



Rana Plaza six years on – A time for reflection

24 April 2019 | By: Beth Wright

On the sixth anniversary of the Rana Plaza building collapse in Bangladesh, *just-style* has taken a step-by-step look at the changes that have been made to improve worker and building safety within the country's ready-made garment industry.

15 April 2019: The Supreme Court of Bangladesh has again delayed its decision on the future operation of the Accord on Fire and Building Safety in the country. The move marks the eighth time the court has adjourned a hearing on a petition filed by the Accord challenging a High Court directive asking it to end all activities in Bangladesh on 30 November. The new date for the hearing is now 19 May.

8 April 2019: The World Trade Organization (WTO) has said it expects Bangladesh to graduate from the Least Developed Countries list in 2024 – the status under which it enjoys duty-free access to the European Union, Canada and Japan – with the body urging the government to make the necessary reforms so it can to continue to capitalise on global trade opportunities.

8 April 2019: The Supreme Court of Bangladesh has once again delayed its decision on the future operation of the Accord on Fire and Building Safety in the country.

3 April 2019: The government of Bangladesh has established a EUR50m (US\$56m) loan fund to provide the country's ready-made garment sector with medium-to-long-term finance for safety and environmental upgrades to factories.

2 April 2019: Ahead of a decision by Bangladesh's supreme court on the future of the Accord on Fire and Building Safety in the country, an analysis of the government's factory remediation data shows a "shocking level of unreadiness" to take over the Accord's work.

1 April 2019: The European Union has called on the government of Bangladesh to implement garment factory safety standards at all commercial buildings in the country, following the second building fire in under a month.

25 March 2019: A group of former members of the now-defunct Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety has teamed up with several other brands to launch Nirapon, a voluntary programme tasked with overseeing the ongoing safety, training and helpline efforts in Bangladesh ready-made garment factories.

21 March 2019: A pilot programme commissioned by signatories of the Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh to explore boiler safety at readymade garment (RMG) factories in the country has found defects in all 35 inspected boilers.

11 March 2019: A new training scheme has been launched in Bangladesh as part of a wider bid to get more women into supervisory roles in the country's garment sector.

11 March 2019: The Rana Plaza tragedy pushed Bangladesh's US\$30bn clothing industry into making health and safety improvements to reassure brands they would not be tarnished by similar disasters – and now the industry is going a step further by seeking to establish a reputation for environmental excellence. [Click here](#) to read the article in full.

19 February 2019: A decision on the future of the Accord for Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh has been pushed back once again, with a hearing on the pact's continued operation now due to take place on 7 April.

15 February 2019: A new digital map that charts Dhaka's garment factories, helping buyers know more about the suppliers they are involved with, will strengthen and facilitate the growth of Bangladesh's readymade garment industry, experts say. [Click here](#) to read the article in full.

15 February 2019: The Accord for Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh is calling on the country's government and the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) to negotiate with its Steering Committee on a "responsible and sustainable" transition plan as a decision on the Accord's future looms next week.



14 February 2019: A group of 190 investors representing more than US\$3trn in assets is urging the Bangladesh government not to abandon the Accord for Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh until it is fully capable of continuing its work to ensure the safety of the more than 1,600 factories and 2m garment workers currently covered by the Accord.

29 January 2019: Labour activists and trade unionists say they are staging demonstrations at Bangladeshi embassies and consulates in cities around the world this week, calling for living wages, safe factories, and a halt to repression against the country's garment workers.

15 January 2019: The Bangladesh government is to revise the minimum wages for some ready-made garment workers following eight days of widespread unrest – with workers warned they must return to work or risk losing pay.

14 January 2019: French brands and retailers sourcing from Bangladesh have united to urge the country's government to extend the work of the Bangladesh Accord, days before a decision on its future is due.

7 January 2019: The Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) has entered into an agreement to produce a greater number of skilled workers for the country's ready-made garment sector.

3 January 2019: The safety activities of 100 Accord-monitored ready-made garment (RMG) factories in Bangladesh have been handed over to the government's Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments (DIFE).

18 December 2018: A decision on the future of the Bangladesh Accord has been pushed back until the new year, with the hearing now due to take place on 21 January.

14 December 2018: Unions and worker rights groups have warned the future of the Accord continues to hang in the balance after the Bangladesh government was granted a further delay on a decision regarding the agreement's future.

12 December 2018: The Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety released its fifth and final annual report on factory safety improvements during its tenure – claiming a 93% remediation rate across factories affiliated with the programme and close to 1.6m workers trained to protect themselves in case of a fire emergency. [Click here to read the article in full.](#)

5 December 2018: More than 200 global trade union leaders have shown their unanimous support for the Bangladesh Transition Accord, days before a hearing that will decide the fate of the factory building and safety initiative.

30 November 2018: The Bangladesh High Court has postponed its hearing over the future of the Transition Accord in a move that leaves the alliance's future in doubt for another week.

26 November 2018: The Clean Clothes Campaign (CCC) says the progress reached on fire safety by the Bangladesh Accord is under "severe threat" if it closes at the end of the month, and has called on the government to lift the restraining order.

23 November 2018: The ongoing trade spat between the US and China has benefited Bangladesh's readymade export industry, with orders increasing from both China and the US, a [new study](#) has revealed.

