

Tales of trauma and tenderness at a Jaipur hospital

Every half hour, Anil Vasvani, 32, wakes up with a shudder in his bed at the Sawai Mansingh Hospital here. Each time, his elderly mother hastens to wipe the tears rolling down his face, but fails to stop her own eyes from filling up.

At the overcrowded, unclean ward where blood soaked swabs, bandages, empty biscuit packets, banana peels lie scattered, Savitri Devi, 55, sits next to her son - the only breadwinner of the family - worrying about his future.

Doctors removed Anil's damaged left kidney the day he was rushed to the hospital with pellets in his stomach - a victim of the serial terror bombings in India's popular tourist city in Rajasthan last Tuesday that killed over 60 people and injured over 200. He now whimpers in pain.

'He gets up every half hour and starts weeping. He is disturbed as the blast scene comes to his mind very often,' his mother told a visiting IANS correspondent.

The state-run Sawai Mansingh Hospital is the largest in Rajasthan, but it has not arranged for any counselling for the blast victims.

'We will see if any patient needs counselling. But there is no separate provision for it here,' said Narpat Singh Shekhawat, medical superintendent there.

But the families of victims are trying to make up for what the hospital lacks. In the three wards where the patients are housed, the families present a picture of strength, helping their near and dear ones fight pain, trauma and an uncertain future.

Anil, who struggles to simply get into a more comfortable position in bed and is barely able to speak, told IANS that he was at work as usual in a shoe shop when a bomb went off at Badi Chaupad near Hawa Mahal.

'I vividly remember each and every moment. The blast has ripped apart an entire bangle shop. Many were lying in a pool of blood with their clothes torn. People were running helter-skelter, screaming for help,' Anil murmured.

'I do not when someone put me in a jeep and took me here,' he said.

Savitri Devi said Anil is the only breadwinner of the family comprising them and his two sisters. 'Doctors have advised him three months of rest. We are really worried for him and want him to come out of the trauma,' she said.

'Our life has been thrown out of gear. No relatives or administration is helping us in passing through this tough time, but we are strong and have faith in god. We will get back to our jobs soon,' she said.

Lying next to Anil is Abdul Razzaq, who works at the bangle shop close to the shoe shop. He has fractures in one leg.

'I have five daughters and one handicapped son. I work daily to earn for them. My wife is with me in

hospital and we don't know if my children have eaten anything for the past two days,' an inconsolable Razaq said.

Harshit Lalwani, 12, sounds unusually mature for a boy his age. He suffered pellet injuries in his stomach, chest and nose when another cycle bomb exploded near Manik Chowk, but said: 'Life is full of troubles and this too will pass.'

'I am ready to begin afresh, though it's very difficult to forget what happened. I am missing my friends and want to play with them again,' he said.

His mother Rajani said: 'My son is very brave. We will make him stand in a couple of days and make him more confident.'

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