

Condition in Rakhine

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"Communities also spoke of the cumulative effect of restrictions on movement, further shrinking their access to livelihood and basic services. While some self-restrict their movement for real or perceived sense of insecurity or fear of neighbouring communities, others -- particularly [from] the Muslim communities -- are not allowed to move freely," the statement said.

"The communities we visited frequently spoke of challenges in getting to health services as well as restrictions on the Muslim population in accessing education," the UN assessment teams said.

The teams observed the serious effects on the communities, including on the local economy and diminishing livelihoods, which significantly increases the vulnerability of the communities remaining in Rakhine.

It added that fear and mistrust had an impact on access to education, healthcare and other basic services and also limited interactions between communities, hindering prospects for confidence-building and social cohesion.

"Building confidence and improving conditions among remaining communities will be essential to bring people together, to alleviate poverty, and to address health and education disparities alongside making tangible progress to address root causes," the assessment report said.

"Mistrust, fear of neighbouring communities and a sense of insecurity are prevalent in many areas. Communities often live in isolation, lowering the prospects for contacts, mutual understanding and inter-communal cohesion. This is notable

for relations between the Muslim community and other communities."

The assessment teams also observed that some communities, particularly those living in close proximity to each other, have maintained or restarted interactions.

Encouragingly, most of those who spoke to the teams expressed hope for peace in Rakhine and a number of them indicated willingness to incrementally strengthen or restore relations.

Although the two lead UN agencies partly unveiled their firsthand accounts in the statement, they did not elaborate on the infrastructural arrangements made by the government in Maungdaw for the implementation of "model villages for returnees" or plans for a long-term solution for the returnees.

The UN officials stated that they noted the efforts of authorities to facilitate initial assessment although those were limited in scope and in the locations visited.

While they do not allow for broader conclusions, the field visits had given UNHCR and UNDP an initial understanding of the challenges facing those living there.

The UN was allowed for a limited assessment of three months after the UNHCR and UNDP signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Myanmar on June 6 to support the creation of conditions for the return of refugees from Bangladesh.

a Myanmar daily, The Irrawaddy, reported, quoting Maungdaw District administrative official U Ye Htoo, that work had begun on two projects: building modest houses for the refugees and a new model village plan.

The structures are being built in 19 locations and will house Rohingyas and some non-Muslim groups. The government has 12 prioritised sites for new model villages with each one expected to include a market, school, public park and clinic.

As of Friday morning, the UNHCR and UNDP teams are starting the second phase of their assessments in the townships of Maungdaw, Buthidaung and Rathedaung, based on the travel authorisations received in the past 24 hours, UNHCR spokesperson Andrej Mahecic said in Geneva.

"We also look to have more predictable and broader access and rapid expansion of assessments and discussions continue on the modalities of 'effective access' to all areas in Rakhine covered by the Memorandum of Understanding."

He said the crucial next steps would include follow-up visits to already assessed locations in order to continue engaging with communities and facilitate design and implementation of pre-identified community-based initiatives.

Nearly 750,000 Rohingyas refugees fled Rakhine to Bangladesh following a brutal military crackdown that began on August 25, 2017. They joined the other 300,000 Rohingyas who had earlier fled to Bangladesh.

Dhaka claims that over 1.1 million Rohingya Muslims now live in Bangladesh.

Why Shahidul

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General Md Bashir Ullah told The Daily Star.

Shahidul, 63, who is now in Dhaka Central Jail, submitted the bail petition to the HC through his lawyers on September 18, saying that he is ill and he would not leave the country if he is granted bail.

In the petition, he also said section 57 of the ICT Act does not cover the allegations brought against him in the case.

On September 10, Shahidul's lawyers moved another petition before the HC for his bail in the case filed by police with Ramna Police Station on August 6.

After hearing the petition, the HC bench of Justice Md Rezaul Haque and Justice Abu Taher Md Saifur Rahman the same day directed the lower court concerned to dispose of the appeal by September 11.

On September 11, a Dhaka court rejected his bail plea in the same case.

The renowned photographer was picked up by plainclothes men from his home in the capital's Dhanmondi on August 5.

Police filed the case against him and produced him before a Dhaka court the following day. He was then placed on a seven-day remand.

In court, Shahidul said he was tortured in custody. Police denied the allegation.

On completion of his seven-day remand, Shahidul was denied bail and sent to jail by a Dhaka court on August 13.

Many notable personalities, including Nobel laureate Amartya Sen and 11 other Nobel prize winners, have called for immediate release of Shahidul.

Barrister Sara Hossain, advocate Shahdeeb Malik and barrister Jyotirmoy Barua appeared for Shahidul in the HC, while Attorney General Mahbubey Alam opposed the bail petition.