22 November 2018: A crash in slow motion – it's the only way one can describe the looming economic fallout should Bangladesh refuse to extend the Accord on Fire and Building Safety. In just one week's time the Bangladesh government may force this landmark agreement to stop operating out of Dhaka: a disaster for apparel workers' safety in an industry scarred by tragedy. [Click here to read the article in full.](#)

16 November: The European Parliament yesterday (15 November) passed a resolution urging the Bangladesh Government to allow the work of the Transition Accord on Fire and Building Safety to continue beyond November this year.

7 November 2018: The wage board for Bangladesh's readymade garment sector has finalised its proposed minimum monthly wage, despite objections from trade unions and factory owners.

9 October 2018: The Clean Clothes Campaign has called on the Government of Bangladesh to create a national employment injury insurance scheme for the country's garment workers on the five-year anniversary of the Aswad factory fire.

2 October 2018: A group of unions in Bangladesh have called for an immediate review of the new minimum wage, saying it fails to meet workers' expectations, with a demand the new rate be doubled.

24 September 2018: Campaigners have expressed outrage at the Bangladesh Government's decision to raise the minimum worker wage by 51% to BDT8000 (US\$95) per month - half what the IndustriAll Bangladesh Council (IBC) had been seeking - and are now calling on brands to step in.

20 September 2018: 192 companies have now signed the '2018 Accord' or 'Transition Accord' Bangladesh worker safety pact – with Holland House Fashion and ICA Sweden among the latest to commit. [Here](#) we list the signatories so far.

17 September 2018: A group of 153 investors representing US\$2.8 trillion in assets has warned against the premature termination of the Bangladesh Accord for Fire and Building Safety – saying that lingering risks in the country's garment factories threaten workers, brands and investors.

17 September 2018: The Bangladesh Parliament has passed a new textiles bill that aims to promote investment in the country's readymade garments sector.

14 September 2018: The fourth meeting of a forum set up to expand bilateral trade and investment between the US and Bangladesh has seen the two governments commit to strengthening trade and economic ties between the two countries.

14 September 2018: The Bangladesh Government has increased the minimum wage for garment workers by 51% following months of negotiations.

13 September 2018: The Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety says that since the month of July, a further 36 affiliated factories completed all material components outlined in their Corrective Action Plans (CAPs).

4 September 2018: The establishment of workers' rights in Bangladesh's readymade garment sector has a long way to go, despite improvements since the Rana Plaza collapse, a new survey suggests.

28 August 2018: A group of human rights organisations in Bangladesh has renewed its call for brands to support better wages for the country's garment workers ahead of a meeting of the Minimum Wage Board on Wednesday (29 August).

21 August 2018: Garment workers in Bangladesh are to receive financial assistance via mobile money transfer thanks to a new agreement inked by the country's Labour Welfare Foundation.

15 August 2018: The government of Bangladesh has set up a temporary control room in the country's capital in a bid to avoid any labour unrest in the apparel sector in the run-up to the Islamic festival of Eid-ul Azha.

31 July 2018: A new two-year Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) has been agreed for Bangladesh, focusing on issues such as job creation, social protection, and social dialogue.

26 July 2018: A training course taking place in Bangladesh through to 2021 is training officials on the principles and techniques of investigation of unfair labour practices in Bangladesh with the aim of implementing standard operating procedures.

24 July 2018: The Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety is to transition its Amader Kotha ('Our Voice') toll-free, confidential worker helpline to an independent initiative later this month, expanding its services beyond Alliance-affiliated factories.

20 July 2018: An alliance of labour unions and non-governmental organisations has strongly condemned the process to set a new minimum wage for Bangladesh garment workers – and is calling on brands sourcing from the country to take action.

19 July 2018: Bangladesh's garment owners and trade unions are far apart in the fraught ongoing minimum wage negotiations, proposing pay floors that are widely divergent.

9 July 2018: Germany's Ministry of Economic Affairs has acknowledged the need for reform of factory audits in Bangladesh's textile industry.

6 July 2018: The Bangladesh Government is meeting this weekend to discuss a new minimum wage for employees in the country's US\$28bn ready-made garment sector.

4 July 2018: The Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety says that during the month of June, a further 18 Alliance-affiliated factories completed all material components outlined in their Corrective Action Plans (CAPs).

2 July 2018: The Bangladesh government could shut down more than 750 apparel factories if the units fail to complete safety improvement work by December this year, according to the country's junior labour and employment minister, Mujibul Haque.

18 June 2018: The Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety has received a renewed mandate to carry on its health and safety work.

14 June 2018: Despite years of efforts to strengthen the voices of workers in the Bangladeshi garment sector through social dialogue, real improvements remain to be seen, a new report has found.

13 June 2018: The Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh has been given an extension to its mandate by the Bangladesh government – from 1 June – after a court order preventing this was lifted.

5 June 2018: The new Bangladesh worker safety pact – the '2018 Accord' or 'Transition Accord' – is now in effect but has fallen short of its goal of retaining 100% of its original signatories, including brands such as Abercrombie & Fitch and Australia's Pacific Brands.

30 May 2018: Bangladesh has eased regulations for forming trade unions at garment factories in what appears to be a bid to appease the International Labour Organization (ILO).

29 May 2018: The right of the Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh to continue working in the country has been thrown into renewed uncertainty after the high court extended an injunction preventing the government from prolonging its operations.

