

# Drop Rohingya relocation plan

## HRW calls upon Bangladesh govt

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Human Rights Watch has urged Bangladesh to immediately drop its plan to transfer Rohingya refugees to an "uninhabited, undeveloped" coastal island.

Relocating the refugees from Cox's Bazar to Thengar Char Island would deprive them of their rights to freedom of movement, livelihood, food and education, in violation of Bangladesh's obligations under international human rights law, the New York-based rights body said in a statement yesterday.

"The Bangladesh government is making the ridiculous claim that relocating Rohingya refugees to an island with absolutely no facilities that is deluged at high tide and submerged during the monsoon season will improve their living conditions," Brad Adams, Asia director at the HRW, said in the statement.

"This proposal is both cruel and unworkable and should be abandoned."

Recently, the Bangladesh government has sought financial support from the United Nations and other international partners for relocating tens of thousands of Rohingya

Muslims to Thengar Char in Hatiya in the Bay of Bengal.

According to the HRW statement, journalists who have visited Thengar Char Island, which emerged from river silt deposited in the Bay just a decade ago, describe it as empty, featureless and subject to cyclones and flooding.

During monsoon, it said, the island is submerged; anyone living on the island will have to be evacuated, and any infrastructure would be damaged.

The government announced that it will build embankments around the island to stave off the constant flooding, but similar islands along the coast have long faced flooding and frequent evacuations despite government interventions.

Aid agencies, including the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), which administers refugee camps, expressed alarm over the revival of the plan, and said that any relocation of the refugees to Thengar Char must be voluntary, and be done through a consultative process following a feasibility study, read the statement.

HRW also called for recognising the Rohingya people as refugee since "the Myanmar government has denied its

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British High Commissioner to Bangladesh Alison Blake talking to reporters after visiting Rohingya refugee camps in Ukhiya of Cox's Bazar yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

# Pvt sector's role in implementing SDGs is crucial

## Speakers tell Asia Pacific Business Forum confce

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Asia Pacific Business Forum ended in Dhaka yesterday affirming commitment to international cooperation for sustainable and inclusive economic growth.

The high-level conference also called upon governments of the Asia-Pacific region to collaborate with the business sector to ensure that the benefits from globalisation are fairly distributed.

Speakers at the two-day event at the Sonargaon hotel in Dhaka recognised the significant role businesses can play

in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that go beyond just providing decent jobs.

"The role of the private sector in implementing the SDGs is enormous," said Hongjoo Hahm, deputy executive secretary of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), in the concluding session.

He said strategies have to be better aligned for the private sector's contribution.

Debapriya Bhattacharya, distinguished fellow of the Centre for Policy

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# Int'l initiative needs to be strengthened

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shelter in Bangladesh since October 9 last year.

Amid international pressure, the Myanmar side hinted at repatriation of the newly arrived 69,000 Rohingyas, the sources added.

Myanmar's nationality law, approved in 1982, denies Rohingya citizenship and states that foreigners cannot be naturalised citizens of Myanmar unless they can prove a close familial connection to the country.

Rohingyas are not recognised among the 134 official ethnicities in Myanmar because authorities see them as illegal immigrants from neighbouring Bangladesh.

Talking to local journalists after visiting the unregistered Rohingya slum, locally called "Rohingya Tal", the envoys stressed the need for strengthening international initiative to solve the Rohingya crisis. They also lauded Bangladesh government for sheltering the persecuted Rohingya people.

The British envoy said: "Hearing the description of the torture from Rohingyas who fled Rakhine state in

Myanmar, it seemed that it is tantamount to genocide.

"The initiative the international community has taken to repatriate these Myanmar citizens need to be strengthened. The UK will play a significant role in the humanitarian initiative."

The Canadian high commissioner echoed his British colleague's views and said, "Bangladesh government has done a good job by sheltering these people. The role of the government in upholding human rights is praised. Working for human rights of these people is also an urgent task now."

The Australian envoy said: "Stronger international initiative is required to ensure that Rohingyas can return to their homeland and do not become victim to torture."

The three high commissioners reached the Kutupalong slum by road around 10:00am. They stayed there for about two and a half hours. They spoke with Rohingya men and women through an interpreter. They wanted to know from the Rohingyas what type of torture they faced in Myanmar.

In reply, the Rohingyas described in details the tortures, attacks, rapes, killings, forced disappearances and burning of their homes.

At present, about 90,000 Rohingyas -- both old and newly arrived -- are living in the slum. According to local authorities, around 50,000 had long been living there. Another 40,000 arrived there after the violence erupted in Rakhine on October 9 last year.

Later, the high commissioners went to a registered Rohingya camp and visited a school there. They enquired about the system of educating children at the school and talked to Md Shamsuddoha, who is in charge of the camp.

The envoys wanted to know the present conditions of the registered Rohingyas in the camp and enquired about different ongoing development projects. They stayed there for about one and a half hours.

