

Modern structures with primitive facility for physically challenged

DURDANA GHIAS

Special arrangement for the physically challenged persons is virtually absent in modern structures in the city. Buildings and shopping malls do not have any provision for ramps for their easy access as the building owners and the architects are overlooking this vital aspect.

"When I first heard about the Bhasani Novo Theatre (planetarium) I became very eager to visit there. But when I approached the steps I was dismayed to find no ramp to pull my wheelchair up," said Selima Sharmeen Farzana Ruma, a physically challenged girl who works at Centre for the Rehabilitation of the Paralyzed (CRP) in Savar as a senior receptionist.

While around 10 percent of our population of 1.40 crore people are suffering from various forms of disability we are paying virtually no attention to make special arrangements so that they can move smoothly.

"The first condition to incorporate us into the mainstream is to let us work like normal people. But nobody thinks about us. If we cannot enter the workplace then

how is it possible?" Ruma asked.

She said that building ramps, proper height of the desks, toilet taps and commodes in accordance with the wheelchair and proper width of the lifts and toilet doors are very important.

"Many times I had to hear 'What are you doing? Do you want to break the door?' while trying to

myself," she added.

There is no system for ramps with public transports. Many times she had to choose a taxicab instead of using a public transport. It is virtually impossible to move in wheelchair on the city's high and broken footpaths.

"If I have to go anywhere on a bus I have to take help from others

boy working at CRP said: "When I wanted to get admitted to a school to continue my studies the teachers said it would not be possible for them to enroll me because I'm in a wheelchair."

"Often people treat us unfairly as if we are cursed. We also have the talent and abilities of a normal human being but we do not have proper opportunity," he said.

Persons With Disability Welfare Act 2001 points out the accessibility of physically challenged people in all public places.

Ali Imam, ex-additional chief architect of the public works ministry and architect of Bhasani Novo Theatre admitted that the ramp system outside the Theatre was missed somehow which should have been taken into notice.

"It is true that we do not have enough special arrangements for physically challenged people. We should develop this culture. One reason is we do not have any idea about the number of people who are physically challenged because they do not go out that much. But on the other way the reason of their not going out is the absence of special arrangements," said Imam.

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go through the narrow toilet doors. I had to pay the liftman to push my wheelchair up. And when I refused, he blackmailed me emotionally by saying that this is why I had become paralysed," said Ruma.

"I don't want to pay for others' sympathy. I want to do my work

to reach my seat. Sometimes I feel like not going out by bothering others," she said.

"I find a negative mentality among people. So in the absence of special arrangements it is very hard to move with self-respect," added Ruma.

Sajjad Hossain, an 18-year old



When will the physically challenged citizens have their rights for easy accessibility?

KHOKA'S CORNER FOOTPATH GONE



A developer takes over the footpath on the Satmasjid road near Mohammadur Police Station. As soon as the Trust Builders Limited started the construction, they took over the footpath sending pedestrians on to the main road. The picture shows that the footpath is totally encroached with construction materials lying around. In almost all construction sites similar scenario prevails.

Rajuk to warn public against unauthorised developers

TAWFIQUE ALI

Unable to take any action against the defiant private housing companies, the Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakhya (Rajuk) chairman has decided to warn the general public through advertisements so that they are not duped by alluring advertisements of illegal housing projects.

The Rajuk move comes at a time when a number of big private housing companies have embarked on massive publicity campaigns for selling their plots and flats falsely claiming that Rajuk had approved their projects.

"We are now going to run advertisements -- even on television channels and radio stations, to raise public awareness over false claims by the private housing companies," said Rajuk chairman KAM Haroon.

He told the Star City that the private housing companies' claim

of having approvals from Rajuk is absolutely baseless.

"We have already sent similar advertisements and hopefully they will come out in a day or two," said Haroon. "We have repeatedly served notice to each individual company asking not to publish advertisements of their unapproved housing projects."

"Running advertisements claiming that their projects are approved is just illegal," said the Rajuk chairman earlier.

At least half a dozen big housing companies, claiming to own thousands of acres of land at their disposal, are luring the innocent people through a frenzy of advertisements recently -- in the media including newspapers, magazines, television channels, radio stations and on gigantic billboards in public places.

Most of these companies are not even registered with Rajuk let alone having approval of their projects under the Private Housing Projects Land

Development Rules of 2004, a mandatory prerequisite for urban development, according to Rajuk officials.

"These false claims by a number of companies of having their housing projects approved by Rajuk are aimed at duping the naive people to buy plots or flats and it is an illegal practice. This is a punishable offence," said another top official at Rajuk requesting anonymity.

The housing project development rules of 2004 clearly prohibit sale, allotment and advertisements of a proposed housing project in any manner before obtaining approval from the authorities.

The Building Construction Act of 1952 (amended in 2006) provides that whoever commits an offence by contravening the provisions of the act or by failing to comply with any directions by rules shall be punishable with imprisonment of up to seven

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Highrises threat existence of Baldha garden

With the approval of highrise structures along the Baldha garden Rajuk's officials have once again proved that they care little about the city and its heritage

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dent of the Baldha garden. den, "Pro the longed one obstruction of ancient sunlight pose n t of thousands of rare trees in Baldha garden is under threat," he the added, city that to Rajuk those high had been rise buildings were being dis- Unnayan rise buildings were being dis- Kartripakhya) constructed play- ing high rise four years ago, many time buildings blocking the environmen- sun light talists, media essential for personalities, the survival of local residents and the Baldha gardens surround almost all raised objec- sides of the tions many help 3.38-acre times, but in the vain, said a sun, is concerned source. "But sham- those people bles are so power- as it ful that noth- turn- ing could stop into the construc- tion. ing but a rusty skeleton of after the species of noon." trees will be metal since it Zaminder Bhuiyapat Norendra Narayan Roy Chowdhury established the Baldha garden. The sundial used to display the time from sunrise to sunset. The time dis- played by the clock has always been accurate, lamented the superintendent of the garden. "But 1936 and 1940. Baldha garden is home to some 18,000 trees and 92 families,



can only 381 genus display time and 800 after the species of noon." trees. Bhuiyapat ra is one of the rare species housed in the garden. Before the invention of paper, its bark was used as a material to write on. A few other rare plants in this garden include Amazon lily, Latabot, Krishnabot, Papyrus, Nagalingom, Magnolia and Raj Ashok.



With a rich collection of trees and plants Baldha Garden now faces extinction due to construction of several high-rise buildings depriving the garden of sunlight.