

# Many go to Cox's Bazar, beyond

FROM PAGE 1  
 "Four of my children used to go to school. Now, I will have to work here just to survive," Shamsunnahar told The Daily Star in front of her mother's rented house.

The rent for an eight feet by six feet hut in Nazirartek is only Tk 400 and many of the Rohingyas who are crossing into Bangladesh from Myanmar have been living in the area.

Many Myanmar citizens, like Mariam Khatun, Fatema Begum, Khaleda Begum and Khurshida Begum, who have taken shelter there, are working as day labourers.

On the other hand, many were getting into different slums in Cox's Bazar town, Chittagong, Bandarban and other districts, due to the absence of proper monitoring.

Contacted, Ali Hossain, deputy commissioner of Cox's Bazar, claimed that different government intelligence agencies and law enforcers were monitoring the matter.

"But still many of them [Rohingyas] are spreading to different places because they have relatives who have been living in Bangladesh for many years. Those relatives are helping them," he said.

However, Abu Morshed Chowdhury Khoka, president of Cox's Bazar Civil Society, a platform of citizens in the district, claimed that the spreading of Rohingyas to different places in Bangladesh would have a negative impact on the society. "They [Rohingyas] are getting involved in crimes," he said.

It is necessary to keep all the Rohingyas at a certain place with the help of the UNHCR," said Khoka. He urged the government to take necessary steps in this regard.

The Rohingyas were still coming into Bangladesh through the Naf river despite increased vigilance by law enforcers.

Bangladesh Border Guard (BGB) said they had to send back four boats full of Rohingyas yesterday in the river.

Meanwhile, a five-month-old child died of cold-related disease early yesterday at the unregistered Rohingya camp at Leda in Teknaf. He along with family had reached the camp on Friday evening hours after crossing into Bangladesh.

"He was having severe cold and cough," said Nur Begum, his mother.

Nur Begum said they came to the Leda camp on Friday along with 40 other Myanmar citizens.

**PANIC IN RAKHINE VILLAGE**  
 Rakhine people in Teknaf have been



Wrapped in a shroud, the body of a child being taken out of the unregistered Rohingya camp at Leda in Teknaf for burial by his father Jamal Hossain yesterday morning. The child died of cold-related disease hours after he along with his family reached the camp on Friday evening.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

living in panic since the Rohingyas started to cross into Bangladesh recently.

"It is very natural that we are scared. Situation is bad in Myanmar. The wind may start blowing towards us here in Bangladesh," said Ching Cho Aung, president of New Chang Prue Keyang in Hnila Chowdhury Para in Teknaf.

However, the government has been taking initiatives to protect them from any untoward situation.

"Every night, police are patrolling our village. Police have been deployed at the entrance of our village," he said.

Only 120 Rakhine families are living in Hnila Chowdhury Para which is just three kilometers off the Leda Rohingya camp.

**HOME MINISTER ON ROHINGYAS**  
 Rohingyas are coming to Bangladesh crossing the Naf river though the country is overburdened by them, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan said yesterday.

He was addressing a programme as chief guest in Naogaon, reports our correspondent in Dinajpur.

Later, Asaduzzaman told reporters that the Rohingyas are coming in despite the BGB working round the clock on the border to stop them. On the other hand, the government is also taking care of the Rohingyas and they are getting all kinds of support including medical treatment, he added.

## BNP ON ROHINGYAS

The BNP yesterday urged the government to stand beside the oppressed and displaced Rohingyas of Myanmar, reports our correspondent.

"Every day we see news that Rohingyas people are being brutally tortured and burnt to death in Myanmar. Though Bangladesh's 90 percent population is Muslims, its government is least bother about it," senior leader Khandaker Mosharrar Hossain said at a discussion at the party's Nayapaltn central office in the capital.

## 'I DON'T WANT TO DIE'

For heavily-pregnant Siru Bibu, who fled by boat with four children after her husband and other relatives were allegedly killed by an army operation, the situation that has greeted them was dire.

"If it goes another week, my children will starve," said Siru at the unregistered Rohingya camp at Teknaf.

"Anyone trying to help us is warned or being arrested. As a result, the newly arrived refugees are living in fear," a camp elder told AFP, requesting anonymity.

"Police have arrested some of our neighbours and we heard that they were sent back across the border," Yasmin Akhter, a 25-year-old mother who was only able to bring two of her six children to Bangladesh.

"I hope they won't do it to us... I don't want to die."

# Santals sue MP, UNO, 31 others

FROM PAGE 16  
 Santal leaders, however, claim the number of dead is three.

Following the eviction, police filed a case against Adivasis accusing them of intercepting law enforcers when they were discharging their duties, and also of attacking policemen. Four Santals were arrested in the case and released on bail.

