

Steps taken by Ministry of Labour & Employment and Other Related Stakeholders after Rana Plaza Collapse at Savar as of 15th April 2013:

Immediate after Tazreen Fire incident and tragic collapse of Rana Plaza, the Government has taken various steps to improve overall workplace safety and compliance, as well as made some commitments to international community which includes adoption of a National Tripartite Plan of Action by the constituents, implementation of the Sustainability Compact, and the US Action Plan focusing on legislation and policy reform, administration and practical actions.

1. **Amendment of Labour Law:** The Bangladesh Labour Act, 2006 has been amended on 16th July 2013 to ensure workers' safety, welfare and rights and promoting trade unionism and collective bargaining. In line with this, the National Occupational Health and Safety Policy have been adopted by the Government in 2013. During amendment of Labour Law a total of 76 sections were amended and 8 new sections were incorporate in the Act.
2. **Trade union registration:** After amendment of Labour Act, 2006 trade union registration situation in the RMG sector has got a momentum. For example, after amendment of Labour Act a total of 351 new trade unions have been registered in the RMG sector. ILO has started training program for the office bearers of newly formed unions.
3. **Formulation of rules:** The rules already been published the official gazette on 15th September, 2015. The Rules contain 367 sections and 7 tafsil.
4. **Up-gradation of DIFE:** The Government, through an accelerated process, upgraded the Directorate of Inspection for Factories and Establishments (DIFE) to a Department with 993 staff. Out of which 575 are inspectors. The government has recruited 237 new Inspectors. Now total number of Inspectors working in this department is 277 out of which 57 are female Inspectors. Recruitment of additional 164 Inspectors are under process.
5. **Training Labour Inspectors:** After up-gradation the DIFE, with the support of ILO and other development partners has arranged different trainings for the Inspectors. Some examples of the training program are given below:
 - (a) **Foundational training** for 40 days for the inspectors has already been completed for **159** Inspectors.
 - (b) **110 Inspectors** have taken 4 days training on “Introductory Course for Labor Inspectors”,
 - (c) **96 Inspectors** have taken 3 days training on ‘Labor laws and Inspection Technique’,

- (d) **123 Inspectors** have taken 5 days training on training on “Labor Inspection Induction”,
 - (e) **40 Inspectors** have taken 3 days training on “Basic Introductory Course for Labor Inspectors”,
 - (f) **20 Inspectors** have taken 5 days training on “Training for Master Trainers”,
 - (g) **12 Inspectors** have 2 days “International OSH Regulation Training Course”,
 - (h) **37 Inspectors** have taken 5 days training on “Labors Law and Labor Inspection Training”,
 - (i) **12 from DIFE and 2 from MOLE** have taken training to prepare Inspection Plan for DIFE in ITC-ILO, Turin, Italy
 - (j) Beside these, the Inspectors also participate in different seminars, workshops and meetings with ILO, GIZ and others.
6. **Publicly Accessible Database:** The DIFE with support of ILO, has **developed** a publicly accessible database of 3746 export-oriented RMG factories on **30 March 2014**. The database is available at the website of the Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishment (<http://database.dife.gov.bd/>). It includes related information of all export-oriented RMG factories including names and addresses, number of workers etc. It also includes summary safety assessment reports for **2804 factories** (ACCORD of 712 factories; ALLIANCE of 543 factories and **National Initiative** of 1549 factories) which may be viewed at the website of DIFE ([http://database.dife.gov.bd/reports /safety-assessment-reports](http://database.dife.gov.bd/reports/safety-assessment-reports)).
 7. **Hot line (help line):** With the Department of Inspection for Factories & Establishments a help line, on pilot basis, has been established in RMG prone area at Ashulia, Dhaka on 15th March 2015. The number of the help line is **0800-4455000**
 8. **Minimum Wages:** The Government has declared the minimum wages for the workers of the readymade garments industry with an increase of 77% from the previous one. It has been implemented since 01 December 2013. Now the minimum wage of garments workers is Tk 5300/- which is about US\$68.
 9. **Inspection Plan and Inspection Policy:** Annual inspection plan for 2015 for the DIFE has developed and formulation of inspection policy is underway.
 10. **Regular inspections:** Guided by the BLA, 2006 regular inspections are being carried out by the inspectors of DIFE. Enforcement of the law is ensured through inspections. In the current year a total of 7406 factories have been inspected. This

