

Dreadful desperation

Baby acid victim writhes at hospital

SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Failing to persuade her former husband to marry her again, Afsana Begum, 25, took revenge by throwing acid on his two minor children born to his second wife.

Of the two children, six-month-old Jonaki was shifted to the Burn and Plastic Surgery Unit of Dhaka Medical College and Hospital (DMCH) from Brahmanbaria Sadar Hospital yesterday with severe burns in her head, neck and the back.

Dr Samanta Lal Sen, project director of the burn unit, said the baby received 7 percent major burns and would have to undergo at least four operations.

Her brother, 18-month-old Arman, who received minor burns in lower abdomen, underwent treatment in the Sadar Hospital. He is now back home.

The acid attack took place at around 4:00 am on Saturday when both the children were in deep sleep at their house at Lalpur village in Ashuganj, Brahmanbaria, and their parents -- Mohammad Ali and Marjina -- went outside to answer the nature's call.

As the babies woke up screaming with pain, their parents rushed to the



Six-month-old Jonaki lies on hospital bed as her mother looks on.

room only to see Afsana and her brother Ujjal running out of the room and the babies rolling in pain on the bed. They also found that parts of their dresses and the bed were burnt. There was also a small bottle and the babies rolling in pain on the bed. The babies were soon rushed to Brahmanbaria

Sadar Hospital. As the condition of Jotsna deteriorated, she was shifted to DMCH.

Hearing the screaming, the villagers also rushed to the scene and later went to Afsana's house nearby, but she denied having made the attack, Morjina said.

But Afsana and all her family members went into hiding several hours later.

Mohammad Ali, a blacksmith, married Afsana six years ago but divorced her two and a half years after their marriage following a conflict with his father-in-law. A son was also born to Afsana. The boy, Ramzan Ali, now five, lives with her.

For the last one year, Afsana has been forcing Ali to marry her again. As he refused her, she took revenge on him by throwing acid on Jotsna and Arman, Ali said.

Ali said he divorced Afsana as her father filed a false dowry case against him and he had to serve two months in jail.

Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Ashuganj Police Station of Brahmanbaria Abu Zafar said a case was filed against Afsana, her father and two brothers for throwing acid. Marjina, mother of the two victims, filed the case.

The OC also said that previous enmity led to the acid violence and they are yet to arrest the accused.

\$62m IDA credits to improve city air quality, transportation system

UNB, Dhaka

The International Development Association (IDA), World Bank's concessional arm, will give Bangladesh US\$ 62.20 million in credits under an agreement signed yesterday to help improve air quality and safe mobility in Dhaka City.

The World Bank board approved the credit on May 12, says a World Bank release.

The population of Dhaka is projected to reach 20 million by 2020 and poor air quality in urban area creates serious health hazards, adversely affecting the environment and quality of life.

The donor-funded Clean Air and

Sustainable Environment (CASE) project is designed to reduce air pollution in the capital city by addressing two main air-polluting sectors -- the brick construction and the transportation.

"Air pollution is one of the leading causes of mortality and morbidity in Bangladesh," said Xian Zhu, country director of the World Bank.

"The industrial and transport sectors are likely to grow manifold in Dhaka. This, in turn, will drive the growth of air pollutants and greenhouse gas emissions, unless efforts are initiated immediately to reduce these sources of air pollution," he said.

Xian Zhu said: "We are happy to be able to respond to the government's

request to tackle Dhaka's environmental, transport and traffic challenges."

The CASE project will provide technical assistance to the Ministry of Environment and Forest to improve air-quality monitoring and also introduce cleaner technologies in the polluting brick-manufacturing sector.

These energy-efficient new technologies will reduce energy consumption and lower air pollution, hence improving overall environmental quality.

In urban transport, the project will introduce low-cost measures to reduce conflict between motorised and non-motorised transport, reduce congestion and provide safer and cleaner mobility for pedestrians in pilot areas in Dhaka.

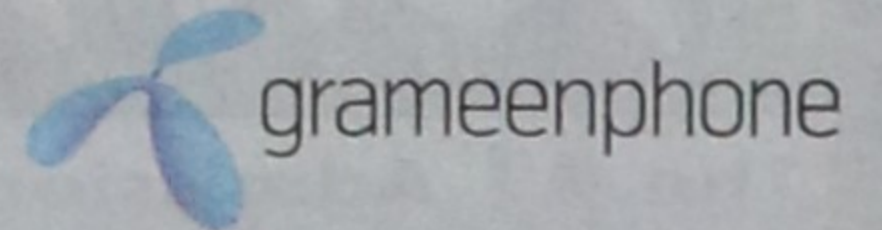


Close to every mother, every child

A glimpse of an innocent smile delights us all – inspires us to stride forward. And, to keep this smile glowing on every child's face, ensuring safe motherhood is essential.

Thus, in partnership with Pathfinder International and through USAID's network of 319 Smiling Sun Clinics supervised by SSFP in 61 districts, "Grameenphone Safe Motherhood and Infant Care Project" is providing free yet comprehensive safe motherhood and infant care services to all underprivileged pregnant mothers and their infants across the country.

