

## Addict rehab centres

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received treatment from drug addiction treatment clinics five times already, but he has also been slipping a couple of days into the completion of each treatment course of 10 to 15 days.

"Although I came out after completing my treatments, my body was still craving the drug after each of them, accompanied by body cramps, which led me to take heroin a couple of days into the completion of every course of treatment," a trimmed beard Mohor, who looked a bit older than his age of 35, told The Daily Star.

Mohor said he was treated in Hadi Madakata Raash Complex at Dayaganj twice, in a clinic at Eskaton twice, and once in a clinic at Tejgaon.

Neither DNC nor any non-governmental organisation has any statistics on how many heroin addicts relapse into the deadly habit even after receiving treatment. DNC also has no statistics on the number of drug addicts in the country. However, DNC officials and a number of doctors said almost all the addicts who receive treatment in substandard clinics, end up relapsing into the addiction.

Around a dozen of addicts, with whom these correspondents talked, said many drug addiction treatment clinics do not even have any full-time doctor and trained nurse. Doctors attached to the so-called treatment centres visit those only once or twice a week, although it is mandatory by law for the centres to appoint a sufficient number of full-time doctors. A full-time psychiatrist is also a must according to government guidelines for all drug addiction treatment centres, but hardly any clinic complies with the government edict.

A top DNC official said they have allegations that some substandard rehabilitation centres are carrying out heroin trade under the cover of treating and rehabilitating addicts.

To check whether the allegations are true, The Daily Star correspondents and a photographer visited at least five such treatment and rehabilitation centres, with the result of not being allowed to enter four of them -- Natun Jibon Drug Addict Treatment and Rehabilitation Centre at West Jatrahari, Al Amin Madakashakta Niramoy Kendro at Sutrapur, Dishari Madakashakta Niramoy Kendro at Jatrahari, and Shah Jalal Hospital at Mohammodpur.

Former patients of at least two of the clinics, which denied The Daily Star access, said those clinics even supply heroin to their patients who have sufficient money to pay for the illicit drug under cover of treating them.

Only Hadi Madakata Raash Complex allowed these correspondents to enter the premises and showed a permission from the Ministry of Health to run the clinic.

The clinic's manager Zakirul Alam Lito said although they do not have any full-time doctor, they do meet all the other government guidelines.

He said they charge only Tk 3,500 from general ward patients and Tk 5,000 from patients who live in cabins for a 10-day treatment course, making it a losing concern. The owner considers the establishment a social work, he added.

Usually reputed drug addiction treatment clinics and rehabilitation centres charge Tk 15,000 to Tk 30,000 from a patient while the substandard ones charge Tk 5,000 to Tk 8,000, to lure in clients.

Treatment centres supposedly treat addicts helping them to recover from the addiction while rehabilitation centres claim to rehabilitate former addicts to normal life after curing them of the addiction, while some centres masquerade as the providers of both services.

**RISKY MALPRACTICE**  
A number of drug addicts said substandard treatment centres inject high doses of sedatives into the patients to keep them sedated sometimes even for three days. "As soon as the effect of the sedative wears off in six hours the clinic staff push injections again," said Suruj Miah, a heroin addict.

He also said Mukta Chhaya Drug Addiction Treatment Centre at Kachukhet in the capital where he had undergone treatment, used to administer 'bath therapy' -- meaning keeping patients 'cool' through repeated baths. Such a 'therapy' often causes patients to catch cold. Patients are often also forced to massage each other's bodies in the treatment centres when someone's body cramp starts due to withdrawal from the drug. "Often the clinic staff beat patients if any of them behaves rowdily," Suruj told The Daily Star.

After three days of such treatments if a patient still behaves violently due to the withdrawals, the treatment centres often keep the person confined in a separate room and beat him or her mercilessly.

The Daily Star investigation revealed that many treatment centres are visited by doctors only twice or thrice a week. General employees, having no training, run the treatment centres during the

rest of the week.

