

ICC seeks

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obtaining reparations before the ICC, but is limited to the submission of victims' views, concerns and expectations on the prosecutor's request to open an investigation, said ICC in the statement on August 16.

The Victims Participation and Reparations Section (VPRS) of the Registry at the ICC has prepared a template victim representation form, which is available on the ICC website.

Guidelines on how to fill in the form are available in English, Burmese, Bangla and Rohingya (audio) to help victims understand and fill in the representation form. Victims can also submit their views in other formats, including in video or audio.

"It is important that the representations, irrespective of their format, contain the information requested in the template representation form," the statement said.

The deadline for submitting victim representation forms to the ICC is October 28, 2019, and the process of submitting representations is voluntary and free of charge, the statement said.

Representations made under article 15 (3) of the Rome Statute do not grant victims participatory status in potential future judicial proceedings, it said.

Victims interested in applying to participate in judicial proceedings before the ICC or for reparations in this situation will have to fill in a separate application form which will be made available in the future if needed be, it added.

On September 6, 2018, Pre-Trial Chamber I of the ICC decided that the court may exercise jurisdiction over the alleged deportation of the Rohingya people from Myanmar occurred on the territory of Myanmar to Bangladesh.

Myanmar, which is not a state party to the Rome Statute, earlier rejected that ICC has jurisdiction over the matter. ICC Prosecutor Fatou Bendouda argued that it can go for investigation as Bangladesh, where the Rohingya were allegedly forcibly deported, is a state party to the Rome Statute, the statement added.

Merchants

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as some seasonal small traders and farmers threw away rawhide after failing to find buyers. They put the price of the dumped rawhide at Tk 100 crore.

Tanners were buying rawhide of cows, bulls and buffaloes at Tk 45-50 per square foot in the capital and Tk 35-40 elsewhere as per the government's decision.

Rawhide of castrated goats were being purchased at Tk 18-20 per square foot. For uncastrated goats, the price was at Tk 13-15.

Some 60 percent rawhide of the tanners' total demand is collected during the Eid-ul-Azha season as more than 1 crore animals, including bulls, goats and sheep, are slaughtered across the country each year.

Shakawat Ullah, general secretary of Bangladesh Tanners Association, said all the tanners started buying rawhide yesterday at government-fixed prices.

He said there was no problem in rawhide trade as both the tanners and merchants agreed to accept the decision of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI), the country's apex trade body.

Shakawat said although a good number of pieces of rawhide has been damaged this year, there would be no crisis of rawhide as more animals were sacrificed this year compared to previous years. "Our target is to buy 1 crore pieces of rawhide."

He said there were 155 tanneries at the Savar Tannery Industrial Estate which went into operation more than two years ago.

Of them, 123 have already started production and rest will go into operation soon, he added.

Besides, there are three tanneries outside of Dhaka.

The major rawhide trading markets outside Dhaka are in Chattogram, Natore, Jashore, Mymensingh, Kishoreganj, Tangail, Dinajpur, Rangpur, Palashbari, Cumilla, Feni and Sylhet.

Ali Hossain, owner of Haji Awlad Hossain and Sons, a rawhide merchant at the capital's Posta, said he sold about 1,000 pieces of rawhide of cows to the tanners yesterday.

Some 15,000 pieces of rawhide were sold at the Posta market on the first day of sale, he added.

Rawhide from outside Dhaka were yet to reach Posta. Merchants from outside the capital would bring rawhide to the market within next 10 to 15 days, Hossain told this newspaper.

He said tanners, who were financially sound, were buying rawhide now.



A BRIDGE TO NOWHERE: This small bridge without any approach road was built for Tk 14.85 lakh in Madhya Dighalkandi village of Bogura's Sonatola upazila. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: MOSTAFA SHABUJ

Govt to feed students from next January

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them in intervals and drink a lot of water afterwards.

"The policy usually does not fix modalities. It will be fixed in the DPP [Development project proposal]," Primary and Mass Education Secretary Akram-Al-Hossain told The Daily Star yesterday evening.

He added that the government was considering different options like providing hot meals, fortified biscuits or package meals consisting of an egg, bread and banana.

