

Survivors are usually accompanied by attendants as they cannot even sit up by themselves. PHOTO: PRABIR DAS



Roksana, 22, had to get her right foot amputated after it was crushed in the collapse. PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

"I am glad to have come out of there alive, but what will happen to me now?"

— Rokhasana, 22, rescued from the fifth floor, lost her leg in the disaster.

BDRS has plans to start a project, the success of which will depend on the availability of funds. The project aims at providing financial support for a thousand patients.

"Under this project, we hope to provide prosthetic limbs to all those who have lost arms and legs in the disaster," said Rahman.

The organisation had also created a database that includes a list of people who require financial support, as well as the number of patients currently admitted in each hospital.

Groups on social networking sites such as Facebook have also played a major role in making organised, co-ordinated information about victims available to those who want to help.

The Facebook page Online Control Room for Volunteers of Bangladesh was founded by Mir Mahdi Mahbub, a PhD student currently studying in Sweden, who was in constant contact with his friends at Dhaka University. Mahbub quickly realised that even though there were many groups working for the victims of the disaster, there seemed to be a lack of coordination that allowed the unwitting dissemination of rumors and misinformation.

Administrators of the page noted that people would often view a post requiring an item for the victims on someone's wall hours after there was no longer any need for the items.

"While Mahdi contacted volunteers of Bangladesh Red Crescent Society and Dhaka University, I was able to contact volunteers of JAAGO Foundation on site to coordinate what was needed and when," said Poroma Kanya Peak, one of the administrators of the page.

The administrators got all the contacts together on one page so that the list of the needs and patients were coordinated and as updated. Information on survivor needs were posted with the date and time along with hospital names, so that donors would know how and by when they could help, and the names and injuries of patients being treated at various hospitals.

Initially, lists flowed quickly from the site, and hospitals and volunteers collected much of the information within the first three days of the disaster. Administrators of the Facebook page aim to share information and updates whenever they are available.

"We hope to remain a source of information from which verified details regarding survivors is available," Peak added.

"Rehabilitation is a long term process," says Dr Abu Bakr Siddiqui, Doctor on Duty, NITOR. "After a patient's operation, the body part that was operated on needs to heal, and only after consultation with experts can the next step be determined."

16 survivors with spinal cord injuries have been admitted to the hospital, but most of them can be helped with relatively conservative medical treatment, even though the situation varies from patient to patient, according to Dr Siddiqui.

There are seven patients who have had to get amputations, but the good news is that most patients are responding positively to treatment. There have been no deaths reported, and many pa-