Lured by the advertisements of the unsupervised treatment centres, which are usually full of promises and descriptions of mostly non-existent services, the guardians and friends of the addicts put their loved ones under their care. But, a majority of the patients treated by the so-called rehab centres and treatment clinics relapse into the addiction after a short while, experts said adding that the practices of such clinics are dangerous to the society.

They said substandard treatment of drug addiction might even cause death.

Prof MA Firoz, director of the Institute of Mental Health and Hospital, said a full-time psychiatrist is a must in all treatment centres, but most do not have any. He said there are only 40 active psychiatrists in the capital.

He said to rehabilitate a patient the rehab centres must also have job trainers.

"It takes 7 to 15 days to treat an addict, but due to wrong treatment methods many have to undergo a longer period of treatment," he added. "Wrong treatment also increases the risk of death," Prof Firoz warned.

He also said there are allegations that in a bid to earn quick cash many so-called treatment centres have been supplying heroin to the patients for a long time to keep the patients admitted to the centres sometimes for three months to a year in an effort to hike up the bill.

A doctor of a reputed treatment and rehabilitation centre in the city's Panthapath area said keeping a patient virtually unconscious for three days by injecting high doses of sedatives may cause death in cases of patients with high blood pressure, and kidney or liver problems.

He said his clinic first diagnoses the level of a patient's addiction through a urine test and then they administer medicines. "We slowly decrease the volume of the dose," he added requesting anonymity. He said they also test the patients for diabetes, blood pressure, and liver and kidney complications, and keep the patients under round the clock observation during the first 24 hours of their admissions.

The physician also said psychotherapy, entertainment facilities, and proper counselling are also must for complete treatment and rehabilitation of drug addicts. He however said it requires around two months to complete treatment and rehabilitation of an addict.

A physician at government-run Tejgaon Drug Addiction Treatment and Rehabilitation Centre said keeping a person unconscious by injecting sedatives is not an acceptable method of treatment at all. He said important organs of a patient may collapse and the patient may even die if sedated without any diagnosis.

**GOVT'S INDIFFERENCE**  
In recent years, the capital witnessed mushrooming of substandard drug addiction treatment clinics and rehabilitation centres without any government licence, regulation, or supervision.

A recent survey by the Department of Narcotics Control reveals that there are 115 treatment and rehab centres in the capital.

DNC officials said apart from the capital, such substandard clinics also sprouted in large numbers in Chittagong, Khulna, Rajshahi, Comilla, Gazipur, Jessore, Satkhira, Bogra, Mymensingh, Barisal, Sylhet, Naogaon and in many other small towns.

Almost none of them have the 80 square feet floor space per patient required by the government guidelines issued in July 2005, albeit being much delayed.

The guidelines stipulate that a rehab centre must have a full-time psychiatrist, at least one full-time physician with special training on drug addiction treatment, two trained nurses, and a janitor for every 10 admitted patients. Centres having 10 beds are required to obtain licences from the government in exchange for a fee of Tk 20,000, centres with more than 10 but less than 21 beds are required to pay Tk 30,000 for the licence, and centres with 21 beds or more are required to pay Tk 50,000 for the licence, while yearly renewal fee of the licences is 50 percent of the licence fee for all.

License fee for counselling centres, which only provide out patient treatment, is stipulated at Tk 10,000.

According to the guidelines, a DNC inspector is supposed to inspect a rehab centre following the receipt of any application for a licence, but in most cases the inspections never take place.

There are four government run drug addict treatment clinics and rehabilitation centres in Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi and Khulna cities. The centre in Dhaka is a 40-bed hospital while the rest have five beds each.

DNC DG Humayun Kabir said the centres in Khulna and Rajshahi have been closed for a year as no doctor was appointed there. "We sent letters to the health ministry asking for doctors, but it has yet to appoint any," he said.

