

Rehab's price increase a blow to the middle-class



One of the many apartment buildings that lie in wait for prospective customers.

SULTANA RAHMAN

Potential buyers have expressed their dismay at the recent announcement from Rehab (Real Estate and Housing Association Bangladesh) that the per square feet price of apartments have been increased from Tk 175 to Tk 200.

The middle-income groups, who have been planning to buy a home of their own have been taken aback by the Rehab decision which will force them to count around two lakh.

Taka extra for a 1000 square feet flat in the city.

"I do not think I will be able to buy my dream house in Dhaka. I had saved some money for it but now the price has gone beyond my reach," said Sohel Arman, an official of a pharmaceutical company.

Rehab president Toufiq M Seraj also admitted that the middle-class would suffer from the raised price. "Initially, the increase in price will create a barrier for potential buyers from the middle-class," said Seraj.

At present, the average price for 1200 square feet apartments in the city is between Tk 25-50 lakh. The Rehab president said that they were thinking of constructing smaller apartments for the middle class families. They are now conducting a study on the possible market for 600 to 900 square feet flats.

Buyers have a liking for comfortable apartments with sufficient living space. But Seraj felt the mind-set of the Bangladeshi people has to change.

"Residents of India's Kolkata live within minimum space. If we want to live in an urban area, we will have to adapt to urban characteristics," said Seraj.

Real estate developers construct around 5000 to 6000 housing units in the capital while the demand is nearly 80,000 to 100,000 a year, according to Rehab stats. 254 private developers completed 450 projects during the last 10 years providing houses to just 12,000 families.

Due to the increase in price of building materials, the cost of under-construction and already constructed flats will go up by Tk 110-125 per square feet. For future

projects, a buyer might have to pay Tk 175-200 extra per square feet.

According to the Rehab president, the price of mild steel rod, an essential building material, has seen a 100 per cent rise from January 2003 to March 2005. 60 grade and 40 grade rods were Tk 22000 and 20000 in June 2003 but now they are Tk 41000 and Tk 38000. A bag of cement that sold at Tk 191 in June 2003 now costs

Tk270.

"If the government had managed to control the artificial price hike of construction materials, then we would not have needed to raise prices of flats," said Seraj.

Seraj called for formation of a national real estate and housing council under the Prime Minister's Office to facilitate this prospective sector that constitutes 14 percent of the GDP.

"This sector can contribute greatly to the urban housing solution. But it needs a comprehensive urban development plan and concerted efforts of the government bodies and real estate companies," said Seraj.

Waste can be source of income for slum-dweller women

10x3

CITY CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a national seminar on waste management in the city said proper management of waste could be a source of income for the mothers living in different slums.

"Slum dwellers can improve the quality of their life if they can make use of the waste, which can be turned into a source of income," said Dr Nazrul Islam, chairman of Centre for Urban Studies at Dhaka University who presented the keynote at the seminar.

Bangladesh Mahila Samity and Social Science Research Council of the planning ministry last week arranged the daylong seminar titled 'Waste management in the city: The role of slum dweller-mothers' at city's Neelima Ibrahim auditorium.

The main objective of the seminar was to chalk out a strategy for inclusion of slum-dweller mothers in waste management plan for the capital.

Rokia Afzal Rahman, former advisor to the caretaker government and president of Women Entrepreneurs' Association, Bangladesh was present at the

seminar as the chief guest.

Dr Islam in his paper said it is very difficult to calculate how much waste are generated in the capital a day as accurate information on the size of the city and its population is not available.

Citing example, the eminent urban researcher said according to Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) the size of the city is around 145 square kilometer while Japan International Cooperation Agency (Jica) calculates it as 181 sq km.

In 2001, as DCC says, around 60 lakh people lived in the city but city Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka says the number has crossed one crore. Recently the corporation has reduced the estimated figure to some 57 lakh.

According to Jica, the city generates 3,200 tonnes of waste a day while Waste Concern, an NGO working on waste management, calculates the figure at 4,500 to 5,000 tonnes.

The corporation collects 44 percent of the total waste. Besides, more than one lakh poor collect 13 percent waste and use them in the recycling industrial sector, the paper said.

Dr Islam claimed that there are

around 3,000 slums in the city but Local Government and Rural Development Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan told the Jatiya Sangsad recently that nearly 35 lakh people live in 4,500 slums in the capital.

"There are six lakh mothers in slums and they can earn money by producing bio-fertilizer from the collected waste through barrel composting system," said Maqsood Sinha, executive director of Waste Concern.

"Each kilogram of compost fertilizer sells at Tk 2.50 and conscious slum-dweller mothers can capitalise such opportunity through community participation to reduce poverty," he said.

He said wasted food items contributed to 60 percent of the total waste and this can be a source of income generation by making it bio-fertilizer.

"Waste is a great concern in city slums but it can be easily avoided by managing the wastes," said Dr Islam, adding, "Poor people generate less waste than the rich but the poor become the vital victims of the waste."

Dr Islam said that to create awareness among the slum

dwellers, committee could be formed in each slum on waste management. He also suggested introducing training and seminars on waste management. "Dhaka City Corporation has to set up permanent and portable dustbins in all slums," said Dr Islam.

The speakers stressed the need for building awareness among the slum dwellers and

urged NGOs to come forward in this regard. They said waste should be treated as resources rather than waste.

The seminar was organised to mark the International Women's Day. About one hundred slum-dweller mothers from 11 city slums participated in the seminar.



