

Draft health policy

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fee' from all public health care centres as per a guideline to be prepared in this regard.

"The provision of 'user fee' has been kept in the draft policy to increase government's revenue. If the revenue from health sector increases, it would ensure better services for the people," said Director General of the Directorate General of Health Services Prof Shah Monir Hossain.

The poorest of the poor would get health services free of cost as per the health policy, he said and mentioned that still people are paying charge for the outdoor health services and cabin at the medical college hospitals.

The provision of imposing user fees has invited strong criticism as it would make the health services costlier for the poor people and violate the constitution, which guarantees health rights.

The poor people are not receiving health services free of cost actually rather they have to spend money for medicines and other services as per the doctors' prescriptions, allege the health experts.

"Collecting user fee might be a source of corruption," said Farida Akhter, executive director of UBINIG, a policy advocacy and research organisation.

If the user fee provision is

introduced, people will think that receiving health care services from private clinics will be better than services from public hospitals, she added.

The timeframe of the 'safety net' for the poor people is not clearly mentioned in the draft health policy, said president of the Health Rights Movement Prof Rashid E Mahubb.

He said it would help commercialise the health sector while the poor people would be deprived after implementation of the user fee provision.

The country has no health policy to ensure people's health. Earlier a draft health policy was prepared during the Ershad regime, which was changed in 2000, while another during the last caretaker government in 2008. Now the government has formulated a draft health policy 2009 after reviewing previous two draft policies.

Talking to The Daily Star Prof Shah Monir Hossain said that the government will review the recommendations to be posted the website to formulate a second draft and several meetings with different stakeholders would be held before finalising the policy.

Before December it will not be possible to finalise the health policy, he said.

The draft health policy has 15 objectives, 18 principles and 49 strategies.

No step yet

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The local leaders of Awami League (AL), who earlier staged arbitration and set free the perpetrators after awarding fines of Tk 10,000 each, are now approaching the leaders of both Kalapara Press Club and Patuakhali Press Club to have a rapprochement with journalists who reported the incident.

Local journalists said the leaders are now telling them if the reporters stop digging further into the incident, they would ask the victim to withdraw the defamation case that she had to file under duress against the editor, publisher and reporter of a Bangla daily.

Earlier, under immense pressure, the editor of a local daily sacked a reporter who covered the September 25 incident. The reporter filed a general diary with the police seeking protection.

The administration is yet to take any step to arrest the culprits or arrange medical test for the victim, whose family fled home for fear of reprisal.

Aug 21 attack

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petitions on August 17 seeking cancellation of their bail.

The Huji members -- Munshi Mohibullah alias Mohibur Rahman, brother of Huji Chief Mufti Abdul Hannan, and Arif Hasan Sumon -- obtained bail in the case on August 12.

Their bail was earlier cancelled in a case filed under the Explosive Substances Act, 1908.

Upon separate petitions submitted by the investigation officer (IO), the court extended the investigation completion deadline into the cases by two months and also directed inspector general of police (IGP) to submit probe reports by the same time, which had earlier expired on October 3.

On August 12 this year, Speedy Trial Tribunal-1 Judge Masdar Hossain granted the Huji men bail saying they were not directly involved in the incident.

Earlier, the same court on August 3 ordered a further probe into the cases following petitions filed seeking fresh investigation.

Meanwhile, the newly appointed 10 Criminal Investigation Department's (CID) additional superintendent of police Abdul Kahar Akond took Pintu and a Huji member Moulana Abu Taher on a three-day fresh remand for interrogation.

Twenty-three people were killed and 300 others were injured in the grenade attack on an Awami League rally at Bangabandhu Avenue on August 21, 2004.

Two cases -- one for murder and the other for blasting grenades at the rally -- were filed following the incident.

On June 11 last year, CID pressed charges against 22 people including Mufti Abdul Hannan, and former deputy minister and BNP leader Abdus Salam Pintu.

CID arrested Hannan, Pintu and 12 others who are now in jail custody.

Pintu's brother Moulana Tajuddin and seven others have been absconding since the cases were filed.

SSF protection

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and Rehana, daughters of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, with foolproof security round the clock.

Ganabhaban, official residence of the prime minister, was allotted to Hasina and a Dhanmondi house to her sister, causing huge uproar.

The BNP-Jamaat alliance government however scrapped the law in December 2001.

