

## Redistribute refugees

Say Cox's Bazar civil society, NGO members

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

High concentration of the Rohingya population in Cox's Bazar is posing serious risks for the economy and ecology of the tourist district, said an alliance of civil society and non-government organisations yesterday.

The local population of Cox's Bazar is 27 lakh, while the number of Rohingyas stands at 800,000, which might become around 10 lakh by the year's end, making Cox's Bazar the most densely populated district in Bangladesh, they said.

"The population density per square kilometre in the country would be 1152 by the year end, it would be 1485 in Cox's Bazar, said the alliance -- Cox's Bazar Civil Society Organisations, NGO Forum (CCNF) -- at a press conference at Dhaka Reporters Unity.

"The Rohingyas are also spreading out beyond the designated camps. They have taken shelter in Cox's Bazar town, both sides of Marine Drive and in other upazilas of the district. This is a serious risk for tourism," said Rezaul Karim Chowdhury, co-chair of CCNF.

The prices of essentials in Ukhia, Teknaf and Cox's Bazar town have

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Newly arrived Rohingya women sit and wait for help with their children near a port after crossing the Bangladesh-Myanmar border yesterday at Shah Porir Dwip near Cox's Bazar.

PHOTO: REUTERS

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BDR CARNAGE

## HC verdict on death reference, appeals on November 26

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court on November 26 will deliver the verdict on the death reference and appeals in the BDR carnage case.

A three-member HC special bench yesterday set the date.

The same bench had kept the reference and appeals as curia adi vult, a Latin legal term meaning the verdict could be delivered anytime, on April 13 this year.

If a lower court sentences any person to death in a case, its judgment is examined by the HC through hearing arguments for confirmation of the death sentence. The case documents and judgment reaches as death reference to the HC from the lower court in seven days after the latter delivers the verdict.

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## New window

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of the documents for letting more and more people know about the trial proceedings, the 1971 Liberation War and the war crimes investigators.

"These documents could be sources of history. We have already started our work and hope to complete it in phase," Samuel Huq, co-coordinator of the agency, told The Daily Star last week.

He said the papers would include the written complaints, investigation reports, statements of witnesses, documentary evidence, including books, newspapers, audio and video clips, and verdicts.

On October 19, the agency, designated to probe wartime crimes committed in 1971, at a meeting formed a committee to archive the documents.

The committee is led by Samail. The other members are Obayed Ullah, Assistant Director (Administration), and Asim Rahaman, Librarian, of the agency and the investigation offices of the war crimes committee.

"We will do the work with our own manpower. We will take suggestions from experts as well," Samail said.

Six war criminals have already been executed and another convict is now serving jail until death for committing crimes during the Liberation War in 1971 after all proceedings of those cases were completed at the tribunal and the Supreme Court.

Talking about the other reasons behind the archiving of the documents, Samail said while investigating some war crimes cases, they found that several relevant documents were destroyed.

"So we decided to provide the documents to several libraries and institutions at home and abroad so that the defence forces cannot destroy them altogether," he said.

A prominent war crimes researcher, Mosifuddin Huq, also a trustee of the Liberation War Museum, praised the move and termed it a "commendable job".

"Storing documents is seen as a very important task in other war crimes tribunals worldwide. So, we need a rich archive," he said.

He said the agency should preserve every single document related to the trials.

## Address Rohingya crisis at APEC, ASEAN meets

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Myanmar to more diplomatic pressure, at least from world leaders, including the US, during the three summits hosted by Vietnam and the Philippines.

They said it would not be possible to let Myanmar to resolve the crisis without continuing pressure on the country.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres would be attending parts of the ASEAN and related summits in the Philippines while Myanmar de facto leader Suu Kyi would be meeting ASEAN leader in the Philippines after the APEC summit.

According to the HRW, the UN Security Council "should impose an arms embargo and targeted economic sanctions and travel bans on military officials implicated in the atrocities".

