

Corruption boomerangs on Titas' good intentions

RAIHAN SABUKTAGIN

Gas authorities' efforts to legalise illegal connections did not fully materialise as corruption once again sneaked its way into the process further weakening the safety of the gas network in the capital.

Titas Gas Transmission and Distribution Co Ltd provided another opportunity to users of unauthorised gas lines to legalise such connections by fixing a certain fee only instead of a security deposit.

The authorities made all rules and regulations flexible in a bid to regularise all illegal connections.

A gas connection requires a certificate from the Department of Explosives but the connections legalised under special provision was deprived of collecting such certificate.

The authorities also waived fines and gas bills for the unauthorised usage period.

A total of 1,13,152 legal domestic and commercial gas connections now exist in the city. This figure includes around

52,000 unauthorised domestic users who legalised their connections under the special facility between February 20 and May 15.

However, these indiscriminately legalised connections have made way to a large number of below standard pipes and other equipment used in the gas network and increased risks for city dwellers.

But a few scrupulous consumers found a way of bringing in new lines to areas unspecified for the supply of gas connections, especially because of safety reasons, by drawing new lines under the pretext that illegal lines had already existed in such areas.

The authority now takes pride in stating that they have brought to track illegal connections and are now documented. Users will have to pay monthly gas bills.

The authority further stated that previously no one knew how many illegal connections existed, but now a large number of such connections are under their control.

The public relations wing of

the authority told Star City that authorisation of these illegal connections did not lower safety of the gas network as these connections were in operation for a long time.

"This legalisation initiative has brought illegal users on track and we can officially make them pay," said an official of the section.

Another top official of Titas said that as people are aware that gas is a dangerous substance, they do not handle connections on their own, but require experts to do so.

"We believe that employees and listed Titas contractors, who are experts in the field, have had a hand in all such illegal connections," he said.

"These employees and contractors regularly collect a huge amount of money from unauthorised consumers and here lies the interest in setting up illegal connections. They even create obstacles to the unauthorised consumers to take up the special offer to legalise their connections," he added.

Initiation of the procedure was met with corruption, and Titas

authorities had to change the circular regarding two times in order to avoid further disruptions in the legalisation process.

In the first circular published in various newspapers, the authorities offered consumers legalisation of both connections and burners.

Some Titas employees making use of this opportunity, talked consumers into drawing new lines through narrow and under-developed roads and lanes, and declaring these lines illegal, got the lines legalised without meeting any safety measures.

Titas then changed its course and made the legalisation offer for burners only.

According to Titas' public relations wing the gas authority will remove the low standard pipes and equipment through constant, strict drives.



Gas safety is in risk as the Titas Gas Transmission and Distribution Co Ltd has decided to legalise illegal connections with leaks.

EBL 6TH EDIM EXPO 2006

Steering education towards career



Students from different educational institutes flock to the EBL 6TH EDIM EXPO to sort out best deals for their education and career.

DURDANA GHIAS

"This is a wonderful exposure for students looking for prospective colleges and universities of further studies both at home and abroad," said Imran who is about to complete the Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC).

Imran was a visitor to the EBL 6TH EDIM EXPO 2006 now being held at the Expo Centre on level 7 of Bashundhara City, with the purpose of helping students to work towards their careers by enrolling into study programmes relevant to their backgrounds and change tracks, if necessary.

"I prefer local private universities of good repute as they are free of session jams. But if opportunity and finances favour, I will try to enrol myself in a college overseas where tuition fees aren't very high and cost of living is reasonable," he said.

"The expo is both about education and career prospects. But 'career' does not mean job opportunities, it just means counselling students towards finding the right 'career'," said Saifuzzaman Raihan, manager projects, Conference & Exhibition Management Services Ltd (CEMS), the firm managing the event.

"We emphasise on having a sound education background to help pick the right job according to one's educational qualifications

and also assist those who are looking forward to change tracks," he said.

Raihan explained that if one is at present working in a bank and wants to change to human relations (HR), then we counsel him on what area of HR he should concentrate on, taking into account his educational background and age. "This is what we call counselling," he said.

"We also deal with the changing education atmosphere. In those days students who had just a degree were employed by good companies, but now even those possessing Masters in Business Administration (MBA) are unemployed," Raihan said, adding that career planning has now become more complicated.

Among the participants are private colleges and universities, IT institutions, education counselling firms, and fashion and hotel management schools. "I am in Bangladesh for three and a half weeks and one reason is this expo," said Dr Terence R Moore, principal, Guildhall College, United Kingdom.