"We will start providing meals to primary schools of disadvantaged and rural areas from January next year," Gias said at briefing at the secretariat after the meeting.

Gias said that if the government provides fortified biscuits it would require about Tk 2,830 crore annually, for cooked meal it would require Tk 5,560 crore, and for the egg, bread and banana packages Tk 7,475 crore.

"We will try to engage private entrepreneurs based on a public-private partnership at union levels to provide the school meals," he said.

Bangladesh currently has two school feeding programmes.

Under one programme, the government gives packets of biscuits, each weighing 75 grams, to nearly 3 million children at primary schools in 104 upazilas, he said.

Under a separate pilot project that began in 2013, around 34,000 students get hot vegetable khichuri meals in three upazilas -- Bamna in Barguna, Islampur in Jamalpur, and Lama in Bandarban, he said.

Gias said that they have seen attendance rates increase by 11 percent in the areas where cooked meals were given and by 6.6 percent where fortified biscuits were given.

Besides, dropout rates decreased by six percent in schools that provided the meals.

WHAT'S IN THE POLICY? Cabinet secretary Mohammad Shafiq Alam at the post-meeting briefing in the secretariat said in an attempt to ensure minimum dietary diversity, meals would be prepared with fortified rice, vegetable oil, locally-grown fresh vegetables and, if possible, eggs, so that students get enough protein and micronutrients.

The policy also proposes the formation of a National School Meal Authority under the primary and mass education ministry, and a Food and Nutrition Research and

Development Centre, he added.

The menu will be selected in consultation with the schools' managing committees, parents and locals. The programme will be overseen by an advisory committee comprising respected locals, the policy said.

Once the policy is implemented, it will minimise students' short-term hunger, create a more positive learning environment and allow students to better concentrate in classrooms, ministry officials said.

It also approved in principle the draft of the integrated special education policy of disabilities related to Neuro-developmental disabilities (NDD) and integrated special education policy on disabilities not related to NDD.

The government had formulated the policies to curb the spread of less qualified special education schools, the cabinet secretary said.

From now on permission from a committee led by UNOs at the upazila level and DCs at the district level would be needed before setting up a special education school, he said, adding that there would be another committee to monitor the quality of education at these institutions.

There should be at least 75 students at a school and the Teacher-Student Ratio should be 1:5, to meet the need of special care for children, he added.

Shafiq also said that the cabinet approved in principle the drafts of Mongla Port Authority Act 2019 and the Chandpur Science and Technology Act 2019.

He said the draft of the Mongla Port Authority Act 2019 proposed strict punishment for polluting rivers.

If any person throws or allows waste, oil, ash and others to be thrown from vessels into the water and/or riverbanks, they would face imprisonment for a term which may extend up to one year, a fine of Tk five lakh or both, Shafiq said.

He said that currently there was an option of a Tk 50,000 fine for pollution.

The weekly cabinet meeting was held at the Prime Minister's Office after almost a month, as Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina returned to Bangladesh on August 8, after completing a 20-day visit to the United Kingdom. Offices were also closed for Eid vacation and the National Mourning Day.

Over 1,000km roads damaged by flood

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damaged by floods this year. The country has 21,576km of national and regional highways and district roads.

Of the affected roads, 195.3km are national highways, 167.6km regional highways, and 641km district roads. At least 15.6km of roads were washed away and seven bridges and culverts were damaged.

"We collected the information on affected roads and repair requirements from our divisional offices," Munir Hossain, executive engineer working at the control room, told this newspaper.

The RHD has 65 divisions and 31 of them were flood affected.

WHY SO MUCH DAMAGE? Experts blame poor planning ahead of road construction and ignoring impacts of climate change as the main reasons for floods causing so much damage to roads and the high repair bills.

In 2017, at least 5,015km of roads were affected by two floods and the RHD had to ask for an additional Tk 1,166 crore from the finance ministry for repairing them.

Transport expert Prof Shamsul Haque yesterday said flood usually causes more damage to roads in Bangladesh as roads and highways are often built blocking natural flow

of water.

When a road is built blocking natural water flow, especially the ones that go eastwards or westwards, more culverts are needed. But engineers give this little consideration, he claimed.

