

# Wayside drugs at 'fair' prices

Medicines and supplies are being sold illegally near the hospitals at Shahbagh under the very nose of authorities

BISHAWJIT DAS

It is amazing that medicines and diagnostic materials are available for sale on the pavements and corners of the city. People are selling medical supplies along the footpaths at Shahbagh in and around the BIRDEM hospital area.

Though the rule that medicine, supplies or instruments used in the medical field cannot be sold without the authority of a registered or recognised pharmacist, many locals are selling medicines and diagnostic instruments openly in broad daylight.

This does not mean that there are no pharmacies in the vicinity, but the area around the place almost near the hospital and across the road are full of these outlets. Nevertheless Shahbagh Market is quite a famous spot for the purchase of various types of medical supplies.

The sellers refused to divulge their names and when asked why were they selling this stuff knowing it is illegal, the reason and excuse for doing so was, "We are not selling any sort of oral medicines, these are all for external use."

"Isn't this a service we are providing?" they asked. "We are just bringing the apparatus people require within their reach and that too at very reasonable prices." They also added that they were selling these medicines and instruments from the inception of the BIRDEM hospital and that these were all

instruments and ingredients required for testing blood sugar levels.

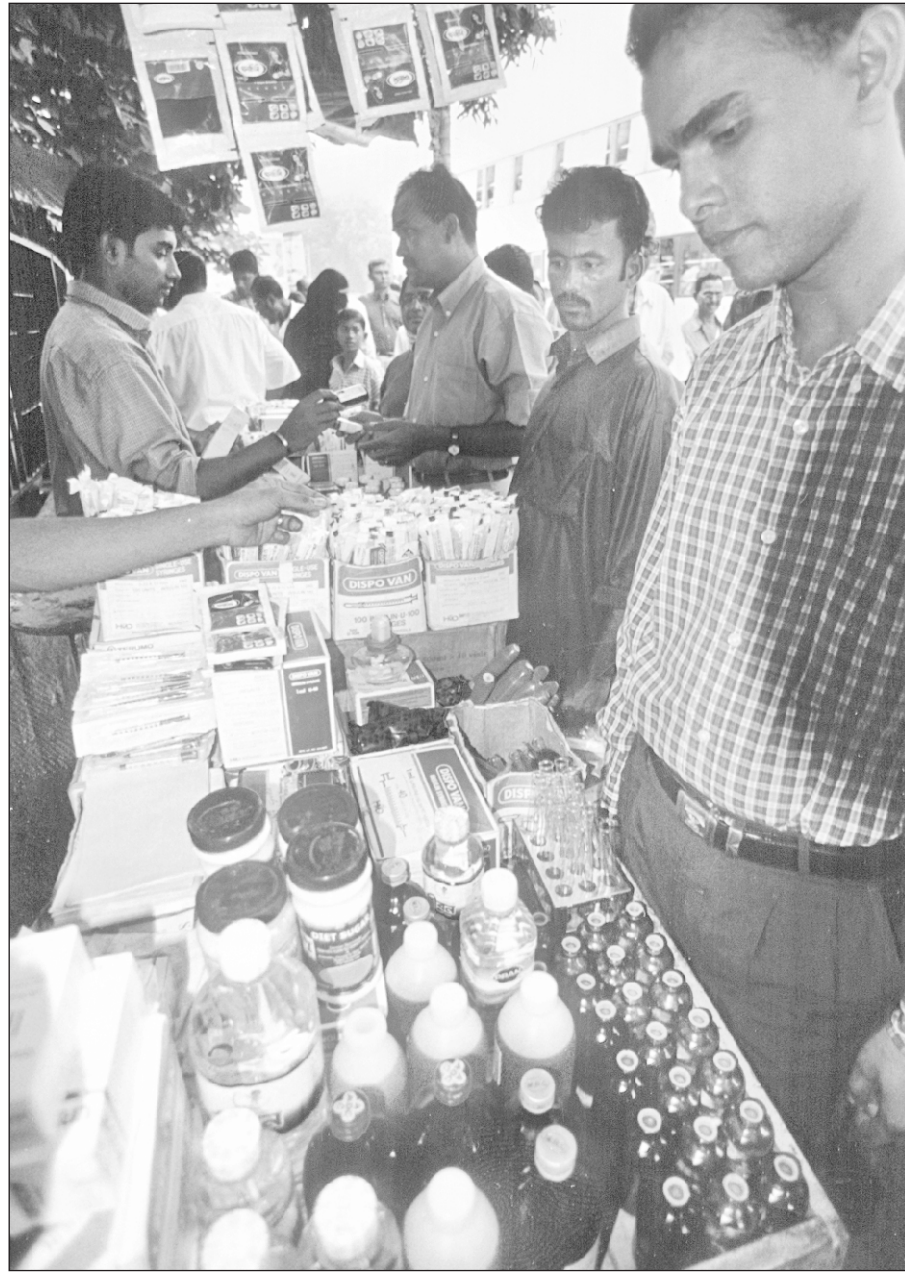
Though they claimed they were not selling any sort of oral medicines, some sugar-free tablets were seen on the table. They sell chemicals, cotton wool, test tubes, syringes as well as various elements used in testing urine.

