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FIRE-RAVAGED BANGABAZAR

# Traders can run shops in the open

DSCC to make temporary arrangements before Eid

MD ABBAS and DIPAN NANDY

Traders of the burnt-down Bangabazar Shopping Complex will erect makeshift shops on the ground to resume their business ahead of Eid.

The traders want to erect a marquee on the 21,250 square feet ground and set up shops on mats or papers as soon as the city corporation removes the charred remains of the wood-and-corrugated-iron-sheet building that was burnt to the ground on Tuesday.

The shop owners association leaders will meet officials of Dhaka South City Corporation on Sunday to decide how the arrangements can be made, said Jahirul Islam, president of Bangabazar Complex.

Ashikul Islam, another leader, said the traders now want to recover from the losses as much as possible ahead of the holidays and look forward to being rehabilitated.

The shop owners, who have always been averse to the city corporation's plan to make a 10-storey shopping mall in the place, are now more open to the idea, he added.

The association may even withdraw a writ petition it filed with the High Court to halt the city corporation initiative, he said.

But the process has to be fair, he added.

Mohammad Rony, a shop owner who suffered a significant loss, said, "Clothes worth Tk 25 lakh were completely burnt. If the government lends a hand, we may be able to start over."

Rakon Uddin, who owned two shops and two warehouses, said, "I have been running the business for 20 years. During Eids, I used to help poor people. But after losing about Tk 30 lakh, I am the one seeking handouts before Eid."

Meanwhile, Salman F Rahman, the prime minister's private industries and investment adviser, visited the site yesterday and said the place would be cleaned.

"Traders will be able to temporarily open their businesses, following laws and regulations," he said.

He added that the traders listed by the city corporation will be compensated within three to four days.

A DSCC committee making the list with the help of the owners' association was asked to submit its report by Sunday.

Dhaka Readymade Garments Beboshayee Samabay Samity organised a human chain on the rubble and urged Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to rehabilitate the traders.

DSCC Mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh told reporters

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**The shop owners, who have always been averse to the city corporation's plan to make a 10-storey shopping mall in the place, are now more open to the idea.**



The Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban in the capital's Sher-e-Bangla Nagar decorated with colourful lights on the occasion of Bangladesh National Parliament's golden jubilee today. The first session of parliament was held at the then Sangsad Bhaban in Tejgaon on April 7, 1973, with Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman as its first Leader. The photo was taken last night.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

ESSENTIAL SERVICES

## Jail, fine for 'illegal' strike

Says bill placed in JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A bill was placed in parliament yesterday with a provision of punishment for enforcing "illegal" strikes that affect essential services.

The Essential Services Bill 2023 proposed a maximum one-year jail and a fine of Tk 1 lakh for violation of the law.

Once the bill is passed by the Jatiya Sangsad, the government will be able to declare any service essential for a maximum of six months whenever necessary, according to the proposed law.

After the declaration, enforcement of strike or shutting off and announcement of layoff in that service would be illegal and those would be punishable offences, the bill proposed.

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## Only journalists can protect journalism

Others will never do, as they only want to use us

MAHFUZ ANAM

This piece is not to contest but to contend, not to rebut but to debate, not to counter

but to inquire, not to make sweeping judgement without facts, but to judge on the basis of facts, not to put labels because it suits one's point of view, but to categorise the issue as it confronts us. Most importantly, it is not to point a finger at others, but to point a finger at ourselves to ask what the state of our beloved profession is, to pursue which we risk our lives and livelihoods.

Finally, this piece is to most earnestly and humbly encourage my fellow journalists to introspect, to ask, to search – in their work, but more importantly in their hearts and minds – as to where objective journalism ends and political journalism begins.

This piece is also to sincerely urge my fellow journalists to think most seriously about how to address the problems of mistakes that inevitably occur in print, electronic and online media.

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THE THIRD VIEW



"This will threaten vulnerable Afghans who depend on humanitarian assistance. We urge the Taliban to... reverse this decision."

