

Subscribers face delays for new phone lines

CITY CORRESPONDENT

Subscribers are unable to secure new land phone connection due to lack of network facilities though the Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board (BTTB) issue demand notes in favour of them.

Those who received demand notes two back are unable to get connections yet, subscribers alleged.

Shahedul Arefin from 12/13 Sher Shah Shuri Road, Mohammadpur said that BTTB had issued a demand note to him in July 2004 after he deposited Tk 10,000 for new connection and an additional amount of Tk 500 to obtain the demand note, but the connection is yet to come.

Shahedul said that whenever he went to the Mohammadpur Telephone Exchange at Iqbal Road with his demand note, authorities concerned gave various excuses.

"When asked about my connection, they said it was not possible to give a connection because of the non-availability of adequate cables," he said.

Like Shahedul, many others in the city, waiting for new connections are frustrated with the low quality performance of the state-run telephone operator.

BTTB sources said that the total number of 1.12 lakh applications for new connections in the country are still pending, while a total of 19,000 demand notes have been issued, of which 17,093 were in favour of applicants within the capital.

"We receive hundreds of applications and keep on issuing demand notes," said an official of BTTB (West), seeking anonymity.

But the fact is that no sufficient underground cable network facilities are available in many areas of the city.

The official also said that it was not possible to cater new connections to the increasing population in the city.

"The Dhaka population is growing; the number of applicants, increasing; but the network facilities are static," the



STAR PHOTO

official added.

Sources said that BTTB has the capacity to provide new connections in an area with a population of 5,000. But if the population in that particular area increased to over 30,000, that could the BTTB do. "The demand and supply gap with continue to exist," the official further said.

On the other hand, the zonal offices are crowded with hundreds of people who have received BTTB demands notes, but are asked to wait for an indefinite period to receive connections.

On July 30 this correspondent visited some of the BTTB zonal offices in the city and found applicants who alleged to have paid the BTTB staff up to Tk 2,500 as bribes in addition to the official demand note amount of Tk. 10,000.

"The BTTB staff take bribes and assure us of giving

connections soon but our wait is indefinite," Habib Ahmed, an aggravated applicant said.

When asked why they are giving large numbers of demand notes, with such a lack of network facilities in many areas of the city, a senior BTTB official said that customers were forcing them to issue demand notes.

"A demand note does not guarantee a connection, which is given only when loops are available at the local exchange," he said.

Under these circumstances BTTB recently reduced the new telephone connection fee by almost 40-50 percent throughout the country.

When asked why telephone connection charges were reduced, the same senior official said that BTTB is facing stiff competition from private land phone operators and losing Tk 100 crore every year. The reduction is to lure new subscribers.

Sources said that the traditional underground cable networking system is quite complicated, time consuming and getting permission from the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) is a tough job.

"We will gradually turn to Optical Network Unit (ONU) or Remote Switching Unit (RSU) given a period of six months," said Afsar Alam, general manager, BTTB (West), Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Telephone Bhaban.

"It will make the system flexible to both us, and the subscribers," he added.

A source of Zonal office at Iqbal Road, Mohammadpur said: "The BTTB staff working on the lines make the system more complicated to obtain certain benefits."

"Political influence, intervention of Collective Bargaining Agent (CBA) leaders and a few of our officials make it impossible for us to ensure a

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transparent and corruption free environment in this sector," he added.

But linemen from different zonal offices said that they are ill paid. "It is quite impossible for us to maintain our families with such poor salaries," said a lineman of sub-office in BTTB at Iqbal Road, Mohammadpur, adding that they are compelled to accept bakshish (tips) from the subscriber.

"It cannot be termed as bribes, they (the subscribers) want us to have some refreshments," the lineman added.

The BTTB has now 8.45 lakh land phone subscribers in the country against its capacity of 11.70 lakh subscribers. Of the total subscribers, six lakh are from Dhaka city.

... of charms and laughter

ELITA KARIM

I was introduced to her three and half years ago, rather, the stern look in her eyes, stubborn chin and grim mouth. "Another arrogant journalist in the house!" I told myself. She was definitely not in my 'friends-list'. A good thirty minutes later, I realised I was wrong.

Novera Deepita was charming in her very own ways. Soon I realised that those stern eyes and stubborn looks were nothing but mere determination to succeed in whatever she was doing, a mask hiding her true bubbly and sparkling self. Her 'high and mighty degree' was a token of her hard work and academic achievements, something that we are all so proud of.

She displayed her inner strength by taking up any kind of tasks or assignments given to her and eventually won the hearts and trust of the seniors around. Her work was well organised and almost perfect with extra details for the readers to enjoy. The seniors depended on Novera to get the work done and that the deadlines were met, which she succeeded in doing scrupulously.

She had a loud contagious laughter; she would reprimand mischief-makers like a mother, would give advice like an elder sister and was a true friend with a shoulder to cry on. In a nutshell, she was always there.

