

Trust fund for community clinics in offing

Says PM while distributing awards to best clinics, launching interactive learning module

UNB, Dhaka

The government has a plan to create a trust fund for community clinics across the country to give those a permanent shape and ensure smooth medicare services for people, said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday.

"We would like to form in the future a trust fund like the PM's Education Trust Fund..." she said.

The premier was addressing a programme arranged by the health and family welfare ministry in Osmani Memorial Auditorium to distribute Best Community Clinic Award 2014 and launch the Interactive Learning Module for community clinic health providers.

Hasina said the objective to establish such a trust fund was to give a solid ground for the community clinics across the country so that no one could shut these down through just an order after the change of government.

"We've had a very bitter experience... we want to make these community clinics self-reliant financially."

She mentioned that each community clinic would have its own account and local people will be the members of the committee for running it.

"Government grants will go to that account and the affluent section of the community will donate to the fund, too."

The local committee will fix how many signatures will be needed to withdraw money from the account, said Hasina, adding that the people who would come to the community clinics for receiving preliminary treatment could donate if they wanted to. "Different organisations can donate to this fund as well."

From this fund, she said, the community clinics would be operated, while the utility bills of the clinics would be paid from this

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Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina hands over Best Community Clinic Award 2014 at a programme organised by the health and family welfare ministry in the capital's Osmani Memorial Auditorium yesterday. Seven clinics from seven divisions got the award.

PHOTO: PID

Journo Shawkat Mahmud sent to jail after remand

No bail petition filed, no lawyer was present, says general recording officer of court

UNB, Dhaka

A Dhaka court yesterday sent to jail Shawkat Mahmud, an adviser of the BNP chairperson and president of a faction of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists, on expiry of a three-day remand in a case filed over the death of a man in an arson attack.

There was no bail petition and lawyer for Shawkat, said Sub-inspector Mohammad Mahmudur Rahman, also general recording officer of the court of Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Md Waz Kuruni Khan Chowdhury.

Shawkat was arrested in front of Samurai Convention Centre in Panthapath on August 18.

On January 9, miscreants hurled a petrol bomb at a private car in front of Celebration Community Centre in Moghbazar. The driver, Abul Kalam Azad, succumbed to his

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People must know about RTI Act for optimum use

Speakers tell first ever RTI Camp; chief info commissioner calls it the only law that can be implemented by citizens

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Benefits of the Right to Information Act need to be highlighted to ensure its optimum use by citizens, said speakers at the country's first ever RTI Camp yesterday.

MRDI and Jagroto Nagorik Committee (JANAK) organised the camp with support from Manusher Jonno Foundation at Shaheed Moshir Rahman High School in Jessore, according to a press release.

Chief Information Commissioner Mohammed Farooq was present as chief guest, while Deputy Commissioner of Jessore Dr Md Humayun Kabir chaired the function.

Mohammed Farooq said the act is

the only law in the country that citizens can apply on authorities instead of the other way round.

Citizens are empowered by the act and the maiden camp has added a new dimension to the campaign for people's right to know, he added.

Information Commissioner Nepal Chandra Sarker said implementation and benefits of the RTI Act depend upon the extent of use of the law by people. They would use it frequently if they were aware of the act's benefits, he said.

Hasibur Rahman, executive director of MRDI, said the camp wants to make the people's right to know movement more dynamic.

Dr Md Humayun Kabir said the act would make the district administration and the activities of upazila and union parishads more transparent and people-friendly.

"The presence of dignitaries has inspired us to be more positive about people's right to know," he said.

Additional Superintendent of Police of Jessore Md Shahid Abu Sarwar and Chairman of Chowgachha upazila SM Habibur Rahman, among others, also spoke.

Representatives from the district and upazila administrations, journalists, teachers, students and about 1,500 peoples from all walks of life were present.



A faction of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists and another of Dhaka Union of Journalists form a human chain in front of Jatiya Press Club in the capital yesterday demanding withdrawal of, what they claimed, the "false" case against their leader Shawkat Mahmud, also an adviser to the BNP chairperson.

PHOTO: STAR

VAT on pvt universities worries guardians

UNB, Dhaka

The government's rigid stance not to remove the value added tax (VAT) on the private university tuition fees has worried students and parents because they have to bear the additional cost.

Talking to the news agency, a number of students and guardians said the decision would hamper the private sector's role in higher education in the country.

They said the government should encourage the growth of private universities across the country since the existing public universities could not accommodate the rising number of students seeking to pursue higher education.

The government imposed a 7.5 percent VAT on the tuition fees of private university students from this fiscal year. Soon after the announcement, the students started movement demanding the removal of the VAT.

But on August 14, at a programme in Sylhet, Finance Minister AMA Muhith said, "It cannot be accepted that they (private

university students) cannot give 7.5 percent VAT while they pay Tk 30,000-Tk 50,000 as tuition fees."

There are currently 84 universities in the country where 328,736 students study.

They said if the government stuck to its decision, students from middle-income families would be deprived of higher education due to the high costs.

However, an education expert supports the government's step to impose VAT on private university tuition fees but suggested that it should be realised from the profits of the university authorities, not from the students.

Siddikur Rahman, a professor of the Institute of Education and Research at Dhaka University, said it was a good decision because private universities were doing business in the name of imparting higher education.

Fazle Rabby Khan, coordinator of "No Vat on Education", a platform which has been demanding removal of the VAT on

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Auto-rickshaw drivers beat up RU students

Altercation over driver's refusal to go to campus as per agreement leads to violence; fellow students block highway in protest; prime accused of beating held

RU CORRESPONDENT

Several hundred students of Rajshahi University yesterday blocked the Dhaka-Rajshahi highway for half an hour protesting an attack on three fellows by auto-rickshaw drivers the night before.

The demonstrators called off the blockade after the proctor and law enforcers intervened and assured them of arresting the attackers.

A case was filed against 10-12 three-wheeler drivers with Motihar Police Station, and the prime accused, Asaduzzaman Munna, was held.

The injured, Chanchal Kumar, Yakub Ali, and Liton Hossain, all master's students of mathematics, were admitted to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital.

Of them, the condition of Chanchal is

critical as his nose and mouth bled profusely, said a friend quoting the duty doctor.

Yakub needed three stitches in the head, while bruises were found all over Liton's body.

Police said the three had an altercation with driver Munna when he stopped the vehicle in the city's Talaimari around 11:30pm and refused to go to the university violating the agreement.

The auto-rickshaw was hired for a trip from Rajshahi Railway Station to the campus, said Motihar Officer-in-Charge Humayun Kabir.

When the students and the driver were having a heated exchange, seven to eight drivers showed up at the scene and beat up the students, the official said.

Around 500 students had blocked the road in front of the university since 11:30am.

RU students recall 2007 'repression'

Demand withdrawal of cases against 13 students; protest blogger, child killings recently

RU CORRESPONDENT

Rajshahi University's Progressive Students Alliance, a platform of left-leaning student bodies, yesterday observed "Student-Teacher Repression Day", marking the country-wide atrocities on them from August 20 to 23 in 2007 during the military-backed caretaker government rule.

They also protested the recent killings of blogger Niladri Chattopadhyay Niloy and some children, and demanded exemplary punishment for the

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Students douse an effigy of Finance Minister AMA Muhith with a flammable liquid in the capital's Shahbagh yesterday demanding withdrawal of the value added tax (VAT) imposed on the tuition fees of private universities. They, however, refrained from igniting the effigy at the last moment.

PHOTO: BANGLAR CHOKRI