



The Daily Star

SECOND EDITION



REGD. NO. DA 781

VOL. XXXI No. 213

BHADRA 10, 1428 BS

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MUHARRAM 15, 1443 HUIRI

16 PAGES PRICE : Tk12.00

NOWHERE TO GO

Rohingya repatriation even more uncertain, riskier after military takeover in Myanmar



PORIMOL PALMA

Rohingya repatriation has become even more uncertain following the military takeover in Myanmar while the displaced people find it riskier to go back to their motherland where there is no legitimate government right now.

To make things worse, the global focus has shifted to the Afghanistan crisis very recently with the Taliban seizing control of the South Asian country, analysts have said.

The Rohingyas, who had fled a brutal military crackdown since August 25, 2017, say there is no guarantee of citizenship, fundamental rights and safety in Myanmar at present.

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4 YEARS OF ROHINGYA CRISIS

- Total Rohingya population in 34 camps of Cox's Bazar **8,72,000**
- In Bhasan Char **18,000**
- Outside camps **2.30 lakh**

“We need to keep alive the Rohingya repatriation issue despite all odds, and continue to press, including the Myanmar military.”

MD SHAHIDUL HAQUE
FORMER FOREIGN SECRETARY

FUNDS REQUIRED FOR
Education, Health, nutrition, Food security, Shelter, protection, Water, sanitation & hygiene, Logistics, Coordination, Site management & development, Emergency telecom

Since August 25, 2017, donors contributed **\$2.59 billion**

Bangladesh economy is burdened with an estimated **\$1.21 billion** a year: CPD



AUG 25, 2017
Rohingya influx began

NOV 23, 2017
Bangladesh, Myanmar signed repatriation deal

NOV 15, 2018 and AUG 22, 2019
Repatriation bids failed

NOV 11, 2019
Gambia filed genocide case with the ICJ

JANUARY 23, 2020
ICJ issued order asking Myanmar to prevent acts of genocide

ROHINGYA FUNDING

YEAR	REQUIREMENT	FUND RECEIVED
2017	\$434m	\$317m
2018	\$951m	\$655m
2019	\$920m	\$699m
2020	\$1,058m	\$629m
2021	\$943m	\$295m

Funding on decline, challenges up

PORIMOL PALMA

As international funding for the Rohingyas declines, Bangladesh faces increasing challenges to manage the displaced people amid little prospect of repatriation anytime soon.

The fund for humanitarian assistance that ranged between 72 and 75 percent of the total requirement in the first three years since 2017 came down to 65 percent in 2020. Until July this year, \$366 million has been committed or disbursed, which is only 34 percent of the required amount of around \$1 billion for this year.

Now, along with the global pandemic comes another humanitarian crisis following the takeover of Afghanistan

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DU to reopen dorms in first week of Oct

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka University is going to reopen its dormitories for the resident students of master's and honours final year in the first week of October, as the government moves to reopen educational institutions in phases.

Meanwhile, the authorities of primary and secondary schools have been asked to ensure that their campuses are clean and ready for reopening after over 18 months of closure due to the Covid pandemic.

At a meeting yesterday evening, the DU provost committee decided to reopen in the first week of October the dormitories for the resident students of master's and honours final year, who will sit for examinations, said Prof KM Saiful Islam Khan, provost of Sir AF Rahman Hall.

The students will be allowed to stay in the dormitories for 15 days during the exams, he told The Daily Star.

Later in phases, other honours students will be allowed to stay in dormitories and sit for exams, he added.

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Railway runs with rundown engines

175 out of 263 locomotives overaged; 78 of them more than 50 years old

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Bangladesh Railway (BR) is trudging along because of its excessive reliance on outdated locomotives caused by the failure to add new engines to its fleet in time.

Poor planning, lengthy procurement process, contractors' failure to deliver shipments as promised, and lately the Covid-19 pandemic have left the BR with 67 percent of its locomotives overaged, experts and engineers pointed out.

As a result, the state-run transport agency is failing to live up to the expectations in terms of services and run trains on schedule. At the same time, its operational costs are going up, they said.

Currently, the BR has 263 locomotives in its fleet. Of them, 175 -- 67 percent of all the locomotives -- are overaged, according to the latest data.

