

# Therapy undone by poor follow-up

## Most addicts seeking help end up on self-destructive path

By Naimul Haq

Absence of efficient and effective follow-up programmes pushes most of the drug addicts in the country who seek counselling and therapy to end themselves of the fatal addiction back to the path of self-destruction, say experts at the Institute of Community Mental Health.

The Institute at the city's Tejgaon area, which began operations in August 1989, is the only detoxification centre in the country still functioning. There are three more establishments but are virtually non-operational.

Since its inception in August 1998, the thana health complex turned detoxification centre in Tejgaon has so far attended 6,000 patients and a survey on them has found a huge majority relapsing to pre-therapy conditions.

The length of rehabilitation varies from individual to individual. For some it may be six months while for others it might take up to two years. But a minimum of six-month recuperation period is required for an addict to return to normal life.

"Without proper follow-up all our efforts could go down the

drain. This is the major problem we experience here," said Dr Morshed Mahboob, a medical officer at the 40-bed centre run by the home ministry's Department of Narcotics Control (DNC).

Most of the people who come at the complex are at the final stage of drug addiction but can still be completely cured provided that they go through special recovery programmes, experts at the centre said.

Rezwan Ahmed (not his real name), a 33-year-old patient who comes from a rich family, has spent some five lakh taka on meperidine, commonly known as pethidine. He lived in Japan for two years. Separated from his wife and family, he wants to get out of the 'amazing world' his friends led him into.

After 12 years of dependence, Rezwan has turned to the Institute of Community Mental Health for help. He also tried to quit drugs before, at least twice, but in vain.

The same is the story of Iqbal Chowdhury (not his real name), the 40-year-old resident of Arisepur village in Gazipur. In ten years of drugs dependence, he

has lost everything -- money, properties and even his beautiful wife.

"I want to go back to a normal life," Iqbal said. "I want to earn and have a family again."

After two weeks of strictly supervised symptomatic treatment, patients like Rezwan and Iqbal are released but are advised to continue follow-up services at the clinic.

"On an average about 60 per cent of the treated cases returns for a follow-up for the first time. Interestingly, only 10 per cent pays a second visit. At least 70 per cent of the previously treated takes readmission. The relapse rate, as you see, is quite high," said Dr Shamim Matin Choudhury, director and chief consultant of the institute.

"At present, our daily outpatient attendance is about 60, and roughly 120 people attend follow-up clinic services every week," Dr Shamim said. "People from all walks of life come here but the ratio is slightly tilted towards the lower class."

"When we started off eleven years ago, we didn't have experienced doctors. As time passed, we

learned more about treatment and the number of doctors increased. Regrettably, the number of drug users has also risen but the facilities have not quite improved," she complained.

"For example, we don't have enough beds. In 1989 we used to attend about 12 to 15 patients a day but now we receive more than 60. We are forced to keep a large number on the waiting list," she added.

No sophisticated instrument is needed for detoxification; however, a well-equipped pathology department is of crucial importance. The centre doesn't have a pathology section. There are no provisions for ECG, X-ray and, most importantly, dope testing.

"We don't have any urine testing kit. Without dope tests it is impossible to determine whether someone has restarted using drugs," said Dr Shamim.

Detoxification is a difficult task. With no backup, no security, no ambulance and little assistance from the government, the Institute of Community Mental Health is in a constant struggle to survive.



A cultural function was organised at the Osmani Memorial Auditorium in the city yesterday to mark the prize giving ceremony of the Bangladesh Cricket Board. Noted artists Shakila Zafar and Shuvra Dev rendering songs in the function. --Star photo

# City commissioners form Nat'l Council

By Staff Correspondent

Commissioners of the country's four city corporations yesterday formed 'National Coordination Council of Bangladesh City Commissioners' to mitigate the sufferings of the city dwellers.

The Council, which comprises commissioners from different political parties, was launched at a press conference at National Press Club yesterday morning.

President of the Council and Commissioner of Dhaka City Corporation Habibur Rahman Mizan told the journalists that over two crore people of four city corporations were facing manifold problems.

Emphasising on updating the city corporation laws in a modern and healthy city, he said the long-standing problems could not be solved as "we have failed to bring major changes in the existing Pourashava Act".

Reading out a written speech, Secretary General of the new organisation and Commissioner of Khulna City Corporation Mia Mojibur Rahman said that representatives at the grass-root level were facing serious problems as the "backdated" laws were not

reformed. "Our popularity at the individual level is also reducing day by day due to this."

