

3 DHAKA CITY WARDS

Locals deprived of services as councillors in jail

MAHBUBUR RAHMAN KHAN

Though he was indifferent to attending city corporation's meetings, sacked Dhaka South City Corporation ward-9 councillor AKM Mominul Haque Sayeed rented a flat to use as his office, spending four times higher than the money allocated by the DSCC.

The DSCC gives a councillor Tk 8,000 a month to pay office rent, whereas Sayeed rented a flat at Tk 35,000 and made it his office in Arambagh.

Sayeed's lavishness has put his successor Sultan Miah in a fix as he cannot pay the additional rent from his pocket. As a result, people of the ward are being deprived of service.

On October 27, the DSCC gave Sultan, councillor of ward-8, the additional responsibility of Sayeed's ward.

"I need a citizen certificate for opening a bank account, but no one is found at the councillor office [of ward-9]. I have been asked to come later," said Humayara on Monday.

People usually go to councillor offices for character, citizenship,

inheritance, and marriage certificates. Like DSCC ward-9, people of DSCC ward-39 and wards-32 and-33 of Dhaka North City Corporation are also not getting adequate services after three councillors were arrested.

"I need an inheritance certificate, but I'm not getting it as our councillor is arrested," said Akhtaruzzaman, a resident of KM Das lane, in front of the ward-39 councillor office at Rajdhani Super market in Tikatoli.

Almost a month after the beginning of drive against illegal casino business, the government removed Sayeed for being "absent in general meetings and staying abroad without permission from the DSCC".

Sayeed, who is reportedly in Singapore now, is also joint general secretary of Dhaka South Jubo League and the president of Arambagh Krira Sangha.

Visiting the councillor office on the second floor of a six-storey building in Arambagh around 11:30am on Monday, this correspondent found Sayeed's room locked.

The ward secretary's room is next

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11,000 illegal foreigners to be deported

Says liberation war affairs minister

RAFIUL ISLAM

The government has finally decided to deport around 11,000 foreigners staying illegally in Bangladesh without valid documents.

Liberation War Affairs Minister AKM Mozammel Haque disclosed the decision after a meeting of the cabinet committee on law and order at the secretariat yesterday.

"Intelligence agencies have identified the foreigners staying illegally. The problem is that they have no money to return home.... So we will request the government to allocate money so that we can send them back to their respective countries," he told journalists.

According to law enforcers, a large number of undocumented foreigners are from different African countries. Many foreigners are involved in crimes.

Jail sources said a total of 633 foreigners were behind bars till yesterday. Of them, 56 are serving jail terms while 500 facing trial. Besides, processes are underway to deport the rest of them as their jail terms have expired.

Talking to The Daily Star, an official at the headquarters of the Department of Prisons said no foreign mission in Dhaka has contacted the Bangladesh authorities to take back their nationals who served jail terms.

Law enforcers say many migrants enter Bangladesh as footballers, students, or businessmen, but they overstay their visas. They never try to

return home.

Even the Dhaka missions of some countries do not respond to communications from the Bangladeshi authorities concerned.

An official of the Detective Branch of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police said many foreigners destroy their passports immediately after their arrival in Bangladesh so that law enforcers cannot identify their nationalities.

He said they face problems in identifying the nationalities of illegal foreigners as many African countries do not have a mission in Dhaka.

The Security Control Organisation (SCO) of the Special Branch of police usually deals with the foreigners.

According to SCO officials, unlike other countries, Bangladesh has no mechanism to deal with illegal migrants. There is no fund for deporting those held by police.

"We don't have a deportation centre to detain illegal foreigners until confirming their identities and communicating with the authorities concerned abroad," said an SCO official, preferring anonymity.

SB officials said Bangladesh's law does not permit law enforcers to detain a foreign national without bringing formal charges against him. And that's why the law enforcers have no other option but to implicate him in cases over criminal activities or illegal stay in the country.

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Mayeen Uddin Khan Badal

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brother Manir Khan told The Daily Star. Badal was admitted to the hospital on October 18 as he was suffering from a heart disease, Manir said, adding that his body was being brought back to Dhaka yesterday.

Badal, hailing from Sarowatoli village of Boalkhali upazila in Chattogram, left behind his wife, three sons and a daughter.

He was the third among eight siblings, said Manir.

Badal was elected lawmaker thrice in a row from Chattogram-8 constituency, beginning in 2008.