Wanted reforms

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"Indigenous communities and women are still backward. We think there should be a logical provision of quota system for the indigenous people, women and some underprivileged freedom fighters," said Nurul Huq Nur, another joint convener of the platform.

The protesters were compelled to withdraw their blockade after 30 minutes due to intervention from police, said Md Tohid, inspector (media) of Hathazari police.

PHYSICALLY CHALLENGED PEOPLE STAGE DEMO

Physically challenged people also demonstrated in three places across the country including Shahbagh yesterday.

Under the banner "Bangladesh Pratibandhi Shikkharthi Oikya Parishad", they demonstrated at Shahbagh intersection protesting against abolition of the quota system.

"We face too many hurdles to get higher education and jobs. Now it would be more difficult for us as the quota for us has been abolished. Injustice has been done to us," said Md Ali Hossain, one of the protesters.

They demanded reservation of five percent quota in class-I and class-II government jobs and 10 percent quota for class-III and class-IV jobs.

In Chattogram, around 50 physically challenged students of CU blocked Sholoshohor around 12:30pm, demanding reinstatement of the quota for them.

They blocked the road for one and a half hours until police intervention, said one of the protesters. Later, they cleared the road as police requested them to leave the road to lessen public sufferings.

Rajshahi University unit of Bangladesh Pratibandhi Shikkharthi Oikya Parishad also staged a sit-in before the university main gate around noon.

They also blocked the Dhaka-Rajshahi Highway, halting vehicular movement until around 2:00pm.

The physically challenged candidates had earlier enjoyed one percent quota.

On October 4, the government issued a circular abolishing the quota system for class-I and class-II jobs in the civil service.

According to the circular, recruitment in grade-9 (class-I) and grade-10 to 13 (class-II) at all government departments, autonomous or semi-autonomous institutions, and various corporations will be based solely on merit.

BNP looks to 'forgotten ones'

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and BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir and some other senior leaders have been tasked with coordinating the process.

Insiders said party's acting chairman Tarique Rahman already asked senior leaders to implement the plan at the soonest possible time.

Party sources said a number of former leaders could be reintegrated by October 15-16. There are some 104 reformist leaders listed and 66 of them are already back into the fold.

"We have a plan to bring back the former leaders and there are some good prospective candidates among them for the upcoming general elections," Jamiruddin Sircar, BNP standing committee member, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Those who want to be active again in the BNP are welcome, but no final decision has been made yet, he added.

For the first time since 1991, the BNP is neither in the government nor in the opposition now as it boycotted the general election on January 5, 2014. Some senior leaders said the party never had a hard time like this since the restoration of democracy in 1990.

The anti-government movement waged by the BNP-led 20-party alliance failed after the 2014 parliamentary polls. The party high-ups are now desperate to win the upcoming general elections.

BNP leaders said they are currently focused on organisational unity and making the party strong like it was during the 1991 general elections. The reinstatement plan is part of this effort.

"There are some 50 leaders who will soon rejoin the party and will be active in politics soon. Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir is contacting them upon instruction of acting chairman Tarique Rahman," a senior leader, wishing anonymity, told The Daily Star.

Insiders said the party high-ups are likely to re-accommodate expelled leaders Mafidul Hasan Tripty, Shahidul Haq Jamal, former lawmakers Najar Hossain, GM Siraj, SA Sultan Titu, Nurul Islam Moni and Akhtaruzzaman, among others.

Former student leaders Sanaul Huq Niru, MA Hannan, Kamrul Hasan Minto and Ershadullah are likely to come back, they added.

However, The Daily Star could not contact them.

Months after the political changeover of January 11, 2007, popularly called 1/11, a good number of BNP leaders sided with the then BNP secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan centring on a 15-point proposal to reform the party.

The leaders became known as "reformists".

Later, a new BNP central committee was formed under the leadership of M Saifur Rahman and Maj (retd) Hafizuddin Ahmed, but excluding party chief Khaleda Zia, who was kept under arrest by the then caretaker administration.

Interestingly, Khaleda is behind bars also when efforts are on to bring back the reformists now.

Some district-level leaders expressed solidarity with the committee of Saifur and Hafizuddin. However, most of the reformists became inactive in politics after the 2008 national elections when BNP became the opposition.

Of the reformist leaders, Hafizuddin, Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf, Sadeque Hossain Khoka, Asadul Habib Dulu, Nasirul Haq Sabu and some others have already become active in BNP.

Mashir said Nepal, Bhutan, and North East India have huge potential to generate hydropower. Bangladesh is importing electricity from India and has plans to import more.

