

A commission with little to no activities

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

The Law Commission, which has been established 26 years ago as a research organisation to modernise the country's laws and judicial system, is now running without its chairman and a member, resulting in facing difficulties in taking policy decisions.

The commission's chairman post currently remains vacant. The tenure of the last chairman Justice ABM Khairul Haque expired on July 23 this year.

ABM Khairul Huq, a former chief justice of the country, had been appointed chairman of the Law Commission on July 23, 2013.

Besides, the office of a member of the institution has also been lying vacant after member Professor M Shah Alam died on August 31, 2020.

Justice ATM Fazle Kabir, the lone member of the Law Commission, is now leading the institution and its research functions.

Contacted, Law Minister Anisul Huq told this correspondent recently that the government has initiated a process for appointing a chairman and a member to the Law Commission.

"The commission will get a chairman and a member soon," he said.

Replying to a query, the minister said the functions of the commission are not

being hampered in any way because of the vacancies.

"The Law Commission is a research organisation. Its member and officials are carrying out the research on the laws regularly and the government has been providing necessary assistance to this effect," he said.

Replying to another query, the minister said it is not true that the government does not accept the recommendations made by the Law Commission for formulating or amending laws as the government and the commission work on the laws based on mutual understanding.

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Law Commission sources said the chairman and the members of the commission are to hold meetings to take any policy decision over recommending

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The chassis of a car is left on the side of a road in Dholaikhal area, to be sold to a suitable buyer. Many scrap shop owners conduct business by occupying parts of the road or footpaths in this manner, causing gridlock in the area. This photo was taken yesterday. PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

DSA created to curb voice of the media Says GM Quader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Television, newspapers and online media are working amidst an environment of fear and anxiety. No one can speak freely at present, said Jatiya Party Chairman GM Quader yesterday.

He said journalists are forced to impose self-censorship in publishing news.

GM Quader said this while holding a views-exchange meeting with the leaders of the National Unity of Journalists (NUJ) at the Banani office of the JP chairman.

Referring to the information of Center for Governance Studies (CGS), GM Quader said 208 journalists have been accused in 108 cases under the Digital Security Act in the last 2 years.

"This has proved that the Digital Security Act was created to curb the voice of the media. This black law needs to be amended immediately," he also said.

GM Quader said when the media is weak, there is a lack of accountability in the society, as a result corruption increases.

He said the date for submitting the probe report in the murder case

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PRAYER
TIMING
SEPTEMBER 19

Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 4:35	12:45	4:30	6:09	7:45
JAMAA 5:10	1:15	4:45	6:12	8:15

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

CITY CORPORATION COMMUNITY CENTRES

Not for the COMMUNITY!

DIPAN NANDY

More than half of the capital's residents belong to middle or lower-middle-income backgrounds. For hosting social events like weddings and birthdays, they have to rely on the city corporation's community centres.

However, most Dhaka neighbourhoods do not have such centres, to begin with.

The two city corporations have 50 community centres in total. Of which, only 29 are currently operational, the rest either in a dilapidated state or occupied by law enforcers or city corporation offices.

According to city planners, keeping public social places closed for an indefinite period for renovations or renting them out to different organisations defeats the purpose.

The city authorities, however, claimed that they are planning to open a community centre in every ward.

NORTH CITY

Of the 14 DNCC community centres, three are used by government agencies and nine are open to citizens. The nine centres are Uttara Community Centre, Mirpur Ward-2 Community Centre, Mirpur Ward-4 Market/Community Centre, Shaheed Commissioner Chaudur Rahman Newton Community Centre, Mohakhali Community Centre, Bir Muktijodha Asaduzzaman Khan Complex, Mirpur Ward-10 Community Centre, Abdul Halim Community Centre (Tejturipara), Souchna Community Centre and Rayerbazar Community Centre.

Meanwhile, Rab is using three community centres as their temporary offices, while Khilgaon Taltala Community Centre, Moghbazar Community Centre, Mohammadpur Community Centre and Banani Community Centre are closed for renovation.

During a recent visit, this correspondent saw that although Mohakhali Community Centre is operational, it is in a dilapidated condition, particularly the restrooms.

Although there is a car parking facility in

COMMUNITY CENTRES DNCC DSCC		
Total number	14	36
Active	10	19
Closed for renovation	1	9
Being used by law enforcers	3	7
Being used by city corporation	0	3



the building's basement, it is mostly occupied by outsiders, forcing guests to park their cars on the streets.

Apart from this, the room of Mohakhali Sporting Club has been made a part of the centre.

However, Uttara Community Centre was found to be an exception. Mohammad Amin, a resident of Uttara-5, said social events such as weddings and birthdays are regularly held there.

SOUTH CITY

DSCC has 36 community centres. Residents, however, cannot use 18 of them due to poor conditions.

Visiting the one at Paltan, this correspondent saw the three-storied building is in dilapidated condition. Meanwhile, Segun Bagicha Community Centre remains closed even after 16 years of its inauguration.

Dhanmondi Community Centre, Northbrook Hall Auditorium of Old Dhaka and Moulvibazar Community Centre are also in a sorry state.

Four, including Islambagh Community Centre and Khalil Sardar Community Centre, are currently under construction. Two more remain out of operation due to a lack of utility connection, while five are being used by law enforcers and three by the city corporation.

