



## Police bullets leave three dead at Nippon Garments of Tongi, Gazipur

### Odhikar Fact Finding Report

The workers of the Nippon Garments Industries Ltd of Ouchpara Tongi of Gazipur came to work at their factory on October 31, 2009 at 8.00 am. Seeing a notice issuing the shut down of the factory, prompted the workers to go inside to speak with the factory owning authority. They were prevented from doing this by the Police. The Police opened fire upon the workers without cause. The tear shells, rubber as well as normal bullets fired by the Police resulted in the injury of almost 20 workers. Babul Sheikh (30) coming from House 245 and Block No. 6 of Ershadnagar, adjacent to the factory premises, Md. Shafiq Mistree (50) from House No. 155 of Block No. 1 and Tajul Islam (50) coming from House No. 512 of Block No. 3 were shot and killed in the incident.

Odhikar engaged in a fact finding of the incident. During the fact finding process, Odhikar spoke with,

- The relatives of the injured and deceased
- Eye-witnesses
- The worker and owner authorities of the concerned factory
- Members of the law enforcement agencies
- The Doctor who performed the Post Mortem of the deceased persons.



Md. Shafiq Mistree



Babul Sheikh



Tajul Islam

### **Jostna Akhtar (18), Operator, Nippon Garments Industries Ltd. and sister-in-law of the late Babul Sheikh**

Jostna Akhtar told Odhikar that at noon on October 30, 2009, she learnt from the other workers that the Director of the factory, Golam Mostafa Monju, would hold a meeting with the workers of the factory before dark because there were no

longer any new work orders. The factory workers were represented in that meeting by the leader from their line<sup>1</sup>.

Jostna came to know that the Director had emergency meetings with the workers three times at 3.00, 4.00 and 4.30 pm respectively. It was agreed that the workers would be paid their wages on the 7<sup>th</sup> of the upcoming month, their bonus on the 15<sup>th</sup> and finally their overtime on the 25<sup>th</sup> following which the factory would be shut down. Jostna was not aware of the remaining decisions of the meeting. She informed that after work ended that day at 6.00 pm she returned home.

At 8.00 am on October 31, 2009, she arrived at work to see the main gate of the factory locked. The gate bore a notice and the factory premise was being guarded by the Police. The notice read, 'This is to notify all concerned with the Nippon campus that, due to the ongoing global recession which has resulted in loss of work for the factory, along with the occurrence of several undesired incidents, the factory shall remain closed from tomorrow, i.e. 31/10/2009 to 29/11/2009. Under the above circumstances all concerned are requested to collect their wages on 10/11/2009 from the Nippon Campus – The authorities'. After reading this notice, Jostna began to wait. By 8.40 am, all the workers of the factory were present in front of the factory gate. Jostna tried to enter the factory premises with the remaining workers with the objective of contacting the Director and owner of Nippon. The Police prevented the workers from entering. This caused grief amongst the workers. According to them, the security guards of the factory could prevent workers from entering the factory but not the Police. To Jostna the clear cut preexisting relationship was that the workers worked for the factory owners. After questioning the role of the Police, a female Police Officer began to beat her and some other female workers.

At the same time the mere presence of 3000-3500 workers in front of the factory gate caused movement along the Dhaka-Myemensingh highway to come to a halt. After telling the workers to evacuate the road, the Police baton-charged the workers and fired tear shells on them. This caused the workers to disperse. At 9.00 am several Officers of RAB-1 (Rapid Action Battalion) arrived at the scene on motorcycle. The workers informed the RAB Officers that the Police had shot and killed some of them and kept the bodies inside the factory. This prompted the RAB Officers to enter into the factory premises with the workers to verify the situation. Jostna and her sister also tagged along. The RAB men came out a few minutes after and at around 9.45 am, the Police spread a rumor that two of their own men were also missing. The Police opened fire once again. The excessive use of tear shells hindered everyone's eyesight.

