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New Bangabazar goes up in flames

1,900 shops gutted; Muezzin killed, 50 wounded; losses estimated at Tk 150 crore



PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

A devastating blaze rages through New Bangabazar Hawkers' Market, killing one and causing around Tk 150 crore in losses yesterday.

Reduced to nothing

MANISHA GANGOPADHYAY

For Mohammad Delwar Hossein, the morning yesterday dawned nightmarish in worst possible ways as fire reduced his ready-made garment shop to ashes.

Like him, many shopkeepers and retail employees of The New Bangabazar Hawkers' Market in Gullistan were rendered penniless by the raging fire that gutted most of the 1,900 shops in the market yesterday.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

China faces textiles quota on 10 categories to US

Dhaka's RMG export anticipates big boost

INAM AHMED

The American textiles lobby has asked the US Department of

Commerce to impose restrictions on imports of apparels in 10 categories from China, a move in which Bangladesh sees an opportunity for

diverting a significant volume of export orders from the apparel giant to itself.

Of the 10 categories that the US lobby has asked for quota imposition on November 1, at least six are of vital importance for Bangladesh. These are categories 847 and 848 (ladies' trousers), 347 and 348 (gents' trousers) and 340 and 640 (shirts).

Bangladesh has significant capacity to increase production in these categories and exports these items to the US. Last year, it exported \$120 million worth of category 847, \$212 million worth of category 848 and \$261 million worth of category 340/640 apparels.

It is expected that quota would be imposed on imports of these categories in March according to the

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A blaze yesterday burnt down some 1,900 shops of New Bangabazar Hawkers' Market and 12 film-distributing offices close by in Gullistan in the capital, killing one person, wounding 50 others and reportedly causing around Tk 150 crore in losses.

Seventy-year-old Qari Mohammad Monzur Ahmed, muezzin (man who calls devotees to prayer) of New Bangabazar Hawkers' Market Mosque, died on the spot, while around 50 owners and employees including five firefighters were injured in the 'mysterious' daylong inferno.

Traders of the market alleged that people of the local ward commissioner and president of the market set fire to the shops to evict its traders for construction of a multi-storied building there, which was stayed by a High Court order.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

Arson alleged

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A former president of New Bangabazar Hawkers Market Committee alleged the fire that gutted some 1,900 shops and a dozen offices in Gullistan yesterday was a deliberate arson attack by some henchmen of Chowdhury Alam and Mohan Mian, president and general secretary of the committee.

"Their men set fire to a shop after pouring fuel," said Abul Khair.

He alleged the motive of the

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

Anticorruption body comes into being

Justice Sultan made chairman

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday formed a three-member Anti-Corruption Commission with Justice Sultan Hossain Khan, a former High Court judge, as its chairman.

With the formation of the much-awaited independent anti-graft watchdog, an election pledge of the three-year-old BNP-led coalition, the government also dissolved the Bureau of Anti Corruption (Bac) under the Anti-Corruption Commission Act, 2004.

The abolishment of Bac has brought uncertainty over the job of some 950 Bac employees. The



Justice Sultan Hossain Khan

Commission has the mandate to absorb some of the Bac staff into the newly formed body while it will be left to the government to decide whether the remaining employees will be assimilated into other departments.

Justice Sultan, now nearly 80 years old, is also a former chief election commissioner (CEC). He served as chairman of Bangladesh Press Council for six years.

Sultan also headed a probe body to investigate the 2002 Mymensingh cinema blasts and filed an investigation report that triggered controversy.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

Human wall to cover 18 dists

Opposition leaders finalise route

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Top opposition leaders yesterday finalised the route of the planned 'no-confidence human wall' to be formed on December 11 from Teknaf to Tentulia aiming to realise their nine-point demand and force the BNP-led coalition government to step down.

The 900 km human wall will span 18 districts -- Cox's Bazar, Bandarban, Chittagong, Feni, Comilla, Munshiganj, Narayanganj, Dhaka, Gazipur, Tangail, Sirajganj, Bogra, Gaibandha, Rangpur, Nilphamari, Dinajpur, Thakurgaon and Panchagarh.

The Awami League (AL), eight components of the 11-Party alli-

ance, JSD, National Awami Party (NAP) and Jatiya Janata Party have jointly planned the massive human wall as the launching of a vigorous antigovernment movement.

