CH A P T E R - XIV

THE LIMITS OF GREATER GAUHATI

(Future Growth of the town)

The present area of urbanization is hardly sufficient to accommodate the everincreasing population of Gauhati town. Though there are some vacant lands within the present municipal boundaries that have been suggested to be developed, yet these will not be enough to meet the growing needs of the city. Therefore many additional areas will have to be developed for Greater Gauhati.

The present population of Gauhati is slightly more than one lakh. The shifting of the State Capital from Shillong to Gauhati may be also needed for better administration of the state. If really the capital comes to Gauhati, the increase of population and other developmental works will enhance the town to a considerably big city.

Besides these, completion of the construction of the Brahmaputra Bridge, the Oil Refinery and other projects at hand may lead the total population of Gauhati to nearly half a million within a short time.

Perhaps considering these facts the Government of Assam has prepared a Master Plan for Gauhati town by their town planners to provide for an ultimate population of about 3,50,000 in the coming 20 years. The Greater Gauhati for which the Master Plan has been prepared comprises five distinct units. The approximate land available for development in each unit, the population that each unit will be able to accommodate etc. are given below:
Figure - 22

By kind permission of the Town Planner, Gauhati.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Unit</th>
<th>Approximate area in acres</th>
<th>Approx. population that will be accommodated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Gauhati City Proper</td>
<td>2,900</td>
<td>60,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Jalukbari</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Ajara-Mirjanpur</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Khanapara</td>
<td>4,100</td>
<td>80,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. North Gauhati-Amingaon</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>30,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unit "A" :- This unit includes the existing city proper, Chandmari and Kharghuli Hills, areas on both sides of Beltola Road, Dispur area between Sarania and Gauhati-Shillong Road, and are between Gauhati-Shillong Road and Narakashur and Fatasil hills. The total area of this unit measuring about 1,900 acres is already developed and the balanced of 2,900 acres would be available for additional population.

These additional undeveloped lands skirting the town, are now going to be developed. In the meantime some important industries are already developed in this outer zone. For example a Cycle Factory has been established at once tiger-infested forest covered area of Fatasil. Some Saw Mills, Flour Mills, Iron Foundries are also established at Dispur area.

The Master Plan for Greater Gauhati states that Kamakhya hill area has been proposed to be kept reserved as a pleasure resort and picnic spot. The present character and sanctity of the hill will be kept in fact throughout its additional development and the scheme for the development of Kamakhya will be

* By kind permission of the Town Planner, Town Planner's Office, Gauhati.
introduced very carefully so that any additional development in this hill will not mar its present character and sanctity of the hill. The Kamakhya hill in its natural forms, characters, and sanctity should be an ideal attraction for the citizens of Greater Gauhati.

The present Kamakhya town which is situated on the top of the Nilachal Hill, now attains the position of tiny religious town, basing on shrines, on health and on scenery. The total area of the hill is about one square mile and the present town comprises only about 80 acres of land.

The Kamakhya is a very ancient but important religious spot for the Hindus. The temple of Kamakhya and Bhubaneswar are situated on the top of the hill and both of them are very famous in the whole of India. These temples are visited by about 50,000 pilgrims annually. The temple of Kamakhya cannot be dated with accuracy but the present temple was built in the 15th century by joint efforts of Naranarayana and Chilona, the Koch Kings of Old Kamrupa. But according to some puranas like Kalika Purana and Jogini Tantra it is written that the shrine was made where the genital organ of Sati was fallen. The Austic formation of the name Kamakhya indicates that the deity was formerly a Goddess of spirits or ghosts, who were worshipped in a cremation ground.

The total population of Kamakhya town is about 2,500 and the chief occupation of these people is mostly priesthood i.e. "Pandagiri".

Kamakhya constituted a town committee in 1955 and since then the town is developing fast.
P A N D U

Pandu is situated 5 miles west from Gauhati on the southern bank of the Brahmaputra. It was originally a small village but after linking with Upper Assam and Calcutta by the Assam-Bengal and Eastern Bengal Railways respectively Pandu now attains the status of a Railway town. The town is now rapidly growing on all sides especially eastwards to Gauhati and has almost merged with the better except at a narrow constriction near the Kamakhya foot hills.

Characteristically Pandu is linked with the whole of Assam and rest of India with Railways, Roads and Waterways. The town is a centre of transport and communication, the development of which is mainly due to the break caused by the henced unbridged mighty Brahmaputra. Apart from this the town possesses an efficient system of City-Bus that plyover along the main thoroughfare up to Gauhati.

The Pandu Town is roughly divided into 3 main contiguous parts: (1) Pandu proper to the west, (2) Maligaon to the north east, and (3) Gotanagar to the east.

