

## Homeo hospital in chronic disorder

PORIMOL PALMA

Poor administration and lack of proper planning have turned the Homeopathic Degree College and Hospital (HDCH) in the city into a dysfunctional institution.

The 100-bed lone government homeopathic hospital at Mirpur has never seen more than 50 patients admitted due to the absence of proper treatment, nursing and regular duty of doctors. Hardly 20-25 patients are admitted a day, hospital sources said.

According to official rules, four medical officers (MO), four clinical assistants, four emergency medical officers and 54 intern doctors are supposed to be on duty in three shifts to take care of the patients by rotation.

But only two MOs attend the 8:00am to 2:00pm morning shift. They also do not come in time and usually leave the hospital before 1:00pm, a source alleged.

Allegations are also there that Principal of the college Dr Niamat Ali attends the office only a few days a month and leaves after 15-30 minutes stay

in the hospital.

An asthma patient died during the Eid-ul-Fitr last year just because there was no doctor and the on-duty nurses could not reach anyone of them over telephone. An intern doctor the next morning reported to the principal accusing the on-duty nurses of their negligence in duty, and the principal stopped disbursement of their salary for several weeks.

"All the 27 trained nurses have the allopathic orientation, and so they cannot apply any medicine at emergency and in the absence of the doctors," an official of the hospital said.

Nurses complained to the principal on many occasions over the doctors' absence, but the principal did not care for them. He rather replied to the nurses: "This is not your duty to inquire about the doctors, you do your duties," said a senior HDCH official.

Due to doctors' absence and negligence, sweepers and the ward boys also do not perform their duty regularly. "As a result, the wards remain in a shabby state," the source said.

While contacted, the principal



The Government Homeopathic Hospital at Mirpur.

admitted the mismanagement in the hospital. He however said the problems arose mainly because 12 doctors are on 3-year education leave.

"They were granted the leave before I joined as principal here," he said.

A considerable number of patients used to receive treatment at the hospital even a year ago but the number has started declining because of doctors' shortage, the principal said.

Twelve of the total 22 doctors and teachers are of allopathic background and so they cannot be assigned to visit the wards, he noted.

The hospital authorities have recently proposed raising the number of seats to 250 from existing 100, although most of the seats remain vacant.

About his alleged negligence in visiting the patients and attending office, the principal said, "This is an administrative post and I have many other administrative jobs outside."

When contacted, Director (Homeo) of the Directorate General of Health Services Dr Mahub Ara Ummeh Zohora (now on leave prior to retire-

ment) admitted the mismanagement in the hospital.

She said shortage of doctors and financial constraints have made the institution inactive.

The director however said they are trying to come out of the problems and a proposal has been made to regularise 30 honorary homeopath doctors who passed from the HDCH and are now teaching at the college without remuneration.

Lack of publicity of the hospital is also a reason, she said, when asked about the admission of very small number of patients that contrasts with a huge number of patients crowding the private homeopath chambers.

So far 45 homeopath doctors among 500 who passed from the HDCH were appointed in the upazila health complexes across the country, Dr Zohora noted.

Director General (Health) Dr Abdur Rahman Khan told this correspondent that the hospital and college began its operation in 1990 with the view to give homeopath treatment service an institutional shape as people have keen interest in it.



The roundabout in front of the High Court building beautified in floral motifs.

## No decision yet to build Tejgaon truck terminal

FAIZUL KHAN TANIM

Relocation of the Tejgaon truck stand near Satrasta, which keeps two major link roads blocked 24 hours a day, has become uncertain as the authorities are yet to decide about a permanent site for parking trucks in the area.

General Secretary of Bangladesh Truck Owners Association M Rustom Ali Khan said the communications ministry has assured them of building a permanent truck terminal behind Masjid Market Complex near the truck stand.

But Communications Minister Nazmul Huda denied that his ministry has given such assurance. "Building a truck terminal in the middle of the city is not a good idea and no decision has yet been taken in

this regard," he told Star City.

Huda said the truck owners association has been given permission to use the place temporarily until a decision is taken.

Every day several hundred trucks come to Karwan Bazar carrying vegetables and other commodities from different parts of the country. After unloading the goods these trucks are parked on the Satrasta-Farmgate link road.

Local residents say the trucks create severe traffic congestion in the area.

Ahmed Mozammel, an official of Dhaka Wasa, said the traffic jam in Karwan Bazar and the roads near Hotel Sonargaon is mainly because of the trucks, which queue up keeping the link road blocked.

"That link road is totally unusable as an alternative

route towards Farmgate," an official of IFIC Bank Karwan Bazar branch said.

The private sector transport bodies operating in the area -- Bangladesh Truck Drivers Union, Bangladesh Truck Owners Association and Transport Owners Association -- however said they have minimised the traffic congestion in the area.

Joint Secretary of Truck Drivers Union Sadekur Rahman said they have taken a number of measures to control traffic in the area. "We the three associations are now working together. We have hired volunteers to control traffic."

He said they have developed two one-way lanes for trucks. "We always keep one side of the road empty so that no traffic jam occurs."

## Private sector's impressive beautification work

SABRINA KARIM MURSHED

Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) has moved to allot medians and parks to the private sector for beautification and maintenance and has so far yielded encouraging results.

Residents are of the opinion that medians and road-islands are looking more colourful with flowers like marigold, cosmos and other green plants. At some places the firms in charge of maintenance have fenced off the medians to protect plants and grass from jaywalkers. Also, the plants are being watered properly and regular cleaning up has been ensured.

