



PHOTO: MOSFIQUR RAHMAN JOHAN

"No one is free, even the birds are chained to the sky"
— Bob Dylan

SNAPSHOT

ROHINGYA CRISIS



PHOTO: NAIMUL KARIM

Relief clothes rejected by Rohingyas have flooded the refugee camps.

MAILBOX
thestarmagazine@gmail.com

Enemies of traffic safety

The article "Enemies of traffic safety" published in *Star Weekend* on September 1 was a perfect scenario of the traffic laws of Dhaka city before Eid. Before the festival, traffic police or sergeants are more active compared to the rest of the year. It is a form of civilised harassment—even if the vehicle and its driver are fully abiding with traffic rules and regulations, the sergeants make up an absurd violation and lodge a case against the vehicle simply to extract money from the owners.

The more tickets they issue, the greater their supposed efficiency. But city dwellers suffer and if we attempt to argue with the sergeants, we are fined more heavily. There should be a proper monitoring system so that we are not exploited. At times, vehicle owners bribe traffic sergeants in order to avoid paying larger amounts where both parties are wrong. But if a car and its driver are in full accordance with traffic rules, why should we pay fines to the traffic authorities?

Rafiq Alam
Mohammadpur, Dhaka



PHOTO: KAZI TAHISIN AGAZ APURBO

Rohingya crisis: where is the aid coming from and is it useful?

Firsthand accounts of journalists, aid workers and well-meaning philanthropists flocking to Cox's Bazar in light of the Rohingya refugee influx tell of the enormous civilian efforts to help the refugees. People all over Bangladesh are collecting cash, dry food, clothes and other relief materials to donate to the refugees—many of whom fled with practically nothing.

Aid organisations from home and abroad are distributing relief items but there is no system to distribute fairly and in an organised manner. Rather, waste is being created and the refugees, particularly children, are at risk of being harmed

in crowds desperately trying to get aid. I urge individuals and organisations wishing to donate to plan a proper distribution system at the site and take into consideration the most pressing needs of the refugees (food, water and shelter materials). But all this cannot be done by civilians alone. The government and international aid agencies need to step up in taking care of vital needs such as healthcare, clean water and sanitation at the settlements springing up in Cox's Bazar.

Mahfuzur Rahman
Adabor, Dhaka

70 Years of Partition: States of being divided

Thanks to *Star Weekend* for presenting such a wonderful issue demonstrating the Partition of Bengal from different viewpoints. Every single article in the magazine had rich content and covered almost all spheres of life from academics to arts. From the editor's note, we came to know the aim of this special issue is to commemorate the 70th anniversary as well as to revive our interest in the history of Partition. I think it truly served this purpose. The human stories from different sources helped us get a sense of the emotions and actions of the time. The articles on the influence of Partition on our literature and film, especially the conversation with Tanvir Mokammel, were interesting reads. Thanks to *Star Weekend* once again for this fascinating issue.

Bulbul
Merul Badda, Dhaka

Barely three weeks ago, it would have taken someone a little more than 10 minutes to reach Kutupalong camp from the main station in Ukha. Today, traffic jams on the Cox's Bazar-Teknaf Highway, arising from the increasing number of relief trucks arriving to help out the Rohingyas, has changed the scenario. But despite the admirable support of Bangladeshis for the four lakh-plus Rohingyas who entered Bangladesh in the last one month, many new refugees are still living on just *muri* and *cha*.

Take for instance the case of brothers Abdul Aher and Nazim Ullah. They were both shot while running away from the Myanmar military. Today they are struggling to compete with others for relief.

The situation at the camps of Ukha upazila suggest; that it is the stronger Rohingyas, who can run after trucks and wait in the heat for hours, who are getting a better share of the pie.

Abdul, who saw a bullet pierce through his foot and received treatment from Ukha after his arrival, cannot wait to be able to run again.

"I don't like the fact that I have to rely on someone else for relief," says Abdul. "I can walk but my foot hurts when I run or put extra pressure on it. Because of that, I am missing out on the food and

aid that the trucks are providing here," he explains.

His brother had it worse. Bullets scraped past 15-year-old Nazim Ullah's cheek and shoulder and knocked him unconscious. "We were late. We should have left before. After getting shot in the head, I lost consciousness. Later I was told that my *mama* picked me up and



Rohingyas wait at the roadside for relief trucks.

PHOTO: NAIMUL KARIM

NOT RELIEVED DESPITE THE RELIEF

NAIMUL KARIM

took me away from there," narrates Nazim. "It still hurts as though there is some poison stuck in there," he adds.

Considering the huge number of people who have taken refuge near the border, it is obvious that a constant supply of relief is required. However, it also seems that the government is yet to implement an approach that can ensure equal distribution of relief among the newly arrived.

The problems in the distribution system can easily be observed on the roadsides of the camp. Upon failing to find a proper distribution point, several volunteers from the trucks, many of whom can carry up to eight tons of relief, were seen throwing the goods to people waiting on the roadsides. Certain trucks actually threw mosquito nets and clothes while the truck was on the move.

Continued to page 4

JUST A HOOK TO SOME LOVED ONES' SAFETY TO US

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