

Rohingya repatriation uncertain

21,000 refugees yet to go back home

WASIM BIN HABIB, back from Cox's Bazar

Repatriation of remaining 21,000 Rohingya refugees living in two camps in Cox's Bazar has become uncertain as some issues remain unsettled between the government and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR). The repatriation process has remained stalled since July 2005 when only 92 refugees went back to their homes in Myanmar. Though the Myanmar government has agreed to take back 8,753 more people, most refugees living in the two camps - Kutupalang in Ukhiya and Nayapara in Teknaf - are unwilling to return home, fearing torture by the ruling junta. The Bangladesh government, however, blamed the UNHCR for delaying the repatriation process, saying that the agency has deliberately stopped the process as its

officials would become jobless after all the refugees are repatriated. Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner Shoyebur Rahman told a group of journalists, who visited the camps on June 16, that the UN agency has put some proposals in the proposed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the government in order to take control of all the activities with regard to repatriation and to make it linger. He said the proposals include granting citizenship to the refugees' children, building permanent houses for them, providing job opportunities after proper training, allowing them to buy lands, closing the departure camp in Teknaf and cutting the jobs of 52 employees of Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commission (RRRC) and downsizing its activities. UNHCR Representative Pia Prytz Phiri, however, denied the

allegation of delaying the repatriation process. Talking to journalists at the UNHCR office in Dhaka yesterday, she said the process has stalled because the refugees do not want to go back home as they think the situation in their country is still not congenial. "We cannot force anybody to go back," she said, adding that the repatriation has to be voluntary. "We cannot promote repatriation unless there is a fundamental change in the situation in Myanmar," she added. About the issue of losing jobs, the UNHCR Representative said, "We will go back home after the refugees are repatriated and there would not be any problem for us in this regard." She also said that there are no such proposals with regards to citizenship and right to buy land in the proposed memorandum of understanding. About RRRRC activities, she said, "We have proposed downsizing the RRRRC in order to reduce the administrative cost, as this cost exceeds the expenditure on the refugees." In Bangladesh, 65 percent of the total expenditure is spent on administrative purposes while only 35 percent on the refugees. But globally the ratio of administrative cost to expenditure on refugees is 30:70, she said. Expressing concern over the poor living standard of the refugees and lack of secondary education facilities for their children, she said the Rohingya refugee camps in no way meet the international standard. A collective effort is needed to find out a solution, she said. "We are in the process of holding a positive and constructive dialogue with the government in this regard." Talking to The Daily Star, a number of refugees said they do not want to go back home now as there is no peace in their country. "We want to go back to our country, but the government (of Myanmar) does not recognise us. The police torture us mercilessly and that is why we are afraid to go back," said a 20-year-old boy living in Kutupalang camp for 13 years. "We will go back when peace will be restored in our country", he added. Currently, 21,293 refugees are living in the camps after 2,36,599 Rohingyas have been repatriated since 1992, when an influx of them began from Arakan in Myanmar following a religious and political persecution.



Professor Mahmudul Haque, director general, Bangladesh National Museum, and Rubaba Dawla Matin, head of marketing, GrameenPhone, inaugurate the exhibition of GrameenPhone-Zainul-Quamrul International Children Painting Competition at the National Museum in the city recently.

6 killed in road mishaps

STAR REPORT

At least six people were killed and 23 others injured in separate road accidents in Rangpur, Natore and Khulna yesterday. Our correspondent from Rangpur says: Three people, including a man and his daughter, were killed and two others injured in a road accident on Rangpur-Dinajpur highway near Taraganj bus stand yesterday morning. Witnesses said a truck loaded with cement ran over passersby as its driver lost control over its steering and fell into a roadside ditch. Dilip Chandra, 45, and his 12-year-old daughter Lipi Rani died on the spot while Majibar Rahman, 40, succumbed to his injuries at Rangpur Medical College Hospital (RMCH). UNB from Natore reports: A man and his wife were killed as a bus rammied their motorbike in Apara area in Singra upazila yesterday. Their minor daughter, however, had a miraculous save and rescued from a roadside bush after the tragic accident on Natore-Bogra highway. Rakib, 30, succumbed to his

injuries on the way to Sadar Hospital while his wife Rana Begum, 22, died on the spot. "But their three-year-old daughter Riya, who was on her mother's lap, fell into a roadside bush and survived supernaturally. Later, local people rescued the baby," said a witness account of the incident. Police and firefighter sources said the accident occurred at noon when a bus rammied the motorbike from opposite direction. The couple along with their daughter was going to Bogra from the district by the motorcycle when the accident occurred. Our staff correspondent from Khulna reports: A van driver was killed and 20 others were injured when a passenger bus bound for Jessore from Khulna fell into a ditch at 9:00am yesterday at Damodar under Phultala upazila. The dead was identified as Abul Hossain, 26. The injured said the accident occurred due to rash driving. Of the injured, 11 were admitted to Phultala Hospital while nine others were released after first aid.

