

CGS PEACE REPORT

an initiative of BPO



CENTRE FOR
**GENOCIDE
STUDIES**
UNIVERSITY OF DHAKA



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May- June 2018

SAY NO TO YABA!

**Crime and Violence in
Bangladesh:
An analysis from BPO**

**An Overview of Drug
Addiction in Bangladesh**

**A global Overview on
Contraband Drugs**

**Understanding Electoral
Violence through
Micronarratives:
Sylhet, Khulna and
Bandarban**

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From the Editor's Desk

Narco-production and trading is a lucrative business in this region. Afghanistan remains the world's largest opium producer, accounting for some 70 per cent (3,300 tons) of global opium production; it is followed by Myanmar, accounting for 14 per cent (650 tons) of global production.¹ India too is a big producer of licit opium, although an earlier estimation showed that about 10 to 30 percent of the licit crop are diverted to the illicit market.² In fact, in India 12,250 hectares of land area are devoted to cultivating illicit opium poppies.³ At the same time, there are other kinds of licit chemicals and pharmaceutical drugs produced in India that are diverted and sold to the illicit market. Indian-produced chemicals, such as acetic anhydride, ephedrine and pseudoephedrine, are used for the illicit production of heroin and methamphetamine. The latter along with caffeine are the two key components of 'yaba' (madness medicine). Earlier the Indian smugglers were involved in producing and selling the codeine-laced cough syrup, phensidyl, across the Bangladesh border, but now they are producing and selling yaba, as return from the latter is much higher 'due to soaring demand.'⁴

The same is the case with Myanmar's illicit drug production. When world attention against the production of opium crops reached Myanmar the 'drug lords,' indeed, with the complicity of the Myanmar military, switched their production to synthetic drugs, mainly yaba, to keep profiting from narco-production. UNODC has already labeled Myanmar as the 'epicentre of the drug trade.'⁵ However, in order to operationalize the sale of illicit drugs, a vibrant but complex relationship between drug dealers and consumers, producers of licit chemicals and illicit traders, security and custom officials, high-risk investors and money launderers, and that again, not only nationally but regionally and globally, is required. This is the worrying factor with the consumption of illicit drugs in Bangladesh. In this connection, three issues require closer attention.

Firstly, the consumption of drugs, particularly yaba, is on the rise in Bangladesh. In fact, yaba seems to have replaced phensidyl. And unlike phensidyl, yaba seems to have attracted the young generation of relatively well-off section of the population, with sellers ranging from local politicians to those policing the border and the streets. What this

¹ Cited from https://www.unodc.org/doc/wdr2016/WDR_2016_Chapter_I_Opiates.pdf. Accessed on 16 May 2018.

² India Country Brief, *Drug Intelligence Brief*, DEA Intelligence Division, Office of International Intelligence, Europe, Asia Africa Strategic Unit, Washington DC, May 2002.

³ Cited from https://www.unodc.org/doc/wdr2016/WDR_2016_Chapter_I_Opiates.pdf. Accessed on 16 May 2018.

⁴ Deepak Acharjee, "Yaba tablets being made in 5 factories in India," *the independent* (Dhaka), 25 September, 2016. See, <http://www.theindependentbd.com/arcprint/details/61351/2016-09-25>. Accessed on 16 May 2018.

⁵ See, <https://frontiermyanmar.net/en/unodcs-jeremy-douglas-myanmar-really-is-the-epicentre-of-the-drug-trade>. Accessed on 14 June 2018.

implies is that the problem of illicit drugs is not only with the consumers and drug dealers but also with certain members of the state machineries who may be profiting from the drug trade. This could have serious national security implications.

Secondly, since Myanmar is heavily involved in narco-production and profiting from the drug trade, from opium to yaba, an extra attention is required given its alleged role in committing a genocide and displacing nearly 800,000 Rohingyas into Bangladesh in August-October 2017. Indeed, Myanmar military may be in the business of using narco-terrorism as a foreign policy tool with the objective of creating 'drug-lobbies' across the border and weakening the neighbour from inside!

Finally, given the nature of the trade and the number of drug addicts in Bangladesh, currently seven million with five million among them yaba users, a coercive solution may not be the correct way of overcoming the menace of narco-terrorism. Apart from the factor of 'unlawful killing,' which is problematic from the standpoint of law and justice, the coercive 'war on drugs' only makes the drug dealers slow down their trade while raising the price of the product. Socio-psychological resistance, including creative livable options for the youth, is a better way to make the 'war on drugs' more effective and sustainable in the long-term.

Imtiaz Ahmed

Director, CGS

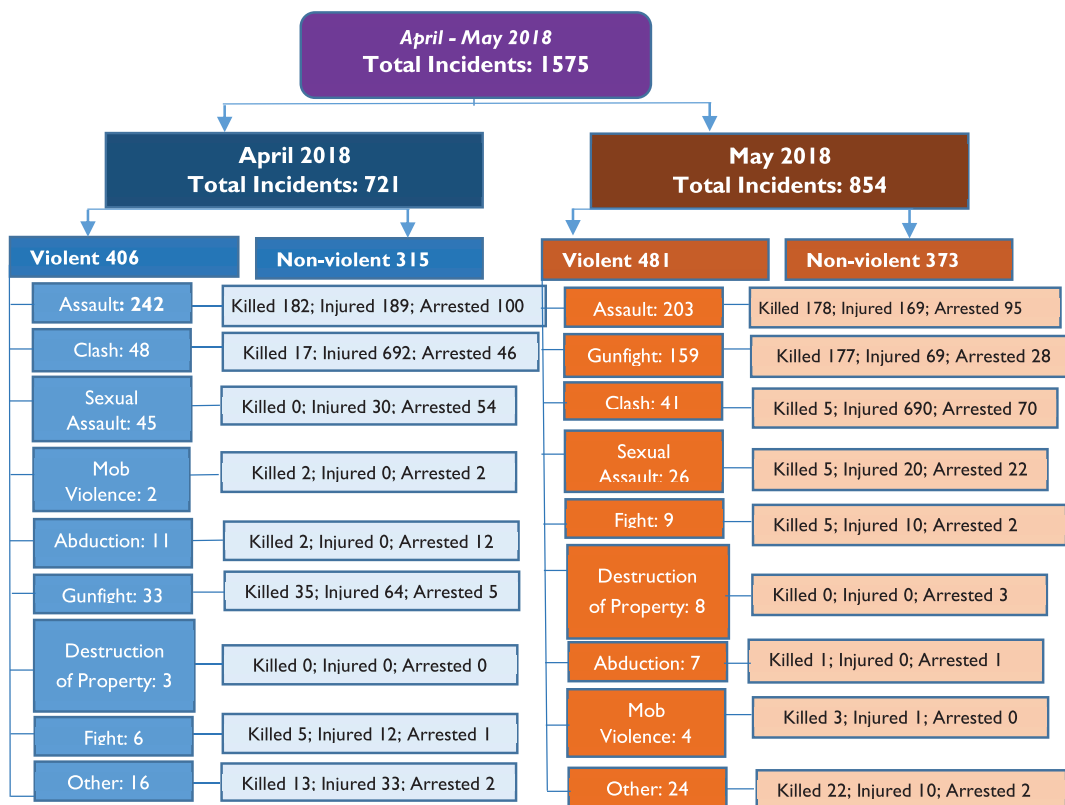
Crime and Violence in Bangladesh: An Analysis from BPO

Part A: Violence Update: (April - May 2018)

The Bangladesh Peace Observatory (BPO) brings together different streams of publicly available data on violence using news reports from prominent national dailies. From April to May 2018, BPO

recorded 1575 violent⁶ and non-violent⁷ incidents all over the country. **Figure 1** segregates these incidents into some general categories by type of violence.

Figure 1: An Overview of Incidents (April - May 2018)



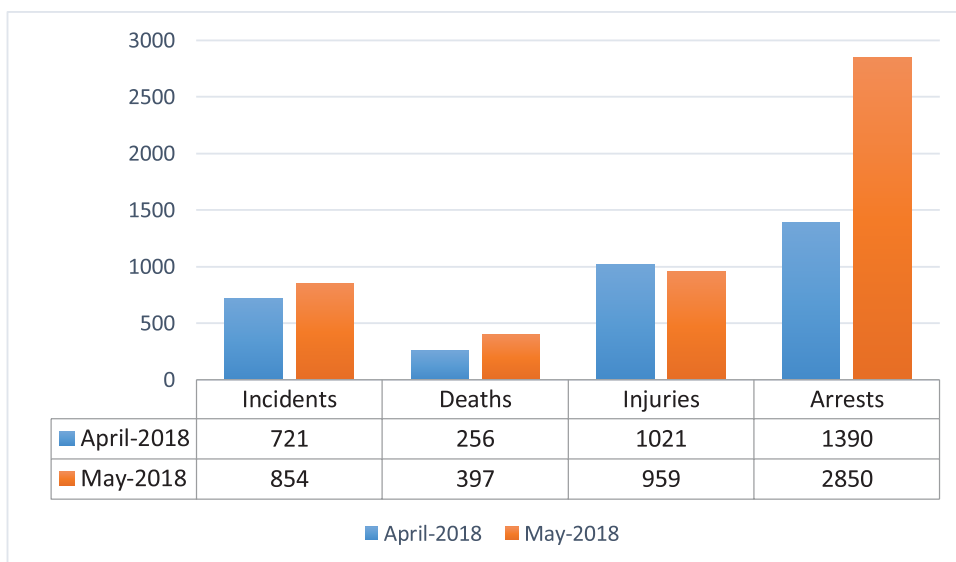
⁶ **Violent Incident:** According to BPO Codebook: The reported incident involved the intentional use of physical force by an individual or group against another individual or group, in a manner that resulted or could have resulted in death, injury or any other form of physical harm to persons or property.

⁷ **Non-violent Incident:** According to BPO Codebook: The reported incident did not involve the intentional use of physical force by an individual or group against another individual or group, in a manner that resulted or could have resulted in death, injury or any other form of physical harm to persons or property, e.g. Arrest, Peaceful Protest, Rescue and Recovery.

Figure 2 shows a difference between April and May 2018 by incidents and their consequences. A total of 256 people were killed in April 2018 and 397 were killed in May. This indicates a rising trend in terms of killing. On the other hand, the number of people injured in violence during April 2018 is higher by 62 than May 2018. A total of 1021 people were injured in April 2018,

while 959 were injured in May. Due to the marked escalation in the activities of the law enforcement agencies of Bangladesh including increased raids and arrests, the number of arrests increased by 1460 in May 2018 than April. In April 2018, a total of 1390 people were arrested and in May, a total of 2850 people were arrested by the law enforcement agencies.

Figure 2: Comparative analysis of Incidents (April- May 2018)



Again, a divisional distribution of incidents during this period as mentioned in **figure 3** indicates that Dhaka is at the top in terms of incidents, deaths, injuries, and arrests. According to BPO data, 450 incidents in Dhaka occurred in which 167 people were killed, 556 injured, and 1901 arrested. The second highest incidents were recorded in Chittagong division. A total of 361 incidents were recorded with 154 people killed, 406 injured and 608

people were arrested. Notably, Sylhet division which stands eighth by incident occurrence is at the second in terms of recorded injuries. A total of 69 incidents were recorded from Sylhet in which a total of 422 people were injured. On 1 May 2018, more than 100 people were injured in two separate occurrences of clash among villagers over land related issue in the districts of Sunamgaj and Habiganj.

Besides these two incidents, BPO recorded 13 more clashes in the Sylhet division which led to 322 injuries. These clashes were mainly caused by political conflicts, eviction drive, religious dispute, control over marketplace, personal dispute, local rivalry, and land-related conflicts in Sylhet division over the past two months.

Rajshahi and Khulna divisions stand third and fourth by the number of incidents respectively. In Rajshahi, a total of 230 incidents occurred in which 82 people were killed, 156 people injured and 531 people arrested. In Khulna, a total of 168 incidents were recorded where 521 people were arrested.

Figure 3: Bi-Monthly Divisional Distribution of Incidents (April-May 2018)

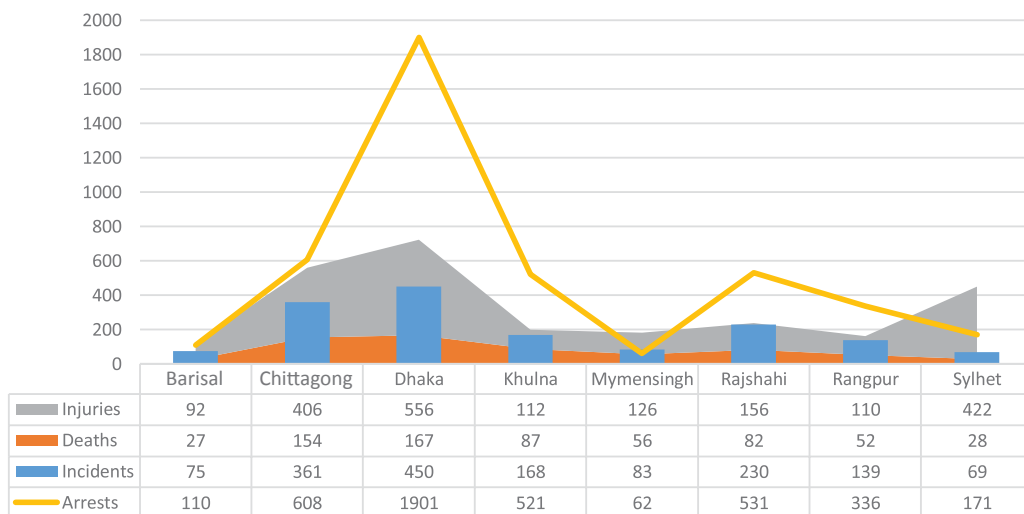


Table I shows five most frequent types of incidents during April-May 2018. According to the BPO data, arrest stands top among the incidents occurred in both months. But the number of arrests were higher by 58 incidents in May 2018 than April. Assault⁸ is the second-most frequent incident in both months. But the number of assault reduced by 39 incidents in May 2018 than April. The numbers of clash and sexual assault also follow a decreasing trend in May 2018 than April by their occurrence. In May 2018, the number of clashes decreased by seven, and sexual assaults decreased by 19.

