

To treat burn patients, time is of the essence

In conversation with Dr Samanta Lal Sen

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN and SHAHEEN MOLLAH

At least 100 people were burnt, and of them, 67 were being treated after the BM container depot fire in Chattogram. Due to the limited capacity in Chattogram, patients with serious injuries needed to be shifted to Dhaka through emergency helicopters.

But why is a divisional city still lacking proper treatment facilities, and what actual steps have been taken for improvement?

In search of the answers, The Daily Star (DS) yesterday talked to Dr Samanta Lal Sen, chief national coordinator for plastic surgery and burn projects in Bangladesh.

DS: What are the limitations in providing treatment to burn patients?

Dr Sen: We are still lagging behind due to lack of supporting infrastructures like dedicated operation theatres (OT), intensive care units (ICU), high-dependency units (HDU) and relevant equipment.

The same crisis was seen in Chattogram. Although it has a burn unit, there are no ICU or OT dedicated for burn patients. On the bright side, the Chinese



DR SAMANTA LAL SEN
Chief national coordinator for plastic surgery and burn projects in Bangladesh

We have successfully set up a skin bank at Sheikh Hasina National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery last year. But we are yet to start the procedure, as we need proper campaigning for it. We have plans to inspire people to donate skin, which will be used for burn patients. A person's skin can be taken within six hours after death.

government is building a burn unit in Chattogram, and four places have already been selected for it primarily.

DS: A dedicated institute was built for burn patients, but many people are still dying. Why?

Dr Sen: Yes, people are still dying, and the death rate, at least six percent, is high. The major reason behind this is cross infection.

Due to space shortage in burn units of divisional cities, patients are kept in close proximity, which spreads infections. Another reason is the issue of shifting patients.

The first 24 hours is the most crucial for a burn patient's treatment. But patients in Satkhira or Barguna will not get that treatment, as these places do not have dedicated burn facilities.

These patients are taken to Dhaka, which takes a lot of time. In these cases, we often have nothing to do.

DS: What steps have been taken to improve burn treatment? What is the status of setting up burn institutes in divisional cities?

Dr Sen: We have successfully set up a skin bank at Sheikh Hasina National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery last year. But we are yet to start the procedure, as we need proper campaigning for it.

We have plans to inspire people to donate skin, which will be used for burn patients. A person's skin can be taken within six hours after death.

And to set up burn hospitals in divisions -- Sylhet, Barishal, Rangpur, Rajshahi and Faridpur -- a bill has already been passed in the Ecne meeting around seven months ago.

DS: If an incident like the depot fire happens again, what steps should be taken?

Dr Sen: At first, the casualty hospitals need to turn into specialised burn hospitals immediately. Next, all expert doctors, including those specialising in burns and causality, should form teams to provide treatment without any delay.

Finally, ICUs and separate spaces need to be dedicated for burn patients.

But for this, we need to raise awareness among every stakeholder and keep in mind that prevention is better than cure.



Despite the ban, slow-moving, battery-operated three-wheelers continue to ply highways. As vehicles on the highway tend to move at fast speeds, the mismatched pace of these vehicles opens up a chance for accidents. This photo was taken from Dhaka-Mymensingh highway yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Children not even safe at home: study

They're abused more at homes than schools, other places, says national survey by MJF



PHOTO: COLLECTED

Speakers at the roundtable on "Violence against Children in Bangladesh" at the capital's Cirdap auditorium yesterday. Manusher Jonno Foundation organised the event.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

About 95.8 percent of children become victims of violence in their very homes, which is more than the violation occurred in educational institutes or community level, found a national survey by Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF).

MJF yesterday unveiled the report, prepared by INCIDIN Bangladesh between June 2020 and May 2021, at a roundtable in the capital's Cirdap auditorium.

The survey also revealed that 86.1 percent of children experienced emotional abuse at educational institutes, while 82 percent were subjected to physical violence.

At the community level, children experienced emotional abuse (84.6 percent) more than physical violence (67 percent).

The situation was similar at workplaces, where 72 percent of children were exposed to emotional abuse, while 55.3

percent were faced with physical violence.

Nearly a quarter of children (24.1 percent) have experienced sexual violence at educational institutes, 36 percent at the community level and 37.8 percent at workplaces.

Within the households, 86.9 percent of children said they have faced physical violence in the name of punitive action. Around 81 percent of guardians were found to be supportive of physical punishment when a child is disobedient.

About 55 percent of children said they faced sexual violence at home.

MJF surveyed 5,078 children in 11 districts, of whom 3,134 were from urban and 1,940 from rural areas.

Teachers, physical instructors, religious instructors, security guards, shopkeepers, neighbours, and unknown individuals were among the perpetrators, according to the report.

Most of the children stated that they did not report those issues because they were afraid of being judged if they complained to their parents.

