

# Struggling to cope with the surge

FROM PAGE 1  
It happened after the Myanmar security forces began a crackdown against the minority group in response to alleged attacks by Rohingya insurgents.

The new arrivals join the already nearly five lakh Rohingyas, who came to Bangladesh between 1978 and 2016.

Every day, thousands of Rohingyas, mostly women and children, are seen sitting by the Cox's Bazar-Teknaf road in Ukhia and Teknaf, irrespective of the sun and rain.

Abdul Mannan, 50, who along with his 12-member family crossed into Bangladesh on September 5 following a five-day journey from Maungdaw in Rakhine, said they had not found any shelter yet and that they were looking for some food.

"We ate some food on Friday afternoon. We are sitting here hoping that somebody would come and give us some food," he told this correspondent around 2:00pm yesterday in Ukhia.

Noyna Khatun, 60, who took shelter at Bagguna hill in Ukhia along with her 18 family members, said they bought a little food with all the money they had managed to bring from their home. However, they already ate that.

"I got two kg rice from a family and cooked it this morning. We had a meal only with salt and chilly," she said yesterday and added that she had no idea how they would survive.

"We are drinking water from a nearby pond," said the woman who knew the water may cause diseases.

The IOM, UN Refugee Agency, World Food Programme, Unicef, Bangladesh Red Crescent Society, Save the Children, Doctors Without Borders and Action Against Hunger are some of the leading agencies working with the government and other NGOs to provide life-saving services to the Rohingyas.

These agencies have a coordination mechanism to provide services in the registered Rohingya camps in Kutupalong and Nayapara and unregistered camps set up in 2012 and 2016. They also began providing the same to the new arrivals, but at a scale much lower than that is required.

Before August 26, Action Against Hunger used to provide lunch and biscuits to around 1,000 people a day, but now it is providing the food to nearly 20,000 people a day in Ukhia and Teknaf, said the organisation's coordinator in Cox's Bazar, Mohammad Mahadi.

"This is not enough at all," he said.

The World Food Programme has been arranging food for the refugees in the registered Rohingya camps, but now it is also arranging food for the new arrivals taking shelter in the registered camps, an official of Kutupalong Registered Rohingya camp said.

The IOM in partnership with other NGOs is supplying some food and other relief materials to the makeshift camps, but that's negligible in comparison to the need, the official said.

The organisation in a statement said many people have set up camps in areas, which are too far from established support centres to receive help. Most families are living in the open, in the rain, with children and the elderly at particularly high risk of getting sick, it added.

Doctors Without Borders (MSF) said its teams are seeing streams of people arriving destitute and extremely traumatised. Many of the arrivals have serious medical needs,



**Rohingya children disembarking from a dinghy in no man's land in Lamba Beel, a canal connected to the Naf river, in Teknaf yesterday.**

such as violence-related injuries, severely infected wounds, and advanced obstetric complications.

"Without a scale-up of humanitarian support, the potential health risks are extremely concerning," said Pavlo Kolovos, MSF head of mission in Bangladesh.

"We've not had something on this scale here in many years."

Shah Kamal, secretary of the disaster management and relief ministry, said as the Rohingyas were staying in a scattered manner, it was difficult for the authorities to provide them with relief materials.

"It will create a huge problem if the situation remained unchanged," he told The Daily Star yesterday, adding that the government was working on ways to put all the unregistered Rohingyas to a specified area in Kutupalong.

Meanwhile, Disaster Management and Relief Minister Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya yesterday said Rohingyas coming from Myanmar would be documented under the biometric system, reports BSS.

The minister made the comment while exchanging views with journalists after visiting the Nayapara Refugee Camp.

### UN AGENCIES SEEKING FUND

The IOM said \$77.1 million were required to provide lifesaving services to the end of 2017 for an influx of up to 300,000 people.

The World Food Programme said it needed \$11.3 million to support the new influx of people arriving, in addition to those already living in camps.

Secretary Shah Kamal said the disaster management ministry had already allocated Tk 10 lakh for relief materials for the Rohingyas.

Asked if the government would appeal to the international community for fund, he said the disaster management ministry would soon hold a meeting with different UN agencies and NGOs to discuss the funding issue.

Meanwhile, the Danish government has allocated Tk 256 million to United Nations World Food Programme as relief aid for the newly-arrived Rohingya refugees.

