

# RELOCATING REFUGEES TO ONE CAMP

# Haphazard early settlements make the job hard

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOlla and MOHAMMAD ALI JINNAT from Cox's Bazar

Continued influx of Rohingyas, unplanned settlement of refugees and haphazard development activities by many organisations made it difficult for the authorities to relocate all the refugees to Balukhali camp in Ukhiya.

"As a huge number of people suddenly entered the Balukhali camp, we didn't get the opportunity to put up a camp for them immediately," said Md. Ali Abul Kalam, relief and refugee repatriation commissioner (RRRC) of the relief and disaster management ministry, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Some unplanned development

activities, including setting up of tube wells and latrines, by many local development organisations and individuals made it tough for the authorities to relocate the refugees, said the official of RRRC who has been tasked with coordinating the relocation, relief and repatriation of the Rohingyas.

"An estimated 1,750 lakh people are yet to be relocated to Balukhali camp. Once the refugees are moved, we will make a place liveable with our limited resources," he added.

Md Ali Hossain, deputy commissioner of Cox's Bazar, echoed the views of Kalam. He said doing everything in a planned way for such a large number

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A Rohingya girl doing the dishes with muddy water flowing down at a Rohingya refugee camp in Balukhali of Cox's Bazar yesterday. Behind her is a toilet fenced with black plastic sheets. Possible outbreak of water borne diseases at refugee camps has been a cause for concern.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

## UN's Bosnia promise forgotten in Myanmar

FROM PAGE 1

Myanmar was a rude awakening for the world.

It said every state with a "capacity to influence effectively the actions of persons likely to commit or already committing genocide", even if outside its own borders, was under an obligation "to employ all means reasonably available to them, so as to prevent genocide so far as possible".

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## 'Systematic bid' to expel Rohingyas

FROM PAGE 1

UN Human Rights chief Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, who had described the operations in northern Rakhine state as "a textbook example of ethnic cleansing", has urged Myanmar to immediately end its "crimes" operation.

By denying the Rohingyas their political, civil, economic and cultural rights, including the right to citizenship, he said Myanmar's actions appear to be "a cynical play for forcibly transfer large numbers of people without the possibility of return."

It also highlights a strategy to "instil deep and widespread fear and trauma—physical, emotional and psychological" among the Rohingyas, the report said.

The report states that "certain operations" started before August 25, and as early as the beginning of August.

The UN Human Rights Office is

gravely concerned for the safety of hundreds of thousands of Rohingyas who remain in northern Rakhine state and reports the violence is still ongoing.

UN has done so far was to issue a Security Council statement and to hold an open discussion to be subsumed by vetoes by China and Russia after the greatest modern time exodus after the persecution began.

The UN under Antonio Guterres, a socialist, a committed reformer, the former prime minister of Portugal, was expected to change the UN from its bureaucratic straps that made it a talking platform. He was after all the prime

minister who resigned and went to the city slums to teach children math before being appointed the UN chief for the first time in the history through an open debate. He was a man to open up and with "heart and reason".

But even he proved too helpless this time in Myanmar as all that the UN have done so far was to issue a Security Council statement and to hold an open discussion to be subsumed by vetoes by China and Russia after the greatest modern time exodus after the persecution began.

Meantime, the streams of Rohingyas fleeing killings and rape continue.

The UN has exposed the inherent weakness of the UN system and the greater need for reforms to prevent and intervene in future genocides.

The call for preventing the veto power in cases of genocide has been growing louder in recent years. In 2013, France, one of the five permanent members in the Security Council, presented a proposal to the General Assembly to limit the use of the veto power in cases of genocides.

The genocide in Myanmar must be stopped forthwith and after Myanmar there must not be another one.

Two years after France's initiative, 107 countries jointly placed a proposal in the General Assembly for enacting a code of conduct to limit the exercise of the veto power. France and UK supported this move.

This reform should immediately be carried out to have a strong UN to deliver on its core goal—prevention of genocide.

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## ROHINGYA REPATRIATION

### Dhaka asks Islamabad to join int'l effort

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka has asked Islamabad to join the international community to impress upon Myanmar to ensure a speedy repatriation of all their forcibly displaced nationals back to their homes in Myanmar.

The call was made when the Bangladesh High Commissioner in Islamabad Tarik Ahsan paid a courtesy call on new Prime Minister of Pakistan Shah Khan Abassi in Islamabad on Tuesday.

The Pakistan prime minister lauded the role played by Bangladesh in the face of the challenges posed by the influx of more than half a million forcibly displaced Myanmarese nationals in Bangladesh.