Mohammad Mostafa of Fakirapool area said people want to use these centres because of the relatively low rent. "But most of these places are in a sorry state, making them unfit

for social gatherings," he said.

City planner Adil Muhammad Khan said the main purpose of community centres in urban areas is to organise various socio-cultural events.

"Many community centres in our city are now occupied by various organisations. Those that are in operation are rented out only for weddings or other functions, which do not serve their primary purpose," he added.

"The city corporation should create community centres in each area by building ward complexes and organise programmes suitable for different age groups, including children, teenagers and the elderly," he added.

WHAT OFFICIALS SAY

Contacted, DNCC Chief Executive Officer Selim Reza said, "Some community centres have proper facilities and people are benefiting from them."

"However, a couple of them have offices of important state agencies, which will be moved if alternative spaces are found. We are also working on modernising the centres," he added.

Farid Ahmed, chief executive officer of DSCC, said, "We are working on setting up social centres in every ward. Some of them will soon be open to the public."

"The process of shifting offices from these centres has also started. They will leave the community centres when they find a convenient place. The same goes for city corporation offices," he added.

'Illegal, against public interest' Says TIB on importing wheat from Russia and engaging Russian companies in drilling

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Importing wheat at an inflated rate from Russia and engaging Russian companies in gas drilling with a high cost is against public interest, said Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) in a statement yesterday.

TIB said the decision of importing wheat from Russia is a violation of the public procurement act and circular of the Prime Minister's Office, which will benefit the middlemen.

In a government-to-government agreement, there is no scope to engage any private company. However, the government engaged a company named National Electronic BD in the wheat importing process, which is illegal, read the TIB statement.

The bigger question is how the organisation who failed to import only one lakh tonnes wheat could get the work order of importing five lakh tonnes of wheat?

IFTEKHARUZZAMAN, TIB executive director

Besides, the engagement of the same organisation with the agreement between the government and Russian Gazprom to drill three gas fields in Bhola -- which was earlier explored by state-owned Bapex -- is not any coincidence. In both cases, it seems that it is planned to create the opportunity for an unscrupulous syndicate to earn unethical and exorbitant profits, it added.

Quoting media reports, TIB Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman said the pandemic and Ukraine war created fluctuations in the global food and energy market, adding to the country's multidimensional problems.

"The government announced restrictions and took austerity measures in the financial sectors to tackle the situation. In the meantime, violating the existing laws, issuing work orders to Moscow-based company Prodtintorg to import food items at an inflated rate shocked us. And the bigger question is how the organisation who failed to

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Japanese envoy meets Fakhrul

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Japanese Ambassador to Bangladesh Ito Naoki yesterday met BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, a day after attacks on some leaders of the party in Dhaka and Cumilla.

After the one and half hour-long meeting held at BNP chairperson's Gulshan office at 10:00am, party's standing committee member Amir Khasru told reporters, "Today's discussion focused on bilateral issues between our two countries. In addition, the contemporary political situation was also discussed."

"Bangladesh and Japan are enjoying a long-standing bilateral relation.

Making his 'ammu' proud

Teen among 40 living in shelter for sex workers' children sits for SSC exams

NILIMA JAHAN

Hazera Begum never got married or had any biological children. Yet, she is the "ammu" (mother) to 40 children, who once struggled for their identities, for what their biological mothers do for a living.

Today, she is immensely proud as her 40 children are growing up gradually, studying and crossing milestones one after another, and doing great in life.

For instance, this year, one of her sons, Shimul* is appearing for the SSC exams from business studies. He was studying at a private school in Adabor.

One of her daughters, Falguni* has also started her undergraduate studies after passing the HSC exams this year. Another two children have just started eleventh grade, while a few have been studying in different schools in the capital.

Hazera, the founding president of "Shishuder Jonno Amra" (We are for the



Hazera with her children at Shishuder Jonno Amra. FILE PHOTO

I don't have many wants. I just want to make sure my daughters never end up in the sex trade, while my boys live a life away from drugs and extortion.

children), a shelter for the children of sex workers, started the organisation in 2010, initially with 25 children.

Working as a sex worker in the brothels and on the streets until she was 23, Hazera started working with "Durjoy Shishu Nibash" run by CARE Bangladesh in 2000 for the children of sex workers.

In 2008, when the centre was closed due to a fund crisis, Hazera, with her life-long savings and assistance from the humanitarian people, started her shelter at Savar in 2010. It was later shifted to Adabar in 2011.

Shimul's mother brought him to "Durjoy Nibash" when he was around one and a half years old.

"I still remember, he was an underweight baby, all skin and bones, used to get sick all the time, and needed to be hospitalised on and off," said Hazera.

"His mother left him to me, as she was

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'Punishment of culprits unavoidable'

Says HC issuing rule on death of woman in mob beating

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

"If exemplary punishment for the real offenders is not ensured, it will not be possible to prevent the repetition of such incidents," the HC bench of Justice Md Rezaul Hasan and Justice Md Atabullah said yesterday.

The bench said this while issuing a suomoto (voluntary) rule on the death of Taslima Begum Renu, a single mother of two, in a mob beating in the capital's Badda in 2019.

"Above all, ensuring punishment of the culprits is unavoidable for making her two innocent infants motherless," the HC bench said.

With the observation, the bench ordered the deputy commissioner of Dhaka to take necessary steps to ensure the presence of the witnesses of the Taslima Begum Renu murder case before the trial court and monitor the trial proceedings to ensure its proper trial.