During the course of events someone declared through the microphone at the Boro Bazaar Jaame Mosque at Ershadnagar, that the factory owning authorities and the Police were taking workers inside the factories and beating them up. All the residents of Ershadnagar were urged to collect their sons, daughters and

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<sup>1</sup> In a factory 70-80 workers form a line. A leader is selected from this group as a representative.

relatives from the scene. This caused the general population of residents to rush towards the factory. Babul Sheikh, husband of Jostna's sister Roksana was one of those concerned residents who had come to collect his wife and Jostna. As he was about to cross the road, the Police grabbed hold of him and took him into the factory. When Roksana called out to her husband, the Police Officers held their firearms against Babul's chest and opened fire. After Babul's body fell to the ground, the Police covered it up with an empty carton. When Jostna and Roksana tried to collect the body from the Police, the Police forced them out of the factory compound. After the clash subsided, the sisters went on searching for Babul's body. On November 1, 2009, the Police arranged for the identification of Babul's body at the Gazipur Sadar Hospital after Jostna and Roksana agreed never to bring the body back to Ershadnagar and also to never file a case concerning the incident. Later on, Babul's body was buried under Police custody at his home town at the village of Jamirar Chor of Shorishabari, Jamalpur.

**Roksana Akhtar (27), Wife of the late Babul and Operator, Nippon Garments Industries Ltd., Ouchpara, Tongi, Gazipur**

Roksana Akhtar told Odhikar that at 8.00 am on October 31, 2009, she arrived at the Nippon factory to find it closed and under Police guard. The Police prevented them from entering the factory compound and one of the female Police Officers baton charged them. This led to a chase between both groups. Roksana was eventually able to enter the factory compound with the RAB Officers at 9.45 am. Her husband Babul Sheikh came to collect her from the factory at 10.45 am. However the Police got hold of him from the road and shot him. Roksana witnessed several men in Police uniform with their faces covered in black cloth use shreds of broken glass to strike at the factory workers one after another. As they were doing this, the Police Officers taunted the workers as to whether they would ever return to work at the factory. Later on when the whole area was bullet ridden and smeared in tear gas, those particular men shed their Police uniforms. They then escaped over the rear wall of the factory wearing t-shirts and lungis. Roksana believes those men to be criminals who were pretending to be Police Officers. She was lying beside her husband's body after having sustained injuries by being kicked and hit by the Police. She was also affected by the tear gas. At around 12.30 pm, the Police took Babul's body and the body of another old man onto a sand filled truck and left the scene.

**Kanu Miah (40), Babul's Father-in-law, Block No. 6, Ershadnagar, Tongi, Gazipur**

Kanu Miah told Odhikar that after 8.00 am on October 31, 2009, there were periodic clashes between the Police and the workers. At one point, Kanu came to know that both his daughters had gone to the factory and were stranded inside due to the ongoing firing. He also heard that Roksana's husband had gone to the scene to bring them. The unstable atmosphere prevailing at that area prevented Babul from getting near the factory, forcing him to wait along the road. At 12.30 pm after the situation had calmed down, Kanu saw his younger daughter Jostna come out of the factory along with other workers. He learnt from Jostna that the

Police had shot and killed Babul and had taken away his body on a sand filled truck. He was also told that Roksana had been ill after attempting to collect Babul's body from the Police. Kanu arranged for his elder daughter's treatment and afterwards searched for his son-in-law's body at the Tongi and Joydevpur Police Stations as well as various hospitals. He was told at the Tongi Model Police Station, the Joydevpur Police Station and the Gazipur Police Super, that the Police had not killed anyone and that they did not have any body in their custody. At 2.00 am on November 1, 2009, Kanu came to know from an unknown person that two dead bodies were being transferred by the Police from the Tongi to the Joydevpur station. Yet this time again, the Joydevpur Police denied possession of any body. A couple of hours later at 4.00 am, Kanu learnt again from an unknown informer that several bodies had been kept at the morgue of the Gazipur Sadar Hospital. Kanu returned after failing to collect Babul's body from the morgue. At 5.00 am Police Officers from the Gazipur Police Line arrived to tell him that there was a dead body in their custody and that they would show him the body if Kanu accepted their conditions. The conditions set by the Police were that the body could not be brought back to Ershadnagar and would instead have to be taken to its home town. Furthermore Kanu would not be able to file a case regarding Bulbul's death. Consenting to these conditions, Kanu wrote down his signature on a blank sheet of paper. Later on he was taken to the Gazipur Sadar Hospital on a Police van where he identified the bullet-ridden body of Babul. Afterwards, Kanu took Babul's body to the village of Jamirar Chor at Shorishabari, Jamalpur under the protection of the Police. Babul was finally buried under Police custody at 5.00 pm. The Police later on threatened to kill Kanu if he ever said a word about the incident.

