Keep NID registration as task for EC, say officials

UNB- The Bangladesh Election Commission Officers' Association has demanded cancellation of a law enacted during the previous Awami League's regime to transfer the national identity registration operation from the Election Commission to the Security Services Division of the Home Affairs Ministry.

The association submitted a memorandum to the Chief Election Commissioner on Tuesday, seeking the National Identity Registration Act, 2023 to be scrapped.

The Election Commission (EC) has been continuing the national identity registration operation for the last 17 years using its own manpower, said the memorandum signed by Muhammad Hasanuzzaman, the Secretary General of the Association and also director (Administration and Finance) of EC's National Identity Wing.

The commission has been providing the national identity cards to the citizens as per the National Identity Registration Act, 2010 after the development of a national voter database with the help of the Bangladesh Army during the 2007-2008.

Since the EC's manpower is used to carry out registration operations, it requires no additional cost.

The Election Commission has its own infrastructure, trained and skilled manpower throughout the country to operate this national identity registration operation, said the EC officers.

But the previous government enacted the National Identity Registration Act, 2023, ignoring the opinions of the civil society, political parties and experts, they claimed

Considering the Bangladesh Election Commission as a role model, the election commissions of different countries including Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Saint Lucia, and Saint Vincent and Grenada Islands are successfully conducting the national identity registration operations, said the EC officers in its memorandum.

They said if the registration operation is transferred under the Home Ministry, it would invite unnecessary controversy and create various problems regarding the national identity database.

Citing the problems, they said questions about the implementation of court decisions, legal complications and credibility of voter lists will arise; citizens' constitutional fundamental right to privacy of information will be undermined; a huge amount of government money will be wasted in setting up new infrastructure and hiring manpower; and the authenticity of the database will be destroyed and security threats for the data will arise.

Though the National Identity Registration Act, 2023 was enacted in September last, the registration operation has not been transferred to the Home Ministry yet.