

Gas demand goes up on Ramadan

CITY CORRESPONDENT

Titas Gas Transmission and Distribution Company is confronted with an increase in demand of up to 20 million cubic feet supply of gas in the city in the wake of Ramadan.

Sources in Titas said the gas demand went up to 400 to 420 cubic feet in Ramadan whereas in the use at normal times remains within 360 to 390 cubic feet.

Consumers are already hard hit by the shortfall in generating gas and in many areas low pressure in gas supply, especially after 10 am, cooking activities are seriously slowed down.

"Cooking takes much longer because of the low pressure in the gas supply. I fast and having to spend much time in the kitchen becomes intolerable," complained Hamida Banu, a homemaker from Ganderia.

Sources in Titas admitted a very large increase in demand of gas

during Ramadan. "It may seem that domestic use, especially cooking would decrease in Ramadan but actually it turns out to be the opposite," said one high official.

"They cook for regular meals along with *sehri* (the morning meal at the start of the fast) and *iftar* (the break of fast)," he said, adding the peak hour for gas usage stretches from 10 am to 9 pm during Ramadan, which is usually from 10 am to 1 pm during normal times.

Tahmina Islam, another homemaker from Uttara substantiated the increase stating that the use of cooking gas in her family increases during the fasting period. "I begin to prepare *iftar* from midday as I have to prepare various items on time," she said. Moreover, she added that a dish such as *halim* takes long time to cook.

The official from Titas also added the commercial use of gas

in restaurants and food outlets also increased during Ramadan. "Though we do not get enough customers in the day, we make a very good profit selling *iftar* items," said Abul Hossain, who works in a sweet shop. He said that is why sweet shops use gas in Ramadan.

However, Titas personnel claim the gas supply stands uninterrupted at present. "We have not received any complaints from the people as yet," said one of them. He also said there would not be any gas crisis in the city as there is no big industries here.

The official also said Titas is trying to increase its gas generation to meet the growing demands. He said the volume of production is being increased especially from Kailash Tila and Feni gas wells. "There was a severe gas crisis in the city last Ramadan but this time we have taken adequate steps to see that it would not happen again," he said.

DU research centres limp on funds dearth

CITY CORRESPONDENT

The research centres of Dhaka University (DU) have been unable to take up any major work because of insufficient budget.

The 25 centres had a budget of only Tk 60,70,000 for research and Tk 60,000,00 for laboratory management, developing research infrastructures and other research works this year.

Although the DU spends some Tk 1,22,70,000 every year on research, many of the centres have not been working properly. Only 14 centres submitted their activities for publication in the last annual statement of the university in 2003.

"We are unable to carry out any remarkable work because of insufficient budget," said Shahabuddin Mian, secretary of the Advanced Human Studies Centre.

Some research centres are not even funded from the revenue budget of the university. Advanced Social Science Research Centre is one of them. Although the centre published 13 volumes of research, it is still funded from the devel-

opment budget of the university.

"We have an allocation of Tk 260,000 every year for salary, research and publication," said Shahidullah, an administrative official of the centre.

Officials of different centres said their directors get very little in honorarium, which does not give them enough incentive.

The centres have also lost their importance as the university faculties have their own publication programme. All the faculties except pharmacy publish the research works of their teachers.

"The research centres take more time to select works for publication. Often, they disqualify works and offer little honorarium," said an assistant professor of the social science faculty on the condition of anonymity.

"Teachers are interested to get their researches published from the faculties, which is much easier to do," he said.

We want to increase allocations to the research centres, but funds crisis is holding us back," said Syed Rashidul Hassan, treasurer of the DU.



PHOTO STAR

City booms with cellphone service centres

FAIZUL A TANIM

The recent hype in buying new sculpts of mobile phones has increased the inevitability of phone repair centres. The use of mobile phones has become more of a necessity than luxury nowadays.

Some mechanics in these shops expertly fix small problems at negligible amounts that would have cost much a few years ago. Customers do not need to spend a lot to buy original spares, said a student at a cellphone shop in the Eastern Plaza Shopping Complex.

Yet a few dishonest businesspeople wait for the opportunity to rip off people who have no technical knowledge of mobile phones by charging high to fix minor problems. They even replace original parts from the sets, customers allege.

The cellphone culture gradually picked up in 1998 when a few service centres opened in the Stadium Market and Eastern Plaza. Thanks to the popularity and affordability the centres have gained in the middle class, about 75 service centres of high repute are now operating in Dhaka, said a mobile phone dealer from Rifles Square shopping mall in Dhanmondi.

The most popular centres -- five or six of them -- are located in Eastern Plaza. They cater to up to 60 customers a day. They charge affordable prices too like the centres at the Stadium Market.

"Stealing mobile phone parts is absurd," said Mujahedul Islam, an engineer, from Cyem Electronics at Eastern Plaza. "The market has become competitive now and charging higher prices than actual will not only ruin our reputation, but bring our business down."

