

# Shopping malls follow govt orders

WAHIDA MITU

Due to lack of close monitoring by the government some of the establishment owners are still illuminating their establishment violating the government's strong urging and announcement of taking ultimate action about illumination.

Responding to the government's call to save electricity, shop owners in Dhaka Metropolitan area decided to stop illuminating their shopping malls at a meeting with the State Minister for Home Affairs Lutfozzaman Babar on October 9.

The next day (October 10) the government announced a decision to cut power connections to shopping malls as an ultimate action if the owner's do not stop illuminating their establishments in the evening.

Most of the shop and mall owners complied with the government order and welcomed the electricity-saving measure to cop with the massive load shedding.

However, the owners of some commercial establishments keep on illuminating their markets and their shops. On October 17, a number of shops and markets in Gulshan, Panthapath and Shantinagar areas were found illuminated.

We have illuminated some smaller portion of the shopping complex," said Apel Mahmood of

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Most Shopping mall like the one above removed illumination after govt order.

Basis Tailors Fabrics Fashion. We will remove all these by tomorrow," he added. This correspondent visited the next day and found no illuminations.

The front side of the Metro Shopping Mall has not been illuminated but almost every individual shop inside the market has illuminated their outlets.

"I have not noticed it, we will immediately stop this, said Motahar Hossain, president of Metro Shopping Mall Business Owners' Association. Most of the shop owners gave the same assurance when their attention was drawn about the illuminations.

However on the evening of October 22 this correspondent found Hosaf Shopping Complex in Malibagh intersection and Mouchak Tower Shopping Complex in Mouchak were illuminated.

"We have monitoring cells to check any irregularities and Desa and Desco are in-charge of doing so," said Muhammad Iqbal Hossain, member engineer of Desa.

But he added that Desa and Desco only have the power to disconnect those illuminated lights if they found the owners not following the orders, they do not have the authority to fine them.

A Desa source said that a decision has been taken at a recent meeting to strengthen the monitoring cell in the Dhaka City.

## TCB SALES

# Little impact on kitchen market

DURDANA GHIAS

The kitchen market adjacent to Newmarket is buzzing with people buying and selling things. The shops with an array of goods and colourful spices draw buyers to fill take their fill of Ramadan items, with pulses, onion, gram, brinjals and sugar topping the list. Though busy with their urns most buyers complain about the soaring prices.

The advent of the month of Ramadan sees the hike in prices of essentials as the tradition goes, despite how the market fared before the beginning of the holy month.

This year the government has taken initiatives to reduce prices, taking some pressure off the middle and lower-middle class by introducing sales at reasonable prices through the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB).

The TCB has four main Ramadan items on sale at 33 spots in the city -- pulses, onion, sugar and gram. Ten of TCB's mobile teams are in operation in the 10 zones in the city from 10:00am to 3:00pm except Fridays, with Newmarket, Mohakhali, Mirpur-10, Khilgaon and DCC Market at Gulshan 2.

The TCB sales operate from truck at close proximity to these usual grocery shops at the kitchen markets, but it has failed to leave a positive impact of the price difference of these four items.

Kajol, a seller at the Newmarket kitchen market told Star City that instead of a decrease the price of some items actually shot up. A maund of sugar went up by Tk 20-30 in the last few days, he added.

Another seller, Nurunnabi, from the same market said that he saw no fall in sales after TCB started their operations. He confirmed the demand he had for these items is the same as

before.

The reasons for the little impact TCB sales have left in market, Habib, a seller said that most rickshaw-pullers, hawkers, beggars and slum dwellers buy from TCB. But the middle and lower-middle quality-conscious people still prefer to buy from the market.

"I bought pulses from the TCB outlet recently, but it was of low quality," said Shawkat, a second year college student. Most buyers voiced the same opinion on the goods sold by the TCB.

The current market price of pulses is Tk 50-52, onion Tk 32, sugar Tk 40-42 and gram Tk 38-40 according to the Newmarket kitchen market vendors, while TCB sells pulses at Tk 40-42, onion at Tk 22, sugar at Tk 36 and gram at Tk 30.

The TCB restricts purchases to only two items at a time and one or two kg of each a person. This paltry amount does not meet their demands and even the poor that patronises the TCB has, eventually to turn to the markets.

Asked why the TCB failed to make have an impact on the market, a TCB official, overseeing the selling, said: "These are two different systems and there is no link. Our sales reach Tk 30,000 to Tk 40,000 a day, which is quite good."

According to a Daily Star report on October 13 the government at a taskforce meeting, chaired by Commerce Minister Altaf Hossain Choudhury, decided to increase the volume of TCB sales to 40 spots, and raised the ration of two items a head to four.

In the meeting it was said that TCB sales were bringing a positive effect to the market though was contradicted by consumers and kitchen market sellers.

But the allegation of hoarding by sellers by buying at a lower price from TCB was denied by both the sellers and consumers.

## Mohakhali flyover safe from earthquakes

CITY CORRESPONDENT

After 10 months, since the first installation in November 2004, all 42 shock transmission units (STU) on Mohakhali flyover have finally been installed.

The authorities were able to install only 21 out of 42 required STUs when the flyover was opened to the public on November 4, 2005.

"The flyover is now completely safe from earthquakes and we are happy to complete the installation," said Shabuddin, project director, Mohakhali flyover.

He said the Roads and Highways Department (RHD), the implementing agency of the flyover completed the installation in September, after missing several deadlines.

The 21 newly installed STUs were imported from America, and RHD officials said the delay was due to dispute between the authorities and the contractor.

"We suggested the installation of US-made STUs but the contractors were bent on installing Chinese-made cheaper ones. We stood firm and made no compromises with the quality and thus the delay," said a high official of RHD.

Another reason for the delay was a World Bank condition that said the STUs should be tested in an independent laboratory before they were installed.

The contractors wanted to test these in China to save money but the authorities once again stood firm.

The 21 STUs were finally tested in Chicago before they were installed on the Mohakhali flyover.

Flyover users have expressed satisfaction and are happy with the stance that the authorities have taken to keep the flyover safe for commuting.

"Dhaka has been identified as one of the earthquake vulnerable cities in South Asia, it was a risky decision to inaugurate the flyover for public use without installing the STUs. We are happy that it is finally done," said Abedur Rahman, a regular user of the flyover.

10x3

10x4