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Strong monitoring key to efficient fund use

The Daily Star-Health 21 roundtable on health budget 2009-10 told

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Health experts and government policymakers yesterday said the health sector needs strong monitoring with people's participation at local levels to efficiently utilise the budgetary allocation.

Apart from comparatively small budgetary share, bureaucratic tangle, shortage of skilled manpower and political clout to recruit staffs are major bottlenecks to improve the country's health sector scenario, they said at a roundtable.

Health Minister AFM Ruhal Haque said the government had taken initiatives to appoint more doctors and nurses to reach healthcare service to the doorsteps

of people and make monitoring stronger through local level committees.

The observations came at a roundtable on "Health Budget 2009-10: Allocation and Utilisation" organised jointly by Health 21, a body of professionals, and The Daily Star at the latter's conference room in the capital.

"Our major problem is not money but bureaucratic tangle where money spending requires so many approvals. This process should be simplified," the health minister said.

The budgetary allocation to the health sector this fiscal is Tk 6898 crore, which is 6.15 percent of the total budget.

Experts said earlier that the govern-

ment could not utilise more than 80 percent of the money allocated.

"Doctors do not stay in their workplaces and medicines disappear. I will find out those involved in such irregularities," he said, adding that doctors are also depressed in various ways. "We need to find a remedy and get out of such culture."

He said if around 9,000 community clinics are in full operation the health service will improve. All such clinics will be brought under internet network to maintain patients' database for quality service.

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PM leaves for Nam summit

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina left for Egypt yesterday to attend the two-day 15th summit of the Non-Aligned Movement beginning today in Sharm El Sheikh.

A special flight of Biman Bangladesh Airlines, carrying a 36-member official delegation led by the PM and a 14-member media team, took off from Zia International Airport at 11:21am.

Foreign Minister Dipu Moni and Foreign Secretary Mijar Quayes are already in Sharm El Sheikh to do the groundwork for the meet through pre-summit meetings.

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BPC's costly oil purchase

Ignores option to save Tk 60-70cr

SHARIER KHAN

Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC) is buying the major part of the country's oil needs at a very high premium rate from Malaysia, although it has the option to slash this expense and save the nation Tk 60 to 70 crore worth of wasteful expense this year.

According to BPC data, it is importing 12 lakh tonnes of diesel and 1.5 lakh tonnes of jet fuel from Petronas Trading Corporation (Petco) of Malaysia till December this year--paying it a premium of \$5.98 per barrel diesel and \$6.6 per barrel jet fuel.

But the BPC is also buying 3.6 lakh tonnes of diesel at a premium of \$4.9 and 60,000 tonnes of jet fuel from the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) at \$6.35 for the period July to December. Compared to the Petco's rate, this deal alone is saving BPC at least Tk 21 crore.

The BPC is additionally purchasing 1.2 lakh tonnes of diesel from the Maldives National Oil Company (MNOC) at a premium

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ACC considers withdrawing 39 cases

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Anti-Corruption Commission is considering withdrawing 39 cases including 12 against Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

The home ministry earlier sent the cases to the ACC by terming those 'politically motivated'.

The cases were filed under the ACC Act during the last caretaker government rule.

Talking to a private TV channel yesterday, ACC Chairman Ghulam Rahman said they would decide on withdrawal of the cases after examining the legal sides.

He said the fate of the cases would be settled as per the laws. "We won't do anything contrary to the law [ACC act]," he added.

SC Appellate Division gets 4 more judges

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

President Zillur Rahman yesterday appointed four senior-most judges of the High Court Division as judges of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, raising the number of the apex court judges to eleven.

The elevated judges are Justice Bijan Kumar Das, Justice ABM Khairul Haque, Justice Md. Muzammel Hossain and Justice Surendra Kumar Sinha.

The president made the

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21 cases against Haji Selim set to be dropped

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The metropolitan public prosecutor (MPP) has recommended withdrawal of 21 cases against former Awami League lawmaker Haji Mohammad Selim considering those "politically motivated" and meant for "harassment".

MPP Mohammad Abdullab Abu on Monday made the recommendation after scrutinising the case dockets and documents, sources say.

The MPP also asked the authorities to send the cases to the district magistrate of Dhaka for his opinion in this regard.

Selim, who is facing a staggering 120 cases on various charges, had earlier filed petitions for withdrawal of 85 of them,

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Home ministry has no-one in its charge officially

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The home ministry has no-one at its helm after Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina left for Egypt yesterday.

The ministry had already been functioning without its minister and state minister. The prime minister had been in charge of the ministry in their absence from the first week of July.

The PM, who will return home on July 17, did not assign anyone from her cabinet to look after the crucial

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Public hearing on July 20 to protect rivers, environment

RASHIDUL HASAN

A parliamentary subcommittee yesterday set July 20 for public hearing of four organisations on saving rivers and environment from pollution.

Sources said the subcommittee, in its report to be submitted to the parliamentary standing committee on forest and environment, will recommend appointing an ombudsman to deal with the irregularities and complaint in the environmental sector.

During the hearing to be held at the parliament complex, the committee will receive recommendations from the officials of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers' Association (Bela), Bangladesh Paribesh Andolok (Bapa), Channel-i and The Daily Star on saving rivers and environment.

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NATIONAL COUNCIL AL invites district councillors' names Sub-committees formed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League yesterday sent letters to its organisational district committees, seeking names of councillors for the national council on July 24.

The letters were signed by AL Office Secretary Abdul Mannan Khan, said sources.

Meanwhile, the AL council preparation committee formed several sub-committees at a meeting in the afternoon.

Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury will be at the helm of the reception sub-committee, Obaidul Quader management, Nuh-ul-Alam Lenin publication, Asaduzzaman Noor publicity, Alamgir Kumkum cultural affairs, Dr Mostofa Jalal Mohiuddin health

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PHOTO: COURTESY

Police recover 45 sharp weapons from Latif dormitory in Dhaka Polytechnic Institute and arrest 35 students in this connection yesterday.

DHAKA POLYTECHNIC INSTT

Raid on halls, 35 arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police early yesterday picked up 35 students of Dhaka Polytechnic Institute from its Latif dormitory following the factional clash of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) at the institution Monday.

The law enforcers raided three dormitories--Latif, Zahir Raihan and Qazi Motahar Hossain--of the institution at around 1:30am. They recovered 45 lethal weapons including seven machetes and three long knives and arrested 35 students in this connection, said Officer-in-Charge Mohammad Omar Faroque of Tejgaon Police Station.

Earlier on Monday, two BCL factions of the institution unit--one led by Zakir and another by Russel--locked into a clash over establishing control on the earnings from first year admission procedure.

Both the sides blasted at least seven bombs during the clash that left seven students injured.

Sources said the clash ensued following an altercation between the two groups as the waiting-list-admission began that day.

OC Omar said a good number of police were deployed on the campus after the clash and they raided three dormitories early yesterday. All the recoveries and arrests were made at Latif dormitory but most of the arrestees did not belong to that dormitory, he added.

Police sources said of the arrestees Rakib Islam alias Masud,

Decision on BDR rebels' trial today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An inter-ministerial meeting will decide today whether the trial of Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) mutineers will be held under the Army Act.

The meeting to be chaired by Law Minister Shafique Ahmed will discuss the

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HEALTH SERVICES Collecting VAT from patients illegal: HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday declared illegal the imposition of Value Added Tax (VAT) on citizens for providing health services to them.

The HC also declared illegal and unconstitutional the provisions of Constitution of Value Added Tax (VAT) Act, 1991 for realising

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