Over the years, he made a reputation for himself as a great orator in the House.

Badal was vocal against corruption and lack of good governance, although his party was a part of the government.

Expressing sorrow over his death, Awami League presidium member and former minister Mosharraf Hossain said Badal actively took part in the Liberation War from Chattogram city.

Dr Mahfuzur Rahman, chairman of Bangladesh Mukti Sangram O Muktiuddho Gobeshona Kendro Trust, said Badal was involved in the politics of Bangladesh Chhatra League in the 1960s, adding that he actively took part in the Liberation War as a guerrilla.

Badal joined JSD in the 1970s and was a central committee member of Bangladesher Samajtantrik Dal in the 1980s, said his brother Manir, adding, he joined Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal afterwards and was elected as an executive president.

Badal was born on February 21, 1952.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury and members of different political parties expressed deep shock over Badal's demise.

Meanwhile, parliament yesterday unanimously adopted obituary references on a number of distinguished personalities, including Badal and former Dhaka City mayor and BNP leader Sadeque Hossain Khoka.

Participating in the obituary motion on the death of Badal, who is an Awami League MP, Hasina said his demise had created a vacuum in the country's politics.

"Badal always worked for the people

of his constituency. He contributed to different sectors, including politics. His death has created a big vacuum in the political arena of the country," she said.

Paying rich tribute to the veteran MP, Hasina said Badal played an active role in all democratic movements, including the liberation war and the anti-Ayub movement.

"I had the opportunity to work with him [Badal] in different movements in the streets," Hasina said, adding, "It's very unfortunate for us that we will not be able to hear his strong voice in parliament anymore."

Hasina, also leader of the House, prayed for the eternal peace of the departed soul and conveyed profound sympathy to the bereaved family.

Opposition leader in parliament Raushan Ershad, AL MP's Tofail Ahmed, Amir Hossain Amu, Mohammad Nasim, Abdul Kalam Azad and Shajahan Khan, President of a faction of Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal Hasanul Haq Inu, Workers Party leader Rashed Khan Menon, Jatiya Party lawmaker Anisul Islam Mahmud and opposition chief whip Mashhur Rahman Ranga, among others, also participated in the obituary reference.

Earlier, Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury moved the obituary references separately with brief resumes of those who died after prorogation of the fourth session of the 11th parliament on September 12.

While moving the references, the Speaker said the House expressed its deep shock at the deaths of Sadeque Hossain Khoka and former deputy minister Humayun Kabir, among others.

After the House adopted the obituary reference unanimously, Speaker adjourned the sitting of the House to show respect to the death of a current MP Badal.

The fifth sitting of parliament began at 4.15pm.

President M Abdul Hamid yesterday also expressed deep shock and sorrow at the death of veteran politician and parliament member Mayeen Uddin Badal.

In a message of condolence, the president recalled with profound respect the contributions of Badal to politics.

"The nation has lost a devoted politician in his death," he said.



Thousands of people gather to bid farewell to former mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka as his body was brought to the BNP's Nayapaltan office in the capital yesterday. Khoka, who had been suffering from kidney diseases, passed away in the USA on November 4 at the age of 68.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Yet another week before it's in use

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filed under the new law for the next seven days, when public awareness programmes would be conducted in this regard.

"At first, I had given seven days...I am now extending it for one more week," Quader said yesterday.

"The work for formulating rules [of the act] is now at the final stage and has to be completed within this time," he said.

"Mass campaigns [about the law] have to be carried out. If we execute the law without raising awareness and taking precaution, it may have a boomerang effect," he added.

Quader, also the general secretary of ruling Awami League, was talking to journalists at a view-exchange meeting with officials of the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) over implementing the law.

Jyotirmoy Barua, a Supreme Court lawyer, however, said that as a minister, Quader does not have the jurisdiction to halt enforcement of the act. The parliament has that authority, he said.

The authority did not raise awareness in the last one year and now the implementation is being halted in the name of raising awareness -- the minister cannot do that, said Jyotirmoy, also a vice-chairman of the Road Safety Foundation.

The authority was supposed to frame rules within six months of the enactment of a law, he said, adding, however, the absence of rules cannot be an excuse (to delay implementation), as many laws are in force without rules.

LACK OF PREPARATION

Amid student demonstrations for road safety last year, the parliament passed the act in September, replacing the Motor Vehicle Ordinance, 1983, with an aim to bring discipline in the transport sector.