includes 962 RMG factories. In case of noncompliance, the factory owners are noticed to rectify and cases are filed against the factory owners for failing to rectify. This year 330 cases have been filed against the factory owners for non complacence issues.

11. **Tripartite National Plan of Action:** A Tripartite National Plan of Action on Fire Safety and Structural Integrity in the RMG Sector was adopted with the assistance of ILO. To implement the Plan of Action a sixteen members Tripartite Committee headed by Secretary Ministry of Labour & Employment has been formed. In line with the Plan of Action ILO has been implementing a project “Improving Working Condition in the RMG Sector of Bangladesh” of \$24.5 million under the Ministry of Labour & Employment. The following areas of intervention have been identified in the project:
 - (a) Verification of building and fire safety of the factories;
 - (b) Strengthening inspection activities;
 - (c) Training on Occupational Safety and Health;
 - (d) Rehabilitation of the disabled and injured persons;
 - (e) Implementation of Better Work Program.
12. **Assessment on structural, fire & electrical integrity:** With the assistance of ILO and under the supervision on National Tripartite Committee (NTC), a plan for assessment of building, fire and electrical safety of all 3685 active export oriented RMG/Knitwear factories has been developed. A Common Standard has been developed for assessment of fire, electrical and building safety of the factories by all initiatives such as National Tripartite Plan of Action for Fire and Structural Integrity (NTPA); the Bangladesh Accord on Fire and Building Safety (ACCORD); and Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety (ALLIANCE).

National Initiatives, ACCORD & ALLIANCE are carrying out the assessment for structural integrity, fire and electrical safety of the RMG factory buildings. In the meantime 3746 factories (1549 under National Initiatives, 1368 by ACCORD and 829 by ALLIANCE) have been assessed.

According to the recommendation of Review Panel, 39 factories have been fully closed and 42 factories have been partially closed for safety reason. Assessment reports have been sent to concern factory for implementation of detailed engineering assessment and to the District offices of DIFE for close monitoring and supervision. All the factories have started remediation according to the recommendation of assessing authorities. In this regard DIFE has started monitoring those remedial measures taken by factory owners. Two taskforces are working to implement the remedial measures taken by the factory owners.

13. **Better Work Program:** Implementation of Better Work Program in Ready-Made Garments industry has been launched on 22/10/2013 by ILO. About 300 factories are expected to participate in the Programme.
14. **Strengthen of Ministry and the Department of Labour:**
 - a. The strength of the Ministry of Labour and Employment has been enhanced by creating new posts.
 - b. Government has taken steps to upgrade the Directorate of Labour to a Department with increased number of manpower.
15. **Training activities by Directorate of Labour:** Under a project on "Promoting Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work in Bangladesh (FPRW)" funded by USDoL and implemented by the ILO training programmes have been conducted for the workers, trade union leaders and employers for capacity building of trade union representatives and employers' organizations and promoting effective labour-management relations. The Government is working to raise awareness of the employers and workers regarding the trade union rights and responsibilities by organizing training and education programme through 4 Industrial Relations Institutes (IRI) under the Department of Labour.
16. **Cooperation agreement with Germany:** A cooperation agreement has been signed on 9 December 2014 among Bangladesh Labour Welfare Foundation (BLWF) of Ministry of Labour & Employment, The Deutsche Gesetzliche Unfallversicherung (DGUV) of Germany and The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit Bangladesh (GIZ) to established a legal framework on National Employment Injury Insurance System in Bangladesh.
17. **Letter of intent with Denmark:** A letter of intent between the Ministry of Labour & Employment & the Ministry of Employment, Kingdom of Denmark has been signed on 19 March 2015 to jointly explore the possibility of engaging in Strategic Sector Cooperation on working environment, focusing in particular on Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) in the Ready Made Garment sector.
18. **Cooperation agreement with Sweden:** A cooperation agreement has been signed on 26 September 2015 at New York between the Government of Peoples Republic of Bangladesh and the government of Sweden and the International Labour Organization on developing and launching a project entitled 'Promoting Social Dialogue and Harmonious Industrial Relations in Bangladesh Ready-Made Garments Industry'.

