

# Govt working to ensure international standard treatment for all: PM

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**The Daily Morning Voice Online Desk:** Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today said her government is working to ensure world class healthcare service for all. “We’re taking measures to make sure that all can get international standard healthcare services,” she said while opening 45 more community vision centres at the Upazila Health Complexes in 13 districts across the country. She virtually joined the inaugural programme held at National Institute of Ophthalmology and Hospital in city from her official Ganabhaban residence here.

The prime minister also opened the newly-built main office of Banshkhali Upazila Awami League in Chattogram and hoped the office will spread her party’s policy and ideals among the people. After opening the 45 community vision centres, she mentioned her inaugurated 90 centres in two phases earlier, saying she planned to build community vision centres across the country in phases to bring all people under free modern and developed eye treatment. “We’re attaching priority on reaching eye medicare services to the people at the grassroots as we’re providing other healthcare services to their doorsteps,” she said. The prime minister said many people were saved from getting blind after providing treatment from the community vision centres. “It is a great achievement for us as a nation while many people have got rid of getting blind,” she said.

Briefly describing her government’s measures for ensuring overall development of the health sector, Sheikh Hasina said her government has a plan to upgrade the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMC) into a 5000-bed hospital. The premier said they have yet to start the work relating to upgrading the Dhaka Medical College due to the Covid-19 pandemic and Russia-Ukraine war, hoping that they will soon begin the work. The prime minister in the first and second phase opened 90 community vision centres which have become the role model in South Asia giving modern and developed eye treatment free of cost. Twenty of the vision centres were opened at Barishal division, 20 in Chattogram division, four in Rajshahi division and one in Khulna division today.

Health and Family Welfare Minister Zahid Maleque and Health Services Division Secretary Dr Mohammad Anwar Hossain Howlader spoke at the programme. National Institute of Ophthalmology and Hospital Director Professor Dr Golam Mostafa briefly described activities of the community vision centres. A documentary on giving eye treatment free of cost from the community vision centres was also screened at the programme. As many as 1331577 persons have so far received eye treatment from these centres while 210868 persons have got eye glasses free of cost from those.

Sheikh Hasina said her government has established Digital Bangladesh as per electoral pledge, adding eye specialists’ are now giving treatment to the grassroots people through telemedicine cashing in on the digital country’s facilities. The premier said establishment of dedicated child hospital in every division is of essence in giving better healthcare services to the children. “I think that building of Shishu Hospitals in every division is necessary,” she said. The prime minister said steps should be taken in every divisional medical universities or district hospitals to ensure better healthcare to the children. In this connection, she also mentioned that they have waived taxes on incubator and other child medicare items. She went on saying that her government has reduced or waived taxes on medicare equipment so that hospitals can be established in the private sector.

The premier said her government has established the first medical university named Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University in Dhaka aimed at building an efficient workforce and facilitating medical research. She added they had also established medical universities in Sylhet, Rajshahi and Chattogram and planned to establish medical universities in all the divisions gradually. The prime minister said her

government has built over 18000 community clinics and health centres across the country for reaching healthcare services to the grassroots following the footsteps of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. She said Bangabandhu had built 10 bed hospitals in upazilas and initiated to construct health centres at the union levels as he wanted to ensure reaching healthcare services to every people's doorstep.

But unfortunately he could not accomplish his plan as the Father of the Nation was assassinated with most of his family members on August 15 in 1975, she said. The BNP-Jamaat alliance had halted the community clinics after assuming power in 2001 on the plea that they would not get votes from the people getting treatment from the clinics, she added. The prime minister said there were 38,000 beds in the hospitals in 2009 but the number of hospital beds has increased to 67,000 while her government has appointed 22,000 physicians and 40,000 nurses.