

The Bailu





Falgun 9, 1426 BS

Your Right to Know

Jamadius Sani 27, 1441 Hijri

BHASHAN CHAR FOR ROHINGYAS

Relocation plan may be shelved

PORIMOL PALMA

The government is considering shelving its plan to shift one lakh Rohingyas to remote Bhashan Char following persistent objections from international aid agencies to the relocation.

"We are seriously thinking of shelving the relocation plan because the international organisations have not agreed to it," Md Enamur Rahman, state minister for disaster management and relief, told The Daily Star on Wednesday.

Without cooperation from those organisations, the government would face difficulties in arranging food, healthcare and other necessary items for one lakh people on Bhashan Char, he said.

UN and aid agencies say the island is isolated, floodprone and would be hazardous for the Rohingyas because of cyclones and tidal surges.

The government has already built 120 cluster villages on SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Several structures, including a four-storey building, have been set up on the Turag as grabbers occupy a large part of the river near the BIWTA landing station at Sinnirtek in the capital's Mirpur area. With the authorities carrying out occasional eviction drives, such encroachment on the river land has been going on for years. The photo was taken on Thursday. PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Homage to **LANGUAGE**



STAR REPORT

Humming the tune "Amar Bhaier Rokte Rangano Ekushey February", thousands of people thronged Shaheed Minars across the country yesterday to pay tributes to the Language Movement heroes.

Bare-footed and wearing black badges, they placed floral wreaths at the monuments and stood silent in remembrance of those who embraced martyrdom to make Bangla the state language in 1952.

The environment reverberated with the Ekushey anthem as the hallowed monuments got slowly covered with flowers. Areas around the monuments wore a festive look with murals, graffiti, and street paintings comprising Bangla alphabets and verses on mother languages.

The day is observed worldwide as the International Mother Language Day. In 1999, the Unesco had declared February 21 as the International Mother Language

Taking part in different programmes, including discussions and cultural sessions across the country and in Bangladesh missions

abroad, people SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

Separated, yet not

Zyma Islam traverses three border points --Banglabandha, Sonamasjid, and Burimari -- in the northwest to get a glimpse of life along the blurring borderline that Bangladesh-India shares

> Bangladeshis. The soil they till, is Indian land, belonging to a

village called Milik Sultanpur.

Habibur, pointing to a small

Bangladesh and India.

The border here runs diagonally

through a strip of fields, separating

"India starts from here," said

pyramid-shaped boundary marker

nestled beneath a grove of banana

trees. To reach his field one has to

walk past it, into Indian territory.

This land is my ancestral property.

Namochakpara because the land

is closer to Bangladesh than to my village in India," he said. While

Mamun and his brother had been

Bangladeshi workers because they

Force) camp before coming to the

"Every day, I submit my Adhaar

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

working with Habibur for only

two years, he has always chosen

were just geograpnically closer

card to a BSF (Border Security

I got two sharecroppers from

"My house is in Milik Sultanpur.

Imagine the land border between India and Bangladesh. What do you think it is like? A fence that runs for miles? A craggy, clearly demarcated line like the one seen on maps?

To most of us, crossing the border requires much ceremony.

Plans need to be made in advance. Communities living along the border will tell you otherwise. To many of them, the border is an invisible line anyone can step over

without a visa. At the Chapainawabganj-Malda border, one finds Bangladeshi nationals tilling Indian land, and vice-versa. They cross over each day to work on these lands -- but perhaps "cross over" is too presumptuous a term. They simply walk over to these lands, the

border of no consequence. At the border of Namochakpara, a bone-thin septuagenarian named Habibur Rahman swung his hoe into the earth, cracking the surface. He is an Indian. Beside him worked two sharecroppers, Mamun and his brother, who are both

SC Order on BTRC's Audit Claim

GP to deposit Tk 1,000cr to state coffers tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

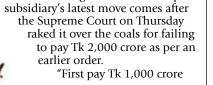
Grameenphone has decided to deposit Tk 1,000 crore to the state coffers tomorrow as per the order of the Supreme Court on Thursday -- a move that is likely to save it from BTRC's regulatory measures.

The operator has taken the decision to get court protection from the pressure the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) has applied on it and its management, it said in a press release last evening that was signed off by its head of external communications Md Hasan.

The BTRC actions include declining no-objection certificates since July, issuing show-cause notice for licence cancellation, and denying recycling of number series, it said.

"These actions have had a negative impact on customer experience and business partners, reduced confidence in the business environment and dented interest from investors," added the statement from the operator, which has 46 percent share of the mobile subscribers in

Bangladesh in its network. But the Norwegian Telenor Group's subsidiary's latest move comes after the Supreme Court on Thursday raked it over the coals for failing to pay Tk 2,000 crore as per an



SEE PAGE 10 COL 5

Road To The

Future Starts Here A landmark is about to be created today by Bashundhara Group for its extraordinary contribution to the People of the country. The country's first private Bitumen processing plant, Bashundhara Bitumen is here to meet the growing demand of bitumen in roads and highways construction sector of Bangladesh. Currently, the 22,000 kilometers of roads and highways under Bangladesh Roads and Highway Department (RHD) is going through major constructions and repairing. Of the 354,000 kilometers of roads under the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED), 105,000 kilometers have been already upgraded to paved roads. Moreover, the government is expanding the national highways into four and six lanes, along with district level roads, for which the use of bitumen is increasing annually by around 10%-15%. Keeping the engineers' requirements as the utmost priority, the premium quality Bashundhara Bitumen comes in Penetration Grade (60/70 & 80/100), Cutback, Emulsified, Oxidized and Polymer Modified (Styrene-Butadiene-Styrene and Rubber Powder) bitumen. This has been possible by adopting the most advanced production technology to assemble the best technical features of the product. The logistics and distribution channel is uniquely designed with a gigantic storage capacity of 37,000 metric tons of Bashundhara Bitumen with a network of round-the-clock bulk and truck delivery system. And with such commitment to the nation, Bashundhara Bitumen is determined to reach both the national and international market of bituminous products with around 900,000 metric tons of annual production. In this way, the 90% import based bitumen market will be led by fulfilling 500,000 metric tons of domestic demand. This will not only uplift Bangladesh globally, but also improve opportunities to elevate the country's foreign currency reserve. You are welcome aboard on the journey of this momentous experience.





