



■ The Rotary Club has installed 1,000 smoke detectors in rundown and overcrowded labour accommodations

# Fire safety push success hailed

By MOHAMMED AL A'ALI

A YEAR-LONG charity project designed to prevent fatal fires in rundown and overcrowded Manama labour accommodations came to an end yesterday.

An estimated 10,000 labourers have benefited from the Rotary Club of Manama scheme, which saw a team of 12 volunteers visit various sites around the city every Friday to deliver and install smoke detectors.

A total of BD5,000 was raised to fund the purchase of 1,000 detectors, which were given to labourers alongside some vital fire safety information delivered in partnership with the Migrant Workers Protection Society.

The last batch of 60 detectors was installed yesterday.

"Our aim was to complete the installation of the smoke detectors in labour accommodation, whether old homes or camps, before the height of summer and Ramadan," said club president Hussain Tadayon.

"We have 12 members who have volunteered every Friday – sometimes with others – to install the detectors in batches.

"The project was launched 12 months ago, and now within a year we have managed to instal 1,000 detectors at a cost of BD5,000.

"Labourers have also been trained on how to change batteries and distinguish the different sounds the alarm makes."

Mr Tadayon told the *GDN* that the club would



■ FLASHBACK: Firemen dampening the gutted building where three workers died in a blaze at a residential building in Manama in March

later revisit the buildings where detectors have been installed to evaluate the effectiveness of the scheme.

"We have to evaluate our work to see if we have accomplished our aim – it is not just about installing detectors and forgetting about them, it is about saving lives," he said.

Bahrain has been hit by a slew of fires in homes and shops over the past week, with one claiming the lives of two teenage sisters.

The Bahrainis suffocated in a blaze last Sunday due to a short circuit in the air conditioning unit of their Sitra bedroom.

Two days later, disaster was narrowly averted

in Duraz as a family of 19 had to be rescued when their three-storey home caught fire.

No one was injured in the blaze, but an estimated 200 chickens kept in a coop on the roof were burnt alive and a fireman suffered minor injuries after he fell from the second storey while trying to douse the flames.

Then on Wednesday, a suspected gas leak caused an explosion in a canister-refilling shop in Jirdab and both a customer and an employee were badly burnt.

That same day Bangladeshi national Abdul Mannan, 32, suffered third degree burns over 70 per cent of his body in a flat fire in Galali.



■ Volunteers installing fire alarms in a building

His rescuer, 28-year-old Ammar Sameer Rabai, was also treated for minor injuries.

Meanwhile, firemen were also called out to a cold store in A'ali that went up in flames on Wednesday following a short circuit. The shop was gutted, but no injuries were reported.

Fires in labour camps can spread quickly and have the potential to carry a heavy death toll.

In March, three Bangladeshi workers suffocated in a blaze at a residential building in Manama, while in January last year 13 of their fellow nationals were killed in a fire that broke out in a rundown three-storey building in the same area.

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