

Publication & Date: THE TIMES OF INDIA (18.03.2011)

Page Number: 4

Head Line: City Hospital Cures 'Whistling Boy'.

THE TIMES OF INDIA, KOLKATA  
FRIDAY, MARCH 18, 2011

# City hospital cures 'whistling boy'

## W Midnapore Minor Accidentally Swallows Whistle, Amuses People With Charlie Chaplin Act

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Kolkata: In the 1931 silent film, 'City Lights', Charlie Chaplin accidentally swallows a whistle, leaving the audience in splits as he breaks into whistling hiccups and lands himself in a series of hilarious situations. A month ago, life imitated art in a remote hamlet of West Midnapore, where seven-year-old Hijbul Ali Khan repeated the famous Tramp act to become a sensation overnight.

Hundreds of people from nearby villages trooped in to see the whistling boy, and Hijbul didn't disappoint. Even grumpy village elders walked away with a grin.

"It wasn't funny to be laughed at. But I did hog the limelight and other kids in the village were envious. Sajid and Mushtaq wanted to whis-

tle and become famous as well but their mothers barred them from buying the pack of snack that carries the tiny whistle," said the impish kid after doctors in Kolkata removed the whistle.

Hijbul's mother Abida Biwi had never heard of the English comic actor but when the doctors showed her a clip from 'City Lights', she, too, couldn't help laughing at her son's predicament.

But a month ago, when an unending stream of strangers walked in and out of her house from dawn to midnight, she was clearly not amused. After three days, she rushed him to the city for medical help.

"Whenever he attempted to speak or breathe hard, he whis-



A relieved Hijbul with his mother in Kolkata

bled. He could eat without trouble and even communicate but the whistling made his breath heavy. His brothers Ahsanul and Riyazul and sisters Khadija and Nazima were amused in the beginning but went quite after a while, realizing it was not funny," said Biwi.

Hijbul's father, Khelaputali Khan, who works in a tailoring shop, had heard about a nursing home in Ekbalpore. But the doctors there said the tiny plastic whistle was lodged in the left lung and the boy needed to be operated upon in a bigger hospital. Someone then referred them to Medicine ENT Institute.

The moment ENT consultant surgeon Arjun Dasgupta saw Hijbul, childhood memories of the brilliant scene from 'City Lights'

came alive. "I could have never dreamed encountering something like that in real life. It was rather surreal. I removed peanuts, vegetables and even beads that children had accidentally swallowed. Never a whistle that had lodged in such a way that the child became a whistler," the doctor said.

He, along with ENT surgeons NYK Mohan and Chiranjit Dutta, conducted an hour-and-a-half-long bronchoscopy to remove the whistle from the oblique left bronchus 11 days after Hijbul had swallowed the object. A longer delay could have turned fatal, choking the child and leading to spasms.

But it didn't and everyone had a good laugh when Dasgupta showed the clip from 'City Lights' to Hijbul and his parents.