

Dhaka Day by Day

Pathetic Pathological Centres

by Mehnaz Ali



If going to a doctor is depressing a visit to a pathological centre can be quite a traumatic experience. Not only does one have to let go of one's finer sensibilities and inhibitions, one may also have to be prepared for all kinds of humiliation. Although there has been a mushroom growth in this city, of diagnostic centres' and 'pathological units' over the last few years, very few of them provide the patient with that precious phenomenon called 'privacy'.

Going to a place full of strangers staring into one's face, with a sample of one's less desirable by-products is bad enough. But being exposed to all kinds of comments and questions is much worse.

Many lady patients, for example, complain about the utter boorishness of the staff at some of these private pathological laboratories. One of them describes the time when she went to get her urine tested for a kidney infection. "There were about four men sprawled on chairs chatting away: when I gave one of them my prescription, he just handed me a narrow test tube and growled rudely: 'go behind the curtains and fill it up to this points.' Extremely embarrassed, especially since this was said within everyone's hearing. The woman went behind the curtains to see that there was a tiny bathroom where one could barely stand, let alone fill the bottle. When finally she came back and handed the test-tube to the staff member, he looked at skeptically and had the audacity to comment 'Oh so little'. Humiliated and angry, the woman had no choice but to grit her teeth and walk out of the centre.

Another infringement on one's right to privacy is when one of the pathologists is even remotely acquainted with the patients. He will ask the most personal of questions and make the ordeal of the tests even worse by making his own comments. Another patient, a doctor herself, who went for a pregnancy test says that the pathologists had the nerve to say, "If it's good news, I will phone your mother and tell her without even asking if that was what

she wanted. Visitors too, often display this lack of tact by saying things like 'why are you here?'

Congratulations in case it's positive, jumping into the conclusion that just because it is a young woman patient she has come for a pregnancy test, not even thinking that she may be testing for hepatitis B in which case a positive indication will be a far cry from something to celebrate.

Male patients are also not spared and they are as susceptible to embarrassing situations as women are. After all who would not find it degrading, male or female, to sit in a room full of people with a jar that is filled with something other than strawberry preserve?

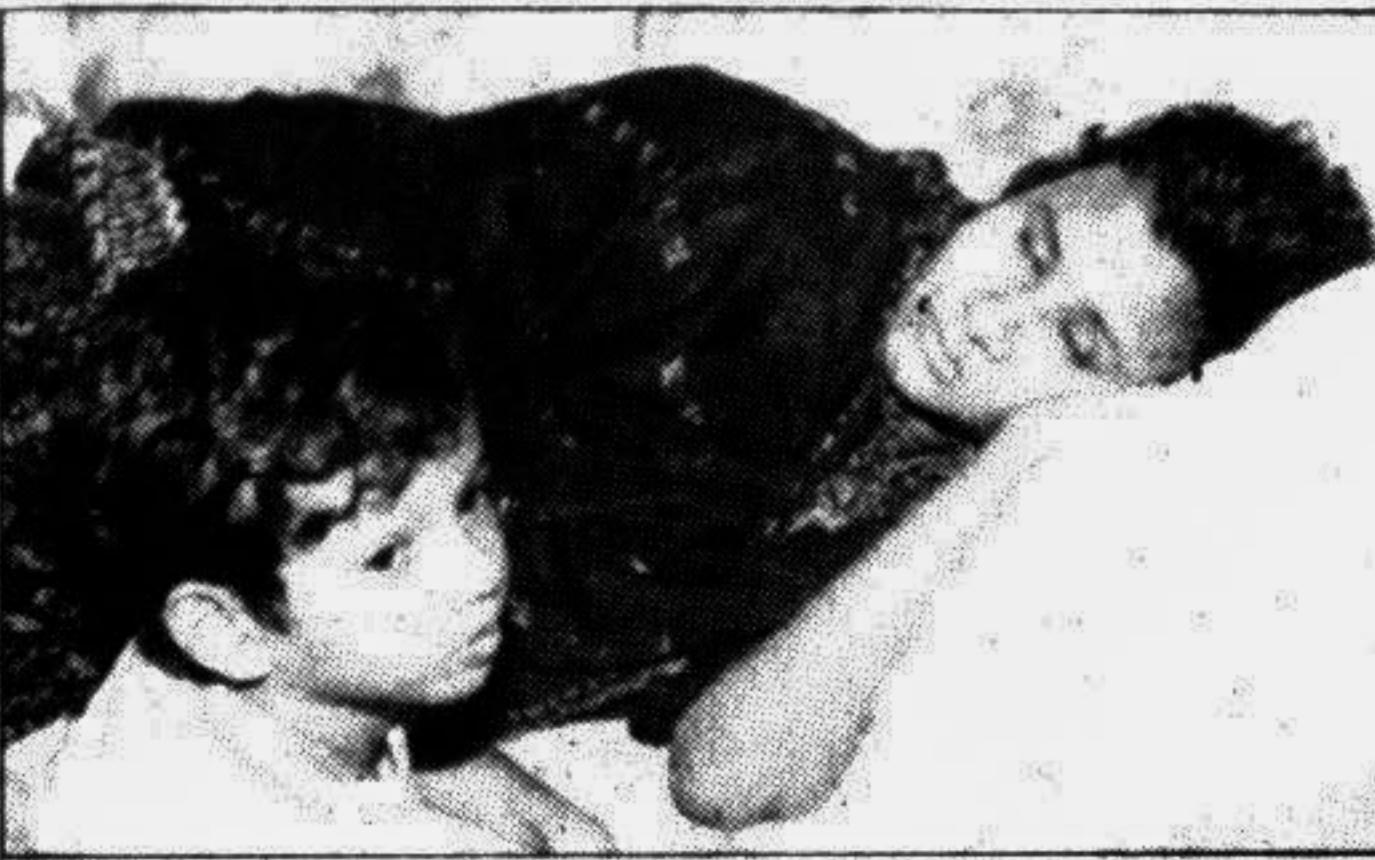
There are of course some pathological centres where tests are done quickly and with impersonal efficiency. The patient will enter his name in a register and will be called according to his serial number. After the sample has been taken and labelled, he will be asked to pay and called to report the next day. The only drawback is that these centres are always so crowded that it may take hours before you get your turn.

