

# KORAIL SLUM

## Goons eating up public resources

*At least 20 syndicates make Tk 1.5cr a month by providing gas, power, water illegally to Korail slum dwellers*

RASHIDUL HASAN and  
SHAHEEN MOLLAH

At least 20 syndicates are making a fortune by providing gas, power and water illegally to people living in the capital's biggest slum, Korail Bosti.

They get an estimated Tk 1.5 crore per month from slum dwellers and a major portion of the money is spent to "manage" the local police station and a section of employees of the three utility service providers.

Home to around one lakh people, who include 28,000 voters, Korail Bosti is spread over 90 acres of government land in Mohakhali. People have been living there since 1990, according to government officials.

These correspondents talked to over 50 locals and several syndicate members to get an insight into the slum's complex web of money and power.

The residents reckon that there are at least 10,000 illegal gas connections, and 15,000 water and as many electricity connections at the slum.

Under the arrangements made by the syndicates, each gas connection costs at least Tk 500 for households and Tk 1,500 for hotels and other commercial users.

A family has to pay Tk 170 per month for using a light bulb and Tk 170 for an electric fan, residents say. A

shop owner pays Tk 900 a month for a light bulb and Tk 600 for a refrigerator.

To get tap water for five minutes a day, one has to pay Tk 150 per month, for 10 minutes Tk 300 and for 20 minutes Tk 600.

Every syndicate has its own staff, including lineman, rent collector and manager. The number of staff depends on the number of homes their illegal services cover.

To set up the connections and run the unauthorised services, the syndicates get technical support from some employees of local water, power and gas supply offices in exchange for bribe.

Between 10th and 15th day of every month, the payment must be paid to the rent collectors appointed by the syndicates.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

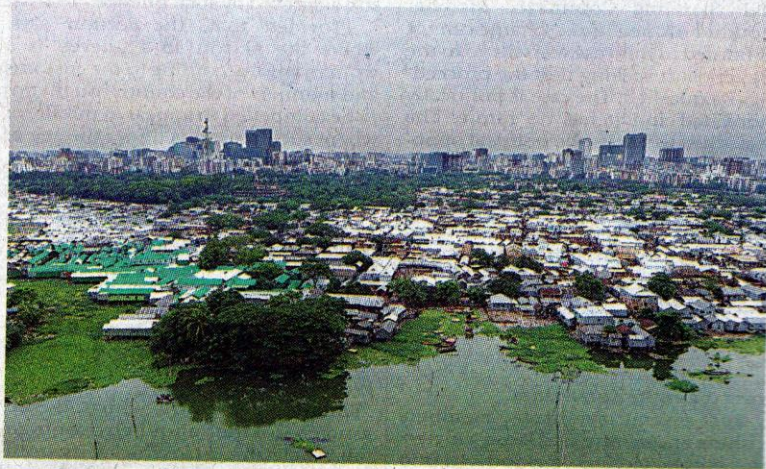


PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

**Korail slum sprawling along the Gulshan-Banani lake.**