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Cancer hospital in sickbed

Shortage of essential equipment, manpower hampers treatment

MAHBUBA ZANNAT and SHAHEEN MOLLAH

The National Institute of Cancer Research and Hospital (NICRH), the largest cancer hospital in the country, is now limping due to lack of useful medical equipment and shortage of manpower much to the woes and worries of patients, especially the poor ones.

As two out of five radiotherapy machines of NICRH have been out of order for months, cancer patients have to wait now for about two months for their turn to get their life-saving therapy.

Such a wait, in fact, is taking a toll on patients diagnosed with cancer at their early stages, hospital sources admitted.

Consequently a huge number of untreated patients are either left to wait for their turn for radiotherapy at an opportune time or forced to find an alternative solution.

The country's largest cancer hospital is lacking a number of critical devices like Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) machine, which has been out of order for the last two months.

It has a digital X-Ray machine but no expert is there to operate it. The Brachy therapy machine broke down two months back ham-

pering the treatment of the cervical patients. Head of the department of Radiotherapy Dr Golam Mostofa, however, said they provide emergency treatment and chemotherapy to the patients so that they can wait for some more days and a very few patients suffer for this.

The hospital has five radiotherapy machines to treat 500 patients daily, which is now treating around 300 patients instead with just three machines. A new machine is yet to start functioning. Out of the two broken-down machines one has recently been repaired after a long time.

"We need five more radiotherapy machines immediately to serve the patients," said Director of the hospital Dr Mollah Obayedullah Baki.

He also said it needs to buy 'cobalt source' for the radiotherapy machine every five years that costs Tk 1.80 crore for repair.

The hospital authorities sent a letter to the ministry on July 30 in this regard but due to bureaucratic tangle the money is yet to be granted.

Even managing a seat in the hospital is very difficult. Cashing in on the situation the nearby house owners with the help of third and fourth-class employees of the hospital are running a



Shawkat Ali, a cancer patient, rests at the gate of NICRH with his son, being refused treatment there.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQUE

Militants blow up Pak school, clinic

24 more killed in fighting

AFP, AP, Peshawar/ Islamabad

Militants blew up a high school and a clinic in restive northwest Pakistan yesterday in the latest spike of violence that has left more than 300 people dead this month, officials said.

A 12-room state-run high school for boys and a clinic in Shahukhel village were turned to rubble by explosives planted by militants, chief of Hangu district administration, Gul Wali Khan, told AFP.

There were no casualties because the buildings were empty, he said. Up to 80 kilograms (176 pounds) of explosives were used, he added.

Militants have destroyed hundreds of schools, mostly for girls, in the North West Frontier Province (NWFP) over the past few years.

Nearly 200 schools were destroyed in the

Swat valley alone during a two-year violent campaign by radical cleric Maulana Fazlullah to enforce Sharia law.

Following up a similar offensive in Swat this summer, Pakistan is pressing a major ground and air operation designed to crush Taliban sanctuaries in the lawless South Waziristan region, which borders Afghanistan.

Authorities last week shut schools across Pakistan following a suicide attack on a university campus in Islamabad. Although most schools reopened on Monday, several private schools have remained closed this week.

Pakistan's military says it has killed two dozen militants over the past day and is closing in on a prominent guerrilla stronghold in the mountains of South Waziristan.

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Call to stop infrastructural projects in tiger zone

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Kathmandu

Representatives from 13 tiger range countries yesterday called for a halt to infrastructure projects in core tiger breeding areas.

They also asked financial institutions to stop financing development projects that adversely affect critical tiger habitats.

The five-day Kathmandu Global Tiger Workshop also felt that empowering local communities that live in and around tiger landscapes with alternative livelihood is vital to

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Drive to recover Sylhet canals in December

9 major canals to be excavated

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Sylhet City Corporation (SCC) decided to retrieve nine major canals from land grabbers and excavate them to rid the city from waterlogging.

The engineering department of the SCC would soon invite tenders for the excavation of the canals, SCC sources said.

The government, under a development project, allotted Tk 11.3 crore to the SCC in this regard, the sources said, adding the project is aimed at freeing the city from waterlogging. SCC will launch a drive to recover the canals sometime in December this year, he added.

Acting Chief Engineer of the SCC Nur Azizur Rahman told The Daily Star tenders would be floated in November. The canals will be demar-

cated and illegal structures on the canals will be demolished, he said.

The canals have remained occupied by some influential quarters for years preventing rainwater from getting out of the city every monsoon.

SCC Mayor Badar Uddin Ahmed Kamran said committees with the affluent people would be formed to ensure proper implementation of the project.

Eight of the nine canals -- Dhubri Chara, Goali Chara, Malni Chara, Gavial Chara, Mangli Chara, Kewa Chara, Baruthkhana Chara and Boita Chara -- fall into the river Surma from the city's Uttar Surma while the remaining one Ratnar Khal from Dakkhin Surma.

