PICKING UP THE PIECES

Live footage of the rescue operations and heartrending photographs in newspapers have awakened in people a deep sense of grief over the colossal loss of life and compassion for those who survived but have lost limbs along with their ability to earn. For survivors the ordeal still goes on. How will they go on without the ability to walk or use a sewing machine or even function normally? How will they feed their families? While the survivors agonise over such questions, people are showing their solidarity in different ways. Many are asking: How can we help?

UPASHANA SALAM

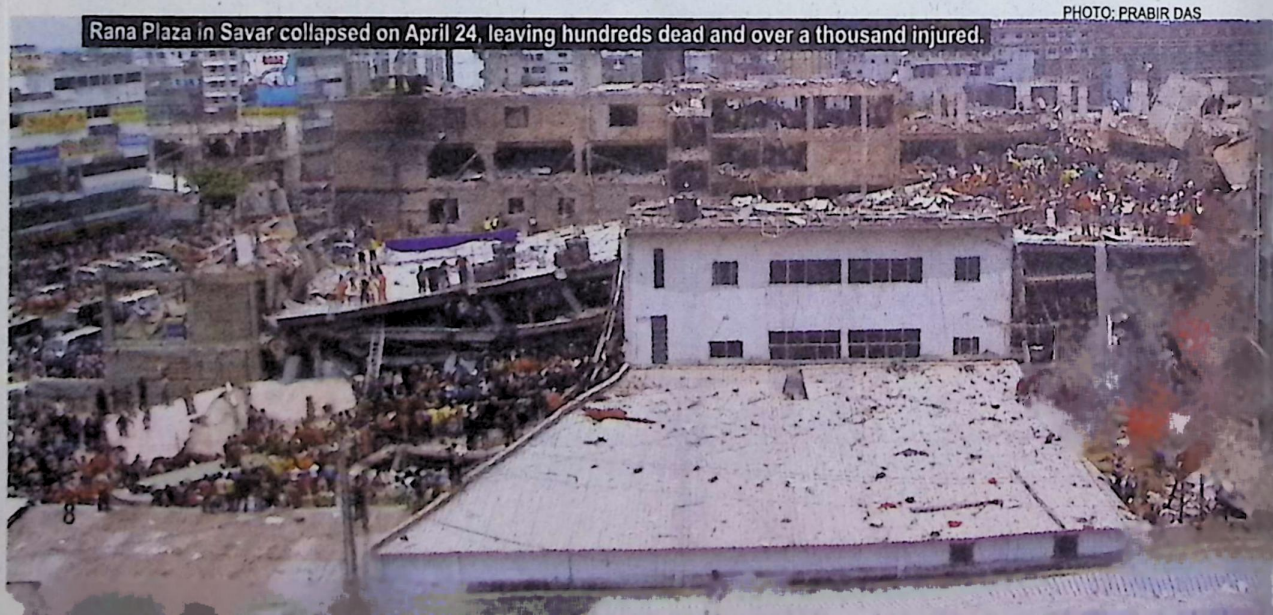
Karuna Sikdar lies helplessly on her hospital bed while her parents bustle around her, making sure she is comfortable, constantly asking her if she would like a drink of water, fussing with the blanket that covers her body.

A survivor of the Rana Plaza collapse, Karuna, 18, seems oblivious to all this attention as she lies with her eyes closed, her face locked in a painful grimace. Her mother says that her once-lively daughter now barely utters a word.

"I am a housewife and my husband works as a household help. Our daughter, obviously, made a huge contribution to our meagre income. But I don't really care about that at the moment; I just want her to get better and come out of her shock," says Karuna's mother.

Karuna, an employee at New Wave Apparel, had the relative good fortune of not being trapped for as long as many of the people who, like her, worked at the nine-storey Rana Plaza. She was rescued on

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS



Rana Plaza in Savar collapsed on April 24, leaving hundreds dead and over a thousand injured.