

Patuakhali hospital needs immediate treatment

10 doctors against 33 posts, but hardly 5 found at workplace: Facilities too inadequate

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, Patuakhali

Treatment of patients is being greatly hampered at Patuakhali General Hospital due to shortage of doctors and other facilities.

The government hospital that is supposed to meet the needs of about 16 lakh people has 33 sanctioned posts of doctors, but only 10 are posted now.

Of them, hardly five doctors are available at the hospital, patients alleged while talking to this correspondent during a visit there on Thursday.

Besides, beds and medicine are too inadequate to the needs of the people.

It was gathered that about half of the patients return home disappointed every day without getting any treatment facility.

About 300 to 400 patients come to the hospital from different parts of the district daily, sources at the hospital said.

This correspondent saw about 200 patients including women and children waiting at the outdoor between 11 am and 1 pm on Thursday.

Only three doctors were seen at the outdoor. A total of 240 patients were given tickets for treatment, but 125 received treatment.

Lucky Begum of Kalaskathi village claimed that she came to the hospital on Wednesday with her diarrhoea afflicted four-year-old daughter Sumi but could not meet a doctor till 1 pm Thursday.

Sonali Gazi of Gopaldi village came on Tuesday with his one-year-old son Suman, who was suffering from fever. She also alleged that she could not meet any doctor till 1 pm

Thursday.

At the outdoor, over 200 patients were waiting.

"I am waiting since 9 am here but the doctor was not available at his room", told Salma of Kuripaka village in the Sadar upazila, mother of one-year-old Monir.

"I came also on Tuesday but the doctor was not at his room and I went back home", she claimed.

The hospital was established in 1979 on 12.44 acres land at Kalikapur in the town with 25 beds. The number of beds was increased to 100 in 1990 and to 250 beds later at a cost Tk13.58 crore. Prime Minister Khaleda Zia opened the upgraded hospital on February 17 this year.

Sources at the Civil Surgeon (CS) office said 23 out of 33 posts of doctors are vacant for long.

The vacant posts are those of senior consultant surgeon, child and ENT specialist, eye consultant, pathologist, radiologist and anaesthetist.

Three out of seven posts of medical officer (MO), all four posts of emergency medical officer (EMO) and all five posts of assistant registrar are also vacant for long.

It has been upgraded to a 250 bed hospital but the manpower including doctors has not been increased. This is awaiting approval of the ministry.

The organogram was sent to the ministry two months back but to no response yet, the sources said.

Patuakhali Civil Surgeon Dr. Nurun Nahar Begum Shiri said the hospital is being run by three medical officers, six consultant doctors and one dentist. She said she gave a proposal to the health ministry for 84 doctors.

It is gathered that out of required 432, only 140 staff including doctors are now posted there.



Patients receiving treatment on the floor of Patuakhali General Hospital.

PHOTO: STAR

School girl killed after gangrape in Kushtia, youth murdered

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Criminals slaughtered a schoolgirl after gangrape and killed a youth over previous feud in separate incidents Saturday night.

In Bheramara, unidentified criminals raped and slaughtered Mina Khatun, 14, daughter of day labourer Amirul Islam at Malipara village.

Police said Mina, a student of class VIII at Mofar Ali High School was picked by a gang when she was returning home from her neighbor Habibur's house at about 10 pm after watching television.

The gang took the girl to a nearby

filed, gangraped and slaughtered her.

Villagers found her bare body yesterday morning.

Habibart told newsmen yesterday that Mina left his house when BTV was casting English news.

Autopsy of Mina was done at Kushtia General Hospital yesterday. Police said the girl was killed after rape.

A case was filed with Bheramara police station.

In the other incident in Kushtia town, criminals hacked to death a young man who had an altercation with local groups in Aruapara.

The victim is Abdur Razzak alias

Huzur Ali, 22, son of Chad Ali of Aruapara.

According to the victim's elder sister Swapna Khatun, one Munna of the area with two unknown persons called Razzak out of home at about 10.30 pm. He was missing since then. Yesterday morning, a night guard in the area found dead body.

Police said the killing could be sequel to a previous enmity among youth groups in the area.

Police arrested Munna. He was being interrogated when the report was filed yesterday afternoon. Sapna filed a case with the Sadar police station.

'Women's corner' makes them self-reliant

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

"I am no longer dependent on my husband's income. I can now earn myself and help run my family happily," said Aklima, a grosser of Modhupur bazaar in Kounia upazila in the district.

Rahela, another shopkeeper there said, "One year back my family members used to pass days half-fied. Now I need not to worry about meals twice a day as my income from the shop is about Tk 200 a day."

