

Shared food, homes for some refugees

FROM PAGE 1

Nur Mohammad Reshad, a living in Kutupalong Refugee Camp, who claimed to have come here 39 years ago, had a different story to tell. “Those of us who have been living here for so many years understand their trouble. We have all opened our homes to them. We share all our food with them,” he said.

“Whatever we get, we share with them and sometimes keep less for us because they need it more now,” he adds.

Pointing at various homes, madrasas and schools, he showed how each of them was now hosting individuals who had just crossed the border.

He agreed with Shanwara’s story but he said everyone there was in need and those with identity cards got the aid easier.

As authorities, UN agencies and NGOs struggle to cope with an influx of over 3 lakh Rohingya refugees, in addition to the previous 5 lakh, providing enough aid is their main worry now. The huge number of people means that there is not enough of it and the long time Rohingyas here make sure they get to the aid first.

Some Locals welcome the Rohingyas

Meanwhile, some locals have started to organise to help the new refugees. While the government is planning biometric registration, they are finding their own ways of identifying the new refugees and providing the

basic necessities to them.

Locals from Cox’s Bazar and as far as Chittagong have taken it upon themselves to bring essentials to the Rohingyas. In almost every camp or locality with refugees, locals are distributing food, water, plastic sheets and clothing items.

Maulana Ashrafur Mostafa from Ukhia is one such man leading a four-man team in Balukhali providing clothes, money, biscuits and dry food to the refugees. A teacher of a local madrasa, Mostafa believes this his duty as a human being.

Travelling in a loaded pick-up truck with these items, he goes from place to place and hands out the items to the needy. “We saw news of the refugees and decided that we had to help. Nearby residents came together and donated all of this,” he said. “Along with the clothes and food, we are giving them some money too,”

In another location, Selim Jahangir, a former member of the Ukhia upazila and BNP joint-secretary of the area, is currently sheltering 2000 Rohingya women in his under-construction house in Balukhali.

“We found these women with children. Their husbands were not with them so we brought them here. We have given them tokens so we can identify who has gotten the relief and who hasn’t,” he says. He said he went around the new settlements and make-shift camps and selected those needing

relief the most.

“I am putting them up in my house so they can all be at one place. I am giving them the relief packages the Bangladesh Army has prepared,” he adds.

Each relief packet contains half kg lentil, one dozen candles, seven kgs rice, potatoes and one matchbox.

But he has his concerns too. “I’m from here and these people are guests so we must help. But I have to say that something more needs to be done for them. The Rohingyas are pushing the labour price down and now the locals are finding it difficult to survive,” he added. He also pointed out that the large numbers, open defecation and littering are hurting the environment and again stressed for more organised planning.

Meanwhile, relief materials aren’t the only things locals are offering. Mizan, a resident of Naopara, is literally lending his hand. The self-employed 29-year-old says he visits the border point every other day. “The people crossing over need our help. Yesterday, an old man crossed the river and collapsed. I carried him to a doctor at Kutupalong,” he says. The man was reunited with his son later, he adds.

Like Mizan, there are many other locals milling around the refugees and offering help wherever possible, setting up homes, buying them necessities or just listening to their harrowing tales. The refugees are not hesitant to talk and are willing to open up to anyone listening.

Freedom, for a moment

FROM PAGE 1

the city, is now home to escapees of an entirely different nature. They come not seeking comfort but flee a brutality unimagined; they come seeking freedom they have never had.

In the district’s Ukhia, hidden from the gaze of the tourists, is the Kutupalong Rohingya refugee camp, lightly called the “capital of Rohingyas”. It is one of the largest Rohingya refugee camps and over here, one can be forgiven for forgetting that they were still in the famed Cox’s Bazar setting.

Here, in Kutupalong, one does not find the expansive sandy beaches or the glamorous hotels. There are no restaurants serving the freshest seafood or locals peddling jewellery handmade from seashells. The excesses end once you cross Marine drive. This is not the place to laze about. This place does not offer a dream only the harshest of truths.

Feruza Khatun, a 70 year old woman, lies on a stack of bamboos, her hand shading her eyes from the blazing sun. If you dare ask her why she is alone, she will tell you. She will tell you because you asked and once you hear her answer, you may never be the same. “I once had two daughters but they are now lost at the sea,” she says, before instantly breaking down.

