



This street was supposed to be 20 feet wide, but the buildings from both sides have encroached upon it, reducing its width to less than 12 feet, in the capital's south Paikpara in Mirpur. There are several hundred more buildings like these in the area but Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha (Rajuk) has not taken any action to free the roads. The photo was taken on Thursday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS



Abdul Hamid steps into 74

UNB, Dhaka

President Abdul Hamid stepped into 74 yesterday. On this occasion, officials and employees of the president's office greeted Abdul Hamid, who took over as the country's president on April 24, 2013, at a ceremony at the Darbar Hall of Bangabhaban. Thanking all for the greetings, the president said, "The love of people and the inspiration from the ideal of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman helped me reach my present position. I want to follow the ideal of

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

JP's FOUNDING ANNIVERSARY Raushan hopes for withdrawal of cases against Ershad

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Raushan Ershad yesterday said she talked to the government over cases filed against Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad and hoped that those would be withdrawn. "I have already demanded withdrawal of his cases. You (JP men) don't need to be worried. The cases should be withdrawn. I have already talked (with the government)...and am working on it," said Raushan, also the senior co-chairman of JP. She made the comments while addressing JP's 31st founding anniversary in the capital's Suhrawardy Udyan. However, men of JP were not convinced and during her speech chanted slogans demanding immediate withdrawal of the cases. In response, she said, "I have already said the cases will be withdrawn but for that you have to make the party strong."



Ershad

Lower courts are holding trials over three cases filed against Ershad. The cases involve corruption in purchasing radars, allotment of plots and murder of Maj Gen Abul Manzur. On November 28, Raushan at a programme said she was

SEE PAGE 5 COL 4

1,100 buildings encroach upon Dhaka roads

Though informed repeatedly, Rajuk is yet to take action

MAHBUBUR RAHMAN KHAN

Over 1,100 buildings in Kalyanpur and Paikpara in the capital's Mirpur were built encroaching upon roads in violation of the city's master plan, but the Rajdhani Unnayan Karipakkha (Rajuk), which is authorised to monitor irregularities in building construction, is overlooking the issue.

As a result, the local road network has shrunk by up to eight feet, from 20 feet to around 12 or 14 feet at many spots, creating serious traffic jams every day.

Locals fear that if the road is not widened, rescue operations during emergencies like fire or earthquake will be seriously hampered because fire fighters will not be able to reach the spot through the narrow roads.

Considering the gravity of the situation, Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) has kept the issue on its agenda at the 2nd inter-organisational meeting with Rajuk and others, to be held today.

During the 1st inter-departmental meeting on August 20 by DNCC, it was decided that Rajuk would play a key role in evicting illegal occupants and widening the access roads of Paikpara and Kalyanpur to 20 feet in line with Dhaka's master plan.

But there has been no action to date. Mahbubur Rahman Nayan, owner of one of the buildings that occupied the road in Dakkhin Paikpara, claimed that he had vacated some space for the road.

But in reality, the owner has built ramps on the "vacated space" for

two shops situated at the ground floor of the building.

When asked, Nayan said, "We'll remove them [ramps] if the authority asks. But there are other houses which should leave their front space too."

Near Battala, another building is being constructed without leaving any space, though its neighbouring building was constructed following rules.

"Such discrepancies make law

possible for shrinkage of the roads. Rajuk received these letters on December 29, the correspondent did not see any sign of action. All 19 letters have similar content except for the names of the roads and areas.

In one of the letters, the councillor said according to the master plan of Rajuk the width of the road at the

possible to rescue victims, which will eventually increase the death toll and financial loss," read the letter.

Requesting Rajuk to take action, the signatory of the letter, Mannan, mentioned the holding numbers of the buildings that have narrowed the roads.

According to the Detailed Area Plan (DAP), since most of the major road networks in the area will be free from non-motorised transport (NMT), these roads should be widened to at least 20 feet, if not 24 feet, to facilitate the movement of NMTs, thereby making the movement of residents easier.

Contacted, Rajuk inspector of the area Mizanur Rahman said they could not conduct drives because of manpower crisis and in want of law enforcers.

Asked why Rajuk did not stop the newly constructed and under-construction buildings that have flouted DAP at the initial stage, he said, "We do."

Wishing anonymity, a house owner alleged that Rajuk officials allowed owners to erect buildings flouting rules in exchange for "bribes". Refuting the allegation, Mizanur said, "If anyone wanted money, I'll suggest locals catch them. In fact, the owners have brought the allegations to hide their crime."

"I won't deny that they [inspectors] have some weakness but we're trying to strengthen the monitoring system," said Rajuk Chairman M Bazlul Karim Chaudhury. "We'll take action if we get specific allegations," he added.



Another occupied road in south Paikpara.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

abiders frustrated," said the owner of a flat of the neighbouring building.

None of the under-constructed building owners were available for comments.

To give a reminder to the authority, Councillor of DNCC's ward no-11 Dewan Abdul Mannan sent 19 letters, recommended by Mayor Annisul Huq, to Rajuk for taking necessary action against 1,123 houses

intersection of SS Clinic and Battala Shariatpur Tower was 20 feet but the owners had occupied the road constructing temporary establishments.

As a result, the width of the road has been reduced to 12-14 feet, it said, adding that under the circumstances, it was very difficult for people and vehicles to use the road.

"Even if a natural disaster like earthquake takes place, it will not be

SINGER LED TVs

It's more than a TV

Bring home the movie theatre experience

Exchange your old TV with new Singer LED TV

Get up to tk. 15,000 Discount!

Bring your old CRT or LED TV of any brand and size* to Singer outlets and get up to tk. 15,000 discount on purchasing a new Singer LED TV.

* Conditions Apply