

Detainees pining behind bars for years

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Around 200 people are languishing for years in the Dhaka Central Jail without being produced in court due to lack of legal aid for the detainees.

Some of the detainees are in jail for more than five years. According to law ministry data, some 171 detainees in the Dhaka Central Jail are waiting to be produced in court for more than a year.

Abonti Nurul, a staff lawyer of a non-governmental organisation which filed a writ petition to High Court challenging such confinements, told Star City that detention of prisoners without producing them before court is against their fundamental rights guaranteed by law and they are entitled to protection of law.

She said there may be innocent people among those detainees and they will not get back the time they are spending in jail without trial.

Asked about the reason for the confinements without trial, AKM Monjurul Karim, senior jail super of Dhaka Central Jail, said: "We are not the right authority to say why these people have not been produced

before courts."

The jail authorities regularly inform the courts about the status of the prisoners, he told Star City.

Admitting presence of such prisoners in jail, a law ministry official said there are many factors that hinder producing the detainees before court. In most cases, investigation process is very slow and the courts cannot fix any date for proceedings due to huge logjam of cases.

Besides, he pointed out that there is lack of transportation facilities to carry prisoners from jail to court and sometimes the police lack manpower to escort the detainees to court. Sometimes, hearing cannot take place as the detainees are not produced before court.

Nasreen Begum, joint secretary of the law ministry and director of the National Legal Aid Services, told Star City that the government is carrying out jail reforms and the inter-ministerial committee for jail reforms is aware of the problem.

She said the committee has discussed the issue after the High Court issued a rule on the government following a writ petition filed challenging such

detention.

Nasreen said the situation has improved after the government arranged legal aid for the detainees through the National Legal Aid Services. The detainees can apply to the district judge with the case documents to avail the legal aid.

She claimed that the number of such prisoners has declined

and the problem could be tackled more efficiently if the jail authorities show more sincerity.

The law ministry data revealed that at least 472 people are detained for more than a year in the district and central jails without being produced before any court even for a single day.



Detainees are transported to the central jail (left) while relatives wait outside the jail gate helplessly to find out their loved ones (right).



Coming from Barguna for treatment, an elderly woman was caught in the fray of the Election Commission siege programme by the opposition alliance last Wednesday and had to be transported to a hospital in Mirpur in a rickshaw van.

Filling stations built

FROM PAGE 21 of Dhaka CNG to BPC for approval quoting all the existing physical and other conditions."

"It is the BPC that finally granted approval," he said.

Senior General Manager (Marketing) of BPC RM Jahangir said, "BPC can make the rules flexible considering market potential of a filling station in the city area."

It is not RPGCL alone but a 14-member site selection committee represented by different agencies and coordinated by RPGCL gives approval for a CNG filling station, said Director (Operations) Shafiqul Azam of RPGCL.

Dhaka CNG managed gas supply for the station by boring underneath the rail tracks and VIP road (Airport Road) from the supply line on the other side of the road.

But Kazi Filling Station that obtained approval for a CNG station in 2003 is still waiting for gas supply. Titas Gas told them [Kazi Filling] that they could get gas supply from the Basundhara Housing point of Pragati Sarani, about a kilometre away, at the company's own expense, which the station owner found commercially unviable.

Pinnacle and Ananta too got the gas supply from Basundhara point, according to sources. But Dhaka CNG did not get the supply from Basundhara point, rather man-

aged the gas connection boring under the rail tracks, sources said.

Divisional Engineer of Bangladesh Railway Abdul Haq said that the railway authorities approve such boring under the rail tracks considering design of the filling station, technical aspects and existing physical condition.

Deputy General Manager of Titas Gas Asabuddin said, "We do not determine who should get gas supply and how. We forward any proposal for industrial gas supply to the company's planning department for decision on gas connection."

In approving design of a filling station and issuing licence for storage and distribution, Department of Explosives considers physical conditions of a proposed station taking public safety into account and examine surrounding factors like source of fire, high tension (voltage) electric transmission line, electric transformer and other hazardous features within 40 meters on all sides, said Amir Hossain, chief inspector of the department.

There is a blacksmith's shop and an electric workshop right along the boundary wall of Dhaka CNG and a good number of automobile workshops within five to seven metres.

"It is a public knowledge that existing rules can be easily bent with influence," said an official of

Explosives Department seeking anonymity.

The land for Dhaka CNG station was developed by earth filling a wetland, owned by Bangladesh Railway, from 12 feet below the road level.

Railway's Divisional Manager Anhar Mahmud said, "We can rent out land if it is vacant. I'm not aware of any restriction in developing land by earth-filling wetland."

Chief Estate Officer of Bangladesh Railway Mokbul Ahmed said, "We have leased out 61 decimal land to Dhaka CNG Company only to set up a fuel filling station."

When pointed out how the authorities allowed earth filling of wetland to develop land though existing wetland law forbids such action, Ahmed said, "Nobody bothers about it seriously."

Having failed to get in touch with the owner of the filling station despite repeated attempts for two weeks, this correspondent wrote a letter to him through courier service informing him of this report. The letter carried a number of queries to obtain his response to the matter.

