



Jatiya Oikya Mancha President Dr Kamal Hossain speaks at a roundtable on "Democracy and Election: Caretaker Government" at a city hotel yesterday. Bangladesh Awami League organised the roundtable.

Hawkers occupy sidewalks four hours after eviction

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The hawkers yesterday rebuilt their open-air shops on the footpaths of Nilkhet in the capital four hours after Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) evicted them.

The hawkers took control of the footpaths stretching from the Dhanmondi Police Station to Gausia Hawker's Market in the morning and encroached the way as it was before the eviction.

The DCC authorities, however, blamed the police for letting the encroachment continue by taking bribes from the hawkers, who also admitted the claim.

The DCC authorities had bulldozed all the illegal shops located on the pavements of Nilkhet in the early hours last night.

Last night, the DCC in the presence of Magistrate Hamim Hassan also bulldozed an illegal kitchen market in New Market during the eviction drive.

"Lastnight's drive at Nilkhet and New Market was a part of the continual eviction process," Mohammad Abu Taleb, chief estate officer of DCC told The Daily Star last evening.

Most of the hawkers were at home when the DCC drove the bulldozers at around 12:30 am, said the hawkers, alleging that the authorities did not give them prior

notice before the eviction.

Hearing the news of the drive, some hawkers rushed to the spot to save the structures and remove the books and materials in safer places while the others came at dawn, the hawkers said.

Some of the hawkers alleged people took away books and materials during the eviction. "I did not find a box of books worth around Tk 1,000 when I came here at around 4:00am," said Mahmud Hassan, a hawker.

"It was not a mass-loot," said another hawker Badshah, adding, "People who were in the market at that time took a box of books or a book while passing by during the eviction."

Most of them constructed their structures by dawn and were ready to start business by 5:00am. "I did not find the structure where I left it last night," said a CD seller, adding, "I bought a ready-made khat (wooden bed) and started selling at 7:00am."

Meanwhile, DCC had evicted the same place some 15 days ago, Abu Taleb informed.

"We have no other choice but to continue business on footpath to run a family," said Golam Mostafa, an elderly hawker who has been running his business for 18 years, when asked why the hawkers encroached the footpaths.

DAUGHTER KILLED OVER DOWRY Father seeks justice

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A father yesterday demanded that the killers of her daughter be brought to justice, alleging that she was strangled by her husband and in-laws over dowry at Siddhinganj in Narayanganj on February 28.

The killers are now intimidating him into withdrawing the case he filed with the court after the local police station refused to record it, said Abdul Barek, father of Shaheda, 26, at a press conference in the city.

Selim, a truck helper, married Shaheda on December 1, 2001 following a love affair.

Barek, a shop owner and resident of Wapda Colony at Siddhinganj, said he also gave Tk 50,000 to Hoque Miah, father of Selim, as he demanded the money for accepting the marriage.

"But after a couple of days, Hoque again demanded Tk one lakh from me and started torturing Shaheda. His son Selim, brother Ali, cousin Sohrab and his brother-in-law Eshak also tortured my daughter," said Barek.

On February 15, several rela-

tives of Selim came to Barek's house and asked him to give Tk one lakh in a week to send Selim abroad, said the old father. Barek borrowed Tk 20,000 and gave them immediately, he said, adding that he also promised them to give the rest in seven days to save her daughter from torture.

"Just after five days, Selim came to my house and pressed me to give the money immediately," said the old man.

"As my daughter protested, Selim gave her a couple of blows in front of me and dragged her by the hair to his home. He also threatened to kill her if the money is not provided in two days," Barek said.

But on February 29 morning, Shaheda was found hanging at her in-laws' house.

Quoting her neighbours, Barek said her husband and in-laws beat her to death and later hung the body with a lungi from the ceiling the previous night and fled the house.

He said the local police station refused to file a murder case and lodged an UD (unnatural death) case instead.

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