Feruza came to Bangladesh to escape the relentless persecution back home in Myanmar. Now she wishes she hadn’t. In fact, she’d rather have died with her children than to be have lost them forever and found herself in a land she had never known, amidst a people who had never known her. She will still hold your hand if you offer it to her. She will hold it and silently cry because no one has as of yet invented a language that could fully describe her pain.

Move a bit deeper inside the camp and you will find Azar Hussain, a man

with the skin of his right hand entirely burnt. He is another victim of Myanmar’s military crackdown. His crime was the way he looked. He had dared to look different under a regime that could not allow such an insult.

“They were shooting at us. I had to run and then they began to throw bombs on us,” he recounts. One such bomb exploded too close to him, burning the skin right off.

While speaking, Azar sees a cow nearby and a smile touches the corners of his lips. It is not a happy smile but rather a melancholic one. “Back in Myanmar, we weren’t even allowed to own cows. We had cows, but they always belonged to the military. If they died, we would be fined. If we slaughtered them, we would have to part with most of the meat,” he remembers.

Azar now lives with his relatives in the refugee camp.

Calling him lucky for it would be quite an exaggeration but if you ask Minara, another refugee, she too would have used that word. Minara does not have any relatives here. In fact, like Feruza, she too has absolutely no one here, except for her five young kids that she doesn’t know how to take care of.

“They killed my husband. Please don’t just give me bamboo. Help me build a home,” she says. Others come up to her and tell her not to lie, claiming she is saying all of this for money. “I am not lying,” she protests, her eyes welling up. You will believe her. Not because you will find sincerity in her tone, but because her devastation is plainly etched across her face.

Every word she speaks is punctuated with a grimace she can no longer control.

But the strangest emotion you will ever experience in Kutupalong is the hollowness that envelopes the very fabric of your soul when you see the

children smiling. Why are they smiling? Have they not lost it all? They have, but perhaps they do not know yet. All they want to do is play. Some want to go back home because despite all the horror, it was still the only home they ever knew.

Magical realism was once described by Luis Leal as, “The principal thing is not the creation of imaginary beings or worlds but the discovery of the mysterious relationship between man and his circumstances. In magical realism key events have no logical or psychological explanation.”

Here, in Kutupalong, a dark form of magical realism is present in every nook and corner, in the smile of every child and the silence of every adult. Almost everything is inexplicable. Every bond formed incomprehensible. The brutality makes no sense. What can be understood though is that none of them are here for a hand out. They are not here out of choice. They are here because where else could they be?

On our way back to the hotel, the broken roads on the way to Ukhia are being quickly repaired. A three-wheeler carries a man speaking through a megaphone, inviting all the villagers to visit Ukhia tomorrow if they wish to see the Prime Minister. Indeed she is coming and with her comes solutions to all the problems.

As the announcement ends, another load of bricks is hastily thrown over a pothole. Papers over cracks. Much like the hotels in the beach town that paper over the cracks in our development.

That is perhaps the only truth we can be sure of. That and learn to savour the freedom we take so much for granted because like the truth, freedom is to be relished, because we never know how long it will last no matter the promises made.

Machines

FROM PAGE 16

Within 10 years a technological revolution will sweep aside old notions of education and change the world forever, Sir Anthony Sheldon, master of Wellington College believes.

School teachers will lose their traditional role and effectively become little more than classroom assistants.

They will remain on hand to set up equipment, help children when necessary and maintain discipline, Sir Anthony said.

However, the essential job of instilling knowledge into young minds will wholly be done by artificially intelligent (AI) computers.

Sir Anthony, a historian and political commentator who has written biographies of ex-prime ministers David Cameron, Tony Blair, John Major and Gordon Brown, said: “It certainly will change human life as we know it.

“It will open up the possibility of an Eton or Wellington education for all.

“Everyone can have the very best teacher and it’s completely personalised; the software you’re working with will be with you throughout your education journey.

“It can move at the speed of the learner.

“This is beyond anything that we’ve seen in the industrial revolution or since with any other new technology.

“These are adaptive machines that adapt to individuals. They will listen to the voices of the learners, read their faces and study them in the way gifted teachers study their students.

“We’re looking at screens which are listening to the voice of the student and reading the face of the student. Reading and comprehending.”

Sir Anthony outlined his vision in a talk at the British Science Festival which took place last week in Brighton.

It will also be the subject of his new book The Fourth Education Revolution, due to be published early next year.

'Robber' killed

FROM PAGE 16

gang members opened fire. In retaliation, police returned fire, triggering a “gunfight”. During the “gun battle”, Robbani was hit by bullets and died on the spot, said police.

