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DMCH limps

Patients suffer as one CT scan machine out of order for 10 months, another for 9 days; MRI machine shut for one month

SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Two CT scanners of Dhaka Medical College Hospital are out of order, causing serious disruption to patient services.

One of the machines broke down about 10 months ago and the other nine days back.

Besides, the hospital's lone MRI scanner has been inoperative since November 10, said DMCH sources.

Patients admitted to the country's largest hospital were counting extra costs to undergo CT and MRI scans at other medical facilities in the city. The delay in diagnosis was putting patients' lives at risk.

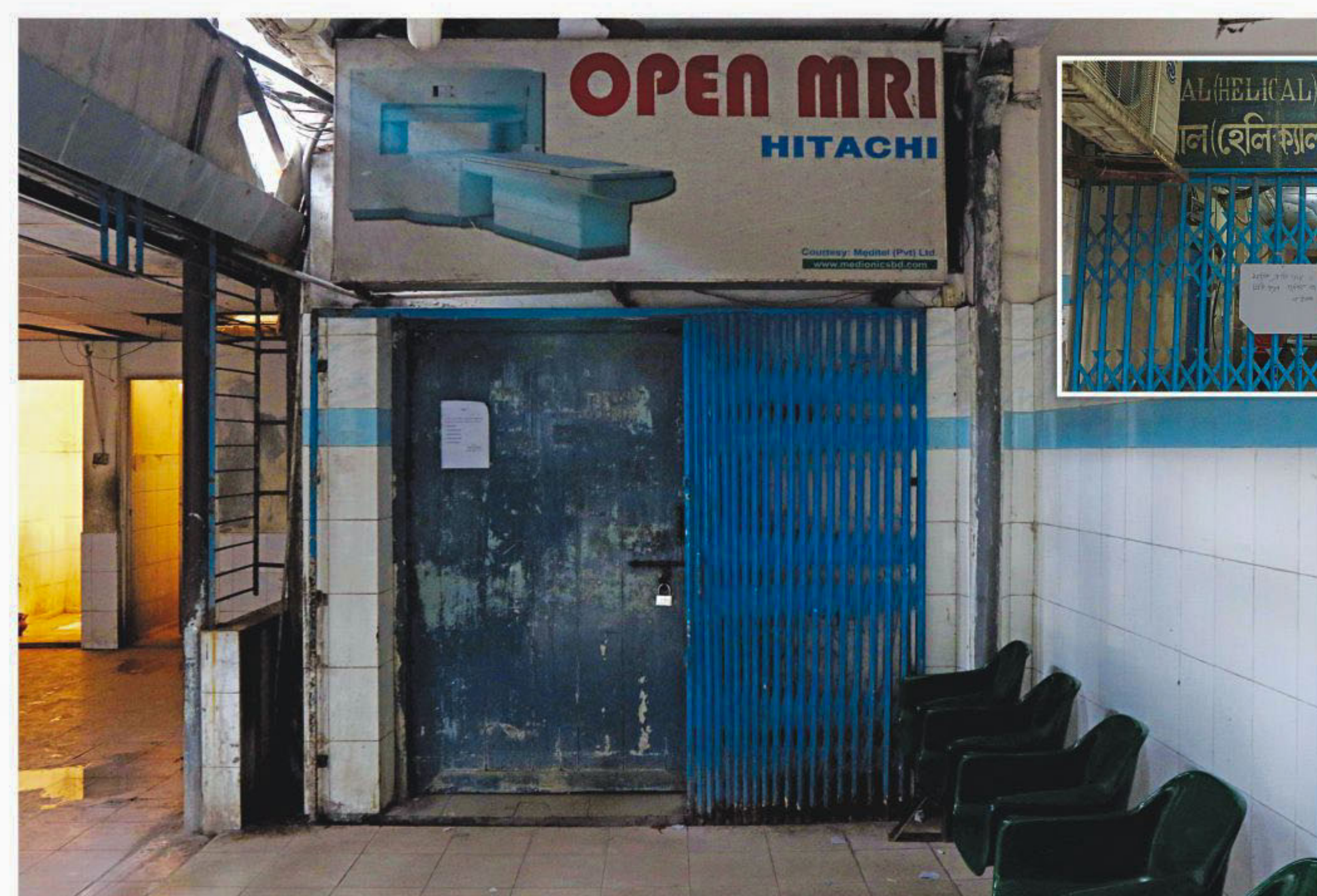
Take the case of Ratan Mallick. The 26-year-old patient from Sonargaon of Narayanganj was admitted to the hospital about 10 days ago with head injury.