The Daily Star investigation revealed that many treatment centres are visited by doctors only twice or thrice a week. General employees, having no training, run the treatment centres during the

## Kenya opposition calls for more rallies

AP, Nairobi

Kenya's opposition leader called yesterday for more rallies across the country, raising the threat of more bloodshed, but also indicated he was willing to share power with the government he accuses of rigging the presidential vote.

More than 300 people have died in fighting since the Dec. 27 vote, bringing chaos to a country of 34 million people that had been one of East Africa's most stable democracies and revived simmering tribal resentments.

The opposition leader Raila Odinga rejected President Mwai Kibaki's offer of a "unity government" but said he was willing to consider a power-sharing agreement guaranteed by the international community. Still, his call for new protests on Tuesday despite a government ban imposed during the unrest dimmed the prospect of a quick resolution.

"This fighting is meaningless," 17-year-old Eliakim Omondi said at a Lutheran church in Nairobi's Kibera slum that was torched days ago. "I wish they would just talk and square everything so the fighting will stop."

Kibaki, re-elected by a narrow margin in a vote count that international observers say was deeply flawed, said Saturday he was willing to form a unity government after meeting with the top U.S. diplomat for Africa, Jendayi Frazer.

Odinga rejected that proposal, but his spokesmen said they were open to other solutions. "Government of national unity is not acceptable to us," said the spokesman, Salim Lone. "But there are other formulations, such as a coalition government with genuine power sharing that we are willing to discuss."

The other opposition proposal is to set up an interim government with a mandate to hold new presidential elections, he said.

## Govt continues

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adviser, it will only perform routine works, and not take any policymaking decision, he added.

But since the incumbent government took over through declaration of a state of emergency, it cannot be termed a 'caretaker government', and it has not been determined how many advisers could be there and what would be their jurisdictions, he added saying therefore the 'cabinet should' be allowed to be expanded.

Saying that the present government will continue to be termed as a 'caretaker government', the court said nowhere in the constitution does it mention how long a caretaker government may continue in office. It rather says a caretaker government will continue until a new prime minister takes over, the court added.

The court, however, said Article 123 of the constitution says the EC must hold an election within 90 days of dissolution of a parliament.

The court asked the petitioner why he does not petition to seek answers to why the election was not held within the 90 days timeframe. It also asked the petitioner whether 30 days are not enough to prepare a voter list.

When the petitioner expressed his interest in filing another writ petition regarding the failure to hold the election within the stipulated 90 days period, the court said the petition might be considered if filed.

## Niko graft cases

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After the files are seized, the investigation officers (IOs) will review them to determine as to whose statements will be required to record.

The IOs, ACC deputy directors Shabbir Hasan and Shahidur Rahman, are also expected to make spot visits in connection with the high-profile cases, filed amid the ongoing purge in the interim period.

## 5.70 lakh

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metric tons at the cost of \$96.8 lakh. **PRICES SITUATION**

Wholesalers yesterday said the price of Swarna, a variety imported from India, marked the largest decrease. It came down from Tk 1,250 per maund Thursday to Tk 1,100 per maund yesterday.

The price of Gutti, another variety, came down to Tk 1,100 from Tk 1,150 per maund while IRR1 to Tk 1,080 from Tk 1,120. Prices of Nazirshail and Miniket fell by up to Tk 50 per maund.

Wholesalers said they were forced to sell at lower prices because of dwindling number of customers even though price was still high at the rice mills.

In the retail markets, the price of coarse rice dropped by at least Tk 2-3 per kilogram. Customers continued avoiding the retail outlets even after prices began to come down Saturday.

Retailers said most of the middle income group people have built up a large stock after prices soared every day over the last week.

Some people told The Daily Star yesterday that they would wait for the prices to come down after open market sale (OMS) starts on January 9.

Queues at the BDR-run fair price shops were relatively short yesterday as many people have decided to wait for the OMS, said sources.

