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Fire service to identify risky markets

DIPAN NANDY and SAJJAD HOSSAIN

Fire Service and Civil Defence will start a survey to identify risky market buildings in the capital from today, said its director general Brig Gen Md Main Uddin.

"We will survey as per Bangladesh National Building Code (BNB)," he said yesterday.

"A market, building or an establishment is supposed to have enough exits and entrance points, and fire safety measures in proportion with the number of people who visit or stay there," he said while talking with reporters in front of the fire service headquarters, after visiting Bangabazar, which burnt to ashes in a devastating fire on Tuesday.

Main said fire service members, along with market owners, will conduct a survey and tell the market authorities about their next course of action.

He said, "We will start the survey from Gausia Market in the capital's New Market area, and Rajdhani Super Market in Titkati, as we think those may be vulnerable to fire."

In reply to a query, the fire official said they have a list of risky markets and buildings, but he could not immediately say how many are on the list.

"Fire-hydrant systems exist in all developed cities. But these mechanisms only exist in some Dhaka factories," he added.

In a building, a fire-hydrant system is a safety measure or emergency equipment that provides

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## Road crashes killed 564, injured 1,094 last month

### Finds road-safety report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A total of 486 road accidents occurred, resulting in 564 fatalities and 1,094 injuries in March this year, according to a report by Road Safety Foundation.

According to the foundation, a total of 194 people lost their lives in motorcycle crashes, and of them, 88 were women and 73 children. This accounts for 34.39 percent of total deaths during the reported period. The motorcycle accident rate was found to be 36.83 percent.

Additionally, 107 pedestrians lost their lives in accidents, accounting for 18.97 percent of the total deaths. Eighty-one drivers and helpers also lost their lives, making up 14.36 percent of the total deaths.

The report gathered information from various sources -- including nine national dailies, seven online news portals, and electronic media.

Furthermore, the report noted that six waterway accidents claimed the lives of eight people, while 19 railway accidents caused the death of 16 people and injuries to four others.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Jatri Kalyan Samity documented 487 road accidents, which led to 538 deaths and 1,138 injuries.

The report also documented 53 train accidents, resulting in 47 fatalities and 15 injuries, as well as nine waterway accidents, which claimed seven lives and caused injuries to 14 individuals. Two people remained missing as a result of these waterway accidents.

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PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Students of Dhaka University's fine arts faculty gear up for Pahela Baishakh celebrations, as they are busy making colourful masks yesterday, ahead of Mangal Shobhajatra. These items will bring a vibrant look to the traditional procession that is brought out on every Bangla new year.

## Quick work visa for right amount of bribe

7 recruiters bribed two Saudi diplomats Tk 154cr, finds CID

SHARIFUL ISLAM

A syndicate of seven Bangladeshi recruitment agencies reportedly sent Tk 154 crore to Saudi Arabia as bribe for two diplomats who used to work at the Saudi embassy in Dhaka. In return, a huge number of work visas were issued for Bangladeshi migration-seekers, revealed an investigation by the Criminal Investigation Department (CID).

CID has also found that the bribe money was sent through two money exchangers in the capital's Gulshan and Banani.

Owners of the seven agencies and an organised gang used to invite the two Saudi nationals to a Gulshan hotel, give presents and arrange parties for them.

In exchange, the Saudi embassy officials set a rule so that one recruiting agency cannot submit more than 20 visa applications in a week and an agency can submit

**Sources said the Saudi embassy in Dhaka started charging recruiting agencies \$220 to \$250 for every work visa about a year ago. The embassy stopped taking the charge after the two Saudi diplomats returned to the gulf country after they were suspended two and a half months ago.**

applications only once a week, but exempted the seven agencies from this rule. These seven were allowed to submit as many applications as they wanted. The embassy used to issue work visas against their applications when the two officials were working in Dhaka, CID officials said.

