



Cops grab jaywalkers by the hand and lead them to mobile courts set up nearby on Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue yesterday. Some of the offenders were placed in a prison van to wait for their turn to pay the fine, which was between Tk 20 and Tk 200. Only 331 people were fined, while a few thousand others jaywalked and got away with it. Though the drive forced some pedestrians to follow the rules, things slipped back to square one after the mobile courts left around 4:30pm.

PHOTO: STAR



Jaywalkers get caught

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accident and congestion."
The two mobile courts realised around Tk 24,000. None were sent to jail.
The situation turned messy again once the mobile courts left for the day in the afternoon.
The Dhaka Metropolitan Police on Saturday announced that it would conduct a weeklong drive at the stretch of the avenue between Hotel Ruposhi Bangla

and Farmgate Police Box. It conducted a three-day awareness campaign since Saturday as well.
Additional police were deployed to coax pedestrians into using footbridges and pavements and capture them when they did not listen.
Signs were also placed asking pedestrians not to break the law.
"I did not know about the drive as I was sick over the last couple of days," said

Bappi, who was caught by traffic police while trying to cross the road near ATN Bangla office.
Asked why he was crossing the road violating the traffic rule and risking his life, he said he saw many people doing so.
Private firm employee Sanaullah, who was fined at Bangla Motor for not using the footbridge just above the intersection, said he was in a rush and also did not have any idea about the drive.

Several penalised jaywalkers alleged that the campaign was inadequate. They blamed the sorry state of footbridges and footpaths.
There are six footbridges on the stretch of the avenue and an underpass at Karwan Bazar. The footbridge next to Ananda Cinema was blocked by Dhaka North City Corporation on July 18 after a physical inspection of the structure by Bangladesh University of Engineering

and Technology. No restoration work is going on.
Two other footbridges are in shabby condition. Restoration of the one in front of The Daily Star Centre was underway. Pavements under the footbridge are partly occupied by construction materials, forcing pedestrians to walk on the road.
The sidewalks near the footbridge at Farmgate intersection are occupied by

hawkers. Many pedestrians are compelled to walk on the road because of this.
A total of 950 people died in 1,102 accidents in the city since 2009. Of them, 134 people died in 155 accidents this year alone, said Mosleh Uddin Ahmed, joint commissioner (traffic) of DMP.
He said many more had to embrace lifelong physical disability due to traffic accidents.

Stop it now

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afford the rest of the amount. A few days after the marriage took place, Saidul said he was not willing to continue living with Kalpona. But the village people intervened and arranged a mutual understanding, and so he took her back to his house.
Although they remained together, theirs was a relationship full of unrest. Saidul physically abused Kalpona, stating that he wanted more money. Saidul worked in a fabric making store in Pabna where acid is used in fabric colouring. One night, he brought acid to his house and poured some into sleeping Kalpona's mouth, with the intent to kill her. Her tongue melted into her lower jaw and she cannot speak properly anymore.
Kalpona's story might not be the same for other women, but the underlying facts are all shockingly similar. Perhaps all perpetrators of violence against women do not have such open access to acid. Perhaps they do not demand a huge dowry. But more often than not, women are subject to some form of abuse in their households, by their husbands or in-laws. The Bangladesh Demographic Health Survey 2007 revealed that more than one-third of both men and women believe that men are justified in beating their wives in specific circumstances, such as arguing. In Bangladesh, violence starts at home, and for the most part, it is completely ignored. The ugly truth is, we all know women who face violence but are helpless in the face of societal pressures.
According to the nationwide survey titled "Violence Against Women Survey 2011" conducted by Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics in collaboration with the United Nations Population Fund, 87 percent of married women are abused by their husbands, with most of them facing violence in the last twelve months, which implies they are abused on a regular basis. Fifty percent of women facing abuse had to seek medical help. A study conducted by the International Centre for Diarrhoeal Diseases Research, Bangladesh (icddr), called "Men's attitudes and practices regarding gender and violence against women 2011" found that a large majority of men in Bangladesh rape because they per-

ceive sex as their entitlement.
"As a civil society, we can increase people's awareness on violence against women and facilitate the support services such as legal and medical help, but justice is in the hands of the policymakers and law enforcers," said Rina Roy, director (rights division) of Manusher Jonno Foundation.
"The prevalence of violence against women will only decline when cases are handled in a transparent manner, with effective punishment sentenced to the perpetrators," Roy added. The case of Kalpona is evidence of this appalling flaw in the system: Saidul Islam was in jail for two and a half years, but he recently got bail and was released.
Starting on November 25, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, people around the world are displaying the colour orange to symbolise hope for a future free from violence against women. The campaign is titled "Orange YOUR Neighbourhood" and is part of the UN Secretary-General's campaign UNITE to End Violence against Women. The theme will be active throughout related events during the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based violence, which will run between November 25 and December 10, Human Rights Day.
Women's rights groups and organisations in the country are working to raise awareness on this important issue. Manusher Jonno Foundation observed the day with 21 partner NGO's across Bangladesh. Rallies, workshops and dramas were held in Gopalganj, Patuakhali, Kurigram, Borguna, among other districts, keeping in mind the Orange theme. Naripokkho, a leading women's rights NGO, organised a play on child marriage and its repercussions at Chhayanaut on November 24. BRAC is organising rallies and human chains in all 64 districts.
A UN Women report found that among all women killed in 2012 around the world, nearly half died at the hands of a partner or family member. Unfortunately, most crimes go unpunished and perpetrators walk free. The challenge is to break down those walls and ensure a safe space for women, which is their basic human right.

