

Staff shortage hits family planning programme

MAHBUBA ZANNAT

Indifferent attitude of the governments towards family planning programme has undermined the success that it achieved in 1980s while manpower shortage at the field level is making the sector more vulnerable.

Of the total 52,337 posts, some 3,699 posts remain vacant for a long time, tremendously hindering the activities particularly in the field level.

The family welfare assistants (FWAs) are the driving force of a family planning programme. The domiciliary services that they provided in 70s led the programme to

attain a huge success in 80s. But now less attention is being given to them, said experts.

A post of the FWA was created to provide counseling and other services to 600 couple of a locality, which has risen to 1200 by this time, but the number of the FWAs remain unchanged.

Besides, many posts of the class one and class two employees are lying vacant due to cadre and non-cadre and doctors and non-doctors clash.

The experts blamed the situation on absence of the successive governments' commitment to this sector.

"The field level workers are

overburdened with their works," said Ganesh Chandra Sarker, director of Information, Education and Monitoring (IEM).

"In addition to their scheduled activities, they have to remain busy with different works, which are actually the job of the health sector workers."

He said the family planning workers are engaged with various works during observance of different days like National Immunisation Day, World Heart Day and World Health Day.

"Currently they are forced to sit at community clinics for three days a week. Then how we can expect smooth running of the family

planning programme," he questioned.

The last massive recruitment took place just ten years back in 2000. Some indiscriminate recruitment took place in the meantime. But the recruitment did not take place judging the actual field level situation, sources at the Directorate General of Family Planning said.

However, the DGFP authorities said some 1270 field level workers would be recruited within a year, which is 70 per cent of the total vacant posts.

Instead of creating more posts adjusting the extended number of population, the government is just filling up some of the vacant posts.

Currently there are some 23,000 workers in the field level including SACMOs, FPIs, FWAs, family welfare visitors (FWVs) and nurse mid-wifery.

"The sector deserves more attention from the government because family planning does not mean birth control only," said Prof Nur un Nabi, department of Population Sciences at the University of Dhaka.

"It is rather a package programme that includes maternal and child health, reproductive health, nutrition and breastfeeding. The people's representatives should have to understand this."

He said it is the second largest directorate in terms of the activities.

But the family planning programme is not a priority issue of the decision makers as still the false notions regarding family planning prevail.

Nur un Nabi, however, stressed the need for a separate ministry for family planning to boost the sector.

"The government should consider population as a priority issue. It is a big issue and amidst the cadre and non-cadre and doctor and non-doctor conflicts the sector will not work properly," he said.

Furthermore, the government should think of population management and activate the National Population Council to monitor the population management in grass-roots level, Nur un Nabi added.

DMCH nurses observe work stoppage

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nurses of Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) staged a demonstration and observed work stoppage for one hour yesterday hampering treatment facilities to the patients.

The nurses mounted the angry protest as DMCH director rebuked some of the nurses who were on their duties late.

The demonstration was staged in front of the office of DMCH Director Brig Gen Shahidul Huq Mallik from 8:00am.

DMCH sources said the director rebuked some of the nurses who joined their duties after 8:00am instead of 7:30pm, new office timing for nurses.

Earlier at a meeting on February 10, it was fixed that the nurses will join their duties at 7:30am from April 1 instead of 8:00am.

As the nurses did not join their duties on time, some nurse supervisors took away the attendance book so that the nurses, who were late, could not sign in the book, DMCH sources said.

The director told The Daily Star that the pre-scheduled duty roster will remain effective, but the nurses will have to report for duty at 7:30 for necessary arrangements, including changing clothes.

CHANDNI CHAWK MARKET

10 injured in clash between two groups of traders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two groups of traders of Chandni Chawk Market in the city yesterday were locked into a clash, leaving at least 10 traders injured.

The market remained closed for over two hours.

The clash ensued following disputes over an election to the market committee and also monetary dealings, sources said.

Police said several hundred traders of the market took part in the clash being divided into two groups from 12:30pm.

Sources said the clash erupted when one of the groups foiled a pre-scheduled meeting at the office of the committee.

AM Kamrul Islam, officer-in-charge of New Market Police Station, said he has formed a six-member committee to resolve the issue.

3 held with 5 kg hemp in Bogra

UNB, Bogra

Members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested three people along with 5 kg of hemp at Muradpur in Shibganj upazila on Wednesday night.

A team of Rab-12 intercepted a motorcycle in front of Muradpur police box on Dhaka-Rangpur Highway around 8:30pm and arrested Biren Kumar Das, Mizanur Rahman and Abdul Khalek along with the hemp.

