



## Half-a-million in jails: Just 23% convicts, rest who fill prisons are undertrial, not held guilty

In India, 76% of all inmates have not been convicted. Denial of bail leads to years in jail.

Overcrowded jails, denial of bail and people incarcerated for years.



Shams Ur Rehman Alavi

**I**ndeed it's one of the most important issues and it certainly needs urgent attention in the country--the issue of undertrials languishing in jails. Hundreds of thousands are lodged in jails across the country & lives spent behind bars. In fact, India has over half-million people in all the jails. Latest data suggests that over half-a-million i.e. 5,73,000 people are lodged in the 1300-odd jails of the country. But what's astonishing is that nearly 76% of all the inmates, are yet to be convicted. Not just the poor and marginalized, the students and the innocent youth, but tribal, religious minorities and other sections like those who don't have kin or lack resources, remain in the prisons for years and years. Without even a verdict, not pronounced guilty, they remain in jails. India has just over 1,300 prisons including the Central jails.

Capacity of these prisons is 4,36,000 but nearly 5,73,000 are kept in these jails. That's a sad story. The inmates live in tough conditions and are stuffed in, because so many undertrials are kept in jails, as per statistics on January 1, 2023 [Dec 31, 2022]. Imagine the situation that those held guilty and serving time in jails are less than 1/4th of the prison population. It not only puts huge pressure on the system but is also unfair. district jails and sub-jails apart from a few others that fall under particular category like open jail or women's jail.

...youth, students, the poor, tribal, members of the marginalized groups, suffer more.

Imagine the hardship, long years of suffering even before the trial and verdict. Bail is a favour or a right. SC has clarified but...

The issue is also related to application of law, citizen's liberty and principles. Justice Krishna Iyer had pronounced that bail was the rule and jail was the exception. The Supreme Court has also made its stand crystal clear. Yet, at the ground level, the people are finding it extremely difficult to get bail. Our jails are filled to capacity and exceed the maximum limit of inmates by a huge number. But those who were booked due to a malicious complaint or false claim, remain in jails [judicial custody]. Innocents must not suffer and people shouldn't be made to pay with long years [even decade] in jail, before the judgment. It is a big challenge and one of the most pressing issues today. In order to improve the situation, the government and its wings must take up steps and the reluctance to grant bail, should be addressed at the earliest.



Justice delayed is justice denied. When people wait for ages to have their case come up for trial and then they are found to be victim(s) of circumstances--either framed or arrested over a false claim, it hurts the person and his entire family. Supreme Court (SC) has expressed concern over the reluctance to give bail at the ground, especially, in lower judiciary. UP is the biggest state in India as far as population is concerned. It is the state that has the highest number of jail inmates in India, too, followed by Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Punjab and West Bengal. It is high time that the system is rectified and due respect is given to the dreams of the founders of nation and the law must be implemented as per the spirit of constitution. Prolonged incarceration is injustice as 'lost years' can't come back.

### IMMEDIATE REFORM REQUIRED IN SYSTEM

Ever since its formation, the country has seen major challenges. In 2024, Bangladesh is estimated to have a population of 175 million, which is much more than a huge country like Russia. The fast pace of economic progress has indeed brought a transformation in the society. The poverty rate has gone down and the country is now termed as a developing economy. From a country that had a high level of poverty, Bangladesh has recorded consistent growth and even the period of pandemic, didn't affect the country much. The GDP has increased and the experts see consistent growth and a further dip in poverty rate in the near future. Challenges like industrial safety, demand for higher wages, cotton T-shirts, women's apparel and children's clothes produced here are also flooding the markets in US, Europe & other parts of world.

## Will 1.5 million Afghans be allowed to stay for one more year?

Pakistan govt had earlier given deadline for eviction

The Asian Tribune

For the Afghan refugees, confusion continues. First, a news came that the Pakistan govt has allowed them to stay in the country for one more year. But a day later, there was another contradictory statement came out. The deadline was announced earlier and as mass eviction was announced, there was panic and worry among the refugees. However, international human rights bodies spoke for the rights of the refugees. Subsequently, govt okayed extension till June 2025.



Around 1.5 million refugees from Afghanistan stay legally in Pakistan. When their cards expired, they were asked to leave. UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi had intervened. But confusion persists as a govt statement said that eviction would continue.



# Secret 'hospitals' that used plastic surgery to change criminals' appearance, **face action**

Used modern technology & gave new identity to criminals so they can avoid arrest

In an important move, authorities have cracked down on hospitals that help the fraudsters, lawbreakers and escaped criminals to hide their identities, with the use of plastic surgery.

Several such hospitals are reportedly run in Philippines, stealthily. The identity of a criminal or hardened offender is changed so that he couldn't be identified.

The police raided such 'hospitals' that offer services like change in facial appearance. From change in shape of nose or altering features, the focus is on helping fugitives deceive the police.

## The Asian Tribune



It makes the job of law enforcement agencies extremely tough. The man who is a wanted criminal, walks past them, emerging as a new man, and not identifiable.

These hospitals are likely to face action and they would be shut, said officials.

In Manila, the city officials have acknowledged that raids led to recovery of equipment and medicines at these 'hospitals'.

Not just features and giving a new face, the skin tone is also changed here. They'd be shut for interfering with law. Anti-organised crime wing took the action. Hair transplant, dental implant and modern technology is used to help scamsters.

## South Asia

# Students' stir continues, gives jitters to govt in Bangladesh

Youths hit streets against quota, many injured in clashes

## The Asian Tribune



The ongoing students' protests in Bangladesh have caused worries for the establishment, as they have continued for days.

The students' anger, the size of the protests and the youths' sentiment on quota issue, are reasons enough to cause worry for the administration.

The intensity of protests has come as a surprise. Youth have been coming out and hurling stones at universities, regularly holding demonstrations, raising slogans and expressing

The protests started over the quota for freedom fighters' descendants in services. While the angry response led to withdrawal of decision, the students remain firm, not willing to budge. These clashes are

first after Awami League's youth wing High court had ordered to restore 30% quota. But Bangladesh top court later intervened.

However, students anger kept growing and it was seen as an anti-govt agitation.

The Govt has refused to accept anti-quota students' charter of demands. It has equated the movement with those who had sided with Pakistan during 1971. Roads were blocked, traffic stopped in cities. Many were injured in clashes.

## West Asia

# More killings in Gaza as Israel continues its attacks on Palestine



## Horror in Gaza

## The Asian Tribune

The horror continues in Gaza. Israeli attacks have led to more deaths.

One of the attacks was on a school while another was in a refugee camp.

Near the Khan Younis, Israel's air attack killed over a dozen. The victims include four children.

The second attack led to

eight deaths. This incident was reported from near the Nuseirat refugee camp. The Al Awda school was targeted and this led to eight person's deaths. The remaining doctors and health services staff are under immense pressure due to continuous strikes and the round the clock efforts to treat injured, save lives.