About 13,000 registered Rohingyas are now living in the camp, established in 1991.

Earlier around 9:30am, the envoys visited Ukhiya Upazila Health complex and later ACF Hospital adjacent to

Kutupalong refugee camp.

On return from the visit, the Canadian High Commission announced a fund of \$49,920 to support the newly arrived Rohingyas. The contribution was made to a local NGO called Society for Health Extension and Development (SHED) which will distribute blankets to among the Rohingya refugee families in two main makeshift settlements.

This is the first time direct funding is provided to a local NGO by Canada in Cox's Bazar to help build and strengthen local capacity, said a press release yesterday.

Canada is also providing \$30,000 through the Canadian Red Cross Society to an emergency relief assistance operation for the newly arrived Rohingya refugees.

These contributions are in addition to Canada's ongoing support of \$250,000 to UNHCR that contributed to increased access to basic services and protection for refugees, and Canada's \$250,000 support to WFP for the provision of food and nutrition assistance to Rohingya refugees living in Cox's Bazar.

# 45,000 posts of pry school teacher vacant

## Minister tells JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Some 45,000 posts of teacher are lying vacant in primary schools across the country, Primary and Mass Education Minister Mostafizur Rahman told parliament yesterday.

Of the vacant posts, 17,615 are of headmasters' post and 27,388 are of assistant teachers', he said while replying to lawmakers' queries.

Among the vacant posts of headmaster, 8,736 are in government primary schools and 8,255 in the nationalised primary schools. The remaining are 624 posts, created under a project taken up to set up 1,500 new schools, the minister said in a scripted answer.

Of the vacant posts of assistant teacher, 17,298 are in government primary schools, 3,960 in pre-primary level of the schools and 3,278 in the nationalised primary schools. The rest are 2,852 posts, created under the project of establishment of 15,00 schools, he added.

In reply to another query, Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid said around 5,574 non-government secondary schools lack necessary infrastructures.

To ensure congenial atmosphere for education, the Education Engineering Department under the education ministry was going to take

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# Run deluge looms

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the 19th over with the opener on 35, yesterday's score line could have been a bit kinder than the 356 for three India reached at stumps.

Vijay's century was followed by a quick hundred from Indian skipper Virat Kohli, who raced to his first century against Bangladesh off 130 balls towards the end of the day. It was the Indian skipper's 16th hundred.

A review of the day would compel the Bangladesh team management to rue the 19th over yesterday, aside from their inconsistency in line and length.

A dab towards square-leg by Vijay was brilliantly stopped by a diving Kamrul Islam Rabbi. Cheteshwar Pujara at the other end had not noticed Kamrul's effort and sprinted for a run. By the time Vijay asked him to stop, Pujara had come all the way and forced his partner to run towards the bowler's end.

Kamrul fired in a throw towards bowler Mehedi Hasan Miraz, who unfortunately could not collect the ball. The ball deflected off his hands and by the time Mehedi had the cherry in hand, Vijay was already home.

Vijay was on 35 at that point and he used the opportunity to score a good-looking 108 off 160 deliveries. India were poised at 67 for one when the lapse occurred and the pair ended up taking the hosts past the 200 mark.

There was barely any relief for the Bangladesh bowlers for most of the day. It is not as though they did not try.

They put fielders in the deep mid-wicket region and tried to bounce Vijay out; they asked Mehedi to bowl

around the wicket in order to check the run-flow and hope to build pressure.

During that phase, Taskin Ahmed seemed to be Bangladesh's most threatening bowler.

He had removed KL Rahul in the very first over after the batsman played on to a full-length, wide delivery to the stumps. He also managed to get some swing in his third spell.

Vijay and Pujara did seem as though they would fall for the traps planned by the visitors a couple of times.

Both the batsmen, for instance, got edges off Miraz that went past the desperate hands of Shakib Al Hasan at first slip in the 15th over.

Vijay, on a similar note was never afraid to take on the bouncers and pulled them successfully every time Kamrul pitched them short.

It was eventually Mehedi who got the breakthrough against the run of play and broke the 178-run stand for the second wicket.

Mehedi had been bowling around the wicket for quite some time, attempting to stem the flow of runs, but changed his approach immediately after Pujara had driven him for a beautiful four through the mid-on region.

In the very next ball, he got a thick edge while attempting to defend Miraz outside the off-stump. The ball jumped off Mushfiqur's pads and went up in the air. Mushfiqur had to make a short dive to hold on to it.

Pujara's departure for 83 brought to the crease Indian skipper Kohli -- much to the delight of the 10,000-plus spectators in the ground who cheered

ferociously upon his arrival.

He made his intentions clear by smashing a wide delivery from Mehedi through cover for a four.

While Kohli seemed as busy as ever, trying to drill the boundaries and taking every single on offer, Vijay had slowed down a bit as he headed towards the three-figure mark.

It was a slightly different approach from a batsman who had earlier been itching to hit the spinners for boundaries. His shot of the match was a beautiful straight drive for six against Shakib Al Hasan.