Ulla Tornaes, the Danish Minister for Development Cooperation, expressed grave concern about the situation in Rakhine and condemned the violence against the Rohingyas in

Myanmar, said a press release issued yesterday, reports UNB.

UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric on Friday said in New York that UN agencies stepped up efforts to provide aid to refugees in Bangladesh.

Stéphane Dujarric, spokesman for the UN secretary-general, told a briefing in New York that the UN and its partners in Bangladesh had developed a plan to help up to 3,00,000 people by providing them with food, shelter, water, health care and other services until the end of the year.

The UN Resident Coordinator in Bangladesh, Robert Watkins, said, "With the movement of people showing no signs of stopping, it is vital that agencies working in Cox's Bazar have the resources they need to provide emergency assistance to incredibly vulnerable people who have been forced to flee their homes and have arrived in Bangladesh with nothing."

### MALAYSIAN RELIEF

A Malaysian aircraft carrying relief materials for Rohingyas landed at Chittagong Shah Amanat International Airport yesterday afternoon.

Deputy Commissioner of Chittagong Zillur Rahman Chowdhury received the relief materials from Malaysian officials.

Contacted, the DC said around 12 tonnes of relief materials, including three tonnes of rice, dates, medicines, towel, soap and shampoos were received.

Earlier, talking to local journalists, Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Tun Razak yesterday announced that his country would do all it can to help alleviate the escalating Rohingya refugee crisis, reports Malaysian The Star online.

### CONTROL ROOM

The Cox's Bazar district administration yesterday opened a control room to monitor the relief operations for the Rohingyas.

"The control room will enhance efficiency in collecting and distributing the relief materials," said Mohammad Ali Hossain, deputy commissioner of Cox's Bazar.

The control room was introduced as different organisations and communities were running relief operations for the refugees separately.

Anyone wishing to donate relief materials can contact the control room at +88 01615700900.

solved "fairly easily".

Despite the deadlock, observers said the telephone call between the Qatari and Saudi rulers itself was a sign that tensions were dissipating.

"The fact that the telephone call took place and the offer of dialogue was made is significant in itself," said Kristian Ulrichsen, a fellow at the Baker Institute for Public Policy at Rice University.

"(It) signals a climb down from the brinkmanship that has characterised so much of the Gulf standoff since June," Ulrichsen told AFP.

But diplomatic efforts led by Kuwait, a key mediator in the crisis backed by Western powers, have so far failed to achieve a breakthrough.

In Washington on Thursday, Kuwaiti Emir Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad Al-Sabah offered Trump an upbeat assessment of his efforts so far.

But in a statement early Friday, the Saudi-led bloc showed no signs of backing down as it questioned the Kuwaiti emir's statement that Qatar would be willing to accept their 13 demands.

The demands include shutting Doha-based broadcaster Al-Jazeera, closing a Turkish military base in the emirate and downgrading Qatari diplomatic ties with Iran.

The bloc also voiced "regret" about the Kuwaiti ruler's statement "on the success of mediation in stopping military intervention".

Instead, the four Arab states stressed that "the military option has not been and will not be considered" under any circumstances.

Riyadh and Doha are both key allies of the United States, which has sent mixed signals on its policy towards the nations.

# Saudi Arabia

FROM PAGE 16

"Qatar is not serious in dialogue and continues its previous policies. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia declares that any dialogue with Qatar shall be suspended until a clear statement explaining its position is made in public."

The development came after US President Donald Trump on Friday spoke separately with the leaders of Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the UAE.

"The President underscored that unity among the United States' Arab partners is essential to promoting regional stability and countering the threat of Iran," the White House said.

"The President also emphasised that all countries must follow through on commitments... to defeat terrorism, cut off funding for terrorist groups, and combat extremist ideology."

When he offered to mediate, Trump said he believed the dispute could be

ferry transportation.

A five-kilometre long queue of vehicles was seen at Daulatdia ferry terminal around 4:00pm yesterday. The buses that entered the terminal on Friday night crossed the river around 9:00am the next morning.

Mohiuddin Rasel, a manager at the Paturia terminal office of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation (BIWTC), said ferries were taking twice the usual time to cross the river on the route due to strong current.

Due to the disruption of ferry services on Shimulia-Kathalbari route, the number of vehicles waiting at Daulatdia terminal increased, he added.

A silent extortion was continuing in the name of so-called Owners Association and Transport Workers Association at Aricha and Paturia ferry terminals, reports our correspondent. The buses that usually run on other

routes were forced to pay up to Tk 500-1000 for using the terminals.

