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ROHINGYA REPATRIATION ATTEMPTS

RESULT ZERO

Myanmar doing little while Bangladesh facing financial, ecological and security challenges



PORIMOL PALMA

When Bangladesh continues to bear the brunt of sheltering more than a million Rohingyas, Myanmar is doing little for their repatriation amid silence of global powers though the Southeast Asian country faces a genocide case, experts and officials said.

About 750,000 Rohingyas -- injured and starved -- fled a brutal military crackdown since August 25, 2017, leaving their homes burnt and relatives killed. Bangladesh generously opened the border and sheltered them, but is now facing tremendous financial, ecological and security challenges.

Even before 2017, some 300,000 other Rohingyas, who fled earlier waves of violence in Myanmar since 1978, were sheltered here.

Bangladesh hastily signed a repatriation deal with Myanmar in November 2017. The next year, UNHCR and UNDP signed a tripartite deal with Myanmar on creating conducive conditions for Rohingya return.

However, none of the demands of the refugees -- guarantee of their safety, basic rights and citizenship -- has been met Myanmar. As a result, two repatriation attempts -- one on November 15 in 2018 and the second on August 22 last year -- fell flat.

Even, the provisional order issued by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in January this year has failed to help make any headway. Dozens of MORE ON PAGE 3 SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

Myanmar frustrating repatriation efforts

Says foreign secy

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

In the face of Myanmar's strategy of doing nothing about restoring normalcy in Rakhine, Bangladesh is demanding the international community to create basic services, safety, security and livelihood options for the Rohingyas who would return to Myanmar.

Myanmar is doing what's needed to frustrate repatriation efforts, Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen told a webinar on the Rohingya Crisis: Western, Asian, and Bilateral Perspectives.

Center for Peace Studies (CPS) of South Asian Institute of Policy and Governance (SIPG) at North South University organised it in partnership with the High Commission of Canada to Bangladesh ahead of the third anniversary of Rohingya influx today.

"With the recent clearance operations by Tatmadaw against the Arakan Army in SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Media gag on govt employees

Old rules invoked to make approval mandatory for talking to, writing in the media; rights activists alarmed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The public administration ministry has asked all secretaries to give necessary instructions to their subordinates so that no public servant writes or talks to the media without prior approval of the authorities concerned.

Shaikh Yusuf Harun, secretary at the ministry, confirmed to The Daily Star yesterday that a letter has been sent to each and every secretary, citing section-22 of the Government Servant (Conduct) Rules, 1979.

"Yes, we have sent the letter. Is there any problem in reminding our officials of the matter?"

Asked what has prompted such a reminder now, he said, "Some [public servants] are talking to the media but they are not supposed to do so. That's why we have sent the letter."

The development comes at a time when rights groups and activists have expressed concern over "the government crackdown" on freedom of expression, especially since the coronavirus pandemic hit the country in March.

They say the latest move would shrink the scope of work of mass media, SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

Journo Kajol denied bail yet again

Taken to BSMMU for check up

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday again refused to grant bail to photojournalist Shafiqul Islam Kajol in a case filed under the Digital Security Act.

Judge KM Emrul Kayesh of the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court of Dhaka passed the order after Kajol's lawyer Jyotirmoy Barua submitted an appeal against the lower court's rejection order.

On June 24, Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Dhiman Chandra Mondol rejected Kajol's bail petition SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

City buildings breeding Aedes

DGHS survey finds buildings with multiple floors by far the worst

HELEMI ALAM

Multi-storied buildings in the capital are the most common breeding ground for Aedes mosquitoes -- carriers of both dengue and chikungunya viruses -- followed by the buildings under construction.

A survey conducted by the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) during the monsoon has revealed that 51.34 percent of the spots, where Aedes larvae have been detected, were in multistoried buildings while 20.32 percent spots were in under-construction buildings.

Among others, 12.83 percent were in slum areas, 12.57 percent in individual buildings and 2.94 percent in abandoned lands.

The survey was conducted at 2,999 houses in 100 areas -- 41 in Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) and 59 in Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) -- from July 19 to July 28. It detected Aedes larvae in 374 houses.

Experts urged the two city corporations and its residents SEE PAGE 5 COL 4

ONLINE NEWS PORTALS

Exclusion of leading dailies from list surprising

Says Editors' Council

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Editors' Council yesterday expressed surprise over the exclusion of leading newspapers from the government list of online news portals.

"The country's television channels do not require any separate government approval for publishing news online. The same rules should be applied for newspapers as well because those are published with government approval just like the television channels. SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

BANGLADESH UPDATE



2,485

New cases in 24hrs



2,97,083

Total cases



3,983

Deaths



1,82,875

Recoveries

GLOBAL UPDATE



813,579

Deaths



23,647,489

Total cases

Suspects confess to murder, girl found alive

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

A girl, who had allegedly been raped and murdered according to an abduction case, was found alive yesterday, 51 days after her going missing from Bandar upazila of Narayanganj.

A police team found her in Kushiya area of the upazila yesterday morning and brought her to Narayanganj Sadar Model Police Station, law enforcers said.

As the girl went missing, the abduction case was filed with Sadar Police Station against three persons, including two youths. Later, the trio confessed in a court that the body of the girl was dumped in the Shitalakkhya river after gang-rape and murder.

Meanwhile, the families of the youths claimed that the police had beaten the three accused, who are now in jail, in remand and forced them to make their confessional statement. However, the police denied the allegation.

Narayanganj Additional Superintendent of Police (administration) Mostafizur Rahman told at a press briefing yesterday noon that the fifth-grader had been missing since July 4.

About two weeks after her disappearance, her mother lodged a general diary (GD) with the Narayanganj Sadar Model Police Station on July 17.

On August 6, her father filed an abduction case with the police station.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6



Office clerks and night guards at government primary school demonstrate in front of the primary education directorate in the capital's Mirpur yesterday, demanding that their jobs be made permanent and their work hours fixed. The demonstrators blocked a street from Mirpur-1 to Mirpur-10 for five hours from 10:00am, disrupting movements of vehicles. Many of them were not wearing masks.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Govt to start antigen testing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Health Minister Zahid Maleque yesterday said the government was going to take an initiative to start antigen rapid testing in public Covid-19 labs to diagnose the coronavirus.

He was addressing an event marking the handover of medical equipment, a donation from the Taiwan External Trade Development Centre, to the Bangladesh government to fight novel coronavirus outbreak.

"Three types of tests are conducted for diagnosing coronavirus. These are PCR test, antigen test and the rapid antibody test. The government has no plan for now to conduct antibody test. Initiatives are being taken to carry out antigen test alongside the PCR test only at government laboratories," the minister told the programme at the secretariat.

Zahid said all government departments related to Covid-19 were active in bringing vaccines to the country. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina would make a right decision at the right time after scrutinising the quality of the vaccines, he added.

On June 3, the National Technical Advisory Committee on Covid-19 had recommended introducing the antigen rapid testing in the country. Many health experts have been stressing for months on using both antigen and antibody rapid tests to ease the pressure on pathology service.

Rapid diagnostic tests (RDTs) are easy-to-use paper tests to facilitate testing outside of laboratory settings. The results of the tests are available within a short time

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5