

What is it good for?

Most community centres of two Dhaka city corporations not usable by public

MATHEWS CHIRAN

Community centres are supposed to be a place where people of a neighbourhood gather, socialise and hold cultural and social events.

However, 52 such centres in 129 wards of the two Dhaka city corporations are not only failing to serve their purposes, but also not being maintained properly or rented out to other organisations, denying people the opportunity to avail the services.

The two city corporations are custodians of the centres, which locals can rent for arranging programmes. These are also supposed to be multi-purpose, such as fitness centres, library, digital centre or a councillor's office.

In a way, these centres are the hub of city corporations for providing services to people at ward level. But the situation is quite the opposite.

Some of the centres are leased out to law enforcement agencies while others do not have facilities to function properly, as they are considered risky or abandoned.

According to records obtained from the city corporations, eight out of 14 centres in Dhaka North City Corporation's (DNCC) 54 wards and 19 out of 38 in Dhaka South City Corporation's (DSCC) 75 wards are in usable condition and accessible to the public.

DNCC has leased out three community centres to Rapid Action Battalion while DSCC leased out seven to Rab and police, said officials.

"We don't have any open space where social events could take place. Hence, a community centre could play a big role in this regard. Lower-middle income or middle-income people can book a centre at only Tk 6,000 as opposed to private-run ones that charge Tk 40,000 to Tk 1 lakh," said DNCC ward-35 Councillor Moktar Sardar.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2



Clockwise from top, Fazlul Karim community centre in Bangshal is being used by Dhaka Metropolitan Police; Shaheed Nagar Community Centre in Lalbagh is also being used by the same agency; Muktijoddha Murad community centre in Tikatuli is leased out to Rab; Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal complex in Modhubag and Rayer Bazar community centre, while not occupied, are also not open for events.



PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON



CWASA MD'S GRAFT HC asks ACC what steps were taken

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday wanted to know what step has been taken against Chattogram Water Supply and Sewerage Authority (Wasa) Managing Director (MD) AKM Fazlullah for his alleged corruption, irregularities and nepotism at his office.

The court asked Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) to submit a report regarding this issue in a month, describing the steps taken.

The HC bench of Justice M Enayetur Rahim and Justice Md Mostafizur Rahman came up with the order while hearing a writ petition, which sought directives on ACC to take appropriate actions against the MD.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

Keep your mask on

Two youth orgs launch nationwide awareness campaign

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

JAAGO Foundation and Volunteer for Bangladesh yesterday launched a campaign titled "Apar mask kothay?" (Where is your mask?). Supported by Beximco Pharmaceuticals, the campaign aims to encourage people to wear masks and raise awareness on the importance of wearing masks during the pandemic.

Around 6,000 volunteers participated from eight divisions - Dhaka, Chattogram, Khulna, Barisal, Sylhet, Rajshahi, Rangpur, and Mymensingh. The volunteers discussed the ongoing coronavirus situation and made people aware of the importance of using masks to limit the virus' spread.

The young, energetic volunteers made some handmade posters and placards containing slogans and awareness messages.

National team cricketer Taskin Ahmed inaugurated this campaign at Gulshan-2. He then visited some of the campaign areas and motivated volunteers to keep up the important work.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

End violence, lynching in the name of religion

Says Human Rights Forum Bangladesh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a virtual press conference yesterday called for ending violence in the name of religion, mob lynching, attacks on religious minorities' home and the growing incidents of violence against women and girls. They urged to ensure rule of law, human rights, accountability and justice.

Human Rights Forum Bangladesh (HRFB) organised the conference and presented a 17-point demand, including ensuring proper trial and punishment for the perpetrators of the brutal incident in Patgram through an impartial investigation, necessary treatment for the injured and security for both families, providing necessary training and guidance to public representatives and religious leaders to prevent the violent behaviour of agitated people.

They also demanded that proper steps be taken against religious leaders who spread hatred through various provocative propaganda, and a fair and impartial investigation should be conducted into the incident of attack on a Hindu household in Cumilla.

