



The 2nd half of the 16th century, Catholics were prominent in Hosenpur in Mymensingh and Sripur near Sonargaon. Among the churches erected by the Augustinians were at Nagori (1675) and Tejgaon (1677). In 1834, the Vicariate Apostolic was created under the jurisdiction of the Sacred Congregation for Propaganda Fide. In 1850 it was divided to the Vicariates Apostolic of Eastern and Western Bengal. Western Bengal's headquarters were in Dhaka.

City high-rises ignore emergency escapes

TAWFIQUE ALI

sures." However, these measures can be installed in all the existing buildings, added Ansary.

Even if a few buildings may have some basic fire fighting facilities and safety measures, the building occupiers are either unaware of them or do not know how to operate these rudimentary equipment.

Buildings lack the most fundamental safety amenities, basic equipment for fire fighting and emergency evacuation facility in the event of a fire incident while the fire service department is ill-equipped and ill-trained, they said.

A fire escape route without obstruction and regular mock exercise are the basics in safety for every building taller than five stories, said the experts.

Professor Mehedi Ahmed Ansary of civil engineering department at Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet), also secretary general of Bangladesh Earthquake Society, said it is more crucial to ensure some fundamental safety measures in each building before procuring equipment for fire fighting.

"These measures are not expensive," he said, "But I am sceptical about any building being equipped with these inbuilt mea-

Experts for in-built safety provisions such as emergency exits for all buildings above the height of six stories



Inbuilt emergency escapes in tall buildings could help prevent similar situation that occurred on February 26 at the BSEC Bhaban in the city.

Event of a fire incident. A building also must have an escape route, fire vent, own water hose and water reserve.

The fire at the BSEC building revealed that the building did not have basic safety measures such

as water sprinklers and fire or smoke detection systems. The automatic or manual alarm systems are standard in buildings all over the world.

Any building must have these fundamental safety measures such

while a high-rise must have more elaborate and sophisticated measures.

Every building should have a fire evacuation plan displayed on each wall and exits clearly marked, a four-member team of

fire warden would be selected from the building occupants and work in rotation, said director of Bangladesh Disaster Preparedness Centre (BDPC) Muhammad Saidur Rahman.

There must be a fire drill at least once in a month, he said, the fire wardens would alarm the occupants in person in the event of fire or during the drill. Every building must have a dedicated water reservoir for fire fighting.

Director General of Fire Service and Civil Defence Brigadier General Rafiqur Rahman said it is practically impossible to inspect all hazardous buildings including around 3,000 garment factories due to inadequate workforce. "There are lakhs of buildings that require fire safety check but we have only four inspectors for Dhaka and 27 for the whole country."

Responding to why the department does not enforce fire safety measures strictly, he said, "We were able to enforce it in some cases, but it has not been possible in many cases."

The number of hazardous buildings is quite high. Many buildings are in a hazardous state in terms of safety, like the 3,000 garment factories, Rafiq added.

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city express

The latest crop of quotes from the city's press -- words worth repeating, we feel, for their humour, insight or sheer outrageousness. Star City does not necessarily support the opinions expressed in this column.

"She [Khaleda Zia] believes that the BNP did everything right and nothing wrong when in power in the last five years"

-- A senior BNP leader

Told a reporter seeking anonymity on the thoughts of BNP chief about the on-going arrests, on Friday. Source: The Daily Star

"But it [commercial billboard] is an income generating source"

-- Prof Syed Abul Kalam Azad

Treasurer, Dhaka University

Told a reporter when asked why huge quantities of billboards inconsistent with the concept and sanctity of the university are being approved, on Sunday. Source: The Daily Star

"It is unheard of and I am puzzled"

-- Dr M Zahir

Eminent jurist

Told a reporter after hearing the news of cancellation of Judge Faisal Mamud Faizee's LLB certificate, on Saturday. Source: The Daily Star

"So, why give him a farewell?"

-- Barrister Amir-ul-Islam

President, Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA)

Told reporters after Chief Justice Syed JR Mudassir Husain retired without receiving the traditional farewell from SCBA surrounded by controversies including not letting the judges work in independently, on Wednesday.

Source: The Daily Star

"We approve what comes to us through official procedure. We do not have time to think of beauty"

-- A DCC official

Told a reporter when asked why innumerable billboards were being permitted in the DCC board meeting that is damaging the city's aesthetic beauty, on Thursday. Source: The Daily Star

"Whenever there is dull thud in this busy market, most shopkeepers start running for their lives abandoning their shops"

-- Mohammad Jasimuddin

A vegetable trader, Rayer Bazar kitchen market

Told a reporter about the dilapidated roof of the market which can collapse on thousands of buyers and traders at any time, on Saturday.

Source: The Daily Star

"It is funny to know that former communication minister Nazmul Huda would use an automobile without registration"

-- A member of Huda family

Told a reporter after police filed a case against Huda for using an automobile with fake registration number, on Friday. Source: The Daily Star

"It looks like a coalmine"

-- Abdul Matin

Deputy Manager, Shadhar Bima Corporation

Told reporters after visiting the first and second floors of BSEC Bhaban for loss assessment after fire swept over it on February 26, on Wednesday.

Source: The Daily Star

Compiled by: Durdana Ghias

FOLLOW-UP

DHANMONDI EIDGAH

PWD's plan for Public Park buried under files

CITY CORRESPONDENT

Public Works Department (PWD) initiative to convert the western part of Dhanmondi Eidgah into a public park remains buried under piles of files.

The PWD's civil engineering and arboriculture wings are the concerned authorities to recover and convert the area into a park. Finding the public land unattended for years, the Eidgah mosque committee tried to grab the land and build a madrasa.

Recently the PWD took initiative to launch a project to make the place a public park in front of

the historic Eidgah, a demarcated area for Eid congregation built during the Moghul period in 1640. According to sources the PWD submitted a plan and a design of the Tk 13 lakh proposed public park to the chief engineer's office on February 14. The department of arboriculture, which would do the landscaping of the park is yet to send its report. The chief engineer's office will only process the file for the project after it receives arboriculture report.

"The chief engineer will review two papers sent by the two wings and will compile the information in one paper. Then he will send it to the ministry," said one of the PWD officials.

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Encroached area (left) in front of historical Dhanmondi Eidgah (right) by the Satmasjid Road where PWD plans to set up a public park.