

Dhaka, Apr 25 (bdnews24.com) — The High Court on Sunday directed the Government's National Disability Welfare Committee to submit a report within 30 days on the steps it has taken to provide equal opportunities for disabled people.

This order, given by Justice Md Mamtaz Uddin Ahmed and Justice Naima Haider followed two writ petitions claiming that people with disabilities were not being allowed to participate in examinations for the Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) and the Judicial Service Commission (JSC).

Following the order, Advocate Swapan Chaukidar, one of the petitioners who is visually disabled said, "I hope that this order will ensure access of persons with disabilities to the cadre services of the country, and that the Court will protect our fundamental rights".

Advocates for the petitioners had told the court that state officials had failed to act upon the repeated pledges by the Prime Minister to ensure quotas in public employment for persons with disabilities.

They also pointed out that the Disability Welfare Act, 2001, confers a duty upon government officers to create equal employment opportunities for persons with disabilities in appropriate services in the public sector, statutory corporations and in local government authorities.

The lawyers told the court that the rules being applied effectively deprived persons with disabilities of the opportunity to appear for BCS and JSC examinations.

This, they argued was a violation of the fundamental rights of disabled people to equality before the law, equality of opportunity in public employment and the right to freedom of profession.

In response, the Attorney General submitted that although disabled persons throughout the world have made immense contributions to the intellectual and cultural sectors, they may not be able to undertake judicial or other public service work.

In response, however, Advocate Shakir, one of the counsel for the petitioners submitted to the court a list of judges with visual disabilities serving in different countries of the world, including India.

He also gave the names of lawyers including that of Mr. Sadhan Gupta, former Advocate General of the Kolkata High Court.

Apart from Advocate Swapan Chaukidar, the other petitioners included Dr. Ridwanul Hoque, Assistant Professor, Department of Law, Dhaka University and four human rights and disability rights organizations - Ain O Shalish Kendra (ASK), Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST), Action on Disability and Development (ADD) and National Council of Disabled Women (NCDW)

[bdnews24.com/at/im/db/1955h](http://bdnews24.com/at/im/db/1955h)  
[25 April 2010](#)