

Commemoration of A Horrifying Tragedy:

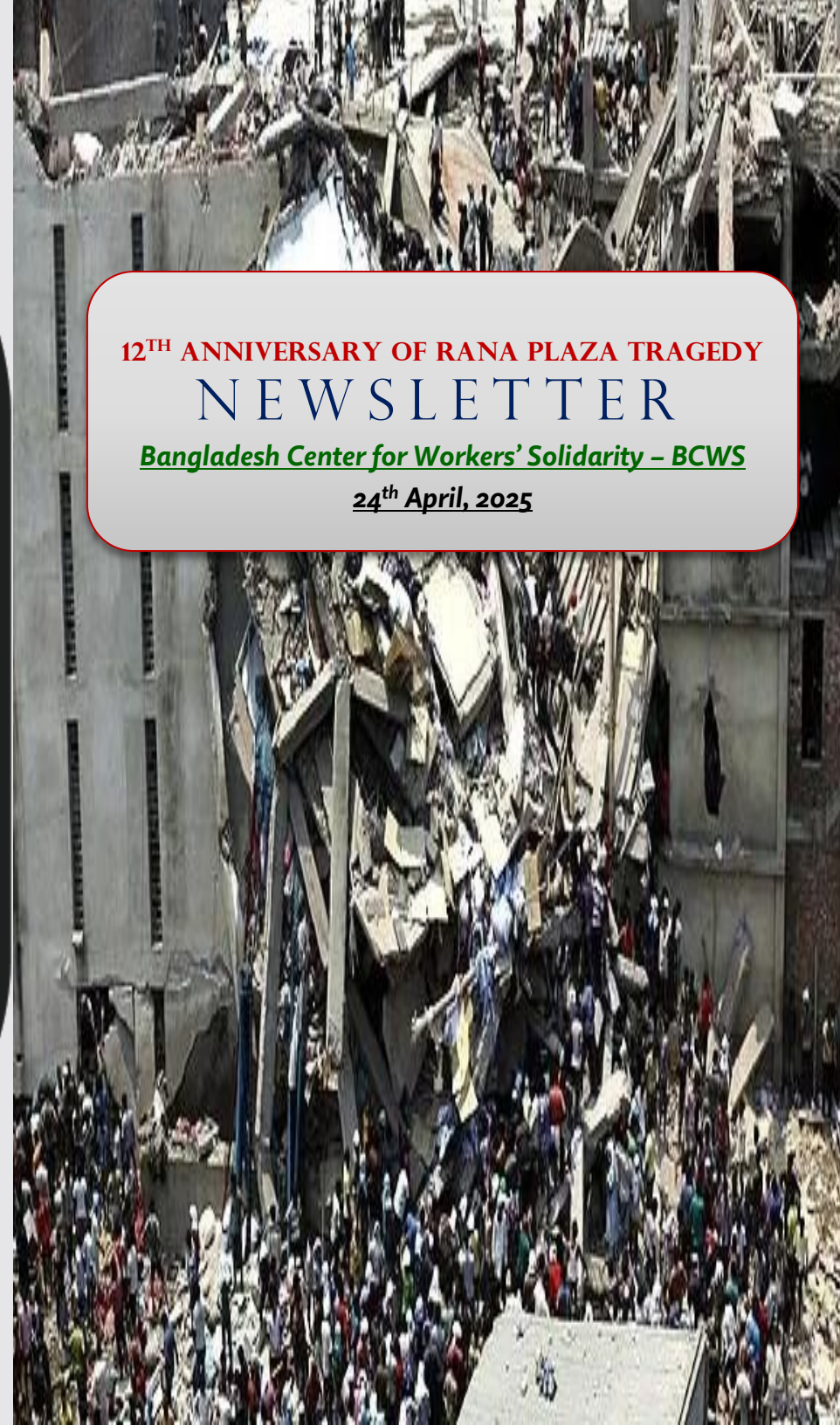
Envisage the building you have been working, and the roof upon you abruptly starts crumbling. What is your first thought during that moment? You run! You try to rush towards exits hastily as you can. Others also attempting to make it through the exits making it impossible to go out altogether. Soon after a big blasted sound occurred and you find yourselves under the pile of 8 to 9 dead bodies upon you surrounding with chunks of building broken rocks, rods where you can no longer move nor see clearly what's going on due to electricity cut. Your breath gets heavier feeling no oxygen to inhale, you are trying to shout with your broken thin voices while your body starts numbing and there's no one around to help you! Thinking, this is just an imagination? But it really did happen. It was one of 1138 dead and over 2500 life-time injured garment worker's stories that took place on 24th April, 2013 at a building called Rana Plaza situated at Savar in Bangladesh. It is the man-made biggest industrial disaster in Bangladesh's history where low wage, overwork, union busting, lack of workers' safety monitoring still prevails. The building housed five garment factories that manufactured clothes for many international clothing brands of Europe & North America. To alleviate the mass damage loss, the establishment of Bangladesh Accord worked as a pioneer step to hold international brands accountable until 2018 handed over to RSC and renewed as 'International Accord'. Over 200+ brands signed to the original Accord which is legally binding. The Accord has made almost 1600 factories safer for over 2.5 million garment