However, other members of the gang managed to flee.

Police claimed to have recovered a homemade gun and a bullet from the spot.

The bodies were sent to Mymensingh Medical College morgue for autopsies.

Robbani stood accused in a case filed for killing two people after rustling 10 cattle from a farm in Gopalpur village of Mymensingh Sadar upazila on August 21, said Mohammad Noor-e-Alam, additional superintendent of Mymensingh police.

Mahmudur

FROM PAGE 16

Sheikh Chhabidul Islam passed the order after scrutinizing the case dockets, statements of witnesses and other relevant documents of the case.

In his order, the magistrate said he did not find any cogent grounds to frame charges against Mahmudur Rahman. Ten others were indicted as the charges brought against them were found to be true.

Of the 10 accused, Anwar, Lutfor Rahman and five others are now on bail while Nirob and two others are on the run.

The court fixed October 25 to start trial of the case.

According to the prosecution, it was alleged that a group of BNP-led-18 party alliance leaders and activists including Nirob, Anwar, Lutfor torched a taxicab by throwing petrol bomb in front of Wasa Bhaban in the city’s Karwan Bazar at about 7:30am on March 26 of 2013.

Later driver of the cab Mohammad Babul filed a case against Nirob, Anwar, Lutfor and 15 others with Tejgaon Police Station.

On April 11 of 2013, police arrested Mahmudur Rahman in the case even though his name was not included in the first information report. He was also remanded for three days in the case.

Police also pressed charges against Mahmudur and 10 others and dropped the names of eight others from the charge sheet.

Mahmudur, a former energy adviser to the government, is accused in over 70 cases and was present in the court yesterday.

India to start

FROM PAGE 16

across 20,000 kilometres.”

While Gadkari expressed how far he wanted to go to address India’s water situation, his projects worried the Bangladesh government.

The country conveyed its concern though the foreign ministry that the proposed river connectivity in India would put the river ecology in peril and cause a water crisis here.

Bangladeshi environmentalists condemned the initiative, saying this would create a desert like situation in Bangladesh.

India cannot do something like that for the common waterways without a joint impact assessment together with the downstream country Bangladesh, they said.

“I strongly condemn such derogatory and brutal thought that ignores millions of farmers here along with the Sundarbans,” said Sharif Jamil, joint secretary general of Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon (Bapa).

The withdrawal of water from the Ganges basin will create an acute water

crisis in the Padma, and the Sundarbans will be the worst victim due to salinity, he said. If water is withdrawn from the Brahmaputra, Bangladesh will face a dire situation.

“Bangladesh needs more water in the Ganges basin but this proposed dam will sharply decrease the flow of water in the Padma,” Sharif said, adding that the government should take steps immediately to address the concern.

Zafar Ahmed Khan, senior secretary of the Ministry of Water Resources, told The Daily Star that Bangladesh had already communicated the matter to the Indian government.

“The Ganges and Brahmaputra are trans-boundary rivers and so any sort of intervention [in their flow] will trouble Bangladesh as we are lower riparian country.”

There will be water crisis in Bangladesh if the proposed projects are implemented, Zafar said.

“River should be nurtured as river and one thing we have to keep in mind that no one is bigger scientist than nature,” he added.

Talks on polls now

FROM PAGE 16

The commission has been in discussion with election stakeholders for nearly three weeks to know their opinion about the next parliamentary elections scheduled to be held late next year.

Earlier, the EC had announced that it would complete talks with 40 registered political parties by September 20.

Starting from August 24, the EC has already held talks with seven political parties, civil society members, editors, senior journalists and representatives from print and electronic media.

The commission has drafted a new talks schedule which will be finalised soon. According to the draft, the EC will sit with Jatiya Party on October 9, BNP on October 12 and the ruling Awami League on October 16, said EC sources.

Bangladesh Muslim League and Bangladesh Khelafat Andolan will hold talks with the EC on October 2, Bangladesh Tarikat Federation and Bangladesh Jatiya Party on October 4; Bangladesher Samajtantrik Dal and Jaker Party on October 5; and Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) and Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (Jasod-Rob) on October 8, says the draft.

Bikalpadhara Bangladesh will meet the EC on October 9, Bangladesh Workers Party and Bangladesh National Awami Party on October 11, Gonotantri Party on October 12, Communist Party of Bangladesh and Krishak Samik Janata League on October 15, Samyabadi Dal on October 16 and Bangladesh Jatiya Party and Liberal Democratic Party on October 17.