Antony Blinken condemns Taliban ban on Afghan women working for UN

NAT'L ELECTION

Its legitimacy may go down to zero if not participatory

Says CEC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Election Commissioner Kazi

Habibul Awal has said if the major political parties do not participate in the next general election, there will be no crisis over the election's

legality, but its legitimacy may "go down to zero".

"Use of EVMs or ballot papers is not a challenge for the election. The biggest

challenge is the political crisis. Whether the major parties will take part or not is a big challenge," he said while talking with reporters at his office yesterday.

The BNP and some other political parties have announced that they would not join the next parliamentary polls, due by late December, if it is held under the incumbent government.

Habibul called upon the political parties to resolve the current crisis through discussions.

About the EC's decision to not use electronic voting machines in the next general election, the CEC said it is not possible to ensure 100 percent free and fair elections regardless of the use of EVMs or ballot papers.

"But if the election is conducted using EVMs, it is safer."

He said that the EC decided to use ballot papers in the election and there was no pressure from anyone in this regard.

"It is entirely our decision. It has not been done under pressure from anyone. The decision was not taken to make the BNP interested in the election.

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In the rubble of Bangabazar market, a labourer scavenging for a pair of jeans his son may be able to wear. The photo was taken yesterday afternoon.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

## Adani Power starts delivering

ASIFUR RAHMAN

Bangladesh has started to receive about 750 megawatts of electricity from the Adani power plant in India yesterday, putting to bed the suspense surrounding the start of the cross-border transmission.

Commercial production at the power plant, located in an Indian village about 100km from the Bangladesh border, began after a successful 14-day reliability test that ended yesterday, The Daily Star has learnt from top officials

of the ministry of power, energy and natural resources and Adani Group. They spoke on the condition of anonymity.

Reliability test is the continuous uninterrupted operation of the entire facility for 72 hours at maximum load.

The reliability test was conducted in presence of a technical committee of the Bangladesh Power Development Board (PDB).

"They [Adani Power] are eligible to announce the commercial operation date," Power Secretary

Habibur Rahman told The Daily Star.

However, some procedures need to be completed before an official start date is announced, he added.

Power Grid Company of Bangladesh data showed that Jharkhand's Godda power plant was supplying about 750 megawatts of electricity on average since April 1.

The power plant, which is on 425 hectares of land in the Indian eastern state of Jharkhand's

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## Rana Plaza owner gets HC bail

No bar for his release in murder case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday granted bail to Sohel Rana, the owner of Rana Plaza, which collapsed in April 2013, claiming at least 1,136 lives.



The bench of Justice Md Akram Hossain Chowdhury and Justice Mohammad Ali passed the bail order in a murder case against Sohel and many other, after a hearing on a rule questioning why he should not be granted bail.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Sohel's lawyer Md Qamrul Islam said there is, as of now, no legal bar to his client's release from jail following the HC order.

"If the government files an appeal with the Supreme Court's Appellate Division challenging the bail order, and if the apex court stays the HC verdict that granted the bail, Sohel cannot walk out from jail."

He added Sohel is not the owner of Rana Plaza. His father Abdul Khaleq, who purchased the land and got the plan for constructing the building from Rajdhami Unnayan Kartripakkha (Rajuk), was the owner.

Meanwhile, Deputy Attorney General (DAG) Mohiuddin Dewan, who opposed the bail petition,

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## We Deeply Mourn



We are deeply saddened by the demise of Ms. Rokia Afzal Rahman. She breathed her last on Wednesday, 5th April 2023 at Mount Elizabeth Novena Hospital at 2:00am Singapore time. Inna Lillahi Wa Inna Ilaihi Rajeun.

We are praying for the salvation of her departed soul and our profound sympathy to the bereaved family.

Ms. Rokia Afzal Rahman is survived by her loving son, daughters, sons-in-law, daughter-in-law, grandchildren and a host of well-wishers.

Her Namaz-E-Janaza will be held at Gulshan Azad Masjid on Friday 7th April after Asr prayer at 5:00 pm. She will be laid to rest at Banani Graveyard.

Rinks GROUP