As of 28 October 2013

Steps taken by Government, Ministry of Labour & Employment and other organizations regarding devastating fire incident in Tajreen Fashions Ltd at Ashulia, on 24-11-2012, Smart Export Garments Ltd at Mohammadpur on 26-01-2013 and Rana Plaza Collapse at Savar on 24-04-2013 causing huge loss of lives and properties:

1. (a) The Cabinet adopted a condolence motion in a meeting held on 26-11-2012 on the tragic incident of fire at Tajreen Fashions Ltd. The Cabinet also declared 27th of November, 2012 as national mourning day in that meeting. The National Flag was at half-mast and all the garments factories of the country remained closed on that day.

   (b) On Rana plaza building collapse the 25th of April, 2013 was observed as national mourning day and the national flag was at half-mast to commemorate the victims died and injured by the accident. The Cabinet adopted a condolence motion in a meeting held on the 29th of April, 2013 in commemoration of the deceased persons.

2. (a) In the Tajreen fire incident 58 identified dead bodies were handed over to the relatives at preliminary stage for funeral among 111 dead workers. The remaining 53 dead bodies were buried in Jurain graveyard under the supervision of Anjuman-e-Mafidul Islam on 27/11/2012 as it was not possible to identify them. The DNA of these 53 dead bodies were tested in the National Forensic DNA Profiling Laboratory in Dhaka Medical College. Through DNA test identity of 41 workers have been known. The concerned District Administration and Intelligence Agencies have been requested to verify about the remaining 12 dead bodies as it was not possible to identify them through DNA test. The process of verification is going on.

   (b) Regarding Rana Plaza collapse 2438 persons alive and 1116 dead bodies were recovered from the damages. The death toll raised to 1134 as 18 persons died later on during treatment in the hospitals. Among the deceased persons 843 could be identified and handed over to their relatives. As 291 dead bodies couldn't be identified they were buried in Jurain grave yard and the process of DNA test of those unidentified bodies is going on. From the office of the Prime Minister Tk. 50,00,000/-(Fifty Lac) has been sanctioned as grant to meet the expenses of DNA test. The process of DNA test will possibly be completed by Octoberber, 2013.

3. (a) Dhaka District Administration in collaboration with the Ministry of Relief and Disaster Management has given Tk.20,000/- (Twenty thousand) for each identified dead body for the funeral. In addition to that, BKMEA has given Tk.7,000/- (Seven thousands) for each identified dead bodies for the same purpose.

   (b) Financial aid amounting to Tk.20,000/- (Twenty thousand) was given by Dhaka District Administration for funeral of each dead worker who were died in Smart Export Ltd. Fire accident.

   (c) Regarding Rana Plaza collapse each family of an identified dead person has been given Tk.20,000/- (Twenty thousand) for funeral through Dhaka District Administration.

4. (a) Among the injured workers in Tajreen fire incident 15 persons were given Tk.50,000/- (fifty thousand) each as grant from the Relief and Welfare Fund of the Prime Minister. In addition to that 89 injured workers were given Tk.1,00,000/- (one Lac) each and the medical expenses of injured workers treated in different hospitals were borne by BGMEA.

   (b) More than one thousand injured persons in Rana Plaza collapse were provided with all sorts of medical facilities in different hospitals with government expenses. Every injured person also got Tk. 5,000/- (Five thousand) from Dhaka District Administration. Government of Bangladesh has already joined artificial limbs of 107 amputees (including 5 amputees of Rana Plaza accident) with the assistance of the Govt. of Thailand.

5. (a) Honorable Prime Minister has given Tk. 7,00,000/- (seven lac) by cheque to the families of 99 identified dead workers who died in Tajreen Fashions Ltd. fire incident. The amount was arranged combinedly by Relief & Welfare Fund of Prime Minister, Labour welfare Foundation Fund of Ministry of Labour & Employment, BGMEA, Bangladesh Bankers Association and two other buyers' organizations.

   (b) Each family of deceased workers who died in Smart Export Garments Ltd. Fire incident have been given Tk.7,00,000/- (seven lac) by cheque by the Honorable Prime Minister with the assistance of IndustryAll, an International Labour Organization.

   (c) Among the deceased persons in Rana Plaza collapse families of 777 persons have been given Tk. 1-5 lac from the Prime Minister's Relief and Welfare Fund. In addition to that each of the 36 workers who lost their limbs has been given Tk.10-15 lac as grant A total amount of Tk.18,85,60,720/- has been disbursed from the Prime Minister's Relief and Welfare Fund so fare.

