

LAW COMMISSION VACANCIES

Govt has no plan to make appointments

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

The government has no plan to fill up two posts, including that of the chairman, of the three-member Law Commission which are lying vacant for over 22 months.

Since the acting chairman and his assistant officials are enough to carry out the tasks, "the government has no plan to appoint a full-fledged chairman and a member for the Law Commission," Law Minister Shafique Ahmed told The Daily Star.

There are enough officials to run the Law Commission smoothly. The Law Commission has no problems, he said. This demonstrates how the government does not pay due importance to the commission which was established in 1996 to recommend amendments and updates and modernise laws and the judicial system of the country.

As per section 5 of the Law Commission Act, 1996, the commission consists of a chairman and two members. Under the law, the government has the power to increase the number of its members if it deemed necessary.

The chairman and members of the commission hold their respective offices for a term of three years from the date of their appointments.

According to the law, the government may reappoint the chairman or a member on expiry of their term.

The commission, which is now loaded with many important tasks, can not run in full swing due to the shortage of the full-fledged chairman and a member.

Aside from the two key positions, seven out of twelve official positions, including that of the principal research officer, are lying vacant, worsening the situation, said the commission sources.

The top post fell vacant after the last chairman, Justice MA Rashid, a retired High Court judge, resigned on October 7, 2010 due to "interference and domination" by a few law ministry officials, said sources close to the justice.

Justice MA Rashid refused to comment on the matter.

Sunil Chandra Paul resigned from the

post of member on January 9, 2011 due to his illness. He passed away on June 16 this year.

Prof Shah Alam, who was appointed member on June 24, 2009, was appointed chairman-in-charge on October 24, 2010. He has been carrying out the commission's functions since then.

His tenure expired last June and the government extended his appointment as member for the next two years on June 24, sources said.

Prof Shah Alam said he does not feel the shortage of manpower in running the Law Commission. Rather he feels a lack of office space of the Law Commission.

The Law Commission is currently housed in the building of Judicial Administration Training Institute (JATI).

The office of the Law Commission was earlier situated in the Old High Court Building. When the International Crimes Tribunal-2 was set up there, the office was shifted to the JATI building in March this year.

The commission has only three office rooms which are not big enough to hold seminars, said Prof Shah Alam.

A request will be sent to the government to provide the commission with a sophisticated office space soon, he added.

A former chairman of the commission, requesting anonymity, expressed astonishment at the government's stand on the commission.

It is very difficult for the commission to run without the chairman and a member. How can the parliament run by making the Law Commission inactive, he questioned.

Law commissions in different countries across the world, including Britain and India, are highly dignified and powerful since they have huge manpower and financial and logistic support, he said.

In England, the judges in the House of Lords discharge functions of the Law Commission to update and modify existing laws and to prepare drafts of new laws, he added.



PHOTO: BSS

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina with people of the indigenous communities at the resort of Nilgiri hill in Bandarban yesterday. On a daylong visit to the district, she inaugurated a number of development projects there and enjoyed an indigenous cultural programme. (Story on Page 2)

BCL man stabbed by rivals

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

An activist of pro-Awami League Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) of MC College unit was stabbed by a rival faction's activists in Sylhet city's Naiorpur area yesterday.

The victim Abdullah was rushed to Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital.

Some 15 armed activists of a faction swooped on the activists of another faction that Abdullah belongs to, said police quoting locals.

No case was filed at the time of filing this report.

Road crashes kill 8, injure 37

METRO DESK

Eight people were killed and 37 others injured in road accidents in Chittagong, Sirajganj, Barisal Comilla and Habiganj on Friday and yesterday.

Our Chittagong correspondent reports, a Bhutbhuti (human hauler) driver Md Jahir, 32, died as a truck hit his vehicle on Dhaka-Chittagong highway in Shitalpur area of Shitakunda upazila yesterday.

In Sirajganj, a farmer was killed and five others were injured as a

Nosimon (human hauler) overturned in Salanga of Ullapara upazila around 12:30pm yesterday.

The deceased was Jahurul Islam, 35.

Our Barisal correspondent reports, three people were killed and 30 others were injured as a bus skidded off the ramp of Khairabad Bridge and plunged into a roadside ditch in Nalchhity upazila of Jhalakathi around 6:00pm yesterday.

The deceased were Morsheda Begum, 48, her son Isa Haolader, 15 and niece Saiful Islam, 14.

UNB from Comilla reports, two

motorcyclists were killed when an unidentified vehicle crashed into their motorbike on Dhaka-Chittagong highway at Hasanpur in Daudkandi upazila early yesterday.

The deceased were Hossain Mia, 25, and Russel Mia, 22.

BSS from Habiganj reports, a man was killed and two others of a family were injured as a CNG-run autorickshaw hit a rickshaw van in Saestanagar area of Habiganj town on Friday evening.

The deceased was Abdul Khalek, 40. The injured were rushed to Habiganj Sadar Hospital.

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