



Recuperating after a burn surgery.

Sitting in one of the makeshift camps near the hospital, on Kalashona *char*, 13-year-old Rehana is healing from an operation, which was done the day before. "Her right arm was burnt when she was 4 years old," explains Rehana's mother. "She fell into the cooking fire when she was checking on it in the kitchen." Rehana and her mother came from a small village quite far from the island when they heard of the Friendship hospital from relatives. "We have been camping here with the rest of the patients for the last 12 days," she explains. "We will go home within a couple of days or so."

Two-year-old Kauser, who was born blind, is resting after having a cataract operation three days ago. "We came from a village 60 miles away," says Kolpona, Kauser's mother. "We have been camping here for the last 10 days waiting for Kauser's turn for the operation." Thank fully, they have distant relatives in Kalashona *char*, explains Kolpona's brother Murshed Ali. "We bring in our food from our relative's house and spend the nights here in the camps. The rest of the waiting families either make their own food or bring it with them from home."

Forty-year-old Nurjahan is quite happy she is leaving the hospital after 12 days of camping with her husband who just had a hernia operation. "The doctors operated on my husband five days ago," she explains. "He has been kept under medication till he is well enough to go home."

There is a long queue in yet another tent where the local volunteers are giving out prescribed medicine to the patients. These patients inform that they come from far and near when they figure out which



Two-year-old Kauser trying to see the world with new eyes.

*char* the floating hospital is stationed at. "I have been here for the last 15 days and have been given my medicine on time," says 37-year-old Jasim. "That's something that we don't get to see in our local hospitals even in the cities. All the patients here are being treated well and also more or less, kept under check on a regular basis by the doctors."

"Sometimes, situations get very difficult to handle as we get hundreds of patients waiting throughout the night, through storms and sometimes temperatures of 3 degrees" admits Runa. "So many patients and their fam-



Local medical - professionals treating women and children.