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FIRE HAZARD

Repeated warnings, little action

DIPAN NANDY

In Dhaka, the scent of burning rubble has become all too familiar as the city is experiencing a cycle of recurring fire tragedies, particularly in markets. Despite warnings from the fire service, little has been done to prevent such incidents.

In 2018, a survey conducted by the fire service on 1,300 markets of the capital revealed that all but five were at risk of catching fire. Of these, 622 were marked as "very risky" and 678 as "risky."

Shocking, no action was taken to address the risks identified in the report. Just twelve days ago, Bangabazar shopping complex was ravaged by a blaze, devastating the hopes of Eid traders.

In response, fire service conducted another survey of 58 markets, all of which were deemed risky. Nine of these markets were classified as highly risky, including Gausia Market, Barishal Plaza Market, Rajdhani and New Rajdhani Supermarket, Alauddin Market, Shakil Anwar Tower, Sharif Market, Maya Katara, and Rosenil Vista.

Besides, 14 were listed as moderately risky and 35 as risky.

Tragically, on Saturday, Dhaka New Super Market was also gutted by a fire, causing significant losses to local

businesses and traders. It was listed as a risky market in the latest survey.

What is particularly concerning is that both Bangabazar market and Dhaka New Super Market were also deemed risky in the 2018 list.

Contacted, Lt Col Mohammad Tajul Islam Chowdhury, director (operation and maintenance) at fire service, stated that they update the list of risky buildings annually and identify problems before informing the building owners.

If the issues are not addressed, banners are put up to raise awareness among the public, he said.

Contacted, Rafiqul Islam, president of Gausia Market Shop Owners' Association, stated that despite a recent visit by the fire service, no meeting had been held to discuss fire safety.

Asked about what action they had taken to address the risks, he replied that they had trained security personnel of the risky buildings in fire safety.

Contacted, urban planner Adil Muhammad Khan expressed his concerns, stating that while the fire service conducted a survey in 2018, none of the authorities concerned took action. He added that authorities need to take initiative to address these risks and prevent future disasters.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday paid a visit to Bangabhaban, President Abdul Hamid's official residence and principal workplace.

PHOTO: PID

FARDIN MURDER

Court orders CID to probe further

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday ordered Criminal Investigation Department (CID) to further investigate into a case filed over the death of Buet student Fardin Noor Parash in November last year.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Shanto Islam Mallik passed the order after Fardin's father filed a no confidence petition against the DB report, clearing Amatullah Bushra, an accused of the case, of murder charges.

In the petition, the victim's father Kazi Nooruddin Rana, also the complainant, sought further probe, alleging that investigation officer Yasin Shikder did not probe the case properly. He also accused the IO of submitting a biased report.

The magistrate directed CID to submit the probe report by May 24.

Bushra, who was granted bail on January 8, attended the court yesterday.

Yasin Shikder, an inspector of the Detective Branch, on February 6 submitted the final report to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court of Dhaka.

In the report, the IO said Fardin committed suicide in November last year. Fardin's father insisted that his son could never die by suicide.

Police arrested Bushra from her Banasree house in the capital on November 10 last year, after Fardin's father filed a murder case with Rampura Police Station.

Fardin, a student of civil engineering, was found dead in the Shitalakkhya in Narayanganj on November 7, three days after he went missing.



A rickshaw ride through the alleys of old town

RRR

After midnight, rickshaw rides in Old Dhaka are an experience. If you have not tried one yet, then you should, especially during the Eid break. A summer breeze flowing through your hair, only a handful of cars plying the roads that are silent with no honking of horns, a street dog accompanying you until the turn of the road — these are a pleasant change of scenery from what we are accustomed to seeing during the day.

I hired a rickshaw from Chankharpool and asked him to take me to my favourite spots scattered in the narrow lanes and by-lanes of that part of the town. The puller asked for Tk 300 per hour, and we happily zoomed towards my favourite egg-paratha roll place, a shanty in Chankharpool opposite the students' hall. Crisp and oil-free, the paratha rolled in a fluffly hot omelette is the best midnight snack you can ever try.

My next destination was Nazirabazar. I was craving Dhaka's best lemonade from Beauty Lassi, and guzzled down two glasses of chilled, lime juice in a sugar syrup with crushed ice. After my thirsty body and soul were soothed, I was riding towards my favourite

Nazimuddin Road. I must add that Pannu Khan Tea Stall at Nazirabazar offers the finest milk tea, and Tayabat Hotel and Restaurant is known for its kala bhuna and paratha. Besides, Bismillah Kabab Ghar has chicken chaap almost like a



schnitzel and very much an in-demand dinner. And then there is Hajir Biriyani.

A particular narrow lane, Kazi Alauddin Road to Nazira Bazar Chowrasta, is a foodie's haven and can be like our own Khao San Road. A stark contrast to the popular tourist destination of Bangkok, the lane is littered with garbage, and hardly any of the store owners pay heed to aesthetics, while the



city corporation has no desire to clean the garbage either. For what could have been a great walk, hopping from one food stall to the other, it is a nasty lane.