In that law, family members meant only Bangabandhu's two daughters who survived the bloodbath that killed the father of the nation and most of his family on August 15, 1975. The proposed law includes their children too.

The bill says a son and a daughter of Hasina and two daughters and a son of Rehana will be entitled to lifelong SSF security no matter where they live.

It however does not specify how the arrangements will be made if they live abroad.

Currently, Hasina's son lives in the United States and daughter in Canada, and Rehana's are settled in the UK.

The July 6 cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina okayed the proposed law.

In a statement tagged to the bill, the home minister says the legislation is needed to ensure security for the members of Bangabandhu's family as conspiracy is still on to kill them.

Hasina, also Awami League president, has seen several attempts on her life over the years.

While in opposition, she survived a grenade attack at a rally on Bangabandhu Avenue on August 21, 2004. The blasts left 23 people including AL leader Iy Rahman killed and scores injured.

In 2000, 80 kg explosives were found in Gopalganj where Hasina's helicopter was supposed to land.

Several people were killed in a gun attack on her rally in Chittagong in 1988.

Dhaka wants

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visiting Economic Affairs Minister of Bhutan Lyonpo Khandu Wangchuk paid a call on her at her office in the capital yesterday morning.

PM's Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad briefed the newsmen after the meeting.

During the meeting, they discussed issues on bilateral interests, including expansion of trade and people-to-people contact between the two countries, and facing global warming and climate change.

The premier said Bangladesh attaches importance to its relationship with Bhutan as this South Asian neighbour was the first country to recognise Bangladesh after its independence in 1971.

Referring to her meeting with US President Barack Obama on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in New York, Hasina informed the Bhutanese minister that she had brought the issue of climate change for which the developing countries are not responsible.

"I told the US president that developed countries are mainly responsible for the current global warming. So, they have to take major responsibilities to tackle the situation."

Mentioning the scenic beauty of Bhutan, Nepal and Bangladesh, the PM said the three countries can launch a package programme to attract tourists as Bhutan and Nepal have hills while Bangladesh has the world's longest sea beach.

Laying emphasis on expanding the people-to-people contact between the two countries, she observed that both the countries would be benefited with exchange of visits.

Political culture

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seventh parliament, between 1996 and 2001, the BNP had boycotted 163 House proceedings out of a total 382 sittings, official records preserved at the Parliament Secretariat show.

Going with the culture of House boycott, the main opposition BNP has begun staying away from the current parliament and its lawmakers joined only 22 out of 72 sittings of the ninth parliament.

Contacted by The Daily Star yesterday over telephone, AL presidium member Kazi Zafarullah said, "As far as I know, no work has begun to formulate the code of conduct."

"A code of conduct of some sort is necessary to bring changes in politics, coming out of the culture of enforcing indiscriminate hartals and House boycotts," Zafarullah asserted.

He claimed that efforts are on to ensure participation of the main opposition lawmakers in the House proceedings to make the parliament more effective.

Political analysts, however, observed that the ruling party, if it moves to formulate the code of conduct, might face enormous difficulties in getting a consensus as differences between the two rival major political parties continue to widen each passing day.

"It seems the ruling party does not want to reach an understanding with the opposition to bring changes in the political culture. The gap between the two parties has already widened," M Hafizuddin Khan, former adviser to a caretaker government, told The Daily Star.

He said the ruling AL had announced that the deputy speaker of the House would be elected from the opposition lawmakers but it did not keep its word. "This was the beginning..." Hafizuddin said.

Asked if any move would be successful in forging a consensus between the rival parties on national issues, Hafizuddin said success of such move depends on the ruling party's sincerity.

BNP has been threatening to launch street agitation at the end of this year or early next year against the government. Talking to The Daily Star yesterday over telephone, BNP senior leader MK Anwar expressed his frustration at the prevailing situation.

"I do not see any way of shunning the previous political culture as the government has made the situation worse," Anwar said replying to a query whether the negative culture of politics will continue.

When his attention was drawn to the AL electoral

Hasina also expressed hope that the two countries are pledged-bound to extend cooperation in establishing world peace.

The Bhutanese minister congratulated Hasina on her assumption of office as the Prime Minister after her party's overwhelming victory in the last general election.

The victory will give democracy a firm footing in Bangladesh, Wangchuk added.

