



Few get help from Police Help Line

Set up to provide help to people in trouble more than 10 months ago, it failed to make much impact

AVIK SANWAR RAHMAN

City dwellers seem unaware of the Help Line service introduced last year by Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) to help accident victims on the spot.

"We have a very few calls and most cases are handled by the police officers on patrol," said an

assistant commissioner (AC) at Shahbagh police control room.

Even telephone operators could not identify the Help Line when they were asked to connect the Help Line.

"Many think the Help Line means 999, but this is the DMP exchange number and the Help Line extension numbers are 2222, 2444, 2333 and 2666," a DMP officer said.

The DMP introduced the Help Line on July 22 last year to offer quick help to the victims of accidents and violence in the city.

Help Line members are always ready at the police control room at Shahbagh to provide help for the people in trouble. Three assistant commissioners, as many traffic sergeants, three sub-inspectors, six constables and three nurses

are on duty, working eight-hour shifts. A highway patrol car, an ambulance, a motorcycle and a wireless set remain stand by.

The initial tasks of the Help Line are to provide aid to the victims, clear roads immediately after accidents and open a quick investigation into crimes.

"Taking the victims to hospital is the main problem of the team, as doctors sometimes need

medicines on an emergency basis and the sergeants spend their own money," the police officer said.

"We have published advertisements in the media and demonstrated in the streets to let people know about the Help Line. People should know about it," he said. "Although the DMP took several steps to make the Help Line popular, the move fizzled out as

people don't think police can really help. The DMP should build its image first," said Rafiqul Islam, a Dhaka University student.

Inspector General of Police Shahudul Haque and DMP Commissioner Ashraf Huda who initiated the Help Line for the benefit of people could not be reached for comments.

DU house tutors often duck duties

HASAN JAHID TUSHER

House tutors at Dhaka University dormitories tend to duck their duties despite their financial and housing facilities from the DU.

According to the university budget book, the DU has at least 100 house tutors and 74 assistant house tutors at 19 dormitories.

Students say if the house tutors had been regular on duty,

they would not have faced the seat crisis and outsiders could not have stayed in halls.

"Hall canteens would have provided better food, if they had monitored them regularly," said Sekander Ali, a journalism student.

He says he has rarely seen any house tutor in his dormitory. "It took me many days to contact a house tutor to get a dormitory seat."

The house tutors, many of them younger teachers, get Tk

1,000 in extra allowances and assistant house tutors get Tk 600 a month. All of them get flats close to the dormitories to carry out regular duties.

Campus sources allege many house tutors were appointed on political grounds -- probably the reason they shirk their duties.

"Not only house tutors but also provosts were appointed with political ties to ruling parties in different times," a DU official said.

Resident students have to go to house tutors for seat allotment

or changing rooms. A house tutor says seat allotment is his main duty.

According to the Dhaka University ordinance and regulations, amended up to 1997, the roles of house tutors include monitoring the arrival and departure of resident students in and out of halls.

They are also supposed to call the roll and seek explanations from absentees, check leave applications and look after dining rooms, canteens, furniture and

other property of halls. Rubaet Ferdous, a house tutor of Muktiyoddha Ziaur Rahman Hall, said the post of house tutor should be changed into assistant provost.

He said the role of house tutors was earlier to look after the resident students and oversee tutorial exams at dormitories. "Now we assist the provost at the hall," he added.

"My house tutors do their duties but could not visit the hall regularly as most of them stay

outside the campus," said Professor Hasibur Rahman, provost of Mohsin Hall, adding he assigned his house tutors to specific duties.

Professor Abul Khair, provost of Shahidullah Hall, said the house tutors did not visit the hall regularly. "They neglect their duties like other jobs in the country," Prof Khair said. "If the house tutors had paid attention, the students would have benefited."

city express

The latest crop of quotes from the city's press -- words worth repeating, we feel, for their humour, insight or sheer outrageousness. Star City does not necessarily support the opinions expressed in this column.

"We want your co-operation; let's give up accusation and counter-accusation, let's make joint efforts to arrest those who killed him"

-- Khaleda Zia
Prime Minister
Tells parliament on the killing of Ahsanullah Master while welcoming Awami League's return to House, on May 12. Source: The Daily Star

"Arrest and try the killers or the whole nation will burst into protest like in Tongi-Gazipur"

-- Sheikh Hasina
Leader of the Opposition and AL president
Warns government while visiting the family of slain AL leader Ahsanullah Master, on May 13. Source: Prothom Alo

"Bangladesh is as tormented as I am because of the fundamentalists"

-- Dr Humayun Azad
DU teachers and author
Tells newsmen at airport on return from Bangkok after about six weeks of treatment, on May 8. Source: Prothom Alo

"Hold public officials accountable by making them declare their assets transparently."

-- Praful C Patel
World Bank Vice President for South Asia
Tells The Daily Star while suggesting financial and electoral reforms, on May 11.

"The OC is taking rest at home when the people are waking up"

-- Siddiqur Rahman (Bangla Bhai)
Commander of so-called Jagrata Muslim Janata
Comments as he found that the Bagmara thana OC is not at his office, on May 9. Source: Prothom Alo.

"If there is no car, hire a microbus for me"

-- Azizul Haq (Azizya)
Notorious Ctg criminal
Tells police after coming out of court, on May 13. Source: Prothom Alo

TALE OF THREE CITY PARKS



Most of the city's parks either lack attention or are illegally occupied. A park at Tikatuli (from left) has been given to a private operator, another at Farmgate is being beautified but the other at Sayedabad remains ignored and encroached.