

Rehab getting rod-price wary

AVIK SANWAR RAHMAN

The real estate and housing business is facing huge losses due to the abnormal price hike of construction rods which has almost doubled from the previous year's rate.

The price of MS Deformed Bar grade 60 is now Tk 40 to 42 thousand per ton which was Tk 23 thousand in 2003, while the 40 grade rod is Tk 34,500 now compared to Tk 18 thousand in March 2003 according to Rehab sources.

"The rise in rod price has effected our business as it will eventually push the price of flats up," said Mahmudul Hassan, secretary of Real Estate and Housing Association of Bangladesh (Rehab).

The construction rod is made out of scrap metal from old ships. The re-rolling mills turn scrap

metal into rod.

In 2003, the demand for old ships rose in China as the country took on a massive construction spree in preparation of the 2008 Olympic Games which it will host.

"The crisis of old ships in the international market raised the price of rod last year. That is no longer the case this year. At least 12 ships were bought to the docks in Chittagong for taking apart this year and the government taxes on rods was also reduced," said a member of Rehab.

There is allegation that the price of rod has been artificially raised by the syndicate members of re-rolling mills association.

"Five to six members of the largest re-rolling mills in Chittagong have bought some small mills and now enjoying a monopoly over rod business through a syndicate," said a

member of Rehab.

The Rehab members said that they might not even be able to continue the business if the price of rod remains the same.

"We sell flats before starting construction at a certain projected rate. But now our cost has increased with the price of rod. Which means we have to either renegotiate with our clients or accept the loss for the goodwill of our business," said a Rehab member.

"We are in a dilemma because we are unable to return the money they (clients) have booked the apartments with and can not raise the price of flats either as we have already accepted the booking," said a Rehab member.

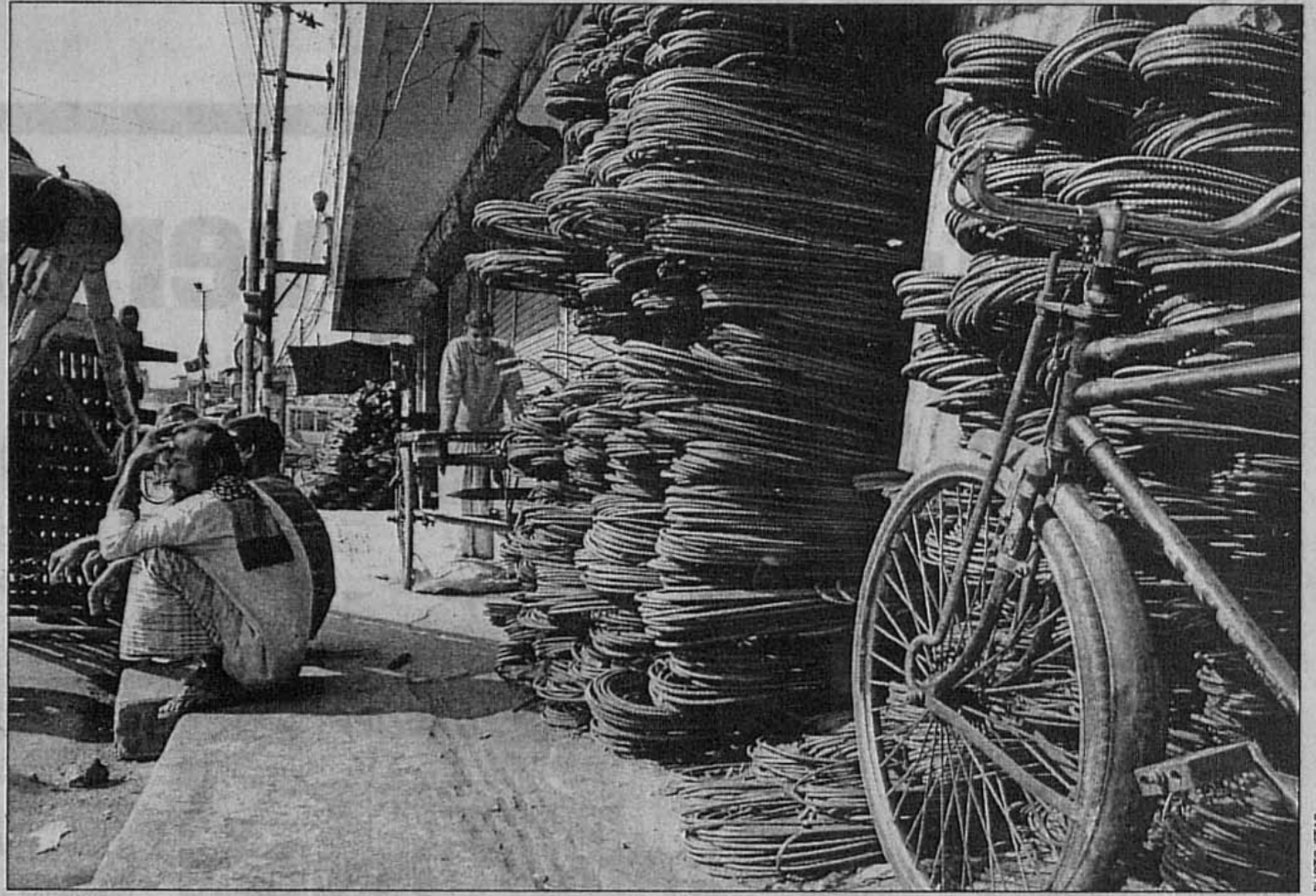
"To stay in business, we have to increase price of apartments by Tk 100 per square feet and the way the price of rod is going up, we