Anyway, heading towards Nazimuddin Road, I stopped at the turn of a mazar, beside the old jail walls, and ordered a takeaway of soft succulent beef kabab. If you are here, you should not miss Nasu Faruker Bakarkhani, which comes in multiple variants, from sugary treats to ones with different flavours of cheese.

After some retail therapy, I turned towards Hotel Star in Thataribazar, Nawabpur. A cup of their frothy milk tea is divine. Another amazing midnight snack is dunking their crisp ruti in this cup of hot tea.

Dhaka at night is a romantic city, a city I love so much. You should plan a rickshaw ride to see Dhaka during these late hours this coming holiday season. For a foodie, this midnight trip to old Dhaka on a rickshaw is indeed a pleasure on a totally different level.

President-elect vows to ensure fair polls

BSS, Dhaka

President-elect Md Sahabuddin yesterday vowed to do whatever necessary to hold a fair, participatory and acceptable Jatiya Sangsad election.

"As the president, I will do whatever is needed to ensure a free, neutral, participatory and acceptable parliamentary election," he told journalists at a ceremony, in which Agami Publications handed over a copy his book "Egiye Jabe Bangladesh (Bangladesh will proceed)" at the capital's Gulshan.

Sahabuddin said, "National election is

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'Improve Teletalk's network'

JS body recommends

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A parliamentary body yesterday recommended that the government expand Teletalk's network to improve services of the state-owned mobile operator.

The parliamentary standing committee on the Ministry of Posts, Telecommunications and Information Technology made the recommendation at its meeting held at Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban.

The parliamentary watchdog asked the ministry to take measures to enhance the network of Teletalk.

Chairman of the JS body AKM Rahmatullah presided over the meeting, while its members State Minister for ICT Division Zunaid Ahmed Palak, Rejwan Ahammad Toufiq, Ahmed Firoz Kabir, Monira Sultana, Zakia Parvin Khanam, Aparajita Haque and Shahdab Akbar attended it.

Posts, Telecommunications and Information Technology Minister Mustafa Jabbar participated in the meeting on a special invitation.

High government officials, including the ICT secretary and posts and telecommunications secretary were also present.

Using lethal means to snatch rickshaws

Two members of gang arrested, say police

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

They were members of a rickshaw-snatching gang that used to be active on the roads of Narayanganj, Jatrabari and Demra areas. If anyone messed with its plans, the members didn't mind killing them.

Police claimed to have arrested two members of such a gang, which strangled two rickshaw-pullers to death recently.

The arrestees are — Nayeem, 23, and Zahid, 20. Two stolen rickshaws were seized from their possession.

Police Deputy Commissioner of Wari Division Ziaul Ahsan Talukdar informed this to the press at DMP media centre yesterday.

He said an unidentified body was found in Amulia Model Town of Demra on March 13 and another on April 3. Two separate murder cases were filed with Demra police station in this connection.

The two dead rickshaw-pullers are Swapan Islam, 35, and Miraj Hossain, 26.

"During the investigation into Swapan's case, the criminals were located using CCTV footage and other intel, after which the duo was arrested in a raid in Demra," said the DC.

On April 2 after midnight, Nayeem, Zahid, and two other youths named Nayan and Raihan went to Jatrabari to snatch a rickshaw. The gang targeted a rickshaw at a Laguna stand behind Jatrabari police station. The members then hired the rickshaw under the pretence of transporting car parts.

Nayan and Nayeem got on the rickshaw, while Zahid and Raihan followed them closely in another auto-rickshaw. They reached a pre-decided spot

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Kabori, the 'Mishti Meye' of cinema

A look back at her career on her 2nd death anniversary

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Kabori was a stalwart of the silver screen for decades. Her smile would earn her the moniker of "Mishti Meye" of Bangladeshi cinema. On this day in 2021, she departed from this life, after a hard-fought battle with Covid.

At the age of 13, the young Mina Pal would become Kabori, debuting on the silver screen along with Subhash Dutta in "Sutorang" (1964). "Neel Akasher Nichey" (1969) was also a hit among the Bangladeshi audience. Who can forget "Ektai Gaan Hoye Ele", where the actress paired up with Razzak? Another landmark in the actress's career is "Moynamoti" (1969). When "Onek Sadher Moyna Amar" was played during the movie, it was reported that most people in theatres started bawling their eyes out.

"Sareng Bou" (1978) still holds a place in the hearts of the people living in the coastal areas of Bangladesh. "Ore Nil Doriya", composed by Alom



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PRAYER TIMING				
APRIL 17				
Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 4:17	12:45	4:45	6:24	7:45
JAMAAT 4:27	1:15	5:00	6:34	8:15
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION				
SEHRI, IFTAR TIMING				
RAMADAN	APRIL	SEHRI	IFTAR	
25	17		6:24	
26	18	4:11	6:25	
27	19	4:10	6:25	