Four prices went up by Tk 2 per kilogram as packs of two kilogram were selling at Tk 86-88, up from Tk 82-84 two days ago.

## Recruitment reforms

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by the law ministry, which will send it to the chief adviser and the president for approval.

According to the draft, pass course graduates won't be able to apply, marks would be deducted in the preliminary test for wrong answers, candidates must obtain 50 percent marks on average in written test, and editors of national dailies may be included in the viva committee.

Besides these, there are some more changes, but the quota system remains unchanged despite growing demand for its abolition from different quarters.

PSC members said abolishing or curtailing the privilege is the responsibility of the establishment ministry, they can only recommend changes.

Previously, the PSC had made repeated recommendations to that end, but the ministry under political governments paid no heed to it, they added.

The immediate past PSC chairman Prof ZN Tahmid Begum placed recommendations for cancelling quota system before President Iajuddin Ahmed while submitting the annual report in 2003.

Incumbent Chairman Saadat Hossain said the present set of recommendations to the establishment ministry to bring back transparency in the commission and in the examination system.

However, incumbent and former PSC members, academics and candidates had suggested that the government immediately abolished the quota system, which apparently allows a bunch of 'unskilled' people to enter public service.

PSC member M Abdur Rauf said quota should be curtailed for the greater interest of the nation. "At least 75 percent of places should be on merit, while the rest may be distributed on the basis of gender, ethnic and religious identity."

Former PSC member Prof Dr Mohabbat Khan blamed the quota system for the present 'miserable condition' in the civil service.

## DU teachers

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In the petition, Court Sub-inspector (CSI) Asaduzzaman said the witness concealed facts which he disclosed before the investigation officer (IO) and a magistrate during the investigation of the case.

The witness did not reveal the facts as he was influenced by the defence. So, he needs to be declared hostile, he said.

After hearing both the sides, the court granted the prosecution petition and fixed tomorrow for next hearing of the case. The prosecution will cross-examine the witness the same day.

The three other witnesses are Ahsan Ullah, assistant secretary of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) Central Committee, ABM Khorsheed Alam, a physician, and Yusuf Harun, a peon of DU Proctor Prof AK Firoz Ahmed.

The four teachers are Dhaka University Teachers' Association (DUTA) President Prof Sadru Amin, its General Secretary Prof Anwar Hossain, Science Faculty Dean Prof Harun-ar-Rashid and applied physics department Chairman Prof Neem Chandra Bhowmik.

DU student Moniruzzaman Sardar, who was arrested earlier, is now in jail custody.

**SAFAYET'S STATEMENT YESTERDAY**

Dewan Safayet Ahmed, a fourth-year student of DU, yesterday told the court that violence erupted on DU campus and its adjacent areas following a scuffle between a student and an army member on August 20.

At one stage students from different DU dormitories gathered therein the evening and surrounded the army camp on the campus.

He did not say anything against the teachers and the students.

**SAFAYET'S STATEMENT ON JANUARY 3**

Safayet on January 3 accused Duta General Secretary Prof Anwar Hossain and several students of making provocative speeches and damaging vehicles on August 21-22 last year.

But he did not say anything

"The public are now suffering for unskilled or semi-skilled civil service officers. The people will be deprived of government services if the system is not completely removed," he said.

"I think cent percent of the candidates should be recruited on merit. When I was with the PSC during 1999-2004, we had suggested that the government cut the quota to 25 percent."

Thousands of jobseekers have been disappointed hearing the news that the quota would remain.

"It's my fate I've not come from a privileged family, for example, a freedom fighter's family. Many candidates, whose educational background is much poorer than mine, have been recruited through the 24th and 25th BCS exams thanks to quota," said Utpal Kumar Das who faced four viva voce.

Fair BCS Movement President Abu Tareq said every quota should go to that meritorious candidates can enter civil service.

"I'm not denying contributions of our freedom fighters. But all I want to say is that our freedom fighters are being embarrassed and the martyrs' spirit is being undermined for this system."

