

DNCC GULSHAN-2 KITCHEN MARKET

'Illegal floor' thrives in risky building

MATHEWS CHIRAN

Right next to the Gulshan-2 intersection, one of the most upscale commercial areas in the capital, a shabby-looking "kitchen market" under the city corporation's custody is running with a plethora of rule violations and questionable management, literally under the authority's nose.

The Gulshan-2 kitchen market stands at a stone's throw from the Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) office building, where a committee of business owners is running illegally constructed stalls on the market's third floor and renting them out for years.

According to records obtained from DNCC, the market is two-storied, and there are 303 stalls. But in reality, it is now a three-storied building with 453 stalls.

While DNCC generates revenue from the first two floors, it does not earn anything at all from the third. The revenue department claimed that the third floor has been in operation illegally for years.

The 31-member market committee is led by Abul Kasem as its president, Md Malek as vice president and Sahibur Rahman as secretary. Each of them own a number of stalls.

According to the committee members, the market was built in the 1980s and was extended during the period of the undivided Dhaka City Corporation.

It may be worth noting at this point that DNCC considers the building risky.

"My relatives and I have a total of 42 stalls in the market. Every member of the committee has similar number of stalls there. It was extended during the period of an undivided

city corporation by taking proper permission. We made the floor with our own money and were allowed temporary allocation," Sahibur Rahman said, when asked about the third floor.

Asked whether they pay monthly rent to the city corporation as per the DNCC Market Sub-Act 2013, he replied, "No. We wanted to pay but the city corporation didn't want to take the money; they wanted to demolish the floor, but we filed a case and won."

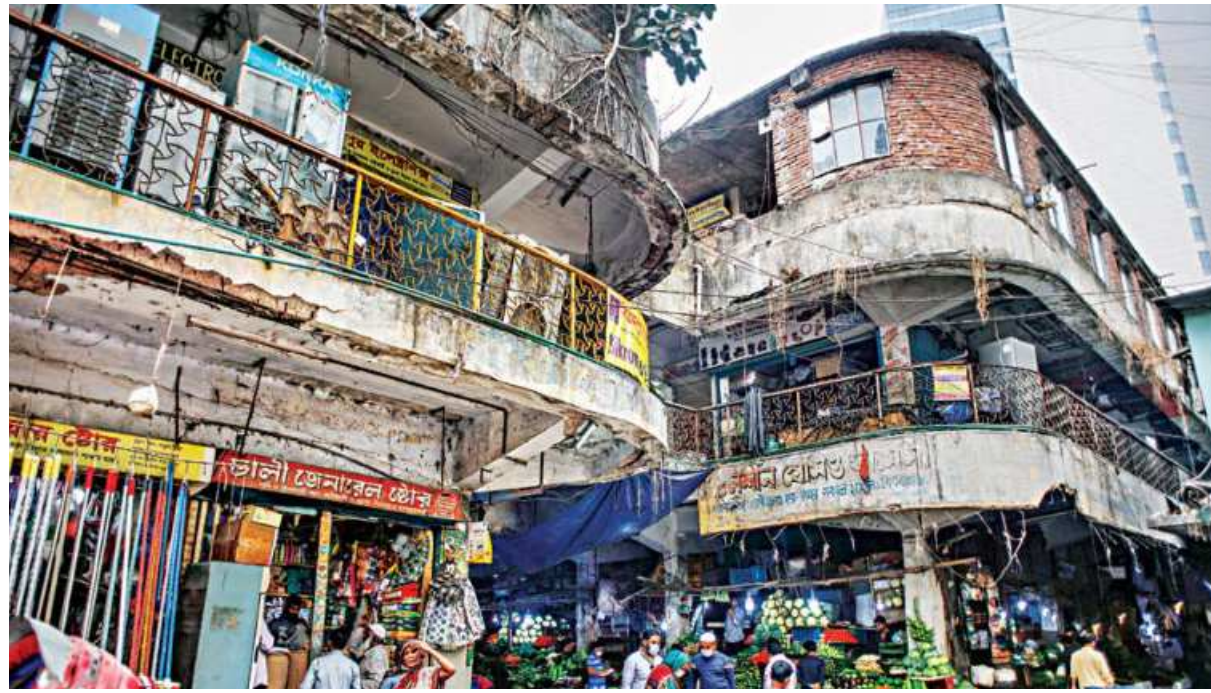
Reiterating the same, its vice president Md Malek aggressively counter-questioned this correspondent. "Who said it is risky? It is not. Only some plasters have fallen off. City corporation has been telling us they'll demolish the market for a long time, but they didn't, so it's not risky at all."

