

Victims of petty crimes rarely turn up for police help

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Although there is an apparent fall in crime incidents and newspapers have fewer such stories these days, tales of a large number of petty crimes are never reported to the law enforcers.

Officials in the city's main police stations, seeking anonymity, admitted that the victims still remain reluctant to turn up for help mostly fearing fresh reprisals or 'police hassles or harassment'.

Woman victims keep away from litigation to avoid possible social stigma.

Mahmuda Akter (not her real name), a resident of Khilgaon, barely escaped a vicious mugging attempt last month while she was stuck in a traffic signal during late evening.

At the busy Gulistan intersection, 39-year-old Mahmuda found two men knocking on her car window.

"There were only two of them, and they were passing through the cars. As they were well dressed and looked decent, I thought them as law enforcers and barely protested when they tried to get in the car," said Mahmuda.

"They pulled out two pistols and pointed them at my waist from both sides before I could realise what was happening. Luckily, the traffic started moving and my driver pressed the accelerator. As the car dashed forward they were forced to get off the car," she said.

Mahmuda managed to get away unharmed, but was shaken by the experience and felt very nervous when she returned home.

"I thought it was pointless to report it to the police. Nothing had been taken or damaged and

no one had been hurt. I also felt a bit anxious about having to make statements and all that," she said.

Her attitude was far from unusual as scores of such cases go unreported every day in this city of millions.

Over the past seven years, Jalil Ahmed, a service provider from Mohammadpur, has been burgled, mugged and threatened with a dagger, and had his car broken in twice. Not once did he go to police.

"It is waste of time going to the police. It is not a problem if you know some action will be taken for sure, but what do you do if you know it is going to be a report just filed and then lie there to gather dust."

Then there is Rakib, who has had three cell phones stolen, Bashir, whose confectionary store has been broken into thrice and Farida, who was assaulted on the street. None bothered to report to the police.

The reasons why people decide to put up a case or shut up are many and varied.

Talking to several victims it was revealed that general people's willingness to report crimes depends on the type of offence and response of the law enforcers.

It is not just those who suffer relatively petty crimes like wallet snatching or common assault who do not come to police. A good number of victims of relatively violent crime decide not to seek help, while some of those who have experienced a burglary also keep quiet.

Delowar Haque (not real name), a businessman was mugged at Banani a few months ago. Haque was walking towards the Banani Bazar at 10:30 that

night when three unidentified men waylaid him.

"As they had sharp weapons with them, I had little choice but to hand them over everything I had in my possession. They took away my cell phone, wristwatch and Tk 3,000 worth of cash."

Haque thought of filing a general diary (GD) with the local police station, but changed his mind later.

"I was thinking to file a general diary with the local police station. Then a couple days later I concluded that it would be no use reporting it. I was also afraid about the hassles the whole thing may cause," he said.

"This 'lack of confidence' in police is an important factor why they don't come to us. People do not seek help from police unless he or she is in a big trouble," said an official at Tejgaon police station.

One of the several complaints against police is that they often discourage people from recording cases. Sometimes they would not even register a general diary, said city dwellers.

"About a few months ago I went to the local police station to file a case against the in-laws of my niece for abuse. The on-duty officer started asking questions about various details. He advised my niece to go back to her in-laws to settle the matter personally," said Monir, a resident of Manipuripara.

"Later, I talked with the OC [officer-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.

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 some of the common complaints against police.

"It is true that quite a lot of people do not report crimes in fear of harassment. To bridge this gap with the general people, we have been holding regular open discussions in our station," said an Officer-in-Charge (OC) of a police station in one of the crime prone zones in the city.

He observed that with such limited manpower and logistics provided to the police improvement in this sector is very difficult. "Our officials have no incentives and our working conditions are not up to the mark. A constable often works seven days a week and rarely gets leave for Eid or Pujafestivals."

"We need support as well. A police person cannot be expected to work efficiently if he or she is not given his or her dues," he said, on condition of anonymity.

However, the police have recently come up with plans to improve its image by taking steps to remove common allegations of harassing people. 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.

"We are aware of the harassments faced by general people. We worked for four months to identify the problems people face in police stations and have prepared a guideline to stop them," said DMP Commissioner Nayeem Ahmed.



Construction of a kitchen market is going on at Aminbazar, Gabtoli in the city. The six-storey market will be built by Dhaka City Corporation. According to DCC officials the market will be ready for opening within two years.

Dhaka Zoo

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Special nutrient has been added with the bird feed. "Electrolyte, vitamins and minerals have been increased in the bird feed to strengthen their immune system," said Animal Nutrition Officer of the zoo, Md Shafiqur Rahman.

Last month the lone rhea of the zoo, a rare species of flightless ratite bird native to South America, died raising an alarm of bird flu as the bird was discharging nasal fluids.

It was later cleared by the Central Disease Investigation Laboratory (CDIL) and Bangladesh Livestock Research Institute (BLRI) that the bird in fact died of enteritis, a cold related disease. The eight and a half year-old rhea was brought from Thailand.