may have to increase it even further in future," said Mahmudul Hassan.

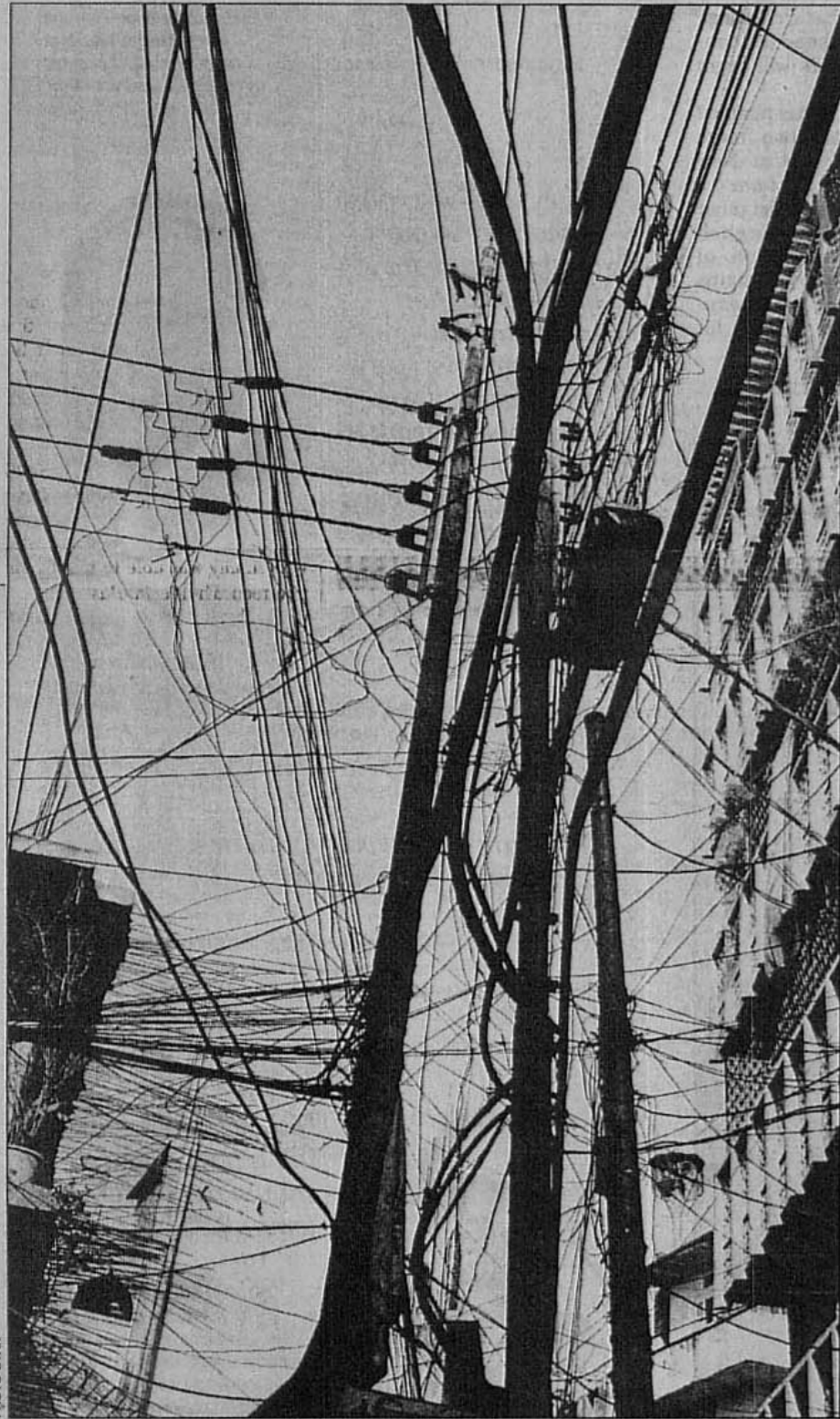
Despite the crisis, Rehab members said the sale of apartments was increasing partly because clients are anticipating the rise of price in future and also due to the lowering of interest rates of house building loan.

