



PHOTOS: KAZI TAHSIN AGAZ APURBO

who regularly sells relief items to the peddlers of this market says, “I need to repair my huts regularly after rain, I need to buy other daily necessities like salt, spices, clothes, utensils, and fuel. And, I have to do all these things by selling rice and other relief materials.”

The World Food Programme (WFP), with the help of local partners, has issued a food card for every Rohingya family settled in the refugee camps. The card entitles the family to receive three essential food items—rice, lentils and edible oil—once or twice a month depending on the size of the family. According to WFP’s distribution cycle:

- A Rohingya family of 1 to 3 members receives



Soaps and hygiene products of different kinds are some of the most popular items in the “Relief Markets.”

THE BUSINESS OF SURVIVAL

In a desperate need for cash, food, and daily necessities, Rohingya refugees are selling relief items to local traders

MD SHAHNAWAZ KHAN CHANDAN

Each afternoon, a race starts for the roads heading from Ukhaia to Kutupalong. Previously surrounded by thick, lush vegetation, both sides of the road are now occupied by peddlers who set up a bustling market there every afternoon. The race is to ensure every peddler gets the best spot to ensure maximum visibility of their merchandise which cannot be found in regular local markets. Hygiene products, baby food, packed dry foods of foreign brands, clothes, utensils, bed sheets, blankets bearing logos of different aid organisations are on sale here. These bazaars, which are thriving on the humanitarian aid given to the Rohingya refugees, are popularly known as “Relief Market” or “Rohingya Market”.

Shamsul Alam, a *majhi* (an unelected Rohingya leader in the refugee camp) of Lambasiya camp

30 kilos of rice, 9 kilos lentils and 3 litres of oil, once per month.

- A Rohingya family of 4 to 7 members receives 30 kilos of rice, 9 kilos lentils and 3 litres of oil, twice per month.
- A Rohingya family of 8 or more people receives 60 kilos of rice, 13.5 kilos of lentils and 6 litres of oil, twice per month.

According to this system, a Rohingya family which only has only three members (regardless of their ages) get the same amount of rice, oil, and lentils, as a family which has seven members, for the first 15 days of the month. On the other hand, a Rohingya family which has eight members and a Rohingya family which has 12-15 members (extended families of this size are quite common among the Rohingya) get equal amounts of rice, lentil and oil.