

23 April, 2024

## Press Release

**The speakers in the discussion meeting demanded rehabilitation, medical treatment, ensuring legal compensation and speedy settlement of the cases of the victims of the Rana Plaza building collapse.**

In order to reviewing the current status of the cases filed with the aim of realizing the rights of the victims and ensuring justice even after 11 years of the Rana Plaza building collapse and identifying the reasons for the long delay in settling the ongoing cases, Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST) at arranged a discussion meeting titled, "Rana Plaza Building collapse: 11 years waiting for justice" on April 23, 2024 at 3:00 p.m. in Dhaka Press Club. M A Awal (Senior District and Sessions Judge), Chairman (Acting), Labor Appellate Tribunal, Dhaka, Barrister Aneek R Haque, Advocate, Supreme Court of Bangladesh and Bimal Samaddar, Additional Public Prosecutor, District and Sessions Judge Court, Dhaka were present as guests of honor.

Sifat-e-Noor Khanam, Senior Staff Lawyer, BLAST and Advocate, Supreme Court Bangladesh gave a presentation on "Rana Plaza Building Collapse: 11 Years Waiting for Justice". In her presentation, she illustrated the progress of all the cases related to Rana Plaza pending in various courts and in the recommendations, she emphasized and called for strengthening on concerted efforts through special initiatives for speedy trial of all these cases and review of laws and bringing necessary amendments and implementation and monitoring of health and safety policies for the benefit of workers.

Nilufa Begum, Sheela Begum, Minu Begum and Dayal Sutradhar, the victims of the Rana Plaza building collapse were present at the meeting, they talked about their experiences and claims, strongly demanded that those involved be brought under the law and punished and that steps be taken to ensure the treatment and rehabilitation of the injured workers.

Guest speaker of the meeting, Barrister Aneek R Haque said that there are 4 writ cases under trial in the High Court department, hearing process of none had started before last year. Even so, we hope to get direction from the High Court against these writs very soon. Along with that, he recommended ensuring the overall issues starting from the protection of the workers.

Bimal Samaddar said, there are 594 witnesses in criminal cases, who are living in different parts of the country. Bringing them to court is a big hurdle. Providing them with travel allowance to court is difficult to arrange as state counsel. In his speech, he urged all civil society organizations, to provide necessary assistance to ensure the presence of the witnesses in the court and said that the labor leaders also need to take steps to rehabilitate the victims.

The participants in the open discussion said that the cases related to Rana Plaza, which are not resolved even after 11 years, tarnish the image of our country in the outside world. In their speech, the negotiators expressed the need to take necessary steps for speedy disposal of the cases, maintenance of the incident site and construction of a memorial at the site and ensuring proper medical expenses and statutory compensation for the injured and disabled workers. Mohsin Majumder, general secretary of the lawyer-Labor Court Bar, said that he would take steps to lobby the ministry for quick settlement of the cases.

Md Shahriar Roni, Trust Coordinator, Trust for Injured Workers Medical Care including Rana Plaza Workers (TIWMC) said that they are working on treating the victims. They have tried to do as much as possible



# বাংলাদেশ লিগ্যাল এইড এন্ড সার্ভিসেস ট্রাস্ট (ব্লাস্ট) BANGLADESH LEGAL AID and SERVICES TRUST (BLAST)

within their limited resources for those who have sought medical care so far. For example, they bear the cost of diagnosis and travel, any treatment in government hospitals.

In the speech of the chief guest, MA Awal (Senior District and Sessions Judge), Chairman (Acting), Labor Appellate Tribunal said - In order to remove the obstacles of taking 594 witnesses in the Dhaka Judge Court case, it is possible to settle the case even by taking the testimony of important witnesses. In his speech, he assured speedy disposal of 11 pending cases in the Labor Court.

In the closing speech of this discussion meeting, BLAST's legal adviser SM Rezaul Karim said –that with the cooperation of all labor organizations, civil society organizations, Rana Plaza cases will be resolved before the completion of an era and expressed hope. He thanked everyone and announced the end of the meeting.

Syed Sultan Uddin Ahmed, Executive Director, Bangladesh Institute of Labor Studies conducted the welcome speech and while presenting the purpose and background of the meeting, Md. Barkat Ali, Director (Law), BLAST expressed deep respect for all the killed workers and condolences for the injured workers. 1 minute of silence was observed to pay respect to them. He said that although many people are confused about whether the incident of 2013 was a murder or an accident, it is not wrong to call it a murder after observing the incident. Today we will know about the progress of the case filed in this incident. Due to lack of proper enforcement of laws and non-existence of necessary laws, such incidents are happening regularly. Even after 11 years, the families of the killed workers and the injured workers have not yet received legal compensation. In this regard, he urged everyone to be aware and active about the responsibilities of the concerned parties in order to ensure their compensation and get justice.

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