They are among 12 poor women who now own shops at the bazaar, built under the Rural Development Project-21 funded by the Asian Development Bank.

The rest women entrepreneurs also told the same thing when a team led by the Project

Implementation Officer of the Asian Development Bank, Md Rafiqul Islam, visited their shops at Modhupur bazaar yesterday to evaluate the project.

The Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) constructed the commercial complex named 'women's corner' at the bazaar one year back to make some poor women self-reliant through income generating activities.

Rafiqul Islam said to The Daily Star that the women entrepreneurs at Modhupur bazaar were doing well, unlike in such other projects in the country.

He said, LGED constructed women's corner at many other places in the country. ADB will continue funding for such initiatives, he said.

Demonstration demanding ferry service

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Several thousand people yesterday put up demonstrations on both sides of the river Rupsha in protest against withdrawal of ferry service from Saturday midnight.

According to some demonstrators, it would be very risky for them to cross the river by boat, negotiating strong current.

The demonstrators demanded resumption of ferry service by Roads and Highways Department (RHD) or to face a tough agitation.

When contacted, a high official of RHD said there is no more need to continue ferry service after commissioning of the Khanjahan Ali Bridge on Rupsha at a cost of 121 million US dollars.

Ferry service was so long a barrier to easy communication between north western and south western regions of the country.

Besides, maintenance of ferry service is very costly, the RHD official said.

No fair election without reforms, says JSD chief

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) President Hasanul Haque Inu yesterday said a free, fair and neutral election is not possible without reforms of the Election Commission and the electoral system.

Now it is the demand of time and reforms should be made for an acceptable election in future, Inu said while addressing a biennial council of JSD's Mymensingh unit, held at a community centre.

JSD will soon announce agitation programmes to realise the demand, Inu added.

Presided over by advocate Giasuddin Ahmed, the council was also addressed by, among others, by JSD central leaders Nazmul Haque Prodhan and Sharif Nurul Ambia and its Mymensingh unit leaders SM Sadek Hossain, Shafiqul Islam Minto, SM Babul; AHM Khalequezzaman of Oikya Mancha, Emdadul Haque Millat of Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) and Nazrul Islam Moni of Gono Forum.

Inu said that the government would not step down without a joint movement by all patriotic and pro-liberation forces. He urged all parties to come to a platform to free the country from the clutch of BNP-Jamat government. "Now BNP wants to establish family politics in the country", he said adding, "fundamentalist forces should be eliminated from the country for ever".

Human chain for safe river journey

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Prothom Alo Bandhu Sabha, a newspaper readers' forum, on Sunday formed a human chain in front of local press club demanding safe river journey.

About 100 members of the forum took part in the human chain. They demanded life insurance for all launch passengers, ban on overloading of launches, making it mandatory for keeping life saving kits in launch and its plying by trained and expert captain, 'Sukhani' and 'Sareng', ban on transport of goods in passengers launches, introduction of sea-trucks along the coastal areas, making riverine routes safe and cancellation illegal route permits.



The half-done Fulchhari-Kamarjani port protection project in Gaibandha. It's fate has become uncertain as the government cut the allocations.

PHOTO: STAR

FULCHHARI-KAMARJANI PORT PROTECTION PROJECT Fund cut makes half-done project's fate uncertain

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Fate of the ongoing Fulchhari upazila headquarter and Kamarjani port protection project has become uncertain as the fund allocated in the current financial year has been sliced by half, creating resentment among all classes of people in the area.

Water Development Board (WDB) sources said the fund has been reduced to Tk 9.5 crore in the revised budget from Tk 20 crore earlier allocated in the current fiscal. The project involves Tk 42.13 crore.

Work on the half-done project has virtually come to a halt due to this, sources claimed.

The work so far done may also be affected by erosion by the mighty Brahmaputra river in the coming monsoon, they apprehended while talking to this correspondent.

The project includes renovating the Brahmaputra riverbank near the Fulchhari upazila headquarter and Kamarjani river port and placing

tiles and concrete blocks.

In about last ten years, vast tracts of cultivable land, houses and structures in Gaibandha Sadar, Fulchhari and Shaghata upazilas were devoured by the Brahmaputra, rendering thousands of families homeless.

The erosion continues more or less round the year at different points along the western bank of river Brahmaputra and increases during the rainy season.

In 2000-2001 financial year, the local WDB prepared a Tk 40 crore project, which involved construction of four spurs in the Brahmaputra and placing RCC blocks on the riverbank slope. After government's approval, tender was floated for the project.

The local people then staged demonstrations against construction of spurs, saying that would flow normal river flow and demanded a permanent solution.