15 May 2018: Bangladesh has overtaken China and India in ethical compliance in the apparel sector, a new survey suggests, thanks to improved workplace safety following pressure from international inspection and remediation agencies in the years following Rana Plaza.

14 May 2018: Calls for Bangladesh to ensure a decent wage for all of its workers have renewed amid claims workers in the country's US\$28bn garment industry receive the lowest wage in Asia.

10 May 2018: Criteria to improve the safety of Bangladesh's garment factories and workers have still not been met, according to the Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh, with too many life-threatening hazards still remaining.

3 May 2018: A change of mindset and a genuine commitment from the Bangladesh Government, exporters and brands are "badly needed" if governance is to be improved in the country's readymade garment sector, a [new study](#) has found.

30 April 2018: The Government of Bangladesh has acknowledged ten apparel companies for maintaining high levels of worker health and safety standards in their factories.

27 April 2018: In spite of the country's advances since 2013, Bangladesh's minimum wage is still just \$64 a month. Mike Flanagan asks why, and suggests that buying more from Bangladesh would not only be in the interests of US brands and retailers – but would also help to boost wages in the country.

26 April 2018: Despite dramatic gains in building safety in Bangladesh since the Rana Plaza disaster, the violation of workers' rights has increased and the squeeze on suppliers has intensified, a [new report](#) has found.

25 April 2018: Five years after the Rana Plaza disaster, Bangladesh's apparel industry has undergone expansive structural transformation and become a role model for health and safety progress, industry-insiders and trade unionists say.

25 April 2018: Garment workers in Bangladesh are earning poverty-level wages, often while relying upon excessive hours of overtime to lift their earnings towards a living wage, a [new report](#) has found.

24 April 2018: As the global garment industry stops to reflect on the tragic events that took place in Bangladesh exactly five years ago today it is also a time to consider what has changed, what hasn't – and what still needs to be done. [Here](#) we share the views of a number of industry executives and stakeholders on progress so far.

24 April 2018: Five years ago, the Rana Plaza catastrophe made Bangladesh notorious – and turned our industry into a pariah. Today, our reaction to the catastrophe has helped Bangladesh become a beacon for how poor countries can pull themselves out of poverty and, in the process, transform human rights and gender equality. All through clothing exports to the West. You will probably never again help achieve anything so extraordinary. [Click here to read the article in full.](#)

24 April 2018: More than two-thirds of the 220 companies who signed the Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh have now committed to the new agreement. UK clothing retailers Fat Face and Next Plc, British department store group Debenhams, and Japan's Fast Retailing are among the latest to sign, taking the total to 152. [Click here to see the full list of signatories.](#)

23 April 2018: As one of the biggest garment exporters in Bangladesh, Epic Group chairman and CEO Ranjan Mahtani knows better than most how the industry has reinvented itself in the wake of the Rana Plaza disaster. [Here](#) he tells just-style why his belief in Bangladesh means the company's investment in the country continues unabated.

23 April 2018: A group of labour advocates gather in New York to reflect on the political and social ramifications of Rana Plaza. [Click here to read the article in full.](#)

19 April 2018: The cost to remediate the remaining dangerous conditions in Bangladesh's ready-made garment industry is estimated at US\$1.2bn, a new [report](#) suggests.

18 April 2018: Two labour rights groups plan a week of action urging garment brands to sign up to the 2018 Bangladesh Accord.

16 April 2018: Better Buying and the Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) are to collaborate on an 18-month programme in Bangladesh to support and promote responsible buying practices.

11 April 2018: The Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety says it is [making progress](#) towards a collective agreement on worker safety with member brands ready and willing to partner with the government to establish a new locally-led safety organisation.

10 April 2018: A number of recommendations have been set out for the International Labour Organization (ILO) ahead of a meeting to devise a standard for the prevention of violence against men and women working in the global garment supply chain.

4 April 2018: The World Bank has approved funding for two projects in Bangladesh – amounting to around US\$560m – which could benefit the nation's small and large textile facilities.

29 March 2018: Digital supply chain mapping platform [Sourcemap](#) is aiming to bring a new level of transparency to the clothing industry with the launch of an initiative to digitally map Bangladesh's garment factories.

27 March 2018: Better Work Bangladesh is running a Levi Strauss Foundation-funded project that provides shoes to barefoot workers in the country's garment factories.

22 March 2018: In a move aimed at boosting Bangladesh's ready-made garment exports, the Government has provided the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) with 500 acres of land inside a special economic zone located in Chittagong.

21 March 2018: Having announced it will transfer its operations to a new safety monitoring organisation before the end of the year, the Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety says [factory remediation remains on schedule.](#)

8 March 2018: Bangladesh's ready-made garment sector has made significant progress in the social upgradation of its workers but its economic upgradation index is low, a new [report](#) has found.

7 March 2018: Bangladesh's labour inspectorate has taken another step forward in ensuring quality labour management in the country's ready-made garment sector with the [launch of a mobile version of its inspection application.](#)

6 March 2018: Bangladesh's trade unions are again pushing for an increase in the minimum wage for workers in the country's US\$28bn garment industry.

16 February 2018: Many major life-threatening safety concerns still remain outstanding in too many of the factories being monitored by the Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh, according to its [latest update](#).