**DISTRICT QUOTA**  
The 10 percent district quota has been set considering the population volume of the districts.

"At first, the district quota is set among the divisions based on total population. Then it is again distributed among the districts based on total population in the districts of certain division," a top official of PSC said.

"Candidates of overcrowded districts get the privilege of the district quota, while those of less populated districts are deprived. I think the government should immediately revoke district quota because it is a discrimination against meritorious candidates," said Mohabbat Khan.

PSC sources on the other hand said irregularities occurred in previous BCS examinations centring the 55 percent quota.

## al-Qaeda urges

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website usually used by Islamists.

Bush is due to arrive in Israel on Wednesday, the first US president to visit the Jewish state in nine years, in a bid to hasten the search for peace with the Palestinians. He is also due to visit the West Bank as well as five Arab states.

The message strongly criticises Egypt's President Hosni Mubarak and Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah who will welcome Bush to their countries as part of his eight-day tour of allies in the region.

It also contains a renewed attack on Pakistan's President Pervez Musharraf over his support for the United States.

Gadahn recites verses from the Muslim holy book, the Koran, and reviews the "victories" of the Mujahedin in Afghanistan, Iraq and the Maghreb.

He ends the message with prayers "for the victory of Muslims over the Jews, the Americans and their allies."

Gadahn -- also known as Azam al-Amriki and Azam the American -- is a key al-Qaeda propagandist and is originally from California.

He has appeared in several videotapes for al-Qaeda since 2004, praising the September 11, 2001 attacks on New York and Washington and threatening new terrorist onslaughts.

In October 2006, he became the first person to be charged in the United States with treason since the World War II era. The charge carries a minimum of five years in prison on conviction and a maximum penalty of death.

Gadahn, long believed to be in Pakistan, has a one million dollar reward posted for his capture, and he appears along with bin Laden on a US "Wanted" poster featuring 26 "faces of global terrorism."

Gadahn was born in 1978 in southern California, the son of a 1960s Jewish rock musician who later converted to Christianity and became a rural goat farmer.

His conversion to Islam came after he attended the Islamic Centre of Orange County, California, where he is believed to have come under the influence of two foreign-born Islamist radicals.

Gadahn is believed to have left California for Karachi in 1998 and gradually lost contact with relatives in the United States.

## Fresh clashes

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last week announced it would quit the moribund truce from January 16.

Dhanapala had also served as head of the government's peace secretariat, which coordinated the Norwegian-led peace efforts with Tamil separatists to end the decades-long conflict, which has killed tens of thousands.

The government scrapped the truce agreement, which automatically ends the truce monitoring mission, and gave the mandatory two weeks' notice to pull out.

In the capital Colombo, the government on Sunday heightened already tight security arrangements.

Motorists said all vehicles entering or leaving the city of 650,000 people were being checked one by one, causing long queues and traffic snarls.

According to government figures, 48 rebels have died in separate clashes since the start of the year and three soldiers have been killed.

There was no comment from the rebels, who are fighting for an independent homeland for minority Tamils in the island's north and east.

Independent verification of casualty figures is not possible as journalists are not allowed into rebel-held areas. Both sides are known to make sharply varying casualty claims.

Tens of thousands of people have died since the conflict erupted in 1972.

## Amnesty chief

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prisoners have the right to get justice.

"Justice protects human rights," she said adding that it is equally applicable for all prisoners.

While talking to journalists during her attendances at different programmes organised by Brac in Tangail yesterday, the chief of global human rights watchdog said the government has responsibilities in ensuring fair trials.

Irene Khan said on the one hand manifold political problems and a state of emergency are prevailing in the country, while on the other the people are becoming united to protect their human rights. This is a very big thing for the country, she added.

About trials of war criminals the AI secretary general said the war criminals should be tried urgently and fairly, adding, "We said this earlier and this time we will also tell the government that the trials should take place in accordance with international laws."