Pandu is the terminus of the branch of N.F. Railway lying south of the Brahmaputra river. It directly or indirectly serves not only the state of Assam but also the whole of Northeastern India. Strategically Pandu's importance is great because after partition it has grown to a big railway station and as a result of which regional headquarters and other important railway offices have been set up here. Railway station is located at Pandu proper by the side of the Steamerghat while the Railway headquarters is located at Maligaon.
Well planned residential quarters are located at Gotanagar near Maligaon. New residential colonies of the employees have been growing surrounding the original transport nucleus in a planned manner.

The total area comprised by the town is about 1,600 acres and most of the area is already developed by the Railways. Whatever little spaces are available would be needed for the expansion of the Railway Colony. The total population of Pandu is 22,538 (1951 census). The bulk of the population represents employees of railway, steamer and ferry service.

Unit "B" : - JHALUKBARI - This unit comprises the open land to the west of Maligaon, on either side of the A.T. Road, the University town, Engineering College area and the Jhalukbari village proper. The total area is about 1,500 acres and its population at present will be about 3,000.

The area was isolated from human habitation and was mostly covered by tiger-infested forests. With the opening up of the Survey School Forest Training School, the Gauhati University, the Assam Ayurvedic College, the Assam Engineering College, the Gauhati Medical College etc. it attains the status of a cultural town but its growth is yet in its infantile stage.

The University has been established here in a very picturesque setting. There is enough land for its development and expansion and also for the location of other educational institutions.

Unit "C" - Ajara-Mirjapur :- To the west of Jhalukbari, this unit includes the Ajara and Mirjapur villages and the area
comprises about 500 acres of land. The Ajara-Mirzapur Road passes through this unit which will make the area readily accessible.

**Unit "D" - Khanapara** :- Towards the southeast of Gauhati, Khanapara includes the vast open land for its future development. The approximate area about 4,100 acres of land would be developed in this unit. With the opening of Veterinary College, Agricultural farm, Dairy farm, Artificial insemination centre, the town is growing fast. The town is also situated by the A.T.Road and this makes the town easily accessible. A system of City-Bus also ply along this road up to Jhalukbari.

**Unit "E" - North Gauhati-Amigaon** :- The proposed area for future development in this unit is vast open areas between Amigaon and North Gauhati. Approximately about 2,800 acres of land are proposed to be developed in the unit. The Master Plan proposes the location of major industries in this unit and therefore the land to be developed for residential purposes would be about 1,500 acres.

**Existing North Gauhati Town** :- Situated just opposite to Gauhati on the northern bank of the Brahmaputra river, North Gauhati is growing slowly a satellite town of Gauhati; from where one may visit the well-known silk producing town of Sualkuchi where every household weaves the famous Assam Silks known as Endi, Muga and Pat. The town is 14 miles from Gauhati across the river Brahmaputra. Few miles further on is the town of Hajo, scene of many battles between the Kamrupa kings and Mahammadan invaders, where there are the famous Hayagriba,
Madhaba and Kedar temples and a Muslim shrine popularly called Poa Mecca or a shrine having oneforth of the sanctity of Mecca.

Towards east of North Gauhati there is holy place known as Ashwaklanta on the Ashwaklanta hills where there are shrines including one Bishnupada or the footprint of Lord Bishnu. The place has its sanctity like that of Gaya.

North Gauhati constituted a town committee in 1955 and the town committee claims that North Gauhati attained the status of a 4th class town containing slightly less than 6,000 people in that year.

Unlike other urban centres this small town contain a higher percentage of agricultural population.

North Gauhati plays a counter part of Gauhati. Nearly all towns and big villages like Barpeta, Nalbari, Rangia, Tihu, Barama, Pathsala, Hajo, Sualkuchi, Tezpur, Mangaldai, Chariali, Goreswar, Karara, Muktapur, Dimu, Kaniha are connected by all weathered motorable roads with this township. All the roads coming from the above places terminate here and after ferrying across the Brahmaputra one can reach Gauhati town.

Amingaon:— Situated on the bank of the stately river Brahmaputra just opposite to Pandu, Amingaon is a good terminus and a transhipment station. Like Pandu it was also originally a small village and when the railway line was constructed from Calcutta to Amingaon in 1910, it began to a status of a town and its present population is more than 13,607 (1951 census).

The town is smaller than Pandu. The streets are narrow and entirely haphazard. There is no proper drainage system and sanitation is lamentably lacking. The whole area become the breeding...
ground of mosquitoes and flies.

Amingaon and Pandu have been separated by the Brahmaputra which is nearly ½ mile in width here. These two banks will be linked shortly by the Railway-Cum-Road Bridge over the Brahmaputra which is under construction. The bridge will connect Assam with the rest of Assam. The recent development of efficient road and the said bridge will accelerate the commercial importance of the town.

