



STAR PHOTO

A lineman working on 'out-of-order lines' at a junction-box at Shantinagar.

The all powerful telephone linemen

SABRINA KARIM MURSHED

Shahina Khatun was infuriated when she picked up the receiver of her telephone set. Finding the line 'dead' she exclaimed: "Oh no! They did it again." "Why don't they charge us a monthly fee to keep the phones working?" she quipped.

Shahina, a resident of Kazipara, said her telephone remains out of order most of the time throughout the year, thanks to the linemen of the Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board (BTTB).

"The linemen themselves intentionally create problems in the network and then take a good amount of money from us in the name of fixing them," said Shahina.

Not only Shahina but many in the city

also claimed they suffer from such 'misdeeds' of the linemen. People living in Mirpur said such incidents are frequent during the Eid festivals. "You will find the phone dead before every Eid," commented 60-year-old Tahera Islam, a housewife. "Once I even proposed them (the linemen) to come and collect money before the Eid, as it is hard for me to walk down to the local BTTB office to file complaints at this age."

Moreover, many complained that the linemen tamper with telephone lines and give PABX connections to many houses from one line.

"That is why I used to receive calls looking for unknown people at my home," said Abedin Baki, a resident of Shia Masjid Area. However, he said it stopped when all the telephone lines were turned digital.

The linemen are known to be more powerful than their seniors.

"I could not get my telephone connection unless I paid the lineman although the application was recommended by the telecommunications minister in 2002," said a journalist living in Indira Road. "He (lineman) just had to switch on the line from the switch room which he did not until I paid him," he said.

A number of linemen however strongly denied these allegations.

"People make bad comments about us because we are made the scapegoats for the mess in the telephone systems," said a lineman. He said sometimes the linemen only ask for tips after fixing phones. "We are satisfied with whatever they give us as tips," he said.

Dhanmondi going for community police force

SYED TASHFIN CHOWDHURY

Residents of Dhanmondi are planning to initiate their own community police force in order to combat criminal activities and traffic congestion that has plagued the area.

The plans were discussed at a seminar organised by the Dhanmondi Ratepayers Association (DRA) on January 17 at a local community centre.

"Only through such steps can we address the atrocities to a certain extent," said Abul Khair Bablu, commissioner of Ward 49.

Former inspector general of police Nurul Huda delivered the keynote speech at the gathering. M Mahbubuzzaman, former minister

of agriculture was present as chief guest.

Prominent residents of Dhanmondi, representatives of different shopping centers, community centers, schools, diagnostic centers and other commercial establishments in the area were also present at the seminar.

"We had invited representatives of commercial establishments because the location of their businesses and institutions in different parts of Dhanmondi have created the tremendous traffic congestion over the past few years," said Bablu.

Dhanmondi, officially a residential area, has over 40 big and small schools and no less than seven imposing shopping centers. There

are also numerous hospitals and clinics, universities, colleges and business establishments.

Stagnate traffic is a common feature during the morning and afternoon rush hours on Road 27, Road 2, Mirpur Road Intersection and all other inner roads of the area.

Residents have complained of an increase in crime especially mugging.

People tend to keep away from the roads along the Dhanmondi Lake after dark in fear of drug addicts and crooks. Prostitutes also move around the Lake after sunset.

"Hopefully with a community police force, we will be able to

launch a crackdown on these elements," said Bablu.

Some residents were apprehensive about the effectiveness of the community police.

"The community police will have their work cut out as they will not be armed with anything more than just a baton while fighting criminals brandishing firearms," said one resident.

The DRA however was ready to go ahead with the plans and was just waiting for permission from concerned authorities and funds from financiers.

"Hopefully these matters will be settled in another seminar on February 6," said commissioner Bablu.

Coins of confusion

CITY CORRESPONDENT

Abbas Ali felt helpless as his passenger screamed at him: "Why do you take passengers if you cannot even count money?"

Abbas, the illiterate rickshaw-puller was confused whether he was right or wrong. He thought the passenger was trying to deceive him with a coin of one Taka claiming it to be a two Taka coin. "Okay, if you say so. It is a two Taka coin," Abbas finally conceded.

But not only Abbas, lots of people are getting confused by the shapes and sizes of coins that look quite similar.

There are coins of Tk one, five and the recently introduced Tk two in the market. 50 and 25 paisa coins also exist but they do not cause as much

The blind and illiterate are most affected. They cannot differentiate between the Tk 1, 2 and 5 coins as these are almost equal in shape and size

confusion as their use is limited.

"It is not only the illiterate who get perplexed with these coins but educated people also find them troublesome when in a hurry," said Belal Ahmed who works in a private company. "Especially the coins of Tk two and five are so similar that it is extremely hard to separate them unless you take a careful look," he

added.

People of middle or lower income groups who travel by bus, confront the problem more. "It is quite a task to count the coins at bus counters or inside the buses in the evening due to the low light," said Nazmul Alam a fish trader of Mirpur.

Spare a thought also for blind beggars like Nurullah who find it

almost impossible to sort out what he has earned. "Usually I feel the coins on my palm and realise the value. But these days it is very hard," he said. When asked if he could feel the curves on the edges of Tk five coins, Nurullah said it was of little help.

"There were coins of many values when we were young but they all came in different shapes which never caused any trouble," recalled Tamiz Ali, a 75-year-old.

"The five paisa was square in shape while ten paisa had distinct edges. We even saw the one paisa coin known as 'phuta' paisa that was round in shape with a hole in the middle," said Tamiz adding that the material used for making the coins also varied according to their value.



STAR PHOTO

useful telephonenumber 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
Banmgladesh 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
Sundaran 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

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- 8850141, 8850142
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 | Golap 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-Maghbazar-Nabisco-Gulshan 1, 2 | Kamalapur |
| 6C | Motijheel Shapla chattr- Malibagh- Farmgate- Gulshan 2 | Motijheel Shaplachattr |
| 7 | Sadarghat-Gulistan-Maghbazar-Nabisco-Gulshan 2 | Sadarghat |
| 8 | Chittagong-Motijheel-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Asad Gate-Kalyanpur-Gabtoil | Chittagong Road |
| 9 | Demra Rani mahal-Motijheel-Kalbagan-Shyamoli-Mirpur 1, 10, 11, 12 | Demra Ranimahai |
| 10 | Sadarghat-Gulistan-Kakrail-Mailbagh-Rampura-Biswa Road-Tongi Bridge | Sadarghat |
| 11 | Sayedabad-Motijheel-Fakirapool-Maghbazar-Mohakhali-Tongi Bridge | Sayedabad |
| 11/A | Sayedabad-Khilgoan-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-Maghbazar-Mohakhali-Airport-Uttara-Bipile | Gulistan |