On October 22, the Road Transport and Highways Division issued a gazette stating that the law would come into effect from November 1. But the authority is yet to complete framing the necessary rules.

Mobile courts, run by BRTA and

district administration, could not step in as the law was not incorporated in the schedule of the Mobile Court Act, 2009, said BRTA officials.

BRTA Chairman Kamrul Ahsan said the new law has already been sent to the home ministry to be incorporated in the schedule of the Mobile Court Act.

Besides, law enforcers could not impose any on-the-spot fines, as their point of sale (PoS) machines, providing instant challan, were not updated with the new law. Other relevant documents were also unavailable.

Asked why his ministry could not take necessary preparations in the last 13 months, Quader indirectly blamed his ill health and the protest of transport workers against the law.

He said a three-minister committee was formed and it held several meetings with transport leaders, after which they changed their stance over the law.

"Better late than never. We are now going to implement it and hope the situation will improve," he said.

Prove it or face music

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"I would like to say it unequivocally that those who are bringing graft allegations will have to prove those and provide information. If they can provide information, we will definitely take actions [against the corrupt],"

Hasina said carrying out attacks on the VC's residence, office, vandalism and disrupting classes and activities of a university in the name of a movement was also a kind of terror act.

Talking about Buet, Hasina said the government took action immediately after the murder of Abrar Fahad and arrested all those involved in the crime.

"We took action soon after receiving information... everybody [accused] has already been arrested. Everything, including case proceedings, is going on. Then what are they waging the movement for? This is my question."

The premier said being an autonomous body, a university is supposed to be run with its own financing. But the government provides money from the national budget to the universities every year, she added.

She said a movement is waged whenever any development work or

a project is approved for a university.

Hasina said a project has been approved (for the JU), but the money is yet to be disbursed. "A movement has been waged raising corruption allegations before the disbursement of the money."

DEATH OF NAIMUL ABRAR

Referring to the death of Naimul Abrar Rahat, a student of Dhaka Residential Model College, the PM criticised daily Prothom Alo for neglecting the safety and security of students, and not taking proper steps for his treatment.

Abrar was electrocuted during a function of Kishor Alo on the college premises on Friday.

Hasina said those who arrange a programme on the ground of an educational institution should have the sense of responsibility to ensure the safety of the students. They should have been careful about the safety and security of the children and proper arrangement of everything, she added.

"They neglected it to the point that the boy died from electrocution, but they kept the incident hidden until all the components of the function were over," the PM said, adding that although there were so many hospitals nearby, they took

the student to a private hospital in Mohakhali.

She said the incident of electrocution was reported repeatedly, but nobody paid heed to it.

"How can the Prothom Alo do such a thing with so much negligence? They are holding their function. Don't they have any responsibility? Won't they see whether it was being held properly? They should have realised that children are also studying in the school."

Talking about media outlets, she urged them to focus on the names and identities of criminals, particularly in the cases of sexual repression against women.

She also called upon the owners of media outlets to come forward to donate to the fund of Bangladesh Journalist Welfare Trust.

Hasina handed over cheques of financial assistance to 53 journalists and families of newsmen at the function.

State Minister for Information Murad Hassan and Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Information Ministry Hasanul Haq Inu were present at the programme, chaired by Information Minister Hasan Mahmud.

US slams Myanmar over inaction

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a conclusion to the crisis.

Though Bangladesh and Myanmar signed a bilateral deal on repatriation more than two years ago, the Rohingyas did not volunteer to return in the two efforts made last year and this year.

They say conditions in Rakhine are not conducive to a safe and sustainable return, a statement which is endorsed by the UN.

The refugees also said there was no guarantee of citizenship and safety in Rakhine.

In July this year, the US announced sanctions against the Myanmar military's Commander-in-Chief Min Aung Hlaing and other leaders who it said were responsible for extrajudicial killings of Rohingyas and barred them from entering the United States.

The US, which is the leading contributor of humanitarian assistance, providing more than \$669 million since the escalation of violence in August 2017 (more than \$553 million inside Bangladesh; the rest in Myanmar), also called on others to join in contributing to this humanitarian response.

While meeting Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen, Foreign Secretary Shahidul Haque, and the Prime

Minister's Adviser for International Affairs Dr Gowher Rizvi, Alice also reviewed the US-Bangladesh relationship and discussed enhancing defence cooperation.

