

Bid to bid goodbye to police harassment

DURDANA GHILAS

The police have finally come up with a plan to improve its image by taking steps to remove common allegations of harassing people.

Through a four-month study they have identified 20 ways and seven sources of harassment as well as 12 ways to solve the problems. A guideline has been prepared to deal with the alleged harassments.

Arresting innocent people, not recording general dairies (GDs), delay in inspecting crime scene, dilly-dallying in filing murder case even after post mortem, and not filing case without medical certificate are among the ways people are harassed, according to the study.

As part of the move to solve the problems, Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) has started a motivational workshop

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against those who will be found guilty of harassing people.

One of the common complaints against the police is that most of the time they do not want to record cases. Sometimes they do not want to register even a GD, said Monir (not his real name).

In our society there is a tendency to avoid going to police stations just because people are harassed there. People do not seek help from the police unless he or she is in a big trouble.

cer-in-charge). He also discouraged me from filing the GD. Then I gave them a reference of my relative who was a high official of the police. Instantly they registered my GD," he said.

People do not go to police station also because they are afraid of the police.

"I never went to the police station even if I faced trouble because I think if I go there I will be compelled to give bribe," said Matin (not real name). "Even if I

making police department a very professional, service-oriented organisation, initiating strict discipline, speeding up community policing, and increasing welfare activities by the police.

"We have identified some ways of harassment. For an example, after an incident two opposing sides sometimes file two cases against each other. Sometimes the police know who is the real culprit but do not take action accordingly. So the victim does not get police help," he said.

"In case the police do not know who is the real victim they should do some investigations and talk with other people or witnesses. If this can be done then the number of cases will also go down. Guidelines are being given to the police on how to deal with such counter cases," he said.

About taking action against those found guilty of harassing people even after completing the training, he said, "An SI of Shyampur police station was found guilty and the report was published in the Prothom Alo. The commissioner saw the news and the officer has been suspended."

"In some cases people who are not involved are shown as suspects in FIRs [first information reports]. Murder cases are often taken as UD [unnatural death] cases. Sometimes the police stations wait for the post mortem report before registering the UD case as a murder case. We are hoping that this workshop will work to solve these problems," he added.

DMP Commissioner Nayeem Ahmed said, "We worked for four months to identify the ways of harassment and the steps that should be taken to stop it. The guidelines have been made on the basis of our on-the-job experiences and opinions from people in general."

Around two hundred officials are being trained in one session. Three sessions have completed since it started on December 9. Around 1,400 officials will be trained in the rest seven sessions.

Among recent significant steps taken by the police -- legal service delivery is being given from 33 police stations from March 2007 and police clearance certificate is being given to passport seekers within maximum 7 days through one-stop service.



A recent poster on police week shows police being encouraged to be friendly with people and come to their aid when needed.

to train 2,000 of its officers to stop harassment and make the officers accountable.

Ranging from assistant sub-inspectors to additional commissioners the officials will be trained to help people seek police assistance.

According to officials, strict disciplinary actions will be taken

"A few months ago I was in fear of getting harassed by the in-laws of my niece. I went to the police station and told the officer on duty to record a GD. But he started plying me with questions and giving advice to my niece to go back to her in-laws to settle the matter," said Monir.

"Then I went to the OC [offi-

know a criminal of my area, I do not inform the police about him. I know both the police and the criminal will harass me if I do that."

Md Masudur Rahman, additional deputy commissioner, public relations, DMP, said that the guideline has six objectives -- putting an end to harassments,



A series of bus ticket counters by the sidewalks at Shyamoli Ring Road.

Mushrooming bus terminals spoil people's peacefulness

Sidewalks being used as 'waiting rooms'

RIZANUZZAMAN LASKAR

Indiscriminately placed bus counters and unauthorised 'mini terminals' for long distance bus services in residential areas of the city are creating major inconvenience to the residents.

These counters are everywhere -- on main thoroughfares, inside narrow alleyways or on the sidewalk next to your home.

They sell bus tickets for various inter-district or long distance routes at the rented small spaces on the ground floor of your neighbour's building and conveniently use the street in front of your house as a mini bus terminal.

These types of activities are spoiling the residential nature of city neighbourhoods, creating traffic jam and hazard for children and adults alike, complained upset city dwellers.

"They rent spaces for shops, hotels and even residences in the residential areas and turn those into bus counters or terminals.

Sidewalks are used as 'waiting rooms' for the passengers and their buses create chaotic traffic congestions in the streets," said Mahmud Hossain from East Rampura. "Some have even rented out portion of a shop or

of other places throughout the city.

Bus counters have been mushrooming on both sides of Ring Road in Shyamoli over the past few years, locals said.

A good number of buses going

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hotel to use it as a bus counter," he said.

Some of the residential areas that are worst affected by this booming business include Shyamoli, Malibagh, Shahjahanpur, Rampura, Badda, Kalabagan and a number

to northern districts of the country have their counters on this street. The rows of counters of transportation service companies on both sides of this street make it look like a designated bus terminal.

"It's as if they are planning to

turn this peaceful area into another Gabtoli," said Rumana Chowdhury, a resident of Ring Road, Shyamoli.

Invariably, a number of well-known transportation companies are operating their counters in other residential areas of the city, causing inconveniences to locals.

"Their activities go round the clock, starting early in the morning till late at night. They make the whole neighbourhood feel like one big noisy fish market," said Mahmud Chowdhury from Malibagh.

Indeed, these bus counters are a source of a lot of commotion. It is anything but pleasant to find the scenes of an average bus terminal -- the honking of horns, haphazard parking of oversized vehicles, noisy dialogues and disputes of transport workers along with all the noise that comes with boarding and disembarking the buses right next to your home.

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Love for the lost cakes

SHAHNAZ PARVEEN

It was a different day for the city dwellers. They had the opportunity to get away from their hectic and demanding lifestyle for a change and tickle their taste buds at the Pitha (rice cake) festival organised by Narigrantha Prabartana.

Around 70 types of scrumptious pitha from Jessore, Tangail, Kushtia, Chittagong, Narshingdi, Ishwardi, Noakhali, Barisal, Comilla, Kishoreganj and Chandpur were on display this Monday and Tuesday at the fair held at Mohammadpur.

Pitha enthusiasts were quite pleased to be able to try out all sorts of lip-smacking, uniquely patterned and eye-popping delicacies under one roof. To name a few, Shundori Paakon, Hridoi Horon, Jamai Pitha, Shaipuli, Nakshi Pitha, Khejur Pitha, Poa Pitha, Lobongo Lotika, Chondro Pul, Rosh Goja, Bibkhan, Banshpata, Angti Pitha, Kismis Pitha and several types of Naaru were available at the fair. As an added bonus for the pitha lovers visiting the fair, the participants shared their recipes with them.

The fair was not just about savouring the

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