Among the overaged locomotives, 78 locomotives are over 50 years old. Nine locomotives procured in 1953 are still in



- 77% metre gauge, 47% broad gauge engines overaged
- BR plans to purchase 140 locomotives to replace old ones

service.

The economic life of a locomotive is considered to be 20 years.

The BR has long been struggling to run its services with the outdated engines, but the situation deteriorated after more than

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Cox's Bazar Airport Runway to be stretched to the sea

RASHIDUL HASAN

The government has taken up a project to extend the runway of Cox's Bazar airport by claiming land from the sea.

The Tk 1,568.86-crore project aims at upgrading the airport to international standards and offering foreign holidaymakers a hassle-free trip to the world's longest sea beach.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will virtually lay the foundation stone for the extension to be built on the sea at Cox's Bazar Airport on August 29.

Once done, the 11,700 feet runway will be the country's longest, where wide-bodied planes like the Boeing 777-300ER and Boeing 747-400 will be able to take off and land,

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Dengue spreading from hospitals too

HELEMUL ALAM and SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Nine-month-old Ismail has been undergoing treatment at Dhaka Shishu Hospital for around two months, and around a month and a half ago, underwent surgery for his brain tumour.

But around 10 days back, the condition of the recovering infant started deteriorating and it was found that he had contracted dengue.

"Ismail has been suffering from high fever and was diagnosed with dengue around five days back. He was shifted to the dengue unit from the surgery unit and is now in critical condition," said Hosneara, Ismail's grandmother, on Sunday, adding that they did not take him out of the hospital during this time.

Contracting dengue infection while hospitalised shines a light on the danger patients face in some city hospitals, the authorities of which do not take the required steps to eradicate breeding sources of Aedes mosquitoes -- which are carriers of dengue and chikungunya viruses.

Mobile courts of Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) recently fined a total of Tk 1.9 lakh to two private hospitals in Jatrabari and Dhanmondi after finding Aedes larvae at the sites.

"Our mobile courts fined Northern Hospital in Dhanmondi Tk 1 lakh and Asian Hospital and Diagnostic Centre at Jatrabari Tk 90,000 for getting Aedes mosquito larvae," said Md Abu Nasher, public relations officer and spokesperson for the DSCC.

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24 officials 'asked to take care of secy's ailing mother'

Minister says there was no official order

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock recently issued a written order directing 24 of its officials to look after the ministry's Secretary Rawnak Mahmud's mother who is undergoing treatment at the National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases (NICVD).

The order has been making the rounds in social media platforms and sparked sharp criticism among netizens.

The Daily Star obtained a copy of the order. The order, however, did not contain any signature of any ministry official.

The order asked ministry officials, including a deputy secretary, to look after the secretary's mother round the clock.

It also asked the officials to coordinate their duties and time schedules with Azizul Islam who is the

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This dual-carriageway, connecting Fojdarhat and Bayezid in Chattogram, was built cutting part of a hill. A large chunk of earth recently fell on the road and the authorities, deeming it unsafe, have closed off one side of the road at Jangal-Salimpur and set up contraflow on the other side. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

Do not leave your country

Taliban ask West not to encourage Afghan experts to flee

AGENCIES

The Taliban yesterday urged skilled Afghans not to flee the country, as the new rulers of Afghanistan warned the United States and its Nato allies they would not accept an extension to the agreed August 31 evacuation deadline.

The developments follow what two US officials said was a meeting between CIA Director William Burns and Taliban leader Abdul Ghani Baradar in Kabul on Monday to discuss the chaos in Afghanistan after the Taliban's unexpectedly swift takeover.

No details of the meeting were reported and neither the CIA nor the Taliban confirmed it.

US President Joe Biden, who said last week troops might stay past Aug. 31 to evacuate Americans, will follow a Pentagon recommendation to remove the troops by that date as long as the Taliban enables the US to complete its evacuations, three US officials said.

Two US officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, told Reuters that there was increasing concern about suicide bombings by Islamic State militants at the airport, which has been overwhelmed by Afghans and foreign citizens rushing to leave, fearing reprisals.

One US official said it was no longer a question of if, but when, militants would attack and the priority was to get out before it happened.

The hardline Islamist Taliban told the thousands of Afghans crowding into the airport in the hope of boarding flights that they had nothing to fear and should go home.

"We guarantee their security," Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid told a news conference in the capital, which Taliban fighters seized on Aug 15 from the Western-backed government after two decades of war.

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