

### A picture of delight

Can you see the joy in the face of this young mother? Back in March 2022 she brought two of her children to BNSB eye hospital, each of them with severe cataracts. Unable to afford the surgery – one of the children hadn't even got a birth certificate because the family couldn't afford the £5 registration fee - Vision for Bangladesh was asked if we might consider helping. That day both of the little girls had surgery in one eye and in December they were both operated on again and the cataracts removed from their other eyes. From a situation of absolute bleakness, the light of life has been given and the girls can go to school, learn and have a normal, healthy childhood. No wonder their mother looks so happy!



### Time for Reflection

Over the past two years, Vision for Bangladesh has used all available funds to expand the eye treatment work within the Tea Gardens of Bangladesh and to provide help to as many people as possible.

This has been achieved by the appointment of a team of Tea Garden girls who have been trained to systematically go from house to house to search for and examine the eyes of every young child they could find. Those children (and some very needy adults too) would be transported to the BNSB eye hospital in Moulvibazar where they would receive professional assessment, glasses or surgery for cataracts if necessary, all paid for by VfB.

Free eye clinics were arranged in a number of Tea Gardens where every adult who attended would have their eyes tested, reading glasses given and arrangements made for anyone with cataracts to go to BNSB for surgery. Similarly, children in a number of primary schools were tested and glasses given, together with slow-release Vitamin A medication to every child.



*Vision for Bangladesh team member, Rimly, hard at work helping the people of the Tea Gardens.*

The achievement figures for 2022 were impressive.

# 10,427

People (mostly children) had their eyes tested

## 2,573

Adults attended eye camps

## 426

Received sight saving surgery (mostly cataracts)

## 1,094

Pairs of glasses were issued.

Recently, circumstances have dictated some necessary changes and the decision has been made to consolidate the work that has already been achieved.

Rather than moving into more remote Tea Gardens with problems of safety for the staff and increased costs for transport, it is proposed that with a reduced workforce it would be prudent to re-visit Tea Gardens covered two years ago. Any newborn babies and young children found will have their eyes tested and any needing treatment will

be accompanied to BNSB. The education given to mothers will be reinforced and iron tablets given to them as well as Vitamin A medication to the children. Tea Garden primary schools will be re-visited, possibly twice a year, to give Vitamin A capsules to every child and determining from teachers if any child is having difficulty with reading. In other words, maintain a consistent presence in a limited area and do the work well, rather than a "once in and out" policy. If funds allow it is always possible to arrange further adult or school camps elsewhere.



### Sumi is getting married

February 5th is her wedding day and we wish her every happiness on this special occasion. Sadly, Sumi will be moving to Dhaka and will no longer be able to work with Vision for Bangladesh. She has been a valuable member of the team over the past year or so, and we will miss her. Hopefully we will soon find a suitable replacement for her, but it will take a little time for training and to gain experience.



*Sumi showing love and care to her patients*

### Christmas in the Tea Gardens

A day of celebration of Christmas was enjoyed by many from the Tea Gardens around Moulvibazar. Pastor Ivan Samadder and his team arranged a number of activities including food and even a visit from Santa Claus.

The message of hope was clear in the midst of hardship and poverty. To help through the cold winter weather 400 blankets were given to needy families.



On behalf of the Tea Garden people - thank you for every prayer and every pound. We cannot do this without your continued help.