What is happening with hajj pilgrims?



capability.

What's

hajj package. Last year, the cheapest

will increase the total expenditure to

How did the cost increase so much

The increased dollar rates certainly

played a role behind such inflated

commercial monopolisation of hajj

Bangladesh and Saudi Arabia, Biman

Bangladesh Airlines carry half of the

pilgrims for hajj, and the other half is

flown by two Saudi carriers – Saudia

As per the agreement between

flights by our national flag carrier.

at least Tk 8-8.5 lakh.

within a year?

and Flynas.

GOLAM MORTOZA

Usually, only those who are Biman, Saudia and Flynus have financially capable can partake in all raised their fares by 30 percent, the hajj pilgrimage. In a country which is double the usual price hike. like Bangladesh, apart from a few Usually, a round-trip air ticket individuals, most have a limit to such

for a Bangladesh-Saudi flight costs between Tk 80,000 and Tk 1 lakh. Considering the reality, people This year, Biman is charging Tk 2 lakh save for a number of years - some for the flight from the hajj pilgrims. throughout their whole lives - to The reason Biman has presented be able to go for hajj. This year, there are 127,000 slots available

for the doubling of airfare is quite strange. According to the Biman for Bangladeshis to perform hajj. authorities, as the flights carrying hajj However, so far only 38,000 devotees pilgrims to Saudi Arabia will come have completed the registration back empty, they will recover the loss incurred from empty flights through causing this slow doubling the ticket price. enrolment into hajj packages this

Instead of addressing the rampant corruption and irregularities The problem lies in this year's surrounding aircraft leasing. repair, pilot appointment, airport government hajj package was priced management, etc, the air carrier has at Tk 4.62 lakh. This year, the same targeted the hajj pilgrims to recover package costs Tk 6.83 lakh. Qurbani, its losses. food and other accompanying costs

Perhaps the authorities assumed that no matter how much the hajj packages cost, the Muslim devotees in the country would take part in hajj. But due to limited spending capacity, even after the deadline was extended costs, but the core reason lies in the a few times, the registrations did not pick up. Biman clearly didn't consider people's limited purchasing

> Now the question arises: what could Biman have done differently?

One drawback of hajj flights is that they can only carry hajj pilgrims. The flights landing at the hajj terminal in

Saudi Arabia have returned empty – they cannot carry general passengers back. Similarly, empty flights have to fly to Saudi Arabia to bring the pilgrims back after hajj. This is what Biman has considered to double the ticket prices, passing the burden on to the hajj pilgrims.

It must be noted that Saudia and Flynas are not allowed to carry "If Biman adds a stopover in Dubai countries are allowed to fly an equal its fair share of liability. The policies in hajj flights, this issue can be resolved as the empty flights can then carry general passengers to and from Dubai. It is a busy route during Eid, and as there are fewer Middle-East-bound flights compared to the demand, the fare increases naturally."

"If Biman flights make a stopover in Dubai or any other Middle East

number of flights every day. Only Emirates conducts three daily flights from Dhaka, Fly Dubai and Air Arabia conduct several daily flights, too. On the other hand, Biman and US Bangla only have two flights per day. Thus, there are many unutilised slots that Biman can easily use during haji."

According to aviation experts,

that they are formulating are clearly not pro-people.

In conclusion, let me draw your attention to the hajj packages offered in India and Pakistan.

According to India's hajj committee website, since 2018, the hajj package in India costs 399,000 rupees. Also, as per a gazette from the minority affairs ministry, the government will pay a subsidy of 100,000 rupees per pilgrim this year, which means a pilgrim will ultimately have to pay less than 300,000 rupees. In Bangladeshi taka, that's less than Tk 4 lakh.

Pakistan's economy is almost on the brink of collapse. They are yet to officially announce their hajj package, but according to a report by Pakistan Today, the country's religious affairs ministry may set the package price at one million rupees, which is equivalent to around Tk 4

According to ATAB, airfare for hajj flights is equivalent to Tk 1.2 lakh at best in both India and Pakistan.

It is actually about being considerate towards the people of the country. In Bangladesh, this trend is declining, especially in government and among policymakers. Even a symbolic gesture of empathy towards the general population is a far cry these days.

