



CARDIAC IMPLANTS FOR CHILDREN

Top hospitals using unauthorised devices

Experts raise alarm over patient safety

MOUDUD AHMED SUJAN

Unauthorised companies are smuggling a number of cardiac medical devices into the country and selling those to some of Dhaka's top public and private hospitals without proper vetting, raising questions about health regulations and patient safety.

Over the last one and a half years, these unauthorised devices were used to treat children with congenital heart defects at the government-run National Institute of Cardiovascular Disease and Hospital (NICVD) and National Heart Foundation Hospital as well as private hospital Labaid in the capital, documents show.

Hospital sources and business insiders say a significant number of cardiac medical devices for children is in fact supplied illegally at different hospitals across the country.

Some of these devices are marketed without the permission of the drug regulatory body, the Directorate General of Drug Administration, the documents show, exposing regulatory flaws in medical

device business.

Experts say unregulated medical devices may jeopardise patient safety and raise concerns about the efficacy and safety of cardiac treatments.

"It is highly likely that unauthorised cardiac products will be of poor quality. They may cause serious harm to patients," said Dr Chowdhury Meskat, a professor of cardiology at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University.

A RAID ON HEARTON

On March 31, the Directorate General of Drug Administration raided the office of Hearton Bangladesh, a medical equipment supplier, in Mirpur and seized devices that are used to treat congenital heart defects among children. The seized cardiac devices were worth Tk 27 lakh.

According to the Registration Guidelines for Medical Device, marketing these devices requires a Maximum Retail Price (MRP) certificate from the DGDA. Hearton Bangladesh did not have the certificate.

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Over the years, structures have been built razing hills in many areas of Chattogram city. The same has happened in Bayazid area where the Nagin Pahar has been cut to make room for buildings. This has caused serious damage to the environment and also exposed the locals to landslides. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

KHALEDA'S TREATMENT ABROAD

Family waiting for govt nod

'Contacted several hospitals in Germany, UK'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia's family members are waiting for the government permission to take her abroad for better treatment, according to sources.

Her brother Shamim Iskandar on September 25 wrote to the home ministry seeking permission to take the former prime minister abroad for treatment.

Khaleda has been admitted to the capital's Evercare Hospital since August 9. As her condition deteriorated yesterday, she was taken to the CCU from her cabin and then she was taken back to the cabin.

Her family members have contacted several hospitals in Germany and the UK, sources said.

"Everything depends on the government decision. We are making preparations so that if we get the permission we won't spend more time communicating with hospitals," said a family member, wishing not to be named.

Law Minister Anisul Huq on Thursday said, "An application has recently been submitted to the home

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COMBATING AIR POLLUTION

\$2.3b int'l fund fails to improve situation

Global report says Bangladesh 3rd top recipient of funds; air quality remains hazardous half a year

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

The air quality in Bangladesh remains toxic nearly half the year even after the country received a whopping \$2.3 billion to curb air pollution.

Bangladesh received the fund in several phases between 2017 and 2021 to curb air pollution, becoming the third top recipient of international funds after China and the Philippines for clean air projects, says a global study.

The study titled "The State of Global Air Quality Funding 2023" has been conducted by Clean Air Fund (CAF), a UK-based global, philanthropic organisation working with governments, funders, business and campaigners to create a future where everyone breathes clean air.

"It's encouraging to see that \$2.3 billion of outdoor air quality funding has been

channelled to Bangladesh between 2017-21. However, that does not match the level of air pollution to be addressed or the harm it inflicts," Clean Air Fund CEO Jane Burston told The Daily Star recently.

Outdoor air pollution, which was the focus of the Clean Air Fund report, caused 240,000 deaths in Bangladesh and 4.2 million premature deaths in 2019, according to WHO.

On top of that, this air quality funding is far outweighed by the \$6.4 billion that went to air-polluting and fossil fuel-prolonging projects in Bangladesh during this same period, he noted.

"We need to ensure that international development funders and policymakers put more and better funding into air quality, otherwise our interventions will not keep pace with increases in air pollution and continued fossil fuel funding," he added.

Outdoor air pollution, which was the focus of the Clean Air Fund report, caused 240,000 deaths in Bangladesh and 4.2 million premature deaths in 2019, according

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“Anyone involved in illegally importing or marketing these devices should be brought to book. And that's where the drug administration has a role to play.”

Prof Dr Rashid-E-Mahbub, chairman of Bangladesh Health Rights Movement

“It is highly likely that unauthorised cardiac products will be of poor quality. Those may cause serious harm to the patients.”

Dr Chowdhury Meskat, professor of cardiology at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University

Around one third of unauthorised devices are supplied illegally at different hospitals in the country, say business insiders.

Supply chain of these devices involves some companies, marketing professionals and doctors.

Marketing of these devices without necessary permission from the drug administration raises concerns about their safety and efficacy.

Procurement of such devices points to regulatory flaws.



Small boats ferrying passengers across the Buriganga, putting people's lives at risk as they might get hit by cargo vessels passing by. There had been several incidents of large vessels hitting small boats in the river, resulting in deaths. The photo was taken in Babubazar of Old Dhaka yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

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