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PHOTO: MD MOAZZEM MOSTAKIM

"The way I see it, if you want the rainbow, you gotta put up with the rain." – Dolly Parton, American singer-songwriter, actress, author, businesswoman, and humanitarian

SNAPSHOT

| SECURITY |

Back in 2014, Dhaka Airport received the 'honour' of making it to the Worst Airport of Asia list, where it landed in the ninth place, according to The Guide to Sleeping in Airports. The list described Dhaka Airport as an ugly place: "From broken trolleys to broken toilets with a lack of toilet paper, much of DAC sits in disrepair."

This certainly is an embarrassingly bad news for us. But the good news is of the recent work undertaken by the Dhaka Airport Magistrate Court and two of its executive magistrates, Muhammad Yusuf and Sharif Muhammed Forhad Hossain.

After the involvement of the two magistrates, the incidents of harassment, irregularities and crimes in the airport area decreased significantly, agree most of the frequent fliers.

"We make sure that our service is accessible to everyone, so we encourage everyone to call our helpline or contact us through our Facebook page," says Forhad. "The helpline numbers given on the page "Magistrates, All Airports of Bangladesh" are our personal numbers. The amount of calls, Facebook posts and messages that we get every day is sometimes overwhelming, but we always try to attend to each one of them."

As people can access the hotline numbers provided the page whenever



THE AIRPORT WARRIORS

FAYEKA ZABEEN SIDDIQUA

PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

they want, the magistrates have been able to start their investigations and take actions immediately against any incident of harassment or crime.

In the last few months, the mobile court fearlessly fined domestic and international airlines for their involvement in various irregularities at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport. In many cases, they have had to fine and jail many airport staff for their involvement in various crimes, such as theft and drug peddling. They also dealt with several cases where service providers were punished for not giving proper services.

Ibrahim's case is one of them. 20-year-old Ibrahim was supposed to fly to

Salalah, Oman, on an employment visa from his hometown, Brahmanbaria.

Even though he had his boarding card on him, and had completed the immigration process, he was not allowed to board the aircraft, as it was filled to the brim with passengers. In fact, the management of the airlines forced him out of the aircraft. Ibrahim kept requesting all the employees of the airlines to provide him with a seat, but they refused to provide any accommodation. A victim of callous commercialisation of services, Ibrahim spent one night at the airport, while the airlines, Flydubai, showed no concern for his condition. When the airport employees informed the airport magistrates about this incident, and Muhammad Yousuf found the allegation against Flydubai to be true, as per the Consumer Rights Protection Act 2009, the mobile court fined the airlines Tk. 6.5 lakh for harassing a passenger, where the passenger receives 25 percent of the

compensation, while the rest of the money is deposited to the government exchequer.

Like Ibrahim, thousand others are also immensely benefitted from the mobile court, which has been fearlessly, instantly and most importantly, transparently dealing with different issues that arise in the airport – starting from passenger harassment, baggage cutting, lost luggage, to stealing from luggage and illegal money extortion from the passengers.

"We are not scared to punish the culprits, no matter who they are. But our goal is not only to identify and punish them; we also try to make the passengers aware of their rights and responsibilities. In most cases, they are not clear about what they can or cannot expect from the airport service," says Forhad. "For example, before we came here, we found people were asked to pay money if their luggage did not have any tags on them. Also, they were not clear about paying

taxes when they brought electronic items like mobile phones and television from abroad. Even if paying tax is a rightful demand, they would take it as another form of harassment. By putting up a number of charts with all these tax information on our Facebook page, we try to make them aware of their responsibilities."

Only three years in their service, the success story of these two magistrates is truly incredible - fining a private airlines, Regent Airways, Tk. 3 lakh for harassing passengers at HSI, jailing Biman Bangladesh Airlines staff Nurul Amin, who was working as a cargo helper, for one year on charge of mobile theft at the Biman Cargo, detecting serious irregularities in Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport's 'lost-and-found' department and fining its duty supervising officer, ordering the authorities to ensure proper service and taking steps against those responsible for 'mismanagement' in the department, fining Turkish Airlines Tk. 4 lakh for harassing passengers at HSI, removing over 50 donation boxes kept at Dhaka's Shahjalal International Airport by different religious institutions and so on.

Carry on the good work, dear magistrates. You have all of our support! ■

MAILBOX

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Dharmarajika's Act of Kindness

I was very touched by the article titled "Dharmarajika's act of compassion" published in the *Star Weekend* on June 17, 2016. In these couple of weeks we have seen so many unexpected incidents of religious intolerance. The situation is so bleak nowadays that we are now scared to help unknown people. We even feel insecure to talk to anyone we don't know! However, Dharmarajika's act of greatness teaches us the definition of humanity. Helping each other without considering their social identity is the lesson the monks of Dharmarajika conveyed to us by providing iftar to underprivileged Muslims. These monks proved that who you are does not matter, but what you are does- and what we are is human.
Tasin Seju
Lama, Bandarban



PHOTO: AFP

No to Policies that Kill

I totally agree with the MSF's slogan- 'stop applying policies that kill and prolong anguish' published in the *Star Weekend* on June 24, 2016. Even though every government has some restrictions to provide accommodation to refugees, after reading the article I felt so moved that I would like to ask every government to treat the refugees humanly. Because being in such a helpless state, these people have to leave their beloved motherland in the quest of a safer place even though they have to cross a way that is no less dangerous than their own country. After so many difficulties, when they reach your country, you should not treat them inhumanly. My appeal to these governments is "Only imagine, if you were in the same reality these helpless people have been going through!"
Enam Hasan
Madaninagar, Narayanganj

The Railway Rush

The *Star Weekend* deserves a big hand for the article titled "The railway rush", published on 24 June 2016. Readers have come to know that our journey by train on the occasion of Eid becomes a troublesome journey instead of an 'interesting' one. The writing reminds us how the railway manages the huge rush during Eid by offering poor services with minimum personnel. No visible steps are being taken to fill up the vacant posts in the railway. On the other hand, lack of locomotives, old tracks and want of innovation have made the rail an age old transport service. During big festivals like Eid people depend on rail transport due to cheap fare and safety issues. The Government should take rightful steps to make the railway journey safe and easy.
Md Wazed Ali
Pathok-kandi, Madaripur

The opinions expressed in these letters do not necessarily represent the views of the *Star Weekend*.



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**Earthquakes Don't Kill People.
Buildings Do! Build Safe!**

