

GOVERNANCE IN 90 DCC WARDS

Activities in most Wards come to standstill

Although DCC Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka denies, disappearance of many Ward Commissioners is depriving public of local administrative services that only commissioners are empowered to offer

RIZANUZZAMAN LASKAR

Local government activities in most of the 90 Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) wards have virtually come to a standstill owing to the disappearance of a number of ward commissioners following the recent anti-corruption drives by the authorities.

According to DCC sources, the commissioners' responsibilities are similar to those of UP chairmen. "They are supposed to look after the development work in their wards and approve various legal documents such as citizenship, marriage and character certificates along with residence certificates," said Majibur Rahman, secretary of DCC.

"The commissioners are also responsible for administering specific government owned establishments such as community centres and playgrounds that fall under the particular ward," he added.

After law enforcers apprehended a number of DCC ward commissioners, many others have been either maintaining a low profile or avoiding public appearances and thus depriving thousands of residents in their

wards from collecting important and urgent legal documents such as marriage or citizenship certificates.

Kawsar Ahmed, a resident of Mirpur (DCC ward 6), needs to accompany his ailing father abroad for medical treatment and is desperately in need of passports. However, since the local ward commissioner Ahsan Ullah Hasan had been absent from his office for a while, Ahmed cannot get necessary documents and photographs approved, let alone obtaining citizenship certificates.

"I desperately need the passports issued immediately, but the officials from the (commissioner's) office keep telling me to come back later as the commissioner is not there," said a frustrated Ahmed.

Attempts to contact Ahsan Ullah Hasan, the commissioner of ward 6, through both land and cellphone, were unsuccessful as nobody answered the calls. Asked, his family members told the correspondent that he was not home and they did not know his whereabouts.

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DCC Ward 37 Commissioner's office at Tejgaon has remained locked since emergency was declared.

Rajuk drowns in its own sin

TAWFIQUE ALI

Instances of approving designs of buildings on the main road without any provision for car parking came out recently in a number of cases.

Such irregularities by the Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha (Rajuk) were revealed on March 1 during Rajuk's demolition drive near the Gulshan circle-1.

Rajuk approved the design of a five-storey building 'Rahmania Super Market' (Almas Super Shop) without any mention of car parking provision.

The existing four-storey building at the busy Gulshan-1 intersection is crammed with super stores, groceries, drug stores and other shops on all the floors including the ground floor.

The incident came to light



Rajuk has conducted series of demolition drives to create parking facilities on Gulshan Avenue.

following a Rajuk notice issued to the market owner to retrieve car parking spaces presently occupied by commercial usages.

In a similar instance, Rajuk approved the design of another building (no-44) adjacent to Almas without any mention of car parking provision, though the building is situated on the main avenue.

Design of this building was approved on November 25, 1982.

Rajuk has also approved the design of Gulshan Shopping Centre Complex within a few metres of Gulshan circle-1, though the building rules of 1996 prohibits such shopping centre within 50-metre radius of a crossroads of two or more roads.

In fact, car parking provision is a must particularly for non-residential and commercial

usages of a building, said Rajuk's authorised officer Shamsur Rahman. "But I do not know exactly on what considerations these designs were passed without any mention of parking provision."

In some cases, on the other hand, errant building users are taking advantage of court's injunction to foil Rajuk move against illegal users of buildings that cause immense sufferings to the public.

Rajuk issued the final notice to the Rahmania Super Market (Almas Super Shop) for demolition of illegally constructed portions of the four-storey building. The building occupiers sought three days time to rectify the deviations in the building.

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Young man returns to life from hell

Edris narrates how he overcame serious drug addiction only through his will power

RAIHAN SABUKTAGIN

Inner strength alone helped Mohammad Edris give up his excessive drug addiction and return to a normal life.

People in the neighbourhood in Maghbazar used to know Mohammad Edris as a drug addict and dreaded him for his looks and behaviour. His seemingly unstoppable addiction to heroin, phensidyl and Pathedrine took away almost everything that he possessed.

That was Edris seven years ago. Now Edris is respected by all who know him for he has used his will power to return to a normal life and successfully running a business of accessories for cars at the intersection of Panthapath and Tongi Diversion Road in the city.



Mohammad Edris at his Pathapath shop.

"I was on the brink of death. Those days of addiction were terrible for my family, my neighbours, and me, but after I started discovering my inner strength, the creator saved me from the deadly clutch of drug addiction," said a self-confident and well-established businessman Edris. "Now I am a free and happy family man."

Before Edris was hooked on drugs, his family had a transport business and he had a garment business of his own. He lost it all after getting addicted to Pathedrine, Phensidyl and Heroin.

In 1995, he started a garment business in partnership. His new business partners, who were addicted to the drug themselves, introduced Edris to Phensidyl.

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AN UNWANTED PUBLIC TOILET



The public toilet near the monument of martyred intellectuals in Rayer Bazar lingers in a dreadfully scabby state, illustrating DCC's wastage of public funds. Built three years ago by the Urban Primary Health Care project of DCC, the toilet remains abandoned. Architects who designed the mausoleum blamed the authorities for violating the original designs and constructing the toilet beside the entrance. They said that the toilet is far from being consistent with the original designs. Environmentalists held a public demonstration following the installation of the toilet but could not prevent the authorities from building it.