"This year apartment sale increased compared to last year as people are buying and booking in fear of flats becoming more expensive in future. Interest on house building loans have also been reduced from 16-19 percent to 13-14 percent," said Hassan.

"The government took a policy through which if a person buys a flat by paying Tk 25 per square feet, he does not have to disclose the source of the money he bought the apartment with. This has also boosted the sale," added Hassan.



Owners and workers at rod sales centres sit idle waiting in hope for customers who seemed to have thinned with the hike in rod prices.



Cable operators, ISPs agree to co-operate with Desa

Service providers should register with and pay Desa for using the electric lines, as four clamps will be installed to accommodate service cables

CITY CORRESPONDENT

The cable operators and internet service providers (ISP) have agreed to co-operate with the Dhaka Electric Supply Authority (Desa) in organising the untidy cables on electric poles in the city to beautify the capital ahead of Saarc Summit.

They assured the Desa chairman of necessary co-operation at a meeting on December 14 as the Desa had set a deadline for negotiation on the issue and threatened to remove all the cables from the poles after December 15.

Utility service providers such as satellite TV cable operators, internet service providers, Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board (BTB) and Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) use the Desa poles for their cable network.

"During the meeting, the cable operators and internet service providers agreed to help us install clamps on the poles for the cables and they will also pay charges for using the electric poles," said AAMA Rob, chairman of

Desa.

"The government agencies will follow whatever Desa will decide," he added.

Desa poles have facilities for its power lines only. Desa has two types of lines. Three to four 11 KV electric cables are set at the top of the poles and four other insulated cables are at the second level below the 11 KV lines.

"There is no provision to accommodate telephone lines, internet and satellite TV cables and DCC electric lines on the poles," said the Desa chairman. "So we have decided to install four clamps on every poles for the use of these cables."

"The cost of clamps and wire will be Tk 56,000 per kilometre," he said. "We have already done it on pilot basis on the Airport Road, and we will start work for organising the untidy cables on all major roads soon," said Rob.

Desa want every service provider who uses Desa poles should have registration and they should pay Desa charges for using the poles.

Need for daycare centres in offices

Dhaka workshop says

CITY CORRESPONDENT

As more and more women are taking up jobs, childcare centres in offices have become a necessity, speakers at workshop said last Wednesday.

The workshop titled "Identifying Strategies and Benefits of Onsite Childcare Facility For The Working Mothers" was organised by Phulki, a non-government organisation, in the city.

Daycare centres are needed as nuclear ones are replacing the traditional extended families.

"In an extended family, grandparents or other family members take care of the children. But in nuclear families in the urban areas, children have no one but their parents to look after them," said Kazi Afroz Zahan Ara, associate professor of the Institute of Educational Research, Dhaka University (DU).

"The children of the working mothers can grow better mentally and physically if they stay in daycare centres rather than at homes with servants," she said.

Participants said children learn better social skills when they stay together with other kids in daycare centres.

"Most families have one child who do not learn to share things with others. At daycare centres, they learn to interact with other children," said one of the participants.

Lutfunnahar Nilu, headmistress of Chhayanir Pre-School and Day Care Centre,

said working mothers are relieved when they leave their children in daycare centres.

"They can work more efficiently knowing their children are safe at the centres," she said.

Ruma Sultana of Manusher Jonno, the organisation supporting Phulki financially for providing daycare facilities to working mothers of disadvantaged groups, said a change in the mentality of employers is necessary to provide on-site daycare facilities.

"These mothers think that colleagues would get distracted from work if they bring their children to offices," she said. "They should understand that it would make the mothers work more efficiently," she added.

Selina Begum, Phulki's programme co-ordinator said her organisation faced difficulties in persuading garment factory owners to provide on-site daycare facilities. But the problem could be overcome because of a specific law.

"The factory act of 1965 makes it mandatory for the management to provide childcare if the factory employs more than 50 women. Practices to the contrary are punishable by the law," she said.

She added that the authorities made commitments to provide these facilities but they never materialised.

The workshop participants stressed proper quality of daycare service. They said safe and spacious space is a must for children and that the centres should have skilled staff.

