

Hoodlums
throw acid
on youth

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A gang of four hoodlums threw acid on a youth in the city's Ganaktuli area last night.

Azad, 32, came under acid attack when he was walking to his home at Ganaktuli at around 10:45pm.

He said the gang waylaid him at gunpoint and one of them threw acid, leaving the left side of his face and the left hand badly burnt.

As he screamed for help, one Mamun came to his aid and took him to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

Over 1,400 held

UNB, Dhaka

Police arrested 1,439 people, including four listed criminals, during their ongoing countrywide drive in the last 24 hours ending at 6.00am yesterday.

NGO bureau heavily understaffed

STAR REPORT

The NGO Affairs Bureau, a government watchdog, is being forced to cope with a serious shortage of manpower.

With only 67 staff, the Dhaka-based bureau office has to oversee the financial activities of 1,858 non-governmental organisations (NGOs) across the country.

The watchdog, functioning under the control of the Prime Minister's Office, was set up in 1990 when there was only 382 NGOs.

The number of NGOs has increased nearly five times in the last 14 years but the number of staff in the bureau office remains the same.

"We could hardly perform many duties properly because the office is severely understaffed. The shortage of staff sometimes force us to suspend the monitoring of financial operations

of one NGO halfway through and move on to another NGO," says SM Mesbahul Islam, director of the bureau.

Currently the bureau monitors the implementation of donor funds to 100 NGOs a year. Most of the monitoring work remain pending for two to three years as an average of 111 NGOs are being registered with the Bureau each year.

The flow of foreign funds to NGO hinges on the report of the bureau but the staff shortage creates a major obstacle to carrying out evaluation of the funds during the monitoring process.

Although a reform proposal to increase staff by 130 members has been sent to the ministries for approval, there is a doubt about whether the proposal will be implemented even in the next year.

The director, however, holds high hopes for the reforms. "We hope to

implement the proposal by the end of the year," he said.

The reforms included full computerisation, new office building at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, six divisional offices and amendment to the 1978 Voluntary Activities Regulations.

Absence of a computer database also adds to the bureau's inability to have a detailed and effective monitoring system.

The aim of the bureau is to ensure quality performance of the NGO sector and its accountability to the state.

Its responsibilities include registering NGOs that receive foreign funds, processing and approving NGO project proposals, disbursing project funds, monitoring and evaluating NGO programmes, reviewing reports, realising fees from the NGOs and maintaining liaison with the NGOs and donor agencies.

Dr Habibur
new director
of drug admin

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dr Md Habibur Rahman, a teacher of pharmacy department of Dhaka University, has been appointed director of the drug administration on one-year contract.

He took over the charge from his predecessor Prof. Abdul Gani on Tuesday.

Dr Rahman obtained his doctorate degree from a Japanese university.

He has about 40 research papers published in local and international journals.