



Islanders gathering around for a routine medical check up.

ever since. The initial cost to set up the project was Tk 8 million. An additional amount of Tk 2 million was spent for a dental unit in 2004. Unilever Bangladesh Limited bears almost all the operating expenses of the hospital, which comes to about Taka 8 to 9 million a year.

"The co-sponsors for secondary care in this project are Emirates Airlines, MAF and Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel, flying the doctors in and out of the country, within the country and keeping them for a day or two respectively, before they move on to the chars," explains Runa.

"In our satellite programmes, we bring in professionals for health and rural social education, provide paramedical cares, give special treatment for mother and child health, family

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planning and pregnancy hazards, child nutrition and identify needs for secondary care interventions and many other issues," she says. "For a satellite programme, we don't need a permanent building or anything of the sort," she explains. "We simply gather people under a shade or a village house or build a makeshift platform and educate the islanders on the basic health issues. We also run 10 schools for the children on 10 chars, in prefabricated buildings, for which we have trained local island based teachers."

According to Runa, the floating hospital stays for about one to two and a half months on one island, before moving on to the other islands in the area, depending upon the weather conditions. "During heavy