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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, flood-prone and would be hazardous for the Rohingyas because of cyclones and tidal surges.

The government has already built 120 cluster villages on

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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 MARTYRS



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 Day.

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

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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

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

Bangladeshi. The soil they till, is Indian land, belonging to a village called Milik Sultanpur. The border here runs diagonally through a strip of fields, separating Bangladesh and India.

"India starts from here," said Habibur, pointing to a small pyramid-shaped boundary marker nestled beneath a grove of banana trees. To reach his field one has to walk past it, into Indian territory.

"My house is in Milik Sultanpur. This land is my ancestral property. I got two sharecroppers from Namochakpara because the land is closer to Bangladesh than to my village in India," he said. While Mamun and his brother had been working with Habibur for only two years, he has always chosen Bangladeshi workers because they were just geographically closer.

"Every day, I submit my Adhaar card to a BSF (Border Security Force) camp before coming to the

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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 earlier order.

"First pay Tk 1,000 crore

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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.



THE BEGINNING OF AN ERA OF PIONEERING EXCELLENCE IN BITUMEN

With the beginning of Bashundhara Bitumen, a new chapter commences in the history of bitumen production and usage in Bangladesh. The infrastructural development of Bangladesh will continue onwards and Bashundhara Bitumen is proud to be a pioneer of this endeavor.

