

MAN ESCAPES DHAKA after attending fire safety workshop

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ALARMIST CORRESPONDENT

An employee of a paper company in the capital's Farmgate has been absent without official leave ever since he attended a fire safety workshop at work.

He was last seen running out of the office soon after the workshop, apparently in a cold sweat, and shouting, "I've gotta get to the multiplugs. So many multiplugs!"

The employee who went AWOL has been identified as Assistant to the General Manager Sarwar Topu Shaker, said the company's human resources manager quoting Shaker's colleagues. People were sent to his home after he failed to answer calls from work for a stretch of 14 hours, as per HR policy, HR Manager Jimbro said.

They also visited his relatives, who said that as far as they knew, Shaker had left the capital with his wife and one-year-old son.

"Shaker was okay when the workshop started, but according to those sitting near him, he was gasping louder and louder as the fire safety instructor kept pointing out the ways a fire disaster could happen in the home."

Akhi Dastagir (name changed because she

isn't a real person), who sat next to Shaker at the workshop, told this correspondent that when the instructor started talking, Shaker like everyone else was joking around about fire safety and how ill-prepared we all were for a fire incident.

"I think the instructor sensed that he was not being taken very seriously, and so he dialled it up," Akhi said.

The instructor, whom we won't name because if you say his name thrice he reportedly just shows up, started narrating horror stories.

"I mean, it was like newspaper stories, you know? Like, 'he called his mom and said goodbye, but he did not know he was saying goodbye not just for the night but forever. If only he turned the switch off'... these kinds of stories," Akhi said.

Shaker started twitching when the instructor talked about how fire extinguishers could be unreliable if regular maintenance is not done.

According to Akhi, Shaker at that point muttered, "I have had a fire extinguisher at home for about three years but I did not once do any maintenance."

When the fire instructor talked about

keeping windows open in the kitchen overnight so that there is zero chance of gas accumulating from a leaky cylinder or pipe, Shaker started twitching.

"But what about dengue? We have dengue, I don't want my child to get dengue," Akhi quoted him as saying, adding that he kept repeating the word dengue, interspersed with gas, for a while after that.

But Shaker reportedly lost his equilibrium when the instructor narrated a story about parents who worked all day for their child, but were not wise enough to pay for safe multiplugs, which lead to unspeakable disaster.

"That's when he ran out of the seminar room shouting," Akhi said.

HR Manager Jimbro said, even though no one asked him anything, "The only fire he should be worried about is being fired!"

He then walked away with a smug look on his face.

UPDATE: A family member of Shaker got a text from him, which said, "I am out in an open area. Will throw away this phone because it's a fire risk. Am also working on a large enough fire extinguisher to douse the sun."



A Dhaka dweller, who has had enough of fire disasters in his city, nearing the summit of his mission to douse the biggest fire in the solar system.

PHOTO: TIM BOGDANOV

WHEN READERS WRITE

Families with less than 3 members to merge

SHAFIQ R BHUIYAN

The government has recently announced its plan to address the problem of small families.

The plan involves mandatory mergers of households with less than three members with nearby households across the country.

Minister of Family Privatisation Mr Justin Laizeau, who hails from the country's Bhabna district, made the announcement last week.

The decision has caused citizens to scramble to rearrange their living situations.

The move has left many questioning whether it is genuinely about strengthening family sizes or an attempt to expand free land to construct more shopping malls and AI parks by compressing as many people as possible into fewer homes.

The streets of the country's capital are filled with excitement and anxiety as families wait anxiously to know their fate. Will they be paired with their noisy neighbours who host karaoke nights every weekend? Or might they end up sharing a house with an unusual hermit who only communicates with carrier pigeons?

"We will examine the picture of the last 10 months," Minister Justin Laizeau said. His statement caused more confusion than comprehension. "We will allow six months for voluntary family mergers; after that, we will force families with less than three members to merge with their neighbours. We have discovered approximately three million such families in the capital alone and are currently verifying them."

"It's utter madness," exclaimed Munna Rascala, a prominent bachelor of a one-member family, clutching a stack of photos of his TikTok girlfriends as if they were his lifeline. "I didn't sign up to live in a sitcom with strangers. What's next, mandatory game nights and group yoga sessions?"

The government claims the mergers will benefit the entire community. However, some people wonder if there is more to the story.

Summer-salt Khan, one such citizen, expressed his concerns, saying, "Government officials will have to put in much effort to develop algorithms and compatibility assessments to ensure that families can live together in harmony. It will be a challenging task to promote domestic happiness because they have to ensure that families share a bathroom with people who have similar etiquette and smells."

Meanwhile, opportunistic entrepreneurs have wasted no time capitalising on the chaos, launching "Family Fusion Consultants", promising to facilitate seamless mergers for a hefty fee. Services include compatibility assessments, conflict resolution training, and custom family crest design.

Motivational speakers have also turned up and created videos on living a fulfilling life. The most viewed one is titled "How to live a companionable Shukh-on life from a lonesome Shukh-off life".

With such a short deadline, citizens are becoming increasingly concerned about implementing the family fusion experiment. It is difficult to predict the outcome of this experiment, and many people are still determining what to expect.

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Employer refuses to give workers raises because they will get mugged if they have money

JEAN PAUL SATIRE

A car company has stunned industry insiders with a revolutionary new approach that improves workers' quality of life and reduces the pressure on company coffers all at once. By refusing to give employees their scheduled raises and keeping them dangerously close to the edge of poverty, Stellar Motors – Dhaka's largest automobile importer – is confident it can reduce the risk of employees being robbed in the streets and losing the little wealth they might still possess.

The company's managing director, Kingkriporn Chowdhury, says the idea came to him in a dream.

"We had been dilly-dallying, trying to come up with a believable excuse about why we would not be giving anyone a raise after a tough but successful year. The country has seen high inflation, but there was no way to hide the fact that sales have met targets and revenue has been as expected. Yet, to make sure none of the profits are wasted on employee salaries, we had to find a way to refuse any sort of acceptable raises for the workers," he said, adding context.

"But last week, suddenly, I realised that only rich people, or people who look like they might be rich, get mugged. It's one of the worst things about society, a real hate crime against a specific social class. As the company's leadership, we suffer from this regularly. For example, I have not been able to ride public transportation in over a decade because of the risk of hijackers. As responsible leaders, we decided we wouldn't let the same thing happen to our beloved employees, who are like

family to us."

Earlier this week, Stellar Motors employees received an email from management, explaining to them the details of their newest company benefits:

"Dear colleagues,

In these difficult times, our company has stuck to its guns and come out on top at the end of another year. We could not have done this without the tremendous hard work of each and every one of you. Even though the only way we can reward you for this achievement is monetarily, Stellar Motors understands that in these troubled times, money can be a bad thing. No one wants a target painted on their back, and as the largest importer of automobiles, we have a responsibility to look out for you. Hence, the company has decided to withhold your raises, increments, and promotions this year. To survive the risks out on the street, there is no better way than to remain poor. And as a responsible employer, we will make sure of that.

Best regards,
Management"

Employees have shown mixed reactions to this decision. While many have expressed disappointment, a few of the delusional among the ranks are hopeful.

"This is a good thing. If they hold onto our money and give us the raise next year, or whenever it's safe to do so, that only means our money is in safe hands," said Bhondo Shikari, Assistant Sales Executive.

"Sure, I won't be able to buy my kids new clothes this Eid, but at least Stellar Motors is in good health."



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