



"The consequences of the rising drug abuse will be as dire as militancy. If it is not controlled now, the next generation will be destroyed."

JATIYA PARTY CHAIRMAN GM QUADER



"We are now closer than ever to an agreement but the distance that exists between us and an agreement remains and bridging it is not an easy job."

IRAN'S DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER ABBAS ARAGHCHI ON NUCLEAR DEAL



"I am motivated by support for equality, social justice and internationalism. That is the Labour brand. ... The conclusion I have reached is that this government needs to be replaced."

FORMER UK SPEAKER BERCOW DEFECTS TO LABOUR



Rights custodian not doing it right

NHRC failed to solve half the cases filed over a decade; legal constraints render it even weaker when it comes to complaints against law enforcers

ZYMA ISLAM

The National Human Rights Commission could not resolve nearly half of the cases filed with it over the last decade.

Between 2011 and June 2021, a total of 6,736 complaints were lodged with the NHRC, the nation's rights custodian, but the average case disposal rate over the decade was 55.11 percent. This figure is based on NHRC's annual report 2020 and additional data for 2021.

In addition, a recent report by Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK) analysed the commission's decade-long activities, and found that some of the main reasons behind the NHRC's deficit are an acute lack of manpower, and the founding law itself which restricts the commission from investigating any disciplined forces, including the police and Rab.

Even as just over half of the overall cases were solved each year, only a fraction of the complaints against law enforcement agencies were resolved, said the report, titled "A decade of National Human Rights Commission Bangladesh: Efficacy, Existing Challenges and Opportunities."

CASES IN 2020	FILED	RESOLVED
Complaints against police	9	1
Extra judicial killing	3	0
Custodial torture	5	0
Custodial death	3	0
Enforced disappearance	2	2

"According to the annual reports of the last five years, only one custodial death complaint has been disposed of out of 26. Of the 34 custodial torture complaints, only 10 has been disposed of, and of the 43 complaints of extrajudicial killings, only seven cases were disposed of," said the report.

According to the NHRC's 2020 annual report, 22 cases against the law enforcement agencies (including custodial torture, death, enforced disappearance and extrajudicial killings) were taken up by the commission and only three were resolved.

However, it is to be noted that seven of these cases were initiated by the NHRC on

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PHOTO: DIPANKAR ROY

Minu Sharmin trying to help her father, 60-year-old Sirajul Islam, fight for his life at the dedicated corona ward of the Khulna Medical College Hospital yesterday. Sirajul had been admitted with mild breathing difficulties, and with no beds available, Minu made a bed on the floor. Soon Sirajul started experiencing acute breathing problems and within 10 minutes of his condition worsening, he passed away.

Govt to allow antigen test in pvt hospitals

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

The government is going to allow private hospitals and clinics to conduct antigen-based Covid-19 rapid testing in a bid to expand testing facilities and make those more easily available.

Antigen-based testing facilities are currently available only at government hospitals. Private hospitals and clinics also want to have the facility in the wake of the recent spike in Covid infections, health officials said.

On June 1, the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) sent a letter to the Health Services Division of the health ministry, detailing the cost and other issues regarding the rapid antigen test.

The DGHS letter said the rapid antigen testing should be introduced along with the ongoing RT-PCR testing in private hospitals during the pandemic.

"We have sent a letter to the ministry, but are yet to get any response," Farid Hossain Miah, director (hospitals and clinics) at DGHS, told The Daily Star yesterday.

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Khulna seeing the worst of pandemic

Country logs highest deaths in 7 weeks

MOUDDUD AHMED SUJAN with DIPANKAR ROY from Khulna

With the Covid situation worsening further in Khulna division, the health directorate yesterday reported 82 deaths from the virus all over the country -- the highest in the past seven weeks.

Against this backdrop, the Epidemiology and Public Health Committee of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) has again recommended that the government strictly enforce the health safety measures.

"We reiterated our previous recommendations -- strict enforcement of the health safety guidelines and increasing Covid tests in all areas where virus transmission is higher," Dr Abu Jamil Faisal, member of the committee, told The Daily Star yesterday.

At a meeting on Saturday night, the committee discussed the Covid situation and status of implementation of its recommendations.

Of the 82 deaths yesterday, 32 were reported in Khulna division, according to the DGHS.

The Covid situation in the division, however, is worse than what the DGHS data suggests, as the number of patients exceeded the capacity of at least three hospitals, including Khulna Medical College Hospital (KMCH).

The health services at the KMCH were in disarray as the rush of patients from nearby districts rose significantly, reports our Khulna correspondent.

Many patients from Satkhira are coming to the hospital while the number of patients from Bagerhat, Jashore and other districts is also rising. At least 136 patients were receiving treatment at the hospital yesterday

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Pfizer shots in 3 centres in Dhaka from today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is going to vaccinate people with Pfizer Covid-19 vaccine in Dhaka's three vaccination centres from today.

The vaccine jabs will be administered at Sheikh Russel Gastro Liver Institute and Hospital, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University and Kurmitola General Hospital, said Dr Md Shamsul Haque, line director at the Directorate General of Health Services.

A total of 120 people will be given vaccine shots today at each centre, he said.

They will be observed for 10 days and if there is no adverse effect, then the vaccine jabs will be administered at the mass

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MYANMAR ON CUSP OF A CIVIL WAR

Another refugee influx on horizon?

PORIMOL PALMA

With a civil war brewing in Myanmar, Bangladesh has much to worry about, as the face-off between the junta and the National Unity Government and its allies could result in a refugee influx once again, according to security and international relations analysts.