The council should now take

more meaningful action, but in the meantime governments concerned, especially those in Asia, could take coordinated bilateral or multilateral action to impose targeted sanctions and travel bans, the rights group added.

Leaders gathering in Asia should also discuss the creation of judicial mechanisms to hold perpetrators of abuses in Myanmar accountable, including via the General Assembly and Human Rights Council. The Security Council should refer the situation in Myanmar to the International Criminal Court.

The International Criminal Court was created precisely to deal with crimes against humanity like those being committed in Burma," Adams said. "Members of the Security Council attending the Asia summits should be discussing referring the situation in

Burma to The Hague."

Meanwhile, the Philippine Daily Inquirer in an editorial titled "ASEAN has an obvious role in Rohingya crisis" said representatives of the platform need to address the crisis in Myanmar's Rakhine state at its root causes.

Among the 10 member-countries of ASEAN, only Malaysia had displayed courage it said.

TRUDEAU TO MEET SUU KYI

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau was scheduled to hold a bilateral meeting with Myanmar leader Aung San Suu Kyi at the APEC summit in Vietnam, according to a report of Canadian Press.

This would be their first meeting since a crackdown by security forces began on August 25 and has forced Rohingyas to take shelter in Bangladesh.

About 200 entered Bangladesh just yesterday morning.

Last night, the UNB reported citing the UN Migration Agency that the number of new arrivals from Myanmar's Rakhine state now stands at 613,000.

Bob Rae, Canada's special envoy for the Rohingya crisis, is scheduled to be in Thailand on Friday to find out what is happening in Myanmar at the APEC leaders' summit.

Rae is also expected to use the 21-member APEC event to meet other regional players to push for a coordinated solution to the crisis.

Trudeau had said that he reached out to Suu Kyi about the atrocities being committed against the Rohingya.

Meanwhile, the Liberal government has come under pressure to strip Suu Kyi of her honorary Canadian citizenship.

## 'Bandhan' between Khulna, Kolkata

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ties is very much essential. In this regard, the PM mentioned about the vision of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman who had conducted the idea of regional cooperation in 1972. "This remains our constant guide. I am sure these connectivity initiatives will further consolidate this vision."

With the inauguration of these services, a new door of relationship has been opened up between the two countries, she said, adding that the relationship would be further strengthened in future.

Hasina said Bangladesh-India relations were in fact setting new high standards of bilateral cooperation in the region and beyond. "I'm sure we would be having many more such happy occasions in the days ahead for the greater benefit of our peoples."

She said it was yet another happy occasion in Bangladesh-India relations. "On this important day, I'm extremely happy to join your Excellency to formally launch the end of the immigration and customs of Dhaka-Kolkata Maritime Express and Dhaka of Kolkata-Kolkata Bandhan Express service."

The PM said these initiatives along with a new International Passenger Terminal at Chittagong, Kolkata would facilitate comfortable journeys between Dhaka-Kolkata and Khulna-Kolkata.

She expressed optimism that these services would give a boost to cultural exchanges and tourism between the people of the two countries.

Hasina said the two neighbours were having wonderful cooperation in the railways sector. "Since 2009, it has been strengthened further. Our two countries are also working to open our pre-1965 rail links for cargo transport between Bangladesh and India."

She thanked the Indian government for supporting the railways projects through the Line of Credit (LOC) funds.

Mentioning that connectivity is one of the main pillars of the Indo-Bangla bilateral cooperation, she said, "Our two countries are not only connected through rail, road, inland water and air, but we are connected through internet bandwidth, coastal routes, powergrid as well."

These new modes of connectivity were adding diverse dimensions to India-Bangladesh connectivity architecture. She expressed happiness that the countries recently extended their connectivity to space.

Hasina also extended a belated happy Diwali to Modi, Mamata, Indian External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj and the people of India.

She invited Modi, Mamata and Sushma to visit Bangladesh.