Compensation:

After tragic incident of Rana Plaza collapse the main challenge was to rehabilitate victims and their families. In this process along with the Government, the employers and international brands and buyers came forward to compensate the victims. A total amount of **231 Crore** has been distributed to victims of Rana Plaza by the government along with other stakeholders.

- a. From Government side each family of 976 deceased persons has been provided Tk. 1-5 lakh from the Prime Minister's Relief and Welfare Fund. In addition to that each of the 38 workers who lost their limbs has received Tk.10-15 lakh as grant. In total more than Tk. 29 crore 39 lakh has been disbursed from the Prime Minister's Relief and Welfare Fund as financial assistance.
- b. Government provided all sorts of medical facilities of its own expenses to more than 1000 injured persons. With the assistance of the Govt. of Thailand 107 amputees artificial limbs were provided.
- c. A total of Tk. 50,00,000 (Fifty lac) has been given from Prime Minister's Relief & Welfare Fund for DNA test of the unidentified dead bodies of Rana Plaza incident.
- d. Each family of identified 844 dead persons has been received Tk. 20,000/- (Twenty thousand) for funeral and an amount of Tk. 5,000/- (Five thousand) has been given to each 844 injured workers through Dhaka District Administration. Total amount of Tk. 2,53,65,818/- has been given by the District Administration.
- e. A total of 2785 affected workers/employees of 5 factories housed in that building have been provided with all the dues including salary and allowances by BGMEA. The BGMEA has spent Tk.14.408 Crore (app) for the victims.
- f. With the help of Brands and Buyers and under the neutral Chair of ILO a Global Trust Fund has been established to provide compensation for the victims of the Rana Plaza collapse. More than US \$19 million has already been raised for this fund. As of 8th April 2015 a total of about USD 18.00 million has been disbursed to 3 thousand beneficiaries.
- g. The PRIMARK, an international buyer, within a week of Rana Plaza collapse, provided weekly food aid for one month to about 1300 families through local NGO. As short-term financial assistance Primark provided nine months wage to 3600 workers. As long-term compensation Primark distributed Tk. 944,612,718 which is equivalent to US\$ 14 million to 672 workers or their beneficiaries.

Other activities by Government and other relevant stakeholders:

1. **Sustainability Compact:** Bangladesh, European Union, United States of America and International Labour Organization (ILO) have jointly adopted 'Sustainability Compact' with a view to take joint initiatives to improve labour welfare and safety of working environment in the RMG sector. A stock taking meeting held on 30th October 2014 in Brussels to review the progress of Sustainability Compact.
2. **Bangladesh Action Plan:** Bangladesh Action Plan 2013 proposed by United States of America to improve building and fire safety and working environment ILO, Development Partners and the foreign buyers have jointly taken the following initiatives:
 - (i) Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh signed by European buyers;
 - (ii) Bangladesh Safety Alliance signed by North American buyers;
 - (iii) Improving working conditions in the Ready-Made Garments Sector Project of \$24.5 million proposed by ILO;
 - (iv) A project of Tk. 100 crore of JAICA for factory building inspection and relocation;
 - (v) 205 million project of the United State of America to ensure workers right and improve fire safety;
 - (vi) A project by GIZ to rehabilitate the disabled workers affected by
 - (vii) Rana Plaza collapse.
3. **Cabinet Committee on Garments Sector:** Government formed an eleven member 'Cabinet Committee on Garments Sector' headed by the Honorable Minister, Ministry of Labour & Employment. The committee has formed 2 Task Forces named 'Task Force in Building and fire safety in Ready Made Garments Industry' and 'Task Force on Expansion and Simplification of related laws of Ready Made Garments Industry'.
4. **Committee on RMG factory improvement:** An eighteen member committee headed by Honorable Minister for Jute & Textile has submitted their report with recommendation to protect safe working environment, prevention of accidents and ensure labour welfare in the RMG factories. Government has already taken steps to implement the recommendations of the committee.

