

FOLLOW UP

EIDGAH MOSQUE

PWD to build Public Park on open space

WAHIDA MITU

Public Works Department (PWD) has decided to convert the western part of Dhanmondi Eidgah adjacent to Satmasjid road into a park soon, said the concerned sources.

"The western part of the Eidgah is originally designated for a park. We have instructed the PWD to build a public park with a grill-fence around it", said ASM Ismail, chief architect, Department of Architecture.

According to the design of the park there will be a grill-

fenced boundary. Arboury Culture wing of the PWD will plant trees in the park where the visitors can take rest and spend their leisure time.

"The process of making a park is going on. We are waiting for funds to start the work," said PWD Executive Engineer Taslim Uddin Jamadar.

The residents welcomed PWD's plan as their long cherished dream is going to be fulfilled. The Eidgah mosque committee has long been illegally encroaching on the open space in a bid to grab it for

what they said to build 'a car

park'. "To convert the area into a park is urgent. Otherwise the mosque committee will grab the place like the eastern part," said an elderly resident of the area.

According to several sources, on June 11, 2006 Ministry of Housing and Public Works permitted the mosque committee to use 2.2 bighas of its land on the eastern side of the Eidgah under strict conditions.

One of the conditions included that other than religious structures; the mosque committee must obtain prior permission from relevant authorities if they build any other type of structures on the site. But other than the mosque and madrasa there are also a few tea stalls, a packaging workshop is currently situated inside the area.

Other than using the permitted area the mosque committee as a first step of encroachment started to build a madrasa on 7.15 katha last year. The PWD did not permit the mosque committee to use the place as it has a prior plan to make a project building there.



PWD plans to build a public park on this space on the western side of the historical Eidgah in Dhanmondi.

STAR PHOTO

8x3

5x3

10x3

Sonargaon Hotel does

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Construction Act of 1953, Metropolitan Building Construction Rules-2006 and Bangladesh National Building Code (BNBC) and non-compliance is a punishable offence.

The project includes a multi-storyed car parking lot, a convention hall, tower block, boundary and retaining walls and peripheral road network.

Rajuk served the first notice to the hotel authorities for non-compliance on August 6 last year.

In the second notice served on August 17, the Rajuk authorities asked the hotel authorities to show cause within seven days why unauthorised construction should not be demolished.

The notice also stated that the hotel authorities were going on with construction work in violation of the Building Construction Act of 1953.

Rajuk further instructed Hotel Sonargaon to prepare a construction plan in consultation with Buet (Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology). A team of experts from Buet conducted a study on the nature of

development work in the said canal.

Prof Mujibur Rahman, who led the Buet study group, said constructions like BGMEA building and Sonargaon Hotel extension project are not compatible with the recommendations the team made in their study report.

But the Sonargaon Hotel authorities have all along been negligent to Buet's observation.

Sources said, following Rajuk notices on the hotel, Civil Aviation and Tourism secretary Shahid Alam, a former chairman of Rajuk and now ex-officio chairman of the Hotels International Limited (Hil) that runs Sonargaon Hotel, intervened in the matter and asked the Rajuk authorities not to proceed any further.

The secretary held a meeting with Rajuk chairman KAM Haroon on August 30 at Sonargaon Hotel and advised the Rajuk chairman not to go further with action against the hotel authorities, added the sources.

The secretary-level intervention put off legal action by Rajuk against the authorities of Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel.

After the meeting, the

Sonargaon Hotel authorities were supposed to apply for and obtain the permission, but they did not obtain permission as yet.

Honorary chairman of Centre for Urban Studies Prof Nazrul Islam said their (Sonargaon Hotel authorities') attitude indicates that they are above everything. "It is regrettable that a prominent organisation like Sonargaon Hotel assumes to be so audacious."

Executive member of Bangladesh Poribesh Andolan (Bapa) architect Iqbal Habib strongly condemned the destroying of the Begunbari canal and termed the roles of political governments, Rajuk, Dhaka Wasa (Water And Sewerage Authority) and Bangladesh Railway dubious.

"Both the Awami League and BNP governments were involved in mindless plundering by allotting plots on natural water body like the Begunbari canal on political consideration," said Iqbal.

He demanded the Sonargaon Hotel authorities pull back from their unauthorised development work. He also demanded immediate restoration and demarcation of the canal and implementa-

tion of recreational facilities on it.

Managing Director of Sonargaon Pan Pacific Hotel Gholam Nabi said he instructed the project officials to obtain post-facto approval a couple months back.

"It is an open secret that government organisations usually do not follow the building construction laws and rules," Nabi said adding, "But I agree that land development and construction must be in compliance with building laws and rules."

Even Public Works Department (PWD) itself does not comply with building rules. To establish the authority of Rajuk, PWD has to start abiding by the building laws first, Nabi suggested.

Rajuk has hardly been able to exert its authority in bringing the defiant builders of unauthorised buildings to book. Rajuk's success is limited to serving mere notices on the errant builders.

It has consistently lost in almost all the cases it filed in court against defiant builders who are invariably powerful.

Lilyma Khanom

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Now I have 210 machines and 350 workers," she said.

Lilyma is grateful to her husband, parents, brothers and sisters, friends and all others who helped her in setting up and running the factory. She is the guardian of her family and she looks after her siblings since her father's death.

"I could do a government job. But I wanted to become a businessman like my father and grandfather," she said.

"Fourteen years ago it was quite unthinkable that a girl can become a businesswoman. The negative attitude among relatives and acquaintances was quite high. The society was always against me as I was an educated woman wanting to do something offbeat," said Lilyma.

"No political party left me in peace since I started my business. As an owner of a garment factory I urge the government and the political parties to let us run the business smoothly," she said.

Garment factories

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"One problem is they do not get any formal training. It is like a driver who does not know how the engine works. They can work but if faced with a small technical glitch they cannot solve the problem," said Dr Islam.

The problem of 'on-the-job' training is that it hampers the productivity of those giving informal training to the new recruits.

"Many owners are hiring managers from countries like Sri Lanka, India, Korea and China. But the lifeline of our economy cannot depend on foreign recruits. It is not safe also because there can be a conflict of interest when a Bangladeshi company with an Indian manager and an Indian company vie for the same customer," he said.

Dr Islam it is hard for BIFT to get good students, as garment sector is not the first choice of their students. "A university graduate would rather remain unemployed

then working in the technical line of garment sector," he said.

"Some donors are interested to assist BIFT but the institute wants government support to survive, grow, compete and win because our rival countries' governments are investing lots of money in this sector. If we cannot do the same, we will be struggling for survival," he said.

Lilyma Khanom, managing director, Paramount Knitting Limited, said lack of interest among educated people to work in the technical side is a big reason for shortage of skilled manpower in this sector.

"Educated people do not want to do something tough or offbeat and shy away from technical jobs. After passing masters everybody wants to maintain 'status' and wants to be called 'sir' in his workplace. But in the garments sector it is not possible," said Lilyma, who started from the job of a quality controller and now owns a factory.

Ugly overhead

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such signboards while the institute officials claimed that they have permission.

Another signboard on Mirpur Road at the end of Manik Mia Avenue belongs to a real estate company named Siza Development Company Ltd. Saifur Rahman, general manager of the company, said he was not aware of DCC's illegal signboard demolition drive. He said they have permission for setting up the signboard and he pays DCC for it.

Md Kamruzzaman Chowdhury, estate officer of the DCC, told Star City that the corporation in a circular has asked the companies concerned to remove their signboards by January 31. From February 1, DCC will conduct a drive against the illegal overhead signboards.

He said that owners of those illegal overhead signboards would face criminal case if they did not remove those.