

Mother wants Trishna, Krishna to grow up in Australia

AP, Dhaka

The mother who gave up her conjoined newborn twins for adoption said yesterday that she is overjoyed the toddlers have been successfully separated and wants them to grow up in Australia.

"My babies are alive and doing well. It's the best news I've ever got in my life," a tearful Lovely Mollick told The Associated Press in a telephone interview from her home in Khulna.

The twins, Trishna and Krishna, who turn three next month, had been joined at the top of their heads and shared brain tissue and blood vessels. They were separated on Tuesday after 25 hours of delicate surgery in a hospital in Melbourne, Australia's second largest city, and then underwent an additional six hours of reconstructive work.

The charity that brought the twins to Australia two years ago for the surgery, Children First Foundation, has said it will support the twins as they undergo further medical treatment in Australia for at least the next two years.

Trishna awoke from a medically induced coma on Thursday and Krishna regained consciousness late Friday.

Their 23-year-old mother said she made the heartbreaking decision to give up her daughters to a Dhaka orphanage after giving birth by caesarean section because she could not properly care for their special needs.

While she and her factory worker husband, Kartik Mollick, 35, wanted to maintain a relationship with their daughters, both parents hoped the twins would be raised in Australia.

"I am from a poor family and am not able to



Trishna

Krishna

take care of them," the mother said. "I want them to get a proper education and live a good life."

"I want them to maintain a relationship with me, no matter where they live, when they are grown up," she added. "They have come from my soul."

The girls' Australian legal guardian for the past two years, Moira Kelly, the charity's founder, said yesterday that she has not considered adoption. "I haven't even thought about it," Kelly told reporters.

Adoptions could be stymied since Australia restricts the adoption of foreign children with medical problems that could burden its health care system.

Kelly said the prognosis that both sisters were neurologically sound "gives me shivers down my spine." The twins' cuts will be pushed together so they could again touch, she said.

Krishna is expected to have a longer period of adjustment as the separation brought more changes to her body and brain's blood circulation. Both girls were in serious but stable condition.

Doctors had earlier said there was a 50-50 chance that one of the girls could suffer brain damage from the complicated separation.

Australian aid worker Danielle Noble first saw Trishna and Krishna in an orphanage when they were a month old, and contacted the Children First Foundation.

The foundation raised almost 250,000 Australian dollars (\$229,000) for the cost of caring for the twins in between numerous earlier surgeries to separate blood vessels connecting their brains.

A mystery benefactor funded all hospital costs, Smith said.

Shykh Seraj receives FAO Award

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Media personality Shykh Seraj has been awarded the prestigious AH Boerma Award of the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) for 2008-09.

Shykh Seraj, director and head of news of Channel I, received the award on the last day of the World Food Security Conference in Rome on November 18, said a press release.

He is the first Bangladeshi and the fifth Asian to receive this prestigious award. Since 1979, FAO has presented the award every two years to journalists from around the world who have helped focus public attention on food security and rural development in developing countries. French journalist Laetitia Clavreul also received the award this year.

FAO Director General Dr Jacques Diouf handed over the award to Shykh Seraj.

In his speech, Dr Jacques Diouf highlighted Seraj's contribution to fighting hunger and



PHOTO: COURTESY

FAO Director General Dr Jacques Diouf gives away AH Boerma Award to media personality Shykh Seraj at the World Food Security Conference in Rome on November 18.

poverty.

Seraj stood by the farmers when they are in trouble and brought it to the notices of policymakers during his long journalistic career, he added.

Seraj has been working relentlessly to promote the use of world's new technology among farmers, he said.

Jacques Diouf also said the whole world is fighting against starvation. Bangladesh continues its fight with less number of strength in which the mass media is a dominant one and Seraj is playing a pivotal role in it.

Receiving the award, Shykh

Seraj said today's electronic and print media do not highlight rural life due to other dominating issues like urban politics.

But it is not possible to alleviate poverty and ensure overall development without ensuring development in the agricultural sector and in the rural areas, he said.

The FAO award is named after former FAO chief Addeke Hendrik Boerma, the Dutch national who headed the organisation for two consecutive terms from 1968 to 1975 and was also the first executive director of World Food Programme (WFP).

'Scrap duty-free car import facility for lawmakers'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three non-government organisations -- Citizens Rights Movement, Seba and Green Voice -- formed a human chain in the city yesterday demanding scrapping of the duty-free car import facility for the Members of the Parliament.

In a brief meeting before the human chain in front of the National Museum speakers said, duty-free car import facility for the lawmakers would decrease their honour in society.

They also said that the provision would leave room for corruption in society and help creating traffic congestion.

They demanded the government to import CNG-run large vehicles to reduce traffic congestion.

It suggested upgrading the state-run organisation Pragati so that it can assemble vehicles.

Mafidul Islam, vice-president of Citizens Right Movement, and general secretary Tushar Rehman, among others, were present at the programme.

BANGABANDHU MURDER SC verdict hailed

DU CORRESPONDENT

Different organisations yesterday continued expressing satisfaction over verdict of the Supreme Court on the Bangabandhu murder case.

Hailing the verdict, the organisations leaders demanded execution of the verdict soon and absconding killers would be brought back.

Leaders said the nation finally found relief from a national stigma through the verdict.

In a press release, Bangladesh Islami Oikya Jote demanded that a commission would be formed to try the patrons of killers Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Bangabandhu Chhatra Parishad, BCS General Education Association, BSRS Officers Welfare Association, Bangabandhu Textile Engineers Association and Bangabandhu Ainjibi Samannoy Parishad in separate statements welcomed the verdict and expressed satisfaction.



PHOTO: STAR

Women's rights activists pay tributes to late poet Sufia Kamal by placing wreaths at her portrait at a memorial meeting at Blam auditorium in the city yesterday, marking her 10th death anniversary. Samajik Protirodh Committee organised the event. (Story on Page 11)

Procurement of Web Design/Development/ Maintenance Services

The Institute of Governance Studies (IGS), BRAC University invites interested companies with at least five years relevant experience to submit proposals / quotations for Web Design / Development / Maintenance Services for:

- The Institute of Governance Studies (IGS) website.
- The Journalism Training & Research Initiative (JATRI) website and
- The Affiliated Network for Social Accountability South Asia Region (ANSA-SAR) website,

Interested Companies can submit separate proposals for all three websites or for any one or two of the websites. The Terms of Reference (TOR) for web design/ development/ maintenance services for ANSA, JATRI and new IGS websites can be found at - <http://www.jatridb.org/web.html>

Interested companies can send proposals/ quotations to -

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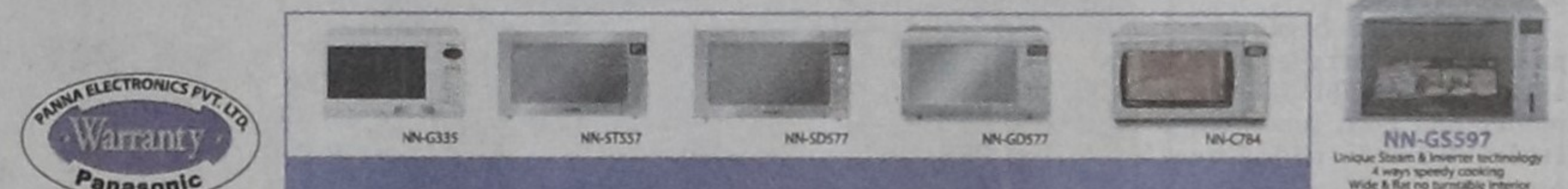
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