13 February 2018: The Asian Development Bank (ADB) agrees a US\$20m loan with Eastern Bank Ltd (EBL) to finance socially and environmentally sustainable projects in Bangladesh's textile and garment sectors.

24 January 2018: Global investors call on brands to re-commit to the Bangladesh Accord for Fire and Building Safety amid [warnings a "weakened" Accord may endanger critical investments](#) made as part of the 2013 agreement and potentially encourage Bangladeshi garment factories to return to their former practices.

22 January 2018: A settlement of US\$2.3m is reached in an arbitration case filed in 2016 against a leading multi-national fashion brand for non-compliance with the Bangladesh Accord on Fire and Building Safety.

16 January 2018: Lured by a shifting global market and better margins, Bangladesh's apparel producers are rushing into the lingerie space – predicting Chinese manufacturers will secure fewer export orders for these lines as their costs rise.

15 January 2018: The Bangladesh Government has formed a [new wage board](#) that will recommend a minimum salary for workers in the country's garment industry following recent labour unrest and calls for the implementation of a more transparent and regular wage review mechanism.

2 January 2018: The Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh says 844 factories of the 1,699 factories it monitors are now participating in its Safety Committee Training programme.

17 November 2017: The Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh says major life-threatening safety concerns [remain outstanding in too many of the factories it monitors](#) – although it hopes the vast majority will be fully remediated when its initial tenure comes to an end in May 2018.

16 November 2017: With just six months to go before the curtain falls on the Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety, country director Jim Moriarty tells just-style he is "pretty confident" the group will finish the vast majority of remediation across its affiliated factories in 2018 and says "steady headway" is being made to create a [new safety organisation in Bangladesh](#).

23 October 2017: The Bangladesh Accord on Fire and Building Safety and The Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety are to end their tenure next June and hand over their responsibilities to a new government-led initiative, [if remediation is properly completed](#). Consequently, a 'Remediation Coordination Cell' will be formed to oversee workplace safety in the RMG sector that will include government representatives, NGO's, industry associations, trade unions and international retailers and brands. A steering committee will be formed to run the cell.

6 October 2017: The Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety says it is ["on pace"](#) to complete remediation across its affiliated factories in 2018 – even though just one-quarter of the factories supplying its members have completed their Corrective Action Plans (CAPs).

22 September 2017: Six people have reportedly been killed after a blaze broke out at a textile mill in Bangladesh.

7 September 2017: Bangladesh's apparel makers are pressing ahead with establishing a separate factory inspection and remediation body, which would operate after existing international health and safety initiatives expire in 2018.

1 September 2017: The Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety says it is confident it can achieve its goal of establishing effective factory safety and worker power initiatives by 2018, but [will not extend its tenure](#).

30 August 2017: Sohel Rana, the owner of the Rana Plaza factory building that collapsed in 2013 killing more than 1100 people, has been jailed for three years on corruption charges.

8 August 2017: The Foreign Trade Association has warned Bangladesh its members could stop sourcing from the country if it refuses to play ball on tackling outstanding labour rights issues.

28 July 2017: In a first of its kind, all Bangladesh apparel factories are to be digitally mapped as part of a new initiative aimed at offering more transparency in the country's garment industry, signalling a transformative shift within the ready-made garment sector.

18 July 2017: Bangladesh exports have experienced the slowest growth in 15 years with garment exports up a mere 0.2% for the year ending June 2017, according to reports.

7 July 2017: Bangladesh books first US apparel import gain since January.

4 July 2017: Swedish fashion retailer Lindex says it is taking the [deaths of 11 people at one of its "most important" supplier factories](#) very seriously and is monitoring the situation on the ground in Bangladesh after a boiler exploded at the Multifabs Limited garment factory yesterday (3 July).

29 June 2017: Primark, Hennes & Mauritz (H&M) and Inditex are among the first to join a raft of major apparel brands and unions in signing a new and improved Bangladesh Accord on Fire and Building Safety that will run to 2021 and promises to offer new worker protections and ensure more factories are inspected and renovated.

18 May 2017: Talks are underway between global unions and a number of signatories of the Accord for Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh over a possible continuation of the agreement, or the formation of a new one, with a potential launch expected as early as next month.

15 May 2017: The safety of Bangladesh's garment industry is set to take a further step forward following the launch of a [new initiative](#) designed to manage the remediation process of the country's garment factories.

11 May 2017: Apparel companies involved in a widely hailed effort to protect garment workers in Bangladesh factories from harm need to take another step to make sure the gains are sustainable. *Click [here](#) to read Aruna Kashyap, senior counsel for the women's rights division of Human Rights Watch's full comments.*

9 May 2017: The Accord for Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh is launching a financial support programme for suppliers that it says will ensure major and costly safety measures can continue to be carried out as the organisation enters its fifth, and final, year.

24 April 2017: The Alliance, Bangladesh's National Garment Workers Federation (NGWF), and global union IndustriAll have reaffirmed their commitment to ensuring the completion and long-term reform of Bangladesh's apparel industry on the fourth anniversary of the Rana Plaza disaster.

21 April 2017: Labour rights group Clean Clothes Campaign (CCC) outlines a set of key actions required from governments, brands and employers it says will drive ["fundamental changes"](#) in the aftermath of the disaster.