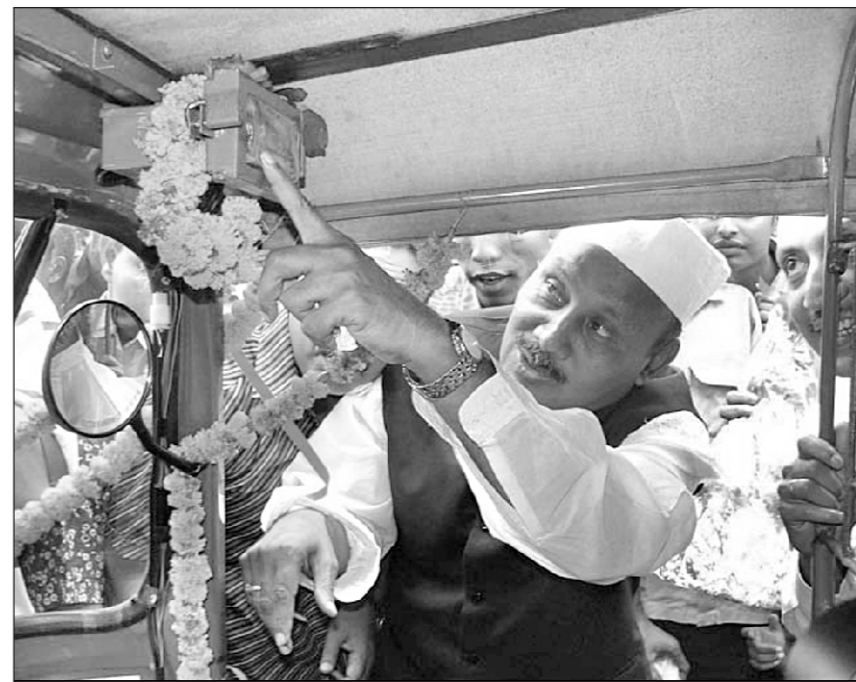
The authorities later conducted a

fresh feasibility study and decided to lay tiles on the river bank slope and place RCC blocks instead of constructing spurs. A budget of Tk 42.13 crore was allocated for 1,984 metre bank protection work in Fulchhari and 720 metre at Kamarjani.

In the first phase, Tk 20 crore was allocated in the current financial year to cover 520 metres in Fulchhari and 416 metres in Kamarjani. The work started late due to delayed disbursement of fund, the WDB sources said.

At the end of last month, the government curtailed the allocation by 50 percent in the revised budget. The area to be renovated has now been reduced to 260 metres in Fulchhari and 230 metres in Kamarjani with an involvement of Tk 9.5 crore, the WDB sources said.

Vast areas will now remain vulnerable to erosion if the project remains half-done, official sources said.



Cittagong City Corporation Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury introduced meters in CNG autorickshaws in the city yesterday by switching on a meter in a vehicle.

PHOTO: STAR



The Citizen Rights Movement organised a human chain in front of Aswani Kumar Hall in Barisal city yesterday demanding reduction of cellphone call charge to 50 paise per minute.

PHOTO: STAR

Factory of spurious oil, 22 other items detected in Rangpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

Detective police on Saturday night unearthed an unauthorised factory at Shahipara in Rangpur town and seized a huge quantity of spurious goods including edible oil and different kinds of cosmetics.

They also arrested the factory owner Joyanal and worker Ripon. Tipped off by some local people, a team of DB police led by Officer-in-Charge Samsuzzoha raided the house of Joyanal at Shahipara at about 12:00 pm. They took him to his shop beside GL Roy road and found a huge quantity of spurious goods there.

They arrested him and brought him to DB police office. In primary interrogation, Joyanal admitted that he produced spurious goods in his factory.

Police said, Joyanal was producing 22 items including spurious mastered and soybean oil, packet tea, talcum powder and vaseline and sold those in markets through some unscrupulous traders.

OC Samsuzzoha told this correspondent that police would seek five days' remand when Joyanal will be produced before court today.

Jubo Dal men sued for extortion

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Four leaders of Kalaroa Upazila Jatiyatabadi Juba Dal (JJD), youth front of the ruling BNP, were sued yesterday by Satkhira district Food Officer for "demanding toll and assaulting the Kalaroa LSD in-charge".

The accused are Kalaroa upazila Juba Dal General Secretary Abdul Kader Bachhu and its leaders Abdul Khaled, Shafiqul Islam and Abdul Hai.

Police said, Satkhira District Food Officer Roka Mia filed the case with Kalaroa thana accusing the four for demanding toll from Kalaroa LSD in-charge Mahtab Uddin and assaulting him.