

Shamima Akter a person with creativity

Shamima Akter was born and raised in Naogaon, where she currently lives with her parents and four sisters in their neighborhood, Potnitala. Currently 19 years old, she was attacked with acid by her husband in 2011 over a dispute over whether or not Shamima would continue her studies as a married woman.

Shamima's devotion to her education was cause for contention with her husband, Shohidul, who would often even resort to violent means to persuade her to give up on her academic ambitions. Shamima, however, was determined to pursue her dream of joining the armed forces and the Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) Camp. She refused to quit her studies on his behest and would suffer daily abuses, like beatings and verbal abuse. After repeatedly borrowing money from Shamima's parents, Shohidul decided to retaliate at his wife and in laws by absconding with a large loan from them. In the middle of the evening on May 25th 2012, Shamima woke up to find her husband sneaking out of the house, and to find that her face was quickly eroding off her skull. She ran to the bathroom and saw that her skin was falling off her face and that she was burning everywhere. Shamima's mother bathed her wounds continuously with water in the hopes that the burning sensation would cool down.

Shamima was brought to ASF on the day of her attack with 11% burn mostly affecting her forehead, face, eyes, nose, neck, right ear and left side of chest and both hands. She received four operations and was at the organization for two and a half months. However, undeterred by her husband's acts, just 15 days after her attack Shamima went back to Potnitala to take her intermediate exams. As a result of the treatment she received at ASF hospital, Shamima's vision was saved, her hearing was restored and she can function without the aid the support of a hearing aid, and lesion on face and neck were healed without major scar and contracture. Shamima still has post burn contracture on her neck and lower part of her chin and visible scar on her face for which she will require more surgical interventions in the next few years.

The day after the attack, Shamima's father filed a case against Shohidul at the Pitnitala Police Station, where the local police paid no heed to his complaints. The day after, Shamima was taken to a local hospital in Fakshahi to receive intensive treatment.

Looking to BRAC for aid, Shamima's father filed a complaint with the legal department at BRAC on behalf of Shamima and the misconduct and neglect of her case at Potnitala Police Station. BRAC accompanied Shamima's family to petition the village Chairman and the District Commissioner's office to get her case filed. As a result, the officer in charge at Potnitala Police Station was reprimanded and punished for neglecting his oversight duties to Shamima's case.

15 days later Shohidul was caught in Uttara, Dhaka. Later he was let out on bail.

Investigations into the case yielded many points of illumination: Shohidul was in touch with one of Shamima's neighbors to collect surveillance information while he was away on Shamima and her whereabouts. He also arranged to steal Shamima's cell phone; he bought the acid he used on Shamima from a gold jeweler. His crime represents one of cold-hearted calculation and foresight;

no crime of passion, Shamima's husband deliberately and methodically planned to ruin her life by leaving her horribly disfigured.

As Shamima continues with treatment and rehabilitation, she struggles with trying to remember that her attacker is behind bars; the scars he left behind, however, is a constant reminder of the threat and damage he represents. Nowadays, Shamima has taken to artistic pursuits to help her recover her sense of self and agency—always singing, dancing, and writing poems, Shamima is a creative person who's talents have not been stifled by the trauma she has endured.