He widely acclaimed Hasina for her address on climate change issue in the recently concluded UNGA, saying this will help tackle challenges of global warming for which least developed countries are the worst victims.

In this context, Wangchuk said Bhutan is facing natural disasters due to global climate change and sought Bangladesh's cooperation in the disaster management process.

Referring to excellent bilateral relations between the two countries, he expressed hope that the relations would be further expedited in the days to come.

About the PM's upcoming visit to Bhutan, he said the people of his country are eagerly waiting to welcome the Bangladesh premier in their country on November 6.

The Bhutanese minister also informed the PM that Bhutan is going to set up a medical college where Bangladesh doctors would be recruited.

Bhutanese Ambassador to Bangladesh Dashedo Bap Kesang, PM's Principal Secretary M A Karim, Office Secretary Mollah Waheeduzzaman and Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad were present on the occasion.

32,000 cops

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collaboration with the Department for International Development of UK and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) organised the programme.

Sahara said women will be given priority in the recruiting scheme to reduce gender gap in police department as there are only 2,269 female police at present.

On security issue, she said, "The government is committed to ensuring security to all, but its task would be easy if the leader of the opposition and people from all strata of life cooperate."

A total of 193 women members of Bangladesh Police received the membership card yesterday, and of them 10 received it directly from the home minister's hand.

Appreciating the role of female police at home and abroad, Sahara said, "Though the history of female police in the country is not long, they are making a significant contribution to improving the law and order. And they are also utilising their merit and skills in upholding the country's image in the world."

She referred to the prime minister's commitment recently at the UN general assembly session to ensure participation of more female police from Bangladesh in UN peacekeeping missions.

The home minister thanked Amena Begum, additional superintendent of police, Chittagong, for being elected coordinator of the IAWP Network, Region -15. "The image of Bangladesh police has improved before the world through this election," she said.

Sahara asked the law enforcement agencies to work more sincerely to curb militancy, terrorism and other crimes in the country.

Speaking on the occasion, Renata Lok Dessallien, UN resident coordinator and UNDP resident representative, said IAWP membership card distribution ceremony shows that Bangladesh Police Women Networking (BPWN) is progressing.

He mentioned many achievements of female police. "Women are still battered, victims of domestic violence, pornography and trafficking. So, efficient and professional service by the police can ease their life," he said.

Others who spoke at the ceremony included Abdus Sobhan Sikder, home secretary, NBK Tripura, additional inspector general of police, Fatema Begum, deputy inspector general of Special Branch and Yasmeen Ghafoor, general secretary of BPWN.

BNP council

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non-cooperation from the committee members.

The party Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain, however, said the party council would be held at the end of this year.

"The process to form committees across the country is going on. The national council will be held after formation of all the committees," he added.

When asked about BNP's failure to form all district committees on schedule, Delwar on Friday said all committees will be formed timely before the national council.

Chairperson Khaleda Zia also recently in a meeting of party standing committee expressed her annoyance over the slow pace of the reorganisation process.

"Chairperson is seriously concerned about the matter and we are trying our level best," Mahbubur Rahman, member of the standing committee, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Asked whether it is possible to hold council in about 20,000 units across the country in two months, he said they had still one more month in hand as the election commission allowed them the time till January 24.

Party insiders, however, said it may not be possible to hold council in every organisational unit across the country but the party will be able to hold district and central council within the scheduled time if the high command wants.

They said the party high-ups might send several teams led by party's senior and mid-level leaders to visit the grassroots areas to supervise the committee formation process so that the process is completed soon.

"Without direct supervision of top leadership formation of field level committees might get tough as almost each unit has several factions," said a former lawmaker of the party.

He also said the party is fraught with apprehension about the fate of the council due to a lack of dynamic leadership in central BNP.

The chairperson, however, is very much interested in the reorganisation of the party from grassroots level through democratic process.

Indonesia

FROM PAGE 16
Desperate villagers complained to AFP reporters they were being neglected while the focus remained on the city.

Whole hillside villages were found obliterated after giant landslides buried houses and hundreds of people, including an entire wedding party of 30 people swept away in an avalanche of mud and rock.

"Today the military will be heading to landslide areas which we have not been able to access earlier because roads are closed and broken," Indonesian military spokesman Sagom Tamboen told AFP.

