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As fire engulfs the FR Tower in the capital's Banani, some try to escape to safety while others are rescued by firefighters -- all amid the flames, fumes and sprinkle of water sprayed from helicopters overhead yesterday. The blaze killed at least 19 and injured over 100. More photos on page 16.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON AND AMRAN HOSSAIN

#### 'Only two ways to escape'

Survivors recount horror

PINAKI ROY and SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Exhausted and terrified, Saifur Rahman, employee of Amraa network office on the 17th floor of the 22-storey Faruk Rupayan Tower in the capital's Kamal Ataturk Avenue, sat on the pavement SEE PAGE 17 COL 1

# BANANI FIRE KILLS 19

The blaze at FR Tower raged for 6 hours; death toll feared to rise; at least 6 fell to their death; around 100 injured

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 19 people were killed and around 100 others injured yesterday as a deadly fire tore through 22-storey FR Tower in the capital's Banani area.

The death toll may rise, fear officials

saying the search operation would police. continue till today morning.

general of the Fire Service and Civil Defence, said they would continue the search operation in the building till 10:00am today and then hand it over to

The blaze was doused around Brig Gen Sazzad Hossain, director 7:00pm after a six-hour hectic effort. Firefighters were yet to know the cause of the fire that erupted on the 6th floor. It spread quickly to other floors of the SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

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"We have written to all the building owners on this street, including this one, at least five to six times, asking them to take precautions for fire safety. But no one ever complied."

FIRE SERVICE DIRECTOR MAJOR SHAKIL NEWAZ

#### **BANANI FIRE AT A GLANCE**



Fire breaks out 12:50pm

Firefighters arrive 1:08pm

Navy, army, air force join

shortly afterwards Fire brigade start rescuing people with ladder at

3:00pm 22 FIREFIGHTING

#### **UNITS TOOK PART IN OPERATION**

Many people remained trapped inside the building Out of panic, many jumped off the building

FIRE UNDER CONTROL 4:45PM **DOUSED 7:00PM** 



Two arms reach out for help from inside the shattered glass of a room in FR Tower in Banani. PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

## A tower of violations

22-storey Banani building had permission for 18 floors, no fire-protected staircases

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

The FR Tower had no permission for its top four floors and there was no fire-protected staircase in the 22-storey building that houses dozens of offices, Rajuk and fire service officials have confirmed.

In 1996, its owner took permission to construct an 18-storey building, Abdur Rahman, chairman of Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha (Rajuk), told The Daily Star yesterday.

SEE PAGE 7 COL 3

### A city where spectre of fire looms

Fire dept's 2017 survey on buildings sends chills down the spine

ZYMA ISLAM

Only 129 of 3,786 establishments in Dhaka city surveyed by the Fire Service and Civil Defence headquarters in 2017 were not classified as "Risky" or "Extremely Risky".

The results suggested that the risk of fire could not be considered underrated.

Fire service officials say that there is a very clear reason why such a large majority of the buildings surveyed do not have the basic measures -- even as early as 2006, establishments were not required by law to have all this.

"In 2017 we surveyed over 3,500 schools, colleges, universities, hotels banks, hospitals, media houses and shopping markets within Dhaka city to assess their vulnerability to fire, and what we found was pretty frightening," said Major

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