"Cellphone parts come in solid boards with permanent circuits attached and cannot be removed as individual items. So the allegation is baseless," Mujahedul added.

Admitting to a few charging-more-money incidents, Russel Ahmed, an engi-

neer from Gulshan-2, said they buy spare parts such as mobile phone mother boards from scrap or spare parts shops to use to fix their customers' phones.

At times, they hold back small components as their customers dispose of old sets at low prices to buy new models. They then use these parts to fix faulty mobile sets. "But stealing or keeping original parts from a cellphone is not the practice," Russell said.

These shop owners are now cautious of complaints of destroying sets. An engineer must be a graduate with diploma or

higher diploma qualifications in electronics and device servicing from recognised institutions.

Maruf Ahmed from one such shop in Orchid Plaza in Dhanmondi said customers are of all ages. People come with all sorts of hardware- and software-related problems of cell phones, but university and school-age customers come with screen-saver and ring-tone related problems.

"About 80 percent of the complaints are related to network problems while the other 20 about battery faults, charging difficulty, speakerphone malfunction or

phone operating system troubles. These can now be fixed at minimum cost," Maruf claimed.

Most customers are happy with the growth of service centres. Faisal, a student from Paikpara, on a visit to one such shop, said a mobile phone from Eastern Plaza would cost in the least about Tk 4,000. So spending Tk 2,000 on a spare or to fix a small problem is not cost-effective. Bringing the set to these service centres, spending Tk 400 -- depending on problem, not only saves time, but is cheaper as well, he said.

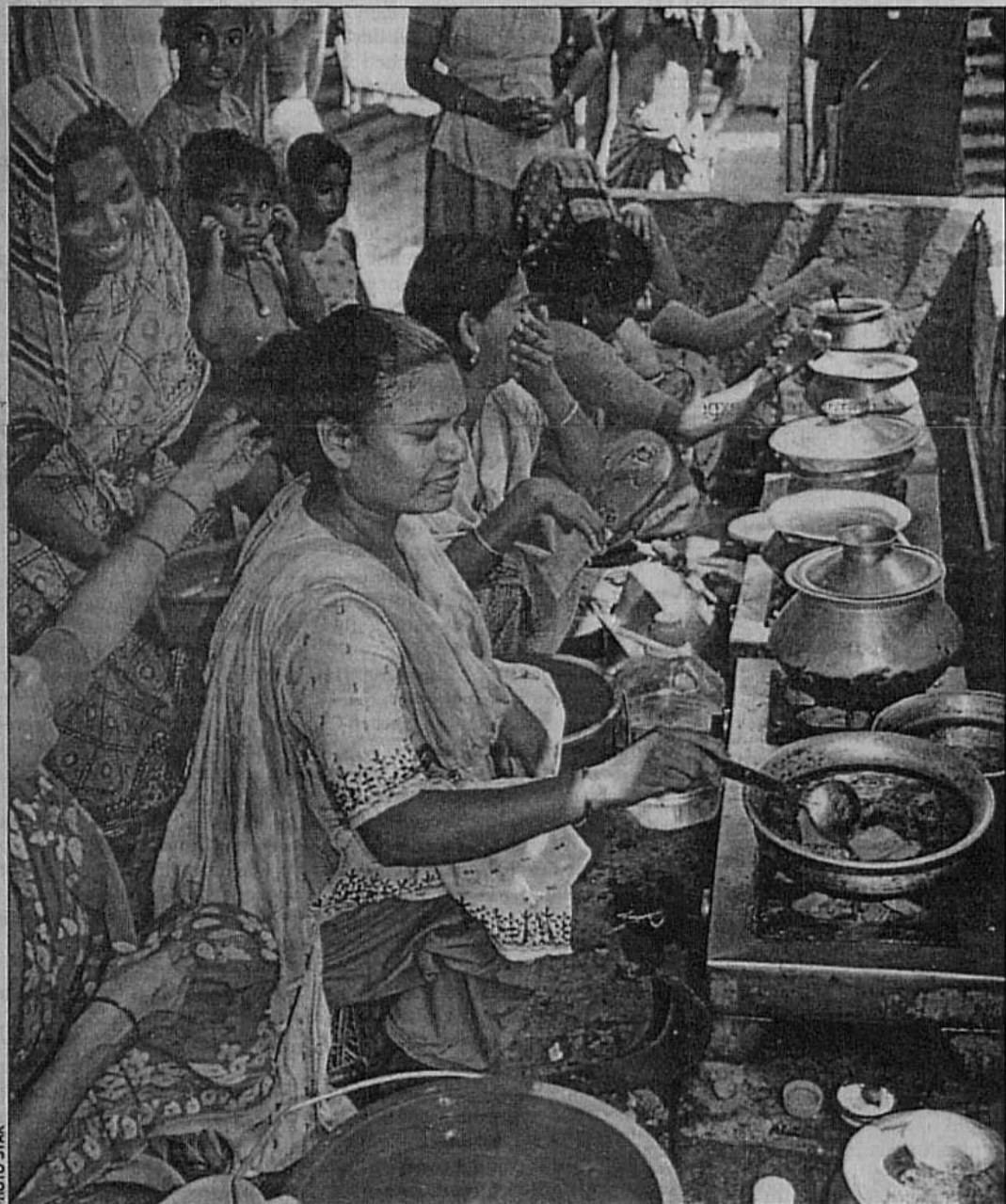


PHOTO STAR

Continuous use of gas during Ramadan increased its demand in the city.