Many slum-dwelling mothers participated in a seminar on income from effective waste management.

healthouting, taxicab & train timing

HEALTH

Hospitals

Heart
National Institute of Cardio Vascular Diseases (NICVD),
- 9130800, 9122560-59

Burn
Dhaka Medical College Hospital
Burn Unit-8626812-6

Cancer
National Cancer Institute-8014914,
8826561-65
Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib
Medical University-8612550-4,
861455-9

Diabetes
Diabetic Research Hospital
(BIRDEM)- 9661551-5,
8616641-50

Mother & Child Care
Shishu Hospital- 9119119,
8116061-62
Azimpur Mother & Child Health
Training Institute- 8624827, 8624980

Eye

Istamia Eye Hospital-9110794,
9119315
National Eye Hospital- 8117202,
8114807

Dental

Dental College -9002035

Orthopaedics

National Orthopaedics (Pangu)
Hospital- 9114075, 9112150

General

Dhaka Medical College Hospital-
8626812-6
Rushmono General Hospital-
8317819

Holy Family Hospital-
8311731-25
Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib
Medical University Hospital-
8612550-4, 8614545-9

Bangladesh Medical College &
Hospital- 8115443, 9118202,
Shamarita Hospital- 9131901
Suhrawardy Hospital -- 9130800,

9122560-69

Salimullah Medical Collage
Hospital -- 7310061-4, 7319002-6
Cholera Research Hospital
(ICDDR)- 8811751-60
Monowra Hospital 8319802, 8318135

Blood Bank

Red Crescent Centre- 9116563
Sandhani (DMCH)- 8624040
Sandhani (SMCH)- 7310061,
7310061,7319022
Dhaka Medical Collage Hospital-
8626812-9

Eye Bank

Sandhani International Eye Bank-
8614040

Ambulances For Dead Body

Anzuman Mafidul Islam (Kakrail)
9336611, Gandaria 7319808,
7318166,
Al-Markajul Islam 9127867,

MARKET CLOSED

Gulshan 1, 2 markets-Friday
Elephant Road-Friday
Bishal Center-Friday
Baitul Mukarram Market-Friday
Polwell Market-Friday
BCS Computer City-Friday
Isha Khan Shopping Complex-Friday.
Rajlaxmi Complex-Friday
Stadium Market-Friday
Bangabazar Market-Friday
National Museum-Thursdays
Ahsan Manzil--Thursday.
New Market-Tuesday
Gausia Market-Tuesday
Mouchak Market-Sunday
Dhanmondi Hawkers Market-Tuesday
Dhanmondi Hawkers Market-Tuesday
Eastern Plaza-Sunday
Farmview Super Market-Sunday
Muktijuddha Jadughar-Sunday
Dhaka Zoo-Sunday
Shishu Jadughar-Sunday

TAXI CAB

Yellow Cab

Navana 9558065
Salida 9344477, 0171620881
Cosmo 9112959 and 8127191
Cab One 7113282-3
Nihon 9347277
Orion 8624741-2
Anudip 8125285 and 8127611
Capital 9352847

TRAIN TIMING

Subarna Express
Mahanagar Prabhati
Mahanagar Godhuli
Turna
Parabat Express
Joyantika Express
Upaban Express
Tista Express
Ekata Express
Upakul Express
Agnibeena Express

Leaves Dhaka at 4:30 pm
Leaves Dhaka at 7:30 am
Leaves Dhaka at 3:15 pm
Leaves Dhaka at 11:00 pm
Leaves Dhaka at 12:45 pm
Leaves Dhaka at 9:45 pm
Leaves Dhaka at 7:00 am
Leaves Dhaka at 5:00 pm
Leaves Dhaka at 8:00 pm
Leaves Dhaka at 9:20 pm

Union

8130485
Kool 0171826731

Black Cab

Cab Ex 9358401
Cabline 8321162
JBS Cab 019364575
Sajan 018126036
Anudip -- 8125285 and 8127611
Cab One 7113282-3

Palki

0171052500
Cab I 7113282
Jatri 0171540074
Nipun 9572277
R-Cab 8914782
Star Cab 9571919
Shihab 018202477 & 018228675
KGN 8620011

Reaches Chittagong at 10:35 pm
Reaches Chittagong at 1:55 pm
Reaches Chittagong at 10:55 pm
Reaches Chittagong at 6:40 am
Reaches Sylhet at 2:30 pm
Reaches Sylhet at 9:20 pm
Reaches Sylhet at 6:40 am
Reaches Bahadurabad at 1:05 pm
Reaches Bahadurabad at 11:15
Reaches Noakhali at 5:00 am
Reaches Jagannath at 2:30 pm

LIBRARY & INFO

Libraries, Cultural and Information Centers
Central Public Library- 8626001-4,
Shishu Academy- 9564128
Shilpakala Academy- 8614673
Bangla Academy- 8619550
Islamic Foundation- 9550280,
9556407
Nazrul Institute- 9114602
Ford Foundation- 8116133
Alliance Francaise- 8611557
Information Resource Center, The
American Center - 8813440-4,
986395-9
British Council- 8618867-8,
8618905-7
Community Development Library-
8113769, 8113604
Goethe Institute Int'l- Dhaka-
9126525-6
Indian Information Centre &
Cultural Library- 8850141-2
The Russian Cultural Centre-
9116314, 9118531, 9118314
Drik Photo Gallery- 9120125,
8112954, 8123412
Press Institute of Bangladesh
(PIB) 9330081-4