Let every child grow in health and vigor under the safe haven of a mother. Our collective effort to keep every mother and child closer can build a healthy and thriving Bangladesh.



Move to create overseas jobs for Bangladeshis

Missions in Greece, Baghdad to open soon

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government will soon open Bangladesh missions in Greece and Baghdad as part of its plan to create more overseas employments for the Bangladeshis, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Hasan Mahmud said yesterday.

"We are also planning to set up embassies in some West European countries like Romania, as they are requiring workers, especially female garment workers," he said at a policy dialogue on 'Global economic Crisis: Impact on Women Labour Migration in Bangladesh'.

Meanwhile, Expatriates' Welfare Secretary Elias Ahmed said the government will set up shelter centres for female migrant workers in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Lebanon and female welfare officials will be appointed in the countries where more Bangladeshi women migrants are concentrated.

International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) jointly organised the dialogue at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel.

Speaking as the chief guest, Hasan Mahmud said the government will take policies that facilitate more overseas employments for the women and that protect them better.

"Around 2000 workers went to Romania, but as they leave jobs, employers are now preferring to hire female garment workers, because they are more reliable," he said.

Mauritius and some central American countries also requested to send female migrants, he said, adding that the new government has already succeeded in some very important issues like withdrawing ban on residency transfers in Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Kuwait.

Saudi Arabia also lifted the ban imposed earlier that when children of Bangladeshis are 18, they should leave that country, he said.

Expatriates' Welfare Secretary Elias Ahmed said last year over 20,000 female migrant workers went to different countries, while during January-April this year the number is 7,451.

"If this trend continues, this year the number of female migrants will be 22,000 plus by the year end. So, it seems global crisis has no impact on overseas jobs of female," he said.

Elias Ahmed, however, said during January-April overall overseas employment declined by 40 percent compared to the corresponding period last year, while the number of returnees also went up.

The expatriates' welfare ministry decided to approach the foreign ministry so that the UN Convention for the Migrants and their Families is ratified to better protect the migrants, he noted.

IOM Regional Representative for South Asia Rabab Fatima said women mobility has evolved as a new economic process, but their issues are often overlooked in policies assessments.

There may be lower demand for migrant workers and decline in remittances this year due to financial crisis, she said, adding that this could have serious effects on long-term human development and on women.

Therefore, it is important that Bangladesh and other labour sending countries prepare short and longer-term measures to minimise the negative impact of the crisis, she said.

Parliamentary Standing Committee Chairperson for Women and Children Meher Afroze Chumki and UNIFEM National Programme Manager Naheed M Ahmed also spoke.

Safe Motherhood Day today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With the slogan 'Ensure safe motherhood, build healthy nation', the country will observe the Safe Motherhood Day today.

Different government and non-government organisations have chalked out various programmes to mark the day.

The inaugural ceremony of the programmes to mark the day will be held at Osmani Memorial Auditorium at 10:00am. The event is organised by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

Adviser to the Prime Minister for Health and Family Welfare Prof Dr Syed Modasser Ali will attend the programme as the chief guest.

Civil Surgeon Office, Dhaka will bring out a rally from Azimpura at 9:00am.

A discussion will be held at Motijheel GOD and Maternity Centre at 10:00am.

Under the Brac Manashi Programme, a daylong health service will be provided to pregnant women at its 27 delivery centres. A voluntary blood donation programme will be held at Jatrabari in association with Sandhani to support the mothers who face complications while giving birth to a child.

Bangladesh Mahila Parishad will organise a discussion on 'Women's Rights: Safe Motherhood' at Cirdap auditorium.

Bangladesh Mahila Sangbadik Forum and DORP will jointly organise a discussion titled 'Maternity allowance-based Swapna package in the national budget' at the National Press Club.

প্রেমের 30 বছর
বদলে যাও বদলে যাও

শ্রমস্বত্ববিভাগের সামাজিক পরি-
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সামাজিক মূল্যবোধ চিহ্নিত করা।
সুবিধা অর্জনে অর্থ উন্নয়ন।
সামাজিক উন্নয়ন প্রকল্পে।

স্বাক্ষর
দেবশীল রায়
চাকমা রাজ

বলুন, লিখুন বদলে দিন বাংলাদেশ

এমনি করে একটি একটি শপথই একদিন বদলে যাবে দেশ। আর তাই আপনার শপথ সত্য হোক জনাই আপনার এলাকায় আসছে বদলে যাও বদলে যাও ব্যানার। আপনিও লিখুন বদলে যাবার অথবা বদলে দেবার একটি শপথ। যা দেশে অনুপ্রাণিত হবে কোটি মানুষ।
অথবা আপনার বদলে যাবার শপথটি এসএমএস করে পাঠিয়ে দিতে পারেন। এসএমএস করলে লিখুন bodolospace আপনার শপথospace আপনার নামospace শব্দের নাম এবং পাঠিয়ে দিন ২২২১ নম্বরে।

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