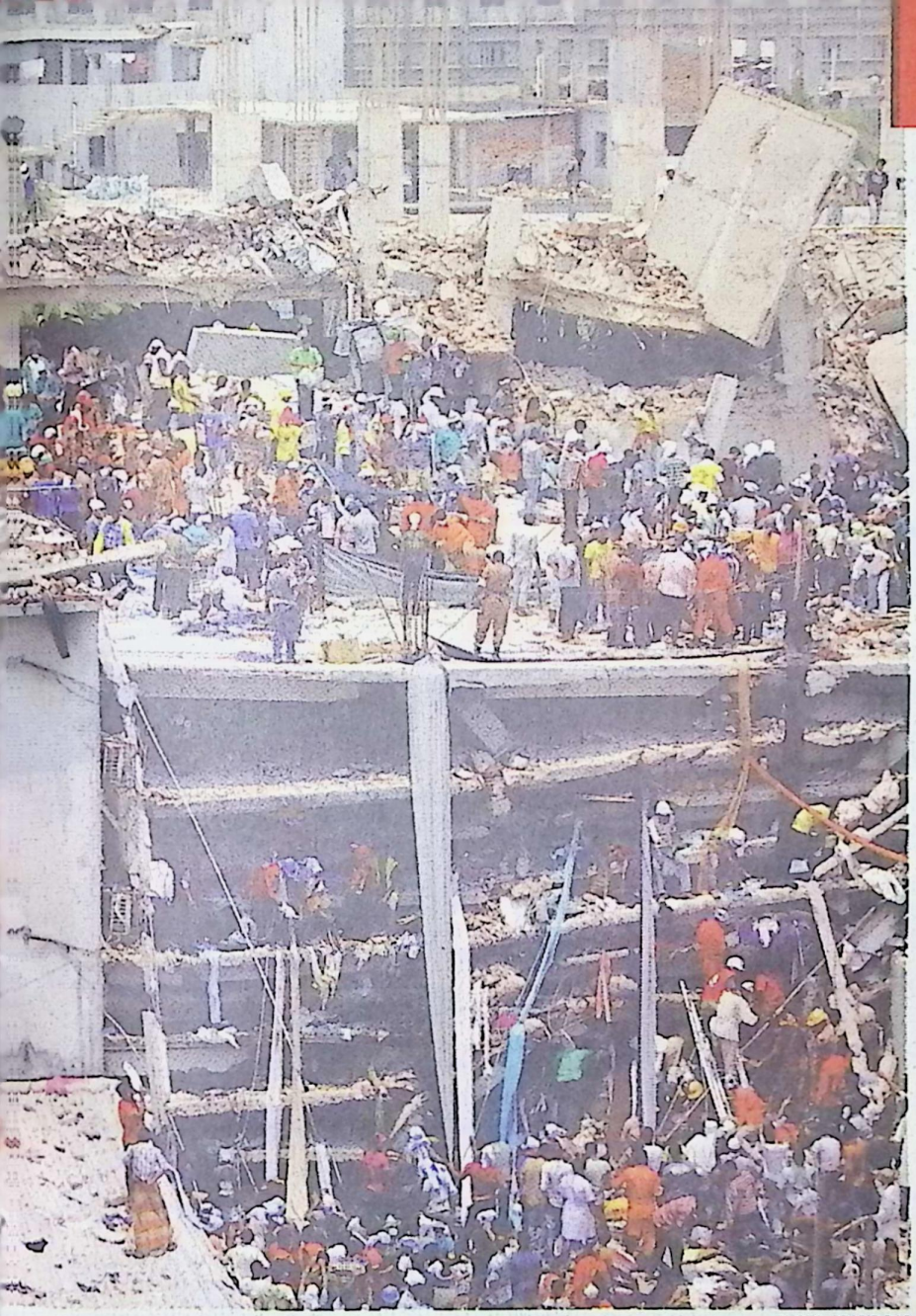


PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

The workers allege that the owners are reluctant to invest in the improvement of the working environment.

At present the department only has 52 inspectors to cover the capital city. Officials claim that because of numbers it is quite impossible for them to check whether workers are covered by insurance and the other facilities.

Mills was tortured by the law enforcers, because the workers were protesting for their due payment.

Azam was arrested in October 2011 by plain-clothes men who Azam later identified as members of a state intelligence agency. He alleges that Mustafiz, who has been charged with the murder of Labour rights activist Aminul Islam, served as an informer of law enforcement and intelligence agencies inside the factories.

"Whatever we discussed at meetings among labour leaders about our rights would be leaked out to the owners and law enforcement before any of us spoke," says Azam.

Azam still recalls the torment he had been through when he was arrested on October 22 2011. "We decided to call a press conference about our wage demands at an internal meeting but before we concluded, I got a call from higher authorities of Ring Shine Textile Mills. They asked me to see them," Azam adds.

The same day garment owners decided to close the factories early. Azam became anxious after getting the call and he left the factory instead of meeting the owners.

"The way authorities came to know about our decisions, I suspected someone among us was leaking out information to the authorities and it