Leaders of mainstream opposition parties finalised the route when they met at the Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) office in the capital to discuss their upcoming agitation.

"People will show no-confidence in the BNP-Jamaat coalition by forming the cross-country human wall as the government has proved its inability to run the country," AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil told reporters after the two-hour meeting.

Jalil said the 3:00pm to 4:00pm

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

Freedom fighters to get priority in welfare

PM on Armed Forces Day

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia lavished praise on the freedom fighters, saying they are the heroic children of the soil 'who had brought our independence'.

She said her government always holds them in high respect and will do everything possible for their welfare.

"Freedom fighters are the pride of our nation. They've presented us with an independent and sovereign country," she told a reception in honour of the heroic freedom fighters.

Armed Forces Division (AFD) organised the reception on its office compound on the occasion of the

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

Come with your friends and family and join our various food festivals and taste the difference from November 25, 2004 (Thursday).

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An Event to Bring Bangladesh and Taiwanese Business Together

Date & Venue 22 November-2004, 09:30 a.m. ~ 06:00 p.m., Monday
Ball Room, Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel, Dhaka (for textile and various products)

23 November-2004, 09:30 a.m. ~ 06:00 p.m., Tuesday
Surma, Titas, Chitra & Meghna Room, 1st Floor, Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel, Dhaka. (for textile products only)

Textile Products
Most up-to-date products from 32 leading Textile manufacturing companies and Associations to be presented including:
Man-made Fiber; Fancy Yarns; Interlinings, Ties; Spandex Covering Yarn; Polyester, Nylon for Gloves and Socks; Zipper and Related Materials; New Suiting, Super Suede, Polyester Suiting, Oxford Twill, Polar Fleece, Metallic Covered with Yarn; Denim Fabrics; Gloves, Hat, Scarf, Socks; Knitted Fabrics with or without Elastic Fiber, Functional Knitted Fabrics; Polyester Filament Yarn/Staple Fiber, Nylon Filament Yarn/Staple Fiber, Rayon Staple Fiber, Acrylic Staple Fiber, Spandex Fiber; Nylon, Polyester, Taffeta, Suede, Moss, Wicking, Lamination products; Printing Dyeing & Finishing Fabrics; Nylon Texture Yarn; Towels, Cotton Fabrics, Gingham, Jacquard, Duck, Suiting, Blended Fabrics, Filament/Spun Mixed Fabrics, Embroidery, Upholstery; Dobby/PVC/PU Luggage Fabrics, Micro-fiber Fabrics, Furnishing Fabrics; Worsted Fabrics of Wool and Wool Blend with Polyester/Lycra/Viscose/Linen; Beach Short, Snow Coat; Linen, Novelties, Prints, Stretch, Buckle, webbing/loop tape, Sewing thread...etc.

Various Products
Most up-to-date products from 22 leading manufacturing and trading companies to be presented including:
Digital video recorder, camera, Processor, Monitor, Computer and Peripherals; Mobile Phone Chargers and Accessories; Manual / power Toothbrush; Melamine products, Tableware, Bathroom ware; Glue stick; Motorcycle;
Wood working machinery; Bra cup making machinery; Food processing and packaging machinery, Food ingredients, Agricultural product; Fork-lifts & stackers; Whole Plant Equipment; Submersible pump, Submersible Sewage/Dewatering Pump, Chemical FRPP/PVDF / SCS pump and blower; Raw edge cog belts, Poly v-belts for car/scooter/agricultural M/C, Rubber v-belts/conveyor belts
Floral tape, Corrugated paper, Special wrapping paper, Gift wrapping paper, Security paper, Melamine overlay paper, Water mark paper; Water treatment system & equipment, Water ionizer, R.O. pure water for hemodialysis
Powder metallurgy parts, Gear, Hand tool parts, Oil pump rotors, Shock absorber pistons, Bushings; Hand wheel, Pulley, Pump, Coupling
Panel Meter, Current Transformer, Motor starter, Load breaker, SW circuit breaker, Temp Controller; Regulator, FRL combination, Quick coupler, Tire pressure gauge, Pneumatic equipment, steel shot, steel grit, steel abrasives for blast cleaning, Steel grit for granite cutting; Fiat and Patterned PS / PMMA sheets, Printing PS decorative sheets, Acrylic mirror, acrylic rod & tube, Castor, Hand truck, Wheel, Bearing, DIY hardware...etc.

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