

BSMMU Reputed hospital now in political quagmire

MAHBUBA ZANNAT

Wholesale politicisation and massive recruitment of low quality persons during 2001 to 2006 are hampering academic affairs and treatment at the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) and its hospital, and have been a drag on the resources of the institution.

Against 1,600 posts including those of teachers, doctors, nurses and others, the BSMMU is now burdened with some 3,600 staff, thanks to the wholesale recruitment during the tenure of its former vice chancellor MA Hadi, who was also the president of pro-BNP Doctors Association of Bangladesh (DAB).

The Department of Dermatology and Venereology has 50 plus doctors including medical officer, consultant and honorary doctors against only 20 beds.

"There is no need for so many doctors. The salary the additional doctors draw could be invested in upgrading the university with modern technologies and infrastructure

development," said Dr Mohammad Sharfuddin Ahmed, associate professor of the Department of Ophthalmology.

Many top positions of the university are now held by inappropriate or inefficient doctors or teachers, said a top source.

A top source said a written application was sent to the University Grants Commission (UGC) and secretary of the health ministry on April 9, seeking investigation and necessary steps against the corrupt officials of the university following the Academic Council meeting but the UGC is yet to take any steps.

Even the caretaker government, which has taken lots of cleansing steps in several other sectors, has not started any move regarding the BSMMU although a number of allegations have sprung up in the media.

Talking to this correspondent, over a dozen officials and teachers of the BSMMU requesting anonymity levelled serious allegations against former vice chancellor Prof

MA Hadi and several other former and incumbent high officials of the university and hospital as well as the former health minister.

As gross nepotism and favouring people from their areas, severe politicisation and bribery dominated recruitment and promotion for the last couple of years, the matter of academic qualifications or competence was completely ignored, sources said.

Loyalty to the ruling party became the first criterion of promotion, said an associate professor of the university, who was recently promoted to his present post.

He said he was a victim of politicisation and his promotion from the post of assistant professor to the current one took seven long years although it was due three or four years ago.

On the other hand, strong political lobbying with the administration awarded a medical officer with undue promotion to the post of associate professor within four

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

UK to up aid Says Iftekhar

UNB, Dhaka

Foreign Affairs Adviser Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury yesterday said Britain will soon increase its annual aid, now amounts to 125 million pounds, substantially in appreciation of Bangladesh's development policies and political stability.

Talking to reporters on the outcome of his four-day official visit to the United Kingdom, the adviser said the British leaders had assured assistance and support to various activities of the caretaker government.

Iftekhar, who had bilateral talks with British Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Office Margaret Beckett, said the discussion was productive and it would intensify bilateral economic and trade cooperation.

Bangladesh-Britain bilateral trade amounts to around 2 billion pounds sterling. The adviser said they discussed how to augment the trade volume.

He hoped the UK would extend cooperation in training Bangladeshi restaurant workers. The two sides discussed establishment of an institute of international standards.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3



PHOTO: STAR

Plumes of smoke rise from chimneys of brick kilns near Amin Bazar on the outskirts of Dhaka as the world observed Earth Day yesterday.

4 suspected JMB men arrested

STAR REPORT

Law enforcers yesterday arrested at least four alleged Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) militants from Jhenidah, Kurigram and Rajshahi and recovered some bomb-making materials.

Law enforcers yesterday arrested at least four alleged Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) militants from Jhenidah, Kurigram and Rajshahi and recovered some bomb-making materials.

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) personnel arrested two alleged activists of JMB raiding Ullapara of Kaliganj upazila early Saturday, our Jhenidah correspondent reports.

The arrestees are: Abu Hasan, 48, an Iman of Ullapara mosque, Jakir Hossain, 25, of Kannyadah of Harinakunda upazila.

Major Hafiz of Rab-6 said acting on a tip-off they raided the house of Abu Hasan in Ullapara around 2:00am yesterday and arrested him and Jakir Hossain. They also recovered bomb-making materials including phosphorus powder, iron shrapnel and other materials including booklets on Jihad written by the now executed JMB leader Khalid Saifullah.

Meanwhile, Abu Hasan allegedly told law enforcers that Jakir

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6



PHOTO: STAR

Remnants of a wall that killed two people after being toppled by jetting water from the pipe of an under-construction pump house at Uttar Goran in the city yesterday.

PRE-BUDGET BIDS DISCUSSION Steps to check price hike, review of ADP projects urged

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a pre-budget discussion yesterday urged the government to take measures against price hike of essentials and restore normalcy in the economic and social lives of the nation.

They also asked the government to review the ADP (annual development programme) projects and drop those which will be found dubious.

Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS), a research institute, organised the seminar in the city and placed some recommendations regarding the upcoming budget.

The BIDS urged the government to discontinue tax holiday system and undertake an in-depth evaluation of the entire incentive structure.

Finance Adviser Mirza Azizul Islam and leading economists took part at the seminar presided over by Quazi Shahabuddin.

The finance adviser said the next budget would focus on poverty reduction and creating new employments. "We will also try to bring more investments in power

sector and generate more funds for social safety net," he added.

According to Mirza Aziz, production cost of per kilogram rice has increased by 16 paisa for the recent price hike of diesel. "We are planning to compensate the farmers, who were affected by the price spiral," added the finance adviser.

Akbar Ali Khan, former adviser to a caretaker government, said inflation will be a great challenge for the interim government while preparing the next budget.

Regarding the latest fuel price hike, Akbar said petroleum price was hiked at such a time when inflation rate was on the rise.

About the PRSP (poverty reduction strategy paper), he said it is nothing but a book only. No local or foreign funds are available to implement the PRSP, Akbar said.

Referring to Dr Yunus's dream to send poverty in the museum, the former adviser said, "Before that we should send the PRSP in the museum."

Mustafa K Mujeri in his keynote paper recommended taking short-term measures to ensure smooth supply of essential commodities.

TITAS GAS LEAKAGE Canadian expert places report, recommends remedial steps

OUR CORRESPONDENT, B'baria

The gas well blowout prevention consultant from Canada yesterday submitted his detailed report on the third well of Titas Gas Field to Petrobangla.

The consultant also recommended a few remedial measures to patch up the leakage in the troubled third well of the field.

Consultant Bob Grace submitted his report along with the

SEE PAGE 15 COL 5

6 killed in city road crashes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Six people were killed and five injured in road accidents in the capital yesterday.

In Jatrabari, three people were killed when a Dhaka-bound passenger bus from Noakhali lost control and knocked down several rickshaws parked by the road before crashing into a traffic island

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

Cricket bids bye to King Lara

AFP, Bridgetown

Brian Lara bid an emotional farewell to international cricket on Saturday but admitted he leaves the game with regrets that the West Indies are still a struggling team.

Lara's 17-year career finished on a losing note when his team were beaten by one wicket by England in their final World Cup Super Eights match at a packed Kensington Oval.

Despite a career boasting 11,953 Test and 10,405 one-day runs as well as twin batting records



Brian Lara

of a Test best 400 not out and 501 not out in first class cricket, he leaves the game with regrets.

"Not all of my dreams have been fulfilled," said captain Lara who made just 18 on Saturday before he was run out in the West Indies total of 300.

"From the very first time I played cricket, my dream was to see the West Indies back on top of the sport.

"Unfortunately, that hasn't happened and we haven't been able to stop the decline. That's the most disappointing thing.

"I'm a team player. I have great hopes for the West Indies that they will get back on top and whoever takes over from me needs to have support. That would be tremendous."

Lara then asked the crowd: "Did I entertain you?" The huge response told him what he wanted to hear.

"If I have entertained you then I am really happy. Thanks for your support down the years.

"Today (Saturday) I have friends here from my school years and from throughout my life. Thanks to everyone. I have enjoyed every single minute of it."

Lara said that his 277 against Australia at Sydney in 1993, his

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6



PHOTO: STAR

Motorists turn on their headlamps and tail lights in the capital as the city witnesses a heavy downpour yesterday afternoon.

Suicide car bombs kill 16 in Baghdad

AP, AFP, Baghdad

Two suicide car bombers attacked a police station in a residential area of Baghdad yesterday, killing at least 16 people while two more US soldiers were killed in rebel attacks, police said.

An American commander also announced plans to recruit more than 40,000 new troops in Iraq's armed forces in 2007 as part of a 14-billion-dollar plan for developing the war-torn country's security forces.

In a mid-morning attack, two car bombs struck outside Al-Bayaa police station in the southwest of the city, the latest in a recent spate of deadly attacks aimed at undermining a joint US-Iraq security strategy.

Six of the 16 killed were policemen, security officials said, updating an earlier casualty toll, while another 95 people were wounded, including about 40 policemen.

The blast tore a massive crater in the road and devastated at least two nearby civilian houses.

Iraqi security forces are regular targets of insurgents and Sunday's attack was the latest spectacular blast that insurgents have managed to carry out despite the massive security crackdown in the city.

Unidentified gunmen dragged 23 members of northern Iraq's Yazidi religious minority from a bus

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

Adviser stresses quick implementation of city's transport plan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Strategic Transport Plan (STP) for the capital is a demand of time and Dhaka city would suffer more if its implementation is delayed further, Communications Adviser MA Matin observed yesterday.

He also stressed the need for widening the existing roads in the capital and shifting Inland Container Terminal (ICTD) from Kamalapur to Gazipur to ease the traffic congestion in the city.

The communications adviser was speaking at a presentation meeting on the STP by the Dhaka Transport Co-ordination Board (DTCB) at his office.

Matin underscored the need for establishing by-pass roads surround-

ing the capital and some other roads connecting east-west parts of the city. He also spoke in favour of developing a waterway surrounding the capital for easy movement of goods and also to save the rivers from encroachment. The adviser assured the DTCB delegation of a formal launching of the plan and its immediate implementation.

Communication experts and high officials of the ministry present at the meeting suggested forming a single authority body to look after the transport related issues in the capital.

The DTCB project was undertaken in 2004 with the help of the World Bank and other donor agencies. A final report was submitted in

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

Charges framed against Shamim Osman

UNB, Narayanganj

The district judge's court yesterday framed corruption charge against Awami League leader and former lawmaker Shamim Osman, now absconding.

Senior Special Judge Abdul Kuddus Mia framing charge said Shamim had failed to submit statement of his wealth as directed by

SEE PAGE 15 COL 5

Prayer Timing		
April 23		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-25	5-00
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-45	5-00
Maghrib	6-27	6-31
Esha	8-00	8-30
Source: Islamic Foundation		