

Mushroom growth of unlicensed diagnostic centres in Rajshahi

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Rajshahi*

A number of diagnostic centres and laboratories have been established in Rajshahi city in recent years, but most of these centres have no license.

According to the office of the Civil Surgeon, Rajshahi, there are at least 83 diagnostic centres and laboratories in the city. Out of the total, only 29 laboratories have licenses. Out of 54, 26 laboratories have applied for licenses. Twenty-eight laboratories do not even bother to apply for licenses.

Business of diagnostic centres and laboratories has become very profitable. That is why more labora-

tories are being opened each and every year. Mostly non-professionals are running the business.

There are some independent diagnostic centres and complexes, but some laboratories are attached to private hospitals and clinics.

Allegations are there that most of the diagnostic centres and laboratories have no good instruments and qualified technicians. So results of investigations of these laboratories are often seen wrong and misleading, physicians say.

Civil Surgeon office sources say, they collect and keep informations about the diagnostic centres and laboratories but they have no

authority to take action.

The diagnostic centres and laboratories having licenses are: Islami Bank Hospital Laboratory, Mukti Clinic Laboratory, Pathology Centre, Care Lab, Nishkrity, Zilia Medicare, Raj Pathology, Padma Diagnostic Centre, Samata Nursing Home Laboratory, Janata Clinic Laboratory, Ekota Clinic and Diagnostic Centre, Sharmin Nursing Home Laboratory, City Diagnostic Centre, Dolphin Clinic Laboratory, Padma Clinic Laboratory, Endoscopy and Maternity Centre, Cure Nursing Home Laboratory, Garibe-Nenaj Clinic Pathology and X-ray Clinic and Pathology.

Myanmar denies involvement

Thai forces hunt for killers of schoolboys

AP, *Bangkok*

Thai forces hunted for masked gunmen Wednesday who killed three teen-age students and wounded a 14 others near the tense frontier with Myanmar, which denied any involvement in the attack.

The three assailants sprayed a school bus carrying about 20 junior high school students with M-16 assault rifle fire on Tuesday, killing two of them.

A third, 13-year-old Krisda

Utapao, died early Wednesday, said Mongkol Chitwatana, head of the Ratchaburi provincial hospital.

The attack, about 20 kilometers (12 miles) from the border, threatened to deepen the enmity between neighbours Thailand and Myanmar, also known as Burma.

A state-run newspaper in Myanmar denied the country's involvement in the shooting.



Minister for Finance and Planning M Saifur Rahman hands over prize bonds amounting to Tk 50,000 and a wheelchair donated by Dutch-Bangla Bank Limited to a disabled freedom fighter at a function held in the city yesterday on the occasion of the sixth founding anniversary of the bank. State Minister for Ministry of Liberation War Affairs Redwan Ahmed, Chairman of the bank Mohammad Sahabuddin Ahmed, Director Abedur Rashid Khan along with President and Managing Director of the bank C M Koyes Sami were present on the occasion.

Pregnancy, childbirth complications claim 20,000 lives a year

BSS, *Dhaka*

At least 20,000 women die annually due to complications related to pregnancy and childbirth, and nine million more suffer from various complications, child health experts said in Dhaka yesterday.

They said about 60 per cent of the girls get married before crossing their adolescence and of them 58 per cent give birth to children exposing themselves to major health hazards.

Generally girls face more physical problems including early mar-

riage, early pregnancy and childbirth, abortions including violence while boys face psycho social problems and its consequences, they said at an advocacy workshop on adolescent reproductive health and problems, jointly organised by Institute of Child and Mother Health (ICMH) and Obstetrical and Gynecological Society of Bangladesh (OGSB).

Health and Family Welfare Minister Dr Khondker Mosharrif Hossain inaugurated the two-day workshop, in which doctors from 13 medical college hospitals and

others who are directly and indirectly involved with the adolescent health issues are taking part.

Vice Chancellor of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Prof M A Hadi, Director General of Family Planning M Fazlur Rahman, WHO representative in Bangladesh Dr Suneety Acharya, Advisor of Adolescent programme of OGSA Prof TA Chowdhury, Director of ICMH Prof Monimul Hoque also addressed the inaugural function.

El Salvador grants asylum to Venezuelan coup plotter

AFP, *San Salvador*

El Salvador on Tuesday granted asylum to former Venezuelan Rear Admiral Carlos Molina Tamayo, who took part in last month's coup attempt against President Hugo Chavez.