6. (a) Ministry of Home Affairs formed an inquiry committee comprising four members to identity the cause of fire, the liable person/persons and future responsibilities and the committee has submitted its report. Divisional Commissioner, Dhaka formed another inquiry committee comprising seven members on this matter and the committee has submitted its report. Furthermore, an inquiry committee with seven members was formed by the Ministry of Labour and Employment to determine the exact number of death, grievously wounded and injured workers. The committee has also submitted its report.

(b) A four-member committee with Labour Director as Convener to ascertain the exact number of deceased persons, grievously wounded and injured persons, ensure their identity, identity the possible cause of fire, the liable person/persons and future responsibilities. The committee has submitted its report.

(c) An enquiry committee headed by Labour Director (Joint Secretary) was formed to determine the liabilities of persons involved behind the Rana Plaza collapse. In addition to that the Ministry of Home Affairs and Dhaka District Administration formed 2 more enquiry committees. Meanwhile the committees submitted their reports.

7. (a) Regarding Tajreen fire incident, a case has been filed with Ashulia Police Station against unknown liable persons and in the mean time three management-level personnel of the factory have been arrested. The case is now being investigated by CID.

(b) A criminal case has been filed with local police station on Smart Export Garments Ltd's fire incident. Two owners of the factory have been arrested in that case. The case is now under investigation.

(c) Savar police station authority has filed a case against the owners of the building and the owners of the garments factories housed in Rana Plaza. Meanwhile, the owner of the building, his father and four owners of the factories have been arrested. The case is now under investigation. Rajuk has filed a case against the owner of the building with Savar police station and in the meantime an executive engineer and assistant engineer of Savar Municipality have been arrested. Besides this, the owner of the building has been shown arrested in that case. The case is under investigation.

8. (a) Regarding Tajreen fire accident, The Chief Inspector, Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments under the Ministry of Labour and Employment filed a case with the Labour Court against the owner of Tajreen Fashions Ltd. according to the relevant sections of the law. The case is under trial.

(b) A Case has been filed against the owner of Smart Export Garments Ltd. with the Labour Court by the Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments according to the relevant sections of the law. The case is under trial.

(c) Regarding Rana Plaza collapse one case against the owner of the building and two cases against each of the owners of 5 garments factories housed is that building i.e. total 11 cases have been filed by the Directorate of Inspection for Factories and Establishments with Savar police station.

9. (a) In case of Tajreen Fashions Ltd. accident, four Inspector level officers of the Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments have been suspended on the basis of enquiry report submitted by the enquiry committee formed by the Ministry of Labour & Employment and departmental proceedings against them are under process.

(b) In case of Smart Export Garments fire incident, two Inspector-level officers of the Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments have been suspended for negligence of duty.

(c) In case of Rana Plaza building collapse, seven inspector level officers of Labour Directorate and Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments have been suspended for negligence of duty and departmental proceeding against them have been started. Moreover new chief Inspector Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments has been posted in place of former one.

10. (a) All dues including salary and allowances have been paid to 1465 workers by BGMEA on different dates regarding Tajreen fire incident.

(b) The affected workers in Smart Export Garments Ltd. have been paid all dues including salary and allowances.

(c) Regarding Rana Plaza Collapse, a total number 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. Till now BGMEA has spent Tk.12.56 crore (app) so fare for the Rana Plaza victims.

11. To uphold stable environment in garment sector through regular discussion and giving necessary instruction an eleven member 'Cabinet Committee on Garments Sector' has been formed headed by the Honorable Minister, Ministry of Labour & Employment. The other members of the committee are Honorable Ministers, Ministry of Textile & Jute, Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development & Co-operatives, Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Industry, Ministry of Commerce, Ministry of Disaster Management & Relief and Honorable State Ministers, Ministry of Labour & Employment and Ministry of Housing and Public Works. Meanwhile, the committee convened 5 meetings and taken important decisions which are now under implementation. 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 Ready Made Garments Industry'. The Task Forces are working.

12. A proposal of forming a standing committee headed by the Secretary, Ministry of Commerce to provide all out support to the Cabinet Committee on Garments Industry has been approved. The other members of the committee are the Secretaries, Ministry of Labour & Employment, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, one representative equivalent to Additional Secretary/Director General from each of the Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of public Administration, Ministry of Local Government and concerned Ministries, one representative from BGMEA, BKMEA, BEF, BILS, NCCWE and Industry All each.

13. 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 Gagaria upazilla in Munshiganj district. Meanwhile, a summery for approval of land acquisition has been sent by the Ministry of Land to the Honorable Prime Minister.

