

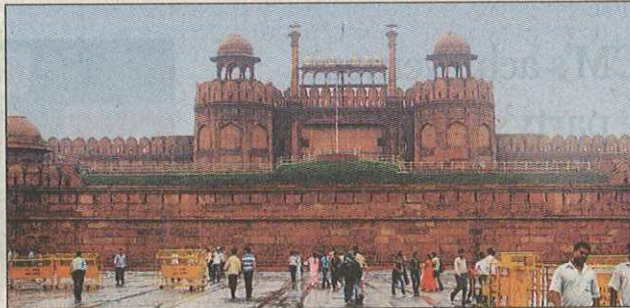
# No access for barriers at heritage sites

**Nivedita Khandekar**  
New Delhi, April 25

AFTER QUTUB MINAR, the other two World Heritage Monuments in the national capital — Red Fort and Humayun's Tomb — would be made barrier-free on par with international standards.

Secretary, Ministry of Tourism Sujit Banerjee said plans are afoot to make all tourist places, especially the heritage sites, accessible to all ahead of the Commonwealth Games. "NGO Svayam has worked at Qutub Minar to make it accessible for all and I have positive feedback on it. So we have invited the NGO to be part of the Ministry's core team."

When asked the need for redoing work at places like Humayun's Tomb, which are



SUNIL SAXENA/HT

The tourism ministry is funding work to make Red Fort and Humayun's Tomb accessible to all — including pregnant women and the obese — ahead of the 2010 Commonwealth Games.

already disabled friendly, Banerjee said, "We are conducting an audit for the same. There is scope for improvement." The Ministry would be providing the funds for the job, he added.

Svayam Director Abha Negi

said, "We have already conducted and submitted accessibility audit for the Red Fort and would be carrying a out similar exercise for Humayun's Tomb in the coming weeks."

"Making a heritage site dis-

abled-friendly is not enough. It needs to be accessible for all, including the aged, pregnant women and even obese people," she said.

"Beginning with the heritage monuments frequented most by tourists, we would be working towards making all heritage monuments in the city accessible for everyone," she added.

Banerjee had recently announced at a conference that his Ministry has been pro-active in taking initiatives for inclusive tourism and to ensure that not just heritage sites but all public places frequented by tourists, like airports and hotels, would be made accessible for all.

The NGO is also working closely with the Ministry for similar efforts at the Taj Mahal and the Jalianwala Bagh.

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25th April 2009

*The award is presented by FLO every year*

## Jindal SAW MD Gets 'Woman Entrepreneur Of The Year' Award

FW BUREAU  
Chandigarh, Feb 26

Sminu Jindal, Managing Director, Jindal SAW Ltd, has been honoured with the prestigious FICCI's Ladies Organisation (FLO) Woman Entrepreneur of the Year 2009 Award for her professional achievements and contribution to the steel sector. Part of the \$10 billion Jindal Group, the fourth largest industrial house in India, Jindal SAW Ltd is one of the country's largest producers of SAW pipes widely used in the energy sector for transportation of oil and gas. Jindal was presented the award at a

glittering ceremony organised by FLO in Mumbai.

Sminu Jindal said, "It is a great honour to receive this prestigious award from an esteemed organisation like FICCI. What makes this award even more special is the fact that this award is a recognition from my peers and veterans of the business community. I thank the jury members and the team of FICCI's Ladies Organisation for bestowing this award on me. It brings with it a sense of greater responsibility and promise to excel in our core business."

Sminu Jindal's crisp business acumen and foresight has been instrumental in bringing about

a complete image makeover of Jindal SAW by engaging modern production techniques, initiating environment protection steps and introducing enhanced professionalism at every level of operation.

An exceptional woman of substance, she does not shy away from challenges in all walks of life. Another dimension to this multi-faceted personality is her commitment to the social cause - accessibility. FLO, the women wing of FICCI, salutes the women achievers of our country in an imposing event every year. It covers 20 different categories and its awardees are leaders in their fields. ♦



**SMINU JINDAL**  
Managing Director, Jindal  
SAW & Founder-Svayam

## REALTYSPEAK

# Accessible infrastructure

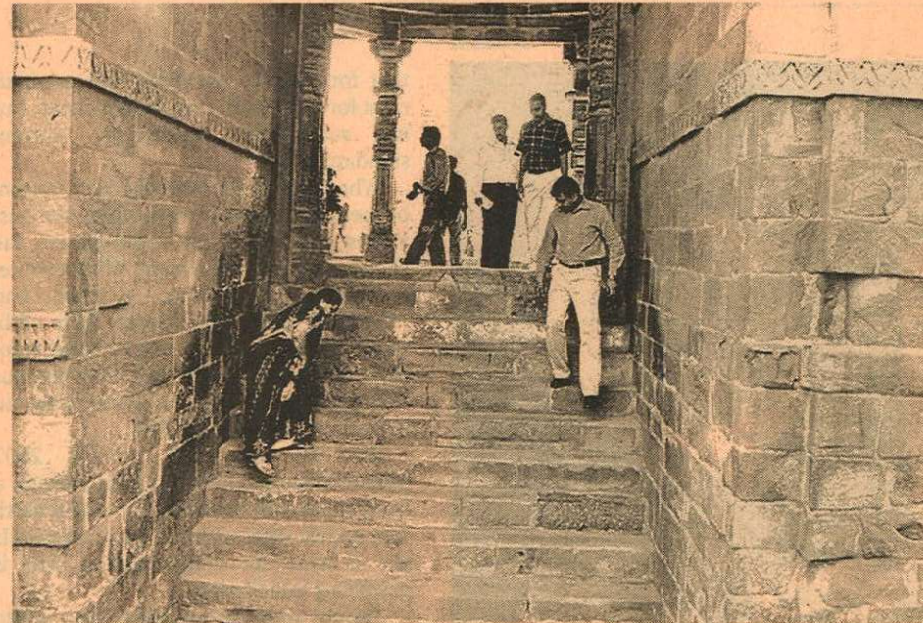
I did not have much options while scouting for schools or colleges while I was young, and had to make do with which ever school that would have me. Travelling around in public transportation and public spaces leaves me cold. Something wrong with me! No. I am a regular person with regular desires and aspirations, so what if I am wheelchair-bound.