The commission has been holding talks with two political parties every day from 11:00am to 1:00pm and 3:00pm to 5:00pm. Ten representa-

tives from each of the political parties are invited to join the discussion.

The EC also plans to hold talks with election observers on October 23, leaders of women organisations on October 25 and election experts on October 30.

A large number of civil society members during talks with the EC recommended restoring the “no vote” option in ballots, creating a level playing field for all political parties and deploying army for holding the next parliamentary elections in a free, fair and participatory manner.

25 missing

FROM PAGE 16

launch. The three were admitted to Mulfatganj Health Complex.

Yesterday’s erosion devoured 20 percent of the river bank in the terminal area. The erosion also damaged 30 percent more area of the river bank in the last one week.

Sohag Mia, a witness, said, “The launches capsized in front of my eyes. There were 50-60 people in the three launches.”

Mohamed Ali, a passenger of Mouchak-2 launch, said although he managed to get to the shore, his wife, mother-in-law and five-day-old daughter went missing. They had come from Dhaka.

Motahar Hossain, the lessee of the launch terminal, said the pontoon was separated from the terminal due to the erosion.

Meanwhile, the shipping ministry, the shipping department and the BWTA have formed separate committees to investigate yesterday’s incident. The BWTA has asked its probe committee to submit the report within 24 hours.

No respite for city residents

FROM PAGE 1

With a well-managed drainage network in place, rainwater instantly runs into the low-lying retention areas. But, it takes hours for the rainwater runoff if the network is faulty or destroyed, leading to immense public sufferings.

As there was heavy rain yesterday, things took a turn for the worse.

Muntakim Noor on his way to Farmgate from Mohammadpur could not get any public vehicle. So, he went by a rickshaw to Manik Mia Avenue, which cost him more than his usual bus trip, and from there he walked to Farmgate.

“I have seen more than a dozen of buses, auto-rickshaws, and motorbikes getting out of order in water at Manik

Mia Avenue,” Noor said.

College student Sabbir Ahmed Noman had similar experience.

He had to walk through knee-deep water “with rubbish floating” from Rajarbagh to Mouchak while returning home at Moghbazar.

“I have waited for an hour in front of my college [at Rajarbagh].... I could not manage to board any public bus as they were jam-packed,” Noman said.

Phul Miah, a helper of Lams Paribahan, said the bus started from Motijheel at around 8:00am and it took some five hours to reach Mirpur-10.

“It took around three hours to cross Shahbagh,” he told The Daily Star around 1:00pm.

“We will have rest reaching Pallabi and then will decide whether to go for the next trip.”

Sewrapara to Kazipara part of Begum Rokeya Sarani remained inundated for hours since morning, reports one of our correspondents.

Shantinagar, Khilgaon, Bashabo, Malibagh, Shantibagh, Mugda, Badda and different parts of Old Dhaka also witnessed similar situation.

Meanwhile, the Met office forecast that light to moderate rain or thunder shower accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely to occur today in Rangpur, Rajshahi, Mymensingh, Dhaka, Khulna, Barisal, Chittagong and Sylhet divisions.

Irma floods Florida cities

FROM PAGE 16

located about 35 miles (56 km) west of Gainesville and headed up the Gulf Coast, the National Hurricane Center said at 8 am ET (1200 GMT).

The Cuban government reported yesterday that 10 people had been killed after Irma battered the island’s north coast with ferocious winds and 36-foot (11-meter) waves over the weekend. This raised the overall death toll from Irma’s powerful rampage through the Caribbean to 38.

Northeastern Florida cities including Jacksonville were facing flash flooding, with the city’s sheriff’s office pulling residents from waist-deep water.

“Stay inside. Go up. Not out,” Jacksonville’s website warned residents. “There is flooding throughout the city and more rain is expected.”

Irma was forecast to cross the eastern Florida Panhandle and move into southern Georgia later in the day, dumping as much as 16 inches (41 cm) of rain, government forecasters said.

HEART-POUNDING NIGHT

After what she called a terrifying night bunkered in her house in St Petersburg, on Florida’s Gulf Coast, with her children and extended family, Julie Hally emerged with relief yesterday. The winds had toppled some large tree branches and part of a fence, but her house was undamaged.