**Land Requirement** :- The estimated population residing within the area covered by the Greater Guwahati Master Plan is about 3,50,000. This means that additional land for about 2,50,000 has to be provided. For these additional people of about 10,000 acres of additional land will be needed. This is roughly the area that is available in different units as stated above. Including the area, which is already developed land within the Master Plan will be about 12,800 acres or about 19 square miles.

The distribution of the land mentioned above for various purposes will be on the following basis.

(A) For thickly populated central area about 40-50 persons per acre.

(B) Parks and Open Space :- 10 percent of the total area or about 4 acres per thousand population. The total area for parks and playgrounds will be about 1,400 acres.

(C) For sub-urban development where population will comparatively be spare about 15-30 per acre.

(D) Areas for shops and Markets etc. :- About 1200 acres that is about 10% of the total area.
(E) Schools & Colleges: - 2-3 acres per 1,000 population.
Sometimes it may vary.
(F) Areas for industries of various types: - About 1200 acres
i.e. about 10% of the total area.
(G) Areas for Government Offices and Public Buildings: -
It is very difficult to forecast this requirement
adequate area shall be kept reserved for other public buildings
and institution in the proposed residential areas. These land
shall be devoted as per needs.
Housing: - At an average rate of 5 persons per family, about
40,000 additional residential units in different forms will be
required to accommodate about 2,00,000 additional people in the
coming 20 years. There are about 10,546 houses in the existing
town. About 1/5 th of these existing houses are far below the
desirable and in an untold deplorable condition. Hence they will
have to be rebuilt. Thus in coming 20 years about 55,000 new resi-
dential unit will have to be built.

The development of residential areas shall be on the basis
of neighbourhood unit principles. Now a days the townplanner and
sociologists have accepted the principle of planning an develop-
ing the residential areas as self contained and self sufficient
neighbourhood units. Each neighbourhood unit of Greater Guwahati
will provide for a population of about 5,000 to 10,000. The unit
should be self-sufficient as regards local requirements, such as
shops, parks etc. The whole city will present the appearance of
and integration of such neighbourhood units.
Roads & Streets: - With the growth of population of Guwahati there
will be corresponding increase in number of different types of
vehicles in the city. Since the new developments are to be on the out-lying areas, the people in these areas will have to depend on public means of communication such as city-buses, taxis or rickshaws or their private conveyances such as cycles, cars etc.

It is expected that the city will have to cater for about five times the present number of vehicles in course of coming 20 years. The character of traffic is also bound to change. From slow-moving rickshaws and other carts the traffic will become fast moving automobile vehicles. The present slow-moving rickshaws will most probably be replaced by autorickshaws.

The Master Plan also proposed that besides remodelling and improving some of the major existing roads new roads will have to be established to cater for the growing traffic and other needs of the city. As the existing central area will continue to functions, it will draw more traffic into it from the ever-growing city. The existing road system in this area is not adequate to meet the requirements of the increased traffic.

The existing railway line is now supposed to be shifted towards further south of the town proper due to the construction of the Brahmaputra Bridge. It is also suggested that the strip of the land now occupied by the railway line will be developed into a major street running east to west from Kamakhya Railway Station to Chandmari. This line passes through a very business area of the city. The removal of the railway line from the existing area of the city will also facilitate the free and unconstructed flow of traffic in the business area.

The present Assam Trunk Road is proposed to be diverted to further south. The diversion starts from Basistha Road junction
The Brahmaputra Bridge, under construction
of the Gauhati-Shillong Road and runs along the foot of Narasikasur and Kalapahar hills to their northern side and meets the Pandu road near Kamakhya railway station. The road will provide a more direct access to the proposed Brahmaputra Bridge (now under construction) to the proposed River Port at Pandu and to the Air Port, to the traffic coming from Upper Assam and from Shillong. At later date, however, when residential unit at Khanapara also gets fully developed this diversion road will not be able to function as a by pass road. Another bypass road to the south of Garbhang reserve forest at the foot hills will have to be constructed. This will start from the present Gauhati-Shillong Road near about Khanapara and will run westward following the foot hills and will meet the proposed National Highway at Mirjapur-Ajara.

**Industrial areas:** The Master Plan proposes the establishment of three distinct industrial zones where the new industries should be located and the existing areas should be gradually shifted. One of these three zones has already established at Bamunimaidan near Chandmari along the Noonmati Road. This industrial zone will primarily be for the cottage industries which do not require heavy movement of raw materials and finished products.

The 2nd industrial zone will be established at Patasil-Kalapahar side. This industrial site will be very well served by the proposed diversion of the National Highway and the Railway line. The zone is supposed to be reserved for small scale and light industries. The 3rd industrial zone is proposed to be established at Amingaon. The construction of the Brahmaputra Bridge will help to locate some of the Major State's industries here.