

# Merani report on city safety tabled

Suggestions include having panel to pass and audit building proposals; legislative approval may be sought after Assembly polls



In the absence of emergency exits in high-rise buildings, rescue chutes are needed to help evacuate people should the need arise

pulsorily have fireproof elevators. Globally, after the September 11 attack, fireproof lifts have been made compulsory.

**PUBLIC AWARENESS**

Public awareness too, is important to avoid fire and building collapses. Each building should display emergency amenities and phone numbers, including those of nearest hospitals, Fire Brigade, ambulances. Each building should have emergency evacuation

plans, and all residents must be made aware of these. A copy should be with the Fire Brigade, which will aid them in emergency evacuation.

The State must also display the advertisement about the fire and safety. Each month, experts should conduct training for residents, involve them in safety operations such as fire drills.

**SIZE AND NUMBERS OF WINDOWS, DOORS**  
Most of the city multiplex-

es have faulty evacuation plans to cope with 'sudden threats', including terror. They must reduce excessive number of seats to make way for exits, an increase the number of exit door. Upcoming buildings should have the required sized windows, doors and exits doors, so that the Fire Brigade can evacuate people speedily.

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SUDHIR SURYAWANSHI

A year after the N V Merani Committee was instituted to recommend security measures in public places, it submitted the six-manual report to State Chief Secretary Johnny Joseph on Wednesday. Here are some of its suggestions for city safety:

**REGULATORY BODY**

A regulatory body to ensure safety of all iconic and high-rise buildings with experts on its advisory panel. With an increase in high-rises in the city, the Fire Brigade faces great difficulties to enter and douse the fire.

The panel will have city data, and all new building proposals will go through them. If any government and public building authorities want to implement security measures, they have to submit the proposal to this panel for scrutiny. The panel will ensure that standard open spaces, proper distances between two buildings and area amenities are maintained. It will conduct annual audits, make surprise visits

high-rises, where there is a possibility of being trapped due to fire, terror or criminal attacks, or industrial accidents, resulting in loss of life or serious injury, if no alternate means of emergency egress is available.

The escape chute system believes that the standard means of emergency egress (the internal stairway) should always be used to exit the building in emergencies. Due to the limited space and several high-rise buildings coming up in the city, escape chutes are an effective alternative method of evacuating people from higher places, when all other means of emergency egress are blocked. One escape chute can evacuate at least 25 people per minute. The government should make it mandatory for each building to have such escape chutes near windows. Buildings not fulfilling this condition must not be given approvals for water and electricity connections.

**FIREPROOF ELEVATORS**

The city witnesses at least 20 minor and major fires in a day. So, the developers need to install fireproof elevators to rescue people during emergencies. Not all elevators need to be replaced in the existing buildings, though new tall buildings must com-

**ESCAPE CHUTES FOR TALL BUILDINGS**

Escape chutes are needed for

**OFFICIALS SPEAK**

**Johnny Joseph, chief secretary:** "We have accepted the Merani report, though I have yet to study it. If we require a legislative approval for major changes, it can be done after the Assembly elections. We will implement all possible recommendations for the safety of the city."



Johnny Joseph

**N V Merani, former secretary, Public Works:** "The government should implement all the submitted suggestions, which will ensure disasters are averted. If any official does not implement the recommendations, then the State should take strict action against them. Officials must be made accountable, and people must also equally cooperate with authorities for their safety."

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