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COVID TREATMENT Cost 12 times higher at pvt hospitals

Says TIB study, contradicts with minister's statement on inoculation expenditure

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Covid-19 treatment cost was more than 12 times higher in private hospitals than that of public healthcare facilities, reveals a study conducted by the Transparency International Bangladesh.

This huge medical costs in private hospitals have put a financial burden on patients, it said.

Meanwhile, the study said costs for the Covid vaccination programme were Tk 12,993-16,721 crore, which is less than half of the claim of Health Minister Zahid Maleque.

The minister recently said the costs were around Tk 40,000 crore.

The average cost (bed, medicine, ICU, oxygen, and other expenditures) was Tk 35,938 in public hospitals, while it was Tk 4,58,537 in private hospitals, according to the study report shared in a webinar yesterday.

Last year, a similar study, done by the health ministry's Health Economics Unit, disclosed that the higher treatment cost in private hospitals was mainly due to not following the national treatment protocol.

Under the TIB study titled "Governance Challenges in Tackling Covid-19 Crisis: Inclusion and Transparency", researchers also explored the government's success and shortcomings

in Covid-19 testing, vaccination campaign and the effectiveness of the financial incentive packages.

Between August 2021 and March 2022, they collected the data for the study through client experience survey in 45 districts, vaccine recipient exit poll survey in 43 districts, entrepreneur survey over phone with 425 entrepreneurs, observation in 105 vaccination centres, and interview.

The study shows that 22 percent patients faced multifaceted problems while undergoing treatment in public and private hospitals.

According to the study report, delayed services due to inadequate medical support caused the deaths of 7.8 percent patients and increased complications for 11.6 percent patients.

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The century-old Neelam Ghar on the Court Street in Old Dhaka is recognised by conservationists as a rare feat of masonry. The property has been leased out to Dhaka Bar Association by the deputy commissioner's office. The association is now planning to construct a multi-storey building named Bangabandhu Bhaban by demolishing this structure.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

NEELAM GHAR OF OLD DHAKA

Grandeur to be replaced by mere building

HELEMUL ALAM

A century-old building in Old Dhaka, known as the Neelam Ghar, will be knocked down and lost like many other historical structures of the city.

Dhaka Bar Association got the property on lease and decided to violate the agreement and build a 20-storey building in place of the two-storey one.

The two-storey building on Court House Street holds immense architectural value, conservationists say. Built during the British era, the structure was used by the British and Pakistani rulers to auction off confiscated objects. Hence the name Neelam Ghar.

The Deputy Commissioner's Office of Dhaka, which is the custodian of the 15 decimals of land, leased it out to the bar association on February 15 for just a year.

The association laid an engraved foundation stone mentioning Bangabandhu Bhaban at the site on March 7. Dhaka South City Corporation mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh inaugurated it.

According to the lease documents, the lessee shall neither build anything new nor change, modify and repair the existing structure. Selling, handing over, and mortgaging the property are also prohibited.

Taimur Islam, chief executive of conservation organisation Urban Study Group, said the initiative is also a violation of a 2017 High Court directive that ordered the authorities to stop changing, modifying and

"Losing such a beautiful piece of architecture will be a real shame for all of us."

demolishing 2,200 British-era buildings named in the group's list of heritage sites in Old Dhaka.

Neelam Ghar is one of those buildings, he added.

"Losing such a beautiful piece of architecture will be a real shame for all of us," he said.

It is an example of Indo-Saracenic architecture, with clear neoclassical influences, he

said. The two-storey rectangular building has a courtyard and is finished with lime plaster with motifs and decorative elements crafted by hand lime mortar, a hallmark of the incomparable skills of the masons from Dhaka.

"Neelam Ghar most certainly is one of the best examples of lime mortar finish," he said.

The deputy commissioner's office earlier leased out different portions of the building to 12 individuals who maintain that they have been living there for up to five decades.

Many of them have already vacated the property. One of them said the DC office stopped taking their lease fee in 2019 and didn't renew their lease.

Contacted, Deputy Commissioner Shahidul Islam said there was nothing called Neelam Ghar in government records. "We leased out a vested property as its custodian."

An official of the DC office said the bar association will not be able to make any changes to the structure.

"They will need to take permission from the DC office to

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

NY SUBWAY SHOOTING

Suspect on the run after injuring 13

AFP, Brooklyn

At least 13 people were injured during a rush-hour shooting at a subway station in the New York borough of Brooklyn yesterday, where authorities said "several undetonated devices" were recovered amid chaotic scenes.

Ambulances lined the street outside the 36th Street subway station, where a New York Police spokeswoman told AFP officers responded to a 911 call of a person shot at 8:27 am (1227 GMT).

Unverified video footage posted on Instagram appeared to show passengers tending to bloodied victims lying on a smoke-filled station platform.

The images showed subway staff herding panicked passengers, some still clutching their morning coffee cups, off the platform and into the carriages of a stationary train. A sign saying 36th Street can be seen in the background.

An unidentified person can be heard saying that a fire had been set in the train car, and that he saw "at least eight people" shot.

According to NBC, citing NYPD and senior law enforcement officials, a man in a gas mask and orange construction vest may have tossed a smoke canister on the platform to distract the rush hour crowd.

The suspect was still at large, according to Manhattan borough president Mark Levine.

The city's fire department gave a toll of "13 injuries at this time," while ABC News quoted police sources as saying at least five people were

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4



The staffers of Water Development Board dropping sandbags in the Kangsha river to fix the Dubai dyke in Sunamganj's Dharmapasha upazila that gave way to flooding. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

Probe body visits four haors

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Sylhet

A probe body formed by the Ministry of Water Resources yesterday visited four haors in Sunamganj where farmers suffered crop losses due to early flash flood.

Following allegations of corruption, negligence and anomalies, the ministry on Monday formed the six-member probe body led by its Additional Secretary Syeda Salma Jafrin to look into possible anomalies in building and maintaining levees.

Other members of the body are Sylhet's Additional Divisional Commissioner Debojit Sinha, Bangladesh Water Development Board

SEE PAGE 7 COL 6

Youth arrested for 'hurting religious feeling'

Mob destroys his house, vandalises Hindu temple

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A youth has been arrested in Bagerhat for "hurting religious sentiment" hours after an unruly mob destroyed his house and vandalised a nearby Hindu temple.

Police filed a case against the 20-year-old man, Kaushik Biswas, saying he "hurt religious sentiment" by posting content on Facebook from a fake ID named "Jehadi Toshonkari".

The cops also filed a case over vandalism and arrested 17 people.

Contacted, Inspector SM Ashraful Alam, chief coordinator of Bagerhat police's media cell, said the man works as a craftsman in India, where he has been residing for three years. He returned to his village home in Morrelganj upazila a week ago. The Facebook posts were made during his stay in India.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4