Although ferry transportation on Shimulia-Kathalbari route was gradually improving as more ferries became operational -- 17 ferries out of 21 -- after a week-long disruption due to siltation on the Padma, people were still suffering for delayed ferry services.

The ferries took twice the time usually needed to complete a trip, and those were carrying only small vehicles and passengers to avoid running aground, reports our Munshiganj correspondent.

Khaled Newaz, assistant general manager of the BIWTC at Shimulia Ferry Ghat, said the authorities continued dredging the river to restore navigability and the work would end on Tuesday.

A huge rush of people was seen on Kathalbari side of the route; Shimulia side was clearer, he said.

# JS goes into session today

UNB, Dhaka

The Jatiya Sangsad goes into its 17th session today after a 58-day recess.

Before the House resumes at 5:00pm, the business advisory committee of parliament will meet at 4:00pm, with Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury in the chair, to fix the duration and businesses of the session.

The new session is expected to witness a lively debate on the Supreme Court's observation on the 16th amendment verdict.

A seven-member SC bench, led by Chief Justice Surendra Kumar Sinha, on July 3 upheld the High Court verdict that declared the 16th constitutional amendment illegal.

Parliament had passed the 16th amendment on September 17, 2014 empowering the House to remove SC judges for incapacity and misconduct.

President Abdul Hamid on August 22 called the 17th session of parliament.

The last session (4th budget session of the 10th parliament) of the Jatiya Sangsad was prorogued on July 13 this year after 24 sittings.

# 6 killed in Gopalganj road crash

A CORRESPONDENT, MADARIPUR

Six people, including two women, were killed and 25 others injured in a road crash in Kashiani upazila of Gopalganj yesterday morning.

The injured were taken to Faridpur Medical College Hospital where three remain in critical condition.

Police and local sources said a truck carrying cement bags collided with a night coach carrying passengers in Barasur area of Dhaka-Khulna Highway.

The deceased were identified as bus driver Bulet Miah, 30, of Kashiani village of Gopalganj, supervisor Ibrahim, 45 of Boalmari in Faridpur, helper Saifujjaman, 40, of Basbaria village in Faridpur and Selina Akter, 30, of Rangpur. The two others remained unidentified.

After the accident, traffic came to a standstill on the highway for over three hours.

# Man dies

FROM PAGE 16

He said a Rab team of Joypurhat Camp, acting on an intelligence report, arrested Mojahar at an orchard near Shingi Hat of Manda around 10:30pm on Friday and seized eight bullets from his possession.

The team took him to some spots for retrieving firearms but found nothing. He was being taken to Rajshahi when Mojahar complained of not feeling well, said the Rab-5 director.

"Moments later, he became unconscious and Rab members rushed him to RMCH," claimed the Rajshahi zonal Rab chief. He said Mojahar was addicted to heroin and was involved in illegal arms trade.

He could not say if he was accused in any criminal case.

Officer-in-Charge Anisur Rahman of Manda Police Station said Mojahar was not accused in any criminal case filed with his station.

Mojahar's father also named Anisur Rahman, uncle Mokhlesur Rahman and elder brother Azaharul Islam went to RMCH to receive the victim's body.

They told reporters there that Mojahar was tortured to death. They claimed that they had heard about Mojahar's arrest at 7:30pm on Friday and that he was openly beaten up by Rab members at Singa Hat.

"I was at the village mosque for Esha prayer when my mother informed me that some 20 people were beating up my brother," Azaharul said.

From Singa Hat, Rab members took Mojahar to his home and confined him to his room.

"We family members and other villagers were hearing him scream as the Rab members were beating him up in the room," he said, adding that the Rab men kept them outside.

He said Rab members beat him up with iron rods and sticks which they gathered from the house.

At 10:30pm, two Rab members took Mojahar out of the room. "He was all bloody and unable to walk," Azahar said.

They then took him away on a motorcycle but returned at 1:30am yesterday. "At that time Mojahar was unconscious," he said, adding that Rab members changed his clothes and left for Rajshahi.

"One Rab officer identifying himself as Muradul Islam told us to contact Rajshahi Medical College Hospital," said Azahar.

Asked about the allegations of torture, Lt Col Mahbulul Alam, said "There was no reason to torture since we got all the information beforehand and seized some ammunition from him, evidence that was sufficient to accuse him."

After returning from Malaysia five years ago, Mojahar had been living with his family and helping out in his father's farm. "He was not engaged in any criminal activity," claimed Azahar.