20 April 2017: In the face of the fourth anniversary of the Rana Plaza factory complex collapse, a cohort of unions and human rights groups call for more apparel and footwear companies to join the likes of Nike, Adidas, H&M and C&A in pledging their commitment to supply chain transparency.

12 April 2017: The Alliance for Bangladesh says the country's garment industry is moving towards being [one of the world's safest](#), having revealed around 72% of remediation work has been completed to date.

11 April 2017: Ansgar Lohmann, head of KiK's Corporate Social Responsibility department, sets the record straight on the company's involvement in Rana Plaza. He tells just-style all compensation payments have all been made on a voluntary basis, adding that the Rana Plaza and Tazreen tragedies have opened up much-needed discussions on compliance and corporate responsibility in apparel supply chains. *Click [here](#) to read the full interview.*

20 January 2017: Two separate pieces of research call for a new approach to the garment factory auditing process, claiming that not only is there a need for more meaningful auditing that goes beyond ensuring basic compliances, but also that their current checklist approach has contributed to the problem of poor working conditions in many manufacturing hubs.

21 November 2016: Labour rights organisations claim the Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety is concealing its lack of action and overstating its remediation progress, while retailers including Gap Inc and Walmart are failing to fulfil their commitment to make supplier garment factories safe.

18 November 2016: The Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh confirms its members are in discussions over whether the group will extend its stay in the country after the 2018 deadline in order to complete its remediation work.

7 October 2016: The Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety is working on a plan to hand over responsibility for its affiliated garment factories to the country's government in 2018, and reveals around 63% of remediation work has been completed to date.

2 September 2016: Bangladesh's garment exporters reiterate that business continues as usual in the country, despite tightening security following terrorist attacks in the country and wider fears of a long-term impact on the sector.

18 August 2016: More than three years after the Rana Plaza collapse, a group comprising government, employer and trade union representatives is been set up in Bangladesh to drive the development of an [employment injury social protection scheme](#).

19 July 2016: A Bangladesh court [formally charges](#) 38 people, including Rana Plaza owner Sohel Rana and his parents, with murder connected to the 2013 collapse of the building that killed 1,135 garment workers.

18 July 2016: Bangladesh is been denied re-entry into the US Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) trade programme for a third year, despite the country's insistence it has made progress in boosting worker rights and improving workplace safety.

6 June 2016: Global union IndustriAll uses the International Labour Conference in Geneva to suggest enforceability is key when it comes to changing the garment industry in Bangladesh. The union claims the Accord is making "significant headway" but says the work "doesn't end" when companies sign up.

26 April 2016: Bangladesh's garment exports have continued to grow at a steady pace despite the country's image taking a hit following the Tazreen and Rana Plaza disasters.

25 April 2016: Efforts to improve worker and building safety in Bangladesh's ready-made garment industry have brought tangible progress over the three years since the Rana Plaza factory collapse – but it is also clear that essential reforms are still needed and that the pace of remediation must accelerate.

2 April 2016: IndustriAll reveals that there are still too many unacceptable delays in the remediation work being carried out in Bangladesh's garment industry and that the vast majority of factories are behind schedule with their repair plans.

18 April 2016: A new transparency index that monitors and ranks high street clothing brands is published, revealing that a large number of global apparel companies are still operating with little knowledge or control of their supply chains. However, Levi Strauss, Inditex (Zara) and H&M came out on top for their efforts.

15 April 2016: The Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety says it hopes its suspension of factories for lack of progress on remediation will be a final wake-up call to owners to step up their efforts. In an update on the progress of its five-year initiative,

the group said 24 factories have been fully remediated, with another six expected to reach closure on their Corrective Action Plans (CAPs) by the end of the month. In addition, around 49% of all required repairs have been completed. But this means just 3% of the total factories used by Alliance member companies in Bangladesh are deemed to be safe.

31 March 2016: The Accord cuts ties with ten more suppliers after they failed to implement workplace safety measures, including Assersion Design, Bonded Fashion Ltd, Camlet Fashions Ltd, Denier Fashion, Foptex (Pvt) Ltd, Glare Fashion Ltd, Green Life Knittex Ltd, Mark Mode Ltd, Silver Style & Designe Ltd, and Sung Kwang Sweaters Ltd.

15 February 2016: A row breaks out over the analysis of the ['Beyond the Tip of the Iceberg: Bangladesh's Forgotten Apparel Workers'](#) report, which was published in December last year. Professors from Pennsylvania State University and the University of Colorado identified a series of errors in data collection and analysis.

2 February 2016: A fire breaks out at the Matrix Sweaters factory in Gazipur, Bangladesh, which supplies members of the Accord and Alliance, including H&M and JC Penney. According to the Accord, the factory was "behind schedule on a number of other fundamental life safety items", including installing the required sprinkler and automatic fire alarm systems.

27 January 2016: The Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) says the industry has made visible progress on labour and safety issues, despite criticism from the International Trade Union Confederation, IndustriAll and Uni Global Union, who said much still remains to be done by the government if it is to comply with the EU Sustainability Compact.

22 January 2016: The Accord terminates business relations with Dhaka-based Prominent Apparels after it failed to implement workplace safety measures.

23 December 2015: A Bangladesh court [accepts murder charges against 41 people](#), including the owner of the Rana Plaza building, Sohel Rana, for their roles in the disaster.