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**Owners of the seven agencies and an organised gang used to invite the two Saudi nationals to a Gulshan hotel, give presents and arrange parties for them.**

### CLEAN ENERGY

## Country needs \$1.53-1.71bn a year to reach target: study

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh needs between \$1.53 billion and \$1.71 billion of annual investment from 2024 to 2041 to meet the ambitious target of producing 40 percent of power from clean energy sources by 2041.

The Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA) yesterday estimated the figure in a study, saying that the country's existing power system can incorporate 1,700 megawatts (MW) to 3,400 MW of solar power and 2,500 to 4,000 MW of wind power.

However, the total cost did not include the cost for grid modernisation and storage facilities.

The study, titled "Charting an Electricity Sector Transition Pathway for Bangladesh", also mentioned that the country could manage such

investments with the help of funding channels, including local resources and international sources like multilateral agencies, climate funds and global pension, private equity and infrastructure funds.

"The government should translate the renewable-energy policy target into a year-wise action plan, backed by a monitoring mechanism to track its progress," said the study's author Shafiqul Alam, energy finance analyst at IEEFA.

Last year, high prices of fossil fuel and increased power generation costs led to a subsidy burden of \$2.82 billion, a steep rise of 152 percent from the previous year, and 301 percent from fiscal 2019-20.

Besides, Bangladesh Power Development Board saw a massive 33.7

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## 'We lost a role model of women empowerment'

**Tributes from all quarters after Rokia Afzal's demise**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The country has lost a champion of women's empowerment with the demise of Rokia Afzal Rahman, chairperson of Mediaworld Ltd, the owner company of The Daily Star.

Eminent citizens and head of organisations said Rokia was an integral actor in advancing the role of women in business and a stalwart supporter of free media.

Rokia Afzal Rahman, 82, passed away peacefully in her sleep at Mt Elizabeth Novena Hospital in Singapore, where she was undergoing treatment.

Prime Minister's Private Sector Industry and Investment Adviser Salman F Rahman expressed profound shock and sorrow at her death.

IBB's Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman in a statement said her death caused irreparable loss to the country. "She will be remembered as an inspiration because of her hard work and patriotism."

Bangladesh Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry, in a statement, said, "We are deeply saddened at the passing away of Rokia Afzal Rahman. BWCCI has lost a dear friend and comrade."

Management and Resources Development Initiative said Rokia will be remembered for her

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## We Mourn



We are deeply saddened to inform that, our honorable Board Chairman Ms. Rokia Afzal Rahman breathed her last at 02:00 am Wednesday at Mount Elizabeth Novena Hospital, Singapore.

The Board of Directors and all employees of MIDAS Financing Limited deeply mourn on her demise. We are praying to almighty Allah SWT for her eternal peace. Our heart-felt condolences to the bereaved family.

Her janaza will be held at Gulshan Azad Masjid on Friday 7th April after Asr' prayer at 5:00 pm.

**MIDAS FINANCING LIMITED**

**CONDOLENCE MESSAGE**

**Rokia Afzal Rahman**

The Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Dhaka (MCCI) is deeply saddened by the passing of the esteemed female entrepreneur Ms. Rokia Afzal Rahman. She breathed her last on Wednesday, 5 April 2023 at Mount Elizabeth Novena Hospital in Singapore at 2:00 am Singapore time. Inna illahi wa inna ilaihi rajeun.

Ms. Rahman was the President of MCCI in 2013 and 2014 and the President of Bangladesh Employers' Federation (BEF) in 1998-99, 2009-2010, and 2010-2011. Under her dynamic leadership, MCCI celebrated its 110th anniversary in 2014, an event graced by the late Indian former President, Mr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam.

An iconic business leader involved in the development of several women's associations, Ms. Rahman had vast experience spanning multiple sectors. She was also a former Adviser (minister) to the Caretaker Government of Bangladesh in 2001.

MCCI expresses its deepest condolences to Ms. Rahman's bereaved family and humbly requests all to pray for her departed soul. May Allah grant her Jannatul Firdous and bless her family with sabr.

**MCCI**  
Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Dhaka