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Heart disease treatment too Dhaka-centric

AHMED DEEPTO

In Bangladesh, cardiovascular disease treatment is predominantly Dhaka centric and is prohibitively expensive. Patients have to either come to the capital or remain untreated, said experts.

The centralisation of heart disease treatment in Dhaka has led to an overwhelming burden on institutions like the National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases (NICVD), resulting in long waiting times for surgeries, sometimes even months.

Patients often have to wait months to get heart stents or major surgeries in government hospitals. As a result, most patients seek treatment in private hospitals, where costs are significantly higher.

An angiogram that costs Tk 3,000-4,500 in a government hospital can cost between Tk 10,000-15,000 in private ones. Heart stenting, which costs Tk 20,000-25,000 in government hospitals, can cost up to Tk 1,20,000 in private facilities.

Many cannot afford these prices.

Md Rafiur Rahman is one such person. He is a 63-year-old former government employee who has two blocks in his heart.

"I had a heart attack in 2019. Then the doctors asked me to wear the ring. But I had to wait more than a month for the surgery in a government hospital. Private medical expenses are high so I didn't go for surgery," he said.

The 700-bed NICVD hospital always has twice as many patients. Around 1,000 patients come to the outdoor department of the hospital every day.

A total of 130 coronary angiograms and 100 heart bypass surgeries are performed daily, with over 100 other surgeries also conducted each day, according to the NICVD.

Catheterisation laboratories or cath labs are very important in heart disease treatment. Various tests including angiogram, angioplasty, pacemaker or ICD implantation are done in this lab.

According to the Directorate General of Health Services, there are 87 cath labs in government and private hospitals across the country. Of these, 58 have been installed in Dhaka. Eight cath labs are now inactive due to a lack of manpower across the country.

DGHS data said that there are 42 cardiac care units in the country, of which 32 have cardiovascular surgery units. Prof Nazmul Hossain, director general of DGHS, said the standard of cardiac surgery and heart treatment has increased after 2000. But the number of surgeries being performed is not high in the country.

When asked about the Dhaka-centricity of heart treatment, Hossain said, "Initiatives will be taken to make heart disease treatment available outside Dhaka."

This is the reality of heart treatment in Bangladesh as the world observed World Heart Day yesterday.

The World Health Organization says that more than four out of five cardiovascular deaths are due to heart attacks and strokes, and one third of these deaths occur prematurely in people under 70 years of age, according to World Health Organization (WHO).

Prof Sohel Reza Chowdhury of National Heart Foundation Hospital and Research Institute said, "Around five lakh people die of cardiovascular disease annually in

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Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus being received at Dhaka airport as he returned home early yesterday, following a four-day visit to the US to attend the 79th session of UN General Assembly. Cabinet Secretary Md Mahub Hossain and Foreign Secretary Md Jashim Uddin welcomed the chief adviser upon his arrival.

PHOTO: PID

VIOLENCE IN CHT

Probe attacks under UN supervision

Demand indigenous communities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A group of indigenous people and leaders yesterday called for a probe committee under the supervision of the United Nations to investigate the recent attacks, murders, and arson in Dighinala of Khagrachhari and Rangamati.

"We demand the formation of a probe committee under the supervision of the UN to investigate the violence and killings in Khagrachhari and Rangamati," said Khukumoni Chakma, reading out a written statement in a press conference.

"The interim government has formed a seven-member committee to investigate the violence, but we have no trust in this committee," he added.

They came up with this demand at a conference titled "Protect our lives and assets," organised by indigenous people from Khagrachhari and Rangamati, at the capital's Jatiya Press Club.

Addressing the event, Ruposhi Chakma said, "I am still living in fear and panic. After losing my son, I'm afraid to send my younger son to school or anywhere outside. I live

I am still living in fear and panic. After losing my son, I'm afraid to send my younger son to school or anywhere outside. I live every day in fear, not knowing when or where another attack might occur.

RUPOSHI CHAKMA

every day in fear, not knowing when or where another attack might occur."

Ruposhi's 20-year-old son, Junan Chakma, was shot dead in

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WB to give \$300m for clean air project

Says environment adviser

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Environment, Forest and Climate Change Adviser Syeda Rizwana Hasan yesterday announced that the World Bank will provide USD 300 million to support the Bangladesh Clean Air Project (BCAP).

According to a press release issued by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, this initiative aims to strengthen air quality management and reduce emissions from key sectors.

The project will be funded by an IDA credit, along with a potential grant for clean cooking initiatives as part of the National Air Quality Management Plan.

The adviser shared this

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Top criminals released after Aug 5 under surveillance

Says DMP chief

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Top criminals who were released from prisons following the fall of Awami League government on August 5 have been kept under police surveillance, said Dhaka Metropolitan Police Commissioner Md Mainul Hasan yesterday.

He made the statement during the inauguration of the "Walton-CRAB Sports Festival 2024" football tournament at Paltan Outer Stadium, organised by the Crime Reporters Association Bangladesh.

The DMP chief said, "They [top criminals] have been released through the court after serving long jail terms. They are now under our surveillance. Legal action will be taken against them if they get involved in new crimes."

According to the Department of Prisons, at least 43 top criminals and militants have been granted bail since August 5.

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DOUBLE MURDER

No arrests after 3 days

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three days have passed since the double murder in Dhaka's Gulshan area on Friday morning, but law enforcement has yet to make any arrests.

Khalilur Rahman, additional deputy commissioner of Gulshan Zone, said they are making efforts but have not been able to make any arrests so far.

The decomposing bodies of Rafiq, 62, a wholesale cigarette seller, and his employee Sabbir, 15, were recovered from a tin-roofed house in the Gulshan-2 neighbourhood area.

Rafiq, a caretaker of an empty plot of land on Road 108, had been living in the tin-roofed house for the past decade. He had also been running a wholesale cigarette shop on the same plot.

Yesterday, doctors of the forensic medicine department conducted

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Vehicles navigate through an alley submerged in muddy water from nearby sewers due to a poor drainage system, causing severe inconvenience to passengers and pedestrians. This issue persists almost year-round, with no measures being taken to resolve it. The photo was taken at Mir Hazirbagh in Dhaka yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Enhance youth employability

Speakers tell event

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

It is urgent to improve young people's employability to effectively meet the pressing demands of today's job market, said speakers at a project launching event yesterday at a hotel in the capital.

To combat youth unemployment, Educo Bangladesh in partnership with Child Fund Korea (CFK) and Eco Social Development Organization (ESDO) has launched project "LIFT".

The project will provide technical and vocational training, soft skills and career guidance to 300 vulnerable youth across various sectors.

AHM Shafiquzzaman, secretary of the Ministry of Labour and Employment, said, "Technical education equips individuals with practical skills and unlocks considerable opportunities for entrepreneurship."

"Our goal is to provide training that enables them to establish themselves as skilled professionals abroad, while also fostering their potential to grow as entrepreneurs within the country," he added.

Abdul Hamid, country director of Educo Bangladesh stated, "Our focus is not only on creating employment but also on promoting a sustainable work environment where young people can shape their own futures."

Foyzal Ahmed, a youth, said, "During the pandemic, my family experienced financial hardships, which forced me to discontinue my studies. Now, I wish to pursue technical and vocational training in mobile servicing and open a mobile repair shop in my village."