He had 12 fours to his name and managed to dominate every bowler except for Taijul Islam.

After Vijay reached his second century, off 149 balls, with a boundary, he attempted to revert to his previous approach and looked to be more aggressive.

In the process he tried to sweep Taijul to the fine-leg fence for a four but was bowled instead in the 64th over.

Kohli and Ajinkya Rahane then carried on, lifting the run rate

Kohli reached his half-century off 70 balls in the 73rd over, courtesy of a flick off Shakib.

Bangladesh took the new ball in the 81st over and unfortunately could not make use of it. Instead of bowling on a good line and length, close to the stumps, they were wide and attempted too many bouncers. As a result, both batsmen punished them and the nine overs of the new ball produced 65 runs. In the process, Kohli reached 111 and remained unbeaten.

# Help root out militancy

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Principal Matior Rahman presided over the programme.

Reiterating her call to Islamic scholars, imams and teachers to prevent the misinterpretation of Islam, she requested them to make it widely known that Islam does not believe in terrorism, militancy and killing people, UNB reports.

The PM handed over prizes among the best Imams and the winners of the National Children and Juveniles Cultural Competition.

Hasina said she had already urged teachers and guardians to watch whether any student remains absent for long from their educational institutions without any valid reason.

She said, "Our people will live in peace, Islam is a religion of peace and Insha Allah, we want to show the world that Bangladesh would be able to spread the real essence of Islam among the people through establishing peace....."

The prime minister observed that there are a lot of chaos, killings, bombings in Muslim-majority countries, and such countries are witnessing the use of arms. "But where such arms are being produced and who are being benefited? Battlefields are being created, Muslims have to shed blood, but who are being benefited through sale of arms? .... We'll have to think about this."

Hasina said some people through resorting to terrorism and militancy are maligning Islam.

Highlighting various steps taken by her government for the spread of Islam in the country, she said the work for

setting up model mosque-slash-Islamic cultural centre will soon start at the district and upazila levels with support from the Saudi Arabian government.

Work is underway to prepare a database incorporating information of the country's all mosques, madrasas, khankahs and Islamic institutions, she said.

The PM said the listed members of the Imam-Muezzin Welfare Trust could now take interest-free loans for their welfare, while a plan is also there to set up an Economic Zone to be operated exclusively by Alem-Ulema to boost their economic activities.

To expand the field of work for Alem-Ulema, Hasina said, the Islamic Foundation could initiate process of appointing Alem certified by them in each halal food and products-manufacturing organisations, considering the growing global demand.

The government is also considering introducing Arabic education course in each district.

Hasina said around six lakh imams and muezzins are working in three lakh mosques.

"Some 1,80,429 Alems have so far received training on computers and are creating mass awareness on basic socio-economic affairs from the Islamic Foundation," she added.

Planning Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal, Chairman of parliamentary standing committee on the religious affairs ministry Bazlul Haque Harun, secretary of the ministry Abdul Jalil and Director General of Islamic Foundation Shamim Mohammad Afzal, among others, also spoke at the function.

# The riddle over docs' handwriting

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say that bad handwriting runs huge risks of wrong medicines that can affect public health, but there has been no study conducted in Bangladesh yet.

Nonetheless, the National Academies of Science's Institute of Medicine (IOM) in a July 2006 report says doctors' sloppy handwriting kills more than 7,000 people annually in the United States. It further mentioned

preventable medication mistakes also injure more than 1.5 million Americans annually.

But another question arose after Dr Rashid-E-Mahbub, chairman of the National Committee of Health Right's Movement, observed that clear handwriting or print prescriptions are very important for countries like Bangladesh. Why? Because, there are no real pharmacists selling the drugs.

Shouldn't our first priority be that then? The doctors need to improve their handwritings but shouldn't our pharmacists be the ones who should be able to understand what medicine is required for which ailment? If the patient cannot decipher, in any situation, the pharmacists themselves should be able to ask what the disease/ailment is and try to connect the dots.

"Authorities have to ensure that the drug retailers have training in pharmacy, so that they too can detect a problem, if any, in the prescriptions; contact the doctors and provide clear instructions to the patients," says Dr Rashid.

Apart from that, in what situation are the doctor's put into?

Dr M Zakiul Abrar, running his own practice, says, "A lot of third parties

nowadays talk patients into suing the hospital or doctor, with the deal that they'll get a percentage of the compensation. This new rule can put a lot of doctors through a lot of harassment, if charged with bad handwriting."

At the end of the day, Dr Abrar, believes that printed prescriptions may be a good option. But if so, this will definitely raise the doctor's fees because new equipment may be

needed to implement this rule. The problem thus may be rooted far below what can be seen on the surface; the question is, how deep are we willing to dig and for whom: the doctors or the patients?

Read today's Star Weekend for a more in-depth perspective, and the conclusion we have come to regarding this new rule that we all may just have mixed-feelings about.