"We have to involve families, communities, schools, elite groups of the society and elected representatives to stand against the violence," said Shaheen Anam, MJF executive director.

Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) Distinguished Fellow Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya said, "We cannot limit violence on children in three categories [physical, emotional and sexual]. The greatest of them all is child labour. Why does a 14-year-old have to go to a welding factory instead of going to school?"

"Digital violence is another major kind of violence. Using children for political purposes is another one, which will be seen frequently in the upcoming election. All violence of such kind should be abolished," he added.

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'Too many cooks spoil the broth'

Experts call for single authority to ensure food safety

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government needs to reshape seasonal drives on an institutional level to protect people from food crisis and syndicates.

Besides, there must be constant monitoring in this regard.

At the same time, a single authority needs to be entrusted to look after food safety issues as many government agencies are involved in the supervision of food-related businesses.

Experts said these at a seminar titled "Safer Food for Better Economy" organised by Bangladesh Food Safety Authority (BFSa) at a city hotel to mark the World Food Safety Day yesterday.

"The country's population has doubled whereas the food production has quadrupled in the last 50 years. It still doesn't make sense why there would be a food crisis," said Dr Mohammed

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Centralised toll system in the offing

Authorities developing unified system for bridge, elevated expressway, tunnel

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Bangladesh Bridge Authority (BBA) has started a process to develop a centralised electronic toll collection system for all its structures -- bridges, elevated expressways and tunnels.

When we hire a company, it deploys a software, and after the tenure, leaves with the software. So, we have to hire a new one. We can't depend on this process for an indefinite time. We want to develop [by hiring consultant] a software and provide our staffers necessary training, so that we can collect toll on our own.

QUAZI MUHAMMAD FERDOUS
Chief engineer of BBA

The authority is going to engage a consulting firm to develop the software and provide training to BBA staffers to run the system on a pilot basis for a certain period.

"We have taken the step to improve the authority's capacity," Quazi Muhammad Ferdous, chief engineer of BBA, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Bangabandhu Bridge, Mukhtarpur Bridge in Munshiganj, and Padma Bridge, which would be opened on June 25, are BBA structures.

Besides, it is building Bangabandhu tunnel under Karnaphuli river in Chattogram, and two expressways -- Dhaka Elevated Expressway and Dhaka Ashulia Expressway -- in Dhaka and adjacent areas. More such projects are in the pipeline.

Currently, BBA hires companies for collecting toll from their structures for a certain period and has to spend a handsome amount of money for the task.

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'Raking in money by promising govt jobs'

DB arrests syndicate leader for defrauding people

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Md Selim, owner of a community centre in Rajshahi, submitted a file at the education ministry last month, requesting for a promotion for his relative, who worked at a college.

While Selim was trying to get his file approved, he received a call on May 26. The caller identified himself as a personal secretary (PS) working at the ministry.

"The caller then told me to not worry about anything, assuring that the file will be approved soon. But for the process, I needed to deposit an amount," said Selim.

"It was very hard to realise that the person was a fraud, as he was talking in an official manner. So, I sent Tk 50,000 twice to a mobile financial service [MFS] account," he said.

A couple of days later, Selim went to Dhaka and requested the caller to meet him, but he refused to do so.

Selim then called the actual number of the PS, and found a different person

receiving the phone.

Interestingly enough, Selim claimed that he did not share any information about submitting the file to any unknown person. "Maybe these frauds have a link with the ministry."

This is not an isolated incident. According to victims and detectives, a syndicate using names of ministry officials has been pocketing huge sums of money over the years.

For example, Nasim Atahar, a victim from Dinajpur, paid Tk 1.25 lakh for a job in the education ministry. He talked to three different fraudsters for this.

"Around 11 of us paid around Tk 1 crore in the last one and half months for different jobs," he said.

Cyber and Special Crime Division of police's detective branch (DB) disclosed findings, after arresting a fraudster from Rangpur on Monday.

The arrestee is Rezwanul Haque (21), who studied till 10th-grade, said

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Dhaka South City Corporation built this structure a few years ago to enhance the city's beauty. But at present, the only purpose it serves is that of an eyesore. Posters of political and marketing campaigns have been pasted on the structure, while its broken parts lie around its base. This photo was taken from Shahbagh recently.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Mob beats up traffic sergeant

Video goes viral

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A traffic police sergeant was beaten by a mob in Dhaka's Jurain area yesterday following an altercation with commuters on a motorcycle.

Sergeant Ali Hossain of Wari Traffic Division was undergoing treatment at Central Police Hospital in Dhaka's Rajarbagh.

He needed 23 stitches in his hand, said Mofizur

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PRAYER TIMING		JUNE 8			
Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha	
4:05	12:45	5:00	6:45	8:15	
JAMAAT 4:40	1:15	5:15	6:50	8:45	
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION					