

PAINS IN MITFORD LABOUR WARD-2

Doctors use rusty saucepan, find no sweeper to clean the dirt

DURDANA GHAS

Inadequate number of delivery tables, spotlights and scarce medical equipment are some of the nagging problems faced by the doctors and nurses at the Labour Ward of the Mitford Hospital.

Three delivery tables are crammed in the small delivery room. One of the two spotlights in the room remains out of order most of the time.

"We have two more delivery tables, but we cannot place them in the delivery room because the room is already stuffed. But we need more," said a nurse.

Against the requirement of at least four ventouse machines that are necessary during delivery, the Labour Ward has only one.

"The machine stops working after one or two deliveries. Then we have to fix it to use it again. We are working with this lone machine," the nurse said.

Lack of sterilisation machine is another big problem.

This correspondent found a large rusty and battered saucepan in which surgical instruments were being boiled during a surgery. It was learnt that the ward does not even have any sterilisation machine.

Lower part of the door to the operation theatre is also missing. "We need aluminium door for the operation theatre to keep off flies and keep the area dirt free," said a nurse.

Besides, *ayas* and sweepers



The worn-out delivery room at the Mitford Hospital's Labour Ward, and (below) a battered saucepan used for sterilisation.



Ayas and sweepers in the ward hold the patients hostage and demand money from them for their service, alleged patients

in the ward hold the patients hostage and demand money from them for their service, alleged some patients.

"On my arrival Tuesday evening, I had to give Tk 50 to an *aya* for pushing the trolley. I had to pay another Tk 120 for shaving, although I had done it myself at home. After delivery of my baby at night, I had to give Tk 500 to another *aya* on the excuse that I just had my first baby," said Taslima, a caesarean patient at the postnatal section.

A major problem of the ward is that it is crammed with male visitors regardless of the stipulated visiting hours and what time of the day it is. There is no security guard at the entrance to stop the unauthorised entry of visitors.

Attendants and relatives of the patients often prepare their food in the ward and eat together. They also visit patients at their will, sometimes late at night.

Male attendants were seen inside the room munching on junk foods with their patients.

"Can you tell me what the male visitors are doing in a female ward? They come in anytime of the day and never pay heed to what we say," said a nurse.

"Patients often feel uncomfortable to breastfeed in front of them. They create unwanted crowd and disturbance," said the nurse of the antenatal section.

The only permanent ward boy for the ward died six

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Workers painting outer walls of a high-rise building in Dhanmondi without any safety measures risking their lives. Around two weeks ago a young carpenter died after falling from the second floor of a building at Uttara Sector 5.

Open space, yet not open to all

TAWFIQUE ALI

The authorities of Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha (Rajuk) have been turning a deaf ear to the abuse of a huge playground in Sector 4 of Uttara ever since it was rented out to a commercial amusement park operator.

Uttara Kalyan Samity of Sector 4 rented out the playground to Nepland Fantasy Park more than two months ago, said locals.

Their protests or media reports including the one published in this newspaper in the first week of December failed to make any impact on the authorities and the recreational area for the neighbourhood still remains occupied by the so-called amusement

Playground at Uttara Sector 4 rented out two months ago still remains occupied

park.

A resident of the area said requesting anonymity, "It clearly indicates a secret deal between a section of Rajuk officials and the Kalyan Samity to make money through commercial use of the public space."

Uttara Kalyan Samity is entrusted with the maintenance of the open space, but not authorised to use it commercially. The Samity, however, rented it out to the commercial amusement park operator for

two months in exchange for a "service charge", alleged locals.

The open space has been closed off with makeshift fence, forcing people to pay for the access to the public area or the commercial amusement facility.

Locals are quite outraged by the fact that the renting out of the public playground for commercial purposes is an obvious denial of their right to use it.

Mostafizur Rahman, deputy director (estate) of Rajuk, said

the Rajuk usually does not allow commercial use of parks and playgrounds. "I will discuss the issue with the authorities and see what can be done in this regard," he said.

In the first week of December, M Faruque Jalil, secretary of Rajuk, made similar comments and said they would look into the Kalyan Samity contract with Rajuk.

Around the time, Dr MA Samad, president of the Samity, said according to the contract, Rajuk does not empower the

Samity with any specific authority to allow commercial use of the public park.

"But we take a 'service charge' in exchange for its [the park's] commercial use," Samad said adding that the Samity charges around Tk 1,000 for each sporting event or other events organised by schools, clubs or social organisations.

The money is required for the development and maintenance of the playground, he claimed.

Khondker Neaz Rahman, an urban planner and architect, said such commercial arrangement on a public playground cannot be a substitute for outdoor games or athletic activities for children and youngsters.

Every residential area needs a playground or a park where adults would be able to take a walk and children play to maintain their physical fitness, Rahman said. "The objective of maintaining a playground or a park is to facilitate physical fitness [of the locals]. And junk like this [commercial amusement facility] is not acceptable," he added.

Prof Serajul Islam Choudhury, noted academic and head of advisory committee on parks and playgrounds of Dhaka City Corporation, said using a playground for commercial purposes is an antisocial act and it is a "criminal offence" as well.

The city dwellers are already stricken by severe shortage of open space, he said adding that the abuse of the last remaining playgrounds and open spaces causes irreparable damage to the playgrounds.

"The ones responsible for protecting the open spaces or playgrounds are destroying these in a systematic manner," Prof Choudhury said.

The 'hidden paradise' at BDR headquarters

SHAHNAZ PARVEEN

In the midst of all the hustle and bustle of the capital city, the BDR headquarters compound at Pilkhana stands with its beautiful landscape, gardens full of colourful flowers and a calm and quiet atmosphere.

Though restricted to general public, a recent visit by the Star City correspondent unveils the hidden paradise adorned with emerald green grasses, lakes and patches of trees, a rare scene in the rapidly growing concrete jungle.

There is a wildlife sanctuary, a mini zoo and a botanical garden in the area. The botanical garden has around 737

local species of medicinal plants and fruit trees.

Neatly trimmed green grass and well-maintained spacious garden add an ambience of grandeur to the whole picture. Thousands of roses in full bloom, vibrant in dazzling colours, created an enchanting landscape.

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"Exquisite gardens especially our rose bushes have always been a pride of Bangladesh Rifles," said Major Mahbulul Alam Chowdhury, coordinator of the campus. "The presence of colourful flowers and greeneries rejuvenate the mind of our personnel. They spend their spare time in gardening."

The rose garden at Pilkhana has around 220 species, many of which are no longer found anywhere in the country.

Farah from Basra, Iran, Evangeline Bruce from Eastern Europe, Double-Delight from the Netherlands, King's Ransom and Kiss of Fire from UK are among the few rare species that spread their delicate scent in the garden.

Forty-one gardeners keep the 6-acre garden tidy all the time.

Recent addition to the garden is an orchid cultivation centre with around 47 rare tropical species including

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Uttara playground at Sector 4 still remains occupied with materials used by an amusement park.



A greenhouse set up at the BDR headquarters for rearing rare orchids.