In contrast, the substantial increase of gunfight demonstrates a rising trend of incident occurrence in May 2018. The number of gunfights increased by 126 in May 2018 in number than April. In April 2018, gunfight was the fifth most frequent incident while in May, it was the third most frequent incident. In April 2018, BPO recorded a total of 33 incidents of gunfight all over the country where reportedly 35 people were killed, 64 were injured and five were arrested. On the other hand, 159 incidents of gunfights occurred in May 2018 where reportedly 177 people were killed, 69 were injured and 28 were arrested.

Table I: Top Five Incidents (April- May 2018)

Top 5 Incidents in April 2018		Top 5 Incidents in May 2018	
Types of Incident	Total Number of Incidents	Types of Incident	Total Number of Incidents
Arrest	315	Arrest	373
Assault	242	Assault	203
Clash	48	Gunfight	159
Sexual assault	45	Clash	41
Gunfight	33	Sexual assault	26

⁸ According to BPO Codebook: One-sided violence by an individual or small group against another individual or small group.

Part B: Incidents Recorded by BPO on Drug Peddling

BPO records and maps reported occurrences related to the abuse of drugs. It includes incidence of violence related to drug peddling, raid operations by the law enforcement agencies, and other crimes related to drug addiction. Historically, Bangladesh has been used as a safe route for drug trafficking by the illicit

traffickers by taking advantage

of the clean image of Bangladesh of not being a primary drug producer country. Besides, the local growing market of Bangladesh has become a matter of great attraction to the drug traffickers in the present time. The number of drug addicts, as well as the drug-related violence, has increased manifold. On the other hand, the dynamics of drug trade and drug usage in

Bangladesh has also changed over time. BPO recorded a total of 1426 reported violent and nonviolent incidents related to drug peddling from January 2017 to June 2018. A total of 250 out of 1426 recorded incidents were violent among which a total of 186 were two-way violence⁹ such as gunfight and clash

whereas 64 were one-sided violence¹⁰

such as assault, and abduction.

These incidents occurred all over Bangladesh

(Map 1)

in which a total of 229 people were killed including

two females in separate incidents.

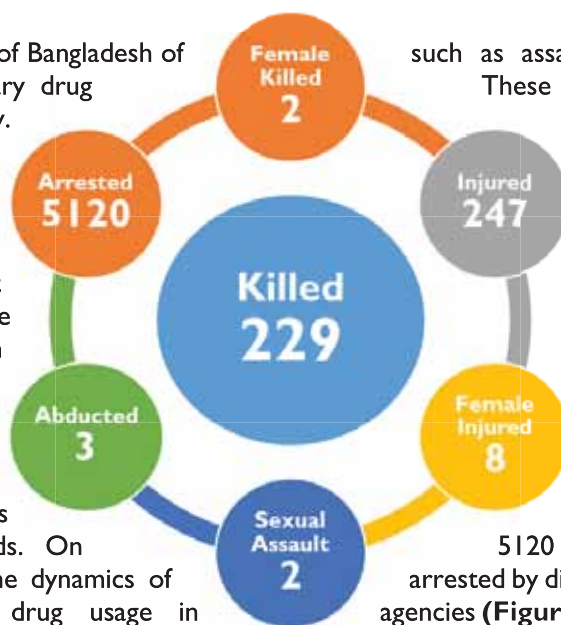
Also, a total number of 247 people were reportedly injured including

eight females and

5120 people were

arrested by different law enforcing agencies (Figure 4).

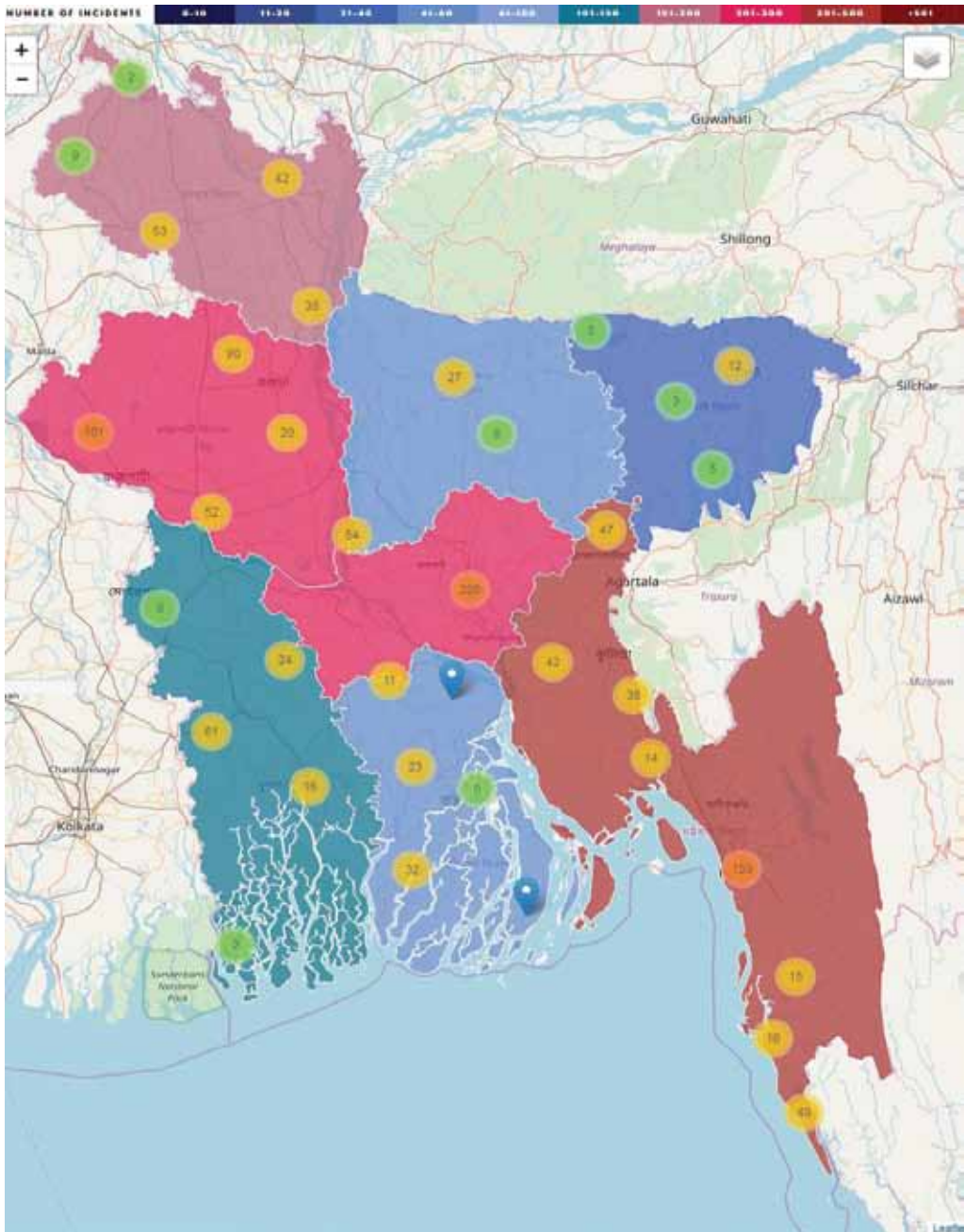
Figure 4: Consequences of Drug Related Incidents (January 2017- June 2018)



⁹ According to BPO Codebook two-way violence refers to incidents where two individuals or groups engage in violence against each other, and no clear distinction can be made between perpetrators and targets.

¹⁰ According to BPO Codebook one-sided violence refers to incidents where violence is inflicted by an individual or group upon another, and a clear distinction between perpetrators and targets can be made.

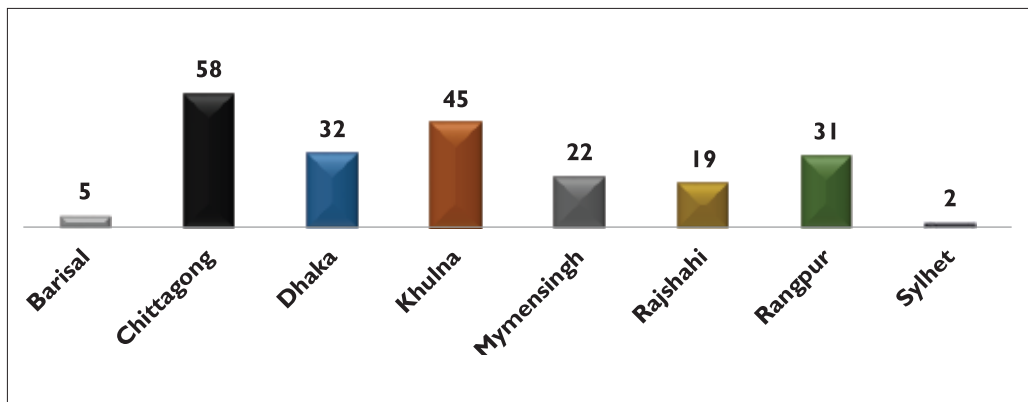
Map 1: Drug Related Incident Heat Map by BPO (January 2017- June 2018)



The recent nationwide crackdown on the narcotics trade launched in early May of 2018, has resulted in an increasing trend in the number of incidents, mainly gunfight, to a great extent. According to BPO data, a total of 214 incidents of gunfight reportedly occurred in Bangladesh (figure 5) from (1) April to (12)

June (2018). It depicts that most of the gunfights occurred in Chittagong, Khulna, and Dhaka division. According to BPO data, 144 out of these 214 reported incidents occurred since May 2018 in which 166 alleged drug peddlers have been killed.

Figure 5: Incidents of Gunfight by Division (April 1-June 12, 2018)



Unlike other divisions, Chittagong possesses some unique features such as it has shared borders with both India and Myanmar, three Hill tract districts of Bangladesh are located in the division, the largest seaport and longest sea beach are also situated in the division etc. All these could provide some technical supports for transportation as well as large potential market base for the illegal and addictive drugs which is utilized by the illicit drug traders and drug peddlers to a great extent. Since Myanmar has started an

undeclared drug war against Bangladesh with the drug called yaba, the number and frequency of yaba shipments by land and sea have been increased manifolds and many local people have been indulging in drug trading in early stage and becoming drug peddlers in later stage. Having large numbers of drug peddlers, Chittagong experienced the highest number of alleged gunfight incidents in the recent anti-drug drive by the law enforcement agencies.

A Global Overview on Contraband Drugs

Between 2015 and 2017, around 29.5 million people or 6 percent of the total global adult population were engaged in the problematic use of drugs and suffered from drug use disorders.¹¹ About 12 million of them suffered from Hepatitis C and HIV related health issues and around 282,000 people died from these diseases. Globally, approximately 190,000 premature deaths occur because of drug addiction. The majority of the death was attributable to the use of opioids and in most cases, these deaths were avoidable.¹² Opium and cocaine are the largely used drugs worldwide. Besides, heroin and methamphetamine's use is also increasing in drug markets. Afghanistan, Mexico, Colombia, and Turkey generally produce drug substance such as poppy, opium in the drug market.¹³ Drugs are related to crime in multiple ways. Most directly, it is a crime to use, possess, manufacture, or distribute drugs classified as having a potential for

abuse.¹⁴ Crime groups generate one fifth to one-third of their total revenue from drug sales. Virtual space such as darknet (deep-web) and payment methods such as bitcoin provides enormous opportunities for them in the drug trade.¹⁵ According to United Nations Office for Drug Control (UNODC), there is a link between drug trade with other forms of organized crime, illicit financial flows, corruption, and terrorism. For example, by some estimates, up to 85 percent of opium poppy cultivation in Afghanistan is in territory under influence of the Taliban. But the relations between organized crime and terrorists groups are always evolving, much like drug markets themselves.¹⁶ Still, the interregional drug trafficking flows continue to explore new markets to expand the business. Therefore, there are a number of global drug trafficking routes through which contraband drug business operates worldwide (**Figures 6,7, and 8**).

