

SAVE DHAKA Healthcare Clinics, labs mushrooming

By Reaz Ahmad and Manirul Islam Khan

In the absence of proper implementation of the government policy, business on medicare service is booming in the city but the standard of service is not improving. In the recent period, Dhaka has seen mushrooming of private clinics and pathological laboratories, operating virtually under no guidelines. Only a very small section of the people of this city of 89 lakh can afford the service of these clinics while the overwhelming majority has to depend on the health service rendered by the government hospitals. There are some common allegations against the private clinics and pathological laboratories and these are — exorbitant service charges, non-professionalism, employing government doctors, doing business without registration and becoming business-oriented instead of being service-oriented. A Health Directorate source said that charges for different services had been fixed in The Medical Practice, Private Clinics and Laboratories Regulation Ordinance of 1982 but none followed that as the rates no more matched the present market value. He, however, said that a new set of regulations fixing the charges was

drafted some five months back. The draft was returned to the directorate last month by the Health Ministry for some necessary tailorings. Dr Md Maniruzzaman Bhuiyan, general secretary of the Bangladesh Private Clinics Association (BPCA), told The Daily Star there is no consistency in charges for various services rendered by different clinics. He said there are some 300 private clinics in the city, of which half have no registration and lack necessary equipment. When approached, a high official of the Health Directorate said that they were handicapped by lack of manpower and vehicles for which routine surveillance on the functioning of clinics was not being possible. He, however, said steps would be taken against unregistered health centres. Dr Quazi Shahidul Alam, secretary general of the Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA), said a pro-people health policy and appropriate policy for private clinics are two prerequisites for improving health care in the private sector. Dr Badiuzzaman Bhuiyan, a member of the Bangladesh Private Medical Practitioners Association (BPMPA), said that to ensure health for all by the year 2000, more doctors



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia visited the flood-affected areas of Sariakandi thana in Bogra district yesterday. — PID photo

Diploma engns asked to help attain development

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday said her government would be able to steer the country to its cherished destination in next five years if all quarters continued their cooperation, reports UNB. Speaking at the 10th national convention of the Institute of Diploma Engineers, Bangladesh, she said the challenge of the coming century is the challenge of developing technology to live through a tough competition. "We will have to step forward through competition in the 21st century in all sectors — science and technology, merit and skill, production and marketing." The Prime Minister urged the diploma engineers to help attain speedy development by putting in their merit and initiative, labour and innovative power. Praising the convention's theme — "Water is for Life and Development" — as timely, Begum Zia said Bangladesh is now a victim of flood and desertification because of construction of dams withdrawing waters from the upstream of major rivers. She said the government had initiated all-out steps to mobilise public opinion at home and abroad for a remedy. The Prime Minister stressed the need for technical education alongside the general education. Since assuming power, she said, the BNP government has attached importance to education sector, increasing the literacy rate by more than 10 per cent. Referring to problems of diploma engineers, Begum Zia said the government was aware of their profes-

Dhaka condemns Serb aggression

Bangladesh yesterday unequivocally condemned the latest Bosnian Serb aggression in Srebrenica, reports BSS. It sets back all efforts made so far by the international community to achieve the cessation of hostilities and raises new apprehensions of grave consequences in Bosnia, a Foreign Office press release said. Bangladesh cannot but view with contempt the attitude of the Bosnian Serbs to continue to defy the United Nations and to flout every initiative of the international community to bring peace to that country, said the press release adding "the latest aggression once again demonstrates that even UN-protected safe havens are now high in the Bosnian Serbs' list of targets in Bosnia." Bangladesh feels that the new challenge clearly demands firm, resolute and bold action by the international community. "Why is needed is a substantially re-enforced UNPROFOR, both in terms of mandate and equipment," the press release said and added "the United Nations must not permit its authority to be flouted: Nor can it afford to permit the aggression committed by the Bosnian Serbs to go unchallenged." Dhaka feels that the very credibility of the United Nations has been called into question and said the rapid reaction force must be made operational without further delay. "The international community, in particular the permanent members of the Security Council, must take firm steps to ensure the security of the safe havens and that of the supply routes for humanitarian assistance, as an immediate step in Bosnia," the press release said.