The chance of the sale of recycled material is inevitable at these outlets. The use of these unhygienic materials may harm patients drastically, and may cause a hindrance as well as create obstacles in identifying diseases.

The packets containing syringes were found to be properly sealed, and had plenty of time for expiry. But there is little chance of these materials being hygienic. Four per cent of HIV patients are victims of these used syringes, according to the UNFPA report 2003.

Contacting a law-enforcing officer on the spot he stated, "Yes, I have noticed this business going on for long time, but I cannot take any action unless the thana gives me any instructions to do so. Besides, I am not an expert in the field of medicine nor do I have the know-how of the technicalities in this regard."

The response of the Ramna thana was, "Unless and until the matter is reported to us with the accusation that these sales have harmed any individual, we can not afford to go into any sort of investigation."



Are they genuine medicines? A thought that may not cross the minds of the customers.

# The recycling story

CITY CORRESPONDENT

The environment-friendly recycling process was at first adopted by developed world countries like the USA, Canada, UK, and nations of Europe back in the early nineties. The idea of not dumping used papers, cans, bottles etc. and instead recycle them had evoked quite an anti-pollution revolution in those countries.

In the beginning, whoever could supply a can or a bottle for recycling was paid 5 cents in the USA and trash papers were sold at different rates according to their weight. The process is still prevalent in the western societies and it has helped the younger generation to grow a sense of responsibility towards the environment and the pollution.

But our country lags far behind in this aspect. At the moment, there are only around a 100 small shops all over the city who buy the used soft-drink bottles, papers and other used items from street urchins at the meager

price of Tk 3 per kilogram. These shops in turn sell these items with a profit margin of not less than 50 paise per kilogram to some old town based businessmen. These people mainly sell the papers to the mills in Narayanganj.

The bottles are sold off to washers who after properly washing them once again sell it to the soft drink companies.

"This business was initiated almost eight years ago in the city in a few shops around the old town," said Saidul, the owner of such a scrap shop at Dalipara, in Kalabagan. "The actual profit is incurred from the papers that we buy and sell, since these are the daily items," he said.

But the sellers are harassed regularly. "Usually some of our workers who are mostly street-urchins and door-to-door vendors, are harassed by the police," said Maqbul, an employee of a scrap shop. "Sometimes local hoodlums beat them up when they can't give them money," he added.

# New WASA MD, finally

CITY CORRESPONDENT

ANH Akhtar Hossain was appointed Dhaka WASA's Managing Director (MD) yesterday by WASA Board for three years. This appointment was made after a long period of speculation.

Presently serving Water Development Board as Additional Chief Engineer, Hossain is likely to take up his appointment with WASA today.

"I don't want to talk about the delay in the appointment because the matter is entirely of the government," said Hossain talking to Star City.

In July, the WASA Board of Directors short-listed a panel of three among ten aspirants and sent their names to the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (LGRD). Among the candidates were Professor Zahurul Islam of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) and Agriculturist Abdur Majid.

Since March 15, the Dhaka Water and Sewerage Authority (WASA) was run by

acting managing director ATM Ataur Rahman who was also transferred to the National Housing Authority as Chairman.

The post of Deputy Managing Director (DMD) (planning, research and development) was run by a superintendent engineer of WASA since June. On September 24, the government appointed Joint Secretary CR Barua as DMD.

On October 2, the Board of Directors short-listed a panel of three namely, Dr Kazi Ali Azam, Liakat Al Faruq and Dr Amjad Hossain, among ten candidates for the position of DMD (planning, research and development) and sent their names to the LGRD ministry.

"We will welcome the new MD. We are really happy that WASA will have a permanent person as the MD," said General Secretary of Dhaka WASA Jatiotabadi Employees' Union, Mizanur Rahman.

"Over the last few months, the chain of command of Dhaka WASA was not maintained properly because of the outgoing MD. I hope that Dhaka WASA will now function smoothly," said Rahman.

