

Dream for a bright smile comes true

30 patients with cleft lip and palate operated upon at Dhaka Community Hospital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The school friends of nine-year-old Rajib laugh at him and some of them even do not want to play with the little boy as he is born with cleft lip and looks a little bit atypical.

"My son just heaves sigh silently to see his own face in the mirror but does not say anything," said Rajib's mother with tear in her eyes at Dhaka Community Hospital (DCH) as she came from Barisal for a cleft lip surgery of her son.

Being a farmer, Rajib's father could not think of such surgery as it is very expensive.

The Aussi-Bangla Smile Programme of DCH has brought a respite to this poor family as under the programme cleft lip and palate surgery is being conducted free of cost with the help of an expert team from Australia since Tuesday.

A private, non-profit making and self-financed organisation DCH, has been providing healthcare to underprivileged people since its inception in 1988.

Through the Aussi-Bangla Smile Programme, partially supported by International Rotary Club, the helpless parents who think of their children's atypical look as curse in their lives, now dream bright smile and clear words from their beloved children.

"Being informed by a relative that a medical team from abroad will conduct surgery for cleft lip and palate patients, I have brought my daughter who cannot speak clearly though studying in class



two," said mother of Suma, 12, who came from Fenchuganj of Sylhet.

The Australian team led by Dr Hasan Sarwar, a surgeon of Nepean Hospital in Sydney, came to Bangladesh on September 7 to treat the underprivileged patients by collecting fund at their own initiative.

The medical team has already conducted surgery at the floating Jibon Tori Hospital and Square Hospital.

The team will conduct surgery



A surgeon operates on a patient with cleft lip at Dhaka Community Hospital (top). A patient with cleft lip after operation (far left) and Prof Mahmudur Rahman (left).

for more than 50 cleft lip and palate patients as of Saturday.

A total of 12 local doctors, 10 local and six Australian nurses and an Australian anaesthetist are conducting the surgery on 12 patients from 8:00am to 9:00pm everyday.

Already 30 patients from different parts of the country have been operated free of cost under the programme.

The patients are provided with free accommodation, transport and other costs, said Medical Officer Dr Humayun Kabir.

"Though around 300 patients had sought operation, we had to select only 50 who are very poor and need the surgery badly," said Chief Medical Officer Dr Barua while talking to The Daily Star.

"As this reconstructive surgery needs a lot of money and poor people cannot afford it, we are considering to continue such type of programme," said Prof Mahmudur Rahman, coordinator of DCH Trust.

The country has enough surgeons and logistics to conduct such operation, but the lack of fund hinders these surgeries though there are around two lakh patients with cleft lip and palate, said the experts.

If the banks, corporate bodies and industrial organisations come forward to create fund as their social duty, it would be much more easier for the poorer section of the country to get a meaningful life, they added.

Uncertainty still looms over hassle-free hajj by non-ballottee pilgrims

UNB, Dhaka

As was the case for last year, uncertainty still looms over hassle-free performance of hajj by non-ballottee pilgrims as private hajj agencies could not yet rent dormitories for them in Mecca and Madina.

A review meeting on this year's hajj management, convened by the religious affairs ministry yesterday, was appraised of the situation. Officials from different ministries and government departments attended the meeting.

Ministry officials and representatives of private agencies blamed each other for the problem and also cited the country-wide flooding as an excuse for delay in renting the dorms.

Officials concerned cast doubt as to whether the hajj agencies would get good and nearby houses for the devotees as other countries have already

completed renting accommodations for their pilgrims.

Religious Affairs Secretary Ataur Rahman, who presided over the meeting, however, said he is hopeful that the problem will be over soon.

He said dormitories were rented in Mecca for those who would go on the pilgrimage under government management. He put the number at 5,583.

But houses were rented neither in Mecca nor in Madina for as many as 41,363 devotees who will go to perform hajj under private management, he added.

