



A signboard by “Dhaka City Corporation” on Rayer Bazar Beribadh road says dumping any kind of waste is prohibited on the spot, and violators will be penalised with Tk 2,000 and 50 lashes with shoes. It’s a different argument that Dhaka City Corporation does not exist since November 2011, when it was bifurcated into north and south city corporations; whether a government authority can issue barbaric punishments like assault remains a bigger question. One might also ask why there appears to be a rickshaw parking spot on government land. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

‘Executive magistrates can’t convict children’

HC terms it ‘inhuman’, scraps sentences of 121 minors

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday scrapped the convictions and jail sentences handed down by the executive magistrate-run mobile courts to juveniles across the country.

The court observed that the process under which executive magistrates convicted and sentenced 121 children through mobile courts is inhuman and in violation of human rights.

“It has damaged the reputation of our judicial system. The magistrates need proper training,” the HC bench of Justice Sheikh Hassan Arif and Justice Md Mahmud Hasan Talukder said after hearing a suo moto rule issued by it earlier.

The court also declared actions of executive magistrate-run mobile courts convicting children and sentencing them to imprisonments for different tenures on criminal charges illegal and unconstitutional.

It directed authorities concerned of the government to immediately release any children convicted and sentenced by mobile courts, if there are any in custody.

The HC observed that executive magistrates cannot convict and sentence children through mobile courts, whatever their offences are, under the Mobile Court

Act, 2009.

At best, executive magistrate-run mobile courts can forward the children if they are accused of any charge to the Shishu Adalat (children’s court) for trial under the Children Act 2013, it said.

Such mobile courts cannot even record confessional statements of children, as competent magistrates have to record confessional statements from children in presence of their parents or legal guardians under the Children Act 2013, the HC observed.

An executive magistrate-run mobile court had reportedly taken confessional statements from 23 children in Shyamali Shishumela and Farmgate areas in only 32 minutes, which is absurd and unacceptable, it said, adding that it shows that executive magistrates concerned of the mobile court do not have a minimum respect for the rule of law.

By convicting and sentencing children, the mobile courts have acted as a parallel of the judiciary, which is an affront to the basic structure of the constitution, the HC said.

Executive magistrates who run mobile courts play the roles of prosecutor and judge simultaneously, which is contradictory to articles 33 and 35 of the constitution, the

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Labour court acquits Yunus, three others

JNU CORRESPONDENT

A labour court in Dhaka has acquitted Nobel Laureate Prof Dr Muhammad Yunus and three other top officials of Grameen Communications from charges of a case filed over violating labour laws, after fining them Tk 7,500 each.

Dhaka’s 3rd Labour Court Chairman Rahibul Islam on February 20 disposed of the case, after the accused sought acquittal of charges, and admitted non-compliance with the Bangladesh Labour Act.

Through his lawyer, Dr Yunus on February 20 promised before the court that he would follow law and would not commit such offence in future, while three others accused appeared before the court and submitted separate petitions, seeking acquittal on grounds that they would not violate any labour rules.

According to case records, Grameen Communications

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Stem cell treatment still questionable for kidney disease

Nephrologists warn patients

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A group of nephrologists yesterday warned renal disease patients against stem cell therapy, as such treatments have not yet been established as safe and effective.

Many institutions in developed countries are still researching the use of stem cell treatments for kidney related diseases, they said.

Patients should not be misguided, they said at a press conference on occasion of World Kidney Day, to be observed today.

Bangladesh Renal Association, Kidney Foundation, and Kidney Awareness Monitoring and Prevention Society (KAMPS) jointly organised the conference at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU).

“We want to clearly inform people that it is not a recognised medical procedure to treat kidney diseases. Patients can face major health risks from such treatments,” said Renal Association President Prof Muhammad Rafiqul Alam.

“Patients should follow recognised and conventional medical procedures,” he said.

The physician said around 40,000 people are suffering from chronic kidney problems. At one stage, the issues get worse and kidneys stop working completely. Then, there is no option left but to transplant kidneys or have dialysis -- both of which are expensive. For this reason, around 80 percent of patients die without treatment.

Prof Rafiqul stressed on prevention and early detection of kidney diseases.

Kidney Foundation Secretary General Prof M Muhibur Rahman, BSMMU Nephrology Department Chairperson

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33PC REPRESENTATION IN PARTY COMMITTEES

Women politicians demand their constitutional right

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Local-level women leaders and party workers from Awami League and BNP yesterday asked their respective party high-ups to ensure one-third representation of women in committees, as granted in the constitution.

The demand was raised at a conference, titled “Women in politics: Each for equal” organised by Democracy International, at a city hotel.

“Even the central executive committee [of AL] does not have 33 percent women in them yet, so when will the ward, union and district committees meet this requirement?” questioned Arpita Khanam Shumi, women affairs secretary of Netrakona district AL committee.

Nineteen members of AL’s 74-strong central committee are women, making up around 26 percent of the committee.

The Representation of the People Order, 1972 stipulates that political parties have 33 percent women in all committees by 2020, terming it a prerequisite for any political party’s registration with the Election Commission.

A number of participants at the conference shared the hurdles of being promoted to posts in various committees.

“I was active in student politics since my university days. Following that, I have worked on the field, at the grassroots, like many of our senior party leaders. But then I

observe that many women are given reserved seats for women just based on their lineage, although they have never been on the field like us,” said Amena Kohinoor Alam, a member of Awami League’s subcommittee on publications and publicity.

Another participant said that increasing the number of reserved seats is not enough, if they all go to wives or family members of male party members, rather deserving candidates.

“The party should collect information and educate themselves about female workers at the grassroots,” said Jedda Parveen Khan Rimi, joint general secretary of Bangladesh Jubo Mohila League.

Women face more challenges at the grassroots level than men do, they said.

Khondokar Atiqa, a reserved seat ward councillor from Mohammadpur, said while male councillors are in charge of one ward each, females councillors have to take care of three.

“I won the election with 2,17,000 votes. Does my male counterpart have to cater to so many people? In addition, I get a lower budget than my male counterparts, even though I am serving more people,” said Atiqa, a BNP-backed councillor for wards 29, 30 and 32.

The women presented a set of recommendations at the conference, including not approving committees at grassroots levels unless they meet

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A green respite for Old Dhaka

Renovated Bahadur Shah Park opens to public

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

After a year-long renovation work, the historic Bahadur Shah Park opened to public yesterday.

The work was done under a “park modernisation project” of Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC). Mayor Sayeed Khokon inaugurated the park.

With the facelift, the park will offer a much-needed green respite to the residents of Old Dhaka, said city officials.

Now, around 500 trees adorn the park while a 12-feet walkway and exercise equipment at different points have been set up under the Tk 6 crore project, they added.

Besides, four-foot deep drain has been constructed to improve the park’s drainage system. Earlier, the park used to remain submerged due to rain. DSCC also spruced up the monuments inside the park, which will be lit up in the evening. There are also benches, a fountain, and two restrooms inside the park.

Every day, more than 2,000 people visit the area.

During the inauguration event, Mayor Khokon urged residents to look after the park and keep it clean. “We had to fight with different influential quarters to keep parks and playgrounds free from encroachers,” he said.

HISTORY OF THE PARK

Enriched with wonderful architectural features, the park is located in Laxmibazar, near Jagannath University.

During the first half of the 19th century, Nawab Khwaja Abdul Ghani, the first Nawab of Dhaka recognised by the British rulers, took the initiative to establish it.

History says, from the time of its construction till 1957, the park was known as “Victoria Park”, named after Queen Victoria. In 1957, the park was renamed after the last

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