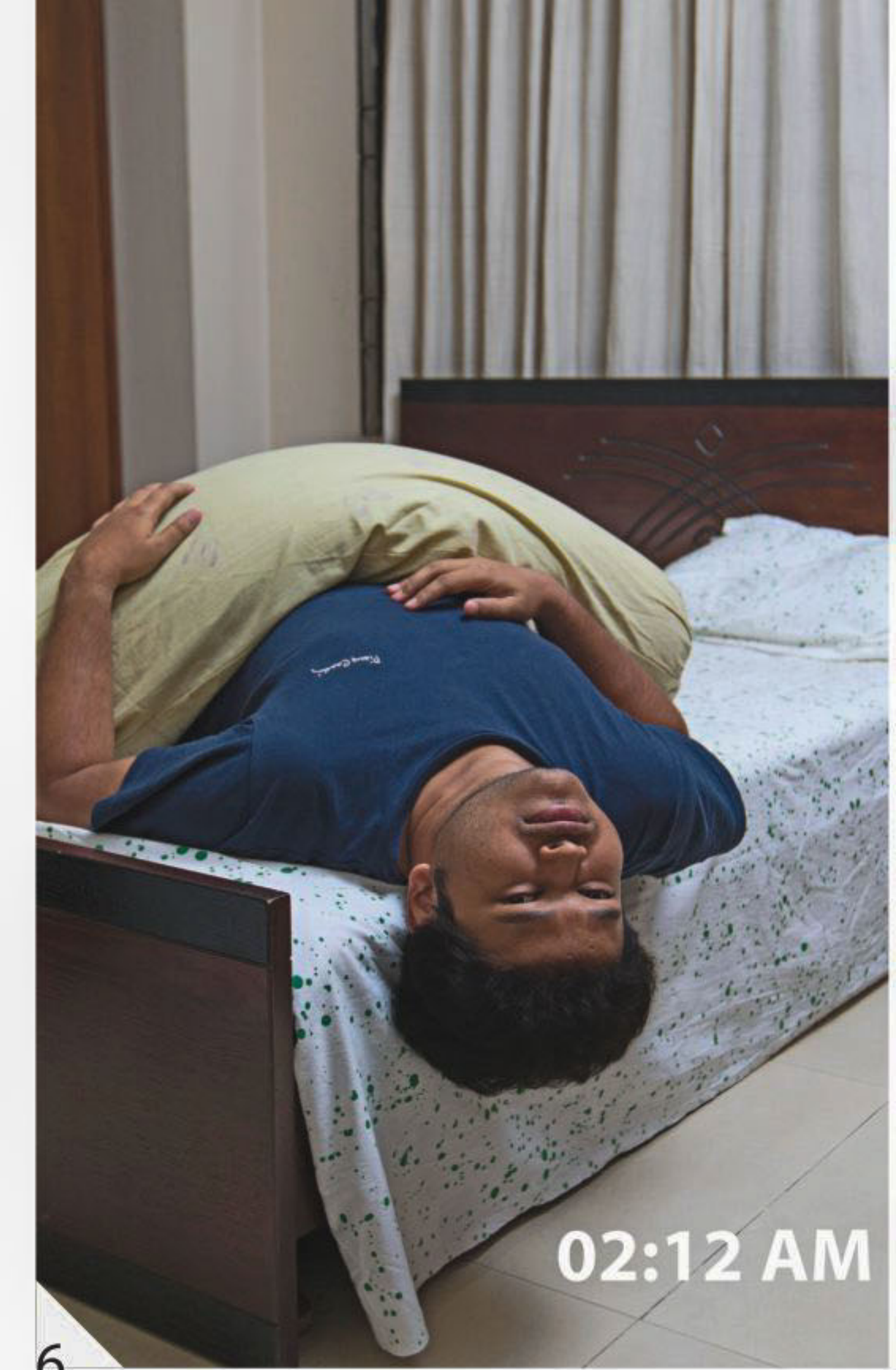


After taking a trip to talk about the importance of sleep at Japan Bangladesh Friendship Hospital, there was one thing that really caught our attention. All floors were crawling with patients, however when we got to the sleep-medicine side, it was almost deserted. But does that mean no one suffers from sleep loss? We all know that is not true, but what this shows is how much we neglect our sleep disorders. For whatever reason it may be, even the smallest of issues can escalate to long term diseases, which makes understanding and curing it is a very important part for a healthy life. To know more and understand what the causes, consequences and treatments sleep disorders may have in the long run, we spoke to Tamima Tanjin, a distinguished clinical psychologist and Senior Consultant at Prottoy clinic and Dr Sarder A. Baki, an eminent General Medicine Specialist at Japan-Bangladesh Friendship Hospital.

