took a court directive to prevent cattle markets being set up on the streets of the capital during Eid-ul-Azha and to ensure the proper disposal of the animals' remains, in order to prevent environmental pollution. In an increasingly consumerist society, it has taken several tragic incidents of injury and death to bring to the notice the potential hazards of humungous billboards -- many of them unauthorised -- all over as well as outside the city. After an exchange of writ petitions and stay orders, the High Court ordered the dismantling of unauthorised and hazardous billboards, a matter which should have been monitored by the relevant city authorities.

Billboards are not the only dangers on the streets, however. Over the decades, many people have made news headlines after being electrocuted by torn and hanging electric wires which were not properly maintained. The sound of transformers exploding too, is a common phenomenon in the city. But it was only after the devastation in Nimtali earlier this year that the negligence of institutions in the power sector was brought to people's notice and, following the filing of a case in this regard, the courts ordered the relevant authorities to examine the city's transformers. The courts have also had to rule to ensure the security before natural and other disasters occur after social groups demanded the procurement of adequate fire-fighting and other rescue equipment necessary in the event of a major earthquake and other disasters and accidents.

While the streets may be hazardous, institutions are not safe either. Human rights groups have had to go to court challenging the "systematic failure" of the government to take action against cases of corporal punishment at schools. When a female headmistress of a school was called a "prostitute" by an education ministry official for not covering her head, it took a court directive to declare that women working at public or private educational institutions may not be forced to wear the veil, that covering their heads is their personal choice and that forcing them to do so is a violation of fundamental rights as enshrined in the Constitution. Extra-judicial punishment such as *fatwa* have also had to be declared illegal by the courts. The High Court has also issued guidelines against sexual harassment at educational institutions and the workplace, which are yet to be made into law.



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From ensuring safety and fundamental rights to protecting sanctity, the courts have also had to take responsibility for upholding the inviolability of the Shaheed Minar, asking the government to take steps so that functions and meetings are not held in the *bedi* or main part. The courts have had to order for the protection of Lalbagh Fort, a historic site on which multi-storied buildings have been constructed. Recent