¹¹ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) (2017). "World Drug Report 2017: 29.5 Million People Globally Suffer from Drug Use Disorders, Opioids the Most Harmful." Accessed: 11 June 2018. Available at: http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/frontpage/2017/June/world-drug-report-2017_29-5-million-people-globally-suffer-from-drug-use-disorders--opioids-the-most-harmful.html

¹² United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) (2017). "World Drug Report 2017: Executive Summary." Accessed: 11 June 2018. Available at: https://www.unodc.org/wdr2017/field/Booklet_I_EXSUM.pdf

¹³ Listcrux.com (2014). "Top 10 Countries known for Producing Opium." Accessed: 11 June 2018. Available at: <https://listcrux.co/top-10-countries-known-for-producing-opium/>

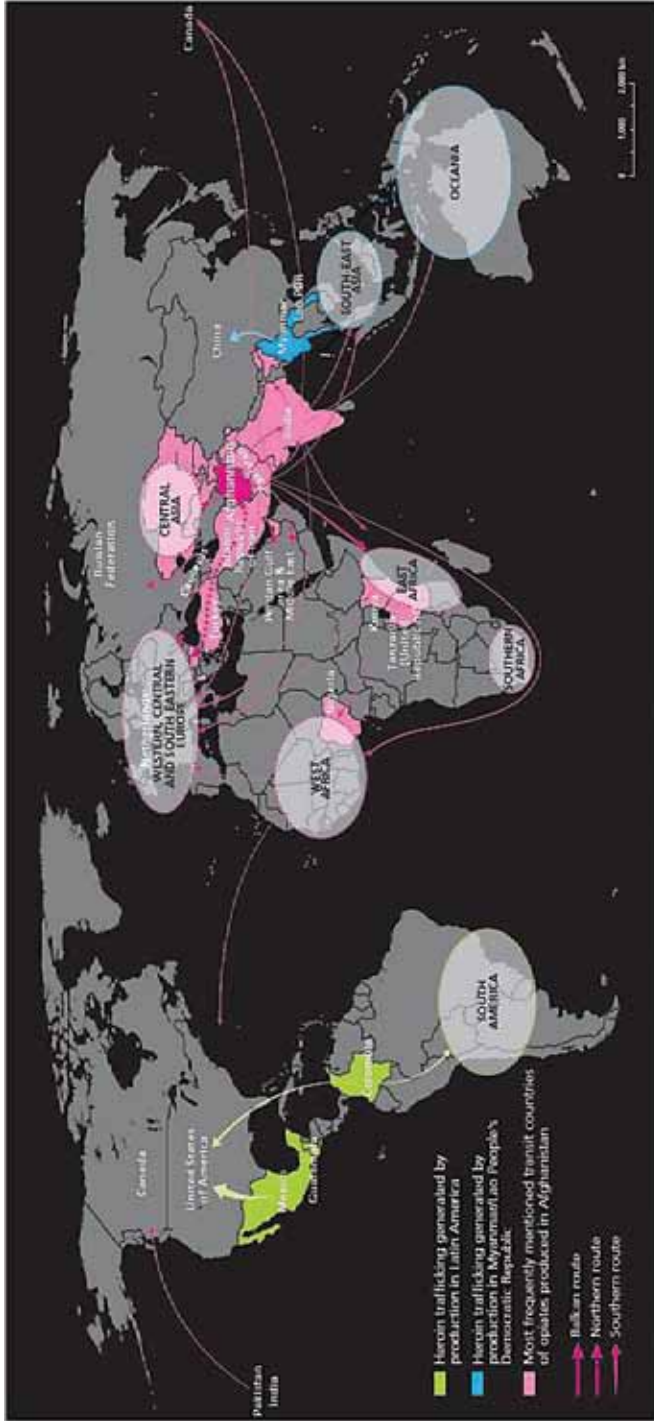
¹⁴ U.S. Department of Justice (1994). "Fact Sheet: Drug-Related Crime." Accessed: 11 June 2018. Available at:

<https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/DRRC.PDF>

¹⁵ UNODC (2017). "World Drug Report 2017: 29.5 Million People Globally Suffer from Drug Use Disorders, Opioids the Most Harmful."

¹⁶ UNODC (2017). "World Drug Report 2017: Executive Summary."

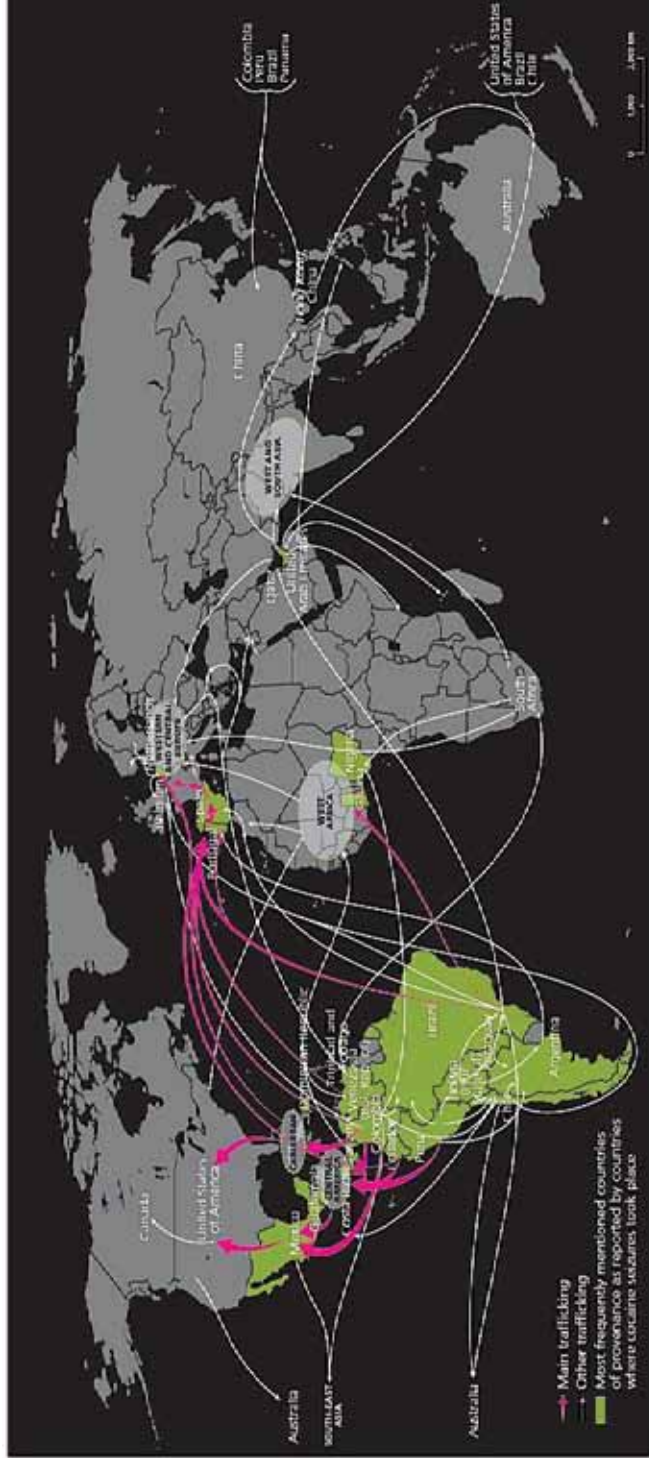
Figure 6: Main Opiate Trafficking Flows, 2011-2015



Sources: UNODC elaboration, based on responses to annual report questionnaire and individual drug seizure database.

Notes: The trafficking flows are determined on the basis of country of origin/ departure, transit and destination of seized drugs as reported by Member States in the annual report questionnaire and individual drug seizure database: as such, they are to be considered as broadly indicative of existing trafficking routes while several secondary flows may not be reflected. Flow arrows represent the direction of trafficking; origins of the arrows indicate either the area of manufacture or the one of last provenance, end points of arrows indicate either the area of consumption or the one of next destination of trafficking. The boundaries shown on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. Dashed lines represent undetermined boundaries. The dotted line represents approximately the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir, agreed upon by India and Pakistan. The final status of Jammu and Kashmir has not yet been agreed upon by the parties. The final boundary between the Sudan and South Sudan has not yet been determined. A dispute exists between the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland concerning sovereignty over the Falkland Islands (Malvinas).

Figure 7: Main Cocaine Trafficking Flows, 2011-2015

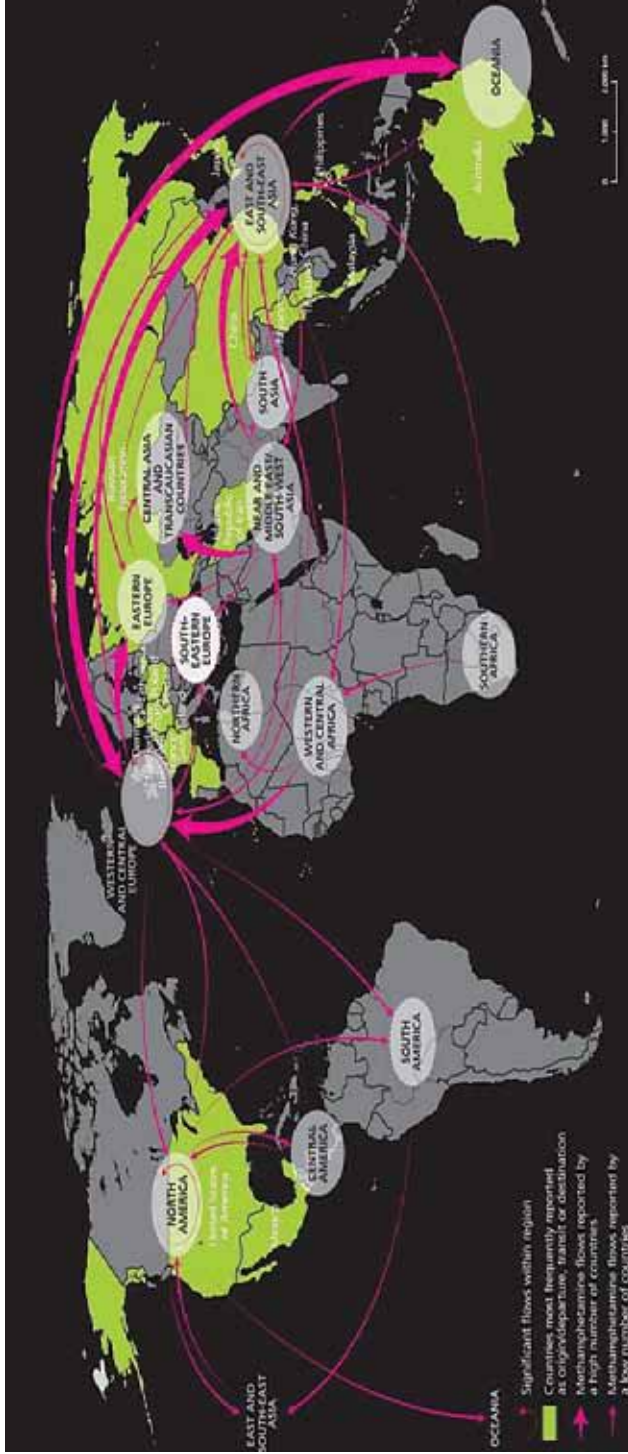


Source: UNODC elaboration, based on responses to annual report questionnaire and individual drug seizure database.

Notes: The trafficking flows are determined on the basis of country of origin/departure, transit and destination of seized drugs as reported by Member States in the annual report questionnaire and individual drug seizure database. As such, they are to be considered as broadly indicative of existing trafficking routes while several secondary flows may not be reflected. Flow arrows represent the direction of trafficking; origins of the arrows indicate either the area of manufacture or the one of last provenance, and points of arrows indicate either the area of consumption or the one of next destination of trafficking.

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Figure 8: Interregional Trafficking Flows of Methamphetamine, 2012-2015



Source: UNODC, responses to annual report questionnaire, 2012-2015.

Note: The origins of the flow arrows do not necessarily indicate the source/manufacture of methamphetamine. Flow arrows represent the direction of methamphetamine trafficking and are not an indication of the quantity trafficked. The boundaries shown on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. Dashed lines represent undetermined boundaries. The dotted line represents approximately the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir agreed upon by India and Pakistan. The final status of Jammu and Kashmir has not yet been agreed upon by the parties. The final boundary between the Sudan and South Sudan has not yet been determined.

¹⁷ Expanding market in East/South-East Asia, Oceania, concerns about growing use in North America, South-West Asia and parts of Europe. Rising treatment demand in some regions.

Contraband Drug Prevention: The War against Drug

The United Nations started its War against Drug in 1961.¹⁸ Subsequently, many countries adopted the concept to combat contraband drug trade and use. The European Union Action Plan to combat drugs is a notable example of collective action against drugs during 1995-1999.¹⁹ The War against Drugs usually involves a number of measures including:

Law Enforcement: To stop illegal drug trade and abuse, many governments took tough penalties against drugs. Declaring drug trafficking illegal, destroying drugs related crops and substance, surveillance, arrest or even crossfire come under this strategy. For example, within two months of the Filipino government's "war on drugs" in July 2016, about 2446 people reportedly died during the campaign against illegal drugs.²⁰

Drug Policy: Countries like the United States, Portugal, Switzerland, and many others have developed anti-drug policy to control the distribution and use of both medicament and illicit drugs.²¹ South Africa

has also taken a five-year plan to end drug trafficking and abuse.²²

Health Care: Many countries implement medical care for drug inflicted victims to deal with drug-related health issues such as HIV, AIDS, Hepatitis B and C, and mental disorders. In the United States, approximately 6,120 USD is spent every second for drug-related health care.²³

Education: UNODC emphasized school-based education, sport, and parental education for youngsters. This practice aims to generate control over drug abuse among the adolescents and the youth.

