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Exhibition showcases architecture

Sudeshna Banerjee



Jogen Chowdhury, Usha Uthup and Gita Balakrishnan light the inaugural lamp at the exhibition venue as Ayan Sen (extreme right) looks on

The hall at CII-Suresh Neotia **Centre of Excellence for Leadership** turned into a showcase of significant architectural projects recently completed or underway in Bengal and across the country thanks to a three-day exhibition organised by the Indian Institute of Architects (IIA), West Bengal chapter, last month. Titled IIA Bangiya Sthapattakala, the exhibition drew 60 firms, 250-odd architects and five institutes teaching architecture.

The exhibition was inaugurated by painter and Rajya Sabha MP Jogen Chowdhury and singer Usha Uthup. "Architecture of an area can help form the mentality of residents. If a neighbourhood is architecturally well-planned, it inspires serenity. If it is haphazard, the opposite happens," said Chowdhury. Areas like Burrabazar and Sealdah needed proper urban planning, he said, while taking a tour of the exhibits.

A film titled *Uncommon Sense* on the life and work of legendary architect Laurie Baker, written and directed by his grandson Vineet Radhakrishnan, was screened after an introduction by him.

The second day witnessed a floral art installation workshop under the guidance of architect and urban designer Monica Khosla Bhargav.

Three young architects made a presentation and Sunil Ghosh, the senior-most architect of the chapter, was felicitated on the occasion of IIA's centenary year on the final day.

Gita Balakrishnan, the chairperson of IIA, WB chapter, said: "Often we architects are not aware of what kind of work our peers are doing. Neither are people acquainted with us. This is the first time we are holding such an exhibition outside the ambit of a broader event. It will help the fraternity learn from each other and raise the bar for architects of this region."

The reason for choosing the venue, she added, was to attract walk-in visitors from City Centre.

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Ayan Sen, one of the organisers who stays in Sunrise Greens, New Town, and works out of his AL Block office in Salt Lake, pointed out that Bengal was on the cusp of an architectural awakening. "Bengal is culturally rich when it comes to music, literature or the other forms of visual arts. But so long people did not have much exposure to good architecture in post-colonial times. Young architects like us are trying to drive that transformation."









There are plans to hold the exhibition on a grander scale next year, the organisers said.



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