"Following consideration of a request for diplomatic asylum from Rear Admiral Carlos Molina Tamayo, the government of the Republic of El Salvador has decided to grant the petition," the Foreign Ministry said in a statement here.

Molina Tamayo has been holed up in the Caracas residence of Ana Leonor Palomo, El Salvador's charge d'affaires, since May 25, when he offered a petition for asylum.

The Foreign Ministry said

Salvador Ambassador Hugo Carrillo held two meetings with Molina Tamayo to determine his motives.

The Salvadoran government has also reviewed information presented by Venezuelan authorities about judicial proceedings opened against him and other members of the junta that briefly seized power in Caracas in mid-April, the ministry said.

The coup fizzled when key Venezuelan military units refused to support the rebellion against the populist Chavez.

El Salvador was the only country that publicly supported the interim government of Pedro Carmona, which ascended after Chavez's ouster.

Carmona has received asylum in neighbouring Colombia.

52 power lines snapped

BSS, *Dhaka*

Dhaka Electric Supply Authority (DESA) yesterday snapped 29 default and 23 illegal electric connections in Narayanganj and Khilgaon areas.

Unabated Padma erosion in Faridpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Faridpur*

Char Hajiganj Bazar in Char Bhadrason upazila, one of the biggest commercial centres in Faridpur and Gendumollar Hat, another major business centre in Sadar upazila, have been threatened seriously due to continued erosion by the river Padma.

Government sanctioned Tk five crore this year with a view to saving the erosion affected places.

Another sanction involving Tk five crore was also made this year for this purpose, but no work has

started as yet to save these two markets. It seems that the projects taken by WAPDA are in doldrums.

People in the area told this correspondent that the Padma has already started eroding some portions of the markets.

If the protection works are not immediately started the two markets will be devoured into the riverbed during this rainy season.

People of the area have urged the authorities concerned to take immediate steps to save the erosion-affected areas.

NATO-Russia Council to weigh Indo-Pak feud at Brussels meet

AFP, *Brussels*

The newly-created NATO-Russia Council will take centre stage at a meeting of alliance defence ministers today and tomorrow, throwing the spotlight on Moscow's efforts to cool sabre-rattling between nuclear rivals India and Pakistan over disputed Kashmir.

The joint body, which groups the former Cold War rivals NATO and Russia, was formed at a summit between the two in Rome last week and has taken on growing importance as Moscow assumes the role of mediator between the belligerent south Asian countries.

At their regular meeting, the 19 NATO defence ministers will be

eager for a debriefing from Russian counterpart Sergel Ivanov on his boss Vladimir Putin's talks in Almaty with Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee and Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf on the stand of in Kashmir which has unleashed fears of a nuclear war.

At a regional summit which brought the leaders of India and

Pakistan into the same room on Tuesday, Putin led diplomatic efforts to avert war on the subcontinent, but failed to get the two to talk together.

Growing concerns over global terrorism drove Russia and NATO to crank up their level of cooperation, but their attention quickly turned to the specter of war in South Asia.

"The presidents and prime ministers strongly urge both sides to de-escalate and to resume talking together so that their problems can be resolved peacefully," NATO Secretary General George Robertson said in Italy last week as the ink dried on the NATO-Russia accord.

That was expected to be his theme at the council meeting here.

An alliance diplomat said the two partners envisioned creating a NATO-Russia training facility and shaping up plans for joint operations.

The 19 NATO defence ministers will be holding their own meeting -- minus Russia -- before the new

council convenes.

Talk there is expected to focus on modernising and streamlining the half-century-old transatlantic alliance to avoid being again sidelined as it largely was in the US anti-Taliban campaign in Afghanistan after the September 11 attacks on the US.

For Robertson, the choice is simple: "Modernise or be marginalised."

The allies will be shaping up decisions for their summit in Prague next November at which they are expected to invite new members from eastern Europe, particularly honing a programme of armed forces modernisation begun at the 1999 NATO summit in Washington, but thus far without laudable results.

To reach that new level of efficiency, the 19 feel, as does Robertson, that they should be getting leaner and meaner, concentrating on a handful of top, do-able priori-

ties, including strategic transport, precision guided weapons, special forces, and secure communications.

US Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld is expected to hammer home the oft-stated American dictum that the allies need to specialise more in the things they do best, and more efficiently pool their military hardware.