When I close my eyes, an image of her quick smile flashes in my mind. It was as easy to make her laugh as it was to make her angry! She used to organise small lunch parties with her colleagues at work and day-long trips to the outskirts of Dhaka city weeks ahead of time. Our callousness towards her plans, sly smiles and joking remarks of messing the day up would bring out screams of anger from her.

Even then, she maintained a regimented check on whether the gang was still in the party

or not and made sure that even the obnoxious lot of the young journalists got their share of scolding and fun at the same time.

Annoyed with my behaviour one day, Noveraapu asked me to have lunch with her in the conference room. I was surprised how at one moment she was full of her childlike spirit and the next minute she was a mature young lady glowing with worldly knowledge. She spoke to me about life in general, people and the several packages yet to be opened and be surprised. I realised how exciting life could be.



The writer (right) with Novera in The Daily Star office.

Yet, she decided, at the spur of a mere moment, to take a break from life and wander away. I don't know what led her to take this decision, but I know that she was a unique personality who will be remembered for her honest approach towards life.

Novera apu, I still hear your laughter in the hallways and then make myself believe that you are not typing away or fussing over a story in the next room. Your desk is as it was a week ago and even now I go over to it half expecting to see a remnant of yours.

You have been etched on our hearts and will stay in our minds, forever.

Lack of parking space

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said that that absence of proper initiatives could bring the speed down to 5.6 in a short span.

DCC has some nominated parking places at Motijheel, Dilkusha, Baitul Mukarram, Shanti Nagar, Newmarket, Mohammad Pur Krishi Market which can totally provide parking for approximately 12,000 to 15,000 vehicles.

Sirajul Islam, DCC's chief town planner told Star City that most house owners especially those owning high rises violate the building designs approved by the Rajdhani Unnayan Katrapakhha (Rajuk) and use

the ground floors for parking only the flat owners' cars while guest cars are parked outside the buildings. In the cases of shopping malls, there is never enough space for parking all the vehicles.

Citing the example of a large hospital building in Dhanmondi, he said: "The owners have shown ground floors as parking spaces, but are in fact using it for different purposes."

"A large number of commercial buildings especially banks, have parking spaces but only for their own vehicles and their customers have to park along

the road," he said.

He emphasised on compelling markets to build more parking floors to reduce occupancy of road lanes, keeping the road free for vehicle movement.

He further said that although street parking is a major cause for traffic congestion, it cannot be totally eliminated but negative effects can be reduced with proper planning.

Parking demands can be controlled if authorities adopt restrictive and non-restrictive parking.

"Restrictive parking should be adopted in the areas where

the demand exceeds the available space and this could be enforced through pricing and regulatory mechanisms," he said.

There should be regular monitoring of parking provisions in all buildings. Private sector can be encouraged to operate parking facilities to augment parking capacity in different zones, he added.

Feroz Al Mujahid Khan, deputy commissioner of DMP Traffic (South) talked about the difficulty to maintain traffic in the city due to lack of parking space. He said, "How can you main-

tain the smooth flow of traffic if the roads are blocked by stationary vehicles".

He added that universities are established in small buildings in residential areas that do not have parking facilities of their own and vehicles occupy space along the main roads beside the university.

"What could a traffic police officer do in a situation like this?" he asked.



Eight year old Sabina, who herself needs caring, was seen feeding her little brother at the High Court premises yesterday afternoon.

healthouting, taxicab & train timing

HEALTH

- Hospitals**
Anjuman-e-Mofidul Islam 9336611, 7411660
BARDEM 8616641-50
Cholera Hospital (ICDDR) 8811751-60
CMH (Dhaka) 9870011
Dhaka Medical Collage Hospital 8628612-6
Holy Family Red Crescent 8311721-5
Islamia Eye Hospital 9119315, 8112156
Lion Eye Hospital 9129127
Medinova Medical Services 8620353-4
Mirpur General Hospital (Pvt) Ltd 9007873, 8015444
Mitford Hospital 7319002-6
National Heart Foundation Hospital 8014914, 8010491, 8021399
Orthopedic Hospital 9112150

- Salimullah Medical College Hospital** 7319002-6
Samorita Hospital 9131901
Shahid Suhrawardi Hospital 9122560-78, 9112086, 8114856, 9130800
Shishu Hospital 8116061-2, 9119119
- Clinics**
Akand Clinic 8015855, 8022581
Arogyaya Niketan 9333730
BAV'S Maternity 8016413-4
Dhaka Monorog Clinic 9005050
Gulshan Mother & Child Clinic 8822738, 8812992
Ibn Sina Clinic 8119513
Jahanara Clinic (Pvt) Ltd 8912929
Judi Maternity 9113322
Paltan Poly Clinic 9557385
Retina Eye Center (Clinic) 9884588, 9884566
Shishu Bekash Clinic 9351625

