

BAITUL MUKARRAM GATE CLOSURE BNP slams Islamic Foundation chief

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP acting secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday said the Islamic Foundation chief decided to keep shut the north gate of the national mosque Baitul Mukarram on Fridays because he got involved in politics.

He made the accusation at a discussion, "Awami misrule and democracy at stake", organised by Bangladesh Muktiyoddha Gonoparishad at Jatiya Press Club.

Islamic Foundation Director General Shamim Mohammad Afzal announced the decision on Thursday, saying the mosque authorities did not want to be a political weapon of anyone.

The declaration followed the February 22 violence when Jamaat-e-Islami and sympathisers rallied at the north gate after Juma prayers and launched violent activities to protest the anti-war criminal movement at Shahbagh.

Fakhrul also said the law enforcers killed common people like birds in the last two days. The government is doing all this only to hold on to power forever, he said. The BNP leader warned the prime minister, "Stop playing your dangerous game."

Fakhrul also said BNP would not tolerate anything injurious to the sentiment of the country's Muslims.

He said, "The prime minister visited the family of the man [blogger Ahmed Rajib Haidar] who disheartened the Muslim community, but she didn't visit the family of Bishwajit [Das] who was killed by Chhatra League cadres."



Artists of Joyoddhoni Sangskritik Sangathan render songs during the "National Flag Festival 2013" it organised at Suhrawardy Udyan in the capital yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

PROBING GRAFT AT BTCL ACC team faces undue pressure

UNB, Dhaka

The investigation team of the Anti Corruption Commission (ACC), which is tasked with probing into alleged irregularities of state-owned Bangladesh Telecommunications Company Limited (BTCL), is facing problems in their work due to external and internal pressures.

"I've completed a number of crucial investigations in my life, but never felt such pressure as I'm facing now to probe the BTCL's graft," an ACC investigator told the news agency.

He said nearly two dozens senior officials of the anti-graft body are trying to influence the inquiry into the BTCL's graft allegation.

Earlier in the first week of February, the ACC team prepared a report and sent the same to the commission recommending filing of a case against some top officials of the BTCL on charge of misappropriating about Tk 600 crore of public money by erasing international incoming call lists.

But, the commission has not yet given approval to file a case, the ACC official said.

About the report, ACC Commissioner Badiuzzaman said he has not yet seen it, but if the report was submitted to the commission, it will be approved next week.

The four-member inquiry team, led by its deputy director SM Sahidur Rahman, is currently conducting probe into the irregularities of BTCL.

Unlicenced diagnostic centres, hospitals mushroom in Ctg city

UDAY SANKAR DAS, Ctg

An estimated 1,000 unlicenced diagnostic centres and private hospitals have mushroomed in Chittagong, some operating without any trained medical staff, with the authorities lacking power and resources to stop the illegal practice.

In some cases, these institutions are starting operations just after applying with the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) for licence and not waiting for approval.

This practice is a clear violation of the Medical Practice and Private Clinics and Laboratories (Regulation) Ordinance, 1982.

Nearly all the major thoroughfares of Chittagong city are lined with such centres and hospitals and more particularly in areas adjoining Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH).

Their numbers do not match figures of the District Civil Surgeon's office in Chittagong, which states that there are just over 200 diagnostic centres and about 80 private hospitals, approved by the DGHS, in the district.

Minhazur Rahman, general secretary of Chittagong Clinic Owners Association, thinks that the number of such illegal healthcare centres would far exceed 1,000 and tougher action must be taken to bring these under the purview of the law.

Chittagong District Civil Surgeon Dr Md Abu Tayyab told The Daily Star that he knew about the unlicenced diagnostic centres and private hospitals.

He said his office, aided by the district administration and police, forms a mobile court and goes on rounds twice every month.

The illegal institutions are fined and/or asked to close down, he said, adding that a few doctor impersonators have already been fined.

However, some centres and hospitals continue operations after paying fines and in some cases, the "closing down" orders are not obeyed.

Most of these illegal clinics have been often found to be filthy and unhygienic, an environment not at all congenial for medical treatment.

Abdul Jabbar, managing director of one

such clinic, Patient Care Hospital Limited, said, "There are many medical institutions without any valid licence. Our licence application is under process."

