



VOL. X NO. 134 REGD. NO. DA 781

www.dailystarmnews.com

DHAKA SATURDAY JUNE 3, 2000

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BEST for the
3rd Millennium

JAISTHA 20, 1407 BS

SAFAR 29, 1421 HIJRI

16 PAGES PRICE : TAKA 6.00

Rajuk not equipped to implement Master Plan

No change in Rajuk's setup since '56

By Morshed Ali Khan

Rajuk is unable to implement the Dhaka Metropolitan Development Plan or the Master Plan due to acute shortage of technical manpower and absence of a monitoring mechanism, Rajuk officials said.

Absence of monitoring is resulting in unplanned urbanisation of the 590 square mile area under the jurisdiction of Rajuk. This is also giving rise to serious social, environmental and economical problems. Town planners and environmentalists said that with the current trend of unplanned growth, Dhaka will become uninhabitable in the near future and its inhabitants will face an 'environmental disaster.'

The officials said although it is mandatory to follow the Master Plan, Rajuk's existing structure "makes it impossible to ensure it". The Master Plan was devised over a period of four years at a cost of about Tk 16

crore. On August 4, 1997, provisions of the Master Plan was incorporated in the Town Improvement Act, 1953 through a gazette notification.

Rajuk's manpower from a peon to the Chairman is less than 450 now and its organogram has remained the same since its inception in 1956. How do you expect Rajuk to implement a modern Master Plan devised in 1998?" asked a senior Rajuk official.

The area under Rajuk's jurisdiction was increased from 320 square miles to 590 square miles when the government converted Dhaka Improvement Trust into Rajdhani Unnayan Katripakkha (Rajuk) on April 30, 1986.

Now, Rajuk's biggest problem is lack of technical manpower required to monitor implementation of the Master Plan. The total number of Rajuk engineers, town planners

and architects is only 35 whereas the number should have been many times that, the official said.

"Then again, all these 35 people are constantly busy approving building construction plans in the city. Rajuk has no mechanism to see what is happening even in Motijheel area which is so near Rajuk Bhaban," said another top official. The only way Rajuk comes to know about a deviation from plan or irregularity is through public complaints or newspaper reports.

"The reason behind so many planning irregularities and corruption in Rajuk is the indifference of successive governments to streamline it", the official said seeking anonymity.

"Successive governments have used Rajuk only to extract residential and commercial plots in the city. They have

See page 11 col 7

See page 11 col 7