## LIFESTYLE

# SLEEP DISORDERS



### TYPES OF SLEEP DISORDER AND CONSEQUENCES

Having sleep disorders or 'somniphthy' does not necessarily mean not getting enough or proper sleep. Sleeping too much or too little, sleeping too deeply or lightly are also specific forms of sleep disorder. While disturbances in sleep due to noise or troubles adjusting to a new place are not concerning, certain more regular sleep disorders arise from graver causes and bring long lasting distressful times for the sufferer, which makes it crucial to understand which form of sleep disorder one is suffering from.

**Insomnia** -- Probably the most common one of them all, insomnia occurs when a person is suffering from sleeplessness or inadequate amounts of sleep which leads to drowsiness, lethargy or headache the next day. "About 35 percent of adults suffer from insomnia at some point in their lives," said Tanjin. Insomniacs may suffer from depression, diabetes, obesity, hypertension and cardiac problems in the long run.

**Hypersomnia** -- In absolute contrast to insomniacs, hypersomniacs have a problem of excessive sleeping. They can even easily sleep through while there is a thunderous storm raging outside. This is also known as 'Iccha Ghum' in Bengali. Fatigue and sleepiness during the day are common symptoms. In the long run, hypersomniacs may suffer from headaches, diabetes and even obesity.

**Sleep apnea**-- This happens when a person's upper respiratory system is blocked and it leads to a pause in breathing. Snoring arises as a result of partial blockage and full blockage results in a cessation of breathing followed by gasping or choking sounds as breathing normalises. "The person sleeping next to the sleep apnea patient is a bigger sufferer as he or she has to bear with the snoring," further explained Tanjin. Obstructive sleep apnea can cause disturbances in sleep and lower oxygen levels which may lead to hypertension, heart diseases and memory problems in the long run.

**Narcolepsy**-- Its special feature includes 'sleep

attacks' when a person has the strangest urge to fall asleep suddenly, whether he or she is engaged in a dull or even lively activity. Although there is no direct physical side effect of the disorder, narcoleptics may be characterised by the society as having a behavioural problem due to their eccentric propensity to sleep. Since they face the possibility of falling asleep in the middle of anything, it could be dangerous in situations like driving or travelling.

**Restless Leg Syndrome (RLS)**-- Patients with RLS tend to have a queer urge to move their leg during their sleep because of some kind of discomfort that they seem to feel. This creepy or itchy sensation in your limbs occurs mostly when you sleep at night. It can be a real obstacle to a good night's sleep causing problems in initiating sleep and interferences during sleep.

**Sleepwalking**-- This behavioural sleep disorder occurs when a person is able to walk, talk and perform other complex tasks in their sleep. Sleepwalking mostly takes place during deep sleep but sometimes it may also initiate in the lighter stages of the non-REM (Rapid Eye Movement) sleep. It is common among children and they tend to outgrow it over the years.

### CAUSES OF SLEEP DISORDERS

**Depression**-- It is one of the biggest causes of less sleep nowadays, and in all sorts of ages too. In a world where everybody has to worry about one thing or another to survive, it can be tough to not have depression; however with proper treatment (psychotherapy, in some serious cases) it is curable.

**Repressed emotions and memories**-- Adults and even children may have the tendency to hide certain feelings or memories which eat them away on the inside but they may be unable to share it. These repressed feelings in turn result in insomnia.

**Psychological or Physical Trauma**-- Sometimes some terrible incidents leave an indelible mark on people's mind as well as body. The victims of such incidents may find it difficult to have a good

night's sleep.

**Nyctophobia**-- Some people are nyctophobic or afraid of the dark which makes it almost impossible for them to fall asleep at night.