The following subsection provides a brief regional overview of the phenomenon with some examples of incidents of War against Drugs. In most cases, governments have undertaken initiatives to combat drug trade and addiction.

¹⁸ Iflscience.com (2016). "Enough is Enough - It's Time for an Evidence-based Approach to Drug Policy." Accessed: 11 June 2018. Available at: <http://www.iflscience.com/health-and-medicine/enough-is-enough-its-time-for-an-evidencebased-approach-to-drug-policy/all/>

¹⁹ European Parliament (1996). "The Fight against Drugs." Accessed: 11 June 2018. Available at: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/topics/drugs/drug3_en.htm

²⁰ Rappeler (2016). "Death Toll Breaches 2,000-Mark as War on Drugs Enters 3rd Month." Accessed: 11 June 2018. Available at: <https://www.rappler.com/nation/144894-death-toll-breaches-2000-ph-war-drugs>

²¹ Rappeler (2016). "Best Practices: How Other Countries Dealt with Drug Problems." Accessed: 11 June 2018. Available at: <https://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/iq/145004-drugs-best-practices-countries>

²² Accessed: 11 June 2018. Available at: <https://drugabuse.com/library/drug-abuse-policy/>

²³ *ibid*

Asia

In a reported estimation, 50 percent-70 percent of prisoners in Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, and Thailand are in jail for drug-related crimes. In China and Southeast Asia, annually half a million drug users are held in compulsory detention centres. Almost 75 percent of reported HIV infections cases were among drug users in Malaysia during the 1990s.²⁴ According to media reports, almost 9,000

accused of drug dealing or use were allegedly killed in between June 2016-April 2017 after Philippine's President Duterte waged a war against drugs with his explicit call for annihilating drug users and dealers.^{25,26} Although this violent campaign received harsh criticism and suspicion among human rights groups and monitors worldwide, it was portrayed as self-defense shootings by the authority.

Europe

Over 80 million adults, or almost a quarter of the adult population in the European Union (EU), are estimated to have tried illicit drugs at some point in their lives. The most commonly used drug is cannabis, with lower estimates reported for the lifetime use of cocaine and amphetamines.

Levels of lifetime use differ considerably between countries, ranging from around one-third of adults in Denmark, France, and the United Kingdom, to 8 percent or less than one in every 10 in Bulgaria, Romania, and Turkey.²⁷

The case of Portugal: Portugal is a success story in terms of nonviolent measures against drug abuse. During 1999, Portugal was the biggest supermarket of drugs in Europe. At the same time, the country also had the highest rate of drug-related AIDS cases in the EU and the second highest prevalence of HIV was among injecting drug users. As a response, in 2001, Portugal introduced the 'Decriminalization of Drug Use Act'.²⁸ This Act is considered one of the most extensive drug law reforms in the

²⁴ *The Diplomat* (2016). "Asia's War on Drugs". Accessed: 11 June 2018. Available at: <https://thediplomat.com/2016/05/asias-war-on-drugs/>

²⁵ Brookings (2017). "The Human Rights Consequences of the War on Drugs in the Philippines." Accessed: 11 June 2018. Available at: <https://www.brookings.edu/testimonies/the-human-rights-consequences-of-the-war-on-drugs-in-the-philippines/>

²⁶ Reuters (2017). "Special Report: Police Describe Kill Rewards, Staged Crime Scenes in Duterte's Drug War." Accessed: 11 June 2018. Available at: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-philippines-duterte-police-specialrep-idUSKBN17K1F4>

²⁷European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) (2015). "Drug Use and Drug-related Problems." Accessed: 11 June 2018. Available at:

<http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/publications/edr/trends-developments/2015/online/chapter2>

²⁸Hannah Laqueur (2015). "Uses and Abuses of Drug Decriminalization in Portugal." *Law Soc Inq*, 40: 746-781. doi:10.1111/lsi.12104 Accessed: 11 June 2018. Available at: https://www.law.berkeley.edu/files/Laqueur_%282014%29_-_Uses_and_Abuses_of_Drug_Decriminalization_in_Portugal_-_LSI.pdf

world. Under the Act, Portugal decriminalized low-level possession and use of drugs while penalties for manufacturing, dealing, and trafficking of illegal drugs remained functional. Along with decriminalization, Portuguese government increased funding to help expand and improve programmes focused on prevention, treatment, harm reduction, and social reintegration. As a result, within 14 years, by 2013 the percentage of people imprisoned in Portugal for drug law violations decreased to 24 percent from 44 percent (1999). Drug overdose casualties also decreased in comparison to EU average.^{29,30}

The Case of Switzerland: Another European country, Switzerland had undertaken measures to control the worsening drug problem in the country. It involved public information drives on the consequences of drug use, therapy, and harm reduction as a part of its policy to control drug abuse. For example, in 1992, Switzerland government provided medically-controlled doses of heroin to drug dependents under the Heroin Assisted Treatment (HAT) programme. In the same decade, it also provided clean needles through the needle exchange programme and Drug Consumption Rooms (DCR) for drug dependents. As a result, the number of drug abused deaths came down to 152 from 405 (1991).³¹

The Americas

From 2006 through 2015, more than one million in the US died from overdoses, alcoholism, and suicide. It is expected to cause 1.5 million more deaths by 2025.³² Since the 1990s, Mexico has experienced a persistent public security crisis involving high rates of violent crime, drug trafficking, and other illicit activities. Also over the years, the United States has increased its border security issues with significant

focus on drug-related trade and criminal activities.³³ The Mexican War on Drugs officially began in 2006. After 10 years, it has left nearly 150,000 people dead and 28,000 missing.³⁴ Alone in 2016, the drug wars in Mexico have claimed between 21,000 and 23,000 lives. That has taken the country back to the peak levels of 2010 to 2012.³⁵ Apart from Mexico, drug-related violence is also prevalent in other countries

²⁹ In Portugal, there are three adult deaths for every one million citizens compared to the EU average of 17.3 deaths per one million.

³⁰ *Rappeler* (2016). "Best Practices: How Other Countries Dealt with Drug Problems." Accessed: 11 June 2018. Available at: <https://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/iq/145004-drugs-best-practices-countries>

³¹ *Ibid*

³² Trust for America's Health (2017). "Pain in the Nation: The Drug, Alcohol and Suicide Crises and the Need for a National Resilience Strategy." Accessed: 11 June 2018. Available at: <http://www.tfah.org/assets/files/TFAH-2017-PainNationRpt-18-FINAL.pdf>

³³ Trans-Border Institute (2011). "Drug Violence in Mexico Data and Analysis through 2010." Accessed: 11 June 2018. Available at: https://justiceinmexico.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/2011_DVM.pdf

³⁴ *Newsweek* (2017). "Mexico is Losing the Drug War as Devastating Violence Grips the Nation." Accessed: 11 June 2018. Available at: <http://www.newsweek.com/mexico-losing-drug-war-devastating-violence-grips-nation-719281>

³⁵ Brookings (2017). "Hooked: Mexico's Violence and U.S. Demand for Drugs". Accessed: 11 June 2018. Available at: <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2017/05/30/hooked-mexicos-violence-and-u-s-demand-for-drugs/>

like Colombia, Peru, Argentina, and Costa Rica. According to the media report, in Colombia, more than 200,000 died during the US-funded plan aim to solve the drug trafficking and internal conflict.³⁶ The 20-

year war to dismantle the Colombian drug cartels has cost approximately 15,000 lives as a part of narco-terrorism.³⁷ According to Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos,³⁸

“Colombia has lost many of its best political leaders, policemen, and soldiers, judges and prosecutors, in a relentless war against drug barons and their violent criminal organizations. . . .between total war and legalization, there exists a broad range of options worth exploring if we want to take better care of drug consumers, protect our youth from drug abuse, collaborate to continue combating organized crime and provide alternative economic means to illegal crop farmers and vulnerable communities.”

Africa

West Africa is a hub of drug trafficking due to its geographic vulnerability, weak resilience, easy access, weak intra-state and inter-state surveillance systems, international counter-narcotics measures which are ‘hampering’ the usual routes, and willingness of local collaborators. According to a report by the World Economic Forum, the approach of adopting repressive state policies (without addressing the detrimental effects of drug use on health and social welfare) has put Africa into the risk of damage like Latin America. This notion is substantiated by the region’s ‘War against Drugs’ with increased state repression and human-rights abuses through anti-drug drives. It was also reported that, criminalizing every

aspect of drug-related activity in West Africa, including personal possession, has been counterproductive by resulting negative consequences such as: the rise of underground syndicate, increased corruption, overcrowded prison, and oppression over the people who genuinely need help while the drug lords are getting away easily. Consequently, the production, distribution, and consumption of synthetic drugs are rapidly rising in the region.³⁹ According to Amnesty International, drug-related human rights abuses occur in Africa because of policies motivated by the war on drug. In many cases, human rights violations go unreported and undocumented. Also, some rehabilitation centres in Africa

³⁶ BBC (2016). “Has Plan Colombia really worked?” Accessed: 11 June 2018. Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-35491504>

³⁷ *The Guardian* (2014). “The US war on drugs and its legacy in Latin America.” Accessed: 11 June 2018. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2014/feb/03/us-war-on-drugs-impact-in-latin-american>

³⁸ *The Guardian* (2016). “As Colombia’s Leader, I Know We Must Rethink the Drugs War: Juan Manuel Santos.” Accessed: 11 June 2018. Available at:

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/apr/16/war-drugs-colombia-un-new-approach>

³⁹ World Economic Forum (2016). “How Can West Africa Win its War on Drugs?” Accessed: 28 June 2018. Available at:

<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/04/how-can-west-africa-win-its-war-on-drugs>

severely punish drug addicts for faster recovery.⁴⁰ Still, African leaders have adopted a number of position papers and declarations, including the 2013 African Union Plan of Action on Drug Control, the Common African Position for the UN General Assembly Special Session on the

World Drug Problem, the Addis Ababa Declaration on Scaling up Balanced and Integrated Responses Towards Drug Control in Africa, and the Abuja Declaration adopted by the Economic Community of West African States.⁴¹

The Case of Ghana: According to the forthcoming Ghana Narcotics Control Commission Bill, for purchasing narcotic drug without lawful excuse, a person is liable on conviction to imprisonment for not less than five years and not more than ten years.⁴²

The Case of Gambia: For any person found in possession of more than 250 grams of cocaine or heroin will be punished minimum sentence of 10 years imprisonment for drug trafficking to life imprisonment in 2011.⁴³

The Case of Mauritius: Mauritius became the first African country to debut a harm reduction policy that legalized needle exchange programmes in 2006. Within seven years, the HIV prevalence rate of prisoners (of whom about 70 percent were drug users) fell by more than half and also reduced drug-related deaths and crime.⁴⁴

The Case of South Africa: South Africa follows National Drug Master Plan to address drugs related issues. The 2013–2017 drug master plan also sought to include “harm reduction” but made almost no reference to needle exchange or opioid substitution programmes or any other forms of harm reduction. However, the National Drug Master Plan (2018-2022) will be the first ever to have consulted the people most affected by drug policy (people who use illicit drugs).⁴⁵

The discussion above gives an idea that the War on Drugs is a global response to drugs problem where countries act locally or collaboratively. Their policies and actions are defined on the basis of their condition of drug problems, level of understanding of the difficulties, and available resources to address the issue.

⁴⁰ Adeolu Ogunrombi (2015). “West Africa: A New Frontier for Drug Policies?” SUR International Journal on Human Rights. Accessed: 28 June 2018. Available at: <http://sur.conectas.org/en/west-africa-new-frontier-drug-policies/>

⁴¹ World Economic Forum (2016). “How Can West Africa Win its War on Drugs?”

⁴² Adeolu Ogunrombi (2015). “West Africa: A New Frontier for Drug Policies?”