RECRUITMENT OF BANGLADESHI WORKERS

Malaysian team in city to finalise formalities

UNB, Dhaka

A Malaysian team arrived in Dhaka on Sunday night to finalise the formalities for recruitment of workers from Bangladesh. Headed by Director General of Immigration Raja Azahar Bin Abdul Manaf, the team members met State Minister for Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment M Quamrul Islam at his office yesterday. Other members of the delegation are Director, Foreign Works Division of the Department of Immigration Alwi Bin Bavutty, Under Secretary of the Ministry of Home Affairs Monsor Bin Embong, Under Secretary of Human Resources Management Division of the Ministry of Home Affairs Alias bin HJ Ahmad and Principal Assistant Secretary of the Ministry of Home Affairs Ms Junaldah. A Bangladesh delegation, led by state minister Quamrul Islam, visited Malaysia last month and held a cordial meeting with the Malaysian side. The ban on recruiting Bangladeshi workers, which was imposed in 1996, was lifted during the talks. As part of the follow-up action, the Malaysian team will visit the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training, Bangladesh Overseas Employment Services Ltd, Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies and a few Technical Training Centres. Thereafter, they will come up with the suggestions and guidelines "to make the intake of Bangladeshi workforce more effective", an official release said. The suggestions and guidelines are especially regarding control of migration cost, selection process and criteria, ensuring the return of the workers after the contract period and monitoring the whole process. They team will leave Dhaka tomorrow.

NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT

Call to strengthen talks

UNB, Baku

Bangladesh yesterday told the opening session of Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers (ICFM) here that the international community must strengthen dialogue and cooperation for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Reaffirming Bangladesh's stand on the Palestinian issue, Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan said a comprehensive solution could be found only through the establishment of an independent Palestine state with Jerusalem as its capital. He also called for greater cooperation among the Muslim states to uphold the interests of the Muslim Ummah.

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Talking to The Daily Star, a number of refugees said they do not want to go back home now as there is no peace in their country. "We want to go back to our country, but the government (of Myanmar) does not recognise us. The police torture us mercilessly and that is why we are afraid to go back," said a 20-year-old boy living in Kutupalang camp for 13 years. "We will go back when peace will be restored in our country", he added. Currently, 21,293 refugees are living in the camps after 2,36,599 Rohingyas have been repatriated since 1992, when an influx of them began from Arakan in Myanmar following a religious and political persecution.



Kumar Bishwajit, a renowned singer and managing director of Gaanchill, and Rafiqur Rahman Khan Yusufzai, managing director of EB Solutions Limited, exchange documents after signing a Memorandum of Understanding in the city on Sunday. Under the agreement, the EB Solutions will have the right to put all the audio-visual productions of Gaanchill on the Internet and use those as mobile phone ring tones.

Primary teachers continue strike

FROM PAGE 1
 introduction of school-based examination system at the primary school level. Teachers of community primary schools wearing shrouds continued their hunger strike until death in the capital. They also started their strike on Saturday demanding nationalisation of jobs. The Bangladesh Primary Teachers' Association called strike led 37,000 government primary schools closed and the leaders of the association vowed to continue their strike until their demands were met. They also threatened to go on a hunger strike until death from June 24 in the capital to press home their demands.

Kazi AK Fazlul Haque, general secretary of the association, yesterday told The Daily Star they held a meeting at Nababktra Primary School in the capital yesterday where 10 teachers from each school were listed to join the hunger strike. He also said the government is yet to take effective steps to realise their demands. "State Minister for Labour and Employment Amanullah Aman talked to us on Sunday but he left for Singapore without giving us any solution to the problem," he added. Two factions of Bangladesh Community Primary Teachers Association wearing shrouds continued their hunger strike in separate places to press home their five-point demand including nationalisation of their jobs. The pro-BNP teachers' association faction has been observing the hunger strike at Muktangan since Saturday while the pro-Awami League teachers' association faction started their strike at the Central Shaheed Minar on Sunday. Around 10 teachers became ill due to exposure to rain and sun. Critically ill Nargis Sultana of Shariatpur, Abdur Razzak of Dhamrai, Dhaka and Kahinur Akhtar Kalpana of Noakhali were admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH), the teachers said.

National fruit exhibition held

UNB, Dhaka

National fruit exhibition and award distribution ceremony was held at Khमार Bari of Tejgan area in the city on Friday as part of the National Fruit-bearing Tree Plantation Fortnight-2006 campaign. Agriculture Minister MK Anwar graded the occasion as chief guest and distributed the awards among the winners who contested in three categories at the exhibition organized by agriculture ministry.

The Gestate Holiday Resort of Sylhet won the first prize in institutional category. Dr M Zakaria, Chairman of Gestate Limited, received the award. State Minister for Agriculture Ministry Iqbal Hasan Mahmud was also present as special guest.

Phensidyl recovered

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) members yesterday arrested three people and seized ganja and 2628 bottles of phensidyl. At the Atrai Toll Plaza of Gurudaspur, Natore, a Rab team challenged a loaded-truck and seized the phensidyl bottles and arrested Saidur Rahman of Charghat, Rajshahi.

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Abu Taleb Choudhury Petitioner

-Versus-
 Registrar, Joint Stock Companies and Firms & others Respondents

It is hereby notified that an application u/s 43 of the Companies Act, 1994 has been filed by the petitioner in the Company Bench of the High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh for rectification of the share register. Upon hearing the matter the Hon'ble company bench presided over by Mr. Justice Shamim Hasnain was pleased to admit the application on 23-05-2006 and passed an order to fix the same to appear in the cause list for hearing on 04-07-2006.

Any person desirous of contesting the aforesaid application may appear before the Hon'ble Court either in person or duly appointed Advocate on the date fixed. Copy of the application may be obtained from the undersigned on payment of requisite cost.

Fatema S. Chowdhury, M.A. (DU), LLB & LLM (UK)
 Filing and conducting lawyer for the petitioner, SOBHAN & SOBHAN (Legal Advisers), House No. 15, Road No. 109, Gulshan, Dhaka.

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