

## BAILEY ROAD FIRE

# 'I jumped off the roof to survive'

DIPAN NANDY and MD ABBAS

"Where's the emergency exit? where's the emergency exit?" people were shouting all around.

But to their horror, they found there wasn't any functional emergency exit through which they can save their life from the inferno that took place on Thursday.

Md Iqbal, a waiter at Mejbani Khana of the building, was recounting how a routine day at work turned into a nightmare.

Survivors yesterday alleged that there was no emergency exit in the seven-storey commercial building on Bailey Road that caught fire on Thursday.

Taking treatment in hospitals, they yesterday described how people resorted to extreme measures to save their lives amid the tragedy.

Lying on a bed in Dhaka Medical College Hospital's Ward 102, Iqbal described his ordeal to The Daily Star.

"I was working as usual, like other days. Suddenly, I saw smoke all around. It was difficult to even breathe," he said.

"There were many people running towards the rooftop to save their lives, and I did the same. It was quite a struggle, but I somehow made it to the rooftop, from where the firefighters eventually rescued me," he told The Daily Star.

Iqbal, who considers himself fortunate to be alive, said there was no way to escape the inferno as there were no emergency exits in the building.

"Since the fire originated from the ground floor, there was no option of escaping [the building] using the stairs," he added.

Mujahidul Islam Jubayer, who works as a chef at Khana's, which is located on the second floor of the building, echoed the same.

"While I was cooking, our manager alerted us about a fire downstairs and instructed us to evacuate to the roof. On the rooftop, we saw many people jumping off to escape the flames and smoke. I followed suit, and after that, I have no idea what happened to me."

He is now undergoing treatment at the DMCH.

At least 46 people died and 12 were injured in the fire.



**It was a different Friday at Bailey Road yesterday. While many shops and restaurants saw fewer crowds, people continued to gather in front of the Green Cozy Cottage Shopping Mall to witness the charred exterior. A devastating fire that broke out at the building on Thursday night killed at least 46 people and injured dozens.**

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## We are alive

FROM PAGE 3

he recounted the fire incident and how he and his family survived with the help of the brave fire fighters.

He said he and his two daughters, Waziha Zaman Majumder, 12 and Wazah Zaman Majumder, 7, along with his wife advocate Mahrufa Gulshan Ara, went to the restaurant to spend some quality family time together.

"It was a sudden decision to go to the restaurant, as it was just two buildings away from our home," he said.

Soon after they placed their orders at the restaurant, Kamruzzaman smelled something burning and, shortly afterwards, saw smoke rising from the lower floors.

"Due to my research and work on disaster management, I could sense the danger," he said. "Looking out the window, I saw people gathering and shouting, pointing towards a building across the street. Smoke was also rising beside the restaurant window."

"I didn't waste any time and decided to leave the restaurant premises as soon as possible, and planned to go upstairs," he continued.

"There were about 10-12 people in the restaurant at the time. I instructed them to leave immediately as well," he said.

There was no safety gear in the restaurant, he recalled. As they moved out of the restaurant to the lobby, a space that can barely fit 12-15 people, they found smoke coming heavily from downstairs.

"Dozens of people were trying to go upstairs. Meanwhile, some people were attempting to go downstairs too," he recalled, adding, "Soon they realised going down wouldn't be possible through the thick,

hazardous smoke and followed us to the roof."

"The smoke was becoming alarmingly dense every second. As we were in pursuit of fresh air, the smoke was following us like death," he said.

Kamruzzaman said he heaved a sigh of relief to find the rooftop door open.

Even on the roof, at least 75 percent of the space was reserved for restaurants and prayer spaces, said the professor.

"However, the roof provided some fresh air but did not guarantee our safety. As time passed, the smoke and heat from the fire intensified, relentlessly rising towards the rooftop, and fear gripped the approximately 40 people, mostly women, who had taken shelter there," he said.

As smoke began to engulf the roof, people tried to save themselves by covering their faces with wet clothes. Many sat down in prayer on the roof, desperately praying for survival, he recalled.

"Just as hope dwindled, we heard the news of the fire service's arrival. However, we couldn't see the crane due to a rooftop restaurant blocking the view," Kamruzzaman continued.

