

LONE BURN UNIT AT DMCH - PART II

Job insecurity haunts docs, staffs unpaid for months

DURDANA GHIAS

Uncertainty has gripped the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) burn unit due to manpower shortage. Many of the skilled doctors have left the unit due to job insecurity.

At present the unit has 29 staff including 10 doctors, 13 nurses, 1 physiotherapist and 2 OT technicians against 78 posts advertised in the beginning of the project in 1998.

The project ended in 2003 and since then their job has been

the project but many of them left the unit due to job insecurity, he added.

Insufficient number of doctors and other staff are struggling to provide treatment for the huge number of patients coming to the unit every day from across the country.

There are 23 duty doctors, including 20 deputed ones, who have to do postoperative duties, emergency duties, outdoor duties (from 8:00am to 2:30pm) and ward duties.

nurses on deputation but they are not skilled and trained like the project staff, said doctors at the unit.

"Deputation is not a solution to this problem. We need to regularise our own skilled staff by taking the project to revenue budget," said Dr Samanta Lal Sen, head of the unit.

"We need at least one doctor for 10 patients and one nurse for each patient but here in some shifts we have only one nurse for 70 patients," said Dr Sen. "To

officer of the project.

Contacted, Dr Khandakar Shawkat Hossain, joint secretary of the establishment ministry, explained that for transferring a development project to revenue budget they need to fulfil the staff recruitment criteria as per Public Service Commission (PSC) rules.

"So all the project staffs have to sit for exam again. Their age limit must conform to PSC rules. This is applicable for all development projects including the burn unit," he said.

But Dr Sen, head of the unit, said, "Why my skilled staff will have to sit for an exam again when they already know how to treat a burn patient?" said Dr Sen.

According to hospital sources, the burn unit project ended in 2003 and then it was placed under Improved Hospital Management programme under Directorate General of Health.

But it was not taken to revenue budget as no project ending after July 1997 was transferred.

Dr Khandakar Shawkat Hossain said the staffs of a development project lose their job at the end of the project period. The staff's appointment letters are considered as resignation letters.

Asked why an important project like the DMCH burn unit kept under development budget he termed the situation 'unfortunate' and sympathised with the project staffs.

"The whole situation is very unfortunate. All we can do is to create new posts. But we cannot transfer it to revenue. We have to comply with the rules. It can be relaxed only by the cabinet," said Dr Shawkat.

However, eight projects of that time period including National Asthma Centre, Alternative Medical Care, Filariasis and a 20-bed hospital at Char Algi in Noakhali were transferred to revenue budget, said sources.

"How many people of this country suffer from Filariasis and asthma and how many of them receive alternative medical care? Is a 20-bed hospital more important than the 100-bed burn unit project?" said a medical officer of the DMCH burn unit.



STAR PHOTO

A doctor going round the burn unit at DMCH.

hanging in the balance due to the government's indecision over regularising their service.

The payment of salaries of 13 senior nurses and 7 other staffs has become irregular for the last five months as the government has not transferred the project from the development budget to the revenue budget.

"As I am not getting salary for the last five months I have to maintain my family by borrowing money," said Md Asaduzzaman, a senior staff nurse of the unit.

There were 22 nurses under

Besides, they have to assist at least 8 to 10 operations a day.

"The number of medical officers is not enough to attend all patients. For an example in a shift from 2:30pm to 8:30pm there remains only two medical officers for the entire facility. It becomes almost impossible for them to attend all the patients at a time," said a medical officer.

Besides attending over 200 inpatients, these doctors have to treat around 100 outpatients everyday.

Apart from the project staff, there are 37 doctors and 11

attend all the patients and run the unit properly we need at least 200 staff including 50 doctors and 80 nurses."

The staffs recruited under the project have become frustrated due to job insecurity and non-payment of salaries. "Salary is a minimum requirement of an employee. How can I serve my patients when I don't have money to buy baby food for my child?" said a nurse.

