Deciphering the code

Infographic: Shaer Reaz

Source: Fatiha Polin; BNBC regulations

Illustration: Nahfia Jahan Monni

Amidst a series of tragic deaths resulting from fires - in the alleyways of Old Dhaka and the towering high rises of Dhaka North - came allegations of building owners and developers flouting codes and corruption among RAJUK officials. The Bangladesh National Building Code (BNBC) provides a list of rules to follow, but what do they actually mean?

Reading the infographic: - Follow the key for must-have elements of fire safety, according to the BNBC. - Follow the numbers for recommendations from architects and civil engineers. Smoke detectors Sprinklers Heat detectors Staircase Emergency exits Fire-resistant materials Alarm sounders Manual call points Main fire alarm control panels Fire fighting box

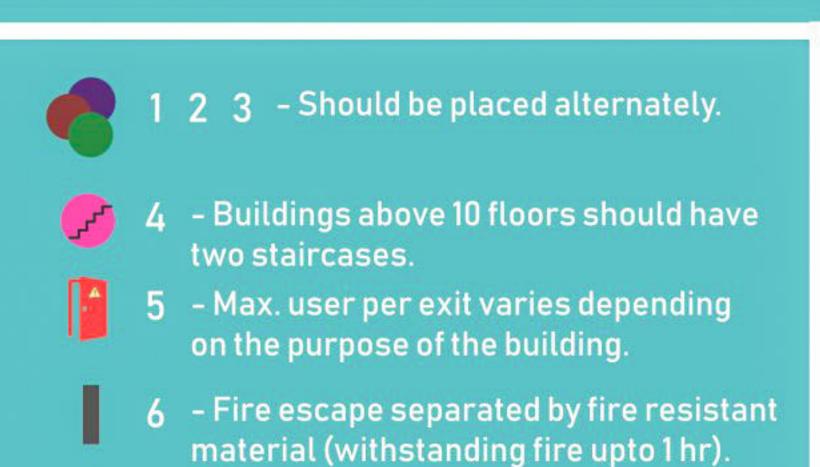
Fire escape specifications:

***All of the above should be present on all

- 1.5 meter (4.9 ft) minimum width
- Must have handrail

floors of the building.

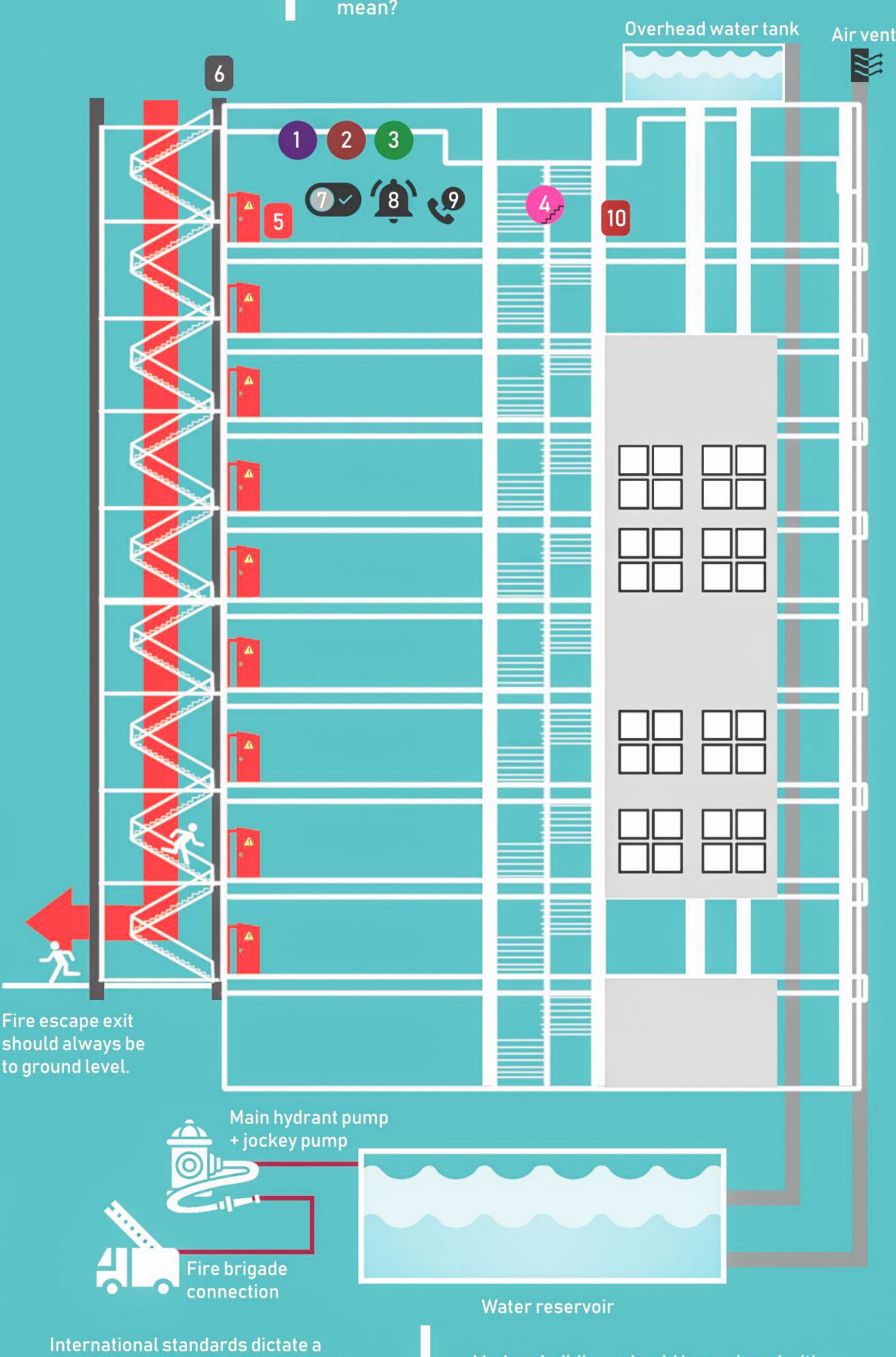
- Must be well-lit (emergency backup)
- Must have non-slippery floor
- At least 2 exits for 500 people
- At least 3 exits for 501-1000 people
- At least 4 exits for 1000> people



7 - Main fire alarm control panel should sound the alarm immediately upon use.

8 - Alarm should continue to sound even after main power is cut.

9 - Easily accessible manual call for fire alarm.



International standards dictate a fire hydrant should be placed every 300 metres (984 feet) for effective fire-fighting in urban areas.

 Fire fighting box containing standard fire equipment (hose pipe, extinguisher, blanket, fire axe, etc.) Modern buildings should be equipped with a dedicated underground water reservoir system, with fire hydrants that allow access to it for the fire brigade. In addition, an overhead water tank should also provide backup to the underground reservoir. Currently, it is difficult to determine how many buildings have a dedicated water reservoir system.