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Proposals cleared, Rs 4.5 cr allocated but Bridge Market still a corner of neglect

The commercial hub of the city in Sector 17 is frequented by hundreds of visitors everyday. But only the Plaza seems to be the focus of attention of authorities. The market nearby is in dire need of a facelift.

The area near the Bridge Market has been neglected for long. Over the years, numerous proposals have been passed, but nothing moves beyond that.

Also, Rs 4.5 crore was allocated for upgrading the market, of which half was to be borne by the Municipal Corporation and the rest by the UT Administration.

According to a proposal passed in February last year, the stretch from Bridge Market to Sector 9 had to be developed with concretised flooring, new streetlights, and a green area with fountains.

A children's corner, complete with swings, was also proposed. But so far, besides parts of the area being dug up, no 'progress' is visible.

To make the matter worse, the contractor left the project mid-way. Now, the Municipal Corporation is looking for a new contractor.

An MC official says the process of re-allotting the tender has started. “Work would be allotted to a new contractor in the coming days. And the contractor who left the project mid-way will be fined as per rules,” the official says. “The market will get a makeover soon.”

Varinder Guleria, president of the Progressive Traders Welfare Association, says in the “last 30 years, area near the Bridge Market has seen no development”.

“We’ve held numerous meetings with the Home Secretary, Municipal Commissioner and councillors, but nothing happens,” Guleria says. “The flooring in the area is broken and there are no lights. Rains add to the misery as parts of the market have been dug up.”

Around a year ago, Guleria adds, the UT Administrator had assured them that work would be completed within a month, “but nothing has happened”.

Another shopowner says business is adversely affected because of the delay. People, he adds, are reluctant to come to the Bridge Market, especially in the evening “as the area is plunged in darkness and

there's not enough space for people to sit".

The area is also a hub of encroachments. This, despite Sector 17 being declared a zero-tolerance zone for encroachments.

Area councillor Pardeep Chhabra says, "I raised the issue in the House recently, and I've been assured that work would restart soon. The sector is the commercial hub of the city. The authorities will ensure its beautification."

Parking lot proposal

Another proposal for Sector 17 was construction of a multi-level parking lot. The proposal had received a nod more than two years ago, but the construction is nowhere in sight.

These days, however, work to remove electricity cables from the site of the parking lot has started. But the parking situation remains as chaotic as ever.