Later, they were handed over to local police station.



Popular Indian playback and ghazal singer Hariharan performs at a musical concert at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in the city yesterday.

Compensation for Sajek families demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Different organisations yesterday demanded adequate compensation for the families affected by the recent attacks on ethnic people at Sajek union under Baghaichhari upazila in Rangamati.

The leaders of the organisations also demanded immediate rehabilitation of the families, says a press release.

In a statement, Gyanendu Bikash Chakma, convener of Sajek Land Protection Committee, and Ambika Chakma, convener of Sajek Women's Society, made the demands.

They alleged that the government has neither taken any initiative to rehabilitate them nor approved UNDP or other humanitarian organisations to rehabilitate the families.

Earlier, the government provided Tk 5,000, one bundle of corrugated iron (CI) sheets and 40 kilograms of rice for each affected hilly family, which were very poor against the demand, they added.

The leaders also demanded an end to financial and physical harassment of indigenous people at Sajek.

Cop closed for beating C&F official in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A traffic constable was closed on charges of beating a rickshaw passenger at Badamtali intersection in the port city of Chittagong yesterday.

The constable was identified as Mohammad Ali, 35.

Sources said Sujit Saha, an official of clearing and forwarding (C&F) agent Shatabdi Enterprise, was going to Chittagong Customs House by a rickshaw from his firm at around 1:00pm.

As the rickshawpuller went some 100 yards off his office at Southland Centre and went a few yards ahead of Zebra crossing ignoring traffic signal, the on-duty constable rushed there and beat up the puller.

Sources said Sujit was trying to settle the matter, but the constable punched him on the mouth and forcibly dragged

him to the police box at Badamtali.

"The constable not only beat me up but also identified me to the public as a mugger while dragging me to the police box," alleged the C&F official while talking to The DailyStar.

"Officials of other C&F agents, who were present at the scene and noticed the incident, came forward and saved me," he said.

Assistant Commissioner (AC) Tanvir Arifat of Double Mooring zone of Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP), quoting the constable, said that Sujit caught the constable by the collar to prompt the latter to punch him.

However, Ali has been closed after the incident and departmental action will be taken against him after an investigation, he added.

20 killed in BSF firing in 3 months

Says Odhikar report

UNB, Dhaka

Some 20 Bangladeshi nationals were allegedly killed by the Indian Border Security Force (BSF) along the Bangladesh-India border between January 1 and March 31 this year, according to a report released by Odhikar, a rights group.

Among the victims, nine people were killed allegedly by gunshots, while the rest were allegedly beaten to death, the report added.

Besides, 20 people were injured in firing, and it is alleged that four others were assaulted while four were abducted by the BSF during the same period.

On the other hand, some 24 people allegedly died in the hands of law enforcers across the country during the same period.

Among them, five were killed under custody, the Odhikar report said.

Some 52 people were killed and 3741 others were injured across the country due to political violence in the last three months.

Of the violence, 154 incidents were recorded as intra-party conflicts within the ranks of the ruling Awami League, killing 8 people and injuring 158 others, while 27 incidents were recorded as internal conflict within main opposition BNP, which injured 340 people.

During the same period, the Odhikar reporter said 53 women and 69 children were victims of rape. Of them, 11 women were killed after being raped, while five of the children were killed after being raped.

Besides, 68 women were recorded as victims of dowry violence, of which 46 were killed and rest were injured. Forty people, including 22 women and four children, became victims of acid violence during the period covered by the report.

Some 38 journalists were injured, 26 were threatened and 17 others were assaulted across the country up until the end of March this year.

Besides, eight journalists and one newspaper office were attacked during the same period.

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3 killed in road crashes

METRO DESK

Three people were killed in separate road accidents in Mymensingh and Dhaka yesterday.

Our correspondent in Mymensingh reports: Two people were killed and six others injured in a road accident on Mymensingh-Paranganj highway at Char Kharicha Bazar in the district yesterday.

The victims were identified as Liton, 35, a village doctor, and Abu Layeem, 15.

The accident took place when a Mymensingh-bound tractor-driven carrier from Paranganj collided head-on with a human hauler at around 3:30pm.

UNB adds: A passenger bus plunged into a roadside ditch near Kamalpur Bus Stand at Dhamrai upazila of Dhaka yesterday, killing its helper and injuring 10 passengers.

The dead was identified as Nayan alias Noyai, 42.

Police said the Dhaka-bound bus of Nirapad Paribahan skidded off the road and fell into the ditch at about 10:00am as its driver lost control over the steering, killing Nayan on the spot and injuring others.

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