He hoped that the Council would play an important role in easing the sufferings of the city residents by resolving their problems through implementing various initiatives by the Council.

Claiming the Council a non-political one, he said all mayors and city commissioners would work simultaneously for the betterment of the city residents.

Asked about alleged involvement of the city commissioner in smuggling drugs, and other criminal activities, Rahman said no city commissioner is involved in such activities. "No elected commissioner can involve himself in such business and if any one found involved, stern action will be taken against him."

Among others, Vice-President of the Council Kazi Moinuddin Munir of DCC, Organising Secretary Farid Ahmed Chowdhury of Chittagong City Corporation, (CCC), Publicity Secretary Abul Khayer Bablu of DCC and Shahida Khanom of DCC were present at the news conference.

# JS: Four bills

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The crucial Vested Property Handover Act 2000 may also be placed in the coming session to resolve the long-standing problems of the Hindu minority. But the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs is yet to send the bill to the Parliament Secretariat, said an official.

An inter-ministerial committee is now scrutinising the relevant clauses of the bill regarding any controversy over the matter. The draft bill was approved by the Cabinet in September last.

Report on another crucial bill (The Constitution Fourteenth Amendment Bill 2000), which was tabled in the budget session, would also be placed in the House with suggestions from the Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Law Ministry.

The committee is likely to suggest passage of the bill that seeks retention of the women's parliamentary reserved seats for 10 years more.

With the BNP-led opposition still sticking to its position on abstaining from the Parliament, the fate of the constitutional amendment bill becomes uncertain. Supporters from the two-third members in the House are required for passage of the bill.

The ruling Awami League with 179 seats lacks the two-thirds majority in the House.

Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Abdul Matin Khasru is expected to pilot a new bill for establishing Bangladesh Institute of Parliamentary Studies to make the parliamentary system more effective. The proposed institute would provide training to the government officials, parliament secretariat officials and employees for creating awareness and develop their skills.

The other new bills likely to be transacted in the House are: The Supreme Court Judges (Leave, Pension and Privileges) (Amendment) Act 2000, The Public Demand Recovery (Amendment) Act 2000, and the Registration of Private Schools (Amendment) Bill 2000.

Scrutiny reports on several pending bills would be submitted in the House as the concerned standing committees have finalised their reports, an official said.

Other than bills, the coming session will also deal with several hundred notices, deposited mainly by the Treasury Bench members, he said.

# Business Awards

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Enterprise Award and Outstanding Woman in Business Award.

The awards for the year 2000 will be announced through a gala event to be held on February 3, 2001, at the Sonargaon Hotel.

The Awards are: Businessman of the Year Award

Presented to the most deserving individual for outstanding corporate success. The candidate must possess integrity, business and financial acumen, management skills and leadership qualities.

Enterprise Award Presented to the small or medium-sized company that has distinguished itself through entrepreneurial spirit and a record of innovation.

Outstanding Woman in Business Award

Presented to the most deserving woman in business or profession who has made an outstanding contribution to her company or profession.

A panel of 11 distinguished jurists drawn from leading intellectuals, journalists, government officials, lawyers, social activists and businesspersons have been formed to choose the deserving persons and companies for the awards.

A wide range of criterion has been set to make an objective judgement on the candidates. For the Businessman of the Year and Outstanding Woman in Business Award, the criteria will be: Financial Performance, Managerial Skills and Contribution to Bangladesh's Economic Development.

The selection criteria for the Enterprise Award will be based on: Innovation, Financial Performance, Company Management and Contribution to the Community.

It may be mentioned here that

Sonia

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transparency," the party statement said.

Sonia took charge of Congress in 1998, raising the defunct party's hopes of a return to past glory but has been unable to lift its fortunes.

The Congress Party, which has ruled India for more than 40 years since the country won independence from Britain in 1947, slumped to its worst showing in the 1999 election, winning just 114 deputies in the 545-member parliament.

"Conceived historically as a party of governance, it (Congress) has yet to script a new role for itself in the changed circumstances," analyst Yogendra Yadav said.

Bangabandhu

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residence in the early morning on August 15 Huda asked the Havildar: "How are you, Gani?"

"It means Huda was very much known to Gani," Advocate Haq submitted for consideration of the court.

Analysing the ins and outs of Bangabandhu killing, along with his family members, the lawyer again said: "Of course, Bangabandhu killing was the result of a pre-planned conspiracy and their motives were not only to annihilate the father of the nation but also his family."