PM returns

The educational institutions in Chandanbaisha were badly damaged by the flood. The Prime Minister distributed some relief materials among the distressed people. Earlier, Begum Zia addressed a spontaneous gathering of flood victims at Goshairi Hat in Dhunat thana. She distributed sares and lungis among the people at Bhandarbari Ghat.

Husband dead in KSA untraced

Alaya Begum is still unsure whether she could see the face of her husband, an immigrant worker in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia who died there of a heart attack about a month ago. Alaya Begum along with her teenage eldest son, Babu, a first division footballer by profession in Dhaka, has been frantically trying to bring the body of their beloved one from the kingdom. "We have done everything possible to bring our father's body," said Babu, "but till now we do not know anything because all our faxes, letters, calls, went unanswered." Alaya with her five children is now passing her days in total uncertainty and mental agony. Her husband had gone to the kingdom as a driver with legal work permit only a year ago. On June 15, Alaya Begum, mother of five from Shankar, West Dhanmondi, received the dreadful news she never wanted to hear. Her husband Kazi Badul Alam, about 45, an immigrant driver in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, had just died of a heart attack. A colleague of Badul, an employee of Al-Falah Rent-a-Car and Taxi in Dammam, Saudi Arabia telephoned the family and said that Badul had died of a heart attack at a local hospital. Since then, the family has sent several faxes to the employer to arrange for the repatriation of the body. The Bangladesh Embassy at Riyadh was also notified by a letter about fifteen days back. The Saudi Arabian embassy in Dhaka was sent a letter in which Alaya appealed to the ambassador to intervene. But all their effort to bring back the body was in vain. When contacted an official of the Saudi embassy said that the matter should be dealt by the Bangladesh Embassy in Riyadh. "We have nothing to do," he said. An official of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Dhaka said that with around a million Bangladeshis working in the kingdom this kind of delay in repatriating bodies has become frequent. She cited a recent incident where relatives had to wait for nearly two months to receive the body of their deceased father. "This is firstly due to tracing the body," she added. "Sometime the relatives come up with wrong information and this misleads the investigative officer there." Secondly, she said that a lot of bureaucratic tangle delays the procedure of repatriation. An official of the Manpower Directorate alleged that very often the employers, in a bid to avoid the repatriation and compensation costs keep silent about the death. "We have even experienced people being buried there without the consent of the relatives," he said. Meanwhile, Alaya Begum and her children wait to see their beloved husband and father for the last time.



A veiled Muslim woman sporting black gloves casts her vote Tuesday in Zarka, some 25 km north east of Amman, during the first general municipal elections in the history of modern Jordan. Fundamentalists suffered a major setback in the polls winning only eight out of 257 municipalities whereas pro-government candidates made a strong showing, giving a boost to Jordan's peace deal with Israel. — AFP/UNB photo

Court told during hearing of writ Constitution can't be rewritten for Rouf

The constitution cannot be rewritten to accommodate Justice Md Abdur Rouf in the Appellate Division, Barrister Anirul Islam told the court yesterday, reports UNB. "If the court say that judges' offices are not in the service of the Republic, we will have to rewrite the Constitution," he said while making his submission on the writ challenging under what authority Justice Rouf is holding the office of a judge in the Appellate Division. He argued that if the concept of government is defined in a narrow sense to accommodate Justice Rouf "we are just turning down the Constitution and destroying the separation of judiciary." "The Constitution can be accepted if it comforts me, but if it pinches me I will also pinch the Constitution," he said referring to the argument of the defence lawyers. Justice Rouf is a defacto judge and the Article 96 of the Constitution is not applicable unless he is a defacto judge, Islam said. Article 96 of the Constitution defines the tenure of office of judges and procedure of their removal and resignation. Barrister Islam made this submission as the court wanted to know if relief can be guaranteed under Article 102 of the Constitution. The writ petition was filed by Convener of the Coordination Council for Lawyers Advocate Shamsul Haq Chowdhury on June 11 and the hearing continued in the HC Division bench comprising Justice Habibur Rahman Khan and Justice M H Ruhul Amin. The petitioner's lawyer contended that Justice Rouf is a defacto judge performing the function of a judge and is holding the office without any lawful authority. "He cannot be removed by applying the Article 96 as it relates to the question whether the judge is lawfully appointed. Unconstitutional appointment can be challenged."