⁴³ *ibid*

⁴⁴ Bhekisisa (2017). “It’s Time to End SA’s War on Drugs.” Accessed: 28 June 2018. Available at: <http://bhkisisa.org/article/2017-06-29-00-its-time-to-end-sas-war-on-drugs>

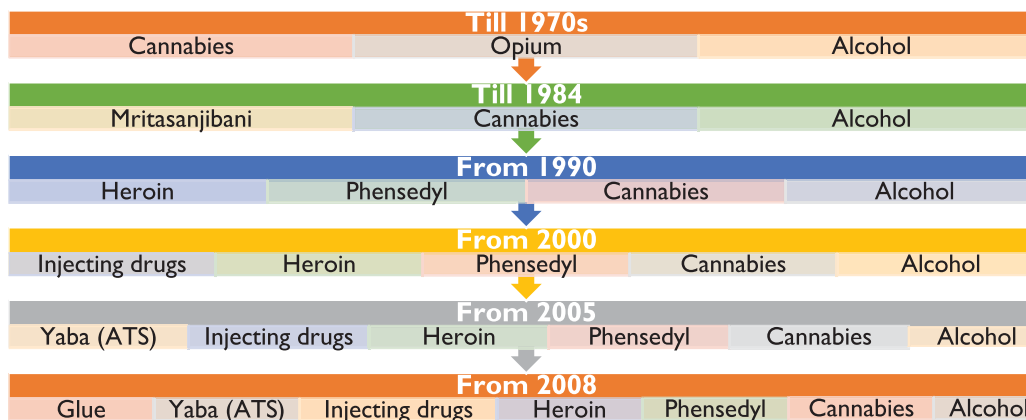
⁴⁵ *ibid*

An Overview of Drug Addiction in Bangladesh

The abundance and increased varieties of drugs have created a huge addicted consumer base in Bangladesh. The demand and supply nexus, accompanied by the geographic location of Bangladesh has put the country into high risk of drug consumption. Two key international drug-producing zones are in close proximity of Bangladesh. One is the Golden Crescent (Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Iraq) which is located in the northwest of Bangladesh. And the other is the Golden Triangle (Myanmar, Laos, and Thailand) which is located in the southeast of Bangladesh. In the 1970s-cannabis, opiate, and alcohol were the available drugs and narcotic products in Bangladesh. Later on, during the 1990s,

heroin and phensedyl became common among drug addicts. By 2005, use of varieties of drugs including yaba, sleeping pills, injections, and glue inhaling widely spread across the country (**Figure 9**).⁴⁶ At present, there are at least seven million drug addicts in Bangladesh. Five million among them are yaba users.⁴⁷ 13 percent of the total drug addicts in Bangladesh are women while the global prevalence is 30 percent.⁴⁸ Apart from addiction, women are also involved in contraband drug business in Bangladesh. Besides, in terms of age, a total of 85 percent of the drug addicts are between 15 to 19 years.⁴⁹ The following subsections provide brief economic and social aspects of drug addiction in Bangladesh.

Figure 9: Evolution of Drug Use in Bangladesh



Source: DNC Annual Drug Report 2010, p.12

⁴⁶ *Channellionline.com* (2018). "The Way destroys a Society and State (Madok Jebhabe Ekhti Somaj o Rastro Dhongsho kore)." Accessed: 10 June 2018. Available at: <https://goo.gl/nim4yc>

⁴⁷ *Bdnew24.com* (2018). "Bangladesh Has 7 Million Drug Addicts, 'Over Half of Them are Addicted to Yaba'." Accessed: 10 June 2018. Available at: <https://bdnews24.com/bangladesh/2018/05/21/bangladesh->

[has-7-million-drug-addicts-over-half-of-them-are-addicted-to-yaba](https://bdnews24.com/bangladesh/2018/05/21/bangladesh-has-7-million-drug-addicts-over-half-of-them-are-addicted-to-yaba)

⁴⁸ *Purboposhchim.news* (2018). "Young Women are at Risk of Shisha (Torunira Jhukche Shishae)." Accessed: 10 June 2018. Available at: <https://goo.gl/zaHp2X>

⁴⁹ *The Daily Janakantha* (2018). "Social Commitment to Drug Control (Madok Niyontrone Shamajik Angikar)." Accessed: 10 June 2018. Available at: <https://goo.gl/ZHj9ow>

Part A: The Economy of Drug Addiction

Table 2: Number of Seized Drugs in Bangladesh (2013-2018)

Name of Drugs	Seized Amount
Heroin	1,046 KGs
Heroin Puriya (small to-go consumable unit)	264,512 pieces
Opium	18.09 KGs
Marijuana	174,273 KGs
Marijuana Puriya	46,525 pieces
Marijuana Tree	2,523 trees
Ample Pathidine	5,725 l injections
Cocaine	25.63 KGs
Beer	50,678 bottles, 15,131 cans
Foreign Alcohol	185,082 bottles
Local Alcohol	1,948,296 litters, 81,176 bottles
Phensedyl	1,543,227 bottles, 7,080 litters
Taari (alcohol made from fermented palm juice)	31,390 litters
Spirit	27,473 litters
Narcotic Injection	653,218 pieces
Narcotic Tablet	318,112 pieces
Total cases filed:	313,084
Total arrested:	390,439

Source: The Daily Jugantor (2018) Online, <https://goo.gl/qeLYLf>

Since the combing operation against drugs began in May 2018, law enforcement agencies of Bangladesh have confiscated intoxicants worth taka 1 Billion.⁵⁰ This seizure indicates the magnitude of drugs business in Bangladesh. Among the conventional drugs, yaba is at the top of drugs business in and through Bangladesh. In

⁵⁰ The Daily Ittefaq (Online) (2018). "Euphoric Drug Business in Prison (Karagar Thekeo Cholche Madoker Romroma Byabsha)." Accessed: 10 June 2018. Available at: <http://www.ittefaq.com.bd/national/2018/05/30/158693.html>

the last five years (till May 2018) police, RAB, Department of Narcotics Control, Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) and other forces of law enforcement agencies have seized a total of 70,228,635 (seven crores two lakh twenty-eight thousand six hundred and thirty-five) pieces of yaba all over the country.⁵¹ Apart from yaba, the following amount of other drugs have been confiscated which reveals a huge area of drugs business in Bangladesh (**Table 2**). Against these seizures, a total of 313,084 cases have been filed in which 390,439 people have been arrested.

According to a yaba trade analysis report, at least 8-10 people come in between the producer and consumer of a single yaba tablet. At the micro level, on a commission based consignment deal, users often become sellers of yaba. The middlemen are also yaba users and often enjoy the luxury of consuming higher quality yaba. In terms of quality, there are three types of yaba on the basis of their rarity and effect. They are: (1) Champa, (2) R7, and (3) Controller. Pink colored Champa is the cheapest and the most available type of yaba worth 54 taka at factory rate and 220-230 taka retail rate in the Capital. R7 production cost ranges between 300-350 taka and sold for about 700-900 taka. The rarest and highest quality yaba is called the Controller which costs approximately 1500-2000 taka and often is sold only if someone buys at least 1000 pills at a time. The whole business is carried by

⁵¹ The Daily Jugantor (Online) (2018). "Huge Drugs Consignment Seized Including Yaba Worth Seven Crore Taka in Five Years (Pach Bochore Shaat Koti Yabashoho Bipul Madok Jabdo)." Accessed: 10 June 2018. Available at: <https://goo.gl/qeLYLf>

different level of players which leads up to the whole-sellers who are at the top tier and control yaba trade in Bangladesh.

Following an organized supply chain, approximately around three million yaba pills enter Bangladesh through at least 33 points on the border from Myanmar.⁵² According to Bangladesh Department of Narcotics Control (DNC), Cox's Bazar and Chittagong Metropolitan area has the highest prevalence of yaba trade because of their proximity with Myanmar. These two areas are hotbed of yaba trafficking route. But, Dhaka is the biggest market for yaba. Similarly, the highest number of heroin consumer in Bangladesh are located in Dhaka, the biggest phensedyl, Buprenorphine, and cannabis market is in

Dhaka as well. Before reaching Dhaka, these drugs follow different routes and points. DNC has identified a number of vulnerable points of entry of smuggling drugs outside of Bangladesh and their counter areas of inflow of drugs in Bangladesh. A total of 42 points in eight districts in Bangladesh bordering 49 points in West Bengal, India; 8 points in four districts in Bangladesh bordering eight points in Indian States of Assam and Meghalaya; 16 points in four districts in Bangladesh bordering 31 points in Indian States of Assam, Tripura and Mizoram and seven other points of Phensedyl trafficking from Balurghat, South Dinajpur, West Bengal, India to Naogaon, Bangladesh have been identified as vulnerable points of drug trafficking in Bangladesh from India.⁵³

Price of a single dose of these drugs is subject to a number of issues. According to DNC, availability, activities of law enforcement agencies inside the country, and border patrolling impacts on the pricing. Besides, the level of purity and alteration also creates difference in price and quality of drugs. In an estimate from the experiences of the drug enforcement officers, DNC has determined a range based pricing of a single dose of drug in the streets (retail level) in Bangladesh (**Table 3**).

Table 3: Approximate Drug Price in Bangladesh

Name of Drug	Approximate Price Range (BDT)
Heroin	30/ - 50/
Herbal cannabis	20/ - 30/
Country made liquor	50/ - 70/
Overseas liquor	100/ - 300/
Phensedyl (codeine preparation)	300/ - 600/
Pethidine injection	100/ - 250/
Buprenorphine injection	40/ - 60/
ATS (Yaba)	300/ - 500/
Adhesive/glue	10/ - 15/

Source: Annual Drug Report of Bangladesh, 2010, p.24

According to this estimate, if anyone desires to purchase contraband drug in Bangladesh- a ten taka note is fair enough. Therefore, the people of Bangladesh irrespective of purchasing power, is at risk of contraband drug consumption.

⁵² *The Dhaka Tribune* (Online) (2016). "Inside the Yaba Trade." Accessed: 10 June 2018. Available at: <https://www.dhakatribune.com/uncategorized/2016/01/29/inside-the-yaba-trade>

⁵³ Details about the drug trafficking points are available at: Department of Narcotics Control (DNC) Annual Drug Report Bangladesh 2016, p. 35-37.

Part B: Causes and Impact of Drug Addiction

According to a survey on primary causes of drug abuse by DNC over patients under treatment programmes, drug addicts in Bangladesh mostly start taking drugs under the influence of friends and out of curiosity. Also, reasons like adverse

atmosphere in family, unemployment, desire to get easy pleasure, psychological disorder, easy access to drugs, lack of awareness, and complications about treatment have been identified as primary causes of drug abuse (**Table 4**).

Table 4: Primary Causes of Drug Abuse of the Patients under Treatment Programmes

Primary Causes of Drug Abuse	2011 (%)	2012 (%)	2013 (%)	2014 (%)	2015 (%)	2016 (%)
Curiosity	32.62	32.68	32.47	24.56	11.00	32.84
Influence of Friends	55.29	61.47	60.64	68.15	84.93	64.44
Desire to get Easy Pleasure	1.39	0.28	0.76	0.81	0.48	0.25
Psychological Disorder	0.63	0.56	0.15	0.67	0.24	0.86
Adverse Atmosphere in the Family	4.16	1.25	2.74	3.37	1.44	0.37
Easy Access to Drugs	0.13	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.48	0.12
Unemployment	4.53	0.00	0.15	0.13	0.00	0.12
Frustration	0.38	2.36	1.76	1.35	0.96	0.49
Lack of Drug Awareness	0.30	0.14	0.15	0.13	0.14	0.12
Complication about Treatment	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.27	0.48	0.37

Source: DNC Annual Report 2016, p. 28

Besides these, doctors and experts have identified more reasons behind drug addiction including: dexterity, misguided life-morale, effect of degenerated culture, lack of personality and moral strength, misconception of taking drugs as part of modern lifestyle, considering drug consumption as challenge/ adventure, influence of drug-addicted family member (especially spouse), desire to escape from reality, misconception on drug's positive effect on creativity/ concentration on

study/ stamina, freedom from sensation of sorrow/ guilt/ tension/ hunger, misconception on drug's ability to eradicate insomnia, intentional drug consumption to harm oneself and so on. But the adversity of drug abuse is beyond the so-called temporary pleasure that drugs allegedly offers. The following figure highlights some of the detrimental interrelated (physical, psychological, social and economic) impact of drug addiction (**Figure 10**).⁵⁴

⁵⁴ *The Daily Janakantha* (2018). "Social Commitment to Drug Control (Madok Niyontrone Shamajik Angikar.)"

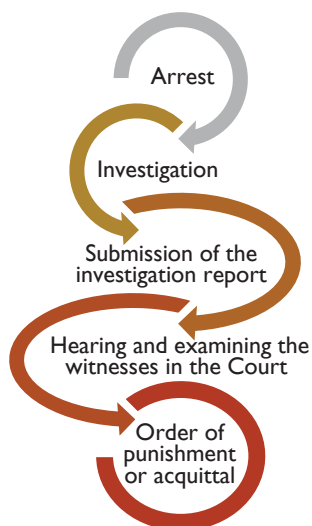
Accessed: 10 June 2018. Available at: <https://goo.gl/ZHj9ow>

Figure 10: Impact of Drug Addiction



Legal Aspects of Drugs in Bangladesh

Figure 11: Legal Procedure for Drug Offender in Bangladesh



Source: DNC

In Bangladesh, there are legal provisions (Acts and Rules) to address drugs related crimes and regulate different aspects of the concerned issue (e.g. alcohol control and organizational behavior). According to DNC, as a criminal offense, a drug offender is subject to a number of legal procedure (**Figure-11**). First of all, the arrest (generally) takes place at the pre-investigation stage. Officers of or above the rank of Sub-inspector of the DNC and Police conduct the investigation by the order of the officer in charge of the Regional Narcotics Offices. The investigation includes: preparing a sketch map of the place of occurrence, taking expert opinion, and collecting oral, documentary, material, and circumstantial evidences. According to DNC, the final orders for punishments or acquittal comes after fulfillment of the following legal requirements:

“The Chief Chemical Examiner of the Central Drug Testing Laboratory is empowered by section 50 of the Narcotics Control Act 1990 to pass an opinion about the chemical nature of a drug which is to be exhibited in the court as evidence. After the investigation is completed the investigating Officer submits the charge sheet at the Court for trial of the case.