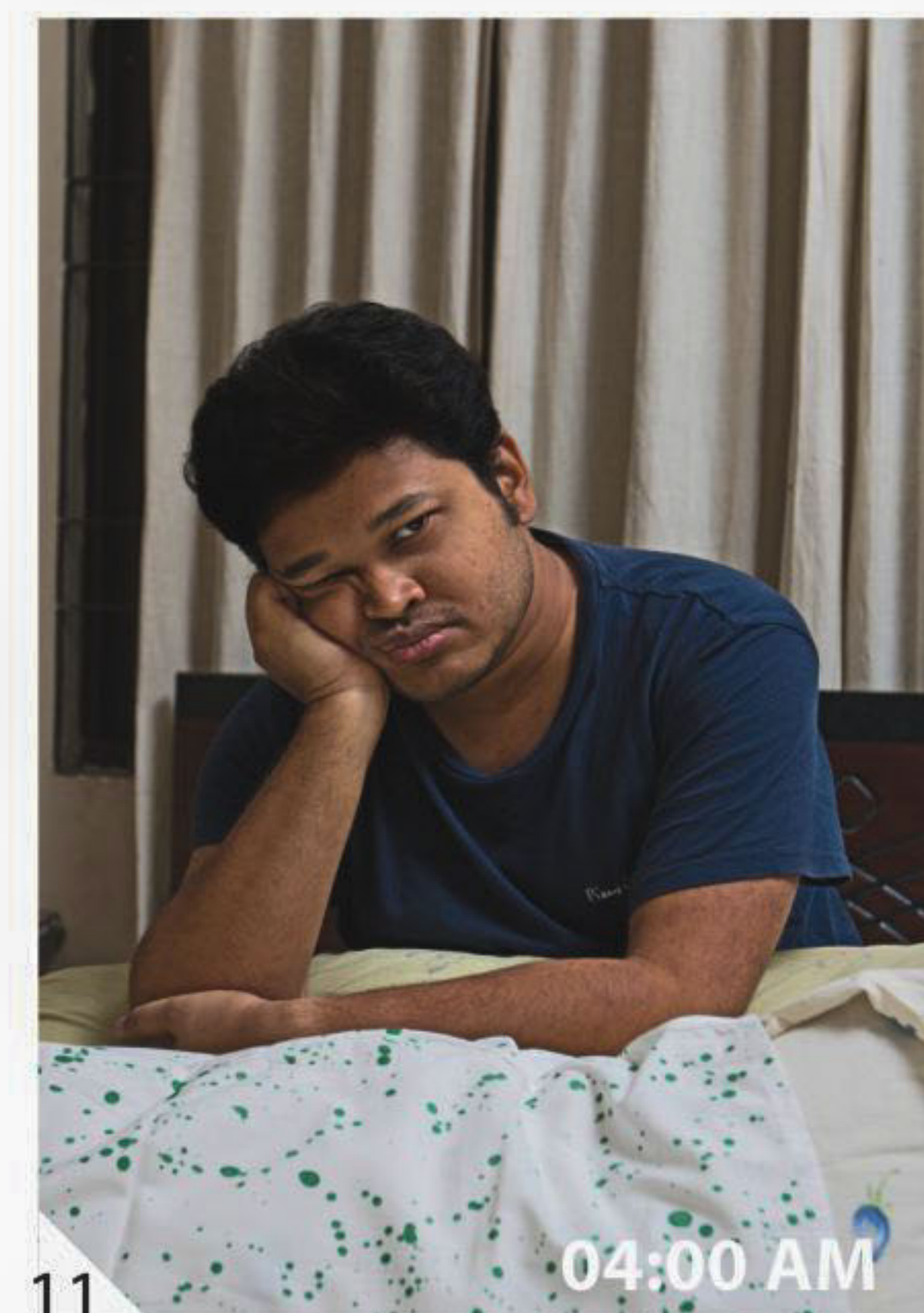
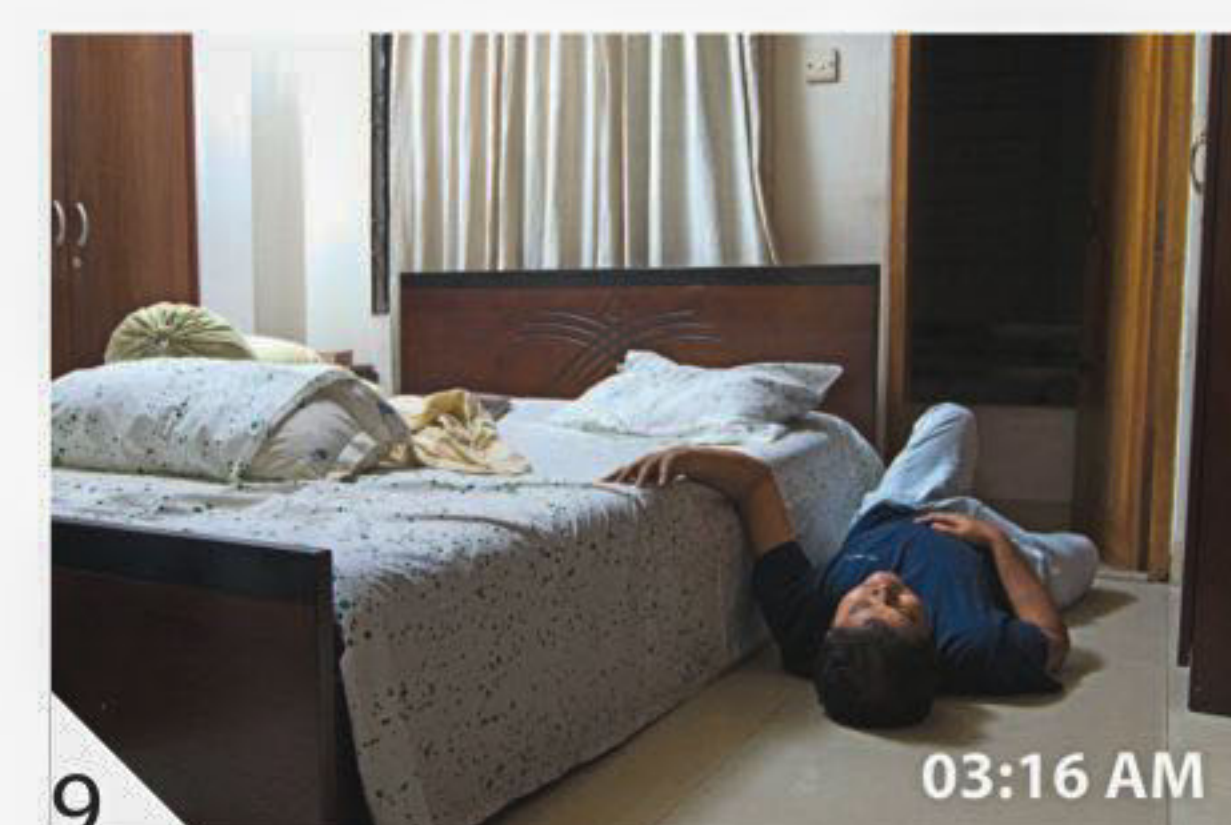
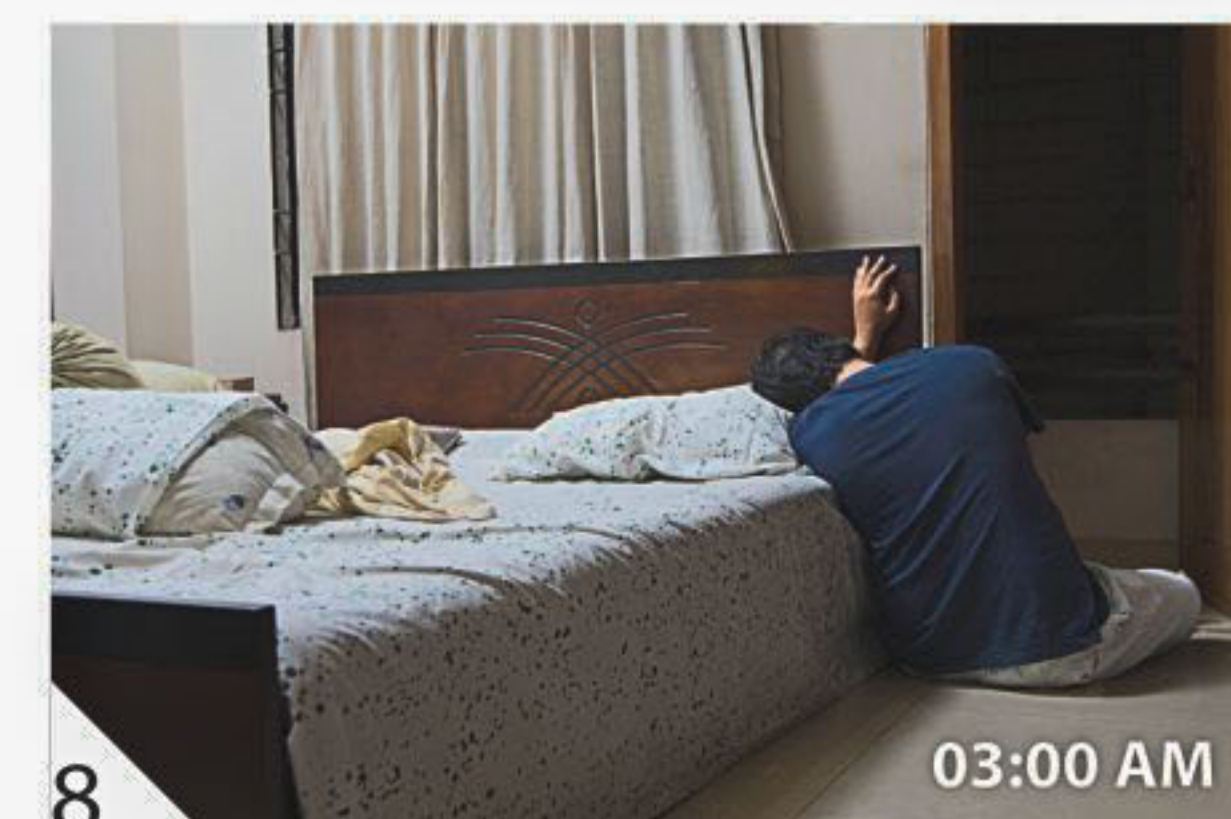
**Dependence on sedatives**-- The unhealthy habit of excessively depending on sleeping pills causes some patients to think that it is not possible for them to fall asleep without them.

