few moments later. Her foot was injured.

Md. Bashir Uddin Ahmed (45) | Uttampur, District, Barisal | Shop Floor Supervisor

Bashir informed that he was inside the building at the time of collapse. He was near a machine and thus the ceiling did not fall over him but his left foot was injured by the machine. When asked about the building, Bashir informed that there were 70/80 shops on the 1st floor, BRAC Bank on 2nd floor, New Wave Bottoms on 3rd floor, Phantom Apparels on 4th and 5th floor, Ethar Tex on 6th floor, New Wave Style on 7th and 8th floor and the 9th floor was under construction. He was working on the 7th floor at the time of collapse. Usually 500/600 workers used to work there. But due to hartal (Political Strike) and the cracks revealed on the day before, there could be fewer workers present on the day of accident.

"The Cracks Had Been Revealed a Day Before", UNO and police along with DB came to visit the building later on that day. Owners of the building, including Sohel Rana had accompanied them. They discussed about the cracks in the pillars. But Bashir is not sure about what they spoke about.

Romana (21) worked in D-Line Production at New Wave Style. She was undergoing treatment in Prince Medical. There were five lines on the 7th floor. 45/50 workers used to work in each line. Production

Manager Minnot Ahmed and Assistant Production Manager Faruk Ahmed were also working with them. She remembered the sound of the building shaking as it collapsed and her attempts to break the window glass to get out. She was rescued at around 10.10 am.

She informed that the building shook like an earthquake 7-8 minutes prior to collapse.

Families of the Missing

Only a few examples from the hundreds of families searching for their missing relatives

During the fact-finding, family members of untraced victims gave details of the missing and asked ASK staff to inform them if any information was found.

In the playground of Savar Adhar Chandra High School, Surma Akter informed ASK investigator that her brother, Din Islam (Saturia, Manikganj) was still missing.

Samsun Nahar was looking for her sister Lucky Akter (Father: Bachchu Mia, Address: Bank Colony, Savar) a helper on the 7th floor. Samsun looked for Lucky in the hospitals, at the police stations and in front of Rana Plaza but could not find her.

Statements of Fire Service, military soldiers and Rapid Action Battalion

Fire Service and Civil Defence authority played a major role in the rescue operation. Officers of all rank and file were sincere in performing their duty. **Nasim Ahmed, Deputy Director of Fire Service**, was on duty and told ASK staff that, "This is a tragic incident that has taken the highest toll on the life of the workers. Fire Service is doing its best within its capacity to rescue them. Twelve Units of Fire Service arrived immediately on getting the news. Actual number of deaths cannot be ascertained right now. We had reached the spot within 15 minutes. We are handling rescue operation with care."

The military rescue team was also active in the rescue operation. Brigadier General Ajmal said, "Right now all we can say is that we are carrying on with the operation. We have no idea how long will it take or the number of casualties. Specially trained members of the armed forces have joined the operation right after the accident. All rescue operators have joined immediately after the accident. We are conducting the operation together and sending the injured to the nearby public/private medical hospitals."

RAB in-charge, Deputy Director Major Kamrul, informed ASK representatives, that RAB and Police had rushed to the site right after the accident and they are ceaselessly helping the rescuers.

Enam Medical College Hospital authority informed that, since 26th April 2013, they had treated 474 injured workers. Most of them came with multiple injuries. Besides, a good number of critically injured have been admitted to ICU. Hospital authorities are providing treatment to the wounded with financial donations from different individuals and organizations.

Information on legal steps

Two cases have been filed with the Savar Police Station:

1. Case No. 53; Date: 24/4/2013; Under the Building Act, 1952, section 12; Complainant: Helal Uddin Ahmed, Rajdhani Unnayan Katripakkha (RAJUK), Dhaka.
2. Case No. 55; Date: 25/4/2013; Law: under sections 307/338/107/427/307(a) & 34 of Penal Code, 1860.