17 more Lions Club members interrogated

The immigration authorities interrogated another 17 Lions Club members at the Zia International Airport soon after their arrival from South Korea yesterday. Of them, three were kept for further interrogation till last night, while the others were released, sources said. Some 207 persons, who had gone to Seoul reportedly to attend an international Lions convention, were deported early this month. A senior official of the Special Branch, however, said the 17 Lions were only questioned to help the investigation into the affair.



Boats plying on a rail track in flood-hit Sirajganj. —Star photo by Enamul Haq

Road link snapped

bankment, built under FAP project, was also washed away by flood waters. One Paniruddin, 65, was killed in a stampede during relief distribution in Shundarganj thana yesterday while one Panchan, 37, was gunned down by pirates near Bhati Godail char. Two people, Shakhil, 15, and Ekabbar Ali, 60, were killed in lightning and some more bodies were seen floating on a raft on river Ghaghot. Leaders of the district units of Awami League, NAP and Ganatantri Party at a joint press conference in Gaibandha town yesterday demanded of the government to declare the district a 'disaster zone'. They also criticized government's alleged negligence to the flood affected people. In Munshiganj district the flood situation turned critical with more areas of Sreenagar thana going under water. In Manikganj district, more areas of Shibbalaya, Harirampur and Daulatpur thanas went under water yesterday following further swelling of the Jamuna. A minor girl, Tania, drowned falling from the rooftop of her partially submerged house in Shibbalaya village. Our Sherpur correspondent reports: Thousands of flood-affected people in the district were facing shortage of food, medicine and drinking water. All the 52 unions in this district are inundated.

Lankan troops near Jaffna town

COLOMBO, July 12: Tamil guerrillas fighting the Sri Lankan army in the northern Jaffna peninsula blew up a bridge today to delay the army's thrust into their stronghold, a military spokesman said, reports Reuter. "Troops are now about six km (3.7 miles) from Jaffna town," Brigadier Sarath Munasinghe told a new conference. Our aim is to liberate the Jaffna people from the clutches of the LTTE. We plan to bring the entire northern province under government control but we can't give a time frame."

The Midnight File

Indian troops reduce search for hostages in Kashmir

SRINAGAR, July 12: Soldiers scaled back their search today for five Westerners held hostage in Kashmir by separatists who have threatened to kill their captives if the hunt continues. Five human lives are involved and we are aware of the threat, so we have reduced the search," said a Jammu-Kashmir state government official, who cannot be identified under briefing rules, reports AP.

India's missile programme fuels tension: Leghari

ISLAMABAD, July 12: India's missile programme is fuelling tensions in the region, Pakistani President Farooq Ahmad Leghari said today in a meeting with outgoing Indian Ambassador S K Lambah, according to an official statement. Leghari told the diplomat who made a farewell call on him, that the missile programme "multiplies tensions in the region and increases threat perceptions in Pakistan," the statement said, reports AFP.