Due to climate change, intensity of rain has increased, he claimed, adding, "But we haven't considered this climate factor while designing our roads and other infrastructure. That's why we often see damages to large structures by floods."

Prof Shamsul, also a former director of Buet's Accident Research Institute, (ARI), said absence of proper drainage system, which should be an integral part of roads, is another reason for the damage to roads and highways. The RHD and Local government Engineering Department give little emphasis on this, he said.

Asked about remedies, he said the authorities should go for climate resilient infrastructure development approach. "Otherwise, we will spend huge amounts of money every year and not see benefits," he added.

"Engineers and contractors doing the repairs must be held accountable for their work," he said. Transparency and accountability in fund usage must be ensured.

Kazi Md Shifun Newaz, assistant

professor of the ARI, also said the authorities should consider potential impact of climate change while designing roads and highways.

He said roads should be built considering the highest flood level and submersible roads could be constructed in suitable places. Submersible roads can stay under water for months and not get damaged.

THE DAMAGE Around 25 percent of the roads under the RHD are in "poor, bad or very bad" condition, according to an RHD survey on 17,452km of roads completed in March, well before the floods.

The roads in Sirajganj came off worst in the floods this year compared to other districts. At least 185.74km of roads were damaged, including 33.74km of a national highway.

Ashrafur Islam, executive engineer of RHD's Sirajganj division, told The Daily Star over the phone that they sought Tk 9.85 crore for patch up work and Tk 29.40 crore for road restoration work.

He said they were not sure when or how much of the money they would get but they have made the roads "usable" with their regular road maintenance fund. The division received Tk 7.35 crore for regular road maintenance in the last fiscal

year. Rangpur had 88.5km of roads flood damaged, Cox's Bazar 79km, Kurigram 72.4km, Naogaon 58.75km, and Feni 57.33km.

Roads and highways in Jamalpur, Netrakona, Kishoreganj, Mymensingh, Bandarban, Chattogram, Lalmonirhat, Gaibandha, Moulvibazar, Sylhet, Sherpur, Sunamganj, Habiganj, Faridpur, Bagerhat, Bogura, Rangamati, Khagrachhari, Natore, Tangail, Laxmipur, Pabna, Feni, Rajshahi, Khulna and Dohazari RHD divisions were also damaged, according to the Flood Control Room.

Asked when they would get the money they seek, Superintendent Engineer Azad said, "It is not possible to say for sure ... but we have already made the roads passable using our own resources."

The road transport and bridges ministry would forward the proposal to the finance ministry which would have the final say regarding the allocations, he added.

Another RHD officials said the finance ministry, upon receiving the proposal, usually asks them to use their regular repair and maintenance fund to patch up the roads as such allocations takes some time to process.

Right tests

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there is an 18 percent chance of false results, Kankar said.

Three-year-old Ayyad Arham had a high fever of 103 degrees Fahrenheit on August 11.

He took the NS1 test from a private hospital in Mirpur only 24 hours later, but the test showed that he did not have dengue.

He then took a CBC, which is a blood test used to evaluate a person's overall health and detect a wide range of disorders, including anemia, infection and leukemia. The CBC test conducted on August 13 showed that Ayyad's platelet count had dropped to 1.35 lakh from the normal range of 1.5 lakh to 4 lakhs.

Sharmin Rahman, mother of Ayyad, said that following the instruction of physicians, they had done IgG and IgM test on August 18 and the IgM tests showed the child had dengue, although his platelet count had increased to 2.56 lakh by then.

The timing of tests is also not the only thing to look out for.

HM Nazmul claimed there were different qualities of NS1 kits and low-quality kits sometimes failed to diagnose dengue.

Many kits were purchased within a short time following the kit crisis, but they were not all of the same quality, he added.

Suggesting not to depend only on NS1 kit, Nazmul said patients should also conduct IgG/IgM and CBC tests, as some of the main symptoms, such as a falling platelet count, starts from the third day of the fever.

The health expert said they conducted CBC tests on the third or fourth day of the fever, while IgM and IgG tests are done on the sixth or seventh day.

"If the symptoms seen are of dengue, but NS1 fails to detect the infection, then we keep the patient under observation. We conduct a CBC test on the third or fourth day [of running a fever]," he said.