"It did not feel like I was Bangladesh when I saw the light posts and green plants beside the roads and blooming flowers

on road-islands while coming from the airport," commented Nasir Ahmed, an expatriate who arrived home on vacation recently.

"Earlier the medians and road-islands were mostly barren and occupied by beggars and hawkers. Now they look eye-soothing and have added to the beauty of the capital," said Tanvir Azim, a student of Dhaka University.

Not only the medians but parks maintained by the private sector also drew appreciation from people. Pantha Kunja Park at Sonargaon crossing has been rescued from illegal occupiers and is now maintained by ARKAY Group. "At least one can now rest a while there if he wishes," commented Hamid, a resident of

Kathal Bagan.

Last October the DCC permitted 81 private organisations to beautify medians, road-islands and few parks in different areas of the city under a four-year contract. It directed them to do the task according to the plan, manual and direction approved by the Dhaka City Beautification Cell of the DCC. The organisations were asked to complete the beautification task by November 15, 2004 which included planting trees also.

The private organisations were allowed to maintain the non-concrete part of the allotted medians and footpaths, medians and islands, until March 31, 2008. The contract is renewable but the firms are not allowed to claim any ownership of the

allotted medians and footpaths.

The DCC also will not allow any billboards, permanent or temporary structures to be established in the allotted spaces. However, the firms responsible can put up three signboards or billboards of their respective organisations according to the specifications approved by the DCC.

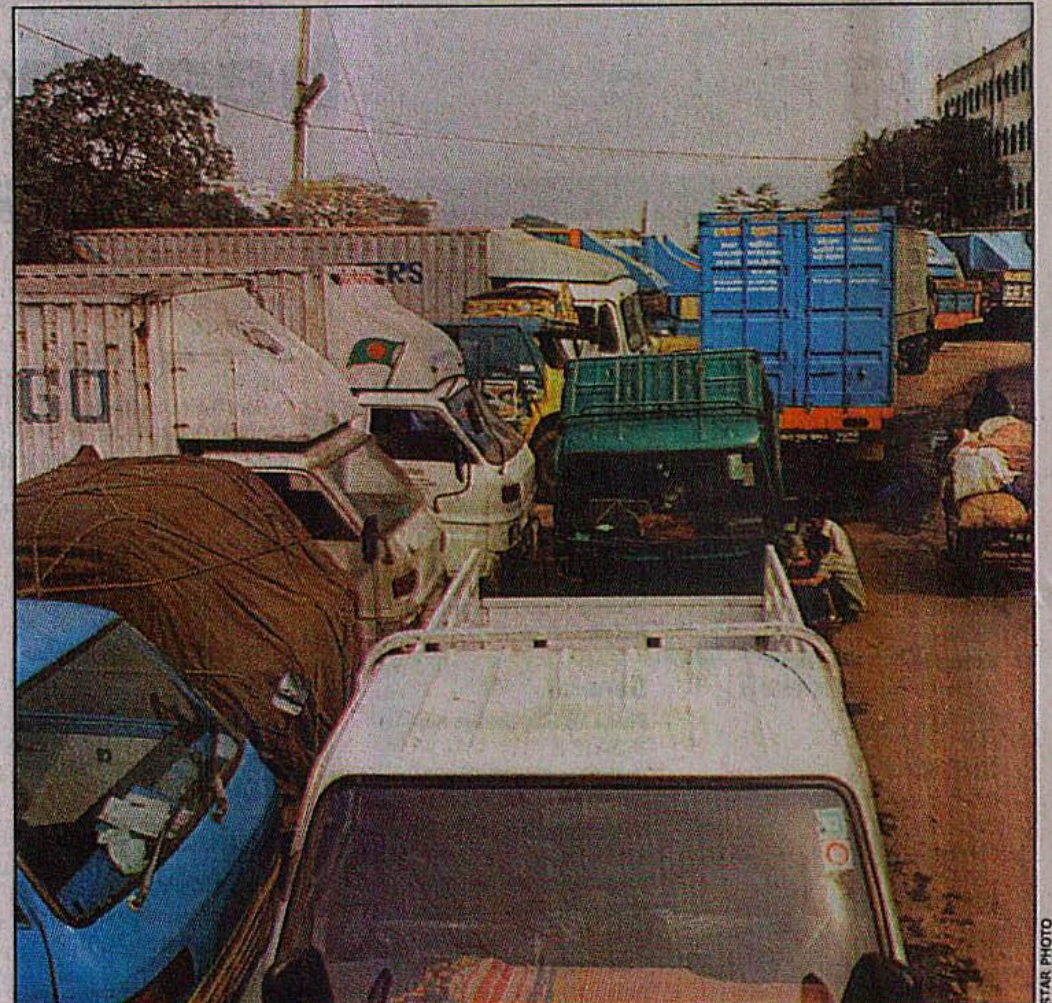
"We have allotted them the spaces for maintenance and beautification but we are strictly monitoring it. If we find any deviation from our contract terms, we will cancel the permission and allot the place to another organisation," said Sohel Farouque, chief conservancy officer of DCC.

"DCC currently faces a shortage of resource and manpower.

Also, its bureaucracy prevents it from development and maintenance activities. We hope the participation of the private sector will provide better maintenance," commented a senior official of DCC.

The private organisations on the other hand find it their corporate and social responsibility to maintain the medians and islands for the people.

"We have tried our best and now it is for the people to decide whether we have succeeded or not," said M. Alam, deputy secretary of Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industries (MCCI). He informed that it cost them Tk 40,000 per month to maintain the median from Bijoy Sarani to Farm Gate.



Trucks stand in all directions obstructing the smooth flow of traffic along Satrasta-Farmgate link road.