

9 November 2021

### Press Release

## High Court Questions Adequacy of Compensation to Shezan Fire Victims and Calls for Investigation Reports

On 7th November 2021, the High Court issued a Rule Nisi on the Labour Ministry and other authorities and on a private company, Hashem Foods, to show cause within 4 (four) weeks as to why the Respondents 14 and 15 (Chairman and Managing Director of Hashem Foods Limited) should not be directed to pay adequate compensation for violation of fundamental rights to the family members of each of the workers killed and injured in the factory fire that took place at the Shezan Juice Factory on 5th July 2021.

The Court also directed three authorities, the Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments, the Deputy Commissioner, Narayanganj and the Fire Service & Civil Defence Directorate, to submit their investigation reports to the Court within 30 days.

The Rule was issued by a Division Bench of the High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh, comprising Mr. Justice M. Enayetur Rahim and Mr. Justice Md. Mostafizur Rahman.

The writ petition was filed by four organizations, the Bangladesh Legal Aid & Services Trust (BLAST), Ain o Shalish Kendra (ASK), the Bangladesh Environment Lawyers Association (BELA) and Safety and Rights Society (SRS). The petitioners were represented by Barrister Sara Hossain and Barrister Aneek R Haque, assisted by Barrister Sharmin Akter. Deputy Attorney General Bipul Bagmer appeared for the State.

**Background:** On 8th July 2021, a fire broke out at the Shezan Juice Factory in Narayanganj causing the death of 52 workers and injury to 50 workers. BLAST, ASK, BELA and SRS filed a writ petition on 10th of July 2021 before the Virtual Court challenging the failure of the respondents to ensure effective enforcement of applicable laws on workplace safety, in particular regarding prevention of fires, and also laws on building safety, resulting in these deaths and injuries, and amounting to breach of their constitutional duties, including the duty to protect the right to life and other specific statutory duties. They also sought directions to ensure adequate compensation for all the victims. The petition was moved by Senior Advocate ZI Khan, Barrister Sara Hossain and Barrister Aneek Haque, with Adv. SM Rezaul Karim.

### For further information, contact

Mahbuba Akhter, Deputy Director (Advocacy) BLAST  
M: 01776060113, E: [mahbuba@blast.org.bd](mailto:mahbuba@blast.org.bd)

Abu Ahmed Faizul Kabir, Senior Coordinator, Ain o Salish Kendra  
M: 01712207150, E: [srcoordinator-an@askbd.org](mailto:srcoordinator-an@askbd.org)

Barrister Aneek R Haque, Advocate, Supreme Court of Bangladesh  
M: 01711564788, E: [aneekrh@gmail.com](mailto:aneekrh@gmail.com)