

Acid attack victim to undergo series of surgeries after a decade

Sought euthanasia after "not getting adequate medical treatment, Govt. help"

Staff Reporter

NEW DELHI: Sonali Mukherjee, who lost her eyesight and sustained extensive burn injuries on her face, neck and back during an acid attack on her at Dhanbad in Jharkhand nearly a decade ago, is finally undergoing extensive reconstructive surgery at BLK Super Specialty Hospital and Radiant Life Care here.

A group of 18 senior doctors at the hospital have started the first of a series of surgeries on the 27-year-old Sonali, who had earlier this year petitioned the Government asking for permission for euthanasia after she claimed to have failed to get adequate medical treatment

- **She lost eyes, ears, sustained extensive burns in acid attack by 3 men in Jharkhand a decade ago**

- **Will undergo about seven surgeries in 12 months by specialists at a Delhi hospital free of cost**

or financial help from the Government.

Head of the Department of Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery at BLK Hospital Dr. A. S. Bath said: "The first of the series of surgeries to restore Sonali's face was undertaken on Monday. She will undergo six-seven surgeries spread over 12 months which will be coordinated by six teams of specialists before she gets a new face."

Doctors are also looking

at how they can help restore her vision and hearing.

Sonali was attacked by three men for objecting to their constant harassment.

"The victim had previously received medical care from government hospitals. Pre-admission, Sonali has extensive facial disfiguration, no sight in both her eyes and deep cornea burns. She has lost her right ear with near total deafness bilaterally. Her eardrums were destroyed and the fa-

cial tissue is deeply scarred," Dr. Bath said.

Radiant Life Care director Dr. Sanjeev Bagai, speaking at a Press conference on Thursday, said: "Sonali is in a positive frame of mind and is looking forward to the work we have planned with her. The victim's surgeries are highly complex multidisciplinary procedures."

"To begin with, our team of doctors will work at reconstructing her scalp and eyelids. Later work will be done on reconstruction of eardrum. The hospital is not charging Sonali for the surgeries and her other medical expenses are being taken care of by a non-government organisation, Beti, and other sponsors," he added.