# Loud protest at noise pollution

CITY CORRESPONDENT

The level of noise pollution in the city has already started taking toll.

"Noise pollution is among the 12 different types in the city which has given rise to about 30 complex diseases," according to WHO, Unicef and the World Bank reports.

Many people, especially children, students, drivers and others are exposed to noise pollution.

"The mental growth of children can heavily be hampered owing to noise pollution. The excess noise can cause great harm to the foetus in the mother's in the womb. The noise does not have any effect on pregnant mothers," said Manik Mahmood in a rally protesting noise pollution.

Students claim that living in the city has become unbearable

as they find it difficult to concentrate on their studies as most schools and coaching centres are located in areas where noise pollution is at its peak.

"It is the people of South Asia that are suffering more from cardiac diseases than any other regions of the world. Noise pollution seems to be the main reason," said Manik quoting Amartya Sen at the rally that took place in the city.

"It seems that the citizens of this city are gradually losing their hearing ability. My feeling is that everybody is speaking loud here," said Shafiquzzaman, a noise pollution expert who lives in Sweden.

Although the Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) can impose a fine between Tk 200 and 300 for creating noise beyond the limit under different ordinances, violators are easily getting away with it.

Hospitals, educational institutions or the government-designated areas are acclaimed 'silent zones' and are supposed to be well guarded from noise pollution but no body cares to maintain the imposition at all.

"Those who are using hydraulic and horns that blast through the air should be brought to the book. I have seen that the dumping trucks of the Dhaka City Corporation are using hydraulic horns but the law enforcing agencies do not arrest or fine them," said Asif, a computer engineer.

The latest addition to noise pollution are the loud speakers on buses that are used to carry a few over enthusiastic pilgrims or picnic goers.

Recently, the Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon, Bangladesh Environment Lawyers Association, Shabdadushan Protirodh Samanway Committee (SPSC), a coordinating committee to resist noise pollution) and other organisations have raised their voices to take necessary steps to lessen the noise pollution.

SPSC protested the government's decision of handing over the responsibility of issuing license to janbanah malik sramik samity by the communication ministry. The protesters alleged that this might increase the noise pollution, as there is chance of issuing licenses to unskilled drivers.

It is learnt that the ministry of environment and forest has given the responsibility of preparing guidelines to reduce noise pollution to the department of environment.



A rally in protest of noise pollution was held in the city recently.

# THE WOUNDED NURSES



Police intercept a procession of Bangladesh Unemployed Diploma Nurses Association and Diploma Student Nurses Union yesterday which was marching towards the Prime Minister's Office to submit a memorandum. The demands of the nurses were withdrawal of the recent 'illegal' appointment of nurses and punishment of police constables and officials responsible for attacking their previous procession.

