

LACK OF FACILITIES IN GOVT HOSPITALS, HIGH COST AT PRIVATE CLINICS

# Poor dental patients bear brunt

NAIMUL ALAM NOBIN

The access of poor patients to oral treatment and dental surgery is very limited due to lack of facilities in government hospitals and high costs at private dental clinics.

They have to wait for days to get admission for surgeries in government hospitals as the number of patients is much higher than the capacity, sources said.

"We usually conduct surgery three days a week, but it is almost impossible to provide all patients with surgery facilities in due time, even if we do this seven days a week," said a doctor in the maxillofacial surgery unit at Dhaka Dental College (DDC), adding, "The number of patients, who come here for treatment, are four to five times higher than the beds available."

"Although the construction of a seven-story building for DDC is at the final stage, its 200 beds would not be enough to ensure surgery facilities for the huge number of patients. Out of the 200 beds, one hundred will be for oral and maxillofacial surgery and the rest will be for general surgery and medicine treatment," said the hospital sources.

Work on the construction of the building began in March 2002 and was supposed to be completed by March 2004, but the building is yet to be operational, they added.

There are only 52 beds for oral and maxillofacial surgeries in government hospitals across the country.

Of them, only three hospitals DDC, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) and Suhrawardi Hospital have the facilities for surgery that needs general anesthesia (making the patients fully senseless).

DDC has 20 beds, Suhrawardi Hospital 18 beds and the BSMMU 14 beds for maxillofacial surgeries.

Of the 14 beds at the BSMMU, eight are paying beds.

Patients have to pay Tk 150 for a bed per day, and Tk 5000 for minor surgery and Tk 8000 for major surgery, while the cost of anesthe-

sia is 2500 at the BSMMU, sources said.

Maxillofacial surgery unit mainly deals in oral cancer, tumors, bone fractures in face, infection inside mouth and other diseases that need facial surgeries and the surgeries that cannot be done with only local anesthesia.

Orthodontics, treatment to unshaped teeth, prosthodontics, capping teeth and setting artificial teeth and conservative dentistry like root canals are provided at DDC.

Dentists say lack of awareness and poor access to treatment are the main causes for the deterioration of oral and dental diseases.

Even the MBBS doctors do not have basic idea about dentistry or oral diseases and their treatment, they added.

"It is very difficult to provide surgery facilities to all the patients with the existing number of beds in the hospital," said Dr Md Harunur-Rashid, assistant registrar of oral and maxillofacial surgery unit of DDC.

"Due to limited access, minor oral problems of the poor people often develop into major problems like tumor turning into cancer," he added.

Dr Harun said MBBS doctors should also have basic idea about dentistry, as many dental patients go to them first, but they do not realise the severity of the patients.

The situation at the district level is very much awful as the government hospitals there can only provide the patients with the facility of tooth extraction and nothing else.

There are two dental units in Chittagong Medical College and Hospital and Rajshahi Medical College and Hospital, but these have no maxillofacial surgery facilities.

Dr Shahriar Islam, dental surgeon at the General Hospital in Barisal said, "We cannot provide better treatment or surgery to the patients as the hospital has no surgical facilities. We can only refer them to Dhaka. If they can afford, they get treatment, otherwise, they suffer."

Dr Abul Faiz, director general of health department, said, "Our first priority is to provide the people with primary dental care, and for that we need dental technologists."

"As a poor country, we are looking for ensuring primary dental care first and then oral and maxillofacial surgery," he added.



A stick is the only sign that warns of an open manhole on the road in front of BTB Bhaban at Rampura in the city, posing serious threat to pedestrians and commuters. The picture was taken yesterday.

## Protect antiquities, archeological heritages

Speakers tell seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a seminar yesterday urged the government to establish a national committee and formulate a policy to protect the antiquities and archeological heritages of the country.

They also urged the government to make a proper list of the antiquities and archeological heritages and make the existing laws up-to-date to protect the archeological structures and the relics.

They made the call at a seminar on 'Preserving Antiquities, Archeological Structures: Our Duties' organised by Save the Environment Movement (SEM) at the Public Library seminar room in the city.

Former director general of National Museum and Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy Shamsuzzaman Khan said there should be an autonomous national committee to protect the archeological heritages and the artefacts of the country.

"The government should create a specialised cadre service in this regard with the graduates from

history, anthropology and archeology departments and they should be trained regularly. They should have specific responsibility for creating awareness among the people in this regard," he said.