Unending wait for plots

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The official-in-charge of NHA said the Waqf Estate affiliates have been continuing their battle over the land by filing back-to-back writ petitions and appeals with the HC and the Supreme Court since 2001.

Nurul Islam, executive engineer of NHA Dhaka division 1, said that this January a court order went in favour of NHA and now it is going to conduct an eviction drive in the area.

The administrator of Waqfs, Bangladesh was asked about the court order but he expressed ignorance about it. He said, the Waqf estate's latest writ petition with the SC and the case at the lower court are still pending.

While all this legal battle is going on, in 1997 the office of the Administrator of Waqfs under the religious affairs ministry started to lease out about 30 acres of the disputed land. Tk 20,000 was taken from the lessees for per katha of land.

An official at the office of Administrator of Waqfs, Bangladesh claimed that the land has been under their possession since 1950 and the eviction drive initiated by the housing authority was illegal.

He added that secretary of the religious affairs ministry has sent a letter to secretary of the housing ministry requesting to stop NHA's 'unauthorised' eviction initiative.

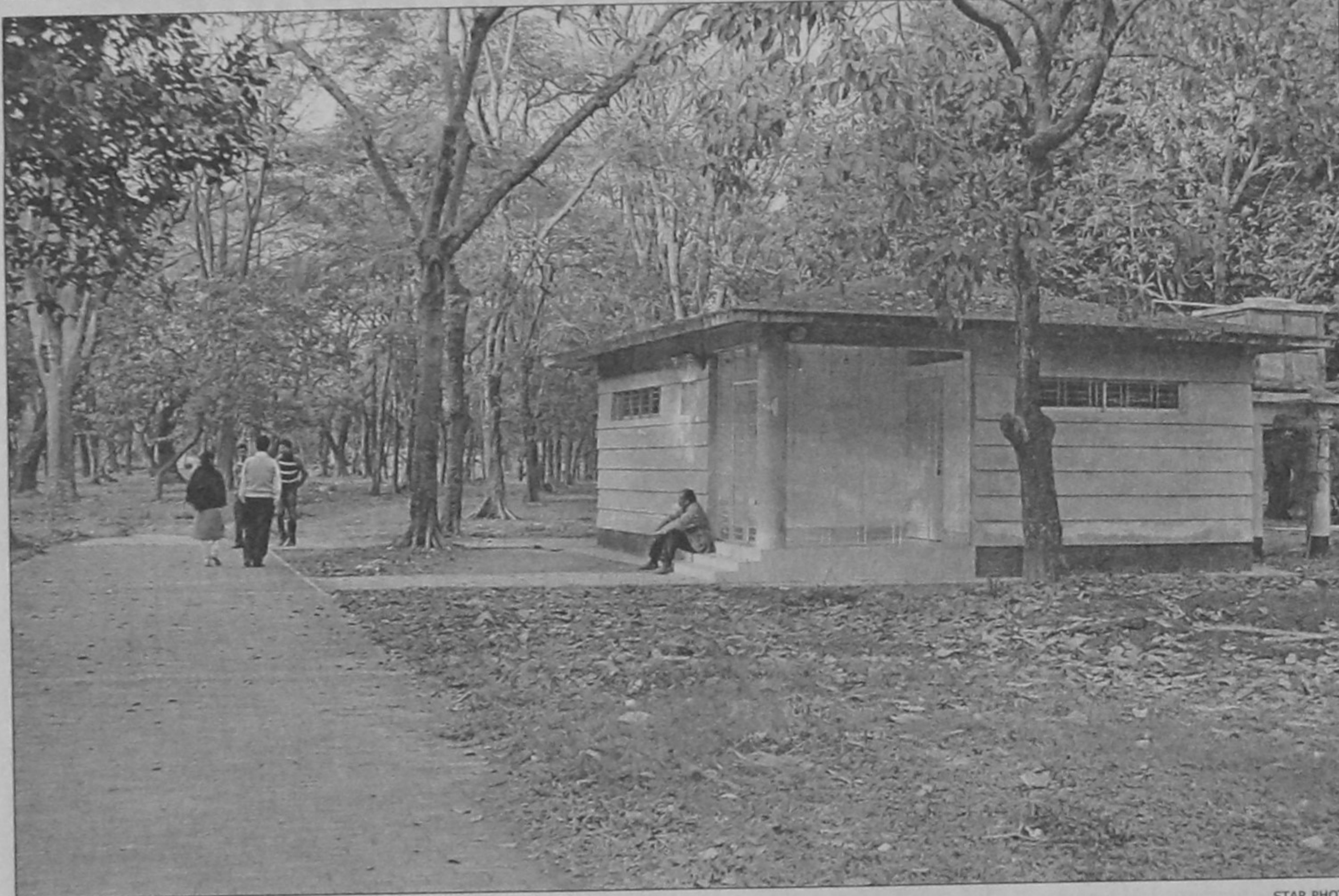
Abu Yousuf Mohammad Hemayet Uddin, administrator of Waqfs, Bangladesh, said,

"Cases are still pending at courts. So, the land rights of the plots are still unsettled."