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useful telephone numbers

COURIER SERVICES

International
Air Borne Express- 9561371, 9561372, 9550724
Air Couriers Intl (BD) Ltd.- 8815970
Aramex International Courier- 9558003, 9559582, 9565075
Airspeed Express- 9563494
Asian Courier Services Ltd.- 8313543
Baishakhi Courier Service- 9558606
Banladesh Express Co. Ltd.- 9565114
Bangladesh Courier Service- 9563989
Bengal Express- 9560642, 9552666
Bangladesh Intl Courier- 953636
Continental Service Ltd.- 9552948, 9558425
DHL Worldwide Express- 9881703-7, 9886305-9, 9882057
Enem Express- 9330699
Fedex Bangladesh Express Co. Ltd.- 9565114
Modhuban Courier Service-

9550884
Overseas Courier Service- 9352431, 8321169
Pacific Courier- 9568446
Reliance Express Service- 9558515, 7110249
Sky International service- 9660442
Skynet world Wide Express- 9558062, 9560258, 7114787, 7113184
TNT Express- 9566662, 9558239, 8618155
Union Courier Service- 9341722
United Parcel Service Air alliance Ltd.- 8826429, 8810223

National
Asian courier Service Ltd.- 8313543
BAE- 9884851
Central Courier Service- 9881118
Confidence Courier Service Ltd.- 9567036
Chisty Courier- 7110177-9
Cosmopol Services- 9552793, 9557975
Dhaka Courier Services- 7236222

Dolphin Courier- 9558802
Dreamland Courier Service- 9550326, 9566975
Pioneer Courier Services- 9561727, 9569759
Probashi Courier Services- 9346359
Rainbow Express Parcel Services Ltd.- 8322773, 8315703
Reliance Express Services- 9558515, 7110249
Sundarban Courier Services- 9551984, 9556189, 9551656
Sunrise Courier Services- 9568751
World Runner Express Ltd. 9112068, Fax - 880-2-9112068

TIPS

Do you know according to Dhaka City Corporation, you must deposit your waste at the collection site between 4pm and 10pm

LIBRARY & INFO

Libraries, Cultural and Information Centers
Central Public Library- 8626001-4,
Shishu Academy- 9564128
Shilpakala Academy- 8614673
Bangla Academy- 8619550
Islamic Foundation- 9550280, 955640
The American Centre (IRC)- 8813440-4, 9886395
The Nazrul Institute- 9114602
Ford Foundation- 8116133
Alliance Francaise- 8611557
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

OUTING

Museum and Zoo
National Museum- 8619396-9
Open: 10 am 5 pm, Friday 3 pm- 8 pm, Thursday closed
Muktijuddha Jadugar- 9559091
Open: 10:30 am 6:30 pm, Sunday Closed
Bangabandhu Smiti Jadugar- 8110046
Open: 10 am 5 pm, Wednesday closed
Ahsan Manzil
Open: 10 am 5 pm, Friday: 3 pm - 7 pm, Thursday Closed
Shishu Jadugar- 9666466
Open: 10 am- 6 pm, Sunday Closed

CITY BUS ROUTE

Bus No.	Route	Starts from
1	Gulistan-Shahbagh-Banglamotor-Farmgate-Mirpur 10, 11, 12	Goiap Shah Mazar
2	Gulistan-Shahbagh-Banglamotor-Farmgate-Mirpur 1, 2	Phoolbaria bus station
3	Gulistan-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Mahakhali-Airport-Azampur	Phoolbaria bus station
4	Shyampur-Motijheel-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Airport-Tongi	Shyampur
5	Sayedabad-Kamalapur-Motijheel-Airport-Joydebpur-Gazipur	Sayedabad
6A	Kamalapur-Motijheel-Gulistan-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Gulshan 1, 2	Kamalapur
6B	Kamalapur-Motijheel-Gulistan-Magbazar-Nabisco-Gulshan 1, 2	Kamalapur
6C	Motijheel Shapla chattr- Malibagh- Farmgate- Gulshan 2	Motijheel Shaplachattr
7	Sadarghat-Gulistan-Magbazar-Nabisco-Gulshan 2	Sadarghat
8	Chittagong-Motijheel-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Asad Gate-Kalyanpur-Gabtol	Chittagong Road
9	Demra Rani mahal-Motijheel-Kalbagan-Shyamoli-Mirpur 1, 10, 11, 12	Demra Ranimahal
10	Sadarghat-Gulistan-Kakrail-Mailbagh- Rampura-Biswa Road-Tongi Bridge	Sadarghat
11	Sayedabad-Motijheel-Fakirapool-Magbazar- Mohakhali-Tongi Bridge	Sayedabad
11/A	Sayedabad-Khligoan-Mailbagh-Rampura-Airport-Tongi Bridge	Syedabad
12	Shanir Akhra-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Asadgate-Mohammadpur	Shanir Akhra
13	Motijheel-Shahbagh-New Market-Jhigatola-Shangkar-Mohammedpur	Motijheel
14	Signboard - Motijheel-Shahbagh-New Market-Shyamoli-Mirpur 1, 12	Signboard (Chittagong Road)
15	Chittagong Road-Motijheel-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Mirpur 12	Chittagong Road
24	Gulistan-Magbazar-Mohakhali-Airport-Uttara-Bipile	Gulistan