



Md Shafiqul Islam Laskar has been leading DNCRP since 2016.

PHOTO: KAZI TAHSIN AGAZ APURBO

“If I don’t enjoy independence to enforce the law, I shall quit”

MD SHAHNAWAZ KHAN CHANDAN

In conversation with Md Shaifqul Islam Laskar, director general of the Directorate of National Consumers’ Rights Protection

Throughout the month of Ramadan, the Directorate of National Consumers’ Rights Protection (DNCRP) continued to hit the headlines by launching market monitoring raids. Its officials went live on social media during those raids, revealing dirty kitchens and storerooms at posh restaurants and food brands, low quality goods and exorbitant prices in super-shops, and widespread food adulteration in kitchen markets. While the public welcomed these raids, company owners have been objecting against DNCRP’s capacity and its way of market monitoring. Amidst tensions, one of the officials of DNCRP, who was conducting such raids, was hastily transferred to another department on May 29. The order of the transfer went viral on social media and came under heavy criticism, and was postponed amidst the Eid holidays only after the Prime Minister’s intervention.

As DNCRP now prepares for a new wave of market monitoring raids after Eid, *Star Weekend* talked to Md Shafiqul

How has DNCRP been working to protect consumer rights? Tell us about your activities.

DNCRP has been established under the Consumers’ Rights Protection Act, 2009 (CRPA, 2009). The purpose of this law is to protect and develop consumers’ rights, preventing any anti-consumer practices as stated in the act, to investigate consumers’ complaints, to ensure compensation for the aggrieved consumer and to raise awareness about consumers’ rights. We take action in two ways: first, we launch market monitoring raids. If we find any questionable practices such as absence of price lists, selling goods and services at higher prices, selling adulterated goods or medicine, not selling or delivering goods or services as promised, deceiving in weight and measurement etc., we instantly fine the seller or the service provider. Secondly, a consumer can file complaint informing us about his/her experience by sending a fax, email or by filling out a form which is available at our office and also on our website. S/he only has to attach the receipt of purchasing the product or the service as proof.

Our officials investigate these complaints, organise hearings by summoning the seller and the complainant and arrange compensation for the consumer if the complaint is found valid. From 2018 to May 29, 2019, we have conducted 6,904 market monitoring raids and fined 19,633 companies. In this period, we have received 7,105 complaints from consumers and solved 4,650 complaints. We are expecting that this year we shall receive more than 10,000 complaints from the



Doctoring weight stone or weight measuring instrument can be punished with maximum one-year imprisonment or with maximum Tk 50,000 fine or both.

PHOTOS: COURTESY

Islam Laskar, Director General, DNCRP about how they protect consumer rights, the capacity of this directorate, challenges they have been facing, and their future plans.

consumers. If the complaints are proved valid, we give 25 percent of the fine to the

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