

INSTITUTE OF CHILD AND MOTHER HEALTH

Working to provide healthcare for the poor

DURDANA GHIAS

When the city's poor hardly have any access to good healthcare a hospital in one of the city's most rundown areas provides modern facilities and healthcare in Matuail.

Situated by the Dhaka-Chittagong highway Institute of Child and Mother Health (ICMH) is working to provide better healthcare to the suburban poor, those coming from the outskirts of the city and people coming from outside the city.

On Thursday, the 13-acre compound of the hospital looked neat with patients lining up in long queues to avail outdoor services. Once the patients walk into the hospital premises, the soothing environ is sure to offer a respite. The general wards are quite clean and devoid of any foul smell unlike other government hospitals. The roominess of the place is an added relief

On Thursday, the 13-acre compound of the hospital looked neat with patients lining up in long queues to avail outdoor services. Once the patients walk into the hospital premises, the soothing environ is sure to offer a respite. The general wards are quite clean and devoid of any foul smell unlike other government hospitals. The roominess of the place is an added relief

deal with lots of patients and case availability is more," said Md Mujibur Rahman, a young doctor working at the general ward.

There is a separate lactation centre where young teenage mothers are shown how to breastfeed their babies.

Poor women in Bangladesh face certain cultural, geographic and economic barriers in accessing obstetric care. Skilled attendance at birth is 13 percent and facility based delivery rate is 10 percent. ICMH aims to improve this situation.

Since its inception in 1999 around 15,091 health care providers and professionals were trained. Among them were 6,597 doctors, 2,203 nurses and 1,916 paramedics. The hospital is attended by 70 doctors and 8 professors.

Rubina, a teenage mother from Narinda, said, "I first heard about this hospital from Shurjer Hashi clinic. At first I thought it would be like other government hospitals but I got better services here."

Jasmine, another teenage mother from Shonir Akhra, who went through caesarian operation to have her baby, said that she heard from her friend about a hospital at Matuail, which offer better healthcare and decided to come here when it was time to have the baby.

"For young doctors ICMH is one of the best places to learn and work. Here doctors

More than one hundred researches were done on maternal and child health issues of which 75 were published in national and international journals. At present 10 research works are going on.

The institution has a community base in two villages at Sonargaon and Narayanganj that provides training and healthcare. The institute has research links with reputed institutes at home and abroad.

Prof Dr Abdul Hannan, executive director, ICMH, said that ICMH has four post graduation courses on child and mother health.

"At present we have 200 beds but sometimes we have to keep more patients than our capacity. But still I think it is better than dying by the roadside. I want more patients to come to this hos-



The spacious compound of ICMH.

pital and want them to inform others," said Dr Hannan.

"Soon we will have another 10 acres on which we will build a nursing college, an institute for health technologists, a basic science department and a 100-bed general

hospital," he said.

This institution has multiple activities like training, research and providing health care. ICMH consists of a hospital building, a training dormitory, residential complex for trainees, a mosque, a primary school, a centre for training and communication and other service areas. It has two outdoors each for children and mothers, consultation rooms, radiology department and hospital phar-

macy.

It was made autonomous in 2002 and is run by a 15-member board of governors of which the minister (currently adviser) is the chairman.

The outdoor service of the

hospital is available from 8:30am to 2:30pm. Outdoor patients have to buy a Tk 10 ticket. It takes Tk 50 to get admitted. The bed rent is Tk 150 and cabin rent is Tk 550 per day.

10x8