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PHOTO: S M REZAUL HAQUE

"It's better to see something once than to hear about it a thousand times."

— Unknown

SNAPSHOT

CURRENT AFFAIRS

Recap: On April 9 allegations arose that Bangladesh Chhatra League's Kabi Sufia Kamal Hall president Iffat Jahan Isha was torturing quota demonstrators inside her room. The general students brought her out of her room and made her publicly apologise while wearing a garland of shoes. Isha was subsequently expelled by both the BCL and University of Dhaka, only to be reinstated three days later. On the night of April 20, three students were handed over to their guardians because of their role in coercing Isha to confront the general students. Star Weekend takes a look at how BCL treats students in Sufia Kamal Hall.



Her Facebook inbox is now flooded with rape threats. One sender called her a pig and said she should've been raped when she was still a baby in her mother's lap. Another, a Bangladesh Chhatra League member of Sreepur named Shajib Hassan, insinuated

SOME ANIMALS ARE MORE EQUAL THAN OTHERS

This is an incident where a certain faction of students were once again reassured that they will remain armed with the power to treat general students however they want. When a BCL leader is almost punished for oppressing girls, but then comes back from the brink of her fall, guns blazing, it conveys the message that political appointees matter more to the authorities than general students.

MAILBOX

Please note we have a new email address: starweekendtds@gmail.com

Deterioration of the image of DU

Widely known in the past as the "Oxford of the East", DU has always stood above other universities in Bangladesh. Since its establishment, this image of the university remains intact. The students and teachers of this university played an important role in the rise of Bengali nationalism and in the epic struggle for freedom. But recent activities of the administration are unprecedented in the history of DU.

Especially the latest incident of female students who were thrown out from Kabi Sufia Kamal Hall around midnight due to raising their voice against existing quotas in the civil service has thrust DU into the limelight and its image has deteriorated. DU students were upset by these actions and according to reports by The Daily Star and other media houses, many students who protested and led from the front now fear reprisals from the administration and Chhatra League which dominates on campus. To keep intact the image of DU, the administration must stop this political harassment of students.

If an institution like DU is not able to ensure the safety of students who are politically neutral, the general student body will lose its confidence in the administration. As a student, I don't want to see such a shameful chapter continue which is tainting the overall image of the university.