**INDIA IS A RELIABLE PARTNER**

The Indian PM said the launch of the first passenger train service between Kolkata and Khulna and three other key connectivity projects marked yet another step towards revival of the physical connectivity that had existed between the two neighbours before 1965, reports our New Delhi correspondent.

Earlier, Modi began his speech breaking into Bangla. "Aaj ei shubho upokkhe dui deshbandher amar abhinandan janai. Aaj amader

"Whenever we talk of connectivity, I am always reminded of the vision to revive the pre-1965 connectivity. I am happy we are taking relentless strides in that direction," Modi said.

He said India takes pride in being a "reliable partner" in Bangladesh's development. The 2nd Bhabanipore and 2nd Titas railway bridges would help strengthen the rail network of the latter he added.

The Indian PM said development and connectivity were linked with each other and the ties between India and Bangladesh, particularly between the people of West Bengal and Bangladesh, were decades old.

India and Bangladesh would touch a "new sky" of development and prosperity as the bilateral ties are being taken forward and people-to-people relations are further strengthened, he added.

Modi said the relations between the leaders of the neighbouring countries should be like the true meaning of the word "neighbour" and they should speak to each other and visit each other whenever they feel like and no protocol should come in the way.

Recalling that he and Hasina had used videoconferencing facility to jointly launch the South Asian Satellite and the integrated check-post at Petrapole-Benapole border earlier this year, the Indian PM said he was happy to once again get the opportunity to inaugurate a series of key connectivity projects.

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motrioe, bandhon aro sudriro holo."

Indian external affairs minister also joined the videoconference yesterday.

Foreign Minister AH Mahmud Ali, PM's Economic Affairs Adviser Moshiur Rahman, Political Affairs Adviser HT Imam, State Minister for Foreign Affairs M. Shahriar Alam, Indian High Commissioner to Dhaka Harsh Vardhan Shringla and secretaries concerned were present at the Gono Bhaban.

The two railway bridges have been built at a cost of \$100 million, which has been met from India's \$8 billion soft loan to Bangladesh.

The bridges will reduce travel time between Dhaka and Chittagong and Dhaka and Sylhet and trains using dual gauge and broad gauge track will be able to run on them.

Our Benapole correspondent adds: The Dhondh Express began its trial run from Kolkata with an 18-member Indian delegation on board. The train reached Benapole at 1:30pm.

Asim Kumar Saha, deputy regional manager of Bangladesh Railway, described the trial run of the train as a milestone.

Recalling that he and the train trial team started its commercial operation from November 16.

The Dhondh Express is scheduled to ply the route every Thursday. It will start from Kolkata at 6:00am and reach Khulna at 1:00pm.

On the return trip, it will leave Khulna at 1:30pm and reach Kolkata at 8:30pm on the same day.

The ticket fare has been fixed at Tk 1,500 for each passenger of AC compartment and Tk 2,000 for each travelling in AC cabin.

## Robbers kill three in Faridpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

Three people were killed and two others injured in two separate robbery incidents in two neighbouring upazilas of Faridpur early yesterday.

The deceased identified as Sazzad Mirinda, 37, son of Johor Mirinda and Senta Mirinda, 33, son of Aymen Mirinda of Abdul Gofur Mirinda Dangi village under Charbhadrasan Union of Charbhadrasan Upazila and Abdul Malak, 32, son of Sultan Kha of Soitankhali village under Dheukhali Union of Sadarpur Upazila.

The first incident happened in Abdul Gofur Mirinda Dangi village. A local resident said, "A gang of robbers numbering 16-17 broke into the house of Sazzad Mirinda around 2:00 in the morning. The pre-wedding celebrations of Fakir's son had been held at the house the evening before."

The gang held the family hostage and looted valuable including 45 tolas of gold ornaments. When villagers were alerted to the situation they chased the robbers who had by then broken into another house for a robbery.