#### **Jorina Begum (35), Wife of the late Shafiq**

Jorina Bagum told Odhikar that she was employed at a factory. Her husband was a carpenter. On the morning of October 31, 2009, she and her husband left from their home at House No. 155 of Block No. 1 of Ershadnagar. Jorina's husband went to his neighbor Babul Miah's house to collect some *goj*<sup>2</sup>. Seeing that her husband was on his way home along the Dhaka-Myemensingh highway, Jorina set off for her factory. At 5.00 pm that very day when Jorina was on her way home, she learnt from others that a clash between the workers of Nippon garments and the Police had led to the death of many workers. As Jorina walked along the road she saw blood on it which was partially covered up with sand. When she reached home she heard that her husband was had been missing since morning. Jorina found out from the workers who were stranded inside the factory that during the morning clash, the Police took into their custody a bearded man from the road and had shot him to death. The Police then took the body into the factory compound where they covered it up with a carton. After the clash subsided, the Police took two dead bodies away on a sand filled truck. Jorina immediately contacted the Police Officers on duty at the factory who informed her that no one had died in the clash. She then searched the Tongi Model Police Station, all the hospitals of Gazipur and also the Dhaka Medical College Hospital

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<sup>2</sup> *Goj* is a type of wood used by carpenters.

for her husband's body but in vain. At 7.00 am on November 1, 2009, Jorina approached the Police Officers at the gate of the factory. After her requests for some assistance, the OC of the Tongi Model Police Station took Jorina onto a Police vehicle to the Gazipur Sadar Hospital to show her a dead body. Upon arrival at the hospital the OC conveyed his conditions of never bringing the body back to Ershadnagar, never filing a case in relation to the incident and to take the body to its home town. Afterwards, Jorina give her signature on a plain sheet of paper where it was agreed that the body would be taken to Ershadnagar. At 12.00 pm after the completion of the Post Mortem, Jorina was showed a body at the morgue. At 12.45 pm the body was placed on a Police vehicle which was apparently on its way to Ershadnagar. Jorina was unfamiliar with the route taken by the Police vehicle. When she asked where she was being taken, the Police told her that they were heading for the village of Boro Manika at Borhanuddin, Bhola. Jorina expressed her desire not to be taken there but was nonetheless forced to by the Police and their threatening ways. They arrived at Boro Manika at 5.00 am on November 2, 2009. The body of Jorina's husband was buried under the strictest Police protection. Jorina went on to say that her husband was not even an employee of Nippon garments. On the fateful day, her husband was only on his way to work from home and that the Police had shot and killed him at the Ershadnagar residential area. She demanded justice for her husband's killing.

**Abdul Goni (80), Goni Miah's Hotel, Ershadnagar, Block No. 2, Borobazaar, Tongi, Gazipur**

Abdul Goni told Odhikar that he opened up his hotel at 7.00 am on October 31, 2009. The workers of Nippon Garments Industries were arriving at their workplace which was along the western end of the Dhaka-Myemensingh highway. The workers found the main gate of their factory closed and a notice issuing closure hanging from its gate. There were many Police Officers stationed outside the factory gate. At 8.00 am the Police prevented the workers from entering the factory compound. As the gathering of workers increased in number, transport along the Dhaka-Myemensingh highway came to a standstill. At 8.40 am when a female Police Officer unnecessarily struck a female worker several times, a clash developed between the Police and the workers.