"For that reason, they killed Begum Mujib, wives of her sons and even minor boy Sheikh Ruseel despite their innocence."

# PM asks Army

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safeguarding national independence and sovereignty.

Earlier, the Prime Minister reviewed the parade on board an open jeep. She formally handed over two National Standards to the "Rising tigers" and "Shaswata Shatash" as recognition to their meritorious services to the nation.

The ceremonial parade was conducted by Lt. Col. ATM Ziaul Hasan.

Earlier on her arrival at the Shaheed MR Chowdhury Parade Ground, the Prime Minister was received by Chief of Army Staff Lt Gen. Mohammad Mustafizur Rahman, Bir Bikram.

The Prime Minister also addressed the Commanding Officers of the East Bengal Regiment on the occasion. She visited the Quarter Guard and laid wreath at "Ajana Shaheed Samadhi". She also visited the Papa Tiger's office.

Cabinet ministers, MPs, diplomats, chiefs of the Navy and Air Force, the Defence Secretary, civil and military officers were present at the function.

# AL plans tours

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"The entire dry season starting from November up to the end of February would be a good time to visit countryside in a bid to reach out the voters well ahead of election time," said a member of ALCWC, preferring anonymity.

Another ALCWC leader said the party chief might also resume her half-finished 'Meet-the-Party Units' programme after her next tour abroad billed for November 11. Hasina had earlier met exclusively with leaders of 33 district units.

"Resolving organisational disputes is a big task in hand before the party gets fully prepared to take up the 2001 election challenge," said another AL leader.

Besides, tonight's ALCWC would also take stock of the latest political developments in the country, especially the BNP-led opposition alliance's move centring November 7.

"We (central AL) have no programme on the day (November 7). However, party's front organisations may have their respective programmes to mark the 'Sepoy Killing Day'," said an AL leader.

Opposition parties are observing November 7 as 'National Revolution and Solidarity Day'.

Today's ALCWC meeting will also discuss party programmes to celebrate the Victory Day on December 16.

# Over 1000 ples

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may require compulsory listing," the official said. "We may make a list of those."

Some senior SEC officials said that because of a number of factors, they were considering such moves.

"The provisions were always there and there was no scope to grant umbrella exemption," said one official. "We feel that through regulating, we can increase securities in the market and also keep the companies under strict monitoring before they come for IPO."

He said the companies seeking to raise funds from the market are full of loopholes due to lack of supervision and monitoring at the primary stage. "The sponsors of these companies treat those as their family companies, which lack corporate management."

These companies, he went on, "only approach us when they lack money and raise funds from the market submitting doctored balance sheets to impress the investors. The companies then fail to keep their commitments, affecting investors and capital market at large."

Another SEC official said the proposed new policy will help SEC to keep the companies under strict monitoring as these will be required to submit audited balance sheets time to time along with other documents.

He also said SEC now does not have the required strength to monitor such a large number of companies and is likely to hire consultants for addressing the issue.

# Gen Mustafiz's tenure

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He was called back from LPR and appointed Chief of the National Security Intelligence (NSI), and later PSO, bringing him back to the army. He was finally appointed Chief of Army Staff on contract for three years.

Sources said that the government is considering the extension just to keep his tenure in conformity with most other previous chiefs.

Earlier, there was a thinking that the present army chief would be promoted to a four-star General, that is, from Lt General to General. This could prolong the service of the Army Chief and solve the problem of appointing a new chief in an election year. But legal experts suggested that promotion in the position of Chief of Army Chief would not automatically increase the length of service, since the position of Army Chief is a tenured post.

In Bangladesh Army, the retirement age for a Brigadier (shortly to be Brigadier General) is 53, that of a Major General 55. There is no set age for the retirement of a Lieutenant General or General. Those promoted earlier

to the post of Lieutenant General were either sent into retirement after promotion or continued to serve as Chief of Army Staff.

Legal experts told The Daily Star that there is no constitutional binding regarding the appointment or duration of service of the Chief of Army Staff. The constitution says that parliament by law should regulate the appointment and terms and conditions of the chiefs of staff of the three services.

Article 62 (2) of the constitution says that until parliament by law provides for the matter specified in Clause (1), i.e. the appointment of Chiefs of Staff of the Defence Services and their salaries and allowances, "the President may by order provide for such of them as are not already subject to existing law."

Since parliament has not enacted any law in this regard during the last 28 years since the adoption of the constitution, the matter can be decided by the president on the advice of the prime minister, the experts said.