The Santal community alleged that police had not received any case from it.

Earlier, a case was filed on November 17 by Shwapan Murmu, a Santal man, against 500 unidentified people in connection with the November 6 incident, but local Santal leaders say Shwapan does not represent them.

Police have so far arrested 21 people in the previous case.

Hembrom, a member of the Bhumi Uddhar committee, yesterday went to the police station along with his lawyers to file a case. Rights organisations Ain O Salih Kendra (ASK), Nijera Kari, ALRD and BLAST gave them legal support.

About the delay in filing the case, he said police had previously declined taking cases from Santals. Later, they were busy caring for the injured.

Regarding Shwapan's case, Hembrom said Shwapan does not represent the community.

He filed the case on behalf of the Bhumi Uddhar committee that represents the Santal community, he added.

About legal support, Nur Khan Liton, acting executive director of the ASK, said the rights body provided the Santals with the legal support since police had declined to take cases from them.

MP Abul Kalam Azad could not be reached on phone.

Earlier, he told The Daily Star that he was not in the area on the day of the incident, terming the allegations brought against him "baseless and politically motivated."

Contacted, UNO Abdul Hannan said last night that he was not aware of any case filed against him.

He along with four other executive magistrates discharged duties on instructions of the district magistrate on November 6, he added.

On November 19, a civil body quoting victims and locals said local lawmaker, union parishad chairman and members and the local administration were "directly involved" in the attack on Santals.

Under the banner of Shachetan Nagarik, rights activists, university teachers, politicians and minority community leaders spoke of their findings at a press conference upon visiting the affected area in Gaibandha.

## BACKGROUND

During the Pakistan regime in 1952, the government acquired 1,840 acres of land at Shahebganj to set up the sugarcane farm.

The deputy commissioner's (DC)

office acquired the land for the then Pakistan Industrial Development Corporation that established Rangpur (Mahimaganj) Sugar Mills between 1954 and 1957.

The original land owners were given only Tk 8.07 lakh for the vast land. Later in 1962, the DC office on behalf of the land owners signed an agreement with the corporation.

The deal stated that the land was acquired for sugarcane cultivation. If the land is used for farming any other crop, the corporation shall surrender it to the government (the DC office).

However, the agreement was violated as the mill authorities leased out most of the land for growing crops like rice, wheat, mustard, tobacco, and maize.

Four months ago, Santal people occupied around 100 acres of land and built makeshift sheds on the plea that the land belonged to their forefathers.

**SANTALS RECEIVING PADDY**  
 Meanwhile, harvest of Aman grown by Adivasis on the land was going on for the third day yesterday.

Following a High Court order, people of Rangpur Sugar Mills began harvesting Aman paddy and handed the crops to the evicted Santals.

At first, leaders of the community refused to receive the paddy, demanding removal of the barbed-wire fence erected around the land and withdrawal of cases filed against them.

They started receiving paddy on Thursday night.

# Uber must be under legal framework

FROM PAGE 1  
 modern and smart system ... But our statement is that any kind of digital service must come under a system and a legal framework," he told reporters at a programme in the capital yesterday.

His remarks came a day after Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) declared Uber illegal, saying the company did not take permission from the government for running the service in the country.

In a circular, the BRTA said operating any taxicab service without permission from the government was illegal and a punishable offence.

Hours after the minister's remarks, BRTA on its official Facebook page further explained its stance saying it had issued the circular to clarify the rules and regulations for operating taxicab services.

According to BRTA rules, separate registrations are given to commercial vehicles. Besides, those vehicles must obtain route permits, which is not applicable to private vehicles. But it is not clear whether the vehicles operating under Uber have got commercial vehicle registration or route permits, said the Facebook post.

Besides, vehicles running under this service must submit necessary information to BRTA, or else it would not be possible to take timely steps if any untoward incident occurs during its service, the post added.

It said the government approved two companies to operate taxicab service in Dhaka city and it would not have any objection if the taxicabs of the two companies operate using Uber.

Uber was gaining popularity among city commuters after its official launch-

ing on Tuesday. It is an online platform that connects people to facilitate transportation through a mobile application.

The biggest advantage of Uber is it does not own any cars. It acts like a middleman between customers and cab drivers. It has made the task of booking a cab easier. Any car owner can become drivers after getting registered with Uber with valid documents, national identity card and a photograph.

The service of the US-based firm can come as a relief for many in Dhaka where commuters suffer every day due to lack of transport. And Uber came when the existing taxi services failed to gain popularity due to unavailability and high fare.

On the other hand, Uber cars will be available and cheaper than the existing usual taxis, said a source at Uber.



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