Separately, a report ['Beyond the Tip of the Iceberg: Bangladesh's Forgotten Apparel Workers'](#) published by the NYU Stern Center for Business and Human Rights reveals indirect sourcing, the key to Bangladesh's high-volume, low-cost model of garment production, is exposing factory workers to safety violations and labour rights abuses.

22 December 2015: The Accord ends business relations with five more garment factories after they either failed to implement workplace safety measures or cooperate with inspections. These include Calvin Fashion Limited, Jaycee's Apparels Ltd, Alpha Knit Apparels Ltd and Sincere Knit Garments Ltd.

18 December 2015: The Better Work programme in Bangladesh gathers even more momentum, with 94 factories having joined the initiative since November last year.

16 November 2015: The Accord cuts business relations with Chittagong-based garment supplier Sadaf Fashions after the supplier refused to implement workplace safety measures.

10 November 2015: Bangladesh reveals that over 80% of its ready-made garment factories have been found to be safe following inspections for structural, fire and electrical safety, with emphasis now switching to remediation. The deadline for assessments was 31 October, at which point 1,475 factories had been inspected through government efforts supported by the ILO with the backing of Canada, the Netherlands and the UK. Meanwhile, around 2,185 factories have been inspected by the Accord and Alliance.

4 November 2015: H&M pledges to improve labour rights for 1.6m garment workers at its supplier factories – in a move that should also contribute to the creation of more stable sourcing markets. The retailer has teamed up with the IndustriAll Global Union and Sweden's IF Metall union to sign a global framework agreement to enhance relations and dialogue between employers, employees and unions at the 1,900 or so factories that make H&M products.

16 October 2015: More than 250 workers, brands, policy makers and campaigners call for a living wage for all garment workers during a two-day 'Living Wage Now' forum in Brussels, organised by labour rights group CCC. Speakers said policies based on voluntary codes of conduct and pilot projects so far taken up by brand and retailers have made "little to no difference".

7 October 2015: An injury insurance scheme for Bangladeshi garment workers is set up as part of a collaboration between the government, the ILO, and Germany. The [Employment Injury Insurance \(EII\) Scheme for Bangladesh](#) will see RMG workers receive payment in case of injury, while employers will benefit from low-cost and no-fault accident compensation insurance for workers.

5 October 2015: Bangladesh rolls out new labour rules, designed to enforce amendments passed in July 2013 to the Bangladesh Labour Act 2006, including provisions on workplace rights, safety and health. US and European Union (EU) diplomats welcome the rules as an "important step and a milestone", while reactions from union bosses and worker rights activists are tepid.

2 October 2015: Swedish fashion giant H&M is criticised by labour rights groups Clean Clothes Campaign (CCC), International Labor Rights Forum (ILRF), Maquila Solidarity Network (MSN), and Worker Rights Consortium (WRC) for potentially endangering hundreds of workers at its supplier factories Bangladesh because they have fallen behind on fire and building safety repairs.

14 July 2015: The Better Work programme in Bangladesh gathers momentum, with 75 factories representing almost 150,000 workers having joined the initiative since November last year.

8 July 2015: The Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety brokers what it says is a first-of-its-kind agreement with the International Finance Corporation (IFC) to help the country's garment suppliers finance factory repairs. Through the credit facility, known as the [Bangladesh RMG SEF Safety Remediation Financing Program](#), the IFC will provide US\$10m each to five Bangladeshi banks to be used as affordable loans to garment factory owners that want to make necessary safety repairs.

Separately, labour rights groups call for an overhaul of the approach to inspection reports on factory safety and working conditions, arguing that industry certificates are "more for show than safety."

29 June 2015: The Bangladesh Accord on Fire and Building Safety says it is "concerned" with delays in remediation at many of the factories that it has inspected. The group said signatory companies and all factories covered by the Accord "need to expedite their efforts to stick to the agreed timelines in the corrective action plans (CAPs) and ensure that any reasons for delays are eliminated".

24 June 2015: Efforts by the Government of Bangladesh to inspect ready-made garment factories for structural, fire and electrical safety reach the 1,000 mark.

22 June 2015: Global unions IndustriAll and UNI slam comments made by Bangladesh's Finance Minister criticising the Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh and describing it as "a noose around the neck of the garment industry", labelling them as "wholly irresponsible". It is understood the Minister claimed the confidence of brands in the Bangladesh garment industry had already been won and, therefore, the Accord should cease its operations.

9 June 2015: The Rana Plaza Donors Trust Fund [reaches its target amount of US\\$30m](#), which will be used to make full payments to all victims of the Bangladesh factory collapse.

2 June 2015: Police in Bangladesh [charge the owner of the Rana Plaza complex with murder](#), for killing more than 1,100 workers, and file charges against 41 others for their roles in the building collapse.

14 May 2015: A coalition of global investors calls on apparel brands and retailers to reveal more information on steps taken to improve conditions for garment workers in Bangladesh. The coalition, organised by the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility (ICCR), warns that delays to larger-scale works on factories – such as remedying construction defects and installing sprinkler systems – are seen by investors as "human rights risks".

30 April 2015: Campaigners including Clean Clothes Campaign and IndustriAll Global Union call on fashion brands and retailers to pledge the final US\$2.7m needed to hit the Rana Plaza Donors Trust Fund target.

28 April 2015: The US Agency for International Development (USAID) sets up a three-year worker empowerment programme in Bangladesh to support labour rights, union organising, and women's empowerment in the ready-made garment sector.