"We are very interested in getting students from Bangladesh through our representatives in Dhaka, Chittagong, Sylhet and Khulna," he said.

"This is an opportunity for us to promote our college through our local representatives and also to see what representatives of other colleges and universities are

offering," he added.

"We participated in this expo to promote the educational facilities our university offers. We are offering 50 percent discounts on spot admissions," said a representative of Eastern University.

"We also inform prospective students about our corporate links that help them to do their internships on completion of the theoretical part," he added.

The local agent of New Brunswick University, Canada is luring students with their promotion of Canada's educational environment, graduate and under graduate courses, low tuition fees, and job opportunities.

"We offer courses in managerial, technical, marketing and designing in the garments sector. This is the first time we are participating in an education expo in Dhaka," said Rajat Bhattacharya, executive director, Pearl Fashion Institute, Bangladesh, an Indian institute affiliated with Nottingham Trent University.

"Our aims in this expo are building awareness as 74 percent of the export earnings of Bangladesh are from garments sector," he said.

"There are many private universities but none of them offer courses related to the garments industry and this is why Bangladesh has to hire people from abroad with high

remuneration for jobs in this sector," he said.

Another new entrant to the race of schools is the Royal Park Institute of Hotel Management, Tourism and Catering, training and guiding new comers to the hotel trade.

"Hotel school is a new trend to Bangladesh and as we have now entered the race we needed exposure to this area of job oriented further education," said Saman Devasurendra, senior lecturer. "Students can study all aspects of the hotel trade from front office management to catering and house keeping under one roof," he added.

Seminars will be held on September 4 at 4 pm on "Role to be adopted by universities & counselling centres to upgrade and provide better services to the students" and "The problems of finance and foreign education". Around 60 institutes in 90 stalls from 15 countries including Bangladesh are participating in the fair.

Eastern Bank Ltd, while Channel I, partners CEMS, daily Jugantor and The Daily Star are media partners. The fair that began last Thursday will end on September 5. No public universities are taking part in this expo.

Advertising, Bank & market timing

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ART & CULTURAL CENTERS

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Bangladesh Shishu Academy
Old High Court Road (Opp. Carzon Hall), Dhaka-1000, Tel: 9550317, 9564128

British Council
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German Cultural Center
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Tel: 9126525, 9126526, Fax: 8110712

Indian Cultural Center
H-25, Road-96, Gulshan-2, Dhaka-1212
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Nazrul Institute
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Tel: 9114500, Fax: 9118051, Email: nazrulins@citecho.net

Russian Cultural Centre
House-510, Road-7, Dhanmondi, Dhaka, Tel: 9118531
Fax: 8113026, Email: roscult@accessstel.net

Shilpakala Academy
Segunbagicha, Dhaka-1000
Tel: 9561709, 9562801-4

Bengal Gallery of Fine Arts
House 275/F, Road 27, Dhanmondi, Dhaka
Tel: 8123115
Email: bf@bdonline.com

Cezanne Art Gallery
UAE Moitri Complex, Kemal Ataturk Avenue, Banani Dhaka
Tel: 8826578, Email: cezanne@bangla.net

Drik Gallery
House 58, Road 15A (New), Dhanmondi, Dhaka
Tel: 9120125, Fax: 9115044, Email: office@drik.net

Gallery Chittrak
House-21, Road-4, Dhanmondi R/A, Dhaka
Tel: 8620345, Email: chittrak@agni.com

National Art Gallery
Segunbagicha, Dhaka-1000
Tel: 9562801-4

Shilpa Rag
House 15, Road 16, Dhanmondi, Dhaka, Tel: 8117085
Fax: 8117085, Email: shilparg@vasdigital.com

Shilpangan
House-25, Road-5, Dhanmondi, Dhaka, Tel: 8614246

Tivoli Art Gallery
F/33, DCC Super Market (1st Floor) Gulshan-2 (North), Dhaka, Tel: 9895903

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Uttara Bank Ltd
9561438, 9551162-3, Fax: 8613529

United Commercial Bank Ltd
9561580, Fax: 88-02-9560587

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Polwell Market-Friday

BCS Computer City-Friday

Isha Khan Shopping Complex-Friday

Rajlaxmi 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

Muktijudha Jadugar-Sunday

Dhaka Zoo-Sunday

Shishu Jadugar-Sunday