

South Banasree area waterlogged, lacks civic amenities

IMRUL HASAN

The residents of the city's South Banasree area under Eastern Housing Project are suffering from severe waterlogging, drainage problem, mosquito menace and lack of civic amenities.

Almost half of the area turns into a water body during the monsoon. At that time, the situation paralyses

normal life in the area.

Also, there is a huge swamp which is an ideal breeding ground for mosquitoes. Locals dump garbage regularly into the water body causing serious environmental pollution in the entire area.

"Stench coming from the swamp is unbearable during the monsoon,"

said Rita Haque, a resident of road number 12.

The authorities concerned have not yet taken any effective

measures to resolve the problems which are aggravating, locals said.

"The developer and the plot owners' welfare association remain silent about our problems," said a senior teacher of South Banasree Model High School.

The locals also complained that the area lacked basic amenities such as street lights, sufficient night guards and a permanent police outpost.

"Due to absence of these facilities,

mugging takes place here every day,"

said Kamrul Ahsan, a grocer in the area.

The residents of road number 12 and adjacent area have been suffering from waterlogging for long. The road remains waterlogged throughout the year.

During the construction of a building at West Block, water was pumped from the construction site to the road no 12 at East Block. Due to lack of drainage system, the road remains under water.

"Sometimes the road goes under 3 to 4 feet water that forces the residents to use a bamboo bridge for movement," said AK Rauf Miah who lives on road no 12.

"The problem could be solved by constructing a culvert or arranging a pipe for pumping out water," he added.

"When the roads go under water, our children cannot go to school," said Shahida Banu, a housewife of South Banasree area.

When contacted, AKM Rezaul Karim, deputy general manager of Eastern Housing, said they are trying to hand over the development works of

South Banasree to Dhaka City Corporation (DCC).

"Alternative measures will be taken in the next dry season to pump out water from the area," he said when asked about the waterlogging problem.

But DCC officials said they could not start the development work as the Eastern Housing authorities did not inform them of the problems.

"They have not sent any letter to the estate department of DCC requesting for the development works of South Banasree. So the works on roads, culvert and electricity lines could not be started," said Sultan Ahmed, sub-assistant engineer of DCC zonal office at Tilpapara.



The under construction community centre at Bashabo has become a shelter for illegal occupants. Construction work is also going on at snail's pace.

Community centre incomplete even after a decade

SYED TASHFIN CHOWDHURY

Locals of Bashabo are frustrated over the delay in completion of a community centre although work had started nearly ten years ago.

The authorities concerned claim that the delay is due to inadequate funds, weather and other problems experienced during the last few years.

The community centre project had started in September 1995 with a budget of around Tk 2.65 crore. The completion deadline was one year but work abruptly stopped within a few months.

"The contractors stopped their work after being threatened by local hoodlums who had seized materials and equipment. They were only willing to return the stuff in exchange of a huge sum of money," said Golam Hossain, Commissioner of Ward 27.

The contractors soon left the site leaving the partially constructed community centre unguarded. Within days, the two bigha area turned into a hub of hoodlums, drug addicts and other anti-social elements.

ments.

"We were scared to go anywhere near the community centre even in broad daylight," said Karim, a resident of Bashabo.

Even though the work was awarded to new contractors and a fund of nearly Tk 1.13 crore allotted, criminals continued to roam free in its compound especially after dark.

In the beginning of this year, the Sabujbagh police station shifted some of its Ansar personnel to the second building of the community centre due to space constraint elsewhere and that move has improved the situation.

"The activities of the criminals soon subsided and they are no longer seen in that area," said Karim.

Currently, besides being used as temporary residence of officers of Sabujbagh station and some DCC employees, the community centre is also used as a cowshed by local butchers. A decorator's shop treats it as its store.

The illegal occupation has damaged the plaster which is coming off the walls of the second building. Floating people often creep through the openings in the walls and pollute the area. The swamp at the back of the main building swells dur-

ing the monsoon and damages the walls of the main building and the boundary.

"The authorities are to be blamed for the existing problems which would not have occurred if the construction was completed on time," said a resident of Bashabo.

Locals have no other option but to rent community centres in neighboring areas like Mothertek, Rampura and Malibagh Chowdhurypara.

"We have high expectations from this community centre as its design is unique compared to other centres," said Nur Ali, another local resident. "The first floor of the main building is supposed to house the auditorium with a capacity to accommodate over 700 guests. The second floor would have a gymnasium and a library. The second building would consist of the local ward commissioner's office and offices of some co-operative associations."

"The contractors have promised that the centre will be completed by August 15," said Commissioner Hossain. He however, could not provide any satisfactory answers for the current illegal occupation of the community centre.



A part of Road No 12 in Banasree where waterlogging is commonplace.

10x3

9x2

9x3