

Builders violating elevator law

FAIZUL KHAN TANIM

High-rise buildings are still being constructed across the city with no elevators in violation of the new Bangladesh National Building Code (BNBC).

According to the code which has recently been updated, buildings above six storeys must have elevators. The code also emphasises on stand-by generators for the elevators and adds that the elevators of high-rises over ten storeys should be spacious enough to accommodate stretchers.

But many residents have alleged that not only the newly constructed buildings, relatively old apartments also do not have proper elevators. Some buildings do not have any despite the provision for installing them.

"Dhanmondi and Paribagh were the first areas where apartments were constructed. Many of these were built way back in the late eighties without elevators although there are provisions for installation. We have complained several times to the owners but they could not care less," said Rahman Alam who lives in Paribagh.

AHMortuza, town planner of RAJUK told Star City that the new BNBC has not been finalised yet. But they are following a revised code that clearly makes elevators mandatory in buildings exceeding five floors.

"There is a shortage of manpower for which the RAJUK can not regularly inspect newly constructed buildings and old ones as well to check whether the owners were following the rules," said Mortuza.

"Once a building's plan has been approved by RAJUK, it is supposed to be monitored by the RAJUK or any law enforcing body, which does not happen. Moreover, once the construction begins, some RAJUK officials allow the construction companies to violate the BNBC act in exchange of bribes. Buildings are often constructed two or three storeys more than what is mentioned in the foundation plan. No elevators are installed even seven or eight months after all the tenants have moved in," said a top official of RAJUK preferring

anonymity.

With the revised BNBC yet to be approved, developers and builders are taking advantage of certain loopholes in the existing building code.

Dr K M Maniruzzaman, head of BUET's urban and regional planning department, told Star City that there is

a Building Occupancy Certificate, which has to be maintained by developers and builders in order to monitor the construction process of buildings as stated by RAJUK.

"The height restrictions of buildings will be addressed in the revised act with Floor Area Ratio (FAR)--the amount of

free or open space around the building, determining how far it can go vertically up," said another urban specialist from BUET.

Dr Wanaiza, a lecturer at the Medical College for Women in Uttara said high-rise buildings without elevators could cause aggravation of respiratory dis-

stress for patients having asthma or other heart diseases.

"Patients suffering from back pain, hyper tension and heart problems should not climb stairs of high-rises. That is why elevators are a must for them," said Dr Wanaiza.



Most sky-scrapers in the city are without elevators, a must for buildings over six-storeys.

Rajuk's promotion farce?

SULTANA RAHMAN

Some 57 employees of the Rajdhani Unnayan Katnipakha (Rajuk) have been promoted recently amid allegations of gross irregularities and violation of government service rules.

The move, reportedly influenced by political factors, has generated frustration among other employees.

Reportedly, a number of government-backed Jatiyatabadi Sramik Dal leaders have been promoted despite not having the necessary qualifications to be elevated as per service rules.

There have been allegations against the authorities also that some officials took bribe to facilitate promotion of undeserving candidates.

"The entire organogram of Rajuk has collapsed with this move. It might create serious discontent," said a source in Rajuk.

Rajuk insiders said that some people gained promotion after the authorities agreed to entertain their demand that in case complications arose, they will return to their previous posts.

Meanwhile, many deserving officials have not been promoted.

Sources said that two grade three employees were elevated to first grade which was serious violation of the government service rules. In another bizarre development following the promotions, there were two superintendent engineers against a single post under the organogram.

"Government Service Rules bar promoting a class three employee straight to first class. The promotion process must be done step by step which means a grade three employee can only be promoted to grade two," said an aggrieved Rajuk official.

Two class three employees have reportedly become assistant directors to state and land which is a first class position. One executive engineer has been raised to superintendent engineer without promoting the present superintendent engineer.

According to the organogram, there are 12 posts for building inspectors but now there are 13 inspectors after the promotion of Sramik Dal president Kazi Amir Khasru.

When contacted, Secretary of housing ministry Iqbaluddin Chowdhury refused to make any comment on the issue.

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