

Badly warped tin roofs of Gulshan DNCC kitchen market after a fire broke out yesterday morning. The incident takes place while the nation is still in shock from Thursday's fire in Banani.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Ravaged by FIRE AGAIN

Blaze at Gulshan DNCC kitchen market burns down over 200 shops, 2 yrs after the market went up in flames

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Amid outcries over the death of 26 people in Thursday's Banani inferno, a massive fire swept through the Gulshan-1 DNCC kitchen market burning down over 200 shops yesterday.

The fire starting around 5:45am spread fast and it took twenty firefighting units around five hours to douse it, said Ataur Rahman, a duty officer at the Fire Service and Civil Defence Headquarters.

No casualty was reported as none stayed in the

one-storey market at night.

Traders said they found almost everything gutted as the flames had engulfed their shops before they could reach the spot. The losses could be worth several crores of taka.

A five-member committee has been formed to investigate the fire.

Officials suspect an electrical short-circuit might have caused the fire, which also spread to

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1,300 CITY MARKETS AT FIRE RISK – PAGE 3

Traders in for bleaker days

Already struggling to recoup losses in fire 2 years back

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

Yesterday's devastating fire at the Dhaka North City Corporation kitchen market dealt a huge blow to the efforts of 248 shop owners, who were already struggling to revive their businesses from a similar disaster only two years ago.

This time the traders at the market have estimated the loss to be nearly Tk 100 crore.

Most of them had taken loans from wherever possible to recoup the losses from the 2017 fire. But before those

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An exhausted firefighter has his head soaked with water from a hose underneath a fire truck in front of the Gulshan market where a fire broke out yesterday morning.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

FR TOWER Police arrest 2 'owners'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

SMHI Faruque, the land owner of FR Tower, and Tasvir UI Islam, one of the owners of the high rise, have been arrested in the capital, police said.

A team of Detective Branch arrested Faruque, 65, an engineer, from Bashundhara area around 1:15am today, DB (north) Additional Deputy Commissioner Golam Saqlain, told The Daily Star. He was being taken to the DB office as of filing this report at 1:45am.

Earlier, police picked up Tasvir from his Baridhara home around 10:45pm.

Tasvir is the managing director and chief executive officer of Quasem Drycells Ltd, which had its offices in the building, police said. He is also the president of Kurigram BNP.

The duo was picked up

An office numb with grief

10 of the 26 who died in Banani fire were from the same office; survivors narrate how they made it to safety

MUNTAKIM SAAD

Ten of the 26 people killed in Thursday's devastating fire in Banani used to work at Heritage Air Express on the 10th floor of the 22-storey FR Tower.

The survivors from the travel agency are reeling from shock and struggling to come to terms with the fact that they have lost their colleagues forever.

One of those who made it to safety is Anjon Kumar Sarkar, manager (central accounts) at the firm. He said he first came to know about the fire after a security guard on the floor screamed for help around 12:30pm.

Anjon immediately alerted his colleagues and told them to come out as quickly as possible.

But some of them were late to respond as they tried to gather their things first, recalled the man as he talked to The Daily Star yesterday.

Anjon along with dozens of others rushed through the stairs to go to the roof. He saw only three of his colleagues on the way.

"One of them was Rabbi who was holding a hand of one of our colleague Tanjela Moule. There was no electricity and smoke engulfed the stairs. By the time we reached the 12th floor, we lost Tanjela amid the rush of people," he said.

"Hours later, Tanjela was found dead," Anjon said, adding at least seven other employees of his office were also injured.

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FAULTY BUILDINGS They will be identified in 15 days Says housing minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Housing and Public Works Minister SM Rezaul Karim yesterday said all buildings constructed violating rules would be identified within 15 days.

"If necessary, the identified buildings will be sealed off, demolished, or all activities will be suspended there until safety is ensured," he told reporters after visiting a Gulshan kitchen market where a fire broke out in the morning.

Owners, businessmen, developers, and even city corporation officials will face action if found involved in faulty constructions, he added.

The minister in February told parliament that 66 percent of 2.04 lakh buildings in the capital were constructed violating

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Nothing is right

Almost all commercial high rises in Banani, Gulshan without fire safety licence; Rajuk knew about FR Tower violations 12yrs back; builder Rupayan claims to be clean

TAWFIQUE ALI

The Rajuk came to know about 12 years ago that the Faruque-Rupayan Tower was built in violation of the approved plan, but it remained silent for all these years.

The construction of four extra commercial floors on the 18-storey building did not worry the Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha (Rajuk) either.