Abdul Goni also told Odhikar that several female workers took refuge in his hotel at 9.30 am after the Police fired their tear shells. Later on 4-5 riot Police came and beat up the female workers by grabbing them by their hair. The Police threw out cooked food from Goni's hotel worth around Taka 10,000/- on to the road and pushed him to the ground. The Police also fired on the right thigh of Abdul Salam (18), son of Goni's brother Abdul Kuddus, an employee of his hotel. When Goni went to assist Salam who was crying out in pain another Police hit his left arm and right leg several times. Goni fell to the ground and lost consciousness. Goni was taken to the hospital afterwards. When he regained his senses Goni came to know that Salam's condition had deteriorated after he was admitted to the 50 bed hospital at Tongi and was subsequently sent to the Dhaka Medical College

Hospital. At around 2.00 pm, the local Member of the Parliament Jahid Hasan Russell came to the locality and gave Taka 5000/- for Salam's treatment. According to Goni the incident had taken place at Nippon garments and the Police there had shot and killed three persons. Yet the Police had gone as far as entering the residential localities of Ershadnagar and had beaten and tear gassed many people. Shopkeepers were taken from their homes and shops. Goni demanded justice for the behavior of the Police.

**Shila Akhtar (21), Operator, Nippon Garments Industries Ltd., Ouchpara, Tongi, Gazipur**

Shila Akhtar told Odhikar that at 8.00 am on October 31, 2009, she arrived at her workplace to see the other workers not being able to enter the factory compound because it was closed. The Police and the workers were having a loud exchange of words. All of a sudden at 8.40 am one of the female Police Officers began to beat the workers with her baton forcing them to clear out of the area. The workers dispersed but gathered at the Dhaka-Myemensingh highway, bringing it to a standstill. Half an hour later a rumor diffused throughout the area that two Police Officers had gone missing. In the span of a few minutes several hundred riot Police arrived at the scene and opened fire all around. The Police beat up whoever they could find at the residential locality of Ershadnagar. Shila was not spared from the beatings either. The Police Officers grabbed Shila by her hair and used their batons to beat her from her waist downwards. When she fell to the ground, several Police Officers dragged her to the other side of the road where she was left. The situation came under control at 12.30 pm. Shila came to know that the whole incident left three dead and 20 injured. She further informed that the problem concerning the payment of wages was constant at Nippon garments. This often led to tension and the workers were often beaten up and fired from their jobs. This was why the workers feared protesting against the injustice that prevailed. A criminal group in the area was always against the proper functioning of this particular factory. Shila also stated that the permanent residents of the locality were offered jobs at Nippon garments. On the night of October 31, 2009, the night shift continued using a female workforce. Shila believed that the Police could have killed and hid the bodies of more workers also.

**Monoara Begum (35), shot on the hand, resident of Ershadnagar**

Monoara Begum told Odhikar that at 9.30 am on October 31, 2009, she was waiting at the Ershadnagar bus stand preparing to go to Uttara. During this time the Police opened fire on the workers of Nippon garments. Three/four Police Officers ran towards her and fired at her. One bullet struck her left hand while a portion of another struck her left cheek which caused Monoara to fall to the ground. Later on a Police Officer took Monoara on to their pickup van and admitted her to a 50 bed hospital at Tongi.

**Murad Hossain, Quality Inspector, Nippon Garments Industries Ltd., Ouchpara, Tongi, Gazipur**

Murad Hossain told Odhikar that at 4.30 pm on October 30, 2009, the Director of the Nippon factory called an emergency meeting. In the meeting the Director informed that the factory was essentially without any work and would be shut down the following month. The workers would be entitled only to Eid-UI-Azha bonus. The workers would be summoned back to work when the factory would get new work orders. The workers would come and go from now on while the presence of the other staff at the factory would not be required until further notice. At 9.00 am on October 31, 2009, Murad learnt that the workers were agitated because the factory had been shut down. According to Murad the owners of Nippon garments, i.e. the Abedin Group was working in connivance with the Police and criminal gangs of the area to keep the factory closed and also to torture and harass the workers. According to Murad, the workers were always helpless against these people. Towards the afternoon Murad came to know that three people had died at the hands of the Police and around 20 others had been injured. He alleged that the criminals hired by the Abedin Group were behind the killings and not the Police. Murad demanded that justice be served through an investigation.

