

18 DU students tortured in five months

Claims newly-formed rights org

DU CORRESPONDENT

In the last five months, at least 18 students of Dhaka University (DU) have been either assaulted or mentally tortured at six dormitories in 10 incidents related to "guestroom culture", mostly by "BCL" men.

The authorities have not taken any action in 15 cases as of yet, according to Students against Torture (SAT), a newly-formed rights-based students' organisation. Three campus correspondents were also assaulted; the authorities kept mum in those cases too.

Saleh Uddin Sifat, SAT founder, revealed this at a press briefing yesterday at DU. BCL men abuse students to teach "manners", for not attending political programmes, posting Facebook posts on guestroom, and breaching "guestroom rules", among other reasons.

The information was recorded from October 5, 2021 to February 28, 2022.

Sifat, also an office secretary of Chhatra Adhikar Parishad's DU unit, said the administration took "so-called" actions in three cases.

Contacted, Saddam Hussain, general secretary of BCL's DU unit, refuted the allegations. "Sometimes unexpected incidents happen in the dormitories. Some non-popular organisations are bringing allegations against us for seeking attention," he said.

This correspondent could not get in touch with DU Proctor Prof AKM Golam Rabbani.

Asked, assistant proctor Abdur Rahim said, "We take action against those involved in such incidents."



Many citizens may not be aware of this, but the yellow tiles seen on footpaths, installed by the city authorities, are supposed to facilitate movement for the blind and disabled. However, when the footpaths have potholes right down the middle, the yellow zone does little help for those who use it. This photo was taken yesterday on Kazi Nazrul Avenue, near Karwan Bazar.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Watch out for these 20 ZONES

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Accident Research Institute (ARI) of Buet has identified 10 most accident-prone intersections of Dhaka city, where people, especially pedestrians, are frequently getting killed.

They also identified 10 accident-prone mid-blocks or road links of the capital, an overpopulated city with inadequate roads and highly undisciplined traffic movement, experts involved with the project said.

Among other variables, the research organisation identified the spots considering road crash data, traffic operation, geographical challenges and facilities for pedestrians.

The deadly intersections and mid-blocks have been selected from around 100 spots. ARI has also prepared site-specific solution for the spots to reduce road accidents.

Buet's Accident Research Institute identifies most accident-prone intersections, mid-blocks in Dhaka.

ARI also prepared three guidelines for making urban roads safer, especially for pedestrians, and are now in the process of taking opinions from stakeholders.

The 10 intersections are at Khilkhet, Jatrabari, Sayedabad, Kakoli, Kakrail, Shyamoli, Matsya Bhaban, Rampura, DIT Extension Road area, and Asad Gate.

The mid-blocks are around Merul Badda-Madhyabadda, East side of Khilkhet Police Station, Kakoli-Sainik Club, Rampura TV centre, Kalyanpur BRTC Bus Stand, Bashundhara City Shopping Complex, Shishu Hospital, Sainik Club-Chairmanbari,

10 INTERSECTIONS

Khilkhet, Jatrabari, Saidabad, Kakoli, Kakrail, Shyamoli, Matsya Bhaban, Rampura, DIT Extension road near Paltan Model Police Station and Asad Gate.

Dhanmandi-27 and the Baily Road intersection beside Viqarunnisa School and College.

Dhaka Transport Coordination Authority (DTCA) in 2020 had taken a project titled "Road Safety Management and Capacity Building Project" at the cost of Tk 4.96 crores.

Under the project, ARI was appointed as the consultant to identify, among others, the most hazardous road locations in Dhaka city, prepare school zoning and make three guidelines.

As per project documents, continuous migration towards the capital due to social and economic reasons is deteriorating the condition of the roads.

"Uncontrolled road development and unplanned landscaping in urban areas have resulted in a disorganised and ineffective road network along with non-standard road geometric features, which leads to a poorly organised road transportation system in the capital," reads the document.

"Besides, sub-standard bus service, poor driving practice, lack of pedestrian or user discipline coupled with ill-designed and ill-maintained road infrastructure result in poor road safety situation in this mega city," it added.



10 MIDBLOCKS

Merul Badda-Madhyabadda, East side of Khilkhet police station, Kakoli-Sainik Club; Rampura TV centre; Kalyanpur BRTC Bus Stand; Bashundhara City Shopping Complex; Shishu Hospital; Sainik Club-Chairmanbari, Dhanmandi-27 and the Baily Road intersection besides Viqarunnisa School and College.

