

Govt forms body to boost pharma raw material industry

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has formed an 11 member committee to provide recommendations aimed at developing the pharmaceutical raw material industry in Bangladesh.

The committee has been formed as part of implementing the recommendations of the Health Sector Reform Commission and the government's export diversification strategy, the Health Services Division said in a notification yesterday.

The committee, led by Sайдур رحمن, secretary of the division, has been asked to submit its report within the next month.

Other members include representatives from Bangladesh Bank and the ministries of commerce and finance.

Hospital and clinic owners' association gets new committee



CITY DESK

The newly elected committee of the Bangladesh Private Hospital, Clinic and Diagnostic Owners Association was officially inaugurated at the Shaheed Abu Sayeed International Convention Center in Dhaka on August 16, said a press release.

The event also marked the association's annual general meeting.

Law Adviser Dr Asif Nazrul was present as the chief guest while Prof Md Sayedur Rahman, special assistant to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, attended as special guest.

Association Secretary Dr AM Shamim gave the welcome address while association President Dr Md Mosaddeque Hossain Biswas Dumbell presided over the event.

33 proposals set for implementation

FROM PAGE 3
directed them to provide weekly updates on implementation, as it has to submit progress reports to the Cabinet Division and the Chief Adviser's Office, officials said.

The 12-member commission, led by National Professor AK Azad Khan, submitted its report on May 5, recommending a sweeping overhaul of health service management to make it more pro people.

The report came at a time when the health sector faces major challenges, including inadequate funding, a shortage of health workers, high out-of-pocket expenses, unequal access to services, and weak governance. These issues, health experts say, deprive many of quality treatment and compel many others to seek medical care abroad.

A senior official of the DGHS said most of the recommendations involve the enactment or amendment of laws and the issuance of necessary directives from the ministry.

In some cases, inter-ministerial decisions will be required to implement certain recommendations," the official said. "However, implementation of some recommendations can begin immediately with just a few directives from the ministry."

Health Services Division Secretary Saidur Rahman said that the implementation of some recommendations can begin immediately, while others require consultations with stakeholders.

"There are some sensitive issues as well, which cannot be implemented without stakeholder consultation," he told The Daily Star last night. Replying to a question, he said the impact of the reform proposals will be visible to some extent within the next three months.

SELECTED RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations, categorised as short-term, are: necessary reform of existing health sector laws; formation of a search committee to give recommendations for the recruitment of top officials of the proposed health services; establishing a digital platform to address service seekers' complaints; setting up a service centre for the quick completion of licensing and administrative processes linked to private hospitals, clinics, and diagnostic centres; introducing E-GP for all procurements in the health sector; appointment of clinical pharmacists at hospitals and primary healthcare centres; establishing a national essential diagnostic list and fixing their costs; creating a national ambulance service network; introducing an e-prescription system; implementing prescription audits; strengthening the internal audit unit at directorates; and prohibiting the prescribing of unnecessary tests and drugs, as well as writing prescriptions on pharmaceutical company pads.

The mid-term recommendations are: formation of the Bangladesh Health Commission for devising health related policies and giving the government strategic advice; ensuring essential drugs at free or subsidised prices; forming an updated pay structure for interns, doctors, post-graduation students, and private health service providers; enacting a health information protection act; and increasing the allocation for health-related research.

The long-term recommendations are: establishing a secretariat for Bangladesh Health

Services; keeping pharmacies at government hospitals and primary healthcare centres open 24 hours; introducing a unique health ID for all and preserving all health and treatment related information there; activating a referral system and making it mandatory; and establishing an administration under a director general for food, drugs, and IVD medical devices.

Student groups

FROM PAGE 3
JCD sources said the issue was discussed in several meetings with BNP acting Chairman Tarique Rahman and senior JCD leaders, but no decision has yet been made.