- The Eye Clinic** 9333238
- Blood Bank**
Red Crescent Centre- 9116563
Sandhani (DMCH)- 8624040
Sandhani (SMCH)- 7310061, 7310061, 7319022
Dhaka Medical Collage Hospital- 8626812-9
- Eye Bank**
Sandhani International Eye Bank- 8614040
- Ambulances For Dead Body**
Anzuman Mafidul Islam (Kakrail) 9336611, **Gandaria** 7319808, 7318166,
Al-Markajul Islam 9127867,

MARKET CLOSED

- Gulshan 1, 2 markets-Friday**
Elephant Road-Friday
Bishal Center-Friday
Baitul Mukarram Market-Friday
Polwell Market-Friday
BCS Computer City-Friday
Isha Khan Shopping Complex-Friday
Stadium Market-Friday
Bangabazar Market-Friday
National Museum-Thursday
Ahsan Manzil-Thursday
New Market-Tuesday
Gausia Market-Tuesday
Mouchak Market-Sunday
Dhanmondi Hawkers Market-Tuesday
Dhanmondi Hawkers Market-Tuesday
Eastern Plaza-Sunday
Farmview Super Market-Sunday
MuktiJuddha Jadughar-Sunday
Dhaka Zoo-Sunday
Shishu Jadughar-Sunday

TAXI CAB

- Passenger's Complaint**
 01711-000990, 01711-000991, 01711-000992, DMP-999, 2627.
- Cab Salida Ltd.** 9344477, 01711-620888, 01711-610405
Cosmo Cab Ltd. 9112959, 8127191, **Nitol Cab Co. Ltd.** 8125285, 01711-621953
JBS Cab Ltd. 0191-364575
Coal Cab Ltd 8130485, 01711-826731
Limujin Cab Ltd. 9318351, 9337204
Multi-Cab Ltd. 9666502, 9570740
Nihon Taxi Cab Ltd. 8624742,
- 8624741
Orion Taxi Cab Ltd. 934727, 9347277, 01711-155144
Reliance Cab Ltd. 9339563-4
RMS Cab Ltd. 8118536
Shatarupa Taxi Cab Ltd. 731083, 01711-458740
Tinni Cab Ltd. 9662009, 01711-645257
Teletex Cab Ltd. 7202201
Alif Cab Co. Ltd. 0191-357838, 83116948
Cab One Ltd. 9563054 Ext.-3077, 3178
United Cab Ltd. 7510166, 01711-

LIBRARY & INFO

- Libraries, Cultural and Information Centers**
Central Public Library- 8626001-4,
Shishu Academy- 9564128
Shilpakala Academy- 8614673
Bangla Academy- 8619550
Islamic Foundation- 9550280, 9556407
Nazrul Institute- 9114602
Ford Foundation- 8116133
Alliance Francaise- 8611557
Information Resource Center, The American Center- 8813440-4, 9886395-9
British Council- 8618867-8, 8618905-7
Community Development Library- 8113769, 8113604
Goethe Institute Int'l- Dhaka- 9126255-6
Indian Information Centre & Cultural Library- 8850141-2
The Russian Cultural Centre- 9116314, 9118531, 9118314
Drik Photo Gallery- 9120125, 8112954, 8123412
Press Institute of Bangladesh (PIB) 9330081-4

TRAIN TIMING

- Subarna Express**
Mahanagar Prabhathi
Mahanagar Godhuli
Turna
Parabat Express
Joyantika Express
Upaban Express
Tista Express
Ekata Express
Upakul Express
Agni Express
- Leaves Dhaka at 4:30 pm
 Leaves Dhaka at 7:30 am
 Leaves Dhaka at 3-15 pm
 Leaves Dhaka at 11-00 pm
 Leaves Dhaka at 6-40 am
 Leaves Dhaka at 12-45 pm
 Leaves Dhaka at 9-45 pm
 Leaves Dhaka at 7-00 am
 Leaves Dhaka at 5-00 pm
 Leaves Dhaka at 8-00 pm
 Leaves Dhaka at 9-20 pm

- 348474
Ulka Express Ltd. 9359885, 01711-313554
Cab Bangla Ltd. 9563077 Ext.-3054, 3178, 01711-622644
Cab i Ltd. 9563054, 9563077, 01711-629585
Cab line Ltd. 8321162
Capital Cab Co. Ltd. 9352847-9
Classic Cab Ltd. 200825, 01711-233851, 01711-812415
Comport Cab Ltd. 8817610-4
Cab Express Ltd. 9341369, 9339337, 9348401 Ext.-111
- Reaches Chittagong at 10:35 pm
 Reaches Chittagong at 1-55 pm
 Reaches Chittagong at 10-55 pm
 Reaches Chittagong at 6-40 am
 Reaches Sylhet at 2-30 pm
 Reaches Sylhet at 9-20 pm
 Reaches Sylhet at 6-40 am
 Reaches Bahadurabad at 1-05 pm
 Reaches Bahadurabad at 11-15
 Reaches Noakhali at 5-00 am
 Reaches Jagannath at 2-30 pm