

'I will have to watch my son die'

SICK SYSTEM Brain-injured boy 'turned away' from AIIMS



■ **Helpless mother:** Sahina's son, 14 year-old Mujahid, can barely move or register events around him – and he's allegedly been turned away from the AIIMS trauma centre because his family has no money to treat him.

RONJOY GOGOI / HT PHOTO

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NEW DELHI: 14-year-old Mujahid has been classified as "half-brain dead," by doctors at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS)—and then wheeled out of the hospital.

It takes Rs 5,000 to 10,000 a month to treat the teenager who can consume only liquid through a pipe, say doctors at AIIMS—an unthinkable sum for Mujahid's mother and siblings who subsist on less than Rs 1,000 a month.

On June 17 this year, the teenager's head was smashed against a railway signal while travelling in a local train near Okla Mandi, South Delhi.

He was his family's sole breadwinner.

His mother Sahina, who used to sell leftover vegetables at Okhla Mandi does not go to work any more, fixed as she is by her son's side.

"Since his accident, I have been with him at AIIMS. Whatever money I had, has been spent on treating Mujahid," says 40-year-old Sahina.

"My other children are lying on the streets and starving."

Doctors at AIIMS said Mujahid is half brain dead and his survival now depends on the medical help that can be provided to him.

"His monthly expense can range between Rs 5,000 to Rs 10,000," said a doctor at AIIMS,

not willing to be quoted.

Medical superintendent D.K. Sharma said he did not have information about the case. Mujahid's family has not lodged any complaint against the discharge with AIIMS authorities.

"Our primary concern was providing him shelter," said his mother Sahina Begum.

On Saturday, Mujahid was discharged after the doctors allegedly said they don't have space to keep him anymore.

Sahina says her first priority is to find money to fill their bellies. "I will have to see my son die before my eyes."

Mujahid's body is almost senseless and he needs two sessions of physiotherapy daily. The only hope for him is an

operation, if physiotherapy works, the doctor said.

"For the time-being we have admitted Mujahid with Butterflies (a Daryaganj-based non-governmental organisation) who can provide the child with physiotherapy," said Charu Gaba of NGO Chetna, who has been providing some monetary aid to the family.

Very few NGOs have facilities to treat Mujahid. No private hospital will treat him because of the high charges.

"Unless the government provides aid or a social organisation adopts him, the boy will not survive," Gaba said.

His family have no option but to wait for that miracle to come through.