



A power distribution post in Old Dhaka with illegal power lines drawn in every direction cause great loss to PDB and Desa.

Metering goes prepaid to cut power pilferage

SULTANA RAHMAN

Dhaka Electricity Supply Authority (Desa) will launch modern prepaid metering in Banani in January in a pilot project to curb electricity pilferage and misuse.

About 2,500 meters will be installed: 2,200 of them are single-phase meters and 300 high-tension meters for household consumers.

Desa and the Power Development Board (PDB) will gradually replace post-paid meters with prepaid ones in the city in phases and simultaneous prepaid metering will also be introduced to Sylhet, Bogra, Chittagong and Sirajgonj in January.

"We have taken up the project experimentally to reduce power pilferage," said Iqbal Hasan Mahmud, state minister for power.

The prepaid system will enable consumers to buy electricity on an hourly

The prepaid system will enable consumers to buy electricity on an hourly basis from power offices that will provide a card with a magnetic strip on its front side so that power could be reserved for any contingency period.

basis from power offices that will provide a card with a magnetic strip on its front side. Consumers will get power connections after inserting the magnetic strip in the prepaid meter.

Power could be reserved for any contingency period and consumers must inform officials about it while purchasing

the card.

Desa is facing a loss of about Tk 1,200 crore in power pilferage since its inception, the state minister told Star City, adding prepaid meters will bridle the severe misuse and pilferage of electricity by commercial and private consumers in collaboration with corrupt officials.

"The causes behind the huge loss are power pilferage, unpaid bills and unabated corruption in which consumers and officials are involved," the state ministersaid.

The PDB and Desa are suffering system losses between 30 to 35 percent on average and there are huge uncollected power bills. Desa failed to collect Tk 35 billion in electricity bills from its consumers, while it also owes at least Tk 50 billion to the PDB in power purchase bills.

"To minimise the loss, we have to take Tk 3,000 crore in loan from the Asian Development Bank soon and pay the money back," the state minister said.

"We hope the prepaid meters will end the logjam of outstanding bills," a senior Desa official said.

New metering will be convenient for consumers, as they would be able to avoid hassles like standing in a long queue in banks to pay electricity bills or receiving ghost bills, he added.

The government will frame a law to curb power pilferage that will include jail terms and discontinuation of electricity connections.

The law will include three stages of punishment for each illegal pilferer -- if caught for the first time, he or she will spend six months in jail with six months of power cut off.

If the act is repeated, the consumer will be imprisoned for one year with power breakage for two years. If it is done a third time, the criminal will suffer seven years in jail and will be deprived of electricity.

"The law will apply both to consumers and officials as consumers cannot pilfer without dishonest officials," the state minister said.

"I don't blame the consumers for pilferage. The employees are the main culprits," Iqbal observed.

Menace around Collegiate School

SYED TASHFIN CHOWDHURY

The Dhaka Collegiate School's authorities are facing difficulties in conducting normal activities of the reputed institute because of the presence of various disruptive elements around the school's compound.

The oldest government school of the city on record (established in 1835), Collegiate School is at present encircled by a tempo stand, makeshift shops and businesses and illegal offices of various political organisations.

Those who have set up these establishments are totally indifferent towards the problems of the school and have been continuing their activities despite constant protests of the school's authorities.

"Time and again we have complained to the owners of these shops and the tempo stand. But they have turned a deaf ear to our pleas," said Ratan Kumar Saha, a teacher of the school which has some 2063 students and 50 teachers.

The busy tempo stand has obstructed the entry passage to the only gate of the school. The bustling crowd at the stand constantly blocks the way of the teachers, students, guardians and others from entering and leaving the school.

"It is only a matter of time before a tempo runs over one of us," said another teacher of the school.

There was a bus stoppage near the school in the early seventies. Back then, the students of the school protested against the menace caused by that stand and it was shifted to the nearby Rai

Saheb Bazar area.

At first the tempo stand was very small during the early eighties. But as time went by, it continued to expand and now one struggles to find the entrance of the school as vehicles and commuters crowd the stand.

"The noise from the tempos of the stand disrupt our classes and we have been complaining about it to our school authorities for weeks," said Abu Abdullah, a student.

The school currently has four buildings. The most affected of these is the one nearest to the boundary wall where the classes of the science department are held.

Local hoodlums and trade unions have erected their offices and shops along the walls of the school. On one portion, there are two public toilets. A party office of the ruling BNP, a garbage bin, a lottery ticket selling shop, a couple of tea stalls add to the nuisance.

Banners and billboards of cigarette ads and other items have almost covered up the signboard that bears the school's name.

The Headmaster of the school Md. Anwar Hossain and other faculty members said that they have conveyed their grievances to the Dhaka Mayor, the local ward commissioner and the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) although DCC officials denied receiving any written complaints from the school's authorities.

"We have to receive something in written form and not verbal ones before we can act against such problems," said a senior official of the DCC on condition of anonymity.

