

Another acid attack

Police set up task force to nab culprits

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Ling Siew Teen recuperating at Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Kota Kinabalu yesterday. A man squirted acid on her face on Tuesday. — NST picture by Junaidi Ladjana

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KUALA LUMPUR: Another case of acid attack occurred in Kota Kinabalu on Tuesday, raising eyebrows on the spike in the number of such incidents nationwide.

Earlier this year, a motorcyclist here went on a spree, splashing schoolchildren and pedestrians with a corrosive liquid, causing injuries to the victims.

That culprit is still at large and police said those attacks were carried out randomly.

In recent weeks, robbers have resorted to using this tactic while in some cases, acid was splashed over minor disagreements.

In the latest incident in Kota Kinabalu, a man used a water gun to spray acid on a 22-year-old woman.

The male assailant called out the victim's name before squirting her face with the corrosive liquid.

Ling Siew Teen sustained serious irritation to the eyes, chin, lips and

cheeks after the attack in Kolombong.

Ling, who is warded at Queen Elizabeth Hospital, said everything happened so fast in the 2pm attack.

"I had just stepped out of my car when someone called out my name. I turned around and a car came towards me.

"Then, a man pointed a toy gun at me and squirted some liquid on my face. I felt a stinging pain in my eyes, irritation on my chin, lips and cheeks. I could not see and called out for help."

Her father, Richard Ling, said the attack happened just after his daughter was about to return to work after having lunch at home.

"A passer-by sent her to the hospital. The liquid appeared to have been diluted and did not seem to have inflicted serious injuries but doctors are still monitoring her condition."

Meanwhile, Bernama reported that a task force had been formed, comprising police officers from here and Selangor, to gather information

and track down the acid splashers.

Criminal Investigation Department director Datuk Seri Mohd Bakri Mohd Zinin said police were going all out to nail the culprits.

A composite image of one of the suspects was released to the media yesterday by Kuala Lumpur police.

Bakri dismissed speculation that the attacks were related to a serial acid splasher who had injured several people since March.

"We have reason to believe that these crimes are unrelated," he said in a statement.

He urged members of the public who had information on the suspects to come forward and assist police.

On Tuesday, Ng Heng Man, 25, was splashed with acid by two men in a blue sports car while driving to his house here just after midnight.

The assailants robbed him of his valuables but failed to take his car.

On Aug 8, Mohd Rafie Abd Latif, 27, the nephew of the 1980s singer Datin Ramziela Radzillah, suffered injuries to his face, body and hands

after he was splashed with acid near Wisma Bumi Raya in Jalan Raja Laut here.

Four days before that, in Kota Baru, a 37-year-old car salesman suffered 17 per cent burns on his body when he was splashed with acid in Taman Uda Murni.

On July 26, a despatch rider was splashed with a liquid, believed to be acid, at a petrol station in Sungai Besi and robbed of RM18,000.

A week before that, two siblings suffered serious injuries after a 31-year-old labourer splashed formic acid on them in front of his house in Felda Jengka 9 in Temerloh.

The victims, Syafiq Haikal Mat Safa Zaidi, 13, and Syaffiy Aiman Mat Safa Zaidi, 10, were cycling to a friend's house about 8pm when the attack took place.

The labourer, Mohamad Hafiz Ismail, was caught and charged in court.

He was sentenced to eight years' jail and given two strokes of the rotan.