At least 26 people were killed in a deadly blaze in the building on Thursday. Fire safety experts found that the commercial high rise lacked any safe fire exit.

Following the Gulshan market fire in January 2017, the fire service department identified that almost all the around 200 commercial high rises in the capital's Banani and Gulshan had no approved fire safety plan, said Maj AKM Shakil Newaz, operations director of Fire Service and Civil Defense.

"None of them had the safety licence from the fire service department," he told The Daily Star.

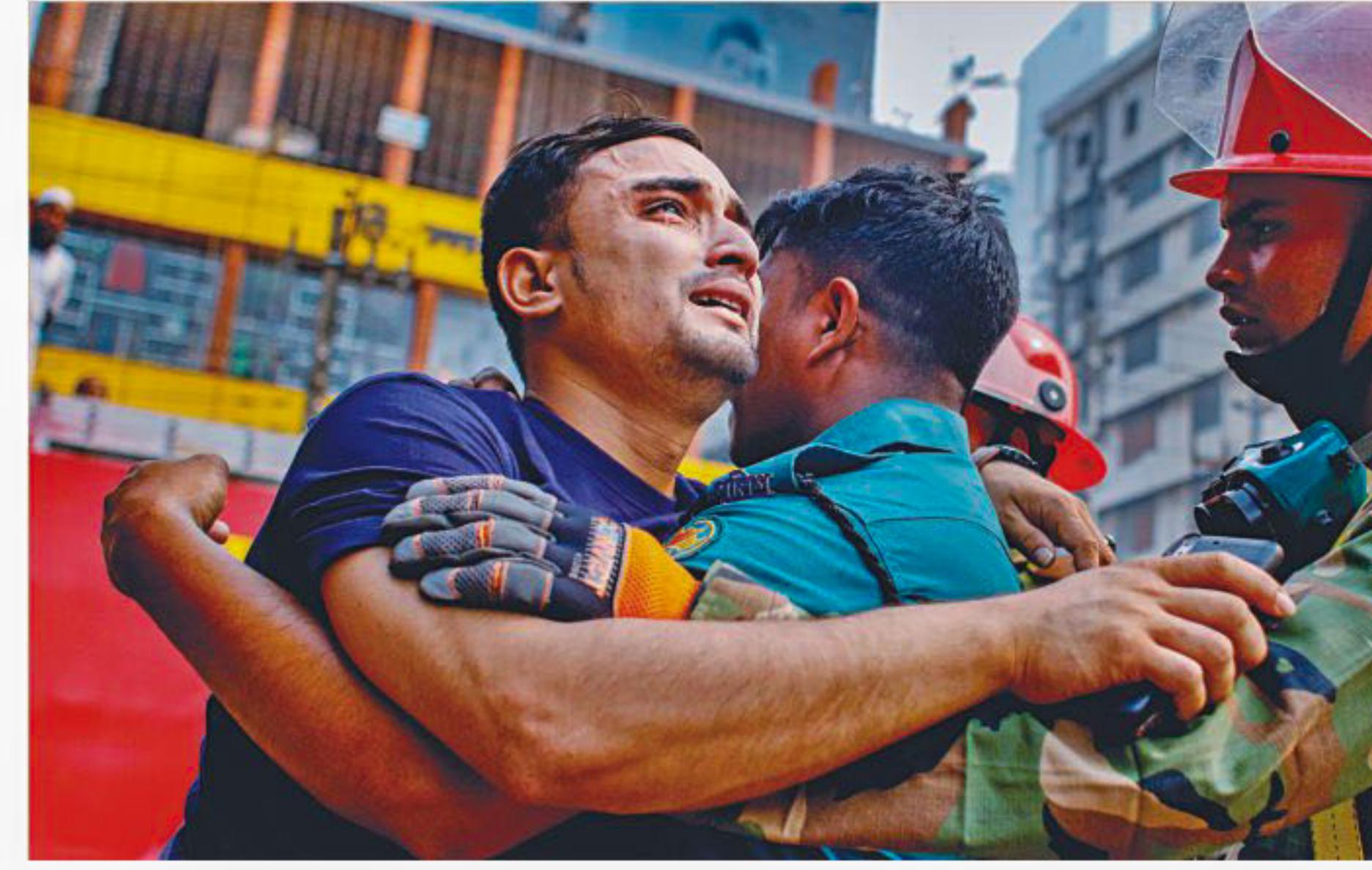
But the fire service is yet to go for further actions, like snapping the utility service connections to those buildings and declaring those unsafe for occupancy. It only held some meetings with the building owners and issued notices to them.