In the morning, Irene Khan visited a centre for Brac's women micro borrowers at Khudirampur village under Karatia union of Sadar upazila in Tangail.

Later, she visited a human rights education class operated by the world's largest non-governmental organisation in Nagar Jalpai village under Sadar upazila, which was followed by a visit to a health education centre in Latipur village under the same upazila.

Answering journalists' questions about Madhupur's indigenous leader Chalesh Ritchi's death in the custody of law enforcers, Irene Khan said, "Amnesty International have already picked up the case and we will ask the government about the reasons of Chalesh's death and what initiatives have been taken regarding a trial."

## Hasina won't go abroad

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court sat at 9:50am. The jail authorities in a custody warrant informed the court that the former premier could not be produced as she is suffering from headache and vertigo.

The judge in its order said that the hearing could not be held in absence of the accused and fixed tomorrow as the next hearing date.

Another accused in the case and Hasina's cousin Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim was brought to the court at 9:35am. As Al acting chief Zillur Rahman arrived at the court at 9:47am, Selim talked with him standing in the dock until the court sat.

The third accused in the case Hasina's sister Sheikh Rehana, who is currently staying in London, was shown absconding by the prosecution lawyers before the court.

Talking to the reporters outside the court, Zillur Rahman said that he cannot give detailed information about Hasina's health as they could not meet her yet.

Replying to a question whether the government has already talked about attaching conditions, Zillur said, "In the present situation, the government is likely to impose condition on Hasina before allowing her abroad."

If the government agrees to send her overseas upon recommendations of the doctors with no condition, only then Hasina might be willing to go, he added.

"Here comes no question of condition for sending her abroad as all the four specialists on gynecology, eye, medicine and ENT, have recommended better medical treatment for the former premier," barrister Shaifq Ahmed, chief counsel to Hasina, said.

"The treatment is for saving life and there must be no condition in this regard," he added.

Earlier after the grenade attack on August 21, the doctors also prescribed Hasina to go to America once in three months for checkups, but she is being deprived of that treatment," Shaifq said.

Replying to another question of arranging better treatment inside jail by bringing doctors from abroad, Shaifq said, "It is not possible as the equipment necessary for her treatment is not available in Bangladesh."

In a joint letter to the chief adviser, the four physicians treating the AL chief Prof Syed Modasser Ali, Prof Pran Gopal Dutta, Prof Shaikha Khanum and Prof ABM Abdullah, mentioned different complications, including of hearing and kidney, and recommended sending her to US.

The letter was sent to the chief adviser through a messenger yesterday morning. Copy of the letter was also sent to the secretary of the home ministry.

Security measures were tightened around the entire parliament complex yesterday with deployment of huge number of law enforcers including detective police and riot police equipped with water cannon.

Several incidents of police harassing the journalists during security checking at several entry points were also reported.

The trial of the detained former prime minister and two others resumed at the court on December 26, several days after a legal wrangle over relocating the court for trying a particular case.

He said the floods damaged vast swaths of the palm plantations in Indonesia, resulting in a supply shrinkage in the global market.

The businessmen told the meeting that current stock of edible oil can meet two months' demand, adding that a few consignments will arrive soon.

Amir Hossain, a Karwan Bazar distributor, said the price of a five-litre can of edible oil of a particular local brand was increased by Tk 10 due to an official decision. He said he was now selling a can of that brand at Tk 499.

But prices of other brands did not increase further yesterday, market sources said.

## New Zealand

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again for the first time in five Tests between the two countries, even if the target was minimal.

The second and final Test starts at Wellington's Basin Reserve on Saturday.

## US mulls covert

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angrily yesterday to reports that US President George W Bush is considering covert military operations in the country's volatile tribal areas bordering Afghanistan.

"It's not up to the US administration, it is Pakistan's government who is responsible for this country," chief military spokesman Major General Waheed Arshad told AFP.