

A 100-bed facility only on paper

Dhaka Mahanagar Shishu Hospital grappling with crisis

DIPAN NANDY

Even when it's afternoon, one can barely see anything inside. Many beds are worn-down, while others don't have any covers.

From outside, the condition of the yellowish structure is not faring any better either. The colour coating is coming off, moss has started to take root as well, which is surprising for a building constructed as soon as in 1990.

This is the present condition of Dhaka City South Corporation-run 100-bed Dhaka Mahanagar Shishu Hospital. This four-storey hospital is located at Lalbagh's Goura Sundar Roy Lane.

The hospital's surgery department has remained shut



Without the 40 beds assigned to the hospital's inactive surgery department, the DSCC-run facility is virtually reduced to only 60 beds. But the condition of these beds are horrific, with most of them either worn-down or lacking even the most basic bedding items, like sheets and covers.

PHOTO: STAR



for the last 13 years. As a result, 40 of the 100 beds at the hospital are also unavailable. The condition of the other 60 beds aren't very well either, which means the hospital is a 100-bed facility only on paper.

According to DSCC health department data, 2,005 outpatients took service at the hospital in 2020-21 fiscal year. The indoors served 678 patients, while the emergency served 442. As the surgery department is closed, not even a minor operation has taken place in this time.

The ground floor of the premises hosts the emergency and outpatient departments. To avail medical service at a cheap rate, people from the lower-income segment crowd the place every day. As the hospital is also a Covid-19 vaccination centre, there's an additional pressure of visitors.

Among them, Al Amin Mia, came here from Chawkbazar. He told this correspondent that he was there with his six-year-old child.

"I'm a van-puller by profession. My son has had a fever for the last two days. I can't afford to take him to costlier hospitals, which is why I've come here," he said.

The same was echoed by Asma Khatun, a resident of Lalbagh who came to the hospital with her daughter Parul. "It's way cheaper here. For those of us who live by the day, this is the only place we can afford."

Meanwhile, the hospital's pediatric surgery department has remained shut since 2008. Hospital sources said this can be attributed to the lack of a surgery consultant, which is why the department stays closed even after having an operation theatre.

Moreover, this means the 40-odd beds dedicated for this department are also out of bounds for patients.

The second floor of the hospital hosts a 40-bed ward, but the entire space is dirty. Almost half of the beds, most of which were dilapidated, did not have patients in them. Even the bed covers reeked of dirt, while moss was visible on the ward's walls.

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PRAYER TIMING JAN 25			Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
		Azan	5-35	12-45	4-15	5-46	7-15
		Jamaat	6-10	1-15	4-30	5-50	7-45
		SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION					

SAGAR RUNI MURDER

85 dates, still no end to probe

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday again asked Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) to submit the probe report of a case filed over the murders of journalist couple Sagar Sarowar and Meherun Runi by February 23.

With yesterday's date, the investigation officer has so far taken 85 dates to complete the investigation.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Tariqul Islam passed the order after Rab's Additional Superintendent Khondoker Shafiqul Alam, also the case's investigation officer, failed to submit the report.

Sagar, news editor

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After street safety movements started flaring up in parts of the city, DMP personnel were found checking vehicles for driver's license, fitness and other documents yesterday. This photo was taken from Farmgate.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

'Where do we complain?'

Anti-sexual harassment cell in JU almost non-functional for 10 years

SHEIKH TAJUL ISLAM TAJ

The anti-sexual harassment cell at Jahangirnagar University remains almost non-functional even after a decade of inception.

The cell has no office or visible activities, and the cell authorities too have declined to reveal any information regarding its operation.

"It is a sensitive issue. I cannot disclose any information regarding complaints about sexual harassment, including the number of cases reported," said Dr Jebunnessa, president of the cell and a professor of public administration at JU.

On March 10, 2010, the university authorities formed the cell following a High Court directive, aiming to address cases of sexual harassment in the university.

