

FOUR YEARS OF RANA PLAZA TRAGEDY

ORCA Homes abode for 44 orphans

Many of victim families still pass days in misery

KM REZAUL HOQUE, Gaibandha

Forty-four children, who lost either or both of their parents in the Rana Plaza disaster on April 24 in 2013, are living in a homely shelter set up at Hossainpur village under Fulchhari upazila in the district, thanks to the initiative of Old Rajshahi Cadet Association (ORCA).

The organisation set up ORCA Homes with the cooperation of BGMEA beside Gaibandha-Balashi road on December 22 in 2014 to rehabilitate the children of Rana Plaza tragedy victims hailing from different districts.

They bear all the cost of the children, including food, schooling and healthcare, at the home set up in a three-storey impressive building with adequate space for playground, library and entertainment facilities.

The inmates, including 23 boys and 21 girls, live there in a homely environment, and attend classes at Hossainpur Muslim Academy from Play Group to Class VIII.

"The organisation will arrange adequate schooling for the inmates and help them to get employment. Help will also be extended for marriage of the girls after completion of their education. Seven people are engaged here to look after the children," said Shafiqul Islam, vice-principal of the academy, who is also working as the in-charge of the home.

"We are living here comfortably, but we often feel sorrow when our mothers' memory comes to mind," said Al-Amin of Aviram village in Pirgachha upazila of Rangpur, who lost his mother Fatema Begum in Rana

Plaza disaster.

Afsana Akhter from Satbhangia village in Faridpur district said she and her younger brother Abdullah are staying at the home after losing their mother Beauty Begum in Rana Plaza disaster.

Of the over eleven hundred people killed in the tragedy, 49 were from Gaibandha district.

Besides, over a hundred people hailing from the district sustained serious injuries and nine others remained missing.

Rana Plaza disaster victims' families received Tk one lakh 45 thousand as government grant in three instal-

ments, but no further help was provided during the last four years, said members of several families, adding that they are passing hard days after losing the only earning persons.

"My daughter Smrity Rani was an employee at Rana Plaza and she was the only earning member of our family. But she died in the disaster, leaving us in utter distress," said Sandhya Rani of Kismat Haldia village in

Sadullapur upazila.

The conditions of the missing people's families are more miserable as they have hardly got any help from any quarter.

Many of the injured workers, who lost limbs in Rana Plaza disaster, became burden of the hard-pressed families.

Sonia Begum of Dakkhin Damodarpur village in Sadullapur upazila, who lost her right leg due to injuries in the disaster, was somewhat lucky as she got Tk 10 lakh as grant from the prime minister's fund and her husband set up a grocery shop with the money.

"We are living here comfortably, but often feel sorrow when our mothers' memory comes to mind," said Al-Amin of Aviram village in Rangpur's Pirgachha upazila.