

How Rohingya youth are fighting for education

MD SHAHNAWAZ KHAN CHANDAN

Abdul Aman, a Rohingya boy of 18, was a student of grade eight in 2017. His dream was to travel abroad for higher education after completing his school.

Aman's dream was shattered when his village Shikderpara, like many others, was razed to the ground during Myanmar military raid on August 26, 2017.

After weeks of trekking through jungles and mountains, Aman and his family members reached Teknaf and finally got shelter at Kutupalong Lambashia refugee camp. Aman never imagined that he would be able to go to school again.

However, in 2018, some Rohingya youth came forward to establish schools inside the refugee camps in shanties with Burmese books and educational materials.

Aman got the opportunity to study again in one of these informal, makeshift schools run entirely voluntarily by Rohingya youth, many of whom had studied in colleges and in universities in Myanmar.

Around half a million Rohingya children in refugee camps in Bangladesh do not have any access to formal education. Only around 1,45,000 of them attend 1,600 learning centres where they get access to only pre-primary and primary level education.

However, there is no recognised educational facility for Rohingya adolescents like Aman, who are above the age of primary schooling.

In the miserable and uncertain environment of the refugee camps, these informal schools in shanties have restored joy and hope among thousands of Rohingya children and adolescents.

"I am so grateful to my teachers who opened this school for us. In this school, I completed up to 12th grade and I learned to communicate fluently in English and Bengali. Thanks to this education, I often get employed by aid workers as a translator and guide. I also teach at the school, mostly students from grade one to five. Three of my siblings are also studying in the school," said Aman.

Yassin Abdul Monab, a Rohingya youth, is a founder of one of these schools.

Yassin was a student of Sittwe University in Rakhine. In 2012, Myanmar government

REFUGEE CRISIS: FOUR YEARS ON



A student delivering his lessons at a makeshift school in the Rohingya camp.

Around half a million Rohingya children in refugee camps in Bangladesh do not have any access to formal education. Only around 1,45,000 of them attend 1,600 learning centres where they get access to only pre-primary and primary level education.



PHOTO: COURTESY

As we don't take any money from the families, we always suffer from severe resource constraints. We have to purchase educational materials frequently because many students have to use same books and they get worn out quickly.

Mohammed Iqbal
Teacher at a makeshift school

We are teaching according to Myanmar curriculum as we hope that we shall be repatriated with citizenship.

Yassin Abdul Monab
Founder of a school

expelled all Rohingya students from universities and colleges. As a consequence, Yassin was forced to drop out when he was a 4th year student of the university's English department.

In Kutupalong refugee camp, Yassin and his friends found thousands of children and adolescents who were in dire need of education.

"We became really worried when we saw that thousands of meritorious children and youth are getting deprived of education. They have the talent but many of them are sitting idly, doing menial works. Many of them are even getting trafficked," stated Yassin.

Mohammed Iqbal, a teacher of a makeshift school, said, "We thought of setting up schools in the camps like we had built in our villages in Arakan. However, the

problem was how would we get books and curriculum? We did not find any Burmese textbook or syllabus in the refugee camps as during our exodus, we could only bring our essential belongings with us."

However, these passionate Rohingya youth came up with a daring solution -- bringing the materials from across the border.

"Some of our relatives stranded in Rakhine helped us to purchase those materials. We could have been killed by landmines, we could have been shot by Myanmar border police but we were determined to bring books and curriculum which were essential to establish our schools," said Iqbal.

"We thought that if we could not educate our children about our history and cannot give them modern education, an

entire generation of our people will sink into ignorance. This thought was our main driving force," he added.

At present, these Rohingya youth are running around 50 schools in different refugee camps.

These schools start at 5 pm and continue up to 8 pm as the teachers have to work during the day for their livelihood. Usually, these schools are housed in long huts comprising two or three rooms. These huts have been erected by community people.

Students are divided into three to four groups according to their age and grade. Teachers like Yassin and Iqbal help these students in their studies.

In one such schools founded by Yassin and his friends, more than 500 students are studying at present completely free of cost.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

AUGUST 21 GRENADE ATTACK

Khaleda govt didn't want to hand over victims' bodies: PM

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday alleged that the then Khaleda Zia government refused to hand over bodies of August 21 grenade attack victims to their relatives.

The prime minister said this in her introductory speech at the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecnc) meeting held at the capital's NEC Auditorium.

She joined the meeting virtually from her official residence Gono Bhavan.

Referring to the 17th death anniversary of Ivy Rahman, former president of Bangladesh Mahila Awami League and wife of late president M Zillur Rahman, the premier said she was taken to Combined Military Hospital (CMH) for treatment.

"I don't know when she [Ivy] died. Khaleda Zia had been there to see her. After her departure, Ivy Rahman was declared dead," she recalled.

She mentioned that Ivy's three children -- Papon (present BCB president), Tania and Moyna -- were kept locked in a room for three to four hours while the then PM Khaleda Zia went there.



SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

10 lakh Pfizer doses to arrive Aug 30

114 more die from Covid-19

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 10 lakh doses of Pfizer vaccine, gifted by the US, is set to arrive in Dhaka on August 30, further easing the crunch of Covid-19 vaccines in the country.

The consignment is scheduled to reach Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport at 7:15pm, according to a press release from the health ministry.

Health Minister Zahid Maleque, Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen and US Ambassador to Bangladesh Earl Miller will be present at the airport to receive the consignment, the release said.

Earlier on May 31, the first consignment of 1,06,000 doses of Pfizer vaccine reached Dhaka. The government received the vaccine under the global vaccine-sharing initiative Covax.

Those vaccines were administered in six centres inside Dhaka city, as they need to be stored at about negative

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

People can be rehabilitated, nature cannot

Sultana Kamal says criticising safari park project in Moulvibazar



If there's a safari park inside the forest, the character of the evergreen forest will change. The animals and birds that live there will face habitat loss.

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Criticising the government's decision to construct a safari park in Moulvibazar, president of Bangladesh Paribesh Andolan (BAPA) Sultana Kamal said, "People can be rehabilitated, but not nature."

She also alleged that the government did not take locals' opinion into consideration when it took the decision to construct a safari park in Moulvibazar's tropical evergreen forest.

She made the remarks after a 10-member team visited the forest in Juri upazila of the district yesterday. The proposed safari park will be built on 5,631 acres of the teak forest.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

'Will start holding symbolic classes from Sept'

Teachers say demanding reopening of univs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

University Teachers' Network, a group of teachers of different universities, yesterday announced that they will hold symbolic classes in open spaces, if authorities do not reopen universities from the first week of September.

They made the announcement at a virtual press conference, where they also proposed a roadmap on how to reopen campuses gradually.

According to the roadmap, the residential halls should be reopened immediately (from September 1) for honours and master's students. Once their exams are over, the following batches should get residential facilities step by step.

"No examination can be taken without ensuring residential facilities. Students who will stay in the dorms and those who will come from home should participate in exams in separate rooms to curb Covid-19 transmission," said Chittagong University Assistant Professor Maidul Islam while presenting the keynote paper.

After exams end, there could be a "hybrid system", where students get the opportunity to participate in classes -- both online and offline. Fifty percent of students

PROPOSED ROADMAP

- Reopen dorms from Sept 1
- No exams without ensuring residential facility
- Hybrid (both online, offline) classes
- Covid testing, vaccination centres on campus

could join online and the rest could start regular classes in the classroom.

"If a student falls ill, they can join online," Maidul added.

He said, the "gonoroom" system in halls should be abolished.

Teachers should be the authority, not the ruling party's student wing, he added. Necessary steps should be taken to ensure hygiene rules under supervision of house tutors.

"This pandemic has also given us an opportunity to renovate the halls," he said.

According to the keynote paper, Covid-19 testing and vaccination centres for students should be installed at campus medical centres on a priority basis. The capacity of medical centres, along with isolation facilities, should be upgraded.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5



To save just a few minutes, pedestrians and bicyclists often resort to acrobatics to get through level crossings when the barrier is down. But this comes with incredible risks, especially during nighttime. On top of that, every such flouting of the rule encourages more to do it. This photo was taken yesterday from Khilgaon Rail Crossing.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

It's 2nd longest in the world

Unicef on Bangladesh's school closure

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The first day of school is a landmark moment for the youngest students and their parents. But due to the Covid-19 pandemic, it is being delayed for around 40 lakh children of Bangladesh for the last one-and-a-half years, Unicef said yesterday.

This extends to an estimated 140 million children across the world. For an estimated eight million of them, it has meant they couldn't get their initiation into education, as they live in places where schools have remained closed throughout the pandemic, Unicef said in a new analysis released as summer break comes to end in many parts of the world.

According to the analysis, Bangladesh's school closure -- started since March 17 last year -- is the second-longest in the world.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

Dengue claims another life

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Another person died of dengue while at least 258 more patients were hospitalised in the last 24 hours till 8am yesterday, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

Among the 258 new cases, 46 are from outside Dhaka.

There have been 38 dengue-related deaths in the country this year. Twelve people died in July while 26 have died in August so far.

Out of the total 8,575 infected, 5,917 were diagnosed in August alone. Of the

Death toll 38
26 died in Aug so far, 12 in July
258 more hospitalised yesterday

total infected, 557 are from outside Dhaka.

At least 2,286 patients were hospitalised in July, 272 in June, and 43 were infected in May, according to the DGHS.

Though most of the patients who were hospitalised have so far been released, 1,146 are still undergoing treatment at hospitals in Dhaka, and 89 outside the capital, the DGHS data shows.

Meanwhile, Dhaka North City Corporation mayor Md Atiqul Islam

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

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Application Deadline:
18 September 2021

GRADUATE PROGRAMS

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LLM	

Application Deadline:
18 September 2021

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