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## Guwahati not likely to be encroachment-free



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Lack of proper rehabilitation policy for increasing population and callous attitude of the civil machinery have hampered the development of the city. Dream of Clean and Green city shown to the citizens has been shattered. With the elections coming closure people are advised to have patience as the new government would perform better, but this could not be done till now even after several guards have changed. Encroachment is a chronic problem of the Guwahati city, the capital of Assam and local authorities have failed to provide solution to overcome this menace. From time to time it has been observed that the civil administration takes steps to evict unauthorized occupation of government land by damaging the dwelling huts of the 'poor occupants', who have no other place for shelter under the sky. After such

eviction drives, those hut owners re-establish and within a few hours they find their shelter ready. The exercise by the administration remains futile. The banks of rivulets like Bharalu in the city are badly affected with such encroachments. It has been found that a large part of the banks of the river are encroached by rich and poor people. Whereas the rich and influential people manage to construct even permanent cemented structures of shops, houses and temples etc, the poor have to face the brunt of administrative ire.

The barriers constructed around to save the rivulet beds have now been demolished along a large part of it. Recent deployment of dredgers to dig Bharalu in order to control floods during rainy seasons and dumping the earth on its banks have also helped the encroachers, who have got earth filling 'free of cost'. A large number of temporary constructions have turned to be permanent structures. On these unauthorized encroachments a large number of residential and business places have come up in the area. Hundreds of shops have been opened inside the Bharalu enclosures itself. Around most of the city markets encroachments on the footpaths and roads are abundant. This creates much harassment to pedestrians, who find it difficult to walk over. The women, elders and the children feel much inconvenience due to such encroachments. In narrow lanes a number of shops have come up with unauthorized shops and parking places. Those also create much hurdle.

Interestingly, the Guwahati Municipal Corporation (GMC) and local police are alleged to be satisfied with such encroachments, because the GMC collects fines from such encroachers and the police get tips from the petty traders. The encroachers feel that by paying money to these people they get rights for encroachment.

Parking of vehicles on roadside is another problem in Guwahati. Local administration has band a number of parking places under the flyovers after the recent bomb blasts in the city. No alternate arrangement has been done for the vehicular traffic to park. As a result the roads of the city have turned into the parking places. Unless alternate arrangements for parking places and rehabilitation of down-trodden people are made there is no chance of getting an encroachment-free Guwahati.

The civil administration's attitude to please all sections of the peoples makes it difficult to follow any firm policy. In fact there is no such policy which can

be implemented. The situation is beyond the control of the administration because of political interference which needs to be eliminated.

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