Abul Khaer GooT Saadat University College Tangail

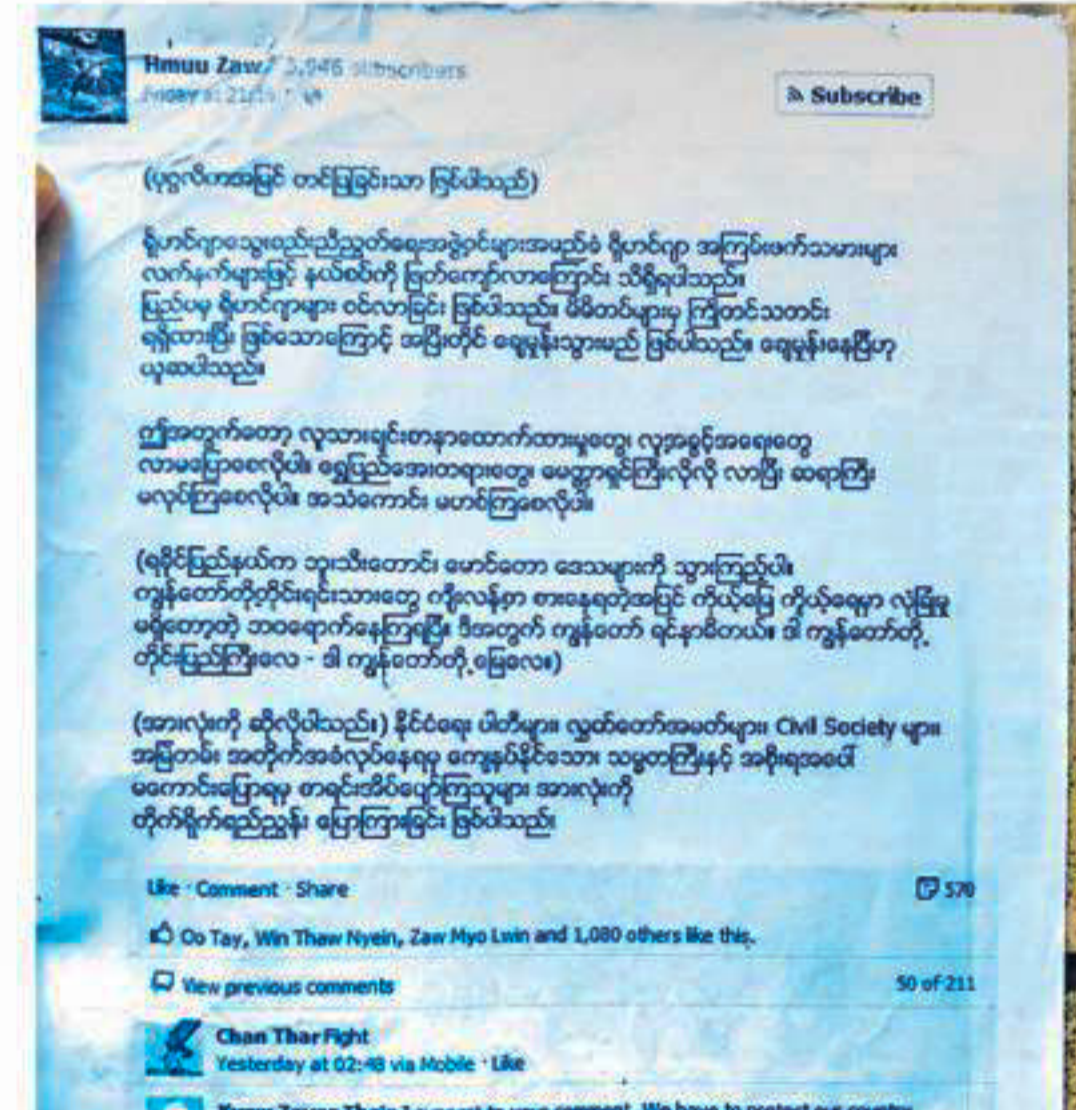


Faulty role of Facebook in Myanmar

This is in reference to a write-up on "Is social media inciting violence in Myanmar?" by Maliha Khan published in Star Weekend on April 13 which explained the controversial role of Facebook in ethnic cleansing atrocities committed against the Rohingya by Myanmar security forces and ultra-nationalist Buddhist communities.

Mark Zuckerberg, the co-founder of Facebook, recently said "From where we stand, this case exemplifies the very opposite of effective moderation. That's the kind of thing where I think it is clear that people were trying to use our tools in order to incite real harm." Facebook's role in spreading misinformation in Myanmar has become a top criticism of the social media company.

Most of us think of Facebook as our best friend as we can share our views, see what our friends are up to, and get a



glimpse of our parents and near and dear ones at any time. But do we ever think of its downside? The fact is that Facebook allows for fake news to spread quickly. Many do not check for the authenticity and source of possibly fake news. They share it quickly without realizing its future consequences.

The Myanmar state army and their associated so-called extreme Buddhists have used Facebook as a platform to incite and instigate mobs to oust the Rohingyas forcefully. During riots, wars and political movements, social media can play a negative role as in the moment, there is little scope to verify sources and what the facts are. We have to take the lesson from the faulty role of Facebook in Myanmar that everyone should be cautious on social media during such situations. Md Zillur Rahaman Bhola

Reckless driving, deadly roads

The mindless killings in the name of road accidents have become a common phenomenon now and the recent death of Rajib is a glaring example of this ruthless practice. It is the basic fundamental obligation of the government and the transport authorities to ensure road safety and punish reckless driving. However, they seem to be least concerned about this hazard that is taking a huge toll of valuable lives on the roads. Many of those who got killed or maimed for life are the sole earning members of their families. What will happen to these families if their sole earning members are lost forever? When will the collective sense of the concerned authorities or the general masses be sufficiently stirred so that no further untoward accidents claim anymore lives?

Nuzhat Rifa Ehsan Baridhara Dhaka

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

ZYMA ISLAM

that she should sell herself to men. Yet another BCL man from Sylhet called Abu Taher Juned asked her whether she would have sex with him for Tk 200-250. A Qatar-based BCL man called Syed Shupon Augustia Mizan threatened to rape her mother. A Jubo League member from Companiganj called Main Uddin Ujjol threatened to rape her.

And these are just the people directly messaging her. Her photo and the link to her Facebook profile is being freely distributed by BCL activists online with messages like "Get this girl" and "Arrest her", and, of course, rape threats.

All of this was sent to a female student from Kabi Sufia Kamal Hall following the series of incidents that

happened over the last two weeks. The student had been one of many who had supported the ousting of the BCL president of her dormitory, Iffat Jahan Isha. "We have shown how to protest against those who oppress us," she had written on her Facebook profile.

"I am constantly afraid that I am being followed," she says, sharing screenshots of the abusive messages with Star Weekend while sitting in a corner of the long porches inside the Teacher-Student Center. "A friend of mine who is affiliated with BCL sent me this message warning me to be careful because the political students are looking for a chance to harm me," she adds, extending out another screenshot.

By now most people know about the drama that unfolded in the Kabi Sufia Kamal Hall of the University of Dhaka. A girl was injured, and another—the BCL president of the dormitory—was

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expelled from the university and then brought back in again; and then three more girls who had demanded the president be removed were first thrown out of the dorm and then taken in again. The university authorities and some political factions are dismissing it as a girls' "hostel-based scuffle" that does not warrant the amount of national attention it is getting. The hate speech in the Facebook interactions described above however indicate otherwise.

"The day BCL hall president Isha was brought back wearing garlands of marigolds, the general students of the dormitory started leaving out of fear that she would now retaliate," says Eity Jahan, a resident of Kabi Sufia Kamal Hall. "I went to the Provost to tell her that the girls are scared but she did not believe me."

"The students dragged Isha downstairs to publicly apologise because

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Advertisement for BSRM (Building a Safer Nation) featuring a bridge and a group of people. Text includes: 'বিশ্ব বলেছিলো- পদ্মা সেতু 'সম্ভব না' একজন প্রধানমন্ত্রী আর ১৬ কোটি বাঙালি বলেছিলো- 'কেন না!' BSRM building a safer nation'.