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Zakat for life: A mission to save lives of children with thalassemia

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Star Online Report

The coronavirus pandemic has abruptly stalled city life. There is no public transport on the roads and people only travel for emergencies. But during the

pandemic, many parents with children suffering from thalassemia are spending stressful days. They will have to survive the pandemic, collect blood for their sick child, and will have to go to the hospital for blood transfusion.

The Thalassemia Foundation Hospital in Shantinagar, Dhaka is seeing a steady stream of patients amidst the lockdown. Patients are coming from Dhaka and adjoining districts for blood transfusion. Hamida Begum, a mother of two, came to the hospital from Mirpur after changing her mode of transport several times. Both her children are thalassemia patients. Without monthly blood transfusion, they get ill.

Five-year-old Ferdous, Hamida's youngest son, is always busy with mischief- playing, running, and jumping. The eldest son Billal is in sixth grade. He also requires blood transfusion every month.

Their father works as a day laborer. Due to the pandemic, he has been unable to find work for about two months. Hamida has to bring her two children to the hospital for blood transfusion. She said, "I had a lot of problems getting blood this time because of the lockdown. Billal's haemoglobin level has dropped to 5 points. The doctor advised to give him two bags of blood this month. I can barely feed the kids. The treatment expense is beyond my capacity," says Hamida.

Then there is Sumaiya, who sits tight in a chair next to the nurse's station while the little one's cry because they cannot stand the stab of the needle. After a while, she will be called. Nine-year-old Sumaiya Akter lost her father last year and now the full responsibility of the family has fallen on her elder brother Sujan.

No one had to worry about Sumaiya's treatment as long as her father was alive. There would always be a way. But in his absence, it has become difficult to even run the family. Meanwhile, the medical cost is about Tk five to ten thousand per month. When the bereaved mother informed the Thalassemia Foundation Hospital authorities about the family's condition, they arranged her treatment with the Zakat Fund.

The Thalassemia Foundation Hospital has 3,205 registered patients, most of whom are extremely poor. It is almost impossible for these families to afford medical treatment for thalassemia. The foundation authorities have therefore urged affluent members of the society to stand by them by donating Zakat to these patients.

The foundation collected zakat of taka one crore and eighty-seven lakh in 2019 with which 428 patients were treated around the year. Professor Dr Manzoor Morshed, President of the Zakat Committee of the Foundation said, "We receive a lot of requests from patients seeking help. Our committee verifies the applications according to Islamic Sharia and recommends free treatment to the patients from the Zakat Fund. We

are not able to help many deserving patients due to insufficient funds. The number of people seeking help is likely to increase this year due to the coronavirus pandemic."

The hospital is seeking help for thalassemia patients like Ferdous, Billal, and Sumaiya by giving zakat to Bangladesh Thalassemia Foundation Zakat Fund.

You can send your donation to the following bank accounts:

Account Name: Bangladesh Thalassemia Foundation (Zakat Fund), Account Number: 20501450100519315 Islami Bank Bangladesh Limited, Mouchak Branch, Dhaka or

Account Number - 01130994802, Standard Chartered Bank, Gulshan Branch.

To donate online via Visa, MasterCard, or American Express Card, visit www.thals.org/zakat. You can also send money via bKash (01729284256) using the "Payment" option.

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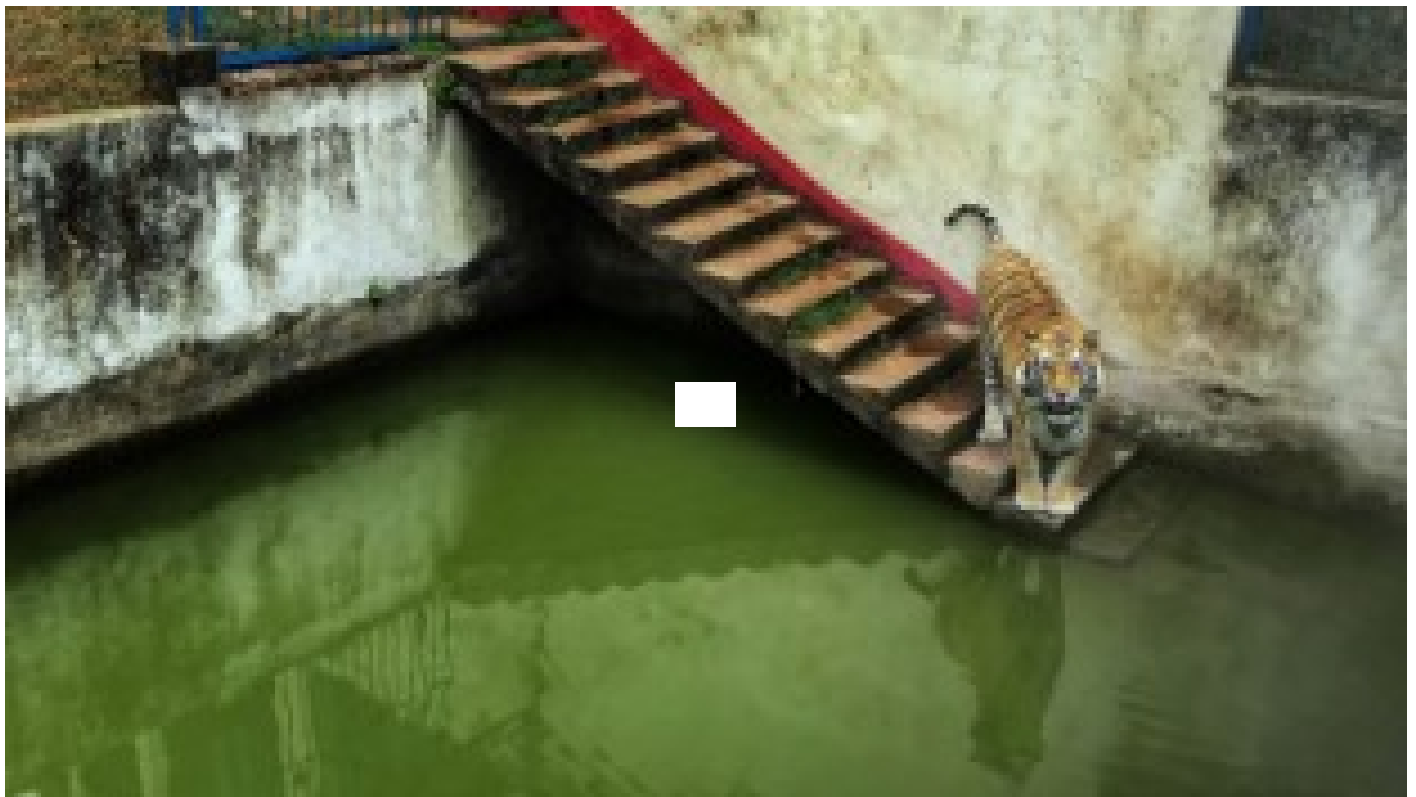
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