**Kamal Hossain, Security Incharge, Nippon Garments Industries Ltd., Ouchpara, Tongi, Gazipur**

Kamal Hossain told Odhikar that he was employed at the Abedin Group. He came to his duty at 10.00 pm on October 30, 2009. At 6.00 am the following morning on October 31, 2009, he transferred duty to Anwarul Azim and Jamal Uddin and left. At 12.00 pm Kamal saw on the television news that there was a worker-Police riot at his factory. At 2.00 pm he arrived at the factory compound to see many brickbats lying inside. The guard room was in shambles and there was no jacket, cloak, register copy etc. Kamal also heard that three workers were killed by the Police and only they knew where the bodies had been kept. He was not interested in making any further comments about the incident.

**Md. Selim (54), person with bullet injury, driver's assistant of Bolaka Paribahan**

Md. Selim told Odhikar that he was employed as a helper of the bus registered Dhaka Metro 388 called 'Bolaka Paribahan'. At 8.30 am on October 31, 2009, he arrived in front of the Nippon garments with his passengers where they were getting off. At that moment three or four Police Officers came towards him and fired three bullets at him. One slightly struck his left arm and scraped off some skin. Another bullet scraped off some more skin along his waist while the final bullet struck Selim on his lower abdomen. Selim fell down inside his bus and was later taken to a hospital at Gazipur for treatment. He informed that the garments workers were expressing their grievances concerning work. Yet the Police had attacked the bus passengers thereby injuring many of them.

**Beauty Akhtar (22), Operator, 'A' Line, Card No. 19885, Nippon Garments Industries Ltd., Ouchpara, Tongi, Gazipur**

Beauty Akhtar told Odhikar that on the evening of October 29, 2009, she heard from Mujibor, the local Commissioner of Ershadnagar that the concerned factory could be shut down due to lack of work. That was why the workers came in on October 30, 2009 not to work but to contact the Director of the factory. The Director was not there and Officers on duty informed the workers that although there was no work at the factory, it would remain open. They also urged the workers to quickly complete the work that remained because the work concerning the shipment would be given to the owner later on day before dusk. Hearing this, all the workers went back to work. Later on throughout the day, the Director of the factory met with the workers three separate times. At 3.00, 4.00 and 4.30 pm, when the Director called for emergency meetings, Beauty as leader of the workers from her line attended. In the meetings it was discussed that although the factory was without new work orders, workers would have to come to work nonetheless. It was also decided that the workers would receive attendance, wages and bonus until the factory got new work orders.

At 8.00 am on October 31, 2009 she arrived at the factory gate to find it locked up by the Police. A notice was also issued stating that the factory had been closed. When Beauty and the other workers tried to enter the factory, the Police barred them from doing so and also told them that if 5-6 workers stood together in front of the gate there would be problems. The workers informed the Police that in yesterdays meeting the Director of Nippon garments had told the workers to attend work regularly. This was why the workers had come to work in the first place. The workers expressed their desire to enter the factory and speak with the Director. They also assured the Police that if their Director told them not to come to work they would comply accordingly. Furthermore the Police were also told that apart from the factory owning authority and the Director, no one had the authority to prevent them from coming to work, not even the Police. The workers asked the security guards of Nippon garments as to why the Police were collaborating for them. As the workers were asking these questions a female Police Officer began beating up an operator who was standing to her left. This caused the operator to fall to the ground. The remaining Police Officers fired tear shells on the 3000 workers who had gathered in front of the gate and began to beat them up. The actions of the Police took a savage turn when they began beating up people from their homes at the Ershadnagar residential locality. This led to a severe clash between the Police and the workers. The situation subsided at around 9.00 am. RAB Officers arrived and took the workers inside the factory to settle the issue for them. After entering the factory compound, Beauty saw a group of men in Police uniform with their faces covered in black cloth. Seeing the RAB Officers, they took off their uniforms and escaped through the rear gate of the factory. She also heard that two police officers were not to be found apart from their uniforms. The RAB Officers left immediately after hearing this rumor. When the police opened fire on the workers, the workers also responded by throwing brickbats. Beauty was unable to leave the factory compound. From the inside of the factory, Beauty saw a quite a few workers fall to the ground after 70-80 Police Officers opened fire on them from the northern end of the road. There



