

# Do 'media centres' promise too much?

SYED TASHFIN

Over the last few years, media centres were seen cropping up all over Dhaka.

These centres generally catered to the needs of students of English and Bangla medium schools and colleges etc., and acted as the link between private tutors and prospective students.

In recent times, operation of these supposed 'help' centres have hit a slump with allegations of rampant fraud discouraging potential customers.

In the beginning, media centres were owned and run by a well-educated group of people whose procedures and customer service were very efficient and ethical. But as it happens in this country, once the business saw a boom, more people started coming into the scene and opened up new outlets with just one objective; making some easy money. Naturally, ethics was the first thing to be sacrificed.

"I have lost around Tk. 3000 in the form of advance payment along with an additional Tk. 300 in member-

ship fees at one such media centre," said Shafiqul Alam.

"I was told that they had a perfect tuition for me and that the job would start from the beginning of the coming month. According to an agreement, I had to pay half the amount of my first month's salary to them," said Alam.

Alam was toyed around by the media centre people for two weeks after he had given them the money. Soon he found out that the tuition he was promised never existed. To his utter shock, he then discovered that the media centre has vanished without a trace.

"Such incidents are very common since most of them have no fear of getting caught," said Mr. A.Z.M. Faisal, the Managing Director of Quantum Media Limited.

"I have been a victim of such media centres myself and I think that most of them are able to commit such deceit since they operate totally illegally and don't even have trade licenses."

Faisal also felt that a loss of Tk. 2000 to 5000 doesn't affect the victim that much, therefore these swindlers are able to get away easily.

"But if you combine the total money lost by victims to such centres, you would be stunned to see the amount of profit the media centres have made," said Faisal.

"The general public should be cautious when dealing with media centres. It is advisable that they start their jobs and get paid for the first month before they oblige the centres," suggested Faisal.

Authorities say that the media centre concept doesn't even have a proper category under which it can function.

"Media centers do not fall into any category of trade enlisted under the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) rule book," said Mafizul Islam Patowary, the trade license officer of the DCC.

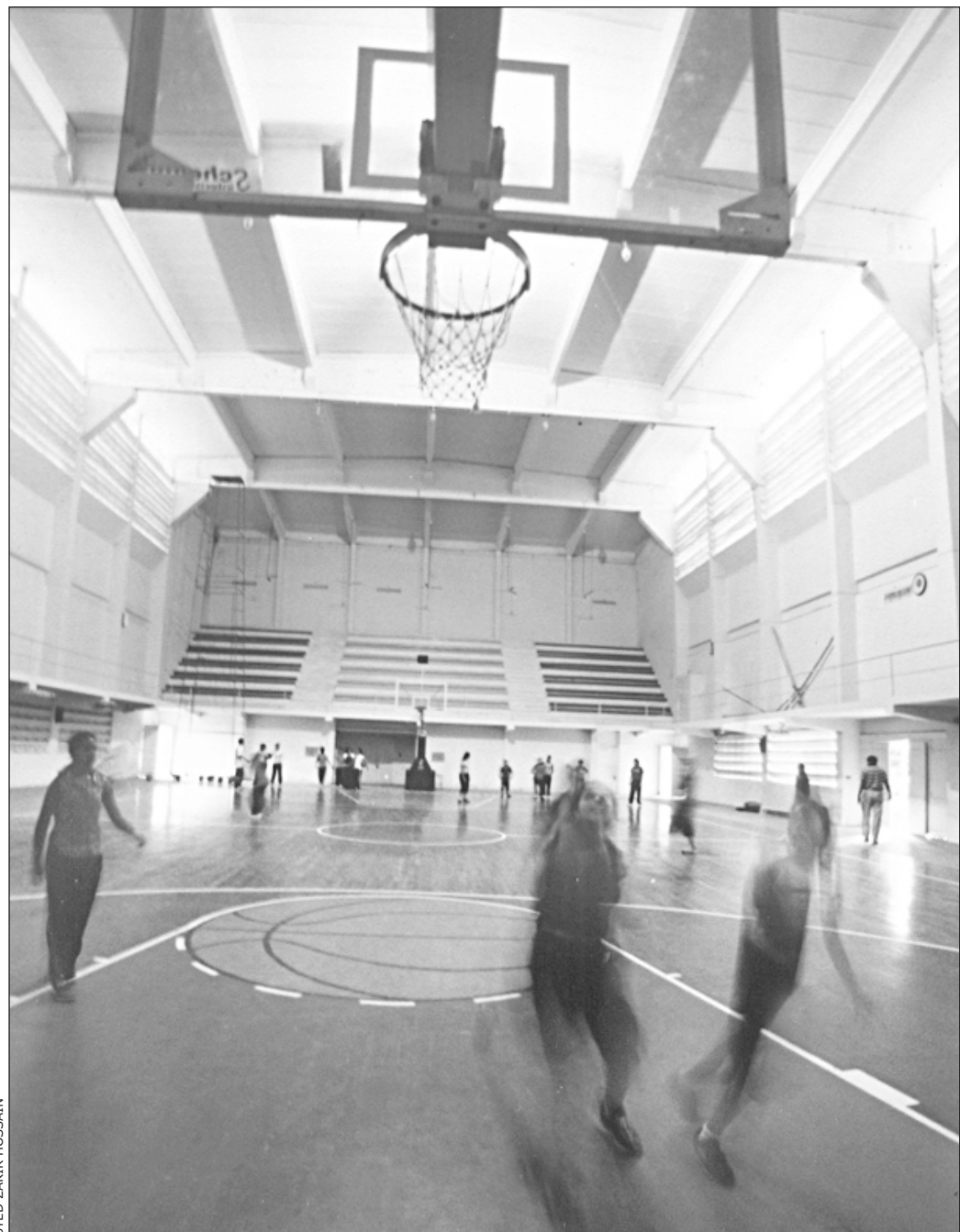
"There are 265 types of businesses but since media centres are not one of them, they are listed under serial no. 34, and that's why it is easier for them to acquire a trade license," added Patowary.