On Monday, doctors at the hospital's neurosurgery ward advised a CT scan of Ratan's head. But his relatives found the Radiology and Imaging Department closed as the CT and MRI scanners were out of order.

"We took him to a private diagnostic centre in Dhanmondi. As we had to negotiate a heavy traffic, his condition deteriorated. On our way back, he fell unconscious," Ratan's brother-in-law Omar Chand Biswas told The Daily Star.

The test and the travel cost the patient Tk 4,000, double the expenses at the DMCH.

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Two CT scanners and the lone MRI scanner of Dhaka Medical College Hospital have gone out of order, causing suffering to patients almost regularly. Inset, a notice on the collapsible gate of the CT Scan Unit says that the unit is closed for unavoidable circumstances.

PHOTO: STAR



Mother Teresa on way to sainthood

BBC ONLINE

Pope Francis has recognised a second miracle attributed to Mother Teresa, clearing the way for the Roman Catholic nun to be made a saint next year.

The miracle involved the healing of a Brazilian man with several brain tumours in 2008, the Vatican said.

Mother Teresa died in 1997 and was beatified - the first step towards sainthood - in 2003.

She won the Nobel Peace Prize for her work

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Refugees 60m

Worried UN says forced displacement record hits new high in 2015

AFP, Geneva

The number of people who have been forced to flee war, violence and persecution looks set to soar in 2015 past last year's record of nearly 60 million, the UN said yesterday.

The UN refugee agency released a report showing rocketing numbers of people living as refugees, asylum seekers or displaced within their countries during the first half of the year, and indicated that the full-year figures would be devastating.

"With almost a million people having crossed the Mediterranean as refugees and migrants so far this year, and conflicts in Syria and elsewhere continuing to generate staggering levels of human suffering, 2015 is likely to exceed all previous records for global forced displacement," UNHCR said.

Last year, the number of displaced soared to a record 59.5 million worldwide, and yesterday's report indicated that this year the figure "has far surpassed 60 million".

That basically means that one in every 122 people on the planet is today someone who has been forced to flee their home, the agency said.

"Forced displacement is now profoundly affecting our times," UN refugee chief Antonio Guterres said in a statement.

"Never has there been a greater need for tolerance, compassion and solidarity with people who have lost everything."

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MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS 2015

219 mayor aspirants face criminal cases

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 219 out of 904 mayoral candidates in the municipality polls are accused in different criminal cases, a civil society platform has claimed.

Of the accused, 33 have been nominated by the ruling Awami League and 96 by the BNP.

The rest are contesting the polls either independently or with support from the smaller political parties, Sushashoner Jonno Nagorik (Sujan), literally meaning citizens for good governance, said at a press conference at the Dhaka Reporters' Unity auditorium yesterday.

At the programme, it published a report on the background information of the mayoral candidates participating in the December 30 municipal elections, to be held on the party lines for the first time.

The report says 36 mayoral aspirants, including seven from the AL camp and 15 from the BNP, have murder cases filed against them.

The Sujan claimed its findings were based on the affidavits of 904 mayoral candidates in 232 municipalities.

According to the Election Commission, a total of 921 aspirants are contesting for the mayoral posts in 234 municipalities.

The Sujan said it could not collect information of 17 contenders due to time constraint and "incomplete information"

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	EDUCATION		BUSINESSMEN
	SCHOOL DROPOUTS	MASTERS	
AL (221)	40	90	165
BNP (206)	40	83	162

SOURCE: SUJAN

Smog red alert

Beijing issues warning for second time

BBC ONLINE

Beijing has issued a second pollution red alert, little more than a week after the first ever such warning.