Cases of human trafficking through the sea may also increase, they added.

The insurgents in the frontier regions may attempt to take shelter within Bangladesh territory if Myanmar slips into a full-blown conflict. Rohingya repatriation, as well as the regional connectivity, may be at stake, they said.

The crisis began following the February 1 military coup that overthrew the elected MPs of the National League for Democracy (NLD). Leaders, including Aung San Suu Kyi, were arrested. Crackdowns on the demonstrators left more than 850 dead so far.

In mid-April, the elected NLD MPs, representatives from different ethnic

minority groups, including Karen, Kachin, Mon, Karenni, Chin, Kayan, and independent MPs, formed the National Unity Government (NUG) with Win Myint as the president and Aung San Suu Kyi as the State Counsellor.

The shadow government is seeking international recognition and bringing together pro-democratic forces, including numerous ethnic rebel groups, to reverse the military takeover.

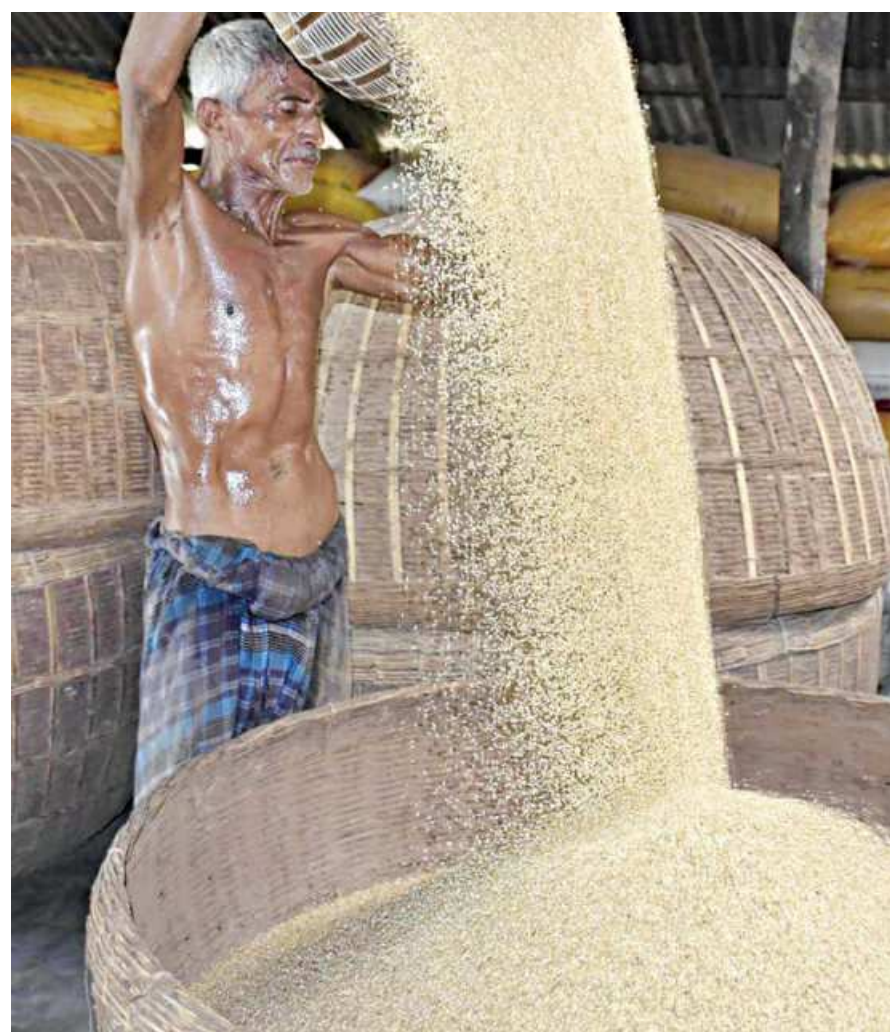
It also formed an armed wing named "People's Defense Force" (PDF) to launch a revolution against the military junta and signed an agreement with the rebel Chin National Front in this regard.

The junta, however, termed the PDF a terrorist organisation on May 8, raising the possibilities of further confrontations, said analysts.

Local media reported that there have been sporadic attacks in various parts of Myanmar.

The latest attack was on June 5, in which at least 20 people were killed by Myanmar's

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A mill worker pouring rice, husked from Aman and Boro paddy, into a large basket which will be taken for sale to traders. The photo was taken from Brahman Kathi village in Barishal's Banaripara upazila recently.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

Two ministers in spat over railway project in Sunamganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sythet

Planning Minister MA Mannan in a Facebook post yesterday reacted to Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen's demi official letter to railways minister over the route selection for a prospective railway in Sunamganj.

In the post, the planning minister expressed his surprise over the foreign minister's "hasty" move and said Momen should have discussed the matter with him before taking sides on this issue.

Planning Minister's APS Masum Billah confirmed the authenticity of the Facebook post to The Daily Star.

In the post yesterday afternoon, the minister wrote, "It's true Dr Momen and I have been friends for over 50 years now. But his writing a hasty DO [demi official letter] to Railways Minister [Nurul Islam Sujjan] supporting the stand of the five other MPs of

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WE DEEPLY MOURN

With deep grief, we announce that **Mrs. Marina Yasmin Chowdhury**, Vice Chairperson of East Coast Group and beloved wife of Mr. Azam J Chowdhury, Chairman of East Coast Group and Managing Director of MJL Bangladesh Limited, passed away on 19 June 2021.

(Inna Lillahi Wa Inna Ilaihi Raji'un)

May Allah grant her Jannatul Firdaus. We convey our heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family.

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