Cognition of a drug case is initially taken at the District Chief Judicial Magistrate’s Court. The Sessions Judge Court conducts trial of cases with higher rate of punishment. In the process of trial the Magistrate or Judge hears the witnesses, the investigators, the detecting officers and the accused, examines the evidences and finally orders for punishments or acquittal.”⁵⁵

For the appropriate comprehension of drug-related offenses, the Narcotics Control Act, 1990 functions as the supreme law over any other law in Bangladesh (regarding drugs). Along with this principal law for drug abuse prevention and control, there are also a number of legislation related to drugs in Bangladesh.

The Narcotics Control Act, 1990: Previously promulgated as the Narcotics Control Ordinance, 1989, this Act is a special law on prevention and control of drugs in Bangladesh. This Act repeals the Opium Act, 1857, the Opium Act 1878, the Excise Act 1909, the Dangerous Drugs Act 1930, and the Opium Smoking Act 1932. Also, about 40 percent of the concepts of drug abuse prevention and control contained in this Act are derived from the UN conventions⁵⁶ and legislation of other countries. For example, this

⁵⁵ Department of Narcotics Control (DNC) Annual Drug Report Bangladesh 2010, p. 56.

⁵⁶ Bangladesh has ratified the 1988 United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances on 11 October 1990, Convention against Corruption on 27 February 2007, and Convention against Transnational Organized Crime on 13 June 2011.

Act has included all drugs which fall under the UN Convention and stratified them into three categories on the basis of their harmful effects and criminality involved (**Table 5**).

Table 5: Intoxicant by Category

Intoxicants of the category A	Intoxicants of the category B	Intoxicants of the category C
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Opium Poppy or sticky substances derived thereof. 2) Any refined, unrefined or prepared opium or any substance prepared with the help of opium. 3) Opium derivatives like Morphine, Codeine, Thebeine, Noscapine, Narcotine, Papavarine etc. and their salts. 4) Any substance containing more than 0, 2 percent Morphine. 5) Any intoxicant having the properties of Opium and fabricated with unnatural means like Pethidine, Meperdine, Methadone, Dextromoramide, Dihydrocodeine, Meperdine Fentanyl, Pentazocaine, Hydromorphone, Omnopone, Alphaprodine, Demeral, Oxycodone, Etophine, Lofentanyl, Alfentanyl, Alphamethyl Fentanyl, 3-Methyl Fentanyl, Asscetrophine, Acetylmethadol, Alphacetyl-methadol, Betaprodine etc. 6) Cocaine, or all Cocaine derivatives. 7) Any substance or any Cocaine salt containing more than 0, 1 percent Cocaine. 8) Tetrahydrocannabinol in whatever form, Cannabis resin, Charas, Hashish etc. 9) Acetic anhydride, or any other ingredient indispensable in the production of Heroine, Morphine or Cocaine (if the acetic anhydride is found together with Heroine, Morphine or Cocaine). 10) Mescaline. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Hemp plant, Herbal Cannabis, Bhang, Bhang plant or any substance prepared with the help of Hemp or Bhang. 2) Any other plant (except tobacco) which can be used as an intoxicant. 3) Alcohol, any kind of alcoholic liquor, rectified spirit, any medicine or liquor prepared with the help of rectified spirit, Beer, or any liquor with more than 5 percent alcohol. 4) LSD, or any substance containing LSD. 5) Barbiturates or similar substances. 6) Amphetamine, Methyl amphetamine or anything that contains Amphetamine. 7) Phencyclidine, Psilocybin, Nicocodine or anything that contains such substances. 8) Methaqualone or anything that contains Methaqualone. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Toddy, Panjui etc. 2) Denatured spirit or methylated spirit. 3) Chlordiazepoxied, Diazepam, Oxazepam, Lorazepam, Flurazepam, Clorozepate, Nitrazepam, Triazolam, Temazepam etc. 4) Any sedative, tranquilizer or hypnotic medicine not mentioned under category B. 5) Any stimulant or depressive medicine not mentioned under category A or B.

Source: <http://www.sai.uni-heidelberg.de/workgroups/bdlaw/1990-a20.htm>

This Act comprehends issues on (regarding prevention and control of drugs and precursor chemical):^{57,58}

- Defining technical terms;
- Describing the power and functions of various concern agencies;
- Establishment, funding, and responsibilities of the National Intoxicants Control Board;
- Defining various drug offence;
- Penal provisions for drug offences;
- Imposing prohibition, control and regulations on legal and illegal drug related activities;
- Issue, inspection and cancellation of licenses;
- Issuing permits and passes;
- Treatment of drug addicts;
- Conducting search, seizure, arrests, investigation, financial investigation, prosecution, asset forfeiture;
- Issuing warrants;
- Prevention of money laundering;
- Applying controlled delivery techniques;
- Revenue collection;
- Control of precursor chemicals;
- Production restriction on intoxicants;
- Listing intoxicated persons;
- Taking action in good faith, and so on.

The Act also articulates specific punishment against drug offences in degrees ranging from minimum (fine) to maximum (death penalty) **(Table 6)**.

Other Related Acts/ Rules:^{59,60,61}

- The Special Power Act, 1975,⁶²
- Customs Act, 1969.⁶³
- Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002.
- Coast Guard Act, 1995.
- The Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898.
- The Evidence Act, 1872.
- The Narcotics Control Rules, 1999.
- The National Narcotics Control Board Fund Rules, 2001.
- The Private Treatment and Rehabilitation Centre Rules, 2005.
- Drug Control (License and Permit Fees) Rules, 2014.
- Mobile Court Guidelines.
- Alcohol Control (License Fee) Rules, 1991 (Revised 2002 & 2014).
- Departmental Recruitment Rules, 1994 (Department of Narcotics Control).
- Uniform Rules of Department of Narcotics Control, 2014.

⁵⁷ Department of Narcotics Control (DNC) Annual Drug Report Bangladesh 2010, p. 67.

⁵⁸ The Narcotics Control Act, 1990. Full English Text available at: <http://www.sai.uni-heidelberg.de/workgroups/bdlaw/1990-a20.htm>

⁵⁹ Drug Control Laws and Rules available at Department of Narcotics Control (DNC) Official Website: <https://goo.gl/sDwiVk>

⁶⁰ Department of Narcotics Control (DNC) Annual Drug Report Bangladesh 2010, p. 67.

⁶¹ Rules / Policies, Security Services Division, Ministry of Home Affairs. Available at: <https://goo.gl/wLjThT>

⁶² This law particularly deals with prevention and control of smuggling. As drug is one of the major items of smuggling in Bangladesh, this law also addresses issues related to drugs. The main jurisdiction of this law is within five kilometers of the border. It is also applicable in other areas of the country in respect of drugs which are smuggled from other countries.

⁶³ This Act covers the issues related to import and export of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursor chemicals.

Table 6: Offences and Punishment under the Narcotics Control ACT, 1990

Contravention Sec.	Offences	Penal Sec	Punishments (Imprisonment)	
			Minimum	Maximum
9	Illicit import, export, manufacture, processing, sale, distribution, purchase, transport, shipment, storage, possession, warehousing, use, etc. of drugs/precursor.	19	2 Years	Death Penalty
9	Any operation of drugs or precursors without license/ permit /pass	22 Ka	2 Years	10 Years
10	Illicit import, export, manufacture, processing, sale, distribution, purchase, transport, shipment, storage, possession, warehousing, use, etc. of alcohol	22 Ga	2 Years	10 Years
12	Issue of license/permit/pass to restricted persons.	26	Fine	1 Year
13	Prescription of drugs without lawful authority.	23	Fine	1 Year
20	Illicit Possession of apparatus/utensils/ingredients for manufacture/ processing drugs/precursors.	20	2 Years	15 Years
21	Allowing land, house, apparatus, utensils, transport for committing offences of drugs/ precursors.	21	Fine	5 Years
23	Violation of the conditions of license/permit/pass.	23	Fine	5 Years
24	Search, seizure or arrest for harassment.	24	Fine	1 Year
25	Abatement/conspiracy/financing/patronizing.	25	3 Years	15 Years
43	Non-cooperation of Law Enforcement personnel in implementing Narcotics/ Precursor Laws.	26	Fine	1 Year

Source: DNC Annual Drug Report Bangladesh 2010, P. 69

According to media report, at present, about 60 percent of the total prisoners in Bangladeshi prison are allegedly accused in drugs-related cases.⁶⁴ Since 2011, a total of 534,113 drugs-related cases have been filed in the country. But 290,800 cases out of these filed cases are still pending for trial. A total of 647,552 people have been arrested against these cases but only about 36,000 are in prison. Rest of them are free due to the alleged weakness and gaps in the law.

According to the same media report, more than 45 percent of the total criminal cases in Bangladesh is of drug offenses. But due to lack of evidence, these cases are delayed. Taking the opportunity of legal process, almost 90 percent of the alleged accused are getting bail or discharge. They are allegedly getting involved in the crime again after their release. As a result, the future of those cases is becoming bleak. In response, police and the DNC proposed for separate judicial courts to ensure speedy trial. Afterward, the Bangladesh Ministry of State forwarded the proposal to the Ministry of Law and Parliamentary Affairs. The drafted proposal is expected to increase speed in trials, ensure easier scope to bring drug godfathers under the law, and the decline in drug trafficking.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ *The Daily Ittefaq (Online)* (2018). "Euphoric Drug Business in Prison (Karagar Thekeo Cholche Madoker Romroma Byabsha)." Accessed: 10 June 2018. Available at: <http://www.ittefaq.com.bd/national/2018/05/30/158693.html>

⁶⁵ *The Daily Amader Somoy (Online)* (2018). "Three Lakh Drug Cases Pending (Jhule Ache Teen Lakh Madok Mamla)." Accessed: 10 June 2018. Available at: <https://goo.gl/VgBgM4>

Initiatives by the Bangladesh Government against Drug Peddling

Bangladesh has always had a strict stance against drugs and has been conducting continuous operations to prevent drug trafficking, trade, and abuse. From 2006 to 2016 DNC and law enforcement agencies of Bangladesh have confiscated a huge amount of different types of drugs including poppy, opium, heroin, codeine, cannabis, buprenorphine, and yaba under 409,884 cases and held 506,092 as accused (**Table 7**). Very recently, Bangladesh has started a de facto war against drugs as Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina directed law enforcement agencies to take strict actions against drug dealers, drug peddlers, abusers, and the persons involved in any kind of drug dealing. Waging a war against contraband drugs, the government has taken initiatives including awareness campaign and anti-drug drives in the country with a 'Zero Tolerance' policy.

Besides, DNC has launched a campaign against drugs since 1 May 2018, to protect the next generation from the threat.⁶⁶ As per the strategy, all TV channels and radios have started to telecast the slogan "love life,

stay away from drugs" (Jibon ke bhalobashun, madok theke dure thakun).

According to Police Headquarters (PHQ) database, there are 26,299 drug dealers and patrons in Bangladesh.⁶⁷ They are mainly involved in yaba business and smuggling. Responding to a question in the parliament, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said that 15,333 cases have been filed in the anti-drug drive since May 2018 and in addition, a total of 20,767 people have been arrested and are facing trial (till 22 June 2018).⁶⁸

After the alleged abduction followed by death of Teknaf Paurashava Ward Commissioner Ekramul Haque, an audio clip of telephone conversation provided by his family created widespread enragement against 'gunfight'. Human rights organizations expressed their concern over the killings and raised questions about the authenticity of the police reports. UNODC mentioned in a statement that they are "closely following" developments related to anti-drug operations in Bangladesh.