He said the government should take measures to protect our historical structures and places for promoting tourism.

The speakers also said lack of proper listing of archeological heritages is one of the problems in saving those. They said the list of 321 structures was prepared 18 years ago but there was no update of that list.

Executive Director of Bangladesh Environment Lawyers Association Syeda Rezwana Hasan said the laws relating to protecting the antiquities and archeological heritages should be amended and made up-to-date to allow community involvement in saving those.

Chairman of architecture department of Asia Pacific University Dr Abu Sayeed M Ahmed, Dr Jasmin Ara of Ahsanullah University and SEM Chairman Abu Naser Khan also spoke at the seminar.



Syeda Rezwana Hasan addresses a seminar at the Public Library seminar room in the city yesterday.

## Pak drug, cigarette, clothes worth Tk 40 lakh seized

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A surveillance team of Customs at Zia International Airport (ZIA) yesterday seized huge quantity of smuggled Pakistani drug, cigarette and clothes worth over Tk 40 lakh and arrested three people in this connection.

The arrestees were identified as Akbar Ali, a traffic loader of Pakistan Airlines, and Mohammad Saddam of Munshiganj district and Abdul Aziz of Laxmipur district, passengers of an aircraft of

Pakistani Airways. Neyamul Islam, assistant commissioner (AC) of the Customs, told The Daily Star that they seized 26 items of drugs worth Tk 12 lakh, 12 cartons of cigarettes of different brands worth Tk eight lakh and 18 luggage containing clothes worth Tk 20 lakh.

He said Saddam and Aziz arrived at ZIA at 3:15pm and were arrested at about 4:30pm from the Customs Hall.

Akbar was arrested for helping them smuggle the goods.

**মাদিনা ট্যাংক**

দীর্ঘ একযুগ ধরে বাংলাদেশে  
লাখে গ্রাহকের আস্থা অর্জন  
করে নতুনভাবে সর্বাধুনিক  
প্রযুক্তি নিয়ে বাজারে এলো

- আনন্দান্বিত উন্নতমানের LLDPE ফ্লোথ্রাফ্ট প্লাস্টিক দিয়ে তৈরি তাই পানির তলাগুন থাকে অস্বস্তি।
- এই ট্যাংক ১২টি গোলাকার রিং দিয়ে তৈরি তাই অত্যন্ত শক্ত ও মজবুত।
- তিন তরর বিশিষ্ট তাই পানিকে রাখে ঠাণ্ডা।
- সূর্যের ক্ষতিকর অতি বেগুনী রশ্মি মুক্ত।
- দেখতে অত্যন্ত চকচকে, আছে অটোলক ঢাকনা।
- ৩৫ বছরের গ্যারান্টি।
- বাজারের সেরা ট্যাংক কিন্তু দামে সাশ্রয়।

**জীবন বাঁচায় পানি**  
**পানিকে বাঁচায় মাদিনা ট্যাংক**  
**আর তাই জীবন বাঁচাতে**  
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দেশব্যাপী আমাদের ডিলার ও খুচরা  
বিক্রেতাদের সাথে যোগাযোগ করুন

এমটিসি পলিকন ইন্ডাস্ট্রিজ লিঃ  
ঢাকা চেম্বার বিল্ডিং (৩য় তলা), ৬৫-৬৬ মহিলা বা/এ, ঢাকা-১০০০  
ফোনঃ ৯৫৬৮০১৩, ৯৫৬২৩৯০, মোবাইলঃ ০১৭১৬ ০৩২০৫১

মাদিনা গ্রুপের একটি পণ্য

**That'll be 10 souls please...**

The Kissie Penny, or Gizzie Iron, are twisted iron rods, about 7 to 12 inches long, that were used for money in Liberia and Sierra Leone from the 19th to the mid 20th century. They were said to contain a soul. If the Kissie broke, the soul would escape and it would be valueless. Of course, the local witch doctor could restore the soul, for a small fee.

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Corporate Office: Ali Mansion, 1173/1207 Sadarghat Road, Chittagong, Bangladesh | Tel: +880-31-2854901-10 | Fax: +880-31-610101 | E-mail: mail@bsrm.com  
Dhaka Office: Mahub Castle (2nd & 4th Floor), 35 Purana Paltan Line, Dhaka-1000, Bangladesh | Phone: +880-2-8313135, 9358135, 8311994, 9356344 | Fax: +880-2-8312905 | E-mail: bsrm@aitlbd.net