14. A Tripartite National Plan of Action on fire safety in the RMG sector jointly signed by representatives of workers, owners and the Ministry of Labur & Employment with the assistance of ILO on 16-03-2013. After Rana Plaza collapse to ensure building safety in RMG sector this issue was added to the action plan and National Tripartite Plan of Action on Fire Safety and structural Integrity in Ready-made Garment Sector in Bangladesh was adopted on 25-7-2013. In this Action Plan 3 fundamental area have been identified which are as follows:

* Legislative and policy related issues;
* Administrative issues; and
* Issues relating to Practical activities implementation.

To ensure building integrity and fire safety, what steps are to be taken, the implementing authority, the organization to provide assistance and the time schedule of implementing the initiatives have been specified in the Action Plan. A sixteen members Tripartite Committee headed by secretary Ministry of Labour & Employment has been formed to implement the Action Plan. A working group headed by the Joint Secretary (Labour), Ministry of Labour & Employment has been formed to assist the committee. ILO is providing with overall support including technical assistance in this regard. The committee in its 2nd meeting held on 21-08-2013 has taken unanimous decision to start the preliminary verification from the 15th of September 2013 relating to building and fire safety in RMG industry. The verification will be administered by 30 teams of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET). The concerned teams will verify on the basis of specific standards approved by the committee. A technical committee of 4 members are working to develop an operating manual to assess the building, fire and electrical safety of the factories. Opinions and views of the concerned parties were exchanged in a workshop organized by ILO on the 7th of September 2013. ILO has invited international tender to procure necessary equipments for detailed structural assessment of the factory buildings. The following areas have been identified to implement the National Plan of Action:

1. Verification of building and fire safety of the factories;
2. Strengthening inspection activities;
3. Training on Occupational Safety and Health;
4. Rehabilitation of the disabled and injured persons;
5. Implementation of Better Work Program.

ILO has submitted a project of $24.5 million to ERD to implement the aforesaid activities. After signing the project document on 22nd October 2013 the project launched for implementation on the same day. As a component of this project the better work Bangladesh programme was also launched on the same day.

15. Twenty three Inspection teams among which 20 in Dhaka and 3 in Chittagong, have been formed by the Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments to ensure safe working environment in garments factories. The teams have made inspection in 3140 RMG factories as of September 2013 and 305 cases have been filed for violating the law.

16. 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. The visiting team called on the Honorable Prime Minister and all concerned. A tripartite declaration was expressed of 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. The proposal of strengthening the Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments was included in the declaration.

17. Bangladesh Labour Act, 2006 has been amended to consolidate and enhance the safety measures in work place. The trade union activities have been made easier as a result of amending the Act. A committee headed by the secretary, Ministry of Labour & Employment has been formed to formulate the rules of the Act. Meanwhile, a working group has started to make the draft of the rules.

18. An eighteen member committee has been formed by the Cabinet Division's notification no: 04.611.006.00.00.001.2013-73 dated 07-05-2013 to visit the ready-made garments factories of the country and submit a report with recommendation to protect safe working environment of this industry, prevent accidents and ensure labour welfare. The Honourable Minister, Ministry of Jute and Textile of the Chairman and the Honourable State Minister, Ministry of Labour & Employment is the vice-Chairman of the committee. Meanwhile the committee has submitted its reports to the Cabinet Committee on garments sectors.

19. A study program has been adopted with government financing under the Ministry of Labour & Employment through BIDS, a renowned organization of the country to determine the number of factories on the basis of locality, the number of workers and employees working and to identity the existing problem and their solution to promote this sector to be number one in the world. The draft report of the study program has been shared with the concerned stakeholders by BIDS. It is expected that the final report of the study will be submitted within a month.

20. Steps have been taken by the Ministry of Labour & Employment to finalize the 'National Occupational Health and Safety Policy'. The policy has been approved by the Cabinet Division on 21/10/2013.

21. Minimum Wage Board has been declared on 13-06-2013 by the Ministry of Labour & Employment to redefine the minimum wages for the workers of ready-made garments industry. The Board is functioning and it is expected that the proposal of the Board will be submitted within time.

22. A minimum rate of tax has been settled by the Govt. regarding import of fire extinguishing equipments in the current fiscal year. In addition to that Tk. 192 crore has been allocated for purchasing fire extinguishing equipments for Directorate of Fire Service and Civil Defense.

23. A committee headed by the GOC, Ninth Infantry Division has been formed according to the directions of the Honorable High Court to determine the exact amount of compensation payable to the deceased and injured workers in Rana Plaza accident. The committee is continuing its activities.