Expressing grave concern over the Cumilla incident, Nijera Kori coordinator Khushi Kabir said Bangladesh is a culturally diverse country,

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Man gets life term for raping 4-yr-old

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A tribunal in Dhaka yesterday sentenced a man to life term imprisonment for raping a four-year-old girl in Dhaka's Nawabganj in 2018.

Judge Tabassum Islam of the Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal-4 of Dhaka handed down the verdict in presence of the lone accused Sunil Bairagi.

The tribunal also fined him Tk 50,000, in default of which, he will suffer six more months in jail, according to the judgement.

Earlier, the prosecution and defence completed their arguments and the tribunal recorded statements of 10 prosecution witnesses, including the case's complainant.

In her judgment, the judge said the prosecution was able to prove the charges of raping the victim undoubtedly. So the accused deserved the highest punishment for his involvement with committing such offence, the judge added.

'TIB report partial, politically motivated'

Says Quader about study on good governance in tackling Covid-19

BSS, Dhaka

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader yesterday described the study report of Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) on good governance in facing coronavirus as partial and politically motivated.

"TIB's study is partial and it is more political than research-oriented," Quader, also general secretary of Awami League, told a press briefing at his official residence on parliament premises.

Mentioning that the study was carried out in a negative perspective, the minister said it stated about Digital Security Act and withdrawal of all cases filed for harassment while giving recommendations on what to do to tackle Covid-19.

Quader said the researchers dubbed the TIB report as a political report instead of calling it a study.

About irregularities in health sector mentioned in the TIB report, the minister said, "The government has taken

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

Dist admin to look after Khuki on PM's behalf

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Rajshahi district administration yesterday began looking after Dil Afroze Khuki, who has been a newspaper hawker in the northern city for 30 years.

In her 60s now, she regularly gives away her hard-earned income to the destitute, choosing a life of constant battles.

The administration took her responsibilities on behalf of the prime minister, said Rajshahi Deputy Commissioner (DC) Abdul Jalil.

"I visited her and directed officials concerned for necessary action," he said. "She doesn't require money, what she needs is care, love of family members and respect."

He said the administration has employed workers to clean and paint her house.

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shahriar Alam also sent gift items for her, including new clothes.

Visiting her yesterday, this correspondent saw workers cleaning the house and setting up water connection.

People and organisations visited her with gifts as well. Khuki's neighbour, Nahid Akter Tania, has also decided to stand by her.

Nahid and her son live in a rented house next to Khuki's, since her husband left her. She has been looking after Khuki for several years. An art teacher, Tania also must struggle



to make ends meet.

"We think Tania is the right person to look after Khuki, as her own relatives are not helpful," the DC said.

While talking to this correspondent, Tania said she has no parents and she treats Khuki as family.

Tania also mentioned of alleged intimidation by Khuki's family members.

She said one of Khuki's sisters asked Tania's landlord to drive her out for speaking about Khuki's woes to media.

A local goon apparently threatened Khuki for "talking against her family," she added.

The DC said, they asked neighbours to report any kind of threat made to Khuki.

About people thronging her house with gifts, Khuki said it feels great seeing people coming to meet her with gifts and cleaning her house, but she does not need all these.

Some organisations offered her assistance and asked her to promise them that she would not work as a hawker anymore.

"Why? Is there anything wrong with being a hawker? Why do they hate this work?" Khuki wondered.

She said she was more concerned about her property. "What will happen to my property when I die? I want to donate my property to the brilliant students of two schools in Kushtia," Khuki said.

HUMAYUN SAHITYA PUROSHKAR

Hasnat Abdul Hai, Nahida Nahid named winners

CITY DESK

Commemorating popular author Humayun Ahmed, the Exim Bank - Anyadin Humayun Ahmed Sahitya Puroshkar 2020 was held at the ASKB Auditorium of Bangla Academy yesterday.

This year, veteran writer and critic Hasnat Abdul Hai was awarded the prize for his contribution to Bangladeshi literature, while young Nahida Nahid received the award in the up and coming writer (under-40) category.