The appointment, tenure or extension of the Chief of Army Staff will, therefore, be done by

the president as per the advice of the prime minister.

Incidentally, President Shahabuddin Ahmed extended the services of his previous Military Secretary Major General A M Siraj by one year.

In case the government decides to appoint a new Army Chief, the names that are expected to be in contention are Major General Harunur Rashid, now serving as Chief of General Staff (CGS) and Major General Fazlur Kabir, GOC, Chittagong. The latter acts as the acting chief, while the Chief of Army Staff is out of the country. Both are freedom fighters.

Among other senior serving generals who should also be in the fray are Major General Hasan Mashhud Chowdhury, Commandant, National Defence College, and Major General Munaim Mansur, Commandant, Staff College. There are two other senior generals who are now on deputation as ambassadors abroad. They are Major General Amin Ahmed Chowdhury, ambassador to Oman, and Major General Anwar Hossain, ambassador to Morocco.

# BNP preparations

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procession while secretaries-general of Jatiya Party, Jamaat-e-Islami and Islami Oikya Jote will be present as special guests.

The four secretaries-general will briefly address the gathering before they parade the city streets in a procession. City BNP President Sadek Hossain Khoka MP will chair the meeting being organised to protest government's refusal to allow the mainstream opposition parties to hold its planned 'grand' public meeting at Paltan Maidan.

Sources said chiefs of three other component parties were willing to attend the procession, but BNP poured cold water on the idea because party Chairperson Khaleda Zia is sick and would not be able to attend the programme.

They said the Jatiya Party tried to have party Chairman HM Ershad as chief guest at the mass procession, but the move failed owing to opposition from BNP and other allies.

BNP sources said the party hardliners, who are apparently unhappy to find their move to confront the government by holding public rally at Paltan Maidan in defiance of a ban or calling hartal on November 7 hit the rock, are not actively participating in the warm-up programmes taken up by the party.

They said the hardliners hardly attend street programmes, but they have always been influencing the party chief to go for tougher programmes. This time, with the cooperation of some alliance leaders they tried hard to influence the BNP leadership in

taking up reckless programmes.

Meanwhile, the city BNP has expedited its mass contact programmes ahead of the mass procession and other functions to be held on November 7. It has been arranging rallies, processions and meetings in every thana unit since November 1.

Its thana units at Mirpur, Kafur and Pallabi held a joint meeting at Mirpur Town Hall yesterday and discussed the programmes taken up by the central committee on the occasion of the 'National Revolution and Solidarity Day'. BNP central leader Alamgir Kabir MP and city General Secretary Abdus Salam addressed the meeting and gave necessary instruction.

Salam told The Daily Star yesterday that the party has taken up elaborate programmes to observe the National Revolution and Solidarity Day. He also said the party would try to give the capital city a festive look.

He said BNP central and city office, the official residence of the leader of the opposition in parliament; thana and ward level offices and those of its front organisations will be illuminated on November 7.

Speeches of late President and founder of BNP Ziaur Rahman and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia will be aired at different city points throughout the day.

The city BNP general secretary said party units at all the 21 thana and wards in the city are going ahead with mass contact programmes and processions and rallies to mobilise public support and make the functions successful.

# 40 Afghan bandits killed by Iranian forces

TEHRAN, Nov 5: Iranian police forces have killed 40 mostly Afghan armed bandits in the east of the country in the past five days, provincial officials said in Sunday's press, reports AFP.

"We have also succeeded in liberating 12 people who had been taken hostage by bandits and drug traffickers," said Mohsen Mehrizadeh, governor of the border province of Khorassan.

Iran is a major transshipment point for narcotics coming from Afghanistan and Pakistan en route to markets in Europe and the Gulf and residents of the unruly eastern border regions have been subjected to regular kidnappings.

Iran blames the Sunni Muslim Taliban militia, which now controls most of Afghanistan, for the sharp rise in trafficking and drug-related crime in the area.

# Spl police

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of the border to arrest criminals and recover illegal firearms.

Quoting from records, police sources however said 27,219 people including 17,416 "wanted criminals" and 75 "terrorists" have been arrested in the country since launching of the drive.

Of them, 9748 were arrested on different charges.

All these happened because police used to drum up before their operation starts, concern sources said.

When asked why they have failed to arrest the top criminals, a police official said the drive is on and they are trying to book them.