24. Implementation Better Work Program in Ready-Made Garments industry has been launched on 22/10/2013**.**

25. Meanwhile the following initiatives have been taken to reinstate GSP facilities in USA which has been suspended from the 27th of June 2013 and the continuation of GSP facilities in European Union:

(a) A delegation under the leadership of the Honorable Foreign Minister of Bangladesh has visited Brussels and Paris to discuss with the Trade Commissioner of European Union and to present the initiatives taken by Bangladesh on working environment in RMG industry in the conference organized by OECD.

(b) Bangladesh, European Union and International Labour Organization (ILO) have adopted 'Sustainability Compact' with a view to take joint initiatives to improve labour welfare and safety of working environment. The United State of America has given consent to 'Sustainability Compact' on the 19th of July 2013.

(c) Regarding Bangladesh Action Plan 2013 proposed by United State of America to improve building and fire safety and working environment, ILO, Development Partners and the foreign buyers have jointly taken different initiatives which are as follows:

(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 a 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 Rana Plaza collapse.

(d) Bangladesh Labour (Amendment) Act, 2013 has been passed by the Bangladesh Parliament on the 15th July 2013 and Notified in Bangladesh Gazette on the 22nd of July after the consent of his Excellency the president of Bangladesh.

(e) The Ministry of Labour & Employment has taken the initiative of formulating rules to implement the Bangladesh Labour (Amendment) Act, 2013 properly and ILO and an NGO has been requested to make a draft of the rules. It is expected that the formulation of the rules will be completed by 2013.

(f) From the month of May 4 Inspector has been appointed and the appointment of 37 Inspector in revenue head is under process in the Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments. In addition to that 23 inspectors are being appointed under a project. Appointment of another 10 inspectors is under process in the Public Service Commission. Upgradation of the Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments with 679 new posts in the 1st phase has been approved by the Government of which 392 posts are exclusively for inspectors. The appointment of 200 inspectors will be finalized after getting the consent of the Ministry of Finance and the committee of the secretaries on the upgradation proposal.

(g) A proposal of increasing the number of inspectors from 50 to 310 in the Directorate of Fire Service and Civil Defense has been sent to the Ministry of Home Affairs.

(h) Two different proposals to increase the number of inspectors in the Rajdhani Unnayan Kartipakshya (RAJUK) and Chittagong Development Authority (CDA) has been sent to the concerned ministry. Meanwhile the proposal of the Rajdhani Unnayan Kartipakshya has been approved.

(i) The committee on Tripartite Plan of Action has decided to start preliminary assessment by 30 teams of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology from the end of October 2013. The assessment will be done with the financing of ILO. Under the 'Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh' sighed by the European buyers and 'Bangladesh Safety Alliance' signed by the North American buyers about 2000 factories will be assessed and rest of the factories will be assessed with the financing of ILO.

(j) An Inter Ministerial committee headed by the senior secretary of the office of the Prime Minister has been formed to examine the implementation of Bangladesh Labour Act, 2006 in Bangladesh Export Processing Zone and the committee has been said to submit the report by 20th of September 2013.

(k) The Directorate of Fire Service and Civil Defense has initiated a hotline regarding fire safety. The Ministry of Labour & Employment has taken initiatives to start two hotlines in the Department of Labour and the Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments in this regard.

(l) ILO has been requested to incorporate in the project proposed by them to construct a database open to all based on the information relating to formation of trade union, labour right, building and fire safety inspection etc. in the garment factories.

(m) The government has decided to withdraw the cases against Kalpona Akhter and Babul Akhter. The District Magistrate, Dhaka has been requested to take necessary action in this regard.

(n) The Ministry of Home Affairs have announced reward for arresting suspected accused Mustafiz in Aminul murder case and advertisement has been published with the photograph of the accused in the newspaper twice. The law enforcing forces are also continuing investigation.

(o) The Ministry of Social Welfare suspended registration/re-registration of Bangladesh Center for Women Solidarity (BCWS) and Social Activities For the Environment (SAFE) on the basis of the proposal of National Security Intelligence. The ministry, in the meantime, has withdrawn the suspension orders. The two organizations are now continuing their activities.

(p) Trade Union registration is being continued and 63 trade unions have been registered since January 2013 till today.

(q) In the Inter Ministerial meeting presided over by the Honorable Commerce Minister on 05-08-2013 the leaders of BGMEA and BKMEA have been requested to ensure job security of the trade union leaders. At the same time they were requested to reinstate the trade union leaders suspended earlier.