



New gas field found in Bhola

It contains around 700 billion cubic feet of natural gas

HASAN JAHID TUSHER

Bapex has found a large gas reserve at Shahbazpur of Bhola.

The discovery of the state-owned Bangladesh Petroleum Exploration and Production Company Ltd (Bapex) was revealed by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina during the cabinet meeting she chaired yesterday.

Briefing reporters at the Bangladesh Secretariat after the meeting, Cabinet Secretary M Shafiqul Alam said the new field is said to have reserves of about 700 billion cubic feet of natural gas.

The new gas field, Shahbazpur Gas Field East-1, is three and a half kilometres east of Shahbazpur Gas Field, officials said.

Alam said if the new gas reserve was added to that of the existing Shahbazpur Gas Field, the total gas reserve of that area would be over one trillion cubic feet.

The exploratory drilling at the new gas field had begun on August 6, he said.

Bapex Managing Director Md Nowshad Islam told The Daily Star over the phone yesterday that the company had become sure of the reserve yesterday. " ... it will have a positive impact on the national energy security and will minimise concerns regarding it," he said.

The Bapex MD said the country has about 11-12 trillion cubic feet of gas reserves and the annual consumption was



BHOLA

SEE PAGE 13 COL 3

TALL TASK IN HAND

Public healthcare faces long-term challenges with the influx of Rohingyas prone to infectious diseases

PORIMOL PALMA



The threat of infectious diseases looms large in Cox's Bazar Rohingya refugee camps as well as the local communities and beyond with hardly any sign of the Myanmar nationals going back anytime soon.

Experts fear that the bordering district, where more than six lakh refugees are sheltered in overcrowded camps lacking pure water and sanitation facilities, is faced with a long-term public health challenge.

The persecuted minority group is very much vulnerable to diseases like TB,

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

DIAGNOSED SO FAR

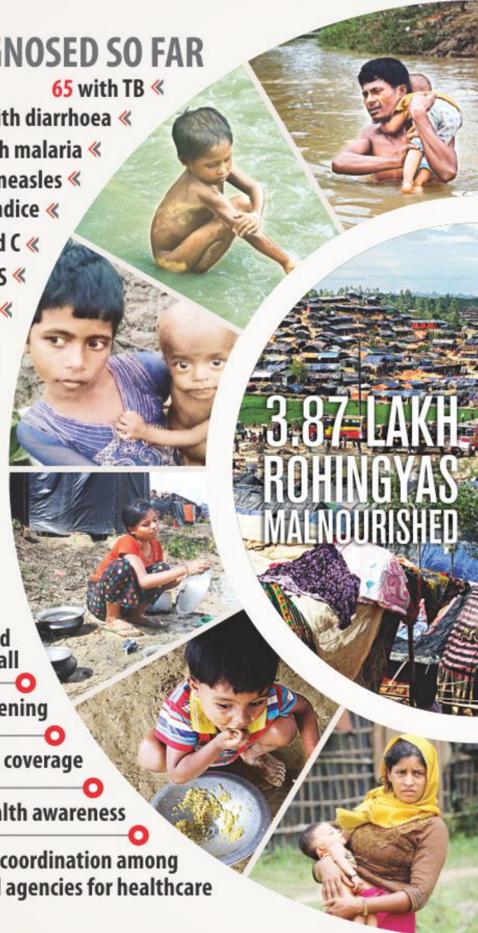
- 65 with TB <<
- 40,000 with diarrhoea <<
- 12 with malaria <<
- 44 with measles <<
- 300 with jaundice <<
- 1,000 with Hepatitis B and C <<
- 29 with HIV/AIDS <<
- 70,000 with respiratory tract infection <<
- 30,000 with skin disease <<

"A large number of these people are malnourished and have a weak immune system. Besides, the highly congested camps are perfect sites for fast transmission of diseases."

A PHYSICIAN WORKING IN ROHINGYA SHELTERS

WHAT TO DO?

- Ensure clean water and latrines for all
- Conduct systematic screening
- Ensure immunisation coverage
- Create health awareness
- Ensure better coordination among government and aid agencies for healthcare



Bangladesh comes first

Says Sushma Swaraj about India's neighbours, promises to resolve 'irritants' in bilateral relations

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

India's External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj yesterday said Bangladesh comes first among all of India's neighbours as part of a neighbourhood policy her government adopted.

The countries' bilateral ties are becoming stronger, she added.

"Our foreign policy follows neighbourhood first approach. Parshi pehele, lekin Bangladesh sabse pehele [neighbours first, but Bangladesh before all]," she said in Hindi.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



ROHINGYA CRISIS
Dhaka wants to settle it peacefully: PM

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said Bangladesh seeks to resolve the Rohingya crisis diplomatically and peacefully and will not engage in rows with Myanmar over the issue.

She made the remark at an unscheduled discussion after the weekly cabinet meeting held at the Prime Minister's Office, two senior ministers told The Daily Star.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 6

\$340m pledged to help Rohingya refugees: UN

Bangladesh ambassador to UN terms the influx untenable

AGENCIES

The head of the UN agency that coordinates humanitarian aid says they have pledged roughly \$340 million to help more than 6,00,000 Rohingyas who have fled Myanmar into Bangladesh since August.

Mark Lowcock of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs said donors included governments and the European Union at a one-day conference in Geneva for the Rohingya. The UN and its partners are seeking \$434 million to help the Rohingya through February.

Lowcock said more contributions are still

expected.

Bangladesh faces an untenable situation because nearly 1 million Rohingya refugees, including the new arrivals, have fled across its border from violence in Myanmar and its government should let them return home, Bangladesh's UN envoy said at the pledging conference.

"This is an untenable situation," Shameem Ahsan, Bangladesh's ambassador to the UN in Geneva, told the UN pledging conference. "Despite claims to the contrary, violence in Rakhine state has not stopped. Thousands still enter on a daily basis."

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

World leaders must engage in political process

Says IOM about repatriation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

UN Migration Agency IOM has urged world leaders to engage in a political process that will allow the Rohingya refugees to return home voluntarily, while appealing for additional funds for emergency life-saving assistance.

"And, to do so in conditions of safety, security, dignity and social cohesion, we should insist with Myanmar officials that these conditions are met," IOM Director General William Lacy Swing said at the pledging conference for the Rohingya Refugee Crisis in Geneva yesterday.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2

HILSA GLUT



A trader shows a hilsa at the wholesale market on Port Road in Barisal yesterday. As the 22-day ban on hilsa netting ended on Sunday, fishermen caught a huge quantity of hilsa in the Meghna, Arial Kha, Tentulia, Bishkhali and Kalabadar rivers, and brought those to the market. Traders said at least 2,500 maunds of hilsa were sold at the market yesterday. Inset, a worker sorts out the fish.

PHOTO: SUSHANTA GHOSH



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