Among the names under consideration for the top two positions are Md Abidul Islam Khan, joint general secretary of JCD DU unit (2015-16 session), and Shaikh Tanvir Barre Hamid, convener of Jashim Uddin Hall unit.

Nahiduzzaman Shipon, general secretary of JCD DU unit, said, "We are yet to finalise anything over the election panel, but leaders and activists have been advised to collect nomination forms for now if they are eligible."

Bangladesh Gonotantrik Chhatra Songshad, formed by a faction of student leaders from the anti-discrimination movement, has finalised its candidates for the top two posts but is still undecided on others, and the works will be implemented shortly."

Established in 1958, Bagerhat municipality has a total of 78.38 kilometres of roads under its jurisdiction.

Most Bagerhat

FROM PAGE 4
tenders in two separate packages covering 22 damaged roads. Work will start very soon."

Echoing him, Abdulla Al Masud, the municipal executive officer, said, "Almost all the major dilapidated roads of the town have been included in the two packages. Tenders have already been invited, and the works will be implemented shortly."

Established in 1958, Bagerhat municipality has a total of 78.38 kilometres of roads under its jurisdiction.

Accusations

FROM PAGE 4
Among the 122 signatories are DU Emeritus Professor Serajul Islam Choudhury; rights activist Hameeda Hossain; lawyer and rights activist Sultana Kamal; development activist Khushi Kabir; Manusher Jonno Foundation Executive Director Shaheen Anam; senior Supreme Court lawyer ZI Khan Panna; DU Prof Nurul Amin Bepari; DU retired Prof MM Akash; visiting Professor at London School of Economics and Political Science Shapan Adnan; and DU retired Prof Monowar Uddin Ahmed.

Talks are ongoing about including three more leftist bodies: Chhatra Union (Mahir-Bahuddin), Chhatra Front (BASAD), and BCL (Jasad).

Though the panel is not yet finalised, names being considered for the top three positions include Meghmalibar Bosu of Chhatra Union, Jaber Ahmed Jubel of Biplobi Chhatra Moitree, and Muzammel Haque of Chhatra Front.

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Debates continue over the AGS post, with Zahid Ahsan, Tahmid Al Muddassir Chowdhury, and Hasib Al Islam under discussion.

"We wanted to bring someone from outside our organisation for the position. If that does not happen, someone among them will be finalised," Kader said.

The left-leaning Gonotantrik Chhatra Jote, an alliance of seven student organisations including Chhatra Union (Tajmid Shimul), Chhatra Front (Marxist), Biplobi Chhatra Moitree, Gonotantrik Chhatra Council, Pahari Chhatra Parishad, Chhatra Federation, and Biplobi Chhatra Jubo Andolon, is also working on a panel.

According to sources, Shibir is considering including female and minority representatives in its panel. Abu Sadik Kayem, former DU unit president, is being discussed for the vice president post, while current president SM Farhad may run for general secretary.

Shibir panel members will collect nomination papers on the deadline day today, said Farhad.

According to DUCSU Election Commission, 125 nomination papers have been collected in the last six days, of which 19 are for vice president, 2 for general secretary, 5 for assistant general secretary, 44 for secretary positions, and 55 for member positions.

Narrow roads, illegal Must ensure

FROM PAGE 4

Chairman Md Nurul Karim said the roads are critically important for city dwellers, and the ongoing

congestion is causing both direct and indirect losses.

"To ease the sufferings of residents, we have taken the initiative to widen these roads," he said, adding that the project is still in its preliminary phase.

He said the CDA's existing master plan had already designated these roads to be 60 feet wide. As a result, no approvals were granted for high-rise constructions along either side of the roads. "Therefore, it is possible to widen the roads simply through land acquisition," he added.

NCP Member Secretary Akhter Hossen said it was the interim government's responsibility to implement the July Declaration. "They should present a new electoral system to the nation, one that is the opposite of a fascist system."

Representatives of various socio-cultural organisations also spoke.

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