The hospital was found to be running without any approval since 2007.

Bashundhara, a diagnostic centre in Panchlaish Residential Area, near CMCH, had not renewed its licence which expired in 2010.

Desh Medical Services on Chatterswari Road, just behind Chittagong Medical College (CMC), has been running for over a decade but has no doctor or medical staff on duty at all times.

Even the manager, who has been working there for eight years, said he was not aware if the clinic was licenced.

Jhunu Probha Shil, a doctor impersonator of City Hospital, a maternity and diagnostic centre situated just opposite CMCH, was fined Tk 1 lakh by a mobile court.

This correspondent recently found her in the hospital. She now claims to be a medical student in a non-government medical college and said the hospital's licence application was under process.

When asked about this widespread malpractice, CMC Principal Dr Selim Mohammed Jahangir said, "This is not only illegal but also unethical and immoral."

He urged the authorities to take stern action against such perpetrators and give exemplary punishment to deter people from carrying out such activities.

The scenario in Chittagong's upazilas is no different.

Dr Tayyab said they recommended four such centres in upazilas to be denied licence for failing to comply with the required standards. But these centres are carrying out their activities, regardless, he added.

No trained medical staff was found in Srishti Hospital and Diagnostic Centre in Anwara upazila. Abdul Halim, identifying himself as a director of the centre, said, "We shall apply for licence."

Dr Tayyab said bringing out mobile courts twice a month was not enough and the resources and manpower at his disposal did not allow him to take stern action against those who are "flagrantly violating the laws".

Road crashes kill 11

METRO DESK

Road accidents killed eleven people and injured eight others in Dhaka, Rajbari, Brahmanbaria and Jhenidah yesterday.

Our staff correspondent reports, three unidentified people were killed and three others injured when a Tongi-bound picnic bus hit a pickup at Nababerbagh in Mirpur Beribandh area of the capital yesterday afternoon.

UNB from Rajbari reports, four motorcyclists were killed as a bus dashed their motorbike near Khankhanapur small bridge in sadar upazila early yesterday.

They were Nazrul, Al-Amin, Saidur and Shafiqul.

Our Brahmanbaria correspondent reports, three people were killed and three

others injured as a bus rammed a CNG-run auto-rickshaw on Comilla-Sylhet highway at Sultanpur bus stand in sadar upazila yesterday noon.

The deceased were auto-rickshaw driver Ershad, 40, passenger Chhuba Mia, 52, and a rickshaw-puller Fayeza Mia, 45. They were hailing from Sultanpur village.

Locals vandalised the bus and blocked the highway for an hour.

In Jhenidah, a motorcyclist was killed and his two co-riders were injured as a human hauler hit their motorbike at Balarampur in Kaliganj upazila yesterday morning.

The deceased was Aatur Rahmn, 30, of Gopalpur in Kaliganj.

Injured Bappi and Shohag were admitted to Kaliganj Upazila Health Complex.



Chittagong City Corporation yesterday took the initiative to wash these sculptures of Bangladesh players, installed in Nimtol ahead of 2011 ICC Cricket World Cup for beautification of the port city, following publication of a photo in The Daily Star on February 27 showing them all discoloured and covered with dirt due to negligence.

PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

MANIKGANJ BAR ASSOC BNP-backed panel sweeps election

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

BNP-backed panel has won nine posts including president, general secretary and assistant general secretary posts in the election to Manikganj Bar Association. Ruling Awami League-backed panel has won six posts in the election.

The election's Chief Election Commissioner Herzazur Rahman Khan Baku declared the result yesterday.

On Thursday, the election was held at the association's auditorium.

From BNP backed panel, Aatur Rahman Bhuyan Farid was elected president; Jasim Uddin was elected general secretary; Mohiuddin Ahmed Bulbul was elected assistant general secretary; Md Yunus Ali Sikdar was elected finance secretary; Mohammad Mohiuddin Swapan was elected library secretary; and Mohammad Masudul Haque Masud was elected sports secretary.

From Awami League backed panel, Md Afsarul Islam Moni was elected vice president; and Md Aminul Haque Akbar was elected literature and cultural secretary.

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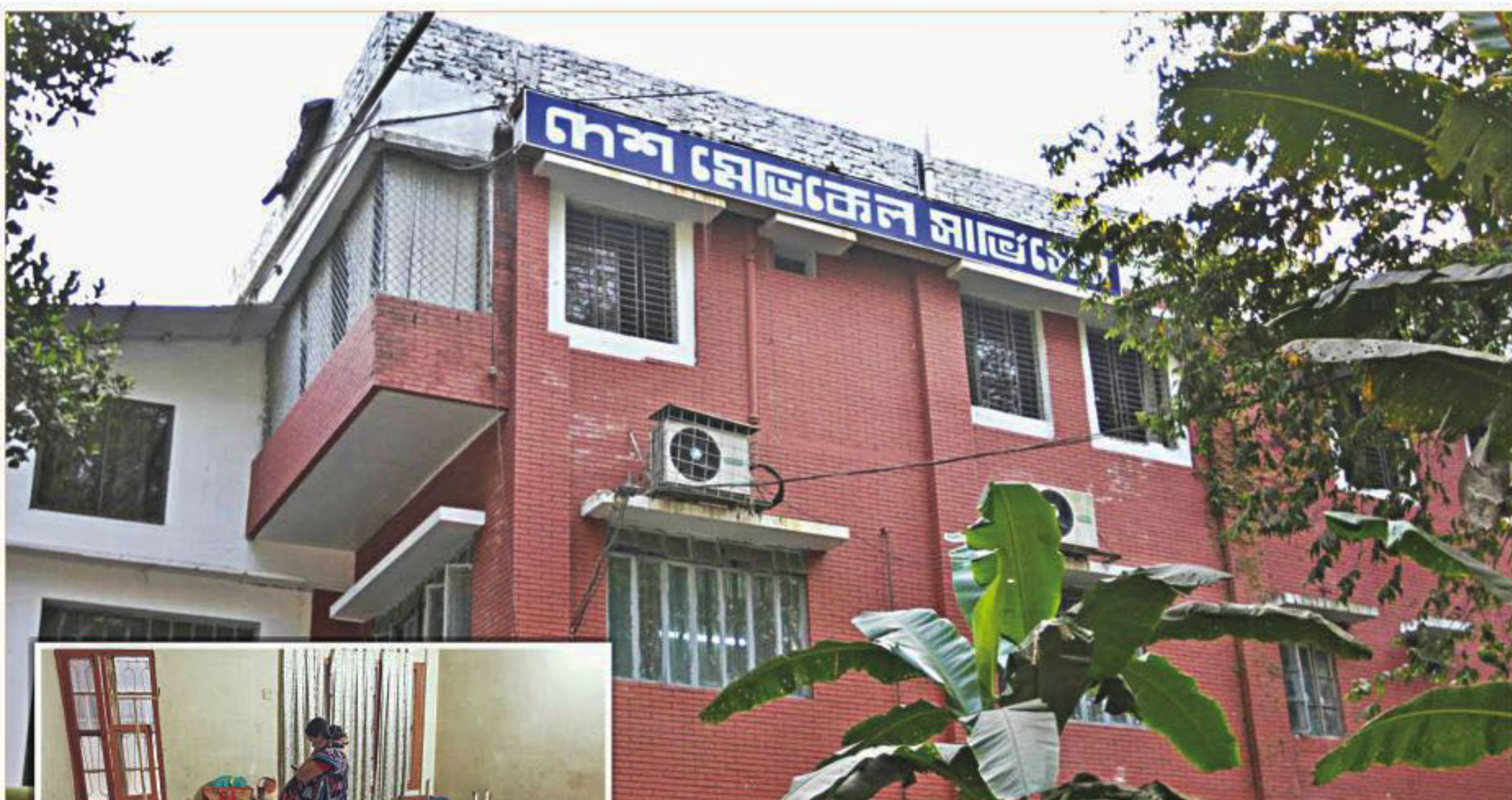


PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

Unlicenced diagnostic centres and private hospitals have mushroomed in Chittagong. The photo shows Desh Medical Services on Chatterswari Road in Chittagong city whose manager could not say whether it had any licence. *Inset*, four beds cramped in one room of City Hospital at Probortok Mor which is running without any licence.