But even then these media centres rarely try to get trade licenses in fear that their procedure of work may be investigated and the truth will land them in hot waters.



These centres generally catering to the needs of English and Bangla medium students have recently been accused of cheating the public.

## Stretching playtime for children



Basketball coaching at the Basketball Federation Training School comes as a relief to the urban kids.

SABRINA KARIM MURSHED

Even a decade ago, afternoon meant playtime for kids. But urban children now miss out on open-air games, with the gradual loss of open space.

However, there is still some scope for youngsters in the city where they can spend some time for fun or workout after a stressful day. Basketball coaching offered at the Basketball Federation Training School comes as a relief to the urban kids.

The indoor basketball ground that belongs to the Basketball Federation in Dhanmondi is always filled with boisterous children. "I really enjoy the training classes," Ambardeen Murshed said, panting for breath. The coaching goes on for six days a week, with two batches for boys and girls.

At least 100 boys and 50 girls have enrolled in the coaching class. Children not less than six years can enrol in basketball training. The training costs only Tk 200 a month. The school provides balls and other equipment.

Even a person of normal height can play basketball. "Being tall helps a man become a basketball player, but it's not the only criteria," said Sayeed Ahmed, a coach. "A person can overcome such barriers with proper training, hard work and innate capability," he added.

"The number of children increases in summer when schools go on vacation," said M o h a m m e d N e w a z, another coach. "Mostly, the students of English medium schools come here," he said.

Obesity among children is increasing, as they hardly get any time for workout, Newaz said. They will get educational degrees but lose physical fitness in future, he added.

The school pays much importance to proper stretching exercises. "Stretching is mandatory for any sport but sometimes it can be harmful unless one knows the proper way," said Mahtabur Rahman Bulbul, the federation secretary.

"Boys and girls must do it in different ways because of their different builds," he clarified. The training class that stretches for one hour and a half includes proper stretching for warming up the kids.

The core training tips are followed by conditioning that includes sit-up and push-up. "These exercises make the body flexible," the secretary said.

However, the organisers said they did not take the initiative to set up the training school only as a physical exercise centre. "We want to introduce basketball among the youths," Bulbul beamed. "We want this game to become more favourite. We encourage girls in particular," he said.

The secretary said the school is planning to make a national team for girls.

Not only the organisers but some girls as well are eagerly awaiting the national team to be formed.

"I dream of being a basketball player at the national level," said Sheikh Nasima Akter Tonu, a trainee of three years.

## Ashes don't always return to ashes

CITY CORRESPONDENT

Ashes are not simply the remaining of what is burnt, it also gives bread to hundreds of low income people in and around the city.

"Chai lagbe? Chai?" (Need ashes) are the yell you will listen in lane to lane in different parts of the city. One Amina does it well in a melodious voice. Mostly the lower-middle class urban people are the consumers of ashes to clean their dishes.

"We buy each bag of ashes at Tk. 200 and sell it at Tk. 250," Amina explained. But the ferrying of ashes is not as simple as it seems. Not only Amina, hundreds of poor women are engaged selling ashes in the city.

"Vending ashes is not a profitable business. The retail sellers in fact make the money without even investing," explains Noor Jahan, a seller. "We buy the ashes in cash and it is not certain whether we can sell the total staff," she added. "Besides, if there is rain, the total investment is spoiled."