"Then, after some time, we saw a firefighter climb up to the roof. Finally, around midnight, we spotted the crane," he said.

He said the fire fighters, over the next two hours, gradually lifted and evacuated people in groups -- children and women first, and then others.

"Today, I have already ordered a birthday cake for Waziha. We'll have to celebrate her birthday, as she told me, 'Baba, eta amar dwtiyo jonmo [Father, it's my second life]," said Kamruzzaman.

## Families lost in flame Looking for loved ones at morgues

FROM PAGE 3

Ria's paternal uncle Wahiduzzaman said, "All three sisters died from the fire after being trapped inside the building."

"Ria was supposed to leave for Malaysia on Saturday. Her death, alongside her sisters, has caused Korban to lose his mind. He lost control of his emotions," Wahiduzzaman added.

### WOMAN DIES AFTER SAVING HER FAMILY

Thirty-year-old Tanzila Esha also went to Kacchi Bhai that night.

She went there with her six-year-old son Arham, her brother's wife Lamia Tabbassum, and Tabassum's two daughters Ayra and Naba.

When Tanzila learned about the fire, she broke the window of the restaurant and helped her son Arham to go out first, then Tabassum, Ayra, and Naba, respectively. But she failed to go out and died in the fire as it had already spread.

Tanzila's cousin Toukir Mujib disclosed the incident after identifying her body at the DMCH

morgue around 2:00am early yesterday.

Tanzila's body was taken to her village home in Pirojpur.

**A FAMILY LOST IN FLAME**  
On the tragic night, a mother died along with her two children while having food at a restaurant on the third floor of the building.

Nazia lived with her husband Ashiq, a businessman, and two children -- Ayat, 8, and Ayan, 6, -- in the capital's Bailey Road area. In the evening, she called her husband, who was at his office, saying she was going to the restaurant as their children were crying.

Around 10:30pm, Nazia again called Ashiq and said a fire broke out in the restaurant, and she lost her younger son Ayan amid the commotion. Later, Nazia could not be reached on her phone.

Rifat, a cousin of Ashiq, said Ayan was found on the stairs of the building, and Nazia and Ayat's bodies were at the DMCH morgue.

"Bhaiya [Ashiq] was living a happy life with his family. And now everything is lost," he said.

FROM PAGE 3

after a while. Later, she tried to call Jewel repeatedly but failed.

Nearly three hours later, at approximately 1:00am, Reba learned that her husband Jewel had been admitted to the intensive care unit at DMCH.

Jewel and his nephew Mohammad Rakib, 22, both used to work in the restaurant. After the fire broke out, they jumped off the building.

Rakib survived but Jewel couldn't.

Jewel's elder daughter Taslima Akter, 8, was also present at DMCH.

"I could have talked to my father one last time if I weren't sleeping," she kept saying.

Reba said, "My husband worked in the restaurant and earned a monthly salary of Tk 20,000. With this, the family expenses were met. Where will I go now with two children?"

Jewel's elder brother Al Amin, said, "I rushed to the spot after hearing about the fire. I found both -- Rakib and Jewel -- alive. Jewel also spoke to me. He later died at the ICU."

Nazmul Hasan, at DMCH

and Sheikh Hasina National Burn and Plastic Surgery Institute morgues.

Nazmul, a student of BRAC University, had gone to dine at Kacchi Bhai

trapped inside. He has been missing since.

"We have been searching for Nazmul since 3:00am. We do not know whether he is dead or alive," Mokhesur said yesterday morning.

Six unidentified bodies, five at DMCH and one at the burn institute, have been burnt beyond recognition. DNA tests will be carried out by authorities concerned soon.

**3 MORE BODIES IDENTIFIED**  
Meanwhile, bodies of three more persons, killed in Thursday night's fire at a building on the capital's Bailey Road, were identified last night.

They are assistant revenue officer Shahjalal Uddin, 34, his wife Meherunnesa Jahan Helali, 24, and daughter Fairuz Kashem Jamira, 3.

Meherunnesa's father Mokter Alam Helali identified the bodies around 9:00pm at DMCH.