The villagers found a speed boat docked at the nearby river and damaged it to prevent the robbers from escaping. However, two robbers guarding the boat opened fire and shot four

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## Dhaka sways

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Hason Raja, They were followed by reported Bangladeshi folk singer Fakir Shahabuddin, whose authentic rendition of folk songs from various regions, including Maizbandari songs and songs of Shah Abdul Karim got the audience on their feet.

Eminent Brazilian composer-singer Mauricio Tizumba and his sextet (six-piece band) presented the most energetic performance of the programme. With his band mates all playing various kinds of percussion instruments, Tizumba brought the exuberance of pulsating Afro-Brazilian beats that resonated superbly with the audience. The language being totally foreign did not stop the spectators from dancing and singing along to the chant-like songs.

The opening ceremony followed, where Finance Chairman of Sun Communications and Square Group Anjan Chowdhury, Dhaka South City Corporation Mayor Sayed Khokon, Dhaka Bank Managing Director and CEO Syed Mahbubur Rahman and eminent singer-researcher Indramohan Rajbhandari joined chief guest Finance Minister AMA Muhith on the dais.

In his speech, Anjan Chowdhury thanked the prime minister, the army, law enforcement and security personnel for supporting and making the festival possible.

"Music runs in the blood of Bangladeshi people; they sing when they go fishing, farming, doing their daily chores," AMA Muhith said in his speech. "Culture and taste is something that must be acquired and at a festival like this, where we get to hear the music of our roots and folk music from around the world, is significant in developing a cultured mind," he said.

The Dhaka International Folk Festival, presented by Meril, powered by Dhaka Bank and organised by Sun Communications, opened today and tomorrow, featuring an array of performers from Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Nepal, Iran and Mali.

## Five lives

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armed with spears, swooped on each other near Chiragram Bazar, leaving four dead on the spot and the others injured. Makbul died on his hospital bed.

Among the injured, Rifaqul Islam, 25, Tufazzul Islam, 38, and Kalam Mia, 48, were in critical condition. They were admitted to Kishoreganj Sadar General Hospital. The other injured were sent to Mitthamun Health Complex/government aid post.

He claimed that Rajib was attacked by the rival group without any provocation as he went near the canal yesterday morning. "The clash ensued when my men went to the spot to protest the incident."

Pallab could not be reached for comments. His mobile phone was switched off.

Majibur Rahman, chairman of Dhaka Union, said they tried to settle the issue several times before it came in.

Alamgir Hossain, officer-in-charge of Kishoreganj Sadar Hospital, said they recovered the bodies and sent them to Kishoreganj Sadar General Hospital for autopsy.

Additional law enforcers were deployed in the villages to avert any more untoward incident, he said.

No case was filed and no one was arrested till last night.

"We are investigating," the OC added.

## HC questions govt's decision about closure

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illegal

In the rules, the court also asked the authorities to show causes why they should not be directed to allow the school run its activities.

The HC bench of Justice Md Asifur Rahman, Justice Md Ataur Rahman Hussain and Justice Md Arifur Rahman said the petitioners had filed three writ petitions challenging the legality of the government's decision.

Advocate AF Hasan Arif, Barrister Akhter Imam and Barrister Rashedi Hussain, Attorney for the petitioners, while appearing before the HC on Sunday seeking a stay order on the petition.

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government's decision so that the school can run its activities as usual.

The Dhaka district administration on Tuesday sealed both the Dhamondi and Gulshan branches of the school on charges of patronising militancy, inspiring extremist views and helping form militant outfits.

Two teams of the district administration, led by two executive magistrates, conducted raids on the campuses of the English medium school in the evening as ordered by the Dhaka police commissioner.

Later, the schools' property was

handed over to its administration officer, who gave an undertaking that all the activities of the school would remain suspended for an indefinite period.

Yesterday, proprietor of the school Khaled Hassan Matin and guardians of 12 students submitted the three writ petitions to the HC seeking stay on the government's decision.

In the petitions, they said the educational activities of the school have been hampered due to the government decision and therefore, the education of the students has become uncertain.

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