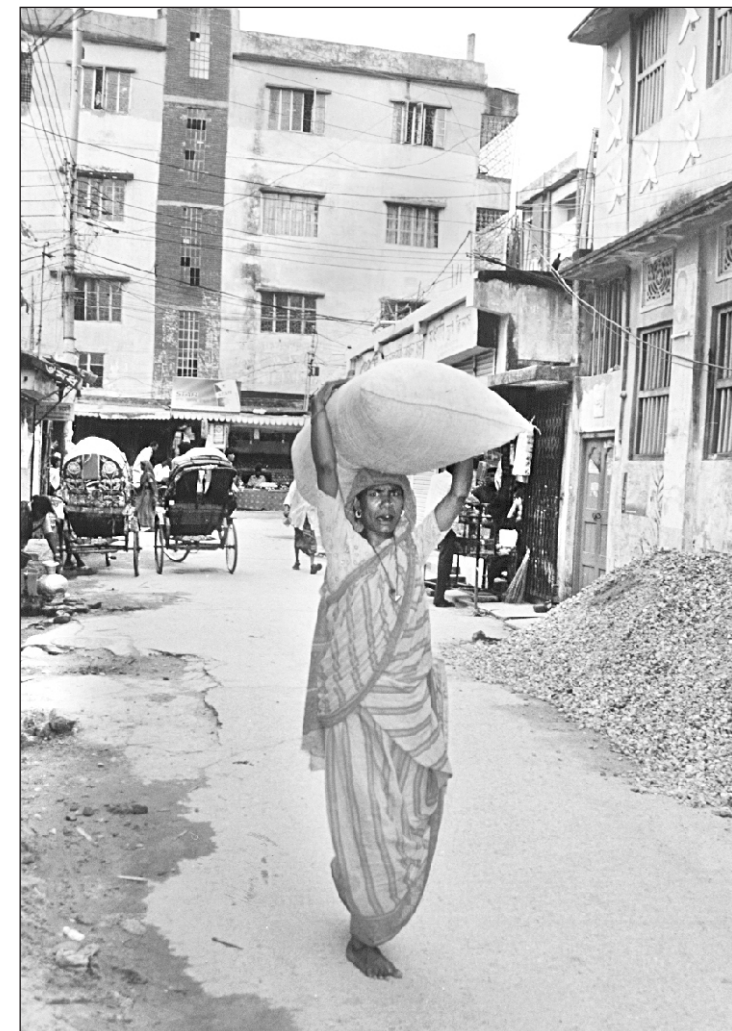
The ash is becoming extinct in the urban life because of the involvement of detergents. The use of gas has reduced the production of ashes in most of the areas. "We didn't have all these detergents even some ten or twelve years ago. I, myself, am still used to and feel comfortable using ashes to clean my dishes at home," informed Sabina Yasmin, a dweller at Dhanmondi.

"Kathpotti, along with the river Buriganga, is the central retail selling point from where we buy the ashes. The ashes come from different countryside areas around the city where paddies are boiled with the husks of rice," described Amina.

It is not yet examined whether the ash-sellers preserve and distribute the ashes in hygiene process, but some environmentalists think otherwise.

The ash what is still grossly used in the villages and towns of the

country is in fact maintains the regular natural recycling system. On the contrary, the detergents have the potential to harm the stomach since these are chemical products, said the environmentalists.



Working hard to make money out of ashes.

## event horizon

### Decentralisation of government advertisement distribution

Bangladesh Shangbadpotro Protinidhi Parishad organized a demonstration in front of the National Press Club, yesterday, against Decentralisation of Government Advertisement Distribution.

The speakers at the demonstration claim that the decentralisation of government advertisement in press would create a distance between government and press. The demonstrators also said that the government has an allocation of Tk 20 crore for advertisement, which is paid by a centralised body. Government revenue comes from two per cent service charges and five per cent income tax of the advertisement bills. Government is earning this revenue because of centralised payment of advertisement bill. The government would lose revenue by decentralisation. Speakers asked how could the government control corruption in several decentralised bodies whereas they are unable to control the corruption of one centralised body.

Speakers also said that this move would create demolition of many newspapers and more than thirty thousand press workers will

become unemployed. The speakers asked for the Prime Ministers intervention in this matter.

### Dhanmondi Paribesh Unnayan Jote meets Mayor

Dhanmondi Paribesh Unnayan Jote, yesterday, met the Mayor of Dhaka City Corporation Sadeque Hossain Khoka in his office at Nagarbhawan to secure the Mayor's support for their initiative to form a committee for the total management of Dhanmondi area.

The members of the Dhanmondi Paribesh Unnayan Jote said that Dhanmondi is losing its residential status due to increasing commercial activities and illegal establishments. They have also observed that public places like Dhanmondi playground are used for cow haat, mela and also as the practice ground of Dhanmondi clubs instead of a playing field for children of the area. There are also plans for the lake-side area to be leased for restaurants and an open-air theatre, which will increase commercialisation, environmental and noise pollution.

