

RESTORATIVE SURGERY FOR ACID VICTIM; PHASE 1 DONE

HT correspondent

■ htreporters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: Eighteen senior doctors at the BLK Super Specialty Hospital have completed their first phase of a reconstructive surgery on 27-year-old Sonali Mukherjee, who was burnt in an acid attack nine years ago in Jharkhand.

BLK Hospital will conduct seven major surgeries over the year so that Mukherjee can bounce back with a new face.

Six departments will be working under Dr AS Bath, head of the department of plastic and reconstructive surgery at the hospital.

"After years of agonising wait and psychological and physical trauma, this team of doctors is almost god-sent. I couldn't have asked for more," said Mukherjee. A native of Dhanbad in Jharkhand, Mukherjee was an 18-year-old NCC cadet when she suffered the brutal attack.

Three boys threw acid on her to punish Mukherjee for complaining against them for harassment.

"Her face was disfigured to such an extent that she lost both her eyes due to deep cornea burns. She lost her right ear and was left with deeply scarred facial tissues. Her back, breasts and upper arms were burnt," said Dr Sanjeev Bagai, CEO and dean, Radiant Life Care.

"We will try and restore 75% of her original self but it will be a tough task considering her burns. This is going to be a highly complex, multi-disciplinary multiple surgery for total facial reconstruction and multi-organ involvement," said Bagai, not ruling out the risk to the patient's life.

Various organisations have raised the ₹40 lakh needed for the operations.