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‘Structural stability: onus on local bodies’

Staff Reporter

VISAKHAPATNAM: Local bodies should focus on ascertaining structural stability of buildings by appropriate scientific methodology that may involve studying the designs adopted, physically verifying the steel using scanners and verifying the strength of the concrete by non-destructive tests, the Visakhapatnam Centre of the Indian Institute of Architects has said.

Members of the association participated in a meeting organised by the Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation (GVMC) on the implementation of the Building Penalisation Scheme (BPS) last week.

The Visakhapatnam Centre Chairman D.V.K. Sudhakar in a memorandum to Municipal Commissioner B. Sridhar said that members of the centre were at the service of GVMC to lend a hand for any citizen-friendly activities.

The association, however, noted that when it came to safety there could be no middle path. In the light of the High Court’s remarks on ‘BPS Mela’ organised in Hyderabad, the purpose of the meeting organised by GVMC appeared to find a middle path for obtaining the certificate. On the implementation of the BPS, Mr. Sudhakar said violation of building norms led to inadequately ventilated buildings, a cause for poor health. Under BPS, instead of addressing the deficiency, citizens were being penalised, he said. “Levying of penalty is meant to be a deterrent for not repeating violation of regulations but with recurring schemes of penalisation/regularisation wrong signals were being sent that one could violate norms and pay the penalty,” he observed.

Mr. Sudhakar said when the need of the hour was co-operation from people and their participation for cash-strapped civic bodies to do their duties better, citizens were being alienated because of BPS policy and the innumerable sets of regulations heaped on them which were “the real cause for violations.”

Structural aspects

In his opinion accompanying the memorandum, a structural engineer, S.V.N. Suryanarayana Raju, said as far as safety of people living in the buildings was concerned there was only one approach- a comprehensive structural analysis of the building. Any other means of visible inspection should not be deemed as technically qualified assessment, he said. Comprehensive assessment was mandatory for buildings built on encroached areas like ‘geddas’ as there was more possibility of structural failure due to soil settlements and erosion.