He also said that they had paid money to the undivided city corporation to get the allocation approval and claimed everything is legal. However, his tone turned hostile when asked further questions.

"Why are you asking us questions? We don't have any problem in our building. If you have anything to ask, go ask the city corporation!"

On a query regarding the market, the Estate Deputy of DNCC replied in writing that the city corporation allocated the market temporarily when it was undivided. However, that arrangement was cancelled as the corporation engineers opined that the floor became overburdened with shops, and the building was at risk of collapsing.

Without giving much detail, the written answer also said two writ petitions were dissolved in favour of DNCC, and they are now working to get rid of the illegal structure.



Top, The dilapidated DNCC 'Kacha Bazar' with unplastered outer walls of the second floor visible from the outside, that the shop owners' committee "built themselves". Left, to-let signs for renting out shops on the third floor are a common sight inside the market. Right, plants are growing on the second-floor walls, with the DNCC building visible right behind.

THE SCENE AT THE MARKET

On the third floor of the market, there are shops selling different materials. Most have been rented out.

This correspondent was offered to rent a 9'x8' stall at Tk 4,000 per month by a trader on the floor. He said the owner of the stall was Dhaka North Sramik League's general secretary Barkat Khan. This correspondent also saw offices of Dhaka North Sramik League at the market.

Barkat denied this, however. "This is not true. I only rented the party office at the market this December [2020]. I myself pay around Tk 8,000 to an owner."

When asked if he knows that the third floor is illegal, he said, "It is the market committee who knows about it best. I'm not entirely aware about the fact."

There are to-let posters with phone numbers pasted on the stairwell to the third floor.

Many shopkeepers from the first and second floors, preferring not to be named, said the committee asked them to move to the upper floor multiple times and promised to give them bigger space if they moved, but they didn't as those were illegal.

"This space is 800 square feet. I have been here since the market was established, and DNCC members collect revenue from me every month. I have documents to prove everything is legal," said a shopkeeper on the first floor.

"The third floor isn't legal, and therefore, I didn't move my shop there," he added.

VIOLATION OF A 2013 SUB-ACT

The current allocation of stalls on the third floor flouts several clauses of the DNCC market Sub-Act 2013.

Section 16 (1) says the stall owner

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

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9 British univs want to set up campus in Bangladesh: envoy

Robert Dickson optimistic about boosting bilateral relations

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

UK-Bangladesh relations can see a boost in the coming days, with British companies keen on investing here because of the country's continuous economic growth, availability of human resources and entrepreneurial spirit of the youths.

At least nine British universities want to set up campuses and bring world class education to tens of thousands of young Bangladeshis, while UK is expecting about 10 British companies to invest in financial, IT and healthcare sectors of Bangladesh in next few years.

On the other hand, with Brexit becoming a reality, Britain is also framing policy to allow professionals from all over the world to work in the UK - one that could create opportunities for Bangladeshis there.

British High Commissioner to Bangladesh, Robert Chatterton Dickson, made these remarks to journalists at his residence in the capital yesterday, a day after the first ever UK-Bangladesh Trade Dialogue where Dickson led the UK side and Commerce Secretary Md Jafar Uddin led Bangladesh side at the commerce ministry.

The envoy also highlighted systematic challenges that UK companies face while trying to invest in Bangladesh and suggested that the two countries can develop a long-term and stronger trade relationship if the challenges are addressed.

The bilateral trade between the two countries now stands at £3.4 billion, with Bangladesh exports to UK worth £2.8 billion. UK will continue to provide GSP facilities to Bangladesh until 2027, continuing up to three years after the country's graduation from LDC in 2024.

As Bangladesh's financial sector evolves, UK would like their investment and expertise to play a part in that, highlighting that London is a global financial hub.

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First metro rail to open on Dec 16

Planning minister Mannan reiterates

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Planning Minister MA Mannan yesterday said that country's first ever metro rail will start running from Uttara to Agargaon in Dhaka from Victory Day (December 16) this year.

He was talking to reporters while observing the progress of metro rail construction work at Uttara's Diabari area in Dhaka.

Although the progress of the work slowed down due to Covid-19 pandemic, construction is now on round the clock, the minister said, adding that the full phase -- from Uttara to Motijheel -- of metro rail would be operational by June 2022.

He said a committee is working to determine ticket prices for the metro rail.

The original implementation period of the project was 2012-2024.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina later directed that metro services from Uttara to Agargaon be made operational by 2019, and from Agargaon to Motijheel by 2020.