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UTILITY	TAXI CAB	MARKET PRICE
<b>Electricity</b> Electricity Complex- PDB- 9566061-5, 9560170-9 Electricity Complex (DESA)- 8616737-43, 8617626 DESCO- 8123138-40 Complaints (Rural Electrification Board, Dhaka)- 8916424-8 <b>Gas</b> Titas Gas Exchange (Emergency)- 9563667-8 Kawrnbarazar-8112135-42 Mirpur- 8014132-3 Mohammadpur- 9117215,9113903 Mohakhali- 9884741, 9885922, 8824993 Motijheel-9667612 <b>WASA</b> WASA (PABX)- 8117829-31 Mirpur- 9000519 Mohammadpur- 8120192 Fakirapool-9115343 Asad Gate- 8917492 Uttara- 9559142, Segunbagicha- 7316348 Pagla- 8113900-39	<b>Yellow Cab</b> Navana 9558065 Salida 9344477, 0171620881 Cosmo 9112959 and 8127191 Cab One 7113282-3 Nihon 8624741-2 Orion 9347277 Sadarghat- 7119759 Mirpur 10 Circle- 9002269, 9001055 Mirpur TVG Complex- 9001189 <b>Black Cab</b> Cab Ex 9358401 Cabline 8321162 JBS Cab 019364575 Sajan 018126036 Anudip - 8125285 and 8127611 Capital 9352847 <b>Union</b> 8130485 <b>Kool</b> 0171826731 <b>Palki</b> 0171052500 <b>Cab I</b> 7113282 <b>Jatri</b> 0171540074 <b>Nipun</b> 9572277 <b>R-Cab</b> 8914782 <b>Star Cab</b> 9571919 <b>Shihab</b> 018202477 & 018228675 <b>KGK</b> 8620011	<b>Rice (Tk. Per Kg)</b> Miniket- 20-22 Pajam- 18.50-19.50 Najirshail- 21-22 Kalijira- 33-34 (Polao) Chiniqura- 35-36 (Polao) <b>Dal (Tk. Per Kg)</b> Masur Dal- 42-44 Masur Imported- 38-40 Mug Dal- 42-44 Mug Imported- 38-40 Motor Dal- 36-38 Motor Imported- 20-21 <b>Oil (Tk. Per Litre)</b> Mustard- 65-70 Soyabean- 41-42 Palm- 35-36 Coconut (Imported)- 100-160 Veg. Ghee- 42-44 Ghee- 300-320 <b>Spices (Tk. Per Kg.)</b> Onion (local)- 20-22 Onion (Imported)- 16-18 Garlic- 30-32 Garlic (Imported)- 24-28 Ginger- 26-28 Ginger (Imported)- 26-28 Turmeric- 65-68 Turmeric (Imported)- 60-62 Dried (Red) Chili- 70-80 Green Chili- 20-24 Coriander (Dhania)- 30-32 Kalijira- 8-10 Cumin (Jira)- 14-16 Cinnamon- 14-16 Almond- 60-70 Aniseed (Labanga)- 40-50 Black Pepper- 20-24 <b>Vegetables (Tk Per Kg)</b> Potato- 13-14 Eggplant- 12-14 Green Papaya- 6-8 Pumpkin (Misti Kumra)- 7-8 Patal- 10-12 Karalla- 14-16 Borboti, (Beans)- 14-16 Dherosh, (Okra)- 12-14 Kakrol- 10-12 Kachumukhi- 10-12 Kachurlati- 10-12 Cucumber- 10-12 Chichinga- 10-12 Jhinga- 12-14 Lal shak- 10-12 Pui Shak- 8-10 Green Banana- 6-8 (Per Hali) Jali Lau- 10-12/Piece Panikachu- 6-10 <b>Fish (Tk. Per Kg)</b> Rui (Local, Medium Size)- 230-240 Rui (Local, Small Size)- 130-140 Katal (Local, Medium Size)- 140-150 Katal (Local, Small Size)- 110-120 Katal (Imported, Medium)- 80-90 Hilsha (Big)- 160-170 Hilsha (Small)- 100-110 Pangash (Big)- 140-150 Pangash (Small)- 60-65 Shing- 300-320 Prawn (Big)- 180-200 Prawn (Small)- 110-120 Silvercarp- 50-60 <b>Meat &amp; Egg (Per Kg)</b> Beef- 85-90 Mutton- 140-150 Chicken- 75 (Poultry) Egg- 15-16 (Duck, Farm), 15-16 (Local Chicken) <b>Fruits (Tk. Per Kg)</b> Green Coconut- 8-10 (Per Piece) Pineapple- 12-15 (Per Piece) Coconut- 10-14 (Per Piece) Jack-fruit- 50-70 (Per Piece) Guava- 12-16 (Per Hali) Banana- 6-8 (Per Hali) Lemon- 4-5 (Per Hali) Mango- 40-55 (Differs species) Apple- 80-90 <b>Others (Tk. Per Kg)</b> Sugar- 32-34 Brown Sugar- 26-28 Salt- 10-11 (Packet) Tea- 120-130 Gold- 8500 (11.66 grams) Silver- 250 (11.66 grams) Sources: Agricultural Marketing Department

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**TRAIN TIMING**

Subarna Express	Leaves Dhaka at 4:00 pm	Reaches Chittagong at 10:15 pm
Mahanagar Prabhati	Leaves Dhaka at 7:30 am	Reaches Chittagong at 2:55 pm
Mahanagar Godhuli	Leaves Dhaka at 3:05 pm	Reaches Chittagong at 9:11 pm
Turna	Leaves Dhaka at 11:00 pm	Reaches Chittagong at 7:05 am
Parabat Express	Leaves Dhaka at 6:30 am	Reaches Sylhet at 2:30 pm
Joyantika Express	Leaves Dhaka at 12:30 pm	Reaches Sylhet at 9:20 pm
Upaban Express	Leaves Dhaka at 9:30 pm	Reaches Sylhet at 6:40 am
Tista Express	Leaves Dhaka at 7:00 am	Reaches Bahadurabad at 1:05 pm
Ekata Express	Leaves Dhaka at 5:00 pm	Reaches Bahadurabad at 11:55
Upakul Express	Leaves Dhaka at 6:00 am	Reaches Noakhali at 1:35 pm
Padma Express	Leaves Dhaka at 9:20 pm	Reaches Jagannath at 2:30 pm