The mayor of Padang, Fauzi Bahar, said that only 60 percent of the disaster zone had been accessed by emergency teams, and that more heavy machinery and materials to rebuild houses were urgently needed.

He said people were "traumatised" in his city, the capital of West Sumatra, which now faces a colossal rebuilding task.

Anger about poor construction and lax enforcement of building regulations is beginning to surface as people recover from the shock of the disaster.

"The government must introduce new standards when rebuilding the city," said Irwadi, a fisheries ministry official waiting outside the Ambacang hotel for news of colleagues who had been meeting there when the quake hit.

"They must only approve permits for buildings that are strong and only use quality building materials."

Countries from around the world have rushed aid and rescue teams to the scene and international aid groups are ramping up efforts to provide housing, medical services and basics such as food and water.

Teams from Australia,

Criminal

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might have been a member of the notorious Dakaiti Shahid group."

The incident occurred at a crowded place but none could identify the killers, Liakat said.

The body of Mohel was sent to Mitford Hospital morgue for autopsy. Morgue sources said his body bore four bullet marks in the head, chest and back.

Mazhar, Kohinoor

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front of Rapa Plaza in the capital's Dhanmondi area. The incident occurred when she was going to pick her son from a school on March 12, 2006.

The complaint also says that the accused snatched gold ornaments worth Tk 75,000, a mobile phone set, a wristwatch and Tk 14,000 in cash from her possession.

On September 27, Judge of Fourth Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court Mohammad Ismail took cognizance of the case against former DC Mazharul Huq and Kohinoor Amir, constable Ruhul Amin and 25 other policemen.

Additional Attorney General AKM Zohirul Hoque yesterday told The Daily Star that Kohinoor has to appear before the HC during hearing of the petition since he prayed for anticipatory bail.

The government will oppose the bail petition during the hearing, he added.

The date of hearing, however, has not been fixed yet.

Dhanmondi police are trying to arrest Kohinoor.

Youth beaten

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Police said Abdul Jalil Chishti, general secretary of ward-2 unit AL, filed a case on behalf of the lawmaker.

In the case statement, Jalil mentioned that Shaheed is a member of top terror Shahadat group who demanded that the MP pay Tk 20 lakh as toll.

"When Shaheed went to receive the money at the MP house, he was caught and later handed over to police", Jalil claimed.

Sub-inspector Yakub Ali of Pallabi Police Station said they had recovered a sharp weapon "from under a sofa on which Shaheed was sitting."

Quoting the youth, SI Yakub Ali said Shaheed had been known to the MP and he went to the lawmaker's house for a personal purpose.

Contacted over phone, wife and daughter of Jalil said he would not talk to anybody as he was in sleep after a whole busy night at the MP's residence.

Ilias Mollah also could not be reached despite several attempts.

Mirpur zone Deputy Commissioner Lutful Kabir said they were investigating whether there was any mystery behind the incident.

Britain, Japan, Russia, Singapore, South Korea, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar and the United States have arrived or are travelling to the scene to help overwhelmed and exhausted locals.

The quake struck off Sumatra's west coast northwest of Padang on Wednesday on a major faultline on the volatile "Ring of Fire" that scientists have long warned was a disaster waiting to happen.

Another 5.5-magnitude earthquake rocked Indonesia on Sunday, in West Papua province which is in the far east of the sprawling archipelago about 3,500 kilometres (2,200 miles) from the Sumatra quake disaster zone.

Authorities said there were no reports of injuries there.

Poor countries

FROM PAGE 1
"Development and Climate Change."

"Climate change is an urgent issue and the needs are enormous and we are waiting and hoping to see an international agreement in Copenhagen," Lin said, referring to UN-sponsored talks in December aimed at curbing global warming.

Marianne Fay, the World Bank's chief economist for sustainable development, said the costs of mitigating and adapting to climate change would add up to around 300 billion dollars (206 billion euros) a year from 2030.

Following the release of the World Bank report, Caroline Pearce, policy advisor to international aid agency Oxfam, said that developed countries "are leading the world into a disastrous future."

"They can sit back and watch poverty and global temperatures spiral out of control or they can reduce their emissions and can hand over significant new money to help poor people adapt to climate change," she said.

MPs want

FROM PAGE 16
Citing an example of such disqualified institutions, he said all the 20 examiners of eight colleges took a public examination, but none of them could pass.

