gang of ten thugs on the New York subway, who gave a Hanukah salute; Mayor Bloomberg handed down a crystal apple by Tiffany's as Foundation for Ethnic Understanding recognised Askari's altruism and bravery.

The Principal Architect who retired two years back thought he was chosen as the project required lot of on-site freehand drawings, and he was good at that. Yet before completion, he was transferred to Rajuk to undertake work on Ambar Shah masjid. Since there was no conservation architect with formal training in the country, there was a lot of amazing trials and errors. Books, references to the building, photographs and community elders were consulted to draw an image of the building during the time of the Nawabs. Some rare photographs were located at the British Museum which helped to reconstruct the interior.

The Nawabatkhana was moved near the east gate to be used as a souvenir shop. After measured drawings of the total building were prepared with details re-constructed from the parts that existed then, mock-ups of wooden details, mouldings, column capitals and decorative elements were made to test materials and craftsmanship in the PWD workshops, and then subcontracted to various manufacturers and/or suppliers.

Walls were redone in brick and damp proof courses were inserted, often by taking out a major part of it. Roof draining was introduced by adding tiger head gargoyles on roof drains to prevent dampening of the wall. Interior walls were originally finished with wall paper; new papers in matching pattern were imported from abroad.

Marble floors were replaced by locally available materials; sandstone was imported from Jaipur in India to replace the flooring in the verandas, driveways and the grand *Chinitikri* design was reconstructed in one of the bedrooms with the help of very old craftsmen. The main dining hall floor was originally done in a biscuit pattern; modern tiles matching the colour and design were cut to match their shapes and replace them.

The original roof and floor of the Ahsan Manjil was constructed with wooden joists covered with burnt clay tiles sealed with lime concrete. These were replaced with concrete floors and the ceiling was redone. The ballroom and the living room both had decorative false ceilings; these were preserved by carefully removing the lime terrace and inserting a layer of concrete cast with imported admixture. The surface was coated with sand and cement slurry to seal the pores and the entire surface was covered with concrete tiles. The false decorative ceilings were saved intact.

The missing metal railings and light posts were reconstructed by following community elders recollection of the design. Local shops were hired to replicate the cast iron models. The toilets with no plumbing used to be emptied by janitors, accessing by cast-iron stairs; remains of one such spiral stair was repaired and used.

Replacing wooden stairs from the northern veranda by cast-iron spiral stairs raised controversy as the original feature was removed to satisfy modern aesthetics, though many colonial period buildings show the presence of similar wooden staircases, confirming that these could be a part of the period design.

Coloured printed glass works were done in the companion metal doors of the main hall. Closest matching local coloured glasses were used to replace some of these damaged panels even though the difference between the existing original glass work and the later day additions is noticeable.

For the purposes of a Museum, concealed electrical wiring was installed in the interiors; exterior flood lights were set up to illuminate the building at night, as part of a lighting plan compatible in character with the old building. The boundary walls in metal railings were redone. The eastern gate was renovated and added with a brick paved road forming the main entrance, which originally was from the north that was marred by the construction of a market. The existing road from the north was replaced with a grassed landscape. Another illegally built shopping mall sprung up opposite the east entry of the complex.

The north gate eventually collapsed from encroachment on July 20, 2008. The Dept. of Archaeology listed this structure as heritage which they failed to protect. They however did not list the main complex as it was used by the Museum authority. Recently I was talking to a friend of mine who is the foremost conservation architect in Bangladesh. He thought leaving out the gate was wrong as a conserved gate would have opened up the whole complex to the city with far-reaching consequences, which now only faces the river!!

Funny Movie Dialogues...

- I've got a good mind to join a club and beat you over the head with it. -- **Groucho Marx (Duck Soup)**
- All I've ever wanted was an honest week's pay for an honest day's work. -- **Steve Martin (Bilko)**
- If I'm not back in five minutes... wait longer! **--Ace Ventura (Pet Detective)**
- Scarecrow: I haven't got a brain... only straw.
  Dorothy: How can you talk if you haven't got a brain?
  Scarecrow: I don't know... But some people without brains do an awful lot of talking... don't they? **--Wizard of Oz**
- He got me invested in some kind of Fruit Company. **--Forrest Gump referring to Apple Computers.**
- My name is Dewey Finn. And, no, I'm not a licensed teacher, but I have been touched by your kids. And I'm pretty sure I've touched them. -- **Jack Black** telling the parents of his class how impressed he is by the musical prowess of their kids.
- Why go up there when people are dying to get down here? **--Elder Gutknecht (Corpse Bride)**