were cries all around. She saw the Police Officer drag the bodies lying on the road into the factory. Beauty was able to recognise the bodies of her previous acquaintances Babul Sheikh and carpenter Shafiq. At one point the whole area was absolutely empty. Soon afterwards, the Police attacked the residential locality of Ershadnagar. When the workers tried to regroup, the police fired rubber bullets and tear shells. In the midst of all this the police arranged for all the dead bodies to be transferred from the factory to a sand filled truck which left the scene soon after.

**Golam Mostafa Monju, Director, Nippon Garments Industries Ltd., Ouchpara, Tongi, Gazipur**

Golam Mostafa Monju told Odhikar that Mr. J H Ko, owner of The Off-Shore Department of Goor Yong Company Ltd. of Korea and Mohammad Hanif of the Abedin Group of Bangladesh were the joint owners of Nippon garments. Mr. H C Jo was in a directorial position at the factory as representative of Mr. J H Ko. Mohammad Hanif was the owner of the factory building. Hanif always employed the local criminals of Ershadnagar to maintain control over the factory. Those criminals would extort money from the factory and work towards ensuring that the factory workers stayed on Hanif's side. Ironically the criminals employed by Hanif once assaulted him after which Hanif filed a case at the Tongi Police Station. Golam Mostafa had acceded to the position of Director at Nippon garments and had been performing his duties accordingly. Due to the ongoing labor unrest Mr. H C Jo declared that he would not be coming back to Bangladesh and would not look after the factory any more. He decided to close down the factory at on point. On the other end the Abedin Group was also pushing Monju for a factory shut down due to the unavailability of new work orders.

Monju had asked Mohammad Hanif for a few days time to sort out the problem but his plea was not granted. In fact Monju was forced to call a meeting involving all employees, staff members, the Chief Level Mechanic, Supervisor, Quality Inspector, all forum members and interested workers at 7.30 pm. It was in this meeting that Monju informed all present that the factory would be shut down. Monju was forced to issue the notice of closure on October 30, 2009 due to pressure created by the owner of the factory building. Monju claimed that he could not perceive that this action would result in the hostilities between the workers and the Police. He also stated that he did not give any prior information to the Police either. According to Monju the Abedin Group was better informed as to why the Police were stationed at the factory gate on the morning of October 31, 2009 and also why they opened fire and engaged in clashes with the workers. Monju stated that the Abedin Group had hired the local criminals to create is deplorable situation in order to gain total ownership over the factory. It was their criminals who had brought the police and had instigated the action of opening fire on the workers leaving three people dead. Monju went on to say that the workers were not at fault and that they had acted as per the decision of the meeting. On the same note Monju as per decision of the meeting intended to shut down the factory after November 10, 2009 by which all interests of the

workers had been addressed. He demanded that a fair investigation into the incident be initiated so that those responsible for the deaths and injuries of the workers are brought to justice.

**Tapan Chandra Saha, OC, Tongi Model Police Station, Gazipur**

Tapan Chandra Saha told Odhikar that he had filed a case concerning the events at Nippon garments on October 31, 2009 at the Police Station. In the First Information Report (FIR), Tapan wrote that at 11.30 pm on October 30, 2009, the Administrative Manager of Nippon Garments Industries Ltd. came to the Police Station to inform Police Super S M Mahfuzul Huq Nuruzzaman that the Nippon factory would remain closed from 31/20/2009 to 30/11/2009. As per the instruction of the Police Super, Tapan filed a General Diary on the early morning of October 31, 2009, which was numbered 1548. With SI's Jahidul, Abul Kalam Ajad, Aminul Islam, Monjurul Huq along with Mobile Officer SI Rafiqul Islam and various CC's (Command Certificates), the District Police RRF and APB, Tapan and almost 70 additional Police Forces were stationed in front of the Nippon factory at 6.30 am on October 31, 2009. Later on Assistant Police Supers of Zone B and Sadar Circile arrived to offer their assistance. At around 8.40 am, almost 1000-1200 workers gathered in front of the Nippon factory gate. When Tapan informed the workers of the closure of the factory, some of them left while others created a road block on the Dhaka-Myemensingh highway, despite his request not to do so.