Nahida Nahid won the award for her book "Purushpath". The programme is held every year on November 12 - the day before Humayun's birthday. This was the sixth iteration of the award programme.

State Minister for Cultural Affairs AKM Khalid served as the chief guest at the ceremony, while Asaduzzaman Noor MP presided over it.

The programme began with a one-minute silence to honour the memory of late Prof Anisuzzaman, who served as the chief panelist for the awards for the last five years. A documentary made to commemorate his life was shown afterwards.

Among others, Anyadin editor Mazharul Islam, Exim Bank managing director Dr Mohammed Haider Ali Mia, and popular actress, producer, and singer Meher Afroz Shaon also spoke at the event.

As part of the programme, Hasnat Abdul Hai is set to receive Tk 5 lakh, while Nahida Nahid will receive Tk 1 lakh.

MINI BYTES



New legislation underway for DATAPRIVACY, LOCALISATION

SHAHRIAR RAHMAN

The government is planning to introduce a new legislation to ensure privacy and data localisation for locally produced data.

State Minister for ICT Zunaid Ahmed Palaksaid draft of the new law is already underway, speaking at a webinar hosted by Internet Governance Forum on October 6.

Palak informed that data being national asset needs to be properly categorised to ensure security and privacy during interoperability, due to personal and institutional needs. He also reiterated the importance of a proper legal guideline to govern access and exchange of data.

According to industry experts, cross-border data flow can be of three categories. The first is data residency, where an organisation specifies in which location their data is stored. This is done due to policy, tax or regulatory reasons. The second is data sovereignty, where the stored data will also be subject to law of the land it is stored in. And last is data localisation, which means any data collected, created, or processed inside a country needs to be stored within the country as well. Out of the three, from a regulatory standpoint, data localisation is deemed to be stringent in nature. Right now, Bangladesh does not have any specific regulations governing these flows of data.

Currently, the data privacy domain is governed by the Data Privacy and Security Rule, 2019. Although there is no central law dictating data localisation, there are several industry-

specific requirements that require storing of data locally such as for telecom, finance, ridesharing, medical etc.

Md Tarique M Barkatullah, the Director of Data Center operations, has been involved with the upcoming legislation since its inception.

According to him, this new legislation is being formulated by a group of experts in coherence with the existing law and by studying existing legislations of other countries.

"Policymakers consider now to be the high time to address the issue regarding privacy and security of our national digital asset. This new legislation will cover the shortcomings that we have seen in other countries and we will make it available public to further the discussion soon." He, however refused to divulge specifics until they are approved, as it might impact foreign investment in the country.

An official within the ministry, requesting anonymity, confirmed that the first draft is almost ready, which will be sent to the highest echelon of the government for review. He also stated that the new legislation will cover not just privacy and localisation of personal data, but also institutional data.

Former BASIS President and CEO of Bdfjobs, AKM Fahim Mashroor welcomed this move. He said, "Our data is our national asset. We are seeing these data being commercially used by many tech giants and sometimes it can create a monopolistic environment in the market. Many other countries have taken similar move. It's time we did too."



Samajtantrik Chhatra Front staged a protest against the grabbing of land that has traditionally been occupied by indigenous Mro community in Chattogram Hill Tracts. The photo was taken yesterday in front of Jatiya Press Club.

PHOTO: STAR

Verdict in DU student rape case Nov 19

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A tribunal in Dhaka yesterday fixed November 19 for delivery of the judgment in the case filed over the rape of a Dhaka University student in the capital's Kurmitola this year.

Judge Quamrunnahr of the Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal-7 of Dhaka set the date after conclusion of arguments.

Prosecution told the tribunal they were able to prove charges brought against the lone accused Majnu and sought exemplary punishment.

However, defence told the tribunal there were no eyewitnesses in the case and appealed to acquit him.

Earlier, the tribunal recorded statements of 20 out of 24 witnesses, including the victim and complainant of the case.

Majnu was produced before the tribunal before hearing.