"I don't know whether my job will be regularised as the government is now asking us to sit for exams again," said a medical

Wasa online billing gets poor response

CITY CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka Water and Sewerage Authority's (Wasa) new online billing system has failed to receive encouraging response from Dhaka's water consumers, sources said.

Introduced in February, the system gives Wasa subscribers access to their monthly water bills through the organisation's official website, www.dwsa.org.bd. Viewers are also privileged to file gripes regarding anomalies in the bills.

However, Wasa officials said there has been little difference in the organisation's billing and payment system since the inauguration of the online system.

"Since majority of the city

dwellers do not have access to the Internet, it would be pointless to expect good results so early," said Raihanul Abedin, Managing Director of Wasa.

Besides, majority of Dhaka's water consumers are still unaware of the Wasa's new online billing system. Many among those who came to know about the new system, appear to be clueless on how to get their billing information.

"I read in a newspaper that Wasa has launched an online billing system, but I could not find the website from where I can collect my payment history," said Zafar Imam, a service holder at Moghbar.

A good number of city dwellers have wrong perceptions

about the new system.

"When I heard of [online billing system] I figured that it is a new scheme to pay our bills online--something like online banking. The idea of getting to pay my bills online got me overjoyed," said Monjur Morshed, a lawyer residing in Farmgate area.

"However, when I actually tried to pay my bills through the website, I came to know that I can only see my current bills and past payment history," he said.

"Although it is not what I expected, I believe this new scheme will help remove anomalies and disputes over water bills, and be useful to both Wasa and its subscribers," he added.

According to sources at Wasa's computer department, the

organisation has been receiving calls from curious subscribers asking how to get access to individual billing information. However, the overall response has been pretty disappointing.

"You have to consider the fact that around eighty percent of city dwellers do not have access to Internet, and not everyone needs to use the Internet to view their water bills," said an official concerned.

"We are working to improve the scheme and add new features so that Wasa subscribers will get more benefits," he said.

An appropriate publicity campaign should be launched to popularise it, he observed.

According to sources, city dwellers will soon be able to pay their bills also through the Internet.

"Once the governmental banks that collect Wasa's bill payments are integrated with the online billing system of Dhaka Wasa, our customers will be able to pay their bills online," another official said adding that the state-run banks are set to introduce online banking by the end of 2009.

Previously, Wasa used to maintain their billing information in manual ledger books. Manual keeping of payment records was quite difficult and because of that many subscribers did not even receive their bills regularly, sources said.

"There were times when a subscriber would receive bills in every three months," said an official adding that many defaulting subscribers tend to get away by not paying bills because of the manual system.

Wasa is exploring ways to draw more people into using the online services to make the scheme a success, said Raihanul Abedin, Managing Director of Wasa.



SSC and HSC examinees fall victims to this nagging situation as their exams always begin at this time of the year when load shedding and frequent power outage become order of the day. In the picture, a student of the ongoing SSC exam studies under candlelight at Green Road while the HSC examinees preparing for exams next month suffer in the same way.

SHISHU PARK NOW DULL, RISKY

No major renovation or addition for decades

RIZANUZZAMAN LASKAR

It was 2:00pm in a sizzling summer day. An anxious five-year-old girl crept inside the tiny cockpit and waited for the aircraft to take off. Moments later as the cutesy plane finally left the ground and started to collect pace, the kid's face began to show signs of panic.

Just when it seemed the large frightful eyes were about to burst into tears, a grin took over her face as her family cheered standing at a distance.

"It feels really nice to see children have fun. This feeling is priceless," says Abdul Halim, a visitor standing a few yards away from the helicopter ride at city's Shaheed Zia Shishu Park.

"I remember as a kid I used to come here often. Now when I see around, it is ironic how the place has changed a little over the years. It is almost the same place I saw in my childhood," he said.

No new children's rides have been installed in the park for the last 9 years while warranty period of nine out of 12 rides expired almost 16 years ago, posing a risk of serious accidents.