Prime Minister Abassi viewed that Myanmar should shoulder its responsibilities for protection of all its nationals, particularly the minorities, said a press release of Bangladesh High Commission in Islamabad.

The Bangladeshi envoy thanked the Pakistan prime minister for expression of solidarity with Bangladesh in tackling the humanitarian crisis.

Welcoming the high commissioner, Abassi recalled the visit of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to Lahore in 1974 for taking part in the second OIC Summit, immediately after the beginning of Bangladesh-Pakistan diplomatic relations.

In an apparent reference to the strained relations between the two countries, Abassi called for strengthening the bilateral relations by "removing the

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work plan yesterday to build 10,000 toilets in Rohingya refugee camps of Cox's Bazar.

Under the work plan, Unicef would finance the construction of 10,000 latrines, covering 2.5 lakh people, in the camps and settlements in the quickest possible time to ward off the threat of large-scale water-borne diseases.

Joint Secretary Muhammad Habibul Kabir Chowdhury of the ministry and Unicef Bangladesh Representative Edward Beigbeder signed the plan.

"There are already reports of water-borne diseases from the health centres in the camps. Disease outbreak is a real and present danger for the camp dwellers and host population. We immediately need to step up sanitation coverage there," said Beigbeder in a statement yesterday.

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On the last day, he will visit a home run by the Missionaries of Charity of Mother Teresa, address priests, religious seminarians and novices.

Before flying back to the evening, he will meet a group of young people.

Earlier in 1986, Pope John Paul II visited Bangladesh, according to the foreign ministry.

## Pope Francis

FROM PAGE 16

The Pope will be in Myanmar from November 27-30 and Bangladesh from November 30 to December 2, said Archbishop George Kocherry, Vatican ambassador to Bangladesh, at a press conference at Bama Cathedral in the capital on August 28.

The announcement came barely a day after the Pope voiced concern over the persecution of Rohingyas in Myanmar.

President Abdul Hamid will receive Pope Francis upon his arrival, and Bangladesh will show the highest礼

to him during his stay.

Pope Francis is scheduled to reach Yangon, Myanmar, in the afternoon of November 27. He will wrap up his Myanmar tour on November 30 and fly to Bangladesh in the afternoon.

After a welcome ceremony at Hazrat

Shahjalal International Airport, Pope Francis will pay homage to Bangladesh's martyrs and Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

He will then make a courtesy visit to the president and address the diplomatic corps.

On December 1, the Pope will celebrate a public mass, meet Sheikh Hasina, the country's bishops and representatives of various religions and Christian churches.

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## New rice yields

FROM PAGE 1

He gave it the nod today [Wednesday], Btri Director General Md Shahjahan Kabir told The Daily Star last night.

He said the new grain has greater elongation traits. After cooking, the rice elongates up to 1.6 times. Other high yielding varieties have 1.2 to 1.3 times elongation rate. The new variety also has export potential as the clean rice is long and slender, he said.

The new variety comes at a time when two of the country's most common rice varieties—BRRI dhan28 and BRRI dhan40—selected by the ICRISAT in 1994, are losing popularity due to ageing.

The prospect of higher rice yield through the release of the new variety also comes against the backdrop of diminishing returns from the country's rice fields.

A recent International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) report says Bangladesh's rice production growth slowed down to just 0.7 percent in five years (2012-16), whereas the growth was as high as 4.8 percent in the previous five years (2007-11).

Akther Ahmed, the country head of the Washington-based food research think tank IFPRI, said, "Rice production

tion more than tripled since the country's liberation [in 1971], but the [agricultural] growth is slowing down."

He observed that the most popular rice varieties in Bangladesh are old and they require better replacements so that farmers can reap more yield from less land and go for agricultural diversity by growing other high value crops.

Akther put emphasis on the agricultural extension service's role in demonstrating and popularising the new potential rice varieties among the farmers. As a third of Bangladesh's total farm households are of pure tenants—those who work in lands owned by others—he said.

With BRRI dhan81, the number of BRRI-developed rice varieties now stands at 86. Among them, six are hybrids while the rest are high yielding varieties (HYVs).

BRRI-developed rice varieties cover more than 80 percent of the total rice area of the country. These varieties account for more than 91 percent of the country's total 35 million tonnes of rice production.



The six girls, back row, who played significant roles in preventing child marriages. Brac, Acid Survivors Foundation and the Australian High Commission yesterday awarded them on the occasion of International Day of the Girl Child 2017 at the KIB Auditorium yesterday.

PHOTO: ASF

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