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Vehicle stand eviction in Sylhet: Transport workers, SCC, police clash

Two highways blocked for hours

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Sylhet city's Chowhatta and Dargah Gate areas witnessed violence for an hour yesterday, as transport workers clashed with police and Sylhet City Corporation (SCC) workers, following an attempt to evict an illegal microbus stand.

Following the clash that started at around 1pm, the transport workers barricaded Dhaka-Sylhet and Sylhet-Sunamganj highways for hours. The barricades were removed around 4:30pm, after a discussion with the transport workers.

For decades, footpaths and roadsides of Chowhatta-Amberkhana road have been occupied by microbuses and cars. Recently, SCC started eviction drives against all illegal stands for development work.

However, the transport workers refused to move. Yesterday morning, the transport workers stopped development work of the road, and an hour later, SCC Mayor Ariful Haque Chowdhury reached the spot to discuss the matter.

During discussion, transport workers locked into an altercation with the mayor and started throwing stones and bricks at SCC officials and workers.

The mayor narrowly escaped the attack. A while after the attack, SCC workers clashed with transport workers, and police got involved to control the situation.

Visiting the place after the clash, this correspondent found 12 vehicles vandalised, while police removed many already.

SCC claimed that at least eight persons -- including a councillor, officials, staff and workers -- were injured in the clash. However, the number of injured transport workers could not be confirmed.

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A small Shaheed Minar built by local enthusiasts at Chandpasha Board Government Primary School in Babuganj, Barishal. The photo was taken this week.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

BARISHAL DISTRICT

Less than 15pc schools have Shaheed Minars

SUSHANTA GHOSH, Barishal

The Shaheed Minar is a symbol of Bangladeshis' love for their mother tongue and the struggle they endured for the language. It imbues the love for language in younger generations who did not witness the language movement of 1952.

To keep young Bangladeshis informed on the country's heritage, language and history, educational institutions should construct the memorial in their compounds so that students can pay their respect to language martyrs.

However, in the district of Barishal,

most government primary schools have no Shaheed Minar due to a lack of government initiative.

According to officials, less than 15 percent of such institutions have Shaheed Minar.

The record from Barishal District Primary Education Office says out of 1,593 government primary schools, only 225 have a Shaheed Minar. There is no Shaheed Minar at schools in Mehendiganj upazila.

Students are eager to have the memorial on their campuses.

Mim, a fourth-grader at Mukul Smriti

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DIPAN MURDER CASE: Death reference docs reach HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The death reference (lower court documents) of the case, in which eight ABT men were sentenced to death for killing publisher Faisal Arefin Dipan, has reached the High Court Division.

Officials concerned of the trial court brought the documents to the HC on Monday, Supreme Court spokesperson Mohammad Saifur Rahman told The Daily Star yesterday.

He said the death reference section of the HC will now scrutinise the documents and then will prepare the paper book for hearing the case.

After the paper book is prepared, Chief Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain may assign an HC bench for hearing, he added.

Judge Md Majibur Rahman of the Anti-Terrorism Special Tribunal of Dhaka on February 10 handed capital punishment to eight ABT men for murdering publisher Faisal Arefin

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With nothing much to do, a group of chauffeurs immerse themselves in a game of ludo on the phone. As their vehicles stay parked near the capital's secretariat for hours, activities like this are the only way for them to pass the time with fellow colleagues.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Water pump stations received from Wasa out of order: Taposh

Recovery of canals ongoing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) Mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh yesterday said the water pumping stations they received from Dhaka Water Supply and Sewerage Authority (Wasa), when the charge of canals was handed over, are out of order.

The DSCC mayor made the comment while he was briefing reporters, after his weekly visit to South Manda and Basabo areas.

"This is a huge obstacle for DSCC. They [Wasa] failed to repair those pumps, and we are trying to repair them through experts," he said.

Taposh said DSCC started their canal cleaning and recovery work, and it is ongoing.

Warning encroachers, the mayor said encroachers will not be able to thwart canal recovery work, no matter how influential they are.

"Shyampur canal is only eight feet wide, although it is supposed to be 100 feet. We have started recovering it and the drive is still ongoing," he said.

He added that the same situation prevails in every canal. "We have found some new encroachment during our visit at Manda canal, and we will take action."

He said authorities have already removed one lakh metric tonnes of garbage from the canals in the last 45 days, and they have also excavated the soil.

The mayor said the corporation is scheduled to continue its work till March 31, so that they can ensure proper water movement through the canals.

He, however, said DSCC will redesign their plan and

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