“My heart just pounded out of my chest the whole time,” said Hally, 37. “You hear stuff hitting your roof. It honestly sounds like somebody is just whistling at your window the whole night. It’s really scary.”

Governor Rick Scott said he would travel to the Florida Keys. Irma first came ashore at Cudjoe Key as a Category 4 hurricane with sustained winds of up to 130 mph (215 kph.)

US President Donald Trump in a ceremony at the Pentagon to remember the victims of the Sept 11, 2001, attacks vowed a full response to Irma, as well as continued federal support for victims of Hurricane Harvey, which flooded Texas.

Shelter

FROM PAGE 2

She said she was looking forward to visiting France at the end of the next month when she would hold a meeting with the French president.

Sophie Aubert said her country was ready to help Bangladesh over the refugee issue.


The diplomat said the overall security situation in Bangladesh improved a lot and she appreciated the PM for her pragmatic leadership.

The ambassador hoped the next general election in Bangladesh would be peaceful.

She said Bangladesh-France cooperation in energy and water sectors has increased a lot. The two countries are also working together on the climate change issue, she added.

Sophie Aubert reassured the PM that the Bangabandhu Satellite would be launched into space on December 16 as per schedule.

PM’s International Affairs Adviser Gowher Rizvi was present at the meeting.



পাওয়ার গ্রীড কোম্পানী অব বাংলাদেশ লিঃ

POWER GRID COMPANY OF BANGLADESH LTD.

(An Enterprise of Bangladesh Power Development Board)

Institution of Engineers Bangladesh (IEB) Bhaban (New), 4th Floor, 8/A Ramna, Dhaka-1000

Web : www.pgcb.org.bd

IFB No.: 27.21.0000.101.07.001.17.5554

Date: September 10, 2017

INVITATION FOR BIDS

(RE-TENDER)

SUPPLY OF TRANSMISSION LINE EMERGENCY RESTORATION SYSTEM (ERS)

(Contract No. PGCB/ERS/2017/01)

- Power Grid Company of Bangladesh Ltd. ("the Employer") invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for "Supply of Transmission Line Emergency Restoration System (ERS)" (Contact No. PGCB/ERS/2017/01) as defined in the bidding document (hereinafter referred to as "the Works").
- The scope of Works is as below:
Supply, delivery, demonstration & training of 230kV and 132kV Emergency Restoration System (ERS) and related services.
- The Works under this contract shall have to be completed within 180 days from the effective date.
- International Competitive Bidding will be conducted in accordance with Single Stage Two-Envelope bidding procedure and is open to all bidders from eligible source countries. PGCB will allocate necessary funds towards the cost of the proposed works.
- Bidders may obtain further information from and inspect and acquire the bidding documents at the head office of Power Grid Company of Bangladesh Ltd. (PGCB), Institution of Engineers Bangladesh (IEB) Bhaban (12th Floor), 8/A Ramna, Dhaka-1000, Tel: 880-2-9553663, 880-2-9550514, 880-2-9558054, Fax: 880-2-9582382. The complete bidding documents are available at PGCB's website <http://www.pgcb.org.bd/>. In case of any discrepancy between the documents downloaded from PGCB website and the Bid Documents (hard copy) issued by PGCB, the later shall prevail.
- A complete set of bidding documents may be purchased by interested eligible bidders on submission of a written application to the Company Secretary, PGCB at the above address upon payment of a nonrefundable fee USD 100.00 (United States Dollar one hundred) only or Tk. 8,200.00 (Taka Eight thousand two hundred) only in the form of **Pay Order/Demand Draft** in favor of **Power Grid Company of Bangladesh Ltd.** The document may also be sent through courier for an additional fee of Taka 1000.00 (for local delivery) or US\$ 120.00 (for overseas delivery). PGCB shall not be responsible for any postal delay.
- Bids must be delivered to the address mentioned above on or before **11:00 Hours** Local Time (GMT+6 hours) on **23 October, 2017** together with a Bid Security of BDT 8,200,000.00 (Eight million two hundred thousand BDT) or equivalent USD 100,000.00 (One hundred thousand USD) only.
- The technical bids will be opened at **11:05 Hours** Local Time (GMT+6 hours) on **23 October, 2017** at the same address mentioned in item 5 in the presence of Bidders' representatives who choose to attend.
- PGCB will not be responsible for any costs or expenses incurred by bidders in connection with the preparation or delivery of bids including costs and expenses related to visits to the sites of installation of the Works.
- PGCB reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to Bidders.

Company Secretary