A seven-member committee, headed by Prof Jebunnessa, was also formed to keep the cell functional. The anti-sexual harassment cell was the first of its kind in any public university in Bangladesh.

The cell was also supposed to raise awareness and conduct counselling among students against sexual harassment. But most students are still unaware of its existence due to no visible activities in the last decade.

This correspondent talked to over 50 students from January 21 to 23. At least 20 of them said they don't even know of any such cell existing on the campus. The rest said they have heard about it, but did not notice any activities.

"I have been a student here for around five years. But I never saw any poster, leaflet or any other form of presence of the cell," said Khadizatul Kubra, an anthropology major.

"I don't know of any such cell on the campus. If it exists, it should come up with massive awareness campaigns," Nafisa Sharmin, a student of urban and regional planning.

Some female students, who have been victims of sexual harassment on the campus, claimed to not get any assistance from the cell.

"I was sexually harassed by a classmate who also

threatened to rape me three years ago. I filed a complaint with the proctor's office, but did not get any support from the authorities," shared a female student from the arts and humanities faculty.

Contacted, the then proctor Sikder Md Zulkernine said he could not recall whether he received any written complaint. "If a complaint was filed, it must have been forwarded to the anti-sexual harassment cell," he said.

AT A GLANCE

- » No on-campus office
- » No activities or campaigns in 10yrs
- » No data available on reported cases
- » No knowledge among students of its existence

Dr Jebunnessa said, "I have taken charge very recently. I will definitely take necessary measures to have a separate office and make students aware of its operations."

Contacted, JU pro-VC (administration) Dr Sheikh Md Munjurul Haq admitted that students are not much aware of the cell due to lack of publicity. "We will take immediate steps to make the cell more functional," he added.



PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

If only time was on their side

Covid positive man dies in daughter's embrace on way to DMCH

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sixty-two-year-old Anwar Hossain, a resident of Old Dhaka's Hazaribagh, had tested positive for Covid-19 four days back. He was receiving treatment at home.

Yesterday morning, when he was complaining of severe breathing issues, his daughter Jhuma Akter decided to take him to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

She, along with her father, started for DMCH in a CNG-run auto-rickshaw. Jhuma was holding her father all the way to DMCH.

Upon reaching the hospital around 12:00pm, she carried Anwar down from the three-wheeler with the help of people in front of the hospital and took him to the emergency department.

But apparently it was too late.

Doctors on duty declared Anwar "brought dead", our photojournalist Anisur Rahman reported from DMCH.

Around 2:00pm, Jhuma started for home with her father's body in an ambulance.

Anwar had contracted Covid-19 for the second time, Jhuma said.

BNP opposing EC law to embarrass govt: Hanif

UNB, Dhaka

Awami League joint general secretary Mahbul Ul Alam Hanif yesterday said BNP is opposing the proposed law to form an Election Commission to embarrass the government.

He said this in response to BNP's remark that the government was hastily setting up an EC to include people loyal to it.

Hanif said this while paying homage at the memorial of Shaheed Matiur Rahman on the premises of Nabakumar Institute at Bakshibazar, marking the Mass Uprising Day.

Mentioning that BNP never wants fair politics, he further said their aim is to create an unstable situation in the country.

'Must resist syndication'

Recruiting agencies voice concerns over sending migrants to Malaysia

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Voicing concerns over syndication, different recruiting agency platforms yesterday said sending migrant workers to Malaysia like the way it was done before will harm the image of the sector and the country.

Organising a press conference under the banner "Owners of general recruiting agencies" at the capital's Dhaka Reporters Unity, they alleged that earlier, a "syndicate" of 10 agencies was involved in sending workers to Malaysia, but the process led to market closure.

Those agencies are trying to create a similar situation again, they added.

They also voiced concerns over excessive airfare and demanded government intervention in this regard.

Bangladesh and Malaysia signed a memorandum of understanding in December last year on labour cooperation.

In September 2018, Malaysia suspended hiring

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