

# Illegal diagnostic labs mushrooming

IMRUL HASAN

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Around 450 laboratory and diagnostic centres in the city are operating without the approval from the Directorate General of Health Service (DGHS), say sources.

According to statistics, until May 30 this year 525 laboratories and diagnostic centres have been registered under the DGHS. However, the total number of such medical facilities is believed to be more than a thousand.

"The numbers are increasing rapidly. After May 30, five or six more labs and diagnostic centres have started business without our approval," said Dr. Mahmud Hussain, a senior official of DGHS.

"We run inspections twice a week. We also alert defaulting institutions through the print and electronic media that they should obtain licenses as soon as possible," he added.

An investigation carried out by Star City showed that diagnostic centres such as Auto Path, Unipath, New Diagnostic, Memory Diagnostics, The Diagnostic Lab and some other laboratories lacked basic facilities like pathological labs, doctor's chambers, trained employees and nurses. The environment inside these diagnostic centres also appeared unhy-

gienic and the equipment used was outdated. Very few patients actually turn up at these labs. The pathologists and lab technicians were also not skilled enough to perform critical tests.

When inquired about the trade license, the manager of The Diagnostic Lab said that if they obtain one, then they would have to pay renewal fees and VAT (Value Added Tax) every year. "That is why we have not applied for a license," he said.

"Although there are unauthorised diagnostic labs in residential areas, these are however needed for the sake of residents as the number of government hospitals is not sufficient," said Dr. Md. Moniruzzaman Bhuiyan, president of Bangladesh Clinic and Diagnostic Owners Association.

A section of doctors also refer patients to unauthorised labs for tests. Some diagnostic centres have even employed representatives to persuade doctors into referring people to them in exchange of 'commission' and other benefits. The unsuspecting patients often pay the price for their unconditional faith in certain doctors.

"I have had my blood examined at two diagnostic centres. The two reports are completely different. I am totally confused now," said Ziaul Hasan while

coming out of Memory Diagnostic.

The diagnostic centres also fix their rates according to their wish as there are no rules and regulations from the government.

"We have no fixed rates. The rates are negotiated on the basis of understanding among owners of various centres," admitted owner of a diagnostic lab at Moghbazar.

Many blame the DGHS for not exercising enough control over unauthorised diagnostic centres.

Although rules stipulate regular visits by officials of the directorate for checking whether diagnostic centres have necessary manpower, equipment and devices, no such inspection had taken place in years, claimed a senior official of the DGHS.

However, Md. Abdur Rahman Khan, the director general of DGHS denied the allegation.

"We supervise unregistered centres and ask them to take approval by fulfilling our conditions. We take legal actions if they fail to do so.

"The Health and Family Welfare Ministry and DGHS have begun the gradual process of reforming the health sector including modernising the facilities of diagnostic centres," he said.



Signboards of diagnostic labs in lanes and by-lanes have become a common sight.

# Shilpakala theatre halls limping for lack of manpower



The experimental halls at Shilpakala Academy meant to boost theatre activities are now facing manpower crisis.

CITY CORRESPONDENT

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Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy's two experimental theatre halls in the city may be shut down soon due to lack of manpower.

High officials of the academy said the halls are now temporarily closed for servicing the air-conditioners but other staff said it is due to lack of manpower.

"There is no payment for the staff for the last one year. So most of the staff are leaving," an official said on condition of anonymity.

"The phone lines are disconnected and even the internal PABX system is out of order. Sadly, there is no staff to fix these problems," he said.

Some 27 employees and nine ushers who are working on a daily basis under the National Theatre Stage project have not been paid since July last year.

Many technical staff have stopped coming to the theatre halls. They are leading an inhu-

The establishment ministry last year approved the proposal to bring the 27 employees under revenue budget but the file has been still lying with the finance ministry. The staff of the two halls have given an ultimatum to the authorities that if they do not receive their arrears, they will finally leave by July 30.

man life since they are not paid their wages.

"My family is in deep trouble. I have to shift to a slum as I could not pay my house rent. Now I cannot even manage to feed my family," said a technician.

An usher said, "I have to borrow from friends and relatives. My relatives are offering small amount of money as if I am a beggar."

The establishment ministry last year approved the proposal to bring the 27 employees under reve-

nue budget but the file has been still lying with the finance ministry.

Top officials of Shilpakala Academy and Joint Secretary of Cultural Affairs Ministry Abdur Razzak said now everything depends on the finance ministry.

Meanwhile, the staff of the two halls have given an ultimatum to the authorities that if they do not receive their arrears, they will finally leave by July 30.

Officials said this will cause a huge loss to the Tk 38 crore project as there will be no skilled hand to run the machines and no security officials to guard them.

The rent for the small hall with 350 seats is Tk 3,000 per half shift while that of the big hall having 700 seats is Tk 7,500.

The money that comes from rent goes to the academy fund which otherwise could be shared among the employees who are not getting salaries, said an employee.

