



Boletín Geotécnico

Artículo

Verdicts in Shanghai Building Collapse

The Wall Street Journal

A Shanghai court convicted six people Thursday in connection with the bizarre collapse of a nearly completed residential building in the city last June, sentencing them to terms ranging from three to five years on charges of causing a “criminal major accident,” local media reported.



Bloomberg News The collapsed building, which has since been demolished

At dawn on June 27, the 13-story “Building No. 7,” part of the Lotus Riverside compound in Shanghai’s Minhang district, fell over on its side, practically intact, killing a construction worker who was trapped inside. The accident spurred concerns over shoddy construction practices and possible corruption, as well as protests among buyers of apartments in the 11-building development. Eight people were arrested; Thursday’s verdicts represent the first batch of convictions.

Qin Yonglin, head of the Lotus Riverside complex for the developer, Shanghai Meidu Property Development Co., and Zhang Yaojie, chairman of the construction company that built the development, each received five-year sentences, according the Web site of the state-run Xinmin News (in Chinese here). Zhang's brother, Zhang Yaoxiong, a subcontractor who was in charge of the digging work on the underground garage, was sentenced to four years, and Qiao Lie, an engineer and project manager for Lotus Riverside, received a three-year sentence. Construction workers Xia Jiangang and Lu Weiying were sentenced to four years and three years, respectively.

According to the indictment, Qin followed orders from his boss, Meidu Chairman Zhang Zhiqin, to hire Zhang Yaoxiong (no relation to Zhang Zhiqin) to excavate an underground garage under the building that later collapsed, according to the China Daily. Prosecutors said that they ordered Zhang Yaoxiong to leave the excavated soil on a plot of land next to the building. The pile-up of soil, combined with the gaping hole under the building, weakened the building's foundations and resulted in the collapse.

Zhang Yaojie and the other defendants were accused of lax supervision of the project and failing to stop the developer from engaging in unsafe construction practices.

After reading out the guilty verdicts, the judge said the six had violated safety management regulations and failed to fulfill their obligations, ultimately causing the collapse of the building, which in addition to the one death resulted in economic losses exceeding 19 million yuan (around \$2.8 million).

Developer Zhang Zhiqin and Que Jingde, a director on Meidu's board with ties to the Minhang district government, are still awaiting trial.

–*Sky Canaves*