In the meantime almost 800-900 people coming from the slum area of Ershadnagar began throwing brickbats, cocktails, iron rods etc. towards the Police. They also caused destruction to the housing along the road and set fire to commuting vehicles. Tapan attempted to stop the attackers. After failing to do so Tapan initiated a subtle baton charge along with firing of tear gas guns. Having failed to quell the hostilities even after 9.45 am, the Police fired their shot guns. At one point when the Police ran out of tear gas gun and shotgun ammunition, they took shelter inside the Nippon factory. The rioting public destroyed the commuting vehicles and a Police Motorcycle (Model-2) and threw it inside a drain. They also used iron rods and sticks to breakdown the factory gate. Once they gained entry into the factory, the public used guns and rifles to fire upon the Police. They also used cocktails, brickbats and iron rods to attack the Police Officers. As a result 26-27 Police Officers were injured which included a female Police Constable Nira Akhter. At 10.30 am, Tapan fired black shots to disperse the rioting public. The disgruntled people were forced to leave the factory compound when the Police opened fire with the objective of protecting the common people, public property and also in self-defense. The clashes continued. At 10.45 am, Additional Police Super Jiadul Kabir led a fresh group of Police Officers and other members of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police to a final crackdown at 12.30 pm on the rioters through baton charges, tear gas and bullets. This led to the calming down of the whole situation. During the crackdown, the Police arrested several people among whom were Shah Alam (18) a tenant of Foklar's house at Block No. 3 of Ershadnagar, Rokon Miah (19)

and Korban Ali (20) tenants of Shahin's house at Block No. 1, Abu Bokor Siddique (18) of North Ouchpara, Arif (19) a tenant of Shumon's house at Hossain's Market, Ibrahim (17) from the Haji Market of Dottopara, Joynal (19) a tenant of Bhutto Miah's house at Himar Digheer and Saiful Islam (20) a tenant of Abdur Rashid's house. After the clash subsided the Police discovered two dead bodies at the northern end of the factory gate. Tapan arranged for the bodies to be sent to the hospital for the post mortem. He also saw to it that the injured civilians and police officers were admitted at various hospitals for treatment. He filed a case at the Police Station which was numbered 66 and dated October 31, 2009. The case was filed under Section 147, 148, 149, 457, 332, 333, 353, 435, 427 and 34 of the Penal Code 1860 and Sections 3 and 4 of the Explosives Act 1884. SI Abul Kalam Ajad was given responsibility to investigate into the case.

**A K M Kamrul Ahsan, OC, Detective Branch, Gazipur**

A K M Kamrul Ahsan told Odhikar that he has been entrusted with the responsibility of investigating into the case after the DB was entrusted with the investigation process on November 2, 2009 after Tapan Chandra Saha, OC of the Tongi Model Police Station had filed a case concerning the Nippon garments clash on October 31, 2009 where a total of 8 suspects had been arrested. Kamrul informed further that 5 more persons had been arrested in connection to the case. Thus a total of 13 persons were in Police custody. He also stated that the late Safiq and Babul along with many others involved in the clash were not workers of the Nippon garments factory. He refused to comment any further because the investigation was still going on.

**S M Mahfuzul Huq Nuruzzaman, Police Super, Gazipur**

S M Mahfuzul Huq Nuruzzaman told Odhikar that he would not make any comments regarding the Nippon garments incident. He suggested Odhikar contact Additional Police Super Ziadul Kabir for information.

**Ziadul Kabir, Additional Police Super, Gazipur**

Ziadul Kabir stated that a case had been filed regarding the Nippon garments incident. However he refused to make any comments about the case.

**Md. Rashedul Alam, Commanding Officer, RAB-1, Uttara, Dhaka**

Md. Rashedul Alam refused to exchange with Odhikar any information regarding the Nippon garments issue. He requested Odhikar to contact the Headquarters of RAB. When Odhikar contacted the RAB Headquarters on December 8, 2009, SI Monir told them that since RAB-1 was particularly involved with the incident, the Officers of RAB-1 would be able to give a clear picture of what happened during the Nippon garments clash. He stated further that the Headquarters merely received messages from its various units.

