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## Team to assess safety aspects in buildings

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MANGALORE: After the recent fire accident at the “Trade Centre”, a multi-storey building here, the Mangalore City Corporation has now planned to form a team to survey buildings in the city and check if all safety norms have been complied with. It will be asked to suggest ways of making building owners adhere to safety measures.

However, the Nagarika Hitarakshana Samiti, a voluntary organisation, termed the plan a “big joke”, an “eye-wash” and an “attempt at covering up” the failure of officials and builders in maintaining safety aspects in buildings.

Commissioner of the corporation K.N. Vijayaprakash told *The Hindu* that Deputy Commissioner of Dakshina Kannada V. Ponnuraj convened a meeting recently to discuss the future course of action in this regard. In addition to officials from the Mangalore Urban Development Authority, the city corporation, and the Department of Fire and Emergency Services, a few builders and architects, participated in the meeting. Following this meeting, the civic body decided on forming a team to survey the buildings, he said.

The Commissioner said that the survey team would comprise architects and builders, in addition to officials. It would recommend to the corporation and the district administration steps to ensure that safety aspects were taken care of by the owners of high-rise buildings. It would help the corporation in framing a policy and prescribing safety aspects in buildings, he said.

The Commissioner did not, however, clarify on the deadline, if any, fixed for completing the survey and for implementing it.

G. Hanumantha Kamath, president of the samiti, wanted to know if there was a need to constitute such a team. "It is just an eye-wash to show the people that the district administration has initiated some steps to check the safety aspects in buildings following the recent fire mishap."

"Officials and builders are hands-in-glove in these matters," he alleged.

"The safety issue would not have surfaced now if builders had followed fire safety norms during construction," he said.

Mr. Kamath suggested that now the corporation should identify those high-rise buildings which had not adopted fire safety measures. Later, it should issue notices to those owners and make them adopt safety measures within three months. While issuing fresh licenses, builders should be told to adopt safety measures compulsorily, he said.