"This year's national hajj policy has made completing the house-renting procedures mandatory within the month of Ramadan," said the religious affairs secretary.

President of Hajj Agencies Association of Bangladesh (Haab) Mohammad Faruque, who was present at the meeting,

admitted the problem and said private agencies failed to rent the houses due to delay in visa-related procedures and the countrywide flooding.

"We could not be sure how many people will go to perform hajj. The government also extended the deadline for house-renting for this reason," he claimed, adding that he is hopeful that the problem will be solved soon.

The religious affairs secretary, however, denied the charge of procedural delays and said the ministry sent in the list of hajj agencies well in advance. "Still, they could not rent the houses".

He said this year the private agencies would have to sign an agreement with the government to send in hajjis to Saudi Arabia.

Under the agreement, he said, the government could take punitive actions against the agencies for misdeeds.

He said the hajj agencies have to rent houses for hajjis within 1,300 metres from Mecca and Madina so that the devotees could stay close to the two holy places.

He said this year the lowest expense for a devotee under government management was fixed at Tk 1,73,402. This is also applicable to those going under private management, he said.

Haab Secretary General Maulana Yakub Sharafat, however, said private agencies would charge a minimum of Tk 1,90,000.

The religious affairs secretary said Biman would operate hajj flights from the country between November 12 and December 14 while return flights would continue from December 23 to January 24.

Labourer dies in rooftop fall

CU CORRESPONDENT

A labourer died when he fell off the rooftop of a five-storied building at Madarbari in the port city yesterday morning.

The victim was identified as Farid, 35, son of Nasir Uddin of Longodu in Rangamati district.

Sources said Farid fell off the rooftop while climbing on a water tank to wash it at around 7:00am.

He was rushed to Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH) where the on duty doctors declared him dead.

Neaz Ahmed appointed honorary consul for NZ



Neaz Ahmed has been appointed as honorary consul for New Zealand, says a press release.

The governor general and the foreign minister of New Zealand and the government of Bangladesh have approved the appointment.

Neaz Ahmed has been the managing director of Southeast Bank Limited since October 2004 and brings with him three decades of banking experience both at home and abroad, acquired through his various important assignments in ANZ Grindlays Bank (Bangladesh & New Zealand), IFIC Bank and as deputy managing director in Premier Bank.

Neaz Ahmed, second son of late Borhanuddin Ahmad, a former secretary, obtained his honours and master's degree in economics from the University of Dhaka.

He is also a seeded tennis player of the country. He is married to Shaheda Ahmad and they have a son and a daughter.

Land registration fees to be realised thru' pay order

BSS, Dhaka

The government yesterday decided to realise land registration fees through pay orders, a law ministry press release said yesterday.

Law Adviser Mainul Hossain approved the decision signing a file on the matter.

In a separate letter, the release said, the adviser asked the inspector general of registration to provide documents soon after the registration of the land.

Muggers stab man to death

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A group of alleged muggers stabbed a man to death early yesterday at Lalbagh in the city.

The unidentified man was about 35 years old and was wearing black trousers and a checked green shirt.

When police reached the spot of the incident at Soarighat, they found the victim in a critical condition and rushed him to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where doctors on duty declared him dead.

Police quoting Azad Hossain, an

eyewitness, said three to four unidentified criminals were manhandling the victim around midnight and later started stabbing him in the chest and belly.

The criminals then fled with everything the victim was carrying, police said quoting Azad.

Meanwhile, locals of Bakshi Bazar lane in Lalbagh captured two muggers, Badal, 20, and Sagar, 22, and handed them over to police around 11:20pm Wednesday after giving them a thrashing. Three to four criminals were trying to mug rickshaw puller Abdul Matin.

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Hindu devotees visit a Puja Mandap at Dhakeswari Temple in the city yesterday, the second day of the five-day Durga Puja.

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not less, but greater than or equal

47 participants, 71 medals.

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