"On average Tk 1.5 crore is being spent on each of the colleges enjoying the MPO status," said the education minister.

"We can't let public money to be wasted in such a way," he added.

AL lawmakers KM Khalid, ABM Anwarul Haque, Abdur Rahman and Murad Hasan were among others who demanded that the government immediately resume bringing educational institution in the system of MPO.

The parliament session resumed yesterday at around 4:00pm without the participation of the main opposition BNP.

In response to a query of AL lawmaker Benzir Ahmed, the education minister said the government has taken steps to print 18.68 crore books for distribution free of cost in the next education year among students from class I to X.

Mohila League

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Khalilur Rahman yesterday told The Daily Star over phone that the Mohila Awami League occupied the land on October 2.

Corporation's Deputy General Manager SM Sohrabuddin said yesterday evening, "We came to know about the matter from a few locals on Saturday. We rushed to the place and saw some day-labourers were erecting the house."

"When we objected to the construction of the house, the leaders simply ignored us," he added.

"We have informed high officials concerned of the matter and will lodge a general diary tomorrow," Sohrabuddin said.

Talking to The Daily Star, however, a Mohila League leader claimed that the land does not belong to the shipping corporation.

"The Koibalyadham Asram authority owns the land," said Mili Chowdhury, president of ward-9 Mohila Awami League.

She said leaders and activists of her party do not have a place to "spend time" and hold party meetings. "So, we chose the site and built our party office," she said.

Asked if they took any permission from the temple authority, party General Secretary Dipti Rani Majumder said they would take the permission after the house is completed.

2 Rab men held

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arrested following the confessions of Mosharrar Hossain and Jasim who were arrested on September 29 from Mymensingh in connection with the looting incidents.

Rab-3 Commanding Officer Lt Mamun Mahmud Firoz Chowdhury told The Daily Star, "As per police requisition, we have handed over them to Motijheel police station and already suspended them as part of punitive measures against them."

Motijheel police said they arrested the Rab men after a case filed on September 6 by Milon Chowdhury, an employee of a gold shop in Chittagong.

In the case statement, Milon mentioned that six people including the two Rab personnel identified themselves as detective branch officials and picked up him from opposite a bus counter in Motijheel on September 6. They later snatched 45 tolas of gold, Tk 16,000 in cash and a mobile phone set worth Tk 25,000 from him.

Milon said he arrived at Kamalapur Railway station by a train from Chittagong in the morning with the gold in his possession and later went to Motijheel for going to New Market for the business purpose.

Sources said Mosharrar

and Jasim disclosed the names of the Rab members and two other retired police members.

Arju Miah, officer-in-charge of Motijheel police station, said they have already identified other persons involved in the crime. But he declined to disclose details for the sake of investigation.

In another incident on September 13, police said, the arrested four persons and two other absconding persons also picked up another person, Mohammad Azim, from near Adamjee Court and looted Tk 10 lakh in cash from him.

Following the arrests, Azim identified the detained persons as the members of the gang that looted his money.

Khandakar Mohiduddin, deputy commissioner of Motijheel Zone, told The Daily Star that the detained persons are the members of a gang who picked up people in the guise of law enforcers abusing their power and later looted valuables issuing threats.

A metropolitan magistrate granted the three-day remand for the two Rab personnel when Motijheel police produced them before the court.

Project for clean

FROM PAGE 16
If people's exposure to polluted air in Dhaka could be reduced by 20-80 percent, it would save health costs of 170-500 US dollars every year, Dr Mohammad Nasiruddin, project director of the CASE, said at a session on the project at a city hotel yesterday.

The environment and forest ministry and the World Bank, Dhaka office, jointly organised the session.

The project also will improve the capacity of the department of environment (DoE) to monitor air quality and undertake 25 brick kiln projects with cleaner technologies to reduce air pollution as well as carry out awareness campaign toward the issue through mass media, said Maria Sarraf, CASE project task team leader of the World Bank.

Of the project cost, the World Bank is providing 62.2 million US dollars as loan while Bangladesh government therest.

Three agencies--the department of environment, Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) and Dhaka Transport Coordination Board (DTCB) will implement the project. The DoE will look after its environment matters while DCC and DTCB the transport.

The CASE project is intended to build 70 km new sidewalks, 80 km one-way streets and