Ignorance too costly

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Following the High Court ruling in 2009, the University Grants Commission directed all universities to form independent sexual harassment complaint committees (SHCC) to protect students from sexual harassment.
However, talking to our Rajshahi University correspondent, a number of students from different disciplines of the university said they did not know how SHCC functioned to prevent sexual harassment on campus.
Learning about the committee from the correspondent, a student named Tanmoy said: "I witnessed an incident of sexual harassment just a week ago where a male student was teasing a female student, using sexually abusive language."
"I will report the incident to the committee on behalf of the girl," he added.
Having been sexually harassed by a teacher about two years ago, a student of sociology department, who would not disclose her identity, had complained to her department chair, instead of taking the matter to SHCC.
She said her teacher had been trying to make advances to her for quite a long time.
"When I refused his proposal, he threatened to hamper my academic career. I was compelled to refrain from taking part in my second year final examinations as a result of his frequent advances. At last I sent a written complaint to the department chair, seeking security of my academic life," she said.
The department asked the teacher to keep himself away from the class to which she belonged and a couple of months later he himself left the university.
Several teachers, wishing not to be named, said the university authorities should take effective steps to create awareness among teachers, officials and students about the activities of SHCC.
Mahbuba Kaniz Keya, president of SHCC at RU, said: "We have requested the university syndicate to spread words about the committee's activities but we have not seen any progress yet."
The committee has provided a sexual harassment prevention guideline to all the departments to make the

teachers and students aware, she added.
Keya opined that though many incidents occurred only a few reached the committee because female students shied away from reporting these in a male dominated social context, fearing further harassment.
The RU authorities sacked three teachers and an instructor following an investigative report submitted by the committee after it was formed in June 2011.
However, Prof Rasheda Akhter, convener of Jahangir University's SHCC, said many complaints reached the university proctor who in turn referred them to the committee.
In the last four years, the committee received nine complaints four of which took place this year: three against students and one against a teacher, she said.
"Except for one of the cases which remained pending because the complainant went abroad, we have completed investigation into the rest and actions were taken accordingly," she said.
Akhter however differed with committee members of other universities on the issue of lack of awareness.
"At JU, students are given a booklet at the orientation which details the HC rule regarding sexually inappropriate behaviour and what they should do in the event of any harassment," she said.
Nowshin Nahar, psycho-social counsellor of Eastern University, said they had not yet provided students with booklets on sexual harassment though a number of workshops and posters are put up on the campus to create awareness among students.
"In most cases, female students are afraid to take their complaint to the committee fearing social rejection and rebukes from their own family," Nahar said.
A fourth-year political science student of RU, who too wished to remain unnamed, said the tendency to shun away from complaining was caused by family pressure.
She said she was approached by an influential student leader about a month ago.
"When I refused, he slapped me several times. At one point I fell to the

ground. He left the place when two of my female friends rushed to the spot," she said, adding that he later threatened her over the phone with dire consequences if she disclosed the matter.
Dissuaded by her friends from complaining to the university authorities, she had called his parent.
Instead of consoling his daughter, her father too told her not to disclose the matter.
"I was shocked when my mother blamed the way I dress for this incident. She rather suggested I always wear veil on campus. A day later, she came to Rajshahi and bought me a veil. From then on I wear veil on campus," she said.
Sexual Harassment as defined in the Guidelines declared by the High Court
a. Unwelcome sexually determined behaviour (whether directly or by implication) as physical contact and advances;
b. Attempts or efforts to establish physical relation having sexual implication by abuse of administrative, authoritative or professional powers;
c. Sexually coloured verbal representation;
d. Demand or request for sexual favours;
e. Showing pornography;
f. Sexually coloured remark or gesture;
g. Indecent gesture, teasing through abusive language, stalking, joking having sexual implication.
h. Insult through letters, telephone calls, cell phone calls, SMS, pottering, notice, cartoon, writing on bench, chair, table, notice boards, walls of office, factory, classroom, washroom having sexual implication.
i. Taking still or video photographs for the purpose of blackmailing and character assassination;
j. Preventing participation in sports, cultural, organisational and academic activities on the ground of sex and/or for the purpose of sexual harassment;
k. Making love proposal and exerting pressure or posing threats in case of refusal to love proposal;
l. Attempt to establish sexual relation by intimidation, deception or false assurance.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN 2014

At least **35** women faced **ACID ATTACKS** OF THEM

- 5** due to family disputes
- 5** due to enmity
- 6** due to land disputes
- 5** due to dowry-related reasons

At least **23** women faced violence due to **SALISH and FATWA**

455 women were raped

72 women faced rape attempts

At least **20%** rape victims were under **13** years old

1,913 girls were victimised by their stalkers since **2010**

VICTIMS OF DOWRY

2009	319
2010	379
2011	516
2012	822
2013	436
2014	147

SOURCE: AIN O SALISH KENDRA; ODHIKAR