She also touched upon strengthening governance and rule of law and highlighted the US Indo-Pacific Strategy's (IPS) opportunities for further US-Bangladesh partnership. IPS is aimed at improving connectivity through the Indian Ocean -- business, governance and security being its main aspects.

During the meeting with Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan, she discussed counterterrorism cooperation and US support for fully implementing Bangladesh's National Plan of Action to eliminate trafficking in persons.

"Meeting with opposition leaders from the Bangladesh Nationalist Party and the Jatiya Party, the acting assistant secretary stressed the importance of credible and contested municipal elections," the statement said.

Wells also hosted roundtables with US apparel brands, manufacturers and labour groups to hear more about the ongoing efforts to improve labour rights and working conditions.

While meeting officials of the Bangladesh Investment and

Development Authority, USAID Deputy Administrator Click reinforced the agency's commitment to supporting Bangladesh's efforts to improve the business-enabling environment.

She also highlighted USAID's partnership with Bangladesh and the private sector to diversify Bangladesh's economy and stimulate economic growth.

Accidental hijack alarm triggers Amsterdam airport chaos

AFP, The Hague

A pilot accidentally set off a hijack alarm on a plane at Amsterdam's Schiphol airport on Wednesday, triggering a huge security operation by Dutch police.

Spanish airline Air Europa "deeply" apologised for the incident on board its flight from the Dutch capital to Madrid, which saw emergency vehicles swarm around the plane.

"False alarm. In the flight Amsterdam-Madrid this afternoon was activated, by mistake, a warning that triggers protocols on hijackings at the airport," the airline tweeted.

Acclaimed Bengali writer Nabanita Deb Sen no more

THE HINDU

Award-winning poet, writer and acclaimed teacher Nabanita Deb Sen passed away in her south Kolkata residence last night after prolonged illness. She was 81.

AsahityaAkademi and Padma Shri awardee, Nabanita will be best remembered for her feminist take on the Ramayana, which she has analysed from the perspective of Sita. Her book, Sitayan, was translated into many languages.



Her parents, both poets, were associated with Rabindranath Tagore and thus Nabanita often said she knew that "one of the signatures of growing up is to write poetry".

Her first collection of poems came out in 1959, the year she was married to economist Amartya Sen. The couple had two daughters and separated later.

She taught for many years in the Comparative Literature department of the Jadavpur University and was a favourite among students.

Her travelogue, Truckbahone McMahan [On a Truck Alone to McMohan], provides an entertaining and delicate description of Tawang in Arunachal Pradesh. Nabanita, in her early twenties, hitchhiked up to Tawang in an Army truck to write the all-time bestseller of Bengali literature.

Lamenting her demise, writer Shirshendu Mukherjee said Nabanita had a "huge pool of material" which could not be used due to her ill health. "Besides losing a friend, I would say I will be missing her writings," Shirshendu said.

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said "her absence will be felt by her myriad students and well-wishers".

13-year-old rape victim caned at village arbitration

Alleged rapist yet to be held

A CORRESPONDENT, Chandpur

A 13-year-old girl has been raped by a man and later caned by a village arbitration in Faridganj upazila of Chandpur, said police.

The victim's mother filed a case with Faridganj Police Station in connection with the rape and the torture on Monday.

According to the case statement, Faruk, 24, a day labourer by profession, picked up the girl on her way to school on October 30. He then boarded a cabin of a Dhaka-bound launch with the girl and raped her. Faruk returned to Chandpur the next day and released the confined girl.

On information, two members of the upazila's Balithuba union parishad -- Haris Miah and Mohsin Topadar -- called a social arbitration on Sunday in which they awarded the girl with caning, the case statement said, adding that the locally influential duo also let Faruk escape.

Both the union parishad members, Faruk and some other people, who were present during the village arbitration, were made accused in the case. Chandpur Senior Judicial Magistrate Md Hasan Zaman took the case into cognisance and recorded the victim's statement.

Abdur Rakib, officer-in-charge of Faridganj Police Station, said they were trying to arrest the accused who were on the run as of 9:30pm yesterday.

Contacted, Balithuba Union Parishad Chairman HM Harun said he heard the story of an eloping couple and directed Haris to settle the issue through village arbitration.

He, however, claimed that he did not know whether the girl was raped.