12TH ANNIVERSARY OF RANA PLAZA TRAGEDY

NEWSLETTER

Bangladesh Center for Workers' Solidarity – BCWS

24th April, 2025



workers in Bangladesh. Still, workers' safety has not been out of dangers, said by some country's indispensable labor rights activists. The employers pay less attention or sometimes pay no heed at all to safeguard factory workers occupational safety hazards. So-called compliance factory's outside array may seem perfect but inside it is a completely different scenario having incommensurate air ventilation, excessive heat – too hot to work, insufficient cooling system which adds immense misery to workers' suffering. Again, the law-mandate factory's safety committees mostly are formed only for nominal and just to show buyers. Tenacious gender-based harassment, seizing the right of freedom of association and mass termination when demanding for fair labor practices still availing in the RMG sector. Recently, labor reform & women reform commissions have highlighted major reforms urging the interim government to embed living standard wage by reviewing after every 3 years; ensuring safe working environments; compensating for employee's workplace injury; functionalizing anti-harassment cells & day care facilities. Rana Plaza tragedy reminds us time and time again that there are still lot of works needed to improve our RMG sector by effectually imbedding labor rights.

BCWS Initiative –Strengthening Workers' Voice:

BCWS is a rights-based labor educator organization battling for a job with dignity since 2000 in Bangladesh. Its purpose is to empower and support garment workers who are seeking decent working conditions and to advocate domestically and internationally for greater respect for labor rights. Major BCWS initiatives highlight-

- **Know your Rights Program** – BCWS is providing trainings to garment workers to enrich their knowledge regarding labor laws & labor rules. These trainings acquaint workers about their legal privileges.
- **Efficacious Leadership Program:** BCWS capacitates factory workers on leadership skills so they can understand about the unfairness and raise their voices against any discrimination to protect their dignities.
- **Climate-Justice Program:** Educating workers on adverse climate impact and addressing mitigation techniques.
- **SRHR Training Program:** BCWS is educating RMG and community level women on the concept of SRHR to aware them about the reproductive health, family planning, safe motherhood.
- **GBVH Program:** Raising workers' cognizance on standing against violence at all levels.
- **Dialogues Program:** Engaging relevant stakeholders to have discussion on ameliorating labor rights.
- **Policy Advocacy & Campaign:** Working with pertinent stakeholders to reform relevant laws & policies. Demonstrating campaigns both inter-intranational platforms.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- *Provision for justifiable rehabilitation of all Rana Plaza injured workers & deceased families with pertinent compensation.*
- *Allow International Accord to work independently and bring RSC works within the framework of the International Accord making them accountable.*
- *Amend Bangladesh Labor Law imbedding employment injury scheme in accordance with ILO Convention 121.*
- *Rana Plaza Day should be officially declared as 'Rana Plaza Day'.*
- *Accelerate the trial of Sohel Rana and all the criminals involved in the Rana Plaza incidence to bring justice.*
- *Embed living standard wage for all garment factory workers.*
- *Brands must be hold accountable to ensure labor rights, climate justice, living wage, FoA.*
- *Safeguard Rights to worker organizing; stop union busting & workers' blacklisting.*
- *Strengthen workers' voice on just transition.*