In recent years, the department carried out some surveys on fire safety at buildings and chemical hazards to assess the potential hazard and vulnerability.

Building and fire safety experts believe that the loss of so many lives and property could have been averted had the Rajuk and the fire service acted in time.

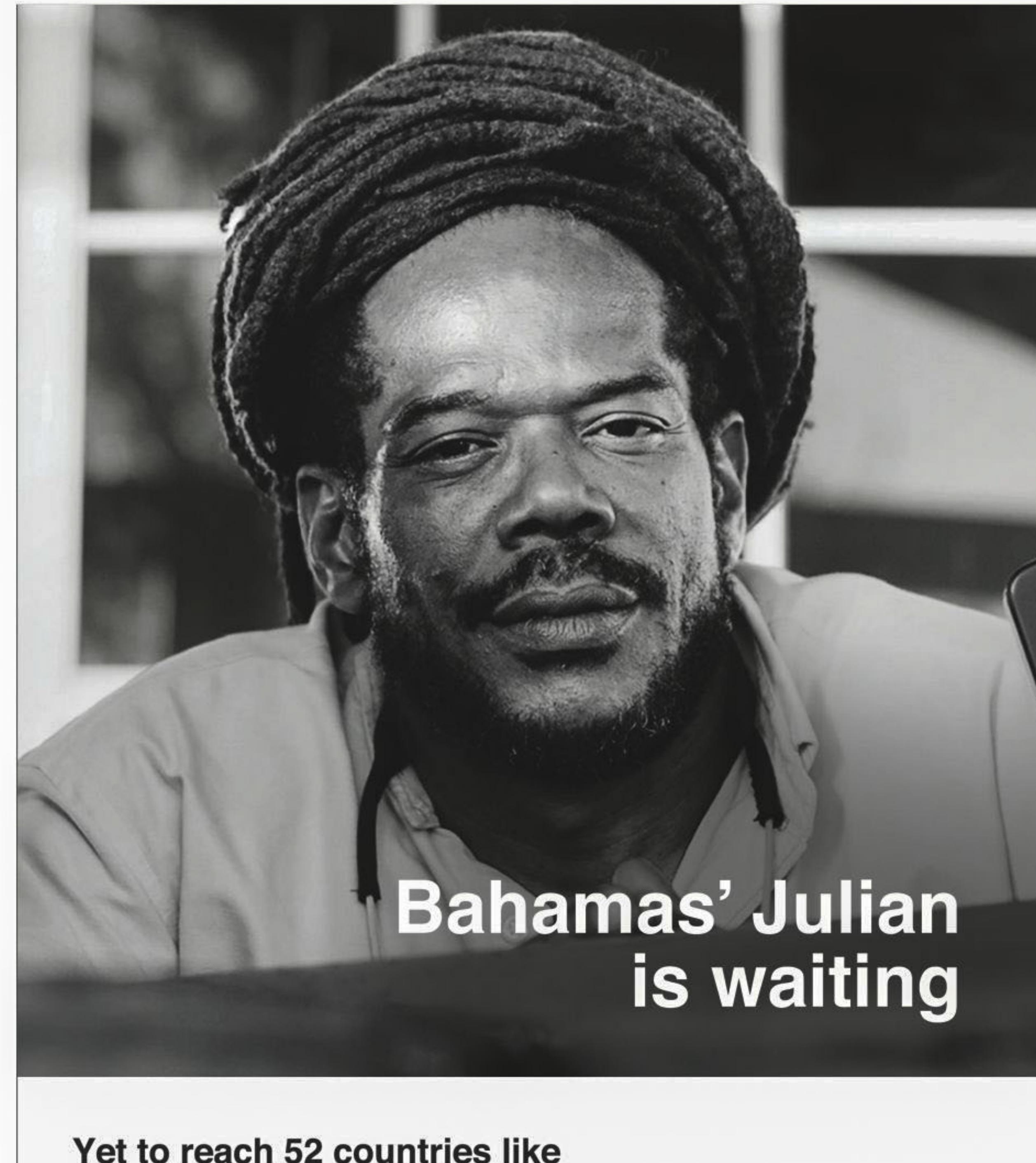
Asked about its silence, Rajuk Chairman Md Abdur Rahman said, "It [violations of the plan of FR Tower] did not come to our notice."

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A policeman and firefighter tackling a grief-stricken man as he tries to enter the kitchen market being razed by a fire yesterday morning.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON



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