**Doctor Md. Ali Haider Khan, Residential Medical Officer, Gazipur Sadar Hospital, Gazipur**

Doctor Md. Ali Haider Khan told Odhikar that at 11.00 pm on October 31, 2009, the Police of the Joydevpur Police Station brought in two dead bodies to the hospital. Amir Hossain a First Class Magistrate prepared the Inquest Report on that very night. At 9.00 am on November 1, 2009, when the Police handed him the Inquest Report Haider formed a three-member Medical Board of which he was the President. The other members of the board were Doctor Md. Hafiz Uddin and Doctor Md. Komor Uddin. Haider recalled that one the deceased had a beard. A bullet had entered the head and had had exited through the back. The Post Mortem number was 308 and the address given was at Bhola. The other body had a bullet wound on the right side of its chest and its Post Mortem was numbered 309. Haider came to know from the Police that the deceased was from Jamalpur. Both bodies suffered from a great deal of blood loss. At 12.00 pm, the Police left with both the bodies.

**Mohammad Ali, Morgue-Assistant, Gazipur Sadar Hospital, Gazipur**

Mohammad Ali told Odhikar that at 11.00 pm on October 11, 2009, the Police arrived at the hospital with two dead bodies. After Ali kept the bodies inside the morgue, the Police kept guard the whole night. One of the bodies had a bullet wound in its forehead. There was also a cut wound on its throat. The other body had a bullet wound on the right side of its chest. The bullet had pierced out through the back.

(Odhikar was unable to speak with the relatives of the late Tajul Islam from House No. 512 of Block No. 3 because after his death at Ward No. 32 of the Dhaka Medical College Hospital, his body was taken to his hometown at Tilipara of Jhalokathi for burial.)

**Followup: January 16, 2010**

**Roksana Akhtar (27, Wife of the late Babul and also Operator, Nippon Garments Industries Ltd., Ouchpara, Tongi, Gazipur**

On January 16, 2010 Roksana Akhtar told Odhikar that the owners of Nippon garments had shut down its factory on October 31, 2009 without clearing the wages of the workers. This event had led the workers to initiate a movement to realise their dues. Roksana's husband had come to the factory during the movement to bring her home. He was killed when the Police opened fire on him. Roksana informed Odhikar that she is involved with the worker's movements to realise due wages of the workers. Despite her efforts the owners of Nippon garments are yet to pay their wages. The Member of Parliament from Gazipur-2 Zahid Ahsan Russell promised to donate some money to Roksana but she is yet to receive that. Roksana informed Odhikar that she has been preparing to file a case with regard to her husbands killing.

**Shahinur Begum (26), neighbor of Jorina**

Jorina Begum, wife of the late Shafiq could not be reached. Jorina's neighbor Shahinur Begum informed Odhikar that Jorina would not file any case regarding the killing of her husband, because of her financial incapability.

**A K M Kamrul Ahsan, OC, Detective Branch, Gazipur**

A K M Kamrul Ahsan told Odhikar that he has been responsible for the investigation of the case since it was transferred to the Deetective Branch on November 2, 2009. The case was originally filed by Officer in Charge Tapan Chandra Saha on October 31, 2009 at the Tongi Model Police Station and 8 people were arrested in connection of that case. Kamrul informed that 5 more persons had also been arrested. A total of 13 people have now been implicated in Nippon garments case. All 13 persons have attained bail from the higher courts. Kamrul stated that the documents concerning bail have already reached to him through the Tongi Model Police Station on January 15, 2009. Kamrul also said that he had requested the factory authority to stay within the legal framework and clear off the dues which the workers are entitled to.

Odhikar demands that a departmental investigation be initiated regarding this incident so that the guilty parties are brought to justice and punished. Odhikar also demands that the victims of the incident be adequately compensated. It also emphasizes on establishing the three-party contract in order to ensure the smooth functioning of the ready-made garments sector.

-The End of Report-