Imtiaz received the letter, but he did not respond to it.

Footpaths caught

FROM PAGE 21 creating obstruction to movement of pedestrians or vehicles placing construction materials on the footpaths or roads. The rules provide for cancellation of the construction plan of an offender.

The managing director of Prianka Builders said: "Everybody is occupying public spaces in the city with construction materials. But I agree that we are causing trouble to the public movement by placing construction materials on the footpath."

Asked if the ward commissioner can permit him to occupy the footpath, Rahman said, "How could he grant me permission if not in a capacity?"

DCC Chief Estate Officer Abu Taleb said, "A ward commissioner has no authority to grant permission to anyone to occupy footpaths."

Ward Commissioner Bablu said: "Question does not arise of allowing a builder to occupy footpath with construction materials. Even the Rajuk may cancel the building construction plan for such offence."

Asked whether he had the

authority to grant permission, he said, "No."

When he was asked how he could permit Prianka Builders to occupy the footpath, Bablu said, "If I have permitted, I will immediately cancel it. I will ask the builder to remove the construction materials within two days, otherwise, I will call police to force them to do it."

In another example, Kusholi Nirmata Ltd is constructing a multi-storey building on the main road of Karwan Bazar kitchen market occupying both the footpath and a portion of the road with construction materials.

Deputy General Manager of the company Shamsul Islam said, "We have permission from the DCC to keep construction materials there. We pay the DCC rent every three months for the space."

But the DCC chief estate officer said question does not arise of renting out footpath and road to any builder, as there no rules permit that.

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HOSPITALS & CLINICS

Ahsania Mission Cancer & General Hospital
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Apollo Hospitals Network
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Emergency no. 9896623, 0171409000

Bangladesh Medical College & Hospital
9118202, 8115843

Central Hospital
9660015-19,

China Bangla Hospital (JV) Ltd
8913674

Dhaka Medical College Hospital
8626812-16

Gana Shasthyo Kendra
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Greenland Hospital
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Holy Family Hospital
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Islami Bank Hospital
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Labaid Cardiac Hospital
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Marie Stopes Clinic
8821874

Medinova Medical Services Ltd
8620353,

Monowara Hospital
8318135, 8319802

Pangu Hospital
9112150, 9113041

PG Hospital (BSMMU)
9614545-9, 9612550-4

Rashmoni General Hospital
8317606, 9557354, 8317819
Ratan's Dental Clinic
9111090

Salimullah Medical College Hospital
7319002-6

Samorita Hospital Ltd
9131901

Shahid Suhrawardy Hospital
9122560-78

Shishu Hospital
8116061-2, 9119119

BLOOD BANK

Bangladesh Red Crescent Blood Bank
9116563

Modern Clinic & Blood Center
9883948

Sandhani, Dhaka Medical College
9668690

BUS SERVICES

Drooti
8014563

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Green Line Paribahan
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Hanif Enterprise
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Keya Paribahan
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Shohag Paribahan (Pvt) Ltd
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Shoukhin Paribahan
8014397, 9001796

Siik Line
7102461

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9333803

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Biman Bangladesh Airlines
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Airport Office: 8917400, Fax: 8913005

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Parabat Express
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Upaban Express
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Ekata Express
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Leaves Dhaka at 4:30 pm
Leaves Dhaka at 7:30 am
Leaves Dhaka at 3-15 pm
Leaves Dhaka at 11-00 pm
Leaves Dhaka at 6-40 am
Leaves Dhaka at 12-45 pm
Leaves Dhaka at 9-45 pm
Leaves Dhaka at 7-00 am
Leaves Dhaka at 5-00 pm
Leaves Dhaka at 8-00 pm
Leaves Dhaka at 9-20 pm

Malaysia Airlines
9888211-20
Airport Office: 8916953, Fax: 9890478

PIA
9349293-5, Fax: 9345300

Singapore Airlines
8811504-7, 9883259
Airport Office: 8911928, Fax: 8811503

Thai Airways
8314711-18, 8914343

Virgin Atlantic Airways
8816324-5, Fax: 9896481

Reaches Chittagong at 10:35 pm
Reaches Chittagong at 1-55 pm
Reaches Chittagong at 10-55 pm
Reaches Chittagong at 6-40 am
Reaches Sylhet at 2-30 pm
Reaches Sylhet at 9-20 pm
Reaches Sylhet at 6-40 am
Reaches Bahadurabad at 1-05 pm
Reaches Bahadurabad at 11-15
Reaches Noakhali at 5-00 am
Reaches Jagannath at 2-30 pm

LIBRARY & INFO-

Libraries, Cultural and Information Centers
Central Public Library- 8626001-4,
Shishu Academy- 9564128
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Bangla Academy- 8619550
Islamic Foundation- 9550280,
9556407

Nazrul Institute- 9114602
Ford Foundation- 8116133
Alliance Francaise- 8611557
Information Resource Center, The American Center- 8813440-4,
9886395-9

British Council- 8618867-8,
8618905-7

Community Development Library-
8113769, 8113604

Goethe Institute Int'l- Dhaka-
9126525-6

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Drik Photo Gallery- 9120125,
8112954, 8123412

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