# India voices concern

FROM PAGE 1

forces and other innocent lives. He had also urged a solution based on respect for peace, communal harmony, justice, dignity and democratic values", it noted.

It is imperative that violence is ended and normalcy in Rakhine restored expeditiously, said the statement, put on the twitter handle of Raveesh Kumar, official spokesperson of MEA.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh High Commissioner to India Syed Muazzem Ali yesterday met India's Foreign Secretary S Jaishankar apprising the latter of the humanitarian situation out of the exodus of a large number of Rohingyas, fleeing persecution in Myanmar.

The meeting, sought by Muazzem Ali as part of Dhaka's international diplomatic campaign on the Rohingya issue, took place at Jaishankar's South Block office and lasted nearly an hour, diplomatic sources told The Daily Star.

They said the high commissioner explained to Jaishankar how the exodus of Rohingya refugees is putting severe strains on Bangladesh's limited resources in sheltering and looking after them.

The presence of such a huge number of Rohingyas in a small geographical area of Bangladesh is badly stretching Dhaka's resources and the situation would worsen if the pace of exodus increases in the coming days, Muazzem Ali told Jaishankar.

Bangladesh would like India to be firmly with it at this hour of the Rohingya refugee crisis, the sources said.

The meeting between the envoy and the top Indian diplomat took place a day after Modi returned from his first bilateral state visit to Myanmar.

During his stay in Naypyidaw and after his talks with State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi, Modi backed Myanmar government in the fight against "extremist" violence in Rakhine.

The Indian PM didn't mention the persecution of the Rohingyas.

In another development, Indian Federal Minority Affairs Minister

Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi said yesterday that it would be difficult for Delhi to offer any relaxation to Rohingyas who have fled Myanmar.

The matter is pending before the Supreme Court and the government is also looking into it, PTI quoted Naqvi as saying at a "parliamentarian conclave" in eastern Indian city of Patna.

"But I do not think we will be able to give any relaxation to them [Rohingyas] when their nation has refused to keep them," he said.

The Supreme Court had on September 4 sought the government view on a petition challenging its decision to deport illegal Rohingya migrants in India back to Myanmar. The matter has been posted for hearing on September 11 (tomorrow).

India's Junior Minister for Home Kiren Rijiju on Tuesday last said the Rohingya people are illegal migrants and stand to be deported.

Most of the Rohingya refugees in India have settled in Jammu and Kashmir, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan states and Delhi and its adjoining areas.

# Teen killed

FROM PAGE 16

Savar Enam Medical College Hospital where doctors declared him dead around 2:00am, he added.

Abdul Awal, officer-in-charge of Ashulia police, said they had so far detained six teenagers for their suspected involvement in the murder.

Of the detainees, a class-VIII student, also Alamin's neighbour, during his primary interrogation, said he had an altercation with Alamin over seniority on Friday afternoon.

"Alamin demanded seniority although he was a student of class VI," the OC said quoting the student, adding, Alamin slapped the detainee when they met again at 9:00pm.

In retaliation, the student hit Alamin with a sharp iron rod and stabbed him with a sharp weapon, the OC added.

# US stops

FROM PAGE 16

Diplomatic sources in Dhaka and Washington say such gentle persuasion on Myanmar doesn't appear to be working.

The US earlier had led global efforts to bring democracy to Myanmar and supported Suu Kyi's rise to power, but the prospects of Washington leading a new pressure campaign appear slim.

It is also seemingly reluctant to condemn brutalities on Rohingyas when international concerns and protests grow over the persecution of the minority group and their exodus from Myanmar to Bangladesh reached over a quarter million.

Contacted by The Daily Star, former Bangladesh ambassador in Washington, Humayun Kabir, however, said, "There is some movement in the US and the policymaking circles are showing sensitivity on the uneasiness on the Rohingya situation."

"We can gain the US support on this issue if there are sustained and effective diplomatic efforts on Bangladesh government side."

He observed that Bangladesh is showing maximum restraint and remain unprovoked as it is trying to resolve the crisis peacefully with Myanmar.

### LETTER FROM UK PARLIAMENTARIANS

A total of 157 British parliamentarians urged their government to exert more pressure on the Myanmar government to stop violence on Rohingya people, BSS reported yesterday.

"The scale of the human rights and humanitarian crisis unfolding in Myanmar is unprecedented in its recent history. It requires the attention of the British government at the highest level," they said in a letter to British Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson on Wednesday.