The diverse characteristics of traffic, and operating vehicles of varying speed and manoeuvring time make the city's intersections more complex. This is why some strict and comprehensive measures to prevent unwanted loss of lives is needed, it said.

Asif Raihan, an assistant professor of ARI, who was involved with the project, said they have carried out surveys for the project from September 2020 to December last year in around 100 spots. However, they didn't consider the intersections and links where developments, like the metro rail and elevated expressway, are going on.

During the survey, they used police and newspaper data on road crashes and observed traffic operation, geometric challenges of the roads and presence or absence of facilities for pedestrians on the particular intersections and mid-blocks to come up with the findings, he told The Daily Star on Sunday.

Asif also said they have provided site-specific solutions for the most hazardous spots and even a road map to implement the solutions, which should come in three phases—short, mid and

long-term.

SM Sohel Mahmud, associate professor of ARI, who also coordinated the project, said they have prepared three guidelines for ensuring road safety in urban areas, focusing on pedestrian safety.

Although Roads and Highways Department (RHD) has a guideline for road safety audits, there is no separate guideline for urban road safety audits, he said, adding that this is why they have developed the guidelines.

Besides, the team has also developed a work-zone safety and mobility guideline, as many development projects are now being implemented in the country, he added.

Project Director Mamunur Rahman said they will hold workshops with stakeholders over the findings and guidelines and hand over results to the two city corporations for implementation, once the project ends in June this year.

'Ensure justice, take preventive measures'

MJF, partner orgs urge authorities on child rape

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF), along with its over 100 partner organisations, has expressed shock and outrage at the situation regarding children's sexual abuse in the country.

The rights organisation issued a press release in this regard yesterday.

According to the statement, at least 14 children – aged between four and eight years – have been reportedly raped and gang-raped in the last 10 days, from February 19 to 27.

The rights body followed up on 25 rape cases from 2012 to 2016, to highlight the current status of the cases and find out the reasons for the delay in delivering justice. Of the 25 cases filed during this period, 25 accused were granted bail within 15 days of their arrests.

At present, 20 accused are out of prison on bail, three are in prison and two others are out of the jurisdiction of the law enforcers because of their connection with influential quarters.

MJF strongly urged the authorities to take preventive measures against these violent instances of sexual abuse of children and ensure justice for the victims through proper implementation of existing laws.

Combined action plan to prevent narcotics spread

Speakers tell workshop

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Exploiting the lack of coordination among law enforcement agencies, narcotics in the capital and its adjacent areas has increased alarmingly.

As a result, a large portion of the country's youth are now victims of drug addiction, with the administration at a loss to stop this menace despite taking various initiatives.

In light of this, experts contend that the situation can be alleviated only through a social movement brought together by implementing a "combined action plan".

Speakers came up with the remarks while addressing a workshop at a city hotel yesterday, organised by the Department of Narcotics Control (DNC). The workshop aimed to facilitate implementation of the action plan.

Speaking at the workshop as chief guest, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan said over 70 percent of inmates enter jail over narcotic cases.

Habibur Rahman, DIG of Dhaka Range police, said over 46 percent of the cases filed in Dhaka range in the last five years was under narcotics charges. "The statistics clearly show the spread of narcotics across the country," he said while addressing the workshop as special guest.

He said while two forces work along the borders to control narcotics, a number of agencies look into the matter once the drugs enter the country.

DNC Director General Abdus Sabur Mondal said although there are 60 to 70 lakh drug addicts in the country, only 10,000 are involved with narcotics smuggling, he said, adding that DNC has already prepared a list in this regard.

Star celebrates Staff Day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The country's leading English newspaper, The Daily Star, yesterday celebrated its Staff Day, with much enthusiasm and a pledge to continue upholding the standard of journalism.

The day-long programme was held on the rooftop of the capital's The Daily Star Centre to mark its 31st founding anniversary.

Although the anniversary was on January 14, the programme was postponed due to the pandemic.

The event began with a "Pitha Utsab" and cultural performances, in which multi-talented staff members of the newspaper participated.

Rokia Afzal Rahman, chairperson of Mediaworld Limited, the owning company of The Daily Star, shared a video message on the occasion, sending her greetings and best wishes.

She said the last two years were challenging for the newspaper. It was incorrectly interpreted that physical copies of newspapers could spread coronavirus, and a lot of people stopped reading them. "We overcame the



The Daily Star Editor and Publisher Mahfuz Anam, guests, journalists and employees celebrate Staff Day by cutting a cake on the rooftop of The Daily Star Centre yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

