

Hospital limps for lack of OT

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People with serious injuries leave Sir Salimullah Medical College and Mitford Hospital without treatment, as the authorities could not install a full-fledged operating theatre (OT), a situation that has lasted for the last 20 years.

"Relatives of such patients wait here until we finally tell them that we are not in a position to treat them. They shift their loved ones to Dhaka Medical College Hospital," said a doctor at the emergency department.

A person grievously injured in an accident on Babubazar Bridge last week was taken to the emergency department and was left on a van for more than an hour before the doctors refused to treat him.

"What are we supposed to do if there is no operating theatre?" the doctor asked, blaming the authorities for the situation.

Dr Imtiaz Farooq, a resident surgeon, said doctors perform minor operations but cannot

undertake major surgeries because of the weak infrastructure.

"I joined the department one and a half months ago and I have so far refused to operate on five seriously injured people. This is painful," he said.

Another source blamed the absence of a full-fledged operating theatre on the authorities' neglect. The rickety operating theatre, now in operation, was set up in 1984.

"We cannot perform any major operation here, we have no anaesthesia and diathermy machine, airconditioner and light," the source said, adding the department also lacks staff like anaesthetists.

The casualty department consists of five doctors, three nurses, a cleaner and a ward boy.

Everyday many injured in road accidents, bomb attacks, stabbing and firing are taken to the hospital from Armanitola, Nayabazar, Babubazar, Islampur, Labagh, Kamrangirchar and Hajaribagh.

Patients from Keraniganj, Nawabganj and Dohar close to the capital are also brought to the hospital.

A hospital official alleged: "Many workers in other departments do not want to start the OT. They play on the situation and take the injured to other private hospitals and clinics."

"The middlemen get commissions from other hospitals and clinics," he added.

Doctors in the emergency department said it would have been possible to start the OT if an anaesthetist, two doctors, a cleaner and a nurse had worked every shift.

Every day, there are more than 50 patients in the casualty department that has only 18 beds - 11 for males and the rest for females. Other patients are forced to sleep on the floor because of the shortage of beds.

Contacted, Abul Khayer Bhuiyan, the hospital director, said: "As we are short of manpower we cannot start the OT. We have asked the health ministry for funds."



Most patients go without treatment as the emergency department of the Mitford Hospital runs with a rickety operating theatre.



Work on to protect Rayerbazar memorial from the coming monsoon with 'whatever funds available'.

Meagre money, yet not disbursed

Rayerbazar memorial to go unprotected

AVIK SANWAR RAHMAN

Fund shortage is seriously hampering construction of a protection embankment around the Rayerbazar Martyrs' Monument, which is threatened by erosion from the Buriganga.

"The Liberation War Affairs Ministry this month has so far received Tk 30 lakh of the Tk 1.16 crore that was approved by the Planning Commission for the current fiscal year. The rest would be paid by the next fiscal," said Didarul Ahsan, deputy secretary of the ministry.

As the war memorial slowly

slips into ruin, another reason for the project not proceeding is because of confusion over which ministry would be in charge for its protection and development and the need to revise costs due to the delay.

But during an inter-ministerial meeting last August, it was made clear which ministry would be overseeing the project's financial management while the PWD was assigned the task of supervision, protection and development of the memorial.

Although the deputy secretary of Liberation War Affairs Ministry has assured that funds would be forthcoming,

the PWD is still waiting.

"We have not received any funds from the ministry for the slope protection though we have heard that it has been approved by the Planning Commission. And since the project costs will go beyond those approved for this fiscal, we have to work with whatever funds available.

"In the meantime have sought expert opinion to save the monument and are taking steps such as breaking bricks to be used as temporary blocks," PWD executive engineer Fazlul Kabir said.

The PWD have also erected bamboo fences around the site.

"Due to lack of funds we resorted to putting up bamboo fences to protect it from the current monsoons."

The concrete cement blocks that were built earlier to partially protect the historical memorial are quickly disappearing due to lack of maintenance.

"The blocks are becoming unsteady and they just crumble in to the river. That is why as a quick fix we are now using bamboo poles instead."

The new project envisages dumping of soil beside the monument and placing geo textile and building new concrete blocks.

GONE WITH THE WIND



Scores of newsstands were set up in the city during the Ershad regime. But most of the stalls are now either poorly maintained or sell everything but newspapers.