"This park is a major recreational place for children from all walks of life in the city. The authorities should do something to modernise and renovate this park to give the children more things to have fun with," Halim said.

An official said only three new rides -- the Jet Star, the Astro Fighter and the F-60 Fighter -- were installed in 1992 and 1997 after the park's inauguration in 1979. Besides these late additions, the park has remained the same for around 30 years.

"It is quite evident that even the children have become bored with the obsolete and dull rides, most of which are over two decades old," the official added.

Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation set up the park in 1979 and Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) took the job of its maintenance in 1983. But DCC sources alleged that besides routine maintenance checks, no major renovation work has been carried out in the last three decades.

Installed by Japanese technicians in 1979, Merry-Go-Round, New Tarbant, Wonder Wheel, Benkino Train, Roller Skating, Trampoline, Battery Car, Chair Tower and Flower Cup have remained as the central attractions of the park over the years.

According to sources at the Engineering Department of the DCC, several projects have been designed to renovate and revitalise the Shaheed Zia Shishu Park in the past two decades but all these projects have been tied up in bureaucratic tangles.

The projects include comprehensive renovation work of the



completed within 2006 is still awaiting the approval of the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (LGRD).

Meanwhile, warranty period of nine rides expired almost 16 years ago and a comprehensive renovation scheme can only ensure public safety, sources said.

With the existing rides exceeding their life span of 10 years, serious accidents might occur if precautionary measures are not taken, DCC officials fear.

"It is quite impossible for any apparatus to offer optimum service for over 10 years as equipment and components wear and tear over time," said a DCC official concerned, adding that some rides are still functioning well -- thanks to sincere maintenance work by the DCC.

Continuing negligence of the authorities over the years is making citizens believe that the authorities are not thinking about ensuring an affordable and safe recreational facility for children of Dhaka -- an overcrowded city that definitely needs more parks of this sort.

"This park is not only a park for the children -- this is a recreational place for a lot of adults as well. Most of these adults, like me, have joyous memories of this park," said Majharul Islam who came to visit the Shishu Park with his family.

"It saddens me to see such an amazing and pleasant place like this getting neglected by the city fathers," he said. "Considering its place in the lives of so many people of the city, the authorities should take immediate measures to renovate and modernise the park."

According to sources, on average around 5,500 people visit the park every day and the DCC earns around Tk 2 crore revenue from the park a year.

park, addition of new rides and features, expansion of the park, and constructing two underpasses connecting the park with National Museum and Dhaka Club. The DCC sources said it is unlikely that any of these schemes would see the light of day anytime soon.

The DCC proposed a Tk 92-crore project in 2004 in a bid to give a facelift to the park as well as to increase revenues by attracting more visitors, sources said.

The ambitious proposal out-

lined a comprehensive renovation of the park that would include refurbishment of worn out rides and adding 16 new rides such as Barn Stormer, Roller Coaster, Mono Rail, Water Splash, Giant Wheel, Viking Mars, Bumper Cars, laser shows and 3-D movies.

The proposal also included a plan to expand the park up to the Police Control Room at Shahbagh, increasing the park's land area from 15 acres to 19 acres.

This project scheduled to the



Dhaka Water Supply and Sewerage Authority - Mozilla Firefox

http://www.dwsa.org.bd/

Dhaka Water Supply and Sewerage Authority
88, Kezi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Kawan Bazar, Dhaka - 1215

Consumer Billing Statistics : 0108080950

Name : Mrs. Maher Barui

Address : House No-37 Kadam Tola Dhaka

Category : Domestic

Water Status : Connected

Meter Status : Metered

Sewer Status : Undefined

Meter No. : 26262

Bill Date Range : 01-01-2008 To 30-04-2008

Payment Type : ☒ All Bill ☐ Paid Bill ☐ Yet Not Paid

Bill No.	Previous Date	Present Date	Consumption	Current Bill Amount	Arrears Amount	Total Bill Amount	Payment Status
2143000	2073000	130000	1644.50	9.50	1644.50	Unpaid	