5. **Tripartite Standing Committee:** A tripartite standing committee headed by the Secretary, Ministry of Commerce to provide all out support to the Cabinet Committee on Garments Industry was also formed.
6. **3+5 Committee:** Three secretaries of Commerce Ministry, Labour Ministry and Foreign Ministry and five ambassadors/high commissioners of USA, Canada, EU, UK and the Netherlands constituted 3+5 Committee. The committee holds regular meetings to assess the progress of the Government's commitment in improving working conditions and labour welfare in Bangladesh.
7. **Garments Industry Village:** A committee headed by a Director General of the Prime Minister's office is functioning to establish a 'Garments Industry Village' on 530 acres of land at Baushia under Gajaria upazilla in Munshiganj district.
8. **Activities of Department of Fire Service & Civil Defense:** The Ministry of Home Affairs has approved in principle the proposal of establishing nine new fire stations for Department of Fire Service & Civil Defense. The number of inspectors has been increased from 50 to 268 in the Department of Fire Service and Civil Defense by the Ministry of Home Affairs.
9. **Increase of Inspectors of RAJUK and CDA:** Two different proposals to increase the number of inspectors in the Rajdhani Unnayan Kartipakshya (RAJUK) and Chittagong Development Authority (CDA) has been approved by Ministry of Housing & Public Works. Recruitment of 91 new inspectors and related engineers in RAJUK is at final stage.
10. **Reduction of Tax & Duty:** A minimum rate of tax was settled by the Govt. regarding import of fire extinguishing equipments in the fiscal year 2013-2014. Government has also made provision for duty free import of prefabricated building materials, fire resistant doors, sprinkler system and equipments, emergency light with exit sign double head etc.
11. **Housing Loan:** A Memorandum of Understanding has been signed between Housing Fund of Bangladesh Bank & BGMEA to provide loan at the rate of 2% interest from the fund to the owners of the RMG factories for construction of Dormitory for the workers.
12. **Visit of ILO DDG:** A high level team from ILO Head Quarter, Geneva headed by one Deputy Director General visited Bangladesh from 1-4 May 2013 to express sympathy and co-operation on tragic accident at Rana Plaza. A tripartite declaration was expressed on the 4th of May 2013 with the assistance of ILO with

a view to continue export of ready-Made Garments items in overseas market and combating the consequences of Savar incident.

13. **Study by BIDS:** A study has been conducted by BIDS with government financing under the Ministry of Labour & Employment to determine the number of factories on the basis of locality, the number of workers and employees working and to identify the existing problem and measures to promote this sector further in the coming year. The Government is taking steps to implement the recommendations in the study.
14. **Activities of Rana Plaza coordination cell (RPCC):** Since the official inauguration on 7th November, 2013 RPCC with this support of NSDC secretariat, ILO and other stakeholders has provided different services to the victims of Rana Plaza collapse. The services include medical support, Job Support/Skills Training, Small Business/Entrepreneurship Development, Financial support/Compensation, Information and advices etc. Till now the Cell communicated more than 4123 people (relatives of deceased/missing workers, survivors, rescue workers and others). The Cell is playing a vital role as a contact point for the victims as well as the service providers.

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