24 April 2015: The ILO, Alliance and global union IndustriAll highlight the progress that has been made towards a safer ready-made garment industry in Bangladesh, but outline the challenges that lie ahead.

22 April 2015: A report by Human Rights Watch suggests Bangladesh needs to effectively enforce its labour law and ensure garment workers can voice their concerns without fear of reprisal if it is to prevent another disaster like Rana Plaza. The report, 'Whoever Raises Their Head, Suffers the Most: Workers' Rights in Bangladesh's Garment Factories' says government and western retailers should do more to enforce international labour standards to protect workers' rights. [Click here for more details.](#)

Meanwhile, a report looking at the response of Canadian businesses to Rana Plaza suggests internal supplier auditing programmes are still not doing enough to address the risks. The Shareholder Association for Research & Education (SHARE) analyses the response to the disaster by Gildan Activewear, HBC, Loblaw, Lululemon, Reitmans, Sears Canada and Canadian Tire. [Click here for more details.](#)

Separately, Jean Lambert, Green MEP for London, urged the remaining retailers and fashion brands who have yet to contribute to the compensation fund for victims of the tragedy to do so without further delay.

20 April 2015: The Rana Plaza Coordination Committee says it has distributed a total of BDT760m (US\$9.8m) to the injured and family members of the deceased and missing workers of the building collapse, after paying BDT310m to 2,968 eligible claimants earlier this month.

17 April 2015: Benetton Group reveals it will double the amount of compensation paid into the Rana Plaza Trust Fund to US\$1.6m following an independent assessment by PwC. However, the \$1.1m payment is described as "insufficient" by the Clean Clothes Campaign (CCC), which has been calling on the retailer to pay \$5m.

1 April 2015: Primark reveals it has completed paying more than 95% of long-term compensation payments to the 668 victims of its Rana Plaza supplier New Wave Bottoms. The retailer's payments stand at \$14m, of which long-term payments amount to \$11m and have been made in full, in cash.

26 March 2015: The ILO releases an update on RMG factory inspections. Of the 3,508 total factories in the country, 2,703 or 77% have been inspected, and 32 have closed.

20-24 March 2015: With a month to go until the two-year anniversary of the disaster, Benetton is urged to make the donation it promised into the Rana Plaza Donors Trust Fund in time for the next round of compensation payments.

16 March 2015: A government-backed telephone helpline has been set up to help Bangladesh garment workers make and resolve grievances relating to workplace safety or worker rights. It will initially target ready-made garment workers in Ashulia, near Dhaka, and if successful, will be rolled out for workers across the country.

25 February 2015: Some 110 additional labour inspectors have been recruited in Bangladesh and are being trained in an ILO programme, bringing the total recruited since the disaster to 178.

23 February 2015: Benetton reveals it is to make a contribution to the Bangladesh Rana Plaza Trust Fund that compensates victims of the disaster, after nearly 1m people signed a petition calling on the company to pay into it.

18 February 2015: Ian Spaulding, senior advisor to the Alliance, talks to just-style about the "good progress" the group is making on its goals, and explains what still remains to be done. [Click here to read the full interview.](#)

30 September 2014: The Fund makes first compensation payments - BDT127.1m (US\$1.64m) to 1,587 beneficiaries. The beneficiaries received payments to the level of 40% of the amount they're entitled to, with deductions for advanced payments already received.

9 September 2014: The Rana Plaza Trust Fund distributes BDT108m (US\$1.4m) to 700 cases, including dependents of 332 deceased victims and 368 injured survivors, in the first of a two-part instalment.

27 August 2014: Supermarket giant Auchan Group reveals it will contribute \$1.5m to the Rana Plaza Donor's Trust Fund – but maintains that it had no business relationship with anyone based in the building.

12 August 2014: The Accord says it is "on track" with the initial inspections of factories used to supply garments to its member companies, which are due to be finalised next month.

31 July 2014: UK apparel retailer Matalan makes a contribution to the Rana Plaza Compensation Trust Fund following a social media campaign calling on the group to pay GBP3m (US\$5.1m). At present, the fund has raised \$17.7m of its \$20m target for the first round of payments.

25 July 2014: The Accord calls on retailers and clothing brands to contribute more funding in order to complete its factory inspections. It says it is still on track to complete its inspection of all 1,500 factories used by its signatories by September 2014 – and that it still expects to spend around \$48m on the five-year project. But, it adds, the amount will now need to be front-loaded to complete inspections on the remaining 700 factories.

26 June 2014: The Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh publishes factory inspection reports and film footage in a move it says is a commitment to be more transparent. To date, it has completed around 800 inspections for fire, electrical and structural safety.

15 May 2014: Production has been suspended in 12 factories supplying a group of brands and retailers in Europe, North America, Asia, and Australia following concerns over building safety. A total of 1,500 factories are due to be inspected between February and October 2014. So far more than 550 factories have been inspected for fire and electrical safety and 480 for structural safety.

23 April 2014: The Rana Plaza Coordination Committee agrees to award BDT50,000 (US\$650) each to victims of the building collapse as advance compensation payments. The fund has so far received about \$15m of the estimated \$40m needed to compensate all victims.