⁶⁶ *The Daily Star* (Online) (2018). "DNC starts anti-drug Campaign Today". Accessed: 10 June 2018. Available at:

<https://www.thedailystar.net/country/bangladesh-dnc-starts-anti-drug-campaign-today-says-director-general-jamal-uddin-ahmed-1541908>

⁶⁷ *The Dhaka Post* (2018). "Bangladesh: Sheikh Hasina's War against Drugs!" Accessed: 10 June 2018. Available at:

<http://www.thedhakapost.com/national/2018/05/22/1421>

⁶⁸ *Priyo.com* (2018). "The New Godfather Syndicate Target of the New Drug Law (Natun Madok Ain er Target Godfather Syndicate)" Accessed: 25 June 2018. Available at:

<https://www.priyo.com/articles/the-new-godfather-syndicate-target-of-the-new-drug-law-201806212205/>

Table 7: Statistics on the Seizure of Drugs by all Agencies in Bangladesh (2006-2016)

Name of Drugs	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Total
Poppy Plant	9.5	60,038	-	1,450,210	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,510,248
Opium (in Kg)	1.058	01.65	-	-	11.69	-	-	-	-	-	-	14,398
Heroin (in gram)	101,591	87,039	146,593	159,783	188,186	107,499	126,92	123,73	78.3	107,539	266,785	684,002.773
Codeine preparation (Bottle)	536,538	380,625	904,384	1,117,354	961,260	932,874	1,291,078	987,661	741,137	870,210	566,525	9,289,646
Codeine (Loose) (Ltr)	2,122.15	6,526,252	2,620,438	2,955,300	4,119,185	3,224	2,613	857,55	434,22	5,104,75	275,68	30,852,525
Cannabis (in Kg)	9,613.515	13,550,028	24,282,395	32,955,581	48,749,357	54,244,16	38,702	35,012.54	35,988.56	40,916,284	47,104,655	381,119,075
Cannabis Plant	2,182	26,380	2,834	791	1,760	742	485	666	727	761	849	38,177
Buprenorphine (Ampoule)	1,610	5,331	45,921	89,469	69,158	118,890	157,995	99,509	178,889	85,946	152,740	1,005,458
ATS (Yaba) (Tab)	1,687	14,4751	36,543	129,644	812,716	1,360,186	1,951,392	2,821,52869	6,512,869	2,017,7581	29,450,178	63,399,075
Total No. of Cases	1,6531	1,6987	1,9091	27,441	29,662	37,245	43,717	40,250	51,801	57,420	69,739	409,884
Total Number of Accused	18,612	22,000	25,042	34,315	37,508	47,309	54,100	47,531	62,080	70,581	87,014	506,092

Source: DNC Annual Report 2010 and 2016

⁶⁹ 5 KG Amphetamine were also seized

The UNODC urged the government to adhere to its commitments to promote balanced, human rights-based approaches to drug control, in line with the three international drug control conventions and the outcome document of the United Nations General Assembly special session on the world drug problem. The members of the Assembly affirmed themselves as ready to engage with all countries to help

bring criminals to justice with the appropriate legal safeguards, in line with international standards and norms, and to promote evidence-based prevention, treatment, rehabilitation, and reintegration.⁷⁰ Besides UNODC, the EU and a number of local intellectuals and rights groups have expressed their concerns as well.

The chairman of the National Human Rights Commission, Kazi Reazul Hoque said,⁷¹

"The way the youth and even the middle aged of the country are being addicted to drugs, it is frightening for the country, it's a danger signal for the generations ahead. Steps must be taken against those who are involved in drug business and their godfathers. But that doesn't mean that, extrajudicial killings are to be incorporated. The things we are learning of late are serious. Extrajudicial killings are acceptable in no way."

Moreover, a group of 'ten eminent citizens'⁷² has urged the government to launch judicial investigation into killings in anti-drug operations, calling these

'unacceptable in a democracy'.⁷³ Also Dr. M. Enamul Huq, former inspector general of police, reportedly said.⁷⁴

"In many shootout cases, law-enforcing agencies' members are not fully following the existing laws and regulations of the country. The objective of the anti-narcotics drive is very good and praiseworthy but the process is questionable."

Despite having a wide range of criticism home and abroad, the anti-drug drives have been continuing all over the country.

⁷⁰ *The New Age* (2018). "UNDOC Closely Follows Anti-drug Drive in Bangladesh." Accessed: 10 June 2018. Available at:

<http://www.newagebd.net/article/42680/undoc-closely-follows-anti-drug-drive-in-bangladesh>

⁷¹ *The Daily Prothom Alo* (Online) (2018). "Law Enforcement in Anti-drug Drives on Own Accord." Accessed: 10 June 2018. Available at:

<http://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/news/176358/Law-enforcement-in-anti-drug-drives-on-own-accord>

⁷² Prof Anisuzzaman, writer Hasan Azizul Huq, poet Nirmalendu Goon, writer-publisher Mofidul Hoque, drama personalities Ramendu Majumdar,

Ataur Rahman, Mamunur Rashid, Nasiruddin Yousuff and Sammilita Sangskritik Jote President Golam Quddus and General Secretary Hasan Arif.

⁷³ *Bdnews24.com* (2018). "Killings in Anti-drug Drives 'Unacceptable in Democracy', 10 Eminent Citizens Say." Accessed: 10 June 2018. Available at: <https://bdnews24.com/bangladesh/2018/06/02/killing-s-in-anti-drug-drives-unacceptable-in-democracy-10-eminent-citizens-say>

⁷⁴ *The Diplomat* (2018). "Death Toll Rises in Bangladesh's Anti-Drug War." Accessed: 10 June 2018. Available at: <https://thediplomat.com/2018/06/death-toll-rises-in-bangladeshs-anti-drug-war/>



Commentary: The ‘Other’ Influx **A. S. M. Tarek Hassan Semul⁷⁵**

Following the last global economic meltdown of 2008, most of the developed nations suffered from sluggish and in many cases negative economic growth. On the contrary, Bangladesh rode that rogue wave of financial crisis on the back of its two economic mainstays, the readymade garments and its expatriate labour force. While the opportunity of having the demographic dividend is expected to nudge Bangladesh towards take off, this window will only last till 2040. However, a drug containing a mixture of methamphetamine and caffeine, popularly known as ‘yaba’ or ‘crazy drug’ seems to stand in the way as a major stumbling block to Bangladesh being a developed nation by 2040, as 7 million are drug addict of which 5 million are addicted to yaba.⁷⁶ From the middle of the last decade there has been a meteoric rise in demand for this Amphetamine-Type Stimulant (ATS), as it was manifested in the number of seizures

of yaba by the law enforcement agencies. In 2017, whereas law enforcers seized 40 million pieces of yaba, the catch yields 30 million only in the first four months of this year, while it is believed that only 10 per cent of the yaba was seized of total smuggled yaba into Bangladesh market.⁷⁷ Although yaba is relatively a new drug sensation in Bangladesh, its history goes back to Nazi Germany as this drug creates an intense hallucinogenic effect and can enable users to stay awake for days. Adolf Hitler’s intent to save his Nazi empire introduced this ‘super-drug’ to boost German soldiers’ energy and keep them awake and alert during periods of extended action on the front lines.⁷⁸ The drug that was invented in Europe during the World War II, found its way in Southeast Asia as it resurfaced in Thailand in the 1960s. The drug was popular among the long-distance lorry drivers to stay awake at night and got criminalized by the Thai government in 1970.

⁷⁵ Research Officer, Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS)

⁷⁶ *Bdnews24.com* (2018). “Bangladesh Has 7 Million Drug Addicts, ‘Over Half of Them are Addicted to Yaba’.” Accessed: 10 June 2018. Available at: <https://bdnews24.com/bangladesh/2018/05/21/bangladesh-has-7-million-drug-addicts-over-half-of-them-are-addicted-to-yaba>

⁷⁷ *The Daily Star* (Online) (2018). “YABA out of control.” Accessed: 10 June 2018. Available at: <https://www.thedailystar.net/frontpage/yaba-out-control-1576924>

⁷⁸ *Deutsche Welle* (2017). “Drug Abuse in Nazi Germany was an ‘Indication of a Society Losing Control’.” Accessed: 10 June 2018. Available at: <https://www.dw.com/en/drug-abuse-in-nazi-germany-was-an-indication-of-a-society-losing-control/a-38338018>

The Roots

The rise in the production of yaba in the Mekong region, otherwise known as the 'golden triangle' is intricately linked with the fall of opium production and gradual substitution by yaba, since the late 1990s. Myanmar being the largest producer of yaba among its Mekong neighbours, earned the tag of 'narco state.' However, the history of drug production in this country goes back to colonial period when the British commercialised the cultivation of opium in mid 1800s. Following the independence of Myanmar in 1948, already a thriving opium industry, did not see any downturn as citizens of Myanmar as well as minority groups in the growing areas, such as the Shan, Kachin, Karenni, and Chin states became the wholesalers. On the other hand, poppy found its major buyers in ethnic Chinese businessmen and international syndicates located in Thailand and later, China. In 1989 in order to curb

the insurgency in exchange of peace, Myanmar government started to sign ceasefire agreements with different armed resistance groups, which has given autonomy to these groups to tax the poppy cultivation and opium industry. However, following an agreement between Myanmar and local ethnic minorities in 1999, poppy cultivation was to be eliminated by 2014.⁷⁹ Consequently, in 2000, production of ATS (Yaba is a popular variant of ATS) was introduced, largely in the Wa regions in Myanmar, which targeted both Thai and Chinese markets. Hence this decline of opium cultivation happened in the backdrop of 'a changing regional drug market'. As poppy based drugs are less profitable than synthetic, the price of opium and heroin started to fall, pushing most East and Southeast Asian markets towards synthetic drugs like ATS.

The narco-economy: Politico-military nexus

By the early 2000s, Synthetic drugs became the sensation among the organised crime syndicates and criminal investors in Myanmar, turning it into a global leader in ATS type drug production. This shift of production coincided with the Southeast Asian governments' anti-drug drive. Compared to poppy based drug, ATS is more potent and has higher profit margins and based on the seizure of ATS drugs in

Myanmar's methamphetamine economy was worth close to US\$ 800 million in 2016.⁸⁰ The ease of manufacturing and supply contributed as well. Since it does not rely on natural plant sources, these pills can be produced without extensive manpower or little expertise in small mobile labs. Unlike heroin, the transportation is far easier as caravans of mules is redundant in the case of ATS.

⁷⁹ Sarno, P. (2009). "The War on Drugs". *Southeast Asian Affairs*, pp. 223-241. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27913385>

⁸⁰ Nan Lwin Hnin Pwint, 'Lawmakers Blame Burma's Drug Problem on Warlord-Govt Nexus', *Irrawaddy*, 4 August 2016

Satellite imagery is of little or no use to the law enforcement agencies, since the smoke or revelatory smell that used to emit from refining of opium to produce heroin is absent during the manufacturing process of ATS.

This ease of production has boomed the ATS production by the Myanmar's warlords who have a viable smuggling route not only to Thailand, China and other Southeast Asian neighbouring countries but Bangladesh as well. There has been wide spread speculation and accusation from the analysts, global media and researchers that, Myanmar's drug problem has intricate link with its quasi democratic government and the military.⁸¹ However, there is discourse regarding the level and extent of such involvement. Several sources argue that the top brass of the Myanmar military is actively involved with this drug nexus while others claim the involvement is limited only to military intelligence.⁸² The ceasefire agreements between the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) and ethnic minority groups such as Wa, Kokang and Pa-O in the 1990s gave the varying degrees of autonomy regarding drug cultivation, production, manufacture and distribution in those particular states. Alongside that, the trade itself is controlled and financed

by Chinese crime networks based outside Myanmar provide little control over these areas.

On the other hand, the close link between the drug trade and the political elites in the post military junta era has been a major problem to eradicate this Yaba problem for Myanmar. A report from 2011, published by the Thailand-based Shan Drug Watch revealed drug industry involvement of seven MPs from President Thein Sein's administration. Militia groups set up by the Myanmar military to help them fight rebel groups have become 'key players in drug trade'.⁸³ Understandably, The UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has denied any such link between epidemic ATS production and the involvement of the government officials, as that will severely undermine the organisation's ability to work within Myanmar. A paper published in 2008 by the US Congressional Research Service (CRS) claims that, without government compliancy the ATS industry could not have flourished thus far. The report went on to allege that trafficking of contraband, including narcotics "...remains a low-risk enterprise, as corruption among officials in Burma's [former] ruling military junta, the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), appears to facilitate trafficking and

⁸¹ Sarno, P. (2009). "The War on Drugs." *Southeast Asian Affairs*, pp. 223-241. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27913385>; Routray, B. (2018). "Narco Economy in Myanmar: From Opiates to ATS" (p. 7). Institut für Strategie-Politik- Sicherheits- und Wirtschaftsberatung.

⁸² Brown, C. (1999). "Burma: The Political Economy of Violence." *Disasters*, 23(3), 234-256. doi: 10.1111/1467-7717.00115

⁸³ Shan Drug Watch: "Druglords in Parliament." (2018). Retrieved from <http://www.burmapartnership.org/2011/11/shan-drug-watch-druglords-in-parliament/>

effectively provide the criminal underground immunity from law enforcement and judicial action.”⁸⁴ This failure of governance has enabled Lo Hsing Han the owner of the largest business corporation in Myanmar, the ‘Asia World’ to launder his drug money in form of infrastructure projects such as Naypyidaw’s new airport. He received a free pass along with attractive business contracts in exchange of negotiating ceasefire agreements with ethnic groups, such as United Wa State Army (UWSA), one of Southeast Asia’s largest drug cartel. Aided by a ruling from the 2008 constitution, this group is manufacturing methamphetamine and possess absolute control over two “self-administered districts” in northeastern Shan state. ⁸⁵ Hence, the ceasefire agreement gave a free ride to these insurgent groups as they first shifted their production from opium to ATS and then build a production and

supply network through government immunity to flood neighbouring countries with yaba. India’s northeastern states neighbouring Myanmar’s Chin state has been the major provider of pseudoephedrine, the main ingredient for yaba production. Although China is another biggest producer of pseudoephedrine, with tighter Chinese control over this precursor drug, Indian pseudoephedrine is in high demand. Poor monitoring system and weak intelligence-sharing between government agencies has been identified as major reason for this rise of illicit pseudoephedrine trade. On the hand, the 2013 change of Indian narcotics laws to define pseudoephedrine as controlled drug did not help the case as the seizures had dropped dramatically. This building up of a regional production network has illustrated a poor regional cooperation among the governments in Southeast Asia as well as South Asia.

