

USING ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS IN BANGLADESH

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A seminar on 'Using environmentally friendly construction materials in Bangladesh' was held on August 24, 2014 at The Westin Hotel, Dhaka. Engineers and realtors called for using environmentally friendly construction materials. The use of clay bricks in construction causes tremendous pollution. This is destroying cultivable land and trees and pollution keeps rising due to this. There is no choice other than using alternative and environmentally friendly construction materials and switching to greener technology.

Mr. S. M. Kamaluddin, Chairman, Concord Group presided over the program. Mr. Anwar Hossain Manju MP, Honourable Minister, Ministry of Environment and Forest, The Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh was the chief guest where Dr. Engr. M. Shamim Z. Bosunia, President of the Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh, Mr. Kamrul Islam Chowdhury, Chairman of Bangladesh Environment Journalist Forum, Prof. Nazrul Islam, Former Chairman of University Grants Commission of Bangladesh and Mr. Lee Yun Young, South Korean Ambassador to Bangladesh were present as special guests. Environment consultant Mr. Saleh Mustafa Kamal P. Eng presented the keynote in the program.

Environment and Forest minister Anwar Hossain Manju MP praised the entrepreneurs for innovating environmentally friendly construction materials to cope with the changing needs of the country's booming building industry.

Dr. Engr. M. Shamim Z. Bosunia said that it is urgent to use environmentally friendly construction materials that would save people and reduce damage caused by natural disasters. He also urged for sewerage system integration and rainwater harvesting.

Prof. Nazrul Islam, in his speech, said use of innovative construction materials would increase with economic development in our country. We have to find out the ways to prevent our environment from the adverse effects that will happen with economic growth. On-site sewerage treatment plants should be integrated with buildings.

Mr. Kamrul Islam Chowdhury opined for green economy, green growth, green development etc. that can help achieve sustainable development. He emphasized that the construction sector should seize the opportunity of CDM mechanism that is going to be the thriving sector. He also advised to cut down emission and ensure sustainable agriculture, energy and development for all.

His excellency Mr. Lee Yun Young addressed the gathering by emphasizing the importance of environment, danger of global warming, sea level rise and Korean commitment towards ethical approach against environmental disparity. He lauded the role of Concord in producing environmentally friendly construction products and its Chairman Mr. S. M. Kamaluddin.

Introduction: For development to be sustainable, it must take into account social and ecological factors as well as economic ones affecting the living and non-living resource base, and of the long-term as well as the short-term advantages and disadvantages of alternative actions.

In recent years, policy planners are paying more attention to environmental problems without ignoring

economic growth. However, policy planners are often baffled if the two agendas are a false dichotomy. In spite of the dazzling development in different sectors of the economy, all policy planners do agree that all future developments in Bangladesh will emanate from two basic resources - **soil and water**. It is the judicious and economic use of these two resources that will promote development and meet the needs of future generations.

Concord became the industry standard:

Concord has always been at the forefront of construction technology in Bangladesh and its innovations in the construction industry have quickly become industry standards. Concord was the first company to set up automated batching plants to supply ready-mix concrete for construction back in 1990. Now it has multiple batching plants and a large fleet of transit mixers.

Concord's pressed concrete products:

Concord is also a pioneer in the field of concrete building materials. It was the first company to set up concrete block plants in Bangladesh and now has four fully automated plants that manufacture concrete blocks (load bearing blocks, hollow blocks and solid blocks), paving blocks, ceiling blocks and a host of other concrete products. Concord also has a terrazzo tiles factory and a roof tiles plant. These backward linkages are very essential to ensure the quality of construction work.

Concord brought in fundamental changes in construction technology in this country.

Pressed concrete products are safer during earthquakes:

Earthquakes are a sure occurrence but highly unpredictable. Bangladesh is within an earthquake prone area and is now divided into 4 zones depending on the likely severity of tremors. The vibration of the ground during an earthquake leads to the collapse of buildings and the falling of cladding materials (bricks) that break into fragments and burst into projectiles that can lead to serious injury or death for anyone in its path.

Dr. Harsh Gupta, then

Director, Geological Services of India in 1999 after Latur earthquake in India, commented "Earthquakes do not kill people, it is the falling debris that kills people". About 10,000 people died during that earthquake where most of the houses were brick built.

Construction technology changed substantially in other parts of the world with the advent of tall buildings to accommodate larger populations in relatively smaller areas. Tall buildings are basically a frame of columns and beams where the openings are filled in by any suitable material. In other parts of the world the open space is filled in by using lightweight materials like hollow blocks, smaller size bricks and dry wall partition.

Brick hazards:

A survey by the DOE in 1993 revealed - 2 billion bricks were produced that year in 1200 kilns scattered all over the country, most of which were in and around Dhaka. None of the kilns had 120 feet high chimneys which the DOE subsequently tried to enforce.

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