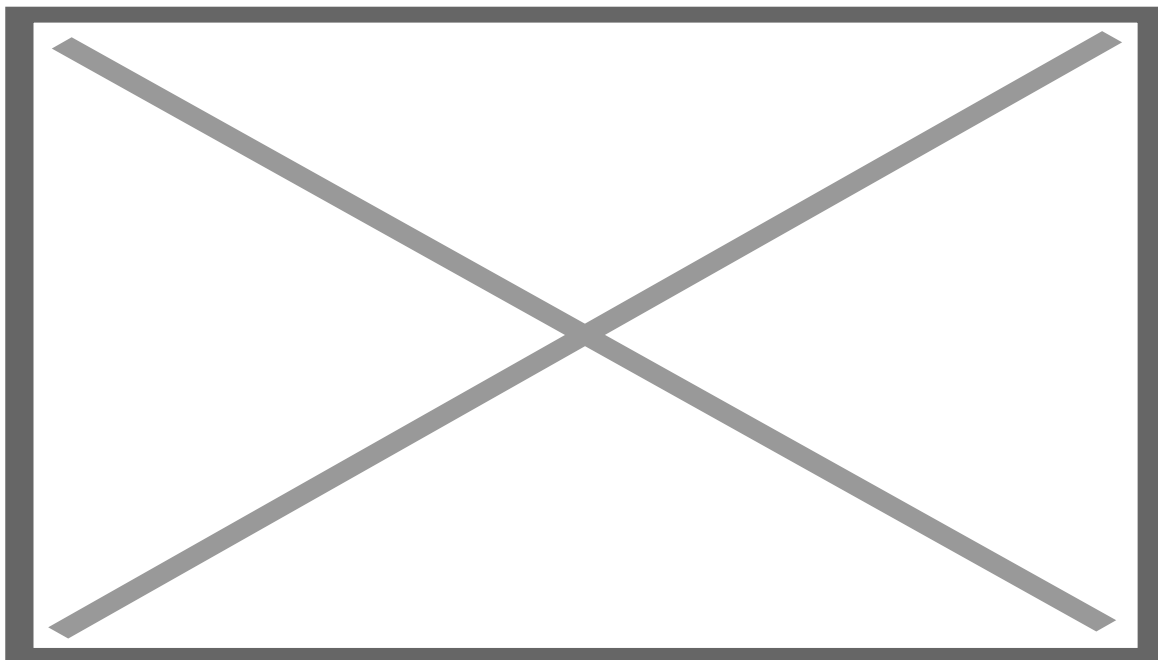


Bangabazar shop owners resume business under open sky

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Online Desk: Eight days after a devastating fire burned the Bangabazar Shopping Complex to the ground, shop owners resumed their businesses by setting up makeshift stalls on the ground where the three-storey structure once stood. While visiting the complex around 9:00am, The Daily Star's correspondent saw the traders bringing wooden "chowkis" on which to display their products.

Later, they started selling garments from makeshift stalls, many of which were equipped with large umbrellas to protect buyers and sellers from the scorching sun. Earlier in the day, the revenue and property department of Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) measured the market space to set up a chain and a row of chowkis. Debris and burnt goods have been removed from the scene. Bricks were being laid at the southern part of the market area so that the businessmen could place their chowkis.



Zahirul Islam, general secretary of Bangabazar Shop Owners' Association, yesterday said everyone would get space for a shop irrespective of the number of shops owned by an affected trader. Traders primarily said the fire destroyed around 3,000 shops and readymade garments stored in them. Shop owners' leaders claimed that goods worth around Tk 1,000 crore were lost.

Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) Mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh formally inaugurated business activities at the site around 12:45pm. After the inauguration, Taposh said DSCC will give Tk 2 crore as assistance to the traders affected by the fire.

Jahirul Islam, general secretary of Bangabazar Shop Owners Association, said 688 small traders got the opportunity to run the business with chowkis. Each chowki is three and a half feet in width and five feet long. Saiful Islam, who had two shops selling children's clothes at the market, said, "Now I will bring the rest of the products from the wholesaler and sit here temporarily. We had a good business before Eids. We don't know how business will go now," he said.