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20 snatchings in two months CU shuttle trains unsafe for passengers

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Snatching has become a routine incident in Chittagong University shuttle trains in the recent months posing threats to academic career of a large number of off-campus students.

Many alleged that the snatchers became desperate and made snatching an every day event mainly for want of adequate security measures by the university authority.

"They even don't care unarmed policemen," said some students adding that two cops were also knifed in a recent incident.

Sources said that valuables worth about Tk 100 thousand was taken away in 20 snatching incidents that took place in the running train over the last couple of months. At least 100 students were knifed or assaulted in these incidents.

The snatchers often jump from running trains when it passes Ambagan level crossing and Jhautala Railway Station. "Most of the snatching incidents took place when the trains were approaching the Jhautala station," a regular commuter told The Bangladesh Observer.

First up trip and last down trip passengers are the most vulnerable to snatching mainly due to lack of lighting in the compartments and scanty presence.

Culprits usually board trains when they go slower at turns near

the outer signal of Jhautala station and get off slightly before the station platform.

Five women students had to jump out from a running train for escaping a recent snatching bid. Two cops also suffered stabbing when they came at the aid of some oppressed students.

University students blamed university authority for not taking security measures for the interest of the students.

They said that slow pace of the train and inadequate vigilance of security people are the main reasons for alarming rise of snatching.

According to the Government Railway Police (GRP), only five to six policemen are usually deployed in the university shuttle trains, which is too little against the need.

Couple of months back the university authority had requested the students to arrange their seats together for the security. The same request also came from the GRP police almost all the day.

But the students of the university said that it is the duty of the university authority to deploy the police personnel in all compartments of the shuttle trains and ensure the safety of the students especially in the first university bound and city bound shuttle train.

"If the authority wants to keep all of the university students in one

compartment then what is the necessity for the seven compartments in the shuttle trains," alleged Rajesh Mutsuddi, a post graduate student of Chemistry Department.

On the other hand, some students of the university raised their question about the stoppage at the Jhautala station when it had earned bad name in terms of frequent snatching.

"Not more than ten students use the Jhautala station for the first two shuttle trains, what is the feasibility to push the hundreds of student's lives and valuables at risk in the name of picking up a handful of students," said Tinu, a 3rd year student of Anthropology Department.

On the other hand, all the student bodies of the university, Islami Chhatra Shibir (ICS), Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), Samajtantrik Chhatra Front (SCF), Bangladesh Chhatra Union (BCU) and Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), now are taking preparation separately for agitation program. "We're planning to wage a movement for ensuring safety of the shuttle users," some students said.

When contacted the Vice-Chancellor of the university said that they have informed the matter to the GRP and Khulshi police Station.

"What else we can do without informing the policemen?" the Vice-Chancellor Professor AJM Nuruddin Chowdhury said.