**Adrenaline rush**-- Upcoming events like exami-

### SLEEP HYGIENE

Sleeping is one of the most significant daily activities; it is a temporary timeout from the real world and the bustle of everyday life so the importance of having adequate sleep is unquestionable.

Besides seeking an appropriate doctor or going for psychotherapy which is extremely beneficial for those who are suffering from trauma or depression, people may resort to a certain 'good



taken at least 2 to 3 hours before bed. Fruits and biscuits could be taken right before bed for they are lighter," says Dr Baki.

**Avoid 'Sleep Repellents'**-- Certain stimulants such as caffeinated drinks and nicotinic substances tend to fend sleep away so avoid consuming these items before sleep.

**Exercise, but on time**-- Vigorous physical activities help to re-energise the body and refresh the

Exclude Electronics-- More than 95 percent of young adults spend time on their phones or laptops right before bed, while adults spend it watching television. Electronic devices give out a form of blue light which is known to destroy sleep and hence doctors advise to not keep any electronic device in bedrooms for better sleep.

**Reduce Brain Activity**-- Even the simplest of things like reading a book requires brain activity, which Dr Baki advises against. The brain needs to be well rested to be able to let you sleep, and the smallest of activities can hamper it.

**Practice makes perfect**-- Most of all, it is crucial to make your body get habituated to a certain pattern of sleeping. Establish a good sleep schedule and try to get yourself to maintain it. It won't happen right away but with time, your body and mind will adjust and you will find yourself getting 7-8 hours of healthy sleep in the long run.

Both Monowara Hospital and Japan Bangladesh Friendship Hospital have their own sleep labs where patients can be diagnosed to detect their sleep disorder. The patient has to simply sleep for a night inside the sleep lab which is decked up with specialised modern equipment that monitors the patient's sleep patterns and other physical actions and reactions during sleep. The reports are given out 24-48 hours later after which the patient can seek treatment from an appropriate doctor.

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