According to the letter signed by Co-Chair of All Party Parliamentary Group for Democracy in Burma Rushanara Ali, MP, and obtained by BSS yesterday, the parliamentarians hoped that as in the past, the government would show global leadership in support of the people of Myanmar as they face in this new crisis.

The letter read, "It appears that the military is using the attacks as a pretext for the mass clearance of the Rohingya population from large parts of Northern Rakhine State rather than seeking to arrest militants from Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (Arsa) involved in attacks against government buildings on August 25."

The Independent reported that Boris Johnson has been urged by 157 MPs and peers to suspend Britain's training of the Myanmar armed forces.

He has already warned Suu Kyi that the treatment of the ethnic minority group is "besmirching" the country's reputation.

The parliamentarians welcomed his statement but urged the Government to suspend British training of the Myanmar military, which cost the UK around £305,000 last year, given reports of beatings, rape and children being deliberately shot.

### 'TERRIBLE SIGNAL'

Meanwhile, American Jewish leaders have called upon the Trump administration to aid the Rohingyas fleeing Myanmar, The Jerusalem Post reported.

Robert Bank, CEO of the American World Jewish Service, called on the government to end the systemic violence against the Rohingya people, send humanitarian aid, and do all it can to ensure that human rights fact-finding groups - including the UN - be allowed to enter Myanmar to investigate the situation.

In his statement, Bank invoked the Holocaust and the idea that Jews have a deep understanding of the horrors of genocide and of being a persecuted ethnic minority.

In another development, the US Holocaust Memorial Museum, which has previously warned of the risk of genocide in Myanmar, says the widespread destruction of homes and villages suggests "an effort to ethnically cleanse the region of its Rohingya population and to prevent their eventual return".

Not wanting to undermine the Asian country's democratic hero, the US is cautiously criticising what looks like a forced exodus of more than a quarter-million Rohingya in the last two weeks as Myanmar's military responds with hammer force to insurgent attacks, according to a report of ABC News yesterday.

Republican and Democratic lawmakers, traditionally in the vanguard of Myanmar policy, have denounced the military's conduct and strongly urged intervention by Suu Kyi, a Nobel Peace laureate who has courted unprecendented criticism for dismissing the crisis as a misinformation campaign.

But the Trump administration is neither readying sanctions nor levying real pressure on Suu Kyi's government. Rather a bill making its way through Congress even talks about enhancing US-Myanmar military cooperation.

"Further normalisation of the military-to-military relationship with Burma is the last thing we should be doing right now," said Walter Lohman, Asia Programme Director at the right-leaning Heritage Foundation. "What a terrible signal to be sending."

Cameron Hudson, director of the Holocaust Memorial Museum's Simon-Skjold Centre for the Prevention of Genocide, on Friday said, "The government efforts to deny Rohingya citizenship rights, restrict their freedom of movement and the practice of their faith, and deny their basic human rights have all been identified as leading precursors to genocide."

In 2012, the museum awarded Suu Kyi the Elie Wiesel Award, its highest honour. Now, it says the ideals that she inspired "appear absent" in the defence of Rohingya.

The museum says it implores Suu Kyi to use her position in government and her "even more powerful voice to uphold those very ideals and work to stop the longstanding persecution and violence that threaten the very existence of Rohingya in Myanmar."

The Refugees International, an independent humanitarian organisation, accuses the military in Myanmar of blocking life-saving aid and rights abuses, "which we believe amount to ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity."

It called for re-imposition of sanctions targeting military officials, such as visa bans and asset freezes, and international accountability for officers implicated in wrongdoing.

# Rush back to city chokes

FROM PAGE 16

Shukanta added that he had seen hundreds of vehicles remaining stuck for nearly 11 hours from Mirzapur of Tangail to Chandra of Gazipur.

Saiful Islam, driver of a Dhaka-bound bus from Rajshahi, said his vehicle had come to a halt at many points in Elega, Rabna, Natiapara, and Mirzapur bypass and so the journey took nearly eight more hours.

Some 12,000 to 15,000 vehicles move on the highway regularly, but the number increased to over 35,000 during Eid holidays, rendering the traffic jam, said Khalilur Rahman Patwary, officer-in-charge of Gorai Highway Police Station.

Our Manikganj correspondent reports that thousands of passengers suffered while crossing the Padma river on Paturia-Daulatdia route due to heavy flow of vehicles and strong current in the waters disrupting the