The members also suggested to the Mayor that community participation is necessary for any development. Leasing to different people who are not involved in the community will only increase the problems for the residents of the

area. In the meeting the Mayor assured that DCC and RAJUK will designate representatives in the management committee which would be formed for the development of the total environment of Dhanmondi residential area.

### Foreign Investors' Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FICCI) reception

The Foreign Investors' Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FICCI) held a reception on July 26 at a top hotel in the city to celebrate its 40<sup>th</sup> founding anniversary. Representatives of FICCI member companies, ministers, senior government officials, members of the diplomatic core and media representatives attended the function. On the occasion, the president of the chamber, Waliur Rahman Bhuiyan spoke of the activities of the chamber.

Past presidents of the chamber living in the country were honoured on the occasion and special crests were presented to them. FICCI was established on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1963 in Chittagong under the name and style of the Agrabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry. The chamber assumed its current name in 1987 and shifted its office to Dhaka in the same year.

## Market price & outing

### MARKET PRICE

Rice (Tk. Per Kg.)	Kaljira- 8-10	Hilsha (Big)- 225-250
Miniket- 20-21	Cumin (Jira)- 16-18	Hilsha (Small)- 100-110
Pajam- 18.50-19.50	Cinnamon- 14-16	Pangash (Big)- 150-160
Najirshail- 21-22	Almond- 60-70	Pangash (Big)- 60-65
Kaljira- 33-34 (Polao)	Aniseed (Labanga)- 40-50	Shing- 320-340
Chinigura- 35-36 (Polao)	Black Pepper- 20-24	Prawn (Big)- 210-220
Dal (Tk. Per Kg.)	Vegetables (Tk. Per Kg.)	Prawn (Small)- 120-140
Masur Dal- 43-44	Potato- 13-14	Silver carp- 50-60
Masur Imported- 40-42	Eggplant- 12-14	Meat & Egg (Per Kg.)
Mug Dal- 42-44	Green Papaya- 8-10	Beef- 85-90
Mug Imported- 38-40	Pumpkin (Misti Kumra)- 7-8	Mutton- 140-160
Motor Dal- 36-38	Chichinga- 12-14	Chicken- 75
Motor Imported- 20-21	Jhinga- 12-14	Egg- 15-16 (Duck, Farm), 14-15 (Local Chicken)
Oil (Tk. Per Litre)	Lal shak- 8-10	Fruits (Tk. Per Kg.)
Mustard- 65-70	Pui Shak- 8-10	Green Coconut- 10-12 (Per Piece)
Soyabean- 42-43	Green Banana- 6-8 (Per Hali)	Pineapple- 10-12 (Per Piece)
Palim- 36-37	Jali Lau- 10-12/Piece	Coconut- 10-14 (Per Piece)
Coconut (Imported)- 100-160	PaniKachu- 8-10	Jack-fruit- 40-60 (Per Piece)
Veg. Ghee- 42-44	Fish (Tk. Per Kg.)	Guava- 12-18 (Per Hali)
Ghee- 300-320	Rui (Local, Medium Size)- 260-270	Banana- 8-10 (Per Hali)
Spices (Tk. Per Kg.)	Rui (Local, Small Size)- 140-150	Lemon- 4-5 (Per Hali)
Onion (local)- 22-24	Katal (Local, Medium Size)- 190-200	Mango- 40-55 (Differs species)
Onion (Imported)- 18-20	Katal (Local, Small Size)- 140-150	Apple- 80-90
Garlic- 34-36	Katal (Imported, Medium)- 105-110	Others (Tk. Per Kg.)
Garlic (Imported)- 28-30		Sugar- 31-32
Ginger- 28-30		Brown Sugar- 26-28
Ginger (Imported)- 26-28		Salt- 10-11 (Packet)
Turmeric- 62-65		Tea- 120-130
Turmeric (Imported)- 50-62		Gold- 8500 (11.66 grams)
Dried (Red) Chili- 70-80		Silver- 250 (11.66 grams)
Green Chili- 16-20		
Coriander (Dhania)- 30-32		

Sources: Agricultural Marketing Department

### OUTING

#### Museum and Zoo

National Museum- 8619396-9

Open: 10 am 5 pm, Friday 3 pm- 8 pm, Thursday closed

Muktijuddha Jadugar- 9559091

Open: 10:30 am 6:30 pm, Sunday Closed

Bangabandhu Smiti Jadugar- 8110046

Open: 10 am 5 pm, Wednesday closed

Ahsan Manzil

Open: 10 am 5 pm, Friday: 3 pm - 7 pm, Thursday Closed

Shishu Jadugar- 9666466

Open: 10 am- 6 pm, Sunday Closed

Sonargoan Jadugha