18 March 2014: The Rana Plaza Coordination Committee adopts the Rana Plaza Arrangement to provide compensation to all injured workers, dependents of the dead and missing, and non-injured workers present in the complex when it collapsed.

12 March 2014: Alliance factory inspections get underway. By 22 April, inspections have been completed on more than half of them, and are due to be finished by July.

20 February 2014: Accord factory inspections get underway, with 38 teams of fire, electrical and structural engineers due to conduct 250 inspections a month until September.

17 January 2014: The Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh finalises the fire, electrical, and building inspection standards against which all its member supplier factories will be assessed. [Click here to see the full scope of the building standards.](#)

15 January 2014: The Government of Bangladesh upgrades the chief inspector of factories and establishments office to a department, sanctioning 679 new staff positions, including 392 new inspectors.

1 December 2013: A new minimum wage for garment workers comes into effect, rising by 77% to \$68 (BDT5,300) per month. The basic salary is also set to rise by 5% each year.

22 November 2013: Led by engineers from BUET, assessments of the structural integrity and fire safety of RMG factory buildings officially commence.

7 November 2013: The ILO brings together technical experts (structural engineers, fire safety experts) from the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) on behalf of the NTC, the Accord, and the Alliance. The experts agree on harmonised standards for structural and fire safety assessments.

22 October 2013: The ILO launches a US\$24m, three-and-a-half year programme on improving working conditions in the ready-made garment sector. The programme is designed to support the National Tripartite Plan of Action. A new Better Work programme is also launched in Bangladesh.

25 July 2013: The Accord and Alliance between them cover 2,409 of the 3,498 Bangladesh factories making garments for export, although it is also estimated that there are another 1,500 factories and facilities on top of this. To address the shortfall, the Government of Bangladesh and representatives from local employers' and workers' organisations sign an integrated National Tripartite Plan of Action on Fire Safety and Structural Integrity in the garment Sector of Bangladesh (NTPA), coordinated by the ILO.

15 July 2013: Amendments are made to the Bangladesh Labour Act, including provisions on workplace rights, safety and health. Progress is also seen on the registration of new unions following the labour law reforms, with over 140 new unions registered to date – compared to just two in the preceding three years.

10 July 2013: Certain elements of the Accord present a major stumbling block to North American firms, including the way in which disputes are resolved, which many US companies feared would subject them to potentially unlimited legal liability and litigation. As a result, a group of 26 mostly North American brands and retailers, including Wal-Mart, Gap, JC Penney and VF Corp commit to the Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety. The Alliance covers 770 supplier factories. *A comparison of the Alliance and Accord can be seen [here](#).*

8 July 2013: The EU, Bangladesh Government and ILO issue the Global Sustainability Compact to promote improved labour standards, the structural integrity of buildings and occupational safety and health, and responsible business conduct in the RMG and knitwear industry in Bangladesh. The Compact assigns an important coordination and monitoring role to the ILO.

27 June 2013: The US decides to suspend the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) benefits to Bangladesh - the system under which it can export certain goods to the US duty-free. While this has little impact on apparel - the vast majority of products do not enjoy GSP relief - it sends a powerful signal to the Bangladeshi government and business leaders. Renewal is due to be reconsidered again in May 2014.

13 May 2013: The first of two major remedial plans is launched. The Bangladesh Accord on Fire and Building Safety is backed by global unions and mostly-European companies, with founder members including Benetton, C&A, Carrefour, Debenhams, Esprit, H&M, Inditex, Marks & Spencer, Otto Group, Primark, Puma, PVH, and Tesco. The full list of signatories now extends to more than 200 companies, *and can be seen [here](#)*. The Accord covers 1,639 supplier factories.

The legally-binding five-year Accord commits to independent safety inspections with public reports on all Bangladeshi suppliers used by the signatory companies, mandatory repairs and renovations, the obligation by brands to underwrite the costs of safety upgrades, and repercussions for suppliers that refuse to improve conditions including the termination of business. It also binds signatories to maintain sourcing volumes in Bangladesh for two years.

1-4 May 2013: A joint statement is signed by tripartite partners (government, workers, employers) identifying key areas for action, such as the assessment of the structural integrity of ready-made garment factory buildings; strengthening labour inspection; worker and management training and awareness of occupational safety and health and workers' rights; rehabilitation and skills training of disabled workers; and the possible establishment of the International Labour Organization (ILO) Better Work programme.

24 April 2013: An eight-storey factory building complex at Rana Plaza in the industrial outskirts of Dhaka, Bangladesh, collapses killing at least 1,138 garment workers and injuring over 2,500 more. Exact numbers are sketchy, with hundreds of bodies remaining unidentified or missing. The world's worst industrial accident in 30 years came just five months after the Tazreen factory fire in Dhaka, where more than 120 workers lost their lives. The Rana Plaza building housed five clothing factories - Ether Tex, New Wave Bottoms, New Wave Style, Phantom Apparels and Phantom Tex - and a mall. The collapse was caused by the illegal addition of two floors on an already sub-standard building.

© 2019 All content copyright just-style.com. Published by Aroq Ltd. Aroq House, 17A Harris Business Park, Bromsgrove, Worcs, B60 4DJ, UK. Registered in England No: 4307068. Tel: Intl +44 (0)1527 573 600. Toll Free from US: 1-866-545-5878. Fax: +44 (0)1527 577423. Email: info@aroq.com.