The Chinese capital will see hazardous smog from today until Tuesday, the official meteorological service said.

Nationwide, a vast area from Xian in central China to Harbin in the north-east would also be badly hit, the National Meteorological Centre said.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4



Yousuf Mia, an employee of Panchashar Union Parishad in Munshiganj, is lending books to kids from a mobile library yesterday. Introduced by the local district administration, this unique initiative has been extended to 69 unions with the aim of building a drug-free society and preventing child marriage.

PHOTO: STAR

Mobile library for kids

Munshiganj Union Parishad takes books to homes

FARHANA MIRZA

It was around 3:30pm yesterday.

Yousuf Ali stopped his rickshaw-van by a narrow muddy road in Malirpathor village of Munshiganj, and rang the bell.

Immediately, kids rushed to the place from wherever they were, encircling the van, as if they were under its magic spell.

The van, full of books, is a mobile library, which takes them into a world yet to be seen and known.

Excited, they asked for books of their choice to read and borrow, and Yousuf was happy to oblige.

Some children became so absorbed in reading that they hardly noticed The Daily Star correspondent who was standing nearby, taking their photographs.

"It's a pleasure to carry books for these kids" said Yousuf, a night guard at the village. He has been employed by the authorities of Panchashar Union Parishad to run the van, in addition to his regular duties.

UP Secretary Rezaul Karim Tuhin, who is supervising the library, said the van cost the UIP Tk 38,000 and the books Tk 55,000.

He said the local district administration "has decided to introduce such mobile libraries in all the 69 unions to encourage children to read."

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PUBLIC UNIVERSITY Now alternative for teachers

Govt okays change in pay scale

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

Public university professors under an alternative system would get salaries of grades 1 and 2 of the new pay scale, subject to approval by the University Grants Commission.

They would also be entitled to a special grade on a par with that of the senior secretaries. Teachers of the status of national professor would only be eligible for the special grade.

The new system would replace the selection grade and time scale. The finance ministry on Tuesday sent a letter to the education secretary to implement the decisions. The gazette of the new pay scale was also published that day.

The cabinet approved the eighth National Pay Scale on September 7, but the university teachers went on a movement protesting abolishment of selection grade and time scale and their status on the pay scale.

The cabinet committee on elimination of salary discrimination made some recommendations in this regard. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina later approved the recommendations.

The finance ministry's letter said professors can get salaries of grades 1 and 2, but the number of teachers in grade-1 would not be more than 25 percent of those in grade-2 at a time.

As the issue of providing grade-1 and grade-2 salary to the professors is related to financial matters of the government, public university authorities would implement it with prior approval from a committee led by the UGC chairman, added the letter.

Under the previous pay scale, university professors got salaries of grade-3, but a portion of them used to be elevated to grades 2 and 1 with the entitlement of time scale and selection grade.

Talking to The Daily Star, a finance ministry official said although the selection grade and time scale have been cancelled, all the privileges of the university teachers would be kept in place in the new system upon approval by the UGC.

Some 100 officials are now serving as secretary and around 12 as senior secretary. About six to seven professors might have the special grade, the official mentioned.

There are over 13,000 teachers at 37 public universities in the country. Of them, around 3,250 are professors.

The letter also said professors of public colleges currently draw salaries of grade-4 under the pay scale of 2009. Around half of them are elevated to grade-3 through selection grade.

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Myanmarese living in Bangladesh total 2 lakh

UNHCR report says

UNB, Dhaka

Two lakh Myanmar people are living in Bangladesh in a "refugee-like situation", says a new UNHCR report released yesterday.

The government of Bangladesh, however, estimates the population to be between 300,000 and 500,000, said the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the UN refugee agency, in its Mid-Year Trends 2015 report.

The report also mentioned that the number of refugees in Bangladesh is now 32,975 who are assisted by the UNHCR.

It also mentioned that there are 11 "pending cases"

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SIBL
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PRAYER TIMING
DECEMBER 19
Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 5-20 12-45 3-45 5-22 7-00
JAMAAT 5-55 1-15 4-00 5-25 7-30
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION