

Mitford Hospital's casualty section limps

Operates without capacity to carry out major operations as there is no anesthesiologist, poor oxygen supply and OT lights

DURDANA GHIAS

The casualty section of Mitford Hospital is plagued with various problems including lack of anaesthesiologists, insufficient OT lights and non-functioning oxygen supply line, which are essential for doing surgery.

Sources said the section is running without the capacity to perform major surgery as there is no anaesthesiologist. The general anaesthesia machine is lying idle in a corner of the operation theatre.

Doctors at the hospital are compelled to shift the patients with major injuries to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital for surgery.

The 15-bed casualty section mainly deals with patients injured in accidents, bone dislocation, stab injuries, and factory workers sustaining injuries while operating machines at their workplaces.

Dr Mahbub Hasan Mehedi, associate professor of orthopaedic surgery and head of casualty section, said lack of an anaesthesiologist is holding back the section's capacity to perform major surgeries.

"To run the operation theatre we need at least 4 anaesthesiologists, but we don't have any. We cannot perform major surgery as general anaesthesia cannot be applied on patients without an anaesthesiologist. We can only perform minor surgeries with local anaesthesia," he said.

"As we do not have proper OT lights, we have to use side lights to perform surgeries. The oxygen supply line of the casualty section is faulty and there is no central oxygen supply system in

the hospital," he added.

According to hospital sources, a total of 187 patients were admitted to the casualty section of the hospital from January 1 to June 30 this year and 974 patients given outdoor treatment.

A total of 331 minor operations were done during the period of which 175 were cut injuries, 67 surgical toileting, 25 treatment for bone dislocation, 18 tendon repairs, 14 foreign body removal, 13 amputations and 2 stab injuries.

Besides, 305 plasters and 259 dressings were done.

Dr Md Belayet Hossain, assistant director (administration) of the hospital said they have applied to the Director General, Health, two and a half months ago for appointing anaesthesiologists at the hospital.

The hospital, second biggest in the city, does not have any post-operative room, observation room, nurses' duty room and toilet for nurses.

Ward boys work there as OT boys in the morning. No ward boys work in the afternoon and at night, the patients alleged. Often nurses have to do the duty of a ward boy in the afternoon and at night.

There is no nurse or sweeper for the operation theatre. Ward nurses and sweepers are working at both the wards and the OT.

While there is no duty room for nurses, several unused rooms in the casualty section have been turned into storerooms of bed

sheets, pillows, carton boxes and worn out almiraahs. There is no gas supply in the section where water is boiled and food is prepared for the patients.

Nurses feel insecure as there is no security guard at night. Female intern doctors usually do not work at night apparently for lack of security.

"Even there is no washroom for nurses. There is one for intern doctors, which we sometimes use. But at night they lock the door from inside. We have to

knock on the door to use the bathroom...it really looks odd," said a senior nurse, seeking anonymity. "To do my duty at night I have to be awake. I have to use toilet at night—sometimes the situation is so awful that I have to use a basin for relieving myself," she said.

Another senior nurse said she is suffering from kidney problems as she drinks less water at night so that she does not have to use toilet.



The operation theatre of the casualty section of Mitford Hospital (left). The costly general anesthesia machine lies idle in a corner (right).

ANOMALOUS ALLOTMENTS IN BEGUNBARI CANAL

Govt to strike two more plots off the list

TAWFIQUE ALI

The government has recently cancelled anomalous allotment of two plots in the city's Begunbari canal, a flood flow zone, while cancellation of plot allotment to two powerful organisations in the same area is under consideration.

"Allotment of plots in favour of BTMA and International Arbitration Centre has been cancelled as per government decision. The decision has been conveyed to the lessees," said Chief Estate Officer of Bangladesh Railway Md Siddique.

The 2001-06 BNP government at the fag end of its tenure allotted four plots to the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI), Bangladesh Textile Mills Association (BTMA), Hotel Hilton (Millennium Holdings Ltd) and International Arbitration Centre in

violation of environment and wetland conservation related laws to serve certain political interests.

Due to 'dubious allotment' the government was deprived of a huge amount of revenue as the valuable public lands were leased out at a token price.

However, the government is yet to cancel plots leased out to FBCCI and Hotel Hilton. According to sources concerned, law adviser to the communications ministry has recommended cancellation of plots leased to FBCCI and Hotel Hilton.

The file with the legal opinion has been forwarded to the law ministry for vetting. But hectic lobbying is going on at the top level of the government to retain the allotment of plots to Hotel Hilton and FBCCI, said the sources.

Director General of Bangladesh Railway Belayet Hossain said he has forwarded the relevant files along with

The Dhaka Metropolitan Development Plan (DMDP) earmarks the Begunbari canal as a natural canal and clearly prohibits any change to its character. As per opinion of the communications ministry, all the said plots in the canal should be cancelled in public interest

required documents to the communications ministry for taking decision. "The rest lies with the ministry," he said.

The communications ministry sold 0.66 decimals of land to BTMA and leased out 4.16 acres to Hotel Hilton. FBCCI got one acre of land at a token price of Tk1 lakh.

At present day market price, one acre of land in this location should cost more than Tk 150 crore, according to sources in

Bangladesh Railway.

There was no public bidding for leasing out the land though it is a precondition under railway's land management rules. The then communications minister made these anomalous deals applying his 'discretionary' authority.

A high official of railway said the allotments can be cancelled just on the ground that leases were not made through open bidding of tender.

The BNP government had

leased out a total of eight large plots in the Begunbari canal. The rest four plots were leased to set up CNG filling stations not only in violation of the city's master plan but also bending railway's land management rules of 2006, sources said.

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As per opinion of the commu-

nications ministry, all the said plots in the Begunbari canal should be cancelled in public interest, according to sources in the railway.

LRGD Adviser Anwarul Iqbal said in last March that all the anomalous allotment of plots in the Begunbari canal area would be cancelled and illegal structures would be removed.

At an inter-ministerial meeting on April 5, the adviser said the government has decided to cancel all the recent allotment of the plots in the Begunbari canal.

The government has recently undertaken a Tk 1, 600 crore project to restore Begunbari canal and Hatirjheel catchment area.

The then Prime Minister Khaleda Zia laid the plaque of the BTMA building on October 22, 2006, five days before her regime handed over power. She laid the foundation plaque of the FBCCI building on October 8.

city express

The latest crop of quotes from the city's press -- words worth repeating, we feel, for their humour, insight or sheer outrageousness. Star City does not necessarily support the opinions expressed in this column.

"I don't think so. Government is here and it's a caretaker government."

-- General Moeen U Ahmed

Army Chief

Told reporters a day after Law Adviser Mainul Hossain termed the present government a military-backed national government, on Tuesday. Source: The Daily Star

"Not a single person in the country will believe that the Dhaka University professor has willingly sought apology."

-- Brig Gen (Rtd) ASM Hannah Shah

Adviser to the BNP Chairperson

Said at a BBC Sanglap where panellists discussed Dhaka University Teachers' Association General Secretary Prof Anwar Hossain's statement seeking apology for recent incidents around DU, on Saturday. Source: The Daily Star

"We all feel insecure and everyone of the university family is devastated, anxious and afraid."

-- Zahidul Islam

Zahurul Haq Hall Provost, Dhaka University

Told reporters after seventeen members of Dhaka University Provost Committee demanded immediate release of the five detained DU academics and asked the vice chancellor to prevent further arrest of DU teachers without specific charges, on Saturday. Source: The Daily Star

"The Election Commission is a constitutional body. The government must accept our demand and must assist us according to the constitution."

-- ATM Shamsul Huda

Chief Election Commissioner

Said at a news briefing while replying to a volley of questions on whether the ban on indoor politics will be lifted for dialogue with EC, on Tuesday. Source: The Daily Star

"It was the previous caretaker government's task to hold elections. But now our task is to restore democracy and hold elections because we came to power after democracy was destroyed."

-- Mainul Hossain

Law and Information Adviser

Said at a briefing after a meeting with the heads of news of different private television channels at the Ministry of Information at the Secretariat, on Monday. Source: The Daily Star

"The political crisis will only be exacerbated by attempts to suppress news and opinion. This government must not abuse the extraordinary powers it has under the state of emergency to keep public in the dark."

-- Joel Simon

Executive Director of New York based Committee to Protect Journalists

Said expressing concern over reported assault, detention and harassment of reporters by security forces during curfew and about warnings to newsmen resulting in widespread self-censorship, on Sunday. Source: The Daily Star

"I lost everything in the flood. This is the last of Tk 100 I saved up for a rainy day. Almost all of it has been spent during the last couple of days. Now what should I buy with this note for lunch?"

-- Insab Ali

A flood victim and day labourer

Told a reporter staring at the Tk 10 note and wondering how to feed his family of eight with this last bit of savings he had held since the flooding began at Ranigram in Sirajganj Sadar, on Thursday. Source: The Daily Star

Compiled by Durdana Ghias



The BTMA plot (left) has been cancelled while the plots for FBCCI Bhaban (middle) and Hilton Hotel still await cancellation.