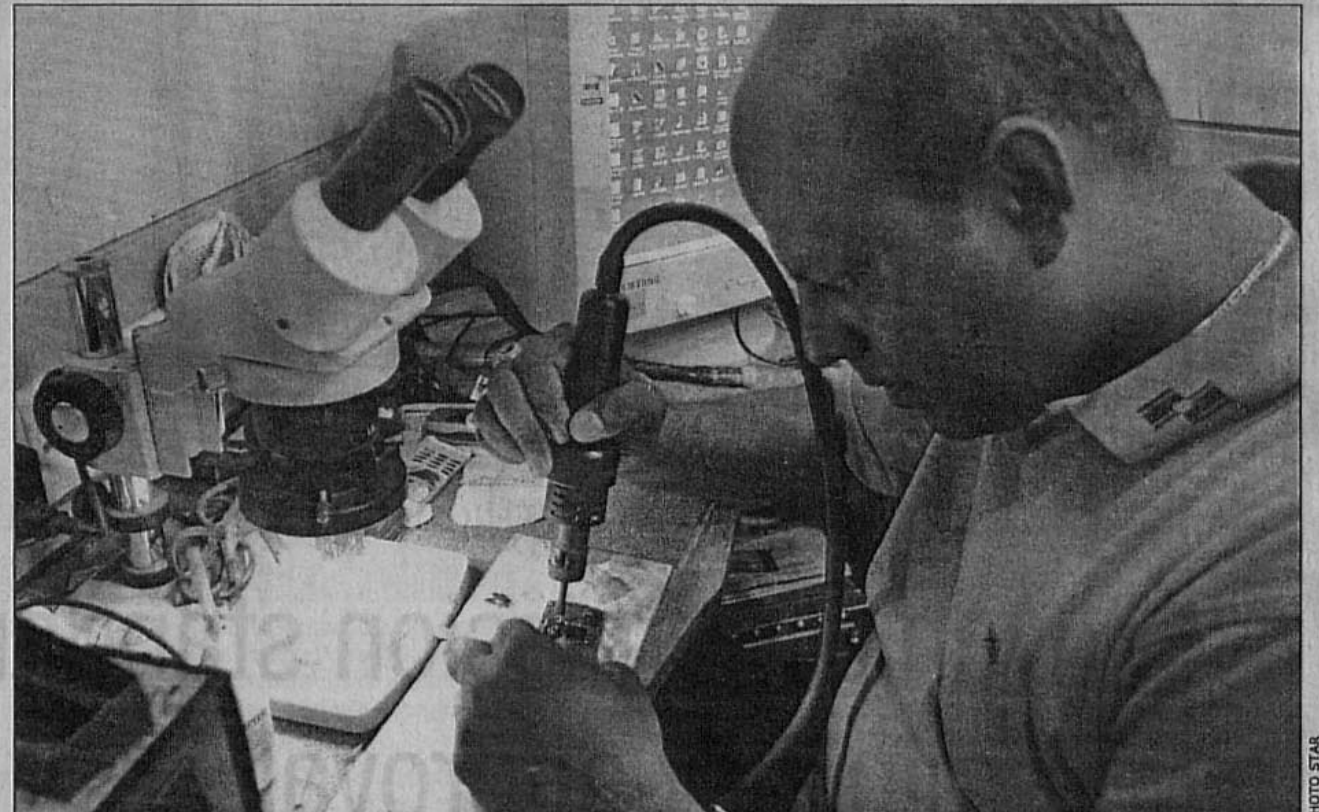


PHOTO STAR

An engineer at work in one of the service centres at Eastern Plaza.

healthouting, taxicab & train timing

HEALTH

- Hospitals**
Heart
 National Institute of Cardio Vascular Diseases (NICVD), -913080, 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- 8311731-25
 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) - 8811751-60
 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,

MARKET CLOSED

- Gulshan 1, 2 markets-Friday
 Elephant Road-Friday
 Bishal Center-Friday
 Baitual 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
 Muktiyudha 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
Black Cab
 Cab Ex 9358401
 Cabline 8321162
 JBS Cab 019364575
 Sajon 018126036
 Anudip -- 8125285 and 8127611
TRAIN TIMING
Subarna Express
 Mahanagar Prabhali
 Mahanagar Godhuli
 Turna
Parabat Express
 Joyantika Express
 Upaban Express
Tista Express
 Ekata Express
 Upakul Express
 Agniheena 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
 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

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
 Drik Photo Gallery- 9120125, 8112954, 8123412
 Press Institute of Bangladesh (PIB) 9330081-4