

DAWN

DAWN FRIDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2004

NGOs facilitate girl's treatment abroad

By Our Staff Reporter

KARACHI, Oct 7: Baby Zakia, a small girl belonging to a family of Shikarpur that does not even afford treatment of their child at some good hospitals in the country, has been treated in the US for the injuries she sustained in a traffic accident several years ago, thanks to the generosity of a Pakistani non-governmental organization and a US-based charity.

On Thursday, Zakia was given a reception at the National Institute of Child Health, where she was initially treated following the accident in which one of her legs was crushed and her urinary and faecal controls impaired. Present on the occasion were representatives of the two non-profit organizations, which played a crucial role in her treatment abroad — the Karachi-based Healthcare and Social Welfare Association and Houston-based House of Charity.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr Iftikhar Jan of the NICH said a prosthesis had been fitted to Zakia's body and she could walk now. He thanked both the organizations for their endeavours in reducing the suffering of the young patient, whose guardians could not afford good treatment even in the country.

Dr Jan informed all those present that the House of Charity had been supplying medical and surgical supplies worth millions, to the NICH. The NICH's collabora-

tion with the two organizations would continue, he added.

Dr Ghulam Bombaywala of The House of Charity, under whose care Zakia stayed in the US for four months, said he had been trying to take her abroad for more than three years but due to one reason or the other he could not. He said the American doctors were of the opinion that the treatment provided to Zakia at the NICH was at par with the best in the world.

Prof Afroz Ramzan Sher Ali of the NICH said a proposal would be formulated soon for the establishment of a prostheses-producing and fitting centre here. She expressed the hope that a rehabilitation centre for

young trauma patients would be set up within a year at her hospital.

Dr Feroze Ismail of Haswa said every child had a right to life, not just an existence. He underscored the need for capacity-building in every institution.

He praised The House of Charity "which was not only thinking about the poor people of Pakistan but also doing something worthwhile for them".

Speaking on the occasion, Baby Zakia said she was feeling fine. She also expressed the desire to go back to the US. Dr Farhat Mirza presented the vote of thanks.

Meanwhile, after the reception, Dr Bombaywala told this reporter that his organization had arranged the treatment of 60 to 70 people in the US. He said a number of US citizens were part of the initiative in which they contributed time, money and effort on voluntary basis.

He said he did not take anyone to the US without his or her family's consent, and that their treatment started within a couple of days of their landing in the there.

Answering a question, he said at least \$40,000 had been spent on Zakia's treatment.

Dr Feroze Ismail said six poor children, who were getting treatment at the NICH, had been sent abroad for treatment. "And in all we have sent 15 patients so far to the US," he added.



Baby Zakia