Presently, grabbers have encroached upon

SEE PAGE 15 COL 5

Govt made JS ineffective

Says Delwar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has made the parliament ineffective by using it to tarnish the image of opposition leaders including Khaleda Zia, alleged BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain yesterday.

"Ruling party lawmakers are frequently making false statements about BNP which proves the government is conspiracies to destroy BNP," he said while talking to reporters at his Armanitola home in the capital.

Rejecting allegations raised by Awami League leader Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim, Delwar said the government is cooking up stories against Ziaur Rahman, Khaleda Zia and their family members only to destroy their image.

On Thursday, Selim alleged in parliament that Khaleda was involved in the Aug 21, 2004 grenade attack and the "conspiracy" which led to last week's bomb attack on ruling party MP Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh.

"The ruling party has made the parliament ineffective for long and now they are using the House to demean opposition leaders," he claimed, adding that late president Zia and his family members are the prime target of this government.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

3RD ODI TODAY

Time to take the lead

SPORTS REPORTER

Tigers will be looking to take the lead today when they take on an ailing Zimbabwe side in the third match of the Grameenphone ODI Cup at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in another day-night affair. Tigers are on a high after bouncing back tremendously from a shock 5-wicket loss in the opening match with a thumping 7-wicket victory in the second ODI to square the series 1-1 on Thursday.

The home side are expected to stick with the winning side, though the poor show of their faster bowlers is a cause of concern. The visitors Zimbabwe however will have to do without their wicket-keeper batsman Tatenda Taibu who hasn't yet recovered fully from his cramp

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

UPDF man killed after abduction

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

An activist of United People's Democratic Front (UPDF) was abducted and killed by criminals in Rajasthali upazila of the district in the early hours yesterday.

He was identified as Lanka Moni Tangchangya, 35, son of Chok Kala Tangchangya of Bogachhari village under Ghilachhari union in Rajasthali upazila.

UPDF in a press release accused Parbatya Chattagram

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2



The people commuting to the capital on boats face difficulties with excessive water hyacinth on the Buriganga near Shaheednagar everyday.

PHOTO: SHAWKAT JAMIL

Criminal killed in 'shootout'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An alleged criminal succumbed to his injury after a shootout between police and his cohorts at the city's Mirpur yesterday afternoon.

The deceased was identified as Titu alias Hridoy, 28, an alleged criminal of Shohor Ali group.

Officer-in-charge (OC) of Mirpur Police Station Zakir Hossain Mollah told The Daily Star that four to five men of the group were loitering near Mirpur 10 when patrol police challenged them around 3:00am. The criminals opened fire at the law enforcers forcing them to retaliate.

After the shootout, police arrested bullet injured Hridoy from the scene. Later he was admitted to Pongu hospital

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

India to proceed cautiously on river-linking plan

Says Manmohan

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

India will move cautiously on interlinking of rivers taking its impact on environment and ecology into consideration, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said yesterday.

At a seminar in New Delhi, the prime minister said, "The interlinking of rivers is something which can help expand areas under irrigation. But there are concerns like environmental hazards."

Replying to a question on how interlinking of rivers can bring relief from the backdrop of droughts and floods in the country, Manmohan said there are different views among experts on how the interlinking of rivers can help provide water security to the people.

Two or three projects were taken up as per the project designs. The Ken-Betwa area (covering Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh states) is one where experiments will be carried out on linking of river system, he added.

He also expressed concern over the issue that the process can

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Green belt planned to protect sea beach

100km stretch in Cox's Bazar brought under project

A CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Cox's Bazar district administration has taken a three-year project to prevent erosion of Cox's Bazar sea beach under the impact of climate change and tidal surge.

Under the Tk 2.5 crore project styled "100 kilometre green belt project along Cox's Bazar sea beach" a huge number of coconut trees would be planted in four rows on the beach.

Cox's Bazar sadar, Ramu, Ukhia and Teknaf sea beaches have been brought under the project.

If implemented, it will help save the sea

beach from erosion and also play an important role in economic and social development of local people.

Sources said the officials of the district administration recently prepared the project proposal after visiting the spot and sent it to the Deputy Commissioner Gias Uddin Ahmed and the secretary of environment and forest ministry on October 19 for approval.

The deputy commissioner said the world's longest sea beach has some gardens of Jhau (Tamarisk) trees planted by the forest

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Prayer Timing		
October 31		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-50	6-25
Zohr	1-45	2-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-32	6-35
Esha	8-15	8-45

Source: Islamic Foundation

OnlinePoll ✓

Do you think the government should go directly for e-passport instead of continuing with machine-readable passport project and then switch to e-passport?

Yes (78.4%)
 No (18.6%)
 No Comments (3.0%)

Total votes: 810

TODAY'S POLL

Do you think ministers' repeated warnings against tender manipulation and land grabbing show that the government is sincere about checking it?

Please cast your vote at www.thedailystar.net