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Although Nazmul's two other friends managed to exit the building, he got

**AN UNCLE'S SEARCH FOR HIS NEPHEW**  
Around 11:30am yesterday, Mokhesur Rahman was found desperately searching for his twenty-two-year-old nephew,

restaurant, situated on the first floor of the building, along with his two other friends.

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## A biriyani stop turns

FROM PAGE 3

3:30am at DMCH premises.

"I should have been there, I should have been there," Golam kept repeating. "Maybe I could have found a way out of the burning building," he added.

The mother daughter duo were among the 46 victims of the devastating fire at the Green Cozy Cottage Shopping Mall on Bailey Road.

"I don't know how I will be able to collect and take

their lifeless bodies home," Golam said, still staring at his wife and daughter.

Meanwhile, the acting principal of Viharunnisa Noon School & College in a condolence message said Lucky was a senior teacher at the institute and her daughter a former student.

All the members of the governing body, teachers, officers, employees, students, and parents of the institutes are saddened by their deaths.

## Gone ... too soon

FROM PAGE 3

engineer, she was also the lifeline for her family.

Her mother passed away due to illness when Lamisha was only 18, but she took up the responsibility of taking care of her younger sister and father -- Nasirul Islam.

For Nasirul, who is an additional deputy inspector general of police at the police headquarters, his two daughters are his life. And everything was fine until Thursday, when tragedy struck, and the family lost their brightest flame.

Nasirul's colleagues said he was playing the role of both mother and father for his daughters. He dreamed that one day his daughters would surpass their father's achievements and reach unique heights.

He had a lot of hopes and dreams surrounding his eldest daughter, Lamisha. And since Thursday's incident, he has not been crying or talking.

He hasn't said a word, said his colleagues.

Lamisha went out for dinner with a friend at a restaurant in the building that caught fire, they said.

After the building caught fire, Lamisha called her father seeking help, and pleaded to save her, they added.

"Please come and save me, father!" she told her father in their last conversation, said Nasirul's colleagues.

Meanwhile, Nahian Amin of electrical and electronic engineering department at BUET also died in the devastating fire.

The bodies were handed over to the family members. Contacted, Prof Mizanur Rahman of BUET said namaz-e-janaza of both the students were held early in the morning at BUET Central Mosque.

Lamisha's body was taken to her village home in Faridpur by an ambulance of Dhaka Metropolitan Police around 10:30am. She will be buried there. Police headquarters, in a statement today, condoled her death.

**YOUNG CINEMATOGRAPHER DIES IN THE INFERNO**  
Tushar Hawladar, a young cinematographer, also lost his life in the tragedy.

Tushar was a recent graduate from a private university, and he was going to attend his convocation ceremony on March 10, said his friend, Niloy Lawrence.

Tushar graduated from the Journalism and Mass Communication Department at Daffodil University. Tushar was working as a junior executive at a private firm, said Niloy.

## Crab fishing season

FROM PAGE 5

"I do not have any other jobs. From the very beginning, I applied myself to crab netting. This ban period left me and many others in my locality suffering," said Nirapada.

"During the last two months, I took a loan of Tk 12,000 from a moneylender to support my family. Now that the ban has been lifted, I hope to repay this loan," he added.

Kamrul Islam, a crab fisherman from the Patharkhali area, echoed him.

**ILLEGAL CRAB NETTING**  
Fishermen however alleged that the two-month ban on crab fishing is not maintained by all. Even though crab netting is prohibited during the breeding season, unscrupulous fishermen still enter the Sundarbans with fishing permits and hunt for mother crabs with eggs.

The fishermen demanded that the criminals be identified and that action is taken against them.

Masum Ali Faakir, union parishad chairman of Sutarkhali of Dacope upazila in Khulna, said the forest department was very strict in stopping illegal

crab harvesting in the last two months. But due to a lack of manpower, they could not protect all the surroundings areas of the Sundarbans.

Mihir Kumar Doe, forest conservator at Khulna Circle, said forest guards have been directed to intensify patrolling and other activities to ensure that no one gets involved in illegal crab netting by taking fishing permit in the Sundarbans.