The housing ministry should have notified the Waqf Estate and compensated before acquiring the land from Waqf Estate, but the ministry did not do any of that, he added.

He also suggested that formation of a technical committee with members from both ministries and the allottees might solve the problem.

But Kazi Tofazzal Hossain, a retired government official and allottee who did not get his plot after years of wait, posed in a saddened voice, "We have grown old and many of us have already passed away. When will they solve the problem and when will we get the plots?"



A public toilet lies idle at the Suhrawardy Udyan in the city. The toilet was constructed by Dhaka City Corporation two years ago but it is yet to be opened to the public.

Stroke

FROM PAGE 21

planned to provide paid services to those who can afford and make a fund out of it so that we can support ourselves and serve the poor patients at Savar," he added.

Besides rehabilitation of stroke patients, CRP Mirpur is also providing domiciliary or home services for patients who need physiotherapy every day. The home service is very useful for elderly patients for whom it is not possible to come to the therapy centre every day.

For the children who need physiotherapy there is an arrangement for their mothers to stay with them. Attendants of other patients also can stay.

CRP Mirpur is providing excellent operation theatre service for visiting neurosurgeons and orthopaedic surgeons, the doctors said.



A specially built wheelchair by CRP is being used for a physically challenged child at the centre.

health, bus services, airlines & train timing

HOSPITALS & CLINICS

Square Hospitals Ltd
Emergency: 8144466, 8144477, 8144488, 01713377773, 01714477774, 01713377775. Fax: 880-2-9118921
Telephone: 8141522, 8142431, 8144400, 8142333, 8159457, 8129334, 01713141447.

Ahsania Mission Cancer & General Hospital
9008919, 8051618

Apollo Hospitals Dhaka
9891680-4, 01713046684/85
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9118202, 8115843

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China Bangla Hospital (JV) Ltd
9813674

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8828855, 8827575

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Pangu Hospital
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PG Hospital (BSMMU)
9614545-9, 9612550-4
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8317606, 9557354, 8317819

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9111090

Saimullah Medical College Hospital
7319002-6

Samorita Hospital Ltd
9131901

Shahid Suhrawardy Hospital
9122560-78

Shishu Hospital
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United Hospital
8836444, 0194001234

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Bangladesh Red Crescent Blood Bank
9116563

Modern Clinic & Blood Center
9883948

Sandhani, Dhaka Medical College
9668690

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7101504

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Airport Office: 8917400, Fax: 8913005

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8960404, 8915699, Fax: 8826115

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9130123-5, Airport Office: 8914573

Indian Airlines Ltd
9555915, 9557813,
Kuwait Airways
9115182, 9118829

Malaysia Airlines
9888211-20
Airport Office: 8916953, Fax: 9890478

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9349293-5, Fax: 9345300

Singapore Airlines
8811504-7, 9883259
Airport Office: 8911928, Fax: 8811503

Thai Airways
8314711-18, 8914343

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8816324-5, Fax: 9896481

TRAIN TIMING

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Mahanagar Prabhati
Mahanagar Godhuli
Turna
Parabat Express
Joyanika Express
Upaban Express
Tista Express
Ekata Express
Upakul Express
Agni Beena Express

Leaves Dhaka at 4:30 pm
Leaves Dhaka at 7:30 am
Leaves Dhaka at 3:15 pm
Leaves Dhaka at 11:00 pm
Leaves Dhaka at 6:40 am
Leaves Dhaka at 12:45 pm
Leaves Dhaka at 9:45 pm
Leaves Dhaka at 7:00 am
Leaves Dhaka at 5:00 pm
Leaves Dhaka at 8:00 pm
Leaves Dhaka at 9:20 pm

Reaches Chittagong at 10:35 pm
Reaches Chittagong at 1:55 pm
Reaches Chittagong at 10:55 pm
Reaches Sylhet at 6:40 am
Reaches Sylhet at 2:30 pm
Reaches Sylhet at 9:20 pm
Reaches Sylhet at 6:40 am
Reaches Bahadurabad at 1:05 pm
Reaches Bahadurabad at 11:15
Reaches Noakhali at 5:00 am
Reaches Jagannath at 2:30 pm

LIBRARY & INFO-

Libraries, Cultural and Information Centers
Central Public Library- 8626001-4,
Shishu Academy- 9564128
Shilpakala Academy- 8614673
Bangla Academy- 8619550
Islamic Foundation- 9550280, 9556407
Nazrul Institute- 9114602
Ford Foundation- 8116133
Alliance Francaise- 8611557
Information Resource Center, The
American Center - 8813440-4, 9886395-9
British Council- 8618867-8, 8618905-7
Community Development Library- 8113769, 8113604
Goethe Institute Int'l- Dhaka- 9126525-6
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The Russian Cultural Centre- 9116314, 9118531, 9118314
Drik Photo Gallery- 9120125, 8112954, 8123412
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