## useful telephonenumber

### COURIER SERVICES

**International**  
Air Borne Express- 9561371, 9561372, 9550724  
Air Couriers Intl (BD) Ltd.- 8815970  
Aramex International Courier- 9558003, 9559582, 9565075  
Airspeed Express- 9563494  
Asian Courier Services Ltd.- 8313543  
Baishakhi Courier Service- 9558606  
Bangladesh Express Co. Ltd.- 9565114  
Bangladesh Courier Service- 9563989  
Bengal Express- 9560642, 9552666  
Bangladesh Intl Courier- 953636  
Continental Service Ltd.- 9552948, 9558425  
DHL Worldwide Express- 9881703-7, 9886305-9, 9882057  
Enem Express- 9330699  
Fedex Bangladesh Express Co. Ltd.- 9565114  
Modhuban Courier Service-

9550884  
Overseas Courier Service- 9352431, 8321169  
Pacific Courier- 9568446  
Reliance Express Service- 9558515, 7110249  
Sky International service- 9660442  
Skynet world Wide Express- 9558062, 9560258, 7114787, 7113184  
TNT Express- 9566662, 9558239, 8618155  
Union Courier Service- 9341722  
United Parcel Service Air alliance Ltd- 8826429, 8810223  
**National**  
Asian courier Service Ltd- 8313543  
BAE- 9884851  
Central Courier Service- 9881118  
Confidence Courier Service Ltd. 9567036  
Chisty Courier- 7110177-9,  
Cosmopol Services- 9552793, 9557975  
Dhaka Courier Services- 7236222

Dolphin Courier- 9558802  
Dreamland Courier Service- 9550326, 9566975  
Pioneer Courier Services- 9561727, 9569759  
Probashi Courier Services- 9346359  
Rainbow Express Parcel Services Ltd.- 8322773, 8315703  
Reliance Express Services- 9558515, 7110249  
Sundaban Courier Services- 9551984, 9556189, 9551656  
Sunrise Courier Services- 9568751  
World Runner Express Ltd. 9112068, Fax - 880-2-9112068

### TIPS

Do you know according to Dhaka City Corporation, you must deposit your waste at the collection site between 4pm and 10pm

### LIBRARY & INFO

**Libraries, Cultural and Information Centers**  
**Central Public Library-** 8626001-4,  
**Shishu Academy-** 9564128  
**Shilpakala Academy-** 8614673  
**Bangla Academy-** 8619550  
**Islamic Foundation-** 9550280, 955640  
**The American Centre (IRC)-** 8813440-4, 9886395  
**The Nazrul Institute-** 9114602  
**Ford Foundation-** 8116133  
**Alliance Francaise-** 8611557  
**British Council-** 8618867-8, 8618905-7  
**Community Development Library-** 8113769, 8113604  
**Goethe Institute Int'l- Dhaka-** 9126525-6  
**Indian Information Centre & Cultural Library-** 8850141, 8850142  
**The Russian Cultural Centre-** 9116314, 9118531, 9118314  
**Drik Photo Gallery-** 9120125, 8112954, 8123412

### OUTING

**Museum and Zoo**  
**National Museum-** 8619396-9  
Open: 10 am 5 pm, Friday 3 pm- 8 pm, Thursday closed  
**Muktijuddha Jadughar-** 9559091  
Open: 10:30 am 6:30 pm, Sunday Closed  
**Bangabandhu Smiti Jadughar-** 8110046  
Open: 10 am 5 pm, Wednesday closed  
**Ahsan Manzil**  
Open: 10 am 5 pm, Friday: 3 pm - 7 pm, Thursday Closed  
**Shishu Jadughar-** 9666466  
Open: 10 am- 6 pm, Sunday Closed

### CITY BUS ROUTE

Bus No.	Route	Starts from
1	Gulistan-Shahbagh-Banglamotor-Farmgate-Mirpur 10, 11, 12	Golap Shah Mazar
2	Gulistan-Shahbagh-Banglamotor-Farmgate-Mirpur 1, 2	Phoolbaria bus station
3	Gulistan-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Mahakhali-Airport-Azampur	Phoolbaria bus station
4	Shyampur-Motijheel-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Airport-Tongi	Shyampur
5	Sayedabad-Kamalapur-Motijheel-Airport-Joydebpur-Gazipur	Sayedabad
6A	Kamalapur-Motijheel-Gulistan-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Gulshan 1, 2	Kamalapur
6B	Kamalapur-Motijheel-Gulistan-Maghbazar-Nabisco-Gulshan 1, 2	Kamalapur
6C	Motijheel Shapla chattr- Malibagh- Farmgate- Gulshan 2	Motijheel Shaplachattr
7	Sadarghat-Gulistan-Maghbazar-Nabisco-Gulshan 2	Sadarghat
8	Chittagong-Motijheel-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Asad Gate-Kalyanpur-Gabtoil	Chittagong Road
9	Demra Rani mahal-Motijheel-Kalbagan-Shyamoli-Mirpur 1, 10, 11, 12	Demra Ranimahal
10	Sadarghat-Gulistan-Kakrail-Malibagh-Rampura-Biswa Road-Tongi Bridge	Sadarghat
11	Sayedabad-Motijheel-Fakirapool-Maghbazar-Mohakhali-Tongi Bridge	Sayedabad
11/A	Sayedabad-Khligoan-Malibagh-Rampura-Airport-Tongi Bridge	Syedabad
12	Shanir Akhra-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Asadgate-Mohammadpur	Shanir Akhra
13	Motijheel-Shahbagh-New Market-Jhigatola-Shangkar-Mohammedpur	Motijheel
14	Signboard -Motijheel-Shahbagh-New Market-Shyamoli-Mirpur 1, 12	Signboard (Chittagong Road)
15	Chittagong Road-Motijheel-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Mirpur 12	Chittagong Road
24	Gulistan-Maghbazar-Mohakhali-Airport-Uttara-Bipile	Gulistan