Take a look around and you will notice how hostile the built infrastructure can be to people with reduced mobility. Why do the infrastructure developers fail to incorporate basic features that will render their projects completely accessible? The population in India is diverse in terms of demography — age, ethnicity, gender, physical, and intellectual capabilities. However, the public infrastructure does rarely reflect this fact.

This issue can be addressed by simply following the principles of Universal Design at a planning stage — a design that enables all to reach, enter and use any given facility with dignity, independence and minimum effort.

Planning Stage — ensure minimum level difference, and if any, address them by corresponding enabling measures like a ramp alongside stairs or wider doors, no steps preceding an elevator, non-skid floor surfaces and adequate lighting.

Accessibility or design-for-all — equal access, that is, each and every person should be able to independently board a bus, enter a restaurant, get an access to all parts of the



People with reduced mobility have to silently suffer owing to the hostile infrastructure

hotel, use a public convenience, visit a historic monument and watch a movie. No amount of reservation by government in educational institutions or jobs can provide relief or mainstream this marginalised section of the society unless there is seamless accessibility in

all walks of life right from your doorstep through sidewalks, public transport systems and the rest of the public infrastructure.

Most of the tourist attraction sites as well as historical monuments remain inaccessible to most people with reduced mobility. A general

overview shows us that most of our beaches, heritage sites, religious sites and other tourist sites lack accessible infrastructure, which is limiting the growth of Indian tourism both domestically and internationally. What is needed is to work with agencies like Archaeological Survey of India and retrofit the heritage monuments and sites to make them barrier free.

An accessible transport system — this would be a major factor in mainstreaming and inclusion of this user group. Inaccessible railways, road transportation, airways and transit infrastructure are a deterrent for travellers with reduced mobility. Lastly, we should look forward to ensure that all new structures are made accessible, and renovations and major construction work must ensure accessibility. The mission to make India barrier free and provide universal access to all involves not only generating awareness about the trials and tribulations of reduced mobility challenged populace but also mould public and policy maker's opinion in favour of public-private participation in providing and executing accessibility solutions. These problems can be overcome by involving people who have the field experience at every stage of execution. It will avoid wasteful expenditure and ensure adherence to accessibility standards. Not only will this make accessibility easier but they also set standards for future urban planning that is more inclusive.

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# Modern bus Q-shelters still out of reach

NDMC began installing disabled friendly bus shelters in 1998. But barring a few, most lack vital features that allow access to all

HAMARI JAMATIA  
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 22

**T**HE sleek new bus Q-shelters in New Delhi Municipal Corporation areas bear tiny disabled accessible signages on its mast. A reality check, however, found that barring a few, most of these new-age shelters prove extremely difficult to reach for persons with disabilities.

While a bus Q-shelter should have accessibility from the footpath as well as the road, little has been done in this regard. The busy bus stand at Barakhamba Road near Gopal Das Building is a good example. While it has a curved ramp joining the shelter to the footpath, there are no curved ramps to reach it from the road.

Members of Swayam, an

NGO working with the Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC) to provide accessible bus Q-shelters all over Delhi, say that while the NDMC's intention may have been good, the final product needs to incorporate minor but important features to be labelled disabled friendly.

The bus shelters' design and execution have been done by JC Decaux. At many shelters, advertisement boards have been placed right in the middle of the footpath leading to the shelter, blocking the way off.

Sminu Jindal, founder of Swayam, said: "NDMC needs to make their shelters accessible from the road and place rails on both sides of the stands to make them fully accessible to people with disabilities."

The NDMC had started the project to modernise bus stands in 1998 on a BOT basis. Pack-

age 1 of the project involved building 89 such bus Q-shelters in the north of Rajpath.

In view of the Delhi government spending crores of rupees to procure disabled friendly low-floor buses, the need for accessible bus Q-shelters becomes even more important. With the Commonwealth Games less than a year away, the NDMC is in the process of revamping many of its footpaths where these shelters will be installed, Mukesh Bhatt, member of the NDMC Council, said.

"We have noticed the problem and in the new bus Q-shelters, we will try and incorporate all the necessary guidelines to make them accessible to all," Bhatt added.

The NDMC is building new shelters on the routes leading to the Commonwealth Games venues as well.



The bus stand at Barakhamba Road in Connaught Place

RAVI CHOUDHARY