"As hydropower is cheaper and clean, Bangladesh signed agreements with Bhutan and Nepal for investment there. India is also a party but it hasn't signed the memorandum for implementation of this project," he lamented.

He said India recognises the right of lower riparian's within India, but beyond India they ignore the fact that other lower riparian states could have claim.

A commission set up to resolve disputes between states that share the Godagari and the Kaberi rivers gave a decision that if the upper riparian

states affected the lives of the lower riparian people, the upper riparian states need to repair and restore the normal flow of water.

"That, in principle, recognises the right of people along the banks to the river water on which their lives depend. If India accepts it as universal right, that should extend beyond the boundary of the nation," said Mashir.

He also talked about engagement of Bhutan and Nepal to boost cooperation in the management of shared rivers.

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He added that they have also engaged students and teachers of different schools in the awareness campaign.

Emdadul said they would resume drive to clean water bodies, beginning from next week, to destroy mosquito breeding grounds.

Since the first-detected cases of dengue in Bangladesh in 2000, around 49,000 people have suffered from the fever, with at least 316 reported deaths. Most of the patients were from Dhaka or its neighbouring districts and they took treatment in hospitals and clinics in the capital, according to DGHS.

Dengue fever is a mosquito-borne tropical disease caused by the dengue virus. Typically, symptoms begin three to four days after infection from mosquito bites. This may include high fever, headache, vomiting, muscle and joint pains, and skin rash.

It said it would be open for business on Sunday and "hope you will come and share your smiles, love, friendship and hugs with us."

Book returned

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he found the book and decided to return it. He said it was what his mother would have done, the library's assistant manager Jackie Morales said.

"He was surprised that (his mom) still had it in her possession. She was very responsible," she said.

The binding is loose on the book, a first edition, so the library said it has decommissioned it. But it's a book that Morales knows well.

"I was assigned the book in high school," she said. "My English teacher had each student in class memorize a different poem."

As for the late fee, Morales said the library never even considered it. "The account wouldn't even exist anymore," she said. "We purged our accounts in 1934."

The story has people aspiring to follow in the man's footsteps.

"I hope this encourages other people to return their items," Morales said. "It's never too late to return your library books."

Hindu temple

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The matter had also been taken to court, he said.

President of the temple managing committee said he had filed a case in connection to the vandalism against Shahidul and 44 others, with Pirojpur Sadar Police Station.

SM Ziaul Haque, officer-in-charge of the police station, said a case was filed against 45 people, in which 10 people were named with Shahidul being the prime accused.

Police have already caught two suspects named Mohidul and Wahiduzzaman, he said, adding that they were trying to nab all the accused in the case.

After the incident, locals kept the Pirojpur-Gopalganj-Dhaka road in the area blocked for hours, demanding exemplary punishment of the culprits.

Being assured by police that appropriate punishment will be given in this regard, the locals later withdrew the blockade.

Upon visiting the spot, Mollah Azad Hossain, additional superintendent of police in Pirojpur, said they were investigating the incident.

UP chairman Shahidul, who lives in Dhaka, could not be contacted by this correspondent for a comment as his mobile phone remained switched off.

20 killed

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Twitter that a limo was involved and it was sending investigators to the scene.

It was unclear how many of the fatalities were pedestrians or occupants of the vehicles but witnesses at the scene said several bodies could be seen on the ground outside the Apple Barrel, according to the Times Union.

The store, a popular stop for tourists viewing fall foliage in the area, posted a message on its Facebook page lamenting the "horrific accident."

It said it would be open for business on Sunday and "hope you will come and share your smiles, love, friendship and hugs with us."

2019, it added.

Till date, EVMs have been used in India in 113 elections to state assemblies and three parliamentary polls since 2000.

"Addition of Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) to the EVM has helped strengthen the voters' trust and transparency of the voting process," the Commission said.

A VVPAT is an independent printer system attached with the Electronic Voting Machines (EVM) that allows the voters to verify that their votes are cast as intended. VVPAT slips will be visible to the voter for seven seconds behind the transparent screen of VVPAT, before falling into the sealed compartment at the base of the machine.

The Commission said the specially designed thermal paper to be used in the VVPAT is capable of retaining the printout for more than five years so that it is available for manual verification by the Court if required in the event of a dispute cast.

So far, VVPATs have been used in 933 state assembly constituencies and 18 parliamentary constituencies, the EC said.

The Commission on Saturday announced the schedule of assembly elections in five states -- Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Telangana and Mizoram.

No change in Khaleda's treatment

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jail on February 8 in the Zia Orphanage Trust corruption case. She landed in prison the same day.

Meanwhile, member of the medical board Prof Sajal Krishna Banerjee of cardiology was replaced by Associate Prof Tanjima