Technical errors were also issues in getting the correct results, Kankar said.

About technical errors, the medical expert said sometimes lab technicians may make mistakes which result in the tests coming out negative, adding that it was necessary to see the result of the NS1 test within 15 to 45 minutes of taking blood for it.

"We should not depend on NS1 every time. Rather doctors should look for symptoms of dengue in a patient and then make the final diagnosis," he said.

Introduced in 2006, the kit allows rapid detection on the first day of fever, before antibodies appear some five or more days later.

SIX DIE OF DENGUE

Six people died of dengue in Dhaka, Mymensingh, Khulna and Faridpur yesterday, increasing the unofficial death toll to 104.

The official death toll, however, is at 40.

According to the Directorate General of Health Services, 1,615 dengue patients were admitted to different hospital across the country in the last 24 hours till yesterday 8:00 am.

The number of dengue cases is now 54,797.

Fatema Begum, 45, a resident of Narayanj's Bandar upazila, was admitted to the Mitford Hospital in a critical condition and died of dengue at around 1:30am yesterday.

In Mymensingh, Anwar, 40, died of dengue around 1:00am at Mymensingh Medical College and Hospital (MMCH), said Dr AB Md Shamsuzzaman, assistant director of the hospital.

Anwar, from Netrokona's Kendua upazila, was admitted to the hospital around 4:00pm on Sunday afternoon, the doctor added.

Another person Selim Mia, 27, of the district's Durgapur upazila, also died

of dengue in the same hospital yesterday.

After being diagnosed with dengue in Dhaka, he was admitted to MMCH on August 13 and died yesterday, said Shamsuzzaman, adding that Selim had other health complications as well.

In Khulna, Mizanur was admitted to Khulna Medical College

Hospital with dengue on August 15 and died at 7:00am yesterday, reports UNB quoting Dr Sailendranath Biswas, resident medical officer of the hospital.

In Faridpur, Delwar Hossain died around 10:00am after being diagnosed with dengue at Faridpur Medical College Hospital, UNB reports.

Delwar's father Sheikh Safiuddin said they admitted Delwar to Faridpur Sadar Hospital with dengue and shifted him to Faridpur Medical College Hospital on Sunday night.

In another case, Syeda Samiya Aktar, 32, a housewife from Faridpur, died of dengue at a private hospital in Dhaka around 7:30pm on Sunday, said Miraz Hossain, one of Sumaiya's cousins.

(Our Mymensingh, Faridpur, Bagerhat, Manikganj and Khulna correspondents also contributed to the report.)

Doubts linger over voluntary return

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to live in Bangladesh as refugees.

"They are always ready to return to their own residences. But the Myanmar government will have to fulfil Rohingyas' demands," the resident of a Kutupalong refugee camp told The Daily Star.

Their demands include holding accountable those who killed and tortured the Rohingyas and drove them out of their land; ensuring citizenship and security of Rohingyas in Myanmar; giving back their lands and properties and protecting all fundamental rights of Rohingyas in Rakhine.

Mohib Ullah, president of Rohingya Society for Humanity and Peace, said the Rohingyas do not want

to live in Bangladesh as refugees.

"They are always ready to return to their own residences. But the Myanmar government will have to fulfil Rohingyas' demands," the resident of a Kutupalong refugee camp told The Daily Star.

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The first attempt of Rohingya repatriation was made on November 15 last year, a year after Bangladesh and Myanmar signed a bilateral repatriation deal following the influx of nearly 750,000 Rohingyas since August 25, 2017.

The repatriation could not begin as the Rohingyas did not volunteer to return, saying there was no guarantee of citizenship and safety in Rakhine.

In June 2018, Myanmar signed a tripartite deal with the UNDP and UNHCR, allowing the agencies to undertake assessment work and propose and implement community-

based projects to create conditions conducive for Rohingya return.

The UN has maintained many times that it does not believe the current situation is ready for large-scale returns.

"We nonetheless respect the right of individual refugees to return should they wish to do so, and will provide support where we can," Joseph Tripura said in a written interview.

"The Rohingyas have their own networks through which they may know better the conditions back in Rakhine," said another UN official, requesting anonymity.