Last but not the least is the accuracy of these tests — something that one can never be 100 per cent sure of. After all when you think of the thousands of people giving samples to a single person who does these tests without any computerised system, it is quite possible to get the results mixed up. So was the case of a gentleman who had given his blood to be tested and was humiliated beyond reason when the report showed "positive for pregnancy."

One must not, of course, be too harsh on these centres, for although there is more than ample room for improvement, they are in fact providing people with an essential service. Perhaps by following the golden rule of quality not quantity, these testing laboratories will emphasise a little on better, cleaner and more professional service.

Otherwise, the customers of these units may develop a pathological hatred for them.

Metropolitan



Wife of a Sub Inspector of Kotwali thana Hasanul Farhad who was killed during a gunbattle between two factions of the JCD at Jagannath University College yesterday, lost her consciousness hearing the news of her husband's death. — Star photo

Biswas, Khaleda greet President of Ghana

President Abdur Rahman Biswas has felicitated his Ghanaian counterpart Jerry John Rawlings to mark the Independence Day of Ghana today, reports BSS.

In a message of felicitation he wished prosperity of the friendly people of Ghana.

In another message the Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia has felicitated Jerry John Rawlings, President of the Republic of Ghana to mark the Independence Day of Ghana today.

The rally was addressed among others by Ruhul Quddus Babu, Naimul Ahsan Jewel, Rokonuzzaman Rokon.

In the message of felicitation the Prime Minister wished continued peace, progress and prosperity of the friendly people of the Republic of Ghana.

3 personalities accorded reception

CHITTAGONG, Mar. 5: The Chittagong Press Club accorded a reception to three noted personalities for their contributions in different fields at a simple ceremony in its auditorium here Friday, reports BSS.

With press club president Obaidul Haq in the chair the reception was attended by newly-elected mayor of Chittagong Alhaj A B M Mahiuddin Chowdhury as the chief guest. It was addressed, among others, by secretary of the press club Abu Sufian and president of Chittagong Union of Journalists (CUJ) Akhithi.

Khalil Ahmed and Mukul Sharma, two local journalists and Belal Mohammad, one of the main organisers of the Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra, who were accorded reception today also spoke on the occasion.

Chittagong Press Club had introduced reception to three personalities including two journalists every year since 1990.

Speaking on the occasion the newly-elected mayor urged the journalists to play a vital role in implementing his pre-election pledges for the corporation.

He said the journalists should make constructive criticism of both the ruling and the opposition parties for the welfare of the society.

Later, the newly-elected mayor presented the press club crest to the recipients.

Special trains for Eid-ul-Fitr

RAJSHAHI, Mar. 5: Bangladesh Railway (west zone) has made special arrangements for the coming Eid-ul-Fitr to clear Eid rush, reports BSS.

There will be no 'off day' of inter-city trains from March 8 to March 13 and from March 16 to March 20. Extra coaches will be attached with inter-city, mail and express trains.

No inter-city, mail and express trains will run on Eid day except Rajshahi Express, Uttar-Banga Mail and Bogra Express. Some inter-city and express trains will not run over west zone following Eid-day.

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