# 55.8pc think floods were caused by India

By Staff Correspondent

About 55.8 per cent of the residents of Dhaka are of the opinion that the recent floods in the south-western region of Bangladesh is man-made and caused by India while only 33.1 per cent consider it as a natural phenomenon. The rest (11.1 per cent) feel that it is a curse on people from the Almighty.

An opinion poll conducted by Centre for Sustainable Development (CSD) among Dhaka city residents last month revealed this.

The poll asked four questions on key aspects of the flood and its impact. About 81.5 per cent of the respondents suggested that evicting illegal occupants of river banks and dredging rivers should be the priority of the government to reduce flood hazards. Only 18.5 per cent are in favour of increasing the disaster management ability of the government.

The poll found that 41.2 per cent of people believe that the authority of cutting dams or roads should vest with government officials, 35 per cent think that the power should vest with local people and the rest think

that elected local leaders should have the right to decide on this.

About 65.5 per cent of the respondents said that since riverbeds are silted so flood waters can not recede fast, 48.5 per cent think that roads are constructed without proper drainage outlets and that is the main cause for longer duration of the flood.

About 34.9 per cent think that encroachment of riverbanks is responsible for delay in flood waters receding. Only 18.4 per cent think that polders constructed by Water Development Board are the main reason for long duration of flood.

A total of 718 people (70.6 per cent male and 29.4 per cent female) took part in the poll.

Out of them 22.6 per cent are in government or non-government jobs, 37.5 per cent in the business sector, 17.8 per cent housewives or household workers, 17.8 per cent students and the rest from various other occupations.

The sample included people from all income ranges in Dhak

# Bushra murder

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of twenty people in connection with the incident.

CID however failed to record confessional statement of any of the accused. Besides, the three hired killers could not be identified and arrested, for which CID will not be able to submit an "effective charge sheet", the sources said.

When asked, the IO said CID was thinking to submit the charge sheet by the end of this month even if the three hired killers are not arrested.

Bushra's father Serajul Islam, a retired ASP of police, told The Daily Star yesterday that the Detective Branch (DB) was investigating the case "very successfully". DB was about to get valuable information from Abdul Kader and said Sufia when they were on four days' remand.

But following influence by a certain quarter, Kader and Sufia were hurriedly sent to jail on the second day of the remand and the case was transferred to CID, he alleged. "The way DB was investi-

gating, it would have solved the case by now," he said.

Sources said that the IO of the case was changed three times.

Serajul Islam alleged that on July 4 doctor said that she was not raped. But the autopsy report on July 11 said that she was raped. It also proves that the quarter has been very active to divert the case.

But chemical test of Bushra's clothes proved that she was not raped, Islam said.

According to CID investigation, Abdul Kader is the step-brother of Bushra's maternal uncle M A Samad who died in 1985. Kader along with his family was living in the West Hajipara house of Samad since 1994.

Bushra's family also started living in the same house in 1996 as three sons and one daughter of M A Samad were in the US. Islam was given the responsibility of taking care of the house.

Relationship between the two families deteriorated as Kader was planning to grab the house, the sources said.

# 'Gandhi' of India's new state snubbed in leadership tussle

NEW DELHI, Nov 5: Shibu Soren, who has led India's longest campaign for a tribal homeland, was today rejected as the first chief minister of the new province to be carved out from the state of Bihar on November 15, reports AFP.

India's newest state, Jharkhand, comprises the mineral-rich districts of the otherwise impoverished and lawless Bihar.

India's ruling coalition Sunday rejected Jharkhand's chief ministerial post to Soren amid speculation the move will prompt the tribal leader to withdraw his regional JMM party from Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's multi-party government.

Soren, a tribal, is often compared with India's independence hero Mahatma Gandhi for his decades-old non-violent struggle for Jharkhand (Forest Land), which has been created with the partition of 18 of Bihar's 51 districts.

Soren, who met Vajpayee overnight with his demand to become Jharkhand's first elected leader, was rebuffed by the premier's National Democratic Alli-

ance which plans to install another tribal as the state's first chief minister, officials said.

Vajpayee decided to reject Soren's demand after a meeting with his coalition allies here Sunday but urged him join the state government which will be sworn in Jharkhand's new capital of Ranchi on November 15.

Digvijay Singh, a leader in Vajpayee's alliance, also met Soren and tried to persuade him not to walk out from the state government led by Vajpayee's Hindu nationalist BJP party. "National Democratic Alliance has to sort out the matter at the earliest," Singh told Soren and assured him the new state government would meet the hopes and aspirations of the people of Jharkhand.