Suspects:

1. Abdul Khaleque
2. Sohel Rana
3. Aminul Islam
4. Md David Mayar Ruku
5. Anisuzzaman
6. Bazlur Rahman

SI Kaiser is the Investigating Officer (IO) for both of the cases.

Observation:

ASK staff observed that the entire 9-storied Rana Plaza collapsed to a height of a two storied building. Fire Brigade, Army, RAB, Police, BGB, Scouts and common people had been participating in the rescue operation. The injured were constantly being recovered and ambulances were taking them to different private hospitals, clinics and even to public hospitals.

The relatives were crying and looking for the missing, injured and trapped workers.

Thousands of people had crowded the site and offering condolence and assistance.

Voluntary participation of local people in the rescue operation, for example, clearing the road for ambulances to rush to hospitals, voluntary distribution of water and food to the people and rescuers has been a remarkable side of this tragic accident.

Rescuers were desperately trying to recover the living, ignoring threats to their own lives. But there was a scarcity of ambulances, oxygen, stretchers, torchlights and other emergency rescue equipments. In some cases, the injured were taken to hospital in rickshaws.

Anjuman Mufidul Islam, Almarkajul Islam, Ad-Din Hospital, Red Crescent Society, Gonoshasthyo Kendra, Enam Medical College Hospital, Lab Zone Hospital and other private hospitals and institutions supplied most of the ambulances. A few were public ambulances. Though Enam Medical and other private hospitals did not have adequate capacity their staff and management went out of their way in providing treatment.

On 24/4/2013 at around 12.45 pm, duty doctor of Shima General Hospital Dr. Shafi Ahmed and Dr. Nabin informed ASK staff that 30 injured workers had been admitted there. "We are trying to provide primary treatment. We do not have ICU and other advance facilities. The seriously wounded need to be sent to ICU and others with broken arm and leg need to be sent to the Orthopaedic Hospital. But we have no idea who will take these persons to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) and Orthopaedic Hospital."

On 24/4/2013 in the evening, dead bodies were brought to Adhar Chandra High School ground to make a list and to handover the bodies to the relatives. The dead bodies, which were identified by relatives and then handed over to them. Unidentified bodies were sent to DMCH morgue. But ASK fact-finders found that the relatives of the dead were harassed while taking over the bodies, for example, the District Parishad asked many questions before handing the dead to the relatives. On the other hand,

many of the dead bodies were taken home by rickshaw or van before the names of the dead entered in the records.

ASK fact-finders observed that although the wounded and dead were to taken to different hospitals there was a lack of coordination in entering their names into the official list. There was no central list for the wounded and dead, no initiative taken to accumulate the dead bodies in a particular place.

Moreover there was a serious lack of coordination in sending/referring critically wounded for better treatment. But there was a positive response from individual volunteers, social and political organizations who donated blood for the critically wounded. Most of the injured were admitted to Enam Medial College Hospitals. Doctors, nurses and students of this Hospital were very sincere in giving treatment. Till 26/4/2013 thousands of wounded workers received treatment here.

List of public/private hospitals and clinics where the wounded of Rana Plaza received treatment:

1. Enam Medical College Hospital- about 1000
2. Rose Clinic & Diagnostic- 63
3. National Orthopedic (Pongu) Hospital- 61
4. New Deep Clinic- 33
5. Prime Diagnostic & Consultation Centre- 30
6. Shima General Hospital- 30
7. Savar Upazila Health Complex- 30
8. Deep Clinic & Hospital- 20
9. Lab John (Unit-1) Pvt. Limited- 26
10. Lab John (Unit-2) Pvt. Limited-21
11. Rezia Clinic- 18
12. Sheba Clinic- 7
13. Mukti Hospital- 6

Many of the rescued wounded were receiving treatment at CMH-Savar, Dhaka Medical College Hospital, National Heart Institute and other public/private hospitals.

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