The Rohingya Dynamics

In disparate effort to curb yaba trade, Bangladesh government went into an anti-drug drive which is reminiscent of the Philippines’ recent war on drug. Following the recent influx of the Rohingyas in Bangladesh the total Rohingya population stands at more than 1.2 million. The protracted nature of Rohingya crisis has already started alarm bell among the Bangladeshi policy makers. Long before the

recent influx, the government has tried to solve the invasion of yaba diplomatically as the issue was raised during high level meetings and in conferences between the law enforcement agencies of the two countries. However, the response from the Myanmar government has been one of the major sources of frustration when it comes to bilateral cooperation on narcotics control. On the other hand,

⁸⁴ Congressional Research Division. (2008). “Burma and Transnational Crime.” Retrieved from <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL34225.pdf>

⁸⁵ Wade, F. (2012). “The shady players in Myanmar’s drugs trade.” *Aljazeera*. Retrieved from <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2012/09/201292295654887542.html>

almost within a year of recent Rohingya influx, plethora of news reports are coming through as this stateless ethnic group started being used as carriers, “intermediaries or traffickers in this super profitable business”.⁸⁶ According to Bangladesh intelligence officials, more than 500 Rohingya yaba smugglers and over 1,000 mules entered Bangladesh after Myanmar launched a crackdown since the August 2017.⁸⁷ Once a drug that was considered as recreational drug for the elites of the middle class, since the influx the price has lowered by almost 50 per cent, hence making it affordable to the mass. As almost 90 per cent of yaba get smuggled from Myanmar to Bangladesh through Naf river region, therefore, this efficient smuggling route has become the only route for the Rohingyas to flee the persecution of Myanmar military and turning them into mule in this trade. Hence, 271 kilometers of porous border with Myanmar along with the coastline has been a major challenge for the government to protect and monitor, considering 700

thousands Rohingyas have fled through this border only less than a year ago. Following the tightening of security along the Naf River, Bay of Bengal-Cox’s Bazar-Barisal-Dhaka has been established as an alternative trade route for yaba.

As the Western nations got disillusioned with the failure of donor driven democratic process in Myanmar, it is imperative to understand the inner mechanism of Myanmar’s state apparatus. The involvement of its political and military elite as direct patrons or beneficiary of drug trade has hindered the anti-drug campaign of Myanmar. The lack of regional cooperation and coordination among the neighbours of Myanmar has also contributed to the boom of ATS trade within the region. As global and regional powers are divided in terms of ways to deal with Myanmar as ‘narco-state’ or ‘irresponsible’ neighbour, it will be difficult for Bangladesh to curb yaba merely by launching Duterte style drug-war.

⁸⁶ Rahman, U. (2010). “The Rohingya Refugee: A Security Dilemma for Bangladesh.”

⁸⁷ *The Dhaka Tribune* (Online) (2018). “From Myanmar to Bangladesh: Yaba’s Journey of a Thousand Miles.” Accessed: 10 June 2018. Available

at:
<https://www.dhakatribune.com/opinion/special/2018/06/02/from-myanmar-to-bangladesh-yaba-s-journey-of-a-thousand-miles>

Understanding Electoral Violence through Micronarratives: Sylhet, Khulna, and Bandarban

Very recently, Centre for Genocide Studies (CGS) teamed up with United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to conduct a study on a number of districts in Bangladesh, which included collecting ‘life-stories’ or micronarratives

related to electoral violence. The following is a representation of the life stories. Out of the selected number of districts, micronarratives from Sylhet, Khulna, and Bandarban are only highlighted here.

Part A: Sylhet District

Sylhet is located in the north-east of Bangladesh. Sylhet district was established on 3 January 1782, and until 1878 it was part of Bengal province. In that year, Sylhet was included in the newly created Assam Province, and it remained as part of Assam up to 1947 (except during the brief break-up of Bengal province in 1905–11). In 1947, Sylhet became a part of East Pakistan as a result of a referendum (except the sub-division of Karimganj) under Chittagong division. It was converted into a division in 1995.⁸⁸ The district is bounded by the Khasia- Jaintia hills of India on the north, Maulvi Bazar district on the south, Kachhar

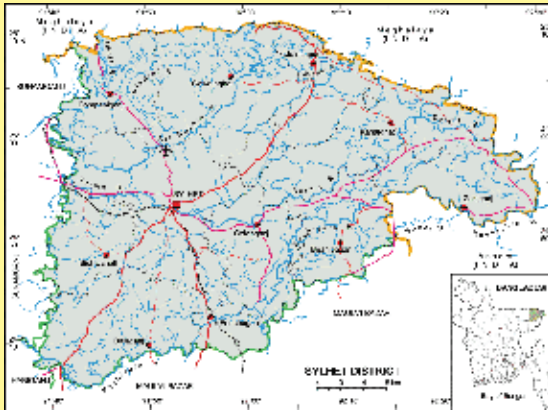
and Karimganj districts of India on the east, Sunamganj and Habiganj districts on the west.

The district possesses one City Corporation and six parliamentary constituencies named as Sylhet-1, Sylhet-2, Sylhet-3, Sylhet-4, Sylhet-5, and Sylhet-6. All of the seats have their representations in the National Parliament by Bangladesh Awami League and its allied parties through the 10th and 9th Parliamentary Election. In the 8th Parliamentary Election, the same party was unsuccessful to secure a single seat.⁸⁹

⁸⁸ *Banglapedia* (n. d.). Sylhet District. Accessed: 12 June 2018. Available at: http://en.banglapedia.org/index.php?title=Sylhet_District

⁸⁹ Official Website of Bangladesh Parliament (n. d.). Accessed: 12 June 2018. Available at: <http://www.parliament.gov.bd/index.php/en/mps/members-of-parliament>

Map 2: District Map of Sylhet



Source:

<https://www.thebangladesh.net/sylhet-district.html#maps>

vehicle vandalizing, chasing, meetings etc. Even during the election, violence prevailed. But political problems, conflicts, and violence are not severe in Sylhet because of social harmony, coherence, and tolerance. Also, extortion is not that much predominant in Sylhet. People will definitely go to cast their vote if there is a fair election.”

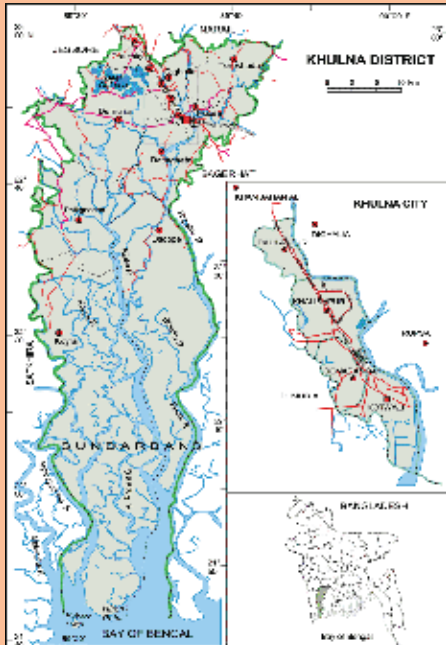
Md. Ali Mazed
Student, Sylhet

“Proxy votes, strikes, and fighting were predominant in Sylhet mostly during 1991 and 2001. The 2008 election was quite fair and violence was almost at zero level except for few centres where influential local party supporters allegedly harassed polling agent or tried to influence the vote bank including attempts to get proxy votes. Before 2014 election, there was tension in the city because of the war crime trial and Jamaat-Shibir’s call for strike every now and then. The business community faced economic loss and several vehicles were vandalized as well. But I have heard that these attacks were not actually instigated by upper-level senior leaders and they even condemned. There is political harmony in Sylhet and tourism is gradually expanding here. The government has also taken initiatives to develop tourist attractions. Therefore, I think politics and business coexist in Sylhet to safeguard the growing tourism.”

Mst. Rahima Begum
NGO activist, Sylhet

Part B: Khulna District

Map 3: District Map of Khulna



Source: <http://khulna.amardesh.com/>

Khulna district is located in the Khulna division. It borders Jessore district to the north, Narail district to the northeast, Bagerhat district to the east, the Bay of Bengal to the south, and Satkhira district to the west. The district currently possesses its representation in the national assembly with six constituencies named as Khulna-1, Khulna-2, Khulna-3, Khulna-4, Khulna-5, and Khulna-6. All of the seats have their representations in the National Parliament by Bangladesh Awami League through the 10th national election in 2014. In the 9th National Election, Bangladesh Awami League had the lead in five seats whereas, in the 8th national election, they won in only one seat.⁹⁰

“The pattern of violence evolved gradually with the change in the type of weapons in the last few decades...The violence was in small-scale and caused injuries by the use of homemade weapons a few years back. Nevertheless, the violence became more violent and life-

threatening when the usages of firearms and bombs begun. Post-election violence is very significant here. For example, the winning candidate attempts to annihilate the oppositions as soon as the victory is assured...Also, after the election, extortionists tried to take control over financially profitable ventures such as bus stands, fish enclosures, businesses, and so on in the name of political power. Violence over minority population is also prevalent during election...I think we must bring back our age-old traditions and culture of tolerance, social manners, family values, and peaceful coexistence to get rid of violence.”

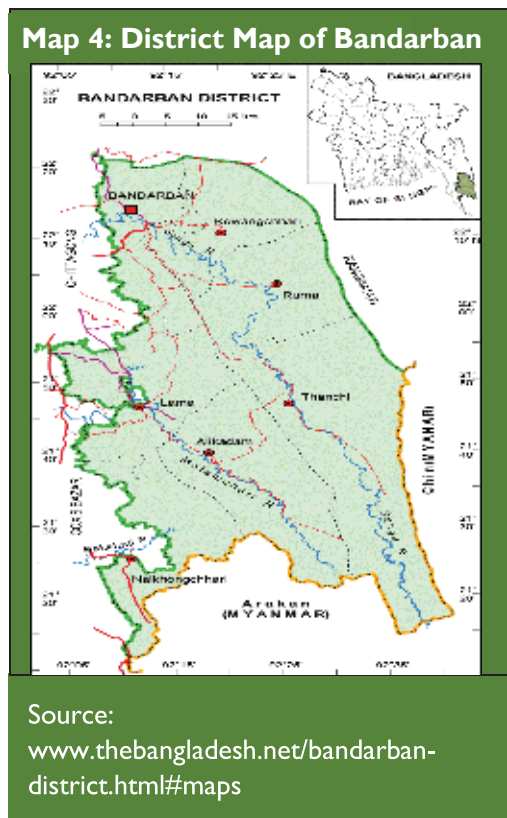
Hena Jamal
Local Correspondent of Media, Khulna

⁹⁰ ibid

“Incidents of repression by the ruling political party against member of the opposition are significant in Khulna... But in recent times, it transcends all the previous records...The ruling party uses administration and police to create pressure on opposition. The opposition leaders suffer from legal charges, abduction, and forced disappearance... all these are the part of their winning strategy since the ruling party can do everything to win the elections... Therefore, violence increases in the election time and if the opposition is strong then the violence turns extreme...People cannot rely over the police...For the betterment of the country, a free and fair election must be ensured.”

**Awsafur Rahman
Lawyer. Khulna**

Part C: Bandarban District



Bandarban is located in the south-east of Bangladesh and is one of the eleven districts in the Chattogram division. It is one of the three Hill districts of Bangladesh and a part of the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), the others being Rangamati district and Khagrachhari district. Bandarban is not only the most remote district of the country but also is the least populated (population 292,900) one. Bandarban town is the hometown of the Bohmong Chief (currently King, or Raja, U Cho Prue Marma) who is the Head of the Marma population. Bandarban is regarded as one of the most attractive travel destinations in Bangladesh. The district possesses only one parliamentary constituency which has been represented by the member of Bangladesh Awami League in the last three National Parliamentary elections.⁹¹

⁹¹ ibid

“I have been living here since 1992. Everything is peaceful here except some issues of unrest in the Hills...The elections of 1996, 2001 and 2010 were peaceful. The candidate who won in those elections came to meet us and I also got the chance to meet with him...Normally we don't have much problems with the Shanti Bahini [Armed wing of the Parbattya Chattagram Jana Samhati Samiti (United People's Party of the Chittagong Hill Tracts)]. But an acute violence occurred in 1995. Both the Bengali and Shanti Bahini were in a position of attacking each other. The situation was so intense that the authority was forced to call more 1,500 police personnel apart from its existing 2,000 members...I think the situation of violence is deteriorating day by day. At present, the ruling party does not tolerate the opposition for any activity. It will be worse in the coming days irrespective of the results of the election.”

Md. Ishak
CNG Driver, Bandarban

“The population of Bandarban is less educated than the other hill districts and hence they are not that much interested about the national issues. If they face any problem or dispute they simply try to avoid administrative rules and process and solve them through traditional system...In the last local election, we have candidates from both Bangladesh Awami League and Bangladesh National Party. On the Election Day, there was a situation of possible violence. But people fled from the area including the activists of both parties. So no one was there to carry out violence...Our people never like violence. They even don't go to court to settle any issue...Our MP (Member of Parliament) is also a very good person. He has been in power since 1991. He likes unity and peace.”

Aung Ching Marma
Student, Bandarban



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