Mosquito control staff plan agitation against handover

CITY CORRESPONDENT

The government decision to put Dhaka Mosquito Control Department (DMCD) under the administrative authority of the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) has sparked protest among the DMCD employees.

As a wing of the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development (LGRD) and Cooperatives, the DMCD has been working with the DCC since 1982 to control mosquito menace in the city.

At present the LGRD ministry is responsible for the administration of the department but the government recently decided in principle to hand over the administrative power to the city corporation.

The employees of DMCD have strongly opposed the government's decision of empowering DCC to run the department and threatened to go for a movement against it.

"We are ready to go to the court this time against the move," said a union leader of the department terming the government move "a decision contrary to the government's employment rules."

The government took the same initiative in 1997 but failed to implement it in the face of agitation of the employees of the department.

DCC sources said the dual

governance of DMCD has made the department inactive for long and that is why the DCC had asked the government to hand over the department's administration to the corporation.

"In the last 14 years, 135 positions in this department fell vacant and the LGRD ministry did not recruit necessary manpower against the posts," said Dr Azizul Haque, chief health officer of the city corporation.

"We work along with the DMCD. If the department comes under DCC it would perform its tasks more effectively," he added.

The government took the fresh initiative to hand over the department to DCC after the corporation on April 27 this year officially applied to the government to take the department's controlling authority.

The LGRD ministry this time seems dedicated to shift the department, now run by some 400 employees. The department's office is located in city's Lalbagh area.

"The government thinks the transfer is necessary to make DMCD more active as the department has no utility under the LGRD ministry," said Serajul Haider, a senior assistant secretary of the ministry.

Nurul Islam, assistant director of DMCD, said "The government can shift any of its department to other department but a regula-

tion should be made before putting a government department under an autonomous organisation."

The employees of DMCD feared it might be disadvantageous for them as the salary

scale and other benefits in the government organisations differ from that of the autonomous bodies like DCC.

"Many of the employees like me are working here for long, and we would not get deserved

pension as the pension regulations of the government and autonomous organisations are different," said an official of DMCD.

But the ministry officials said they are not going to take

any decision that would hurt the employees' interest. "We will set up proper rules and regulations before doing so," the LGRD assistant secretary assured.



PHOTO STAR

healthouting,taxicab&traintiming

HEALTH

Hospitals

Heart

National Institute of Cardio Vascular Diseases (NICVD), - 9130800, 9122560-59

Burn

Dhaka Medical College Hospital Burn Unit-8626812-6

Cancer

National Cancer Institute-8014914, 8826561-65
Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University-8612550-4, 861455-9

Diabetes

Diabetic Research Hospital (BIRDEM)- 9661551-5, 8616641-50

Mother & Child Care

Shishu Hospital- 9119119, 8116061-62
Azimpur Mother & Child Health Training Institute- 8624827, 8624980

Eye

Islamia Eye Hospital-9110794, 9119315
National Eye Hospital- 8117202, 8114807

Dental

Dental College -9002035

Orthopaedics

National Orthopaedics (Pangu) Hospital- 9114075, 9112150

General

Dhaka Medical College Hospital- 8626812-6
Rushmono General Hospital- 8317819
Holy Family Hospital- 83111731-25
Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Hospital- 8612550-4, 8614545-9
Bangladesh Medical College & Hospital- 8115443, 9118202, Shamarita Hospital- 9131901
Suhrawardy Hospital - 9130800,

9122560-69

Salimullah Medical Collage

Hospital -- 7310061-4, 7319002-6

Cholera Research Hospital

(ICDDR)- 8611751-60
Monowra Hospital 8319802, 8318135

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,

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.

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

Muktijuddha Jadughar-Sunday

Dhaka Zoo-Sunday

Shishu Jadughar-Sunday

TAXI CAB

Yellow Cab

Navana 9558065

Salida 9344477, 0171620881

Cosmo 9112959 and 8127191

Cab One 7113282-3

Nihon 8624741-2

Orion 9347277

Anudip 8125285 and 8127611

Capital 9352847

Union 8130485

Kool 0171826731

Black Cab

Cab Ex 9358401

Cabline 8321162

JBS Cab 019364575

Sajan 018126036

Anudip -- 8125285 and 8127611

Cab One 7113282-3

TRAIN TIMING

Subarna Express

Mahanagar Prabhati

Mahanagar Godhuli

Turna

Parabat Express

Joyantika Express

Upaban Express

Tista Express

Ekata Express

Upakul Express

AgniBeena 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

Palki 0171052500

Cab I 7113282

Jatri 0171540074

Nipun 9572277

R-Cab 8914782

Star Cab 9571919

Shihab 018202477 & 018228675

KGN 8620011

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

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- 9126525-6

Indian Information Centre & Cultural Library- 8615096

The Russian Cultural Centre- 9116314, 9118531, 9118314

Drak Photo Gallery- 9120125, 8112954, 8123412

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