Government of The Peoples Republic of Bangladesh  
Local Government Engineering Department  
Office of the Executive Engineer  
District: Chapainawabganj.  
[www.lged.gov.bd](http://www.lged.gov.bd)

Memo No.: 46.02.7000.000.07.001.24.404  
Date: 29/02/2024  
16/11/1830 বঙ্গাব্দ

**e-Tender Notice No : 36/2023-24**  
**Tendering Method (LTM)**

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of following Packages:

Sl No	Description of Work, Package No & Tender ID	Tender Last Selling (Date & Time)	Tender Closing (Date & Time)	Tender Opening (Date & Time)	Remarks
01	Periodic Maintenance of Begpur Bibu Master's House to Begpur Bibu's House (Meet at Sluce Ghaz Road) Road from Ch. 00m-950m road ID No. 1707509 under Gomostapur Upazila, Dist: Chapainawabganj. (Package No. LGED/G&BM/CNG/23-24/RW-41) (Tender ID- 955106).	18 Mar-2024 17:00	19 Mar-2024 11:00	19 Mar-2024 11:00	LTM
02	Periodic Maintenance of Bangabari hat to Mohila Madrasa via Dakhal Madrasa Road from Ch. 00m-600m road ID No. 17075094 under Gomostapur Upazila, Dist: Chapainawabganj. (Package No. LGED/G&BM/CNG/23-24/RW-40) (Tender ID- 955089).	18 Mar-2024 17:00	19 Mar-2024 11:00	19 Mar-2024 11:00	LTM
03	Periodic Maintenance of Nawabganj Shiganj RAB (Zarabari) - Ramchandrapur hat Road from Ch. 2225m-2457m road ID No. 17066009 under Sadar Upazila, Dist: Chapainawabganj. (Package No. LGED/G&BM/CNG/23-24/RW-59) (Tender ID- 955081).	18 Mar-2024 17:00	19 Mar-2024 11:00	19 Mar-2024 11:00	LTM
04	Periodic Maintenance of Khorbosa Bridge to wabla Bath via Mot Chairmas house Road from Ch. 00m-1000m road ID No. 17066445 under Sadar Upazila, Dist: Chapainawabganj. (Package No. LGED/G&BM/CNG/23-24/RW-58) (Tender ID- 955080).	18 Mar-2024 17:00	19 Mar-2024 11:00	19 Mar-2024 11:00	LTM

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PRAYER TIMING MARCH 2  
Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib 7:30  
AZAN 5-15 12-45 4-30 6-05 7-30  
JAMAAT 5-50 1-15 4-45 6-10 8-00  
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

সন্দপত্র হারিয়েছে  
আমার হেলে সন্দপত্র শায়র এইচএসসি  
সন্দপত্র হারিয়েছে যাহার রেজিঃ নং-  
১৮৩০৯০৫৭০, গোল নং-১০২৫২১,  
শিকার-২০২১/২২, গানের সন- ২০২০,  
ডাক কোর্ট। দক্ষিণখান থানা জিএমপি, ঢাকা।  
জিডি নং-১৮৫০, তাং ২৯/০২/২০২৪।  
ছবিঃ খানম

ফ্ল্যাট বিক্রয়  
২৯৩৫ বর্গফুটের ৪ বেড  
রুম প্রায় রেডি বিলাশ বহুল  
প্র্যাপটমেন্ট বিক্রয় হবে।  
ত্রিকানাঃ বসুন্ধরা, ব্লক বি।  
০১৯৩৯১১৮০২, ০১৯৩৯১১৮০১

**World Health Organization**  
Bangladesh

**VACANCY NOTICE**

World Health Organization (WHO) invites applications from the interested and eligible candidates for the following positions under following contractual modalities:

- National Professional Officer (Research and Publication) / TNP
- Team Assistant / TGS

For further details on submission of applications including detailed post description please visit our websites:  
<https://www.who.int/bangladesh/about-us/employment>  
<https://careers.who.int/careersection/ex/jobsearch.ftl>

Qualified female candidates are highly encouraged to apply.

WHO has a smoke-free environment and does not recruit smokers or other tobacco users.

শেখ হাসিনার মুদ্রাঙ্কিত  
রাম শহরের উদ্ভূতি

29/02/2024  
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GD-349