Don't expect too much too quickly: Suu Kyi

YANGON, July 12: Newly freed opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi said today democracy was on its way to Burma but appealed to her supporters to be patient, reports Reuter. Speaking through a megaphone from behind her front gate, Suu Kyi thanked about 200 supporters waiting outside her home, saying she was grateful for their support and encouragement. The crowd cheered 'long live Aung San Suu Kyi' several times after her brief impromptu speech. Myanmar's military government revoked an order on Monday that had confined her to the compound of her house for the last six years. The crowd, which steadily grew throughout the day, quietly dispersed after Suu Kyi's speech in which she also urged them to leave and clear the road for traffic "as a good omen for our cause." Earlier today, inside her ramshackle lakeside home near Yangon University, Suu Kyi held her second news conference since her release. "I'd like to take this opportunity to warn everybody not to expect too much too quickly," she said when asked if she was worried expectations had grown too high over her abilities to bring Myanmar back to democracy quickly. "I think there is still a long way ahead, and the way is not going to be all that smooth. But as long as we have a will and as long as we go about it intelligently I think we'll get there," she added.

Hasina

From Page-1 Congratulating the elected student leaders, the AL chief hoped their victory would help intensify the current anti-government agitation for people's rights to vote and food. She also advised the student leaders to build up themselves with proper education and work for peace, progress and national prosperity. Turning to campus situation, Hasina said, "I want terrorism-free campuses." She called for unity of the student community to achieve the goal. Chhatra League president Enamul Haq Shamim and general secretary Ishaq Ali Panna also spoke on the occasion while the AL central leaders Prof Abu Sayeed and Mamataz Hossain were present. The newly-elected student leaders included Hassan Murad Bhopol, vice-president and Mahbubur Rahman, general secretary of the Chittagong Government Commerce College Students Union and Khurshid Alam, VP and Hossain Kabir, GS of the Chittagong Law College Students Union.

Bankers

From Page 1 recovery claims in 1993, while the Adalat could settle only 25.98 per cent of the cases. Around 29,463 cases for recovery of Tk 2335.20 crore were under trial in the Adalat in 1993. In 1991, 20,294 cases for recovery of Tk 1133.25 crore were under trial. Speakers at the seminar called for reduction of costs for law suits in the Adalat, and increasing the number of such courts and suggested that orders should be made for repayment of the total amount claimed. The defaulters should be barred from contesting national elections and also from being members of the executive boards of banks, they further suggested. General Manager of Sonali Bank A J Masudul Haque Ahmed, in his paper, said that banks should be authorised to issue 'warrants of recovery' in respect of small loans and suggested involvement of the chambers of commerce and industries in the process of recovery. In another paper, Deputy General Manager of Bangladesh Krishi Bank Nurul Huda Chowdhury, suggested setting up of 'summary court to reduce default culture.'

Contempt rules upon Works Secretary

A High Court Division bench yesterday issued two separate contempt rules upon Works Secretary Hasinur Rahman for violating court orders, reports UNB. The bench comprising Justice Naimuddin Ahmed and Justice Md Ruhul Amin directed the Works Secretary to show cause within two weeks as to why he should not be committed for contempt of court for willfully disobeying orders of the court. DSE upturn From Page 1 about 96 per cent. Total trading amounted to Tk 470 crore in 1994-95 as against Tk 240 crore in 1993-94. A total of 2.59 crore securities were traded during the year compared to 1.16 crore in the previous year. There was a boom in trading particularly in the last quarter of the fiscal (April-June 1995) when the daily average increased to Tk 2.23 crore from about Tk 1.44 crore during the previous quarter. Market capitalization in 1994-95 rose to Tk 5,000 crore from Tk 3,000 crore in 1993-94. The market, however, experienced significant fluctuations in prices, specially in the latter part of the fiscal year. The DSE All Share Price Index plunged below 700 on one stage from the all-time high 892 in late November. The index, however, again rose to 777 at the end of June.

Talks with MQM

From Page 1 gunmen have forced a shutdown of all businesses in Karachi every Friday and Saturday in a bid to undermine Benazir's government. Dehvi said the MQM would continue the shutdowns unless the government suspended attacks on suspected militant strongholds. The News reported. The talks, which were due to begin last week but were postponed twice, are considered crucial for ending the violence in Karachi. But few here expect they will be able to resolve ethnic hostilities that have simmered for decades.