For this reason, a corruptionridden organisation like Biman implemented a policy to put more pressure on the people, instead of trying to reduce the corruption level. And the government has aided them in this effort. In the end, it's the ordinary, pious people who are bearing the brunt.

Translated



VISUAL: TEENI AND TUNI

either. Yet, due to poor monitoring at the Dhaka airport as well as the absence of a designated hajj terminal, these Saudi airlines carry general passengers on hajj flights.

Regarding carrying passengers on hajj flights, Bangladesh has scopes for negotiation with Saudi

Speaking to The Daily Star, aviation expert Wahidul Alam said,

general passengers on hajj flights country, they can make hefty profits Biman took the easy way out for hajj even without burdening the hajj pilgrims with doubled airfare," he added.

Can Biman get permission to do this?

"Biman can easily seize the opportunity," Wahidul Alam said. "Many slots are left empty in the Dubai flight schedule, which Biman can utilise. The deal between

flights. Arranging stopovers in Dubai will require efforts and negotiations; Biman avoided that and instead the airline authorities opted to pass the burden on to the hajj pilgrims.

If policies are unclear, if citizen welfare is not the focus of the policies, then decisions like this become easy to make and implement.

Biman is not solely to blame for Bangladesh and UAE is that both this situation – the government has *Ishtiaque Khan.*

Mohammed

The statelessness of Rohingya children and the world's responsibility



an international development worker, is

currently studying Mid-Career Master in Public Administration at John F. Kennedy School of

LAILA KHONDKAR

During a visit to one of the Child-Friendly Spaces inside a Rohingya camp in Cox's Bazar, I met a group of children who made me forget for a few moments the situation that brought them to the camp - the atrocities they had suffered. I was touched by their laughter, warmth, and liveliness. These spaces, set up by Save the Children, were set up in an effort to bring back a sense of normalcy to these children's lives. While observing their activities, I kept thinking about the uncertain future the Rohingya children face due to their statelessness.

A stateless person is someone "who is not considered as a national by any state under operation of its law." More than 15 million people are estimated to be stateless globally. They have no legal protection and are generally denied basic rights, such as education, healthcare, employment, housing, freedom of movement, political participation, etc. Stateless people are vulnerable to discrimination, exploitation and abuse, which includes arbitrary detention, forced labour, trafficking and violence.

Statelessness and children's rights

Children are dependent on the nurture and protection of their surrounding environment to survive and develop. In addition to individual carers, this environment consists of social, cultural and political structures that anchor their sense of belonging and wellbeing. One of the major building blocks of these structures is nationality. Not having a nationality can make it difficult for children to access some of the most fundamental rights - e.g. birth registration, education, healthcare, family life, adequate standard of living, social security, etc.

According to Article 7 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), children should be registered immediately after birth and have the right from birth to acquire a nationality. The principle of the best interests of the child (enshrined in Article 3 of the UNCRC) gives them the right to have their best interests assessed and considered in all actions or decisions affecting their life. Statelessness is contrary to that principle.

The 1954 Convention Relating to the Status of Statelessness Persons provides important minimum standards for treating stateless people. The 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness is important regarding the right of every child to acquire a nationality. Under this convention, states must grant nationality to children who would otherwise

be stateless and have ties with them through either birth on the territory or descent.

The most persecuted minority in the world

In 1982, the Rohingva were arbitrarily stripped of their Burmese citizenship through the passing of a citizenship law. Children born subsequently to Rohingya parents are also deprived of their right to a nationality. The Rohingya population in Myanmar have been continuously deprived of their fundamental human rights. The UN has described the Rohingya as "the most persecuted minority in

Over a million Rohingya have fled violence in Myanmar since the 1990s. Their largest and fastest exodus began in August 2017. This forced more than 742,000 Rohingya to seek refuge in Bangladesh, the majority of whom were women and children. Around 90 percent

Children are dependent on the nurture and protection of their surrounding environment to survive and develop. In addition to individual carers, this environment consists of social, cultural and political structures that anchor their sense of belonging and well-being. One of the major building blocks of these structures is nationality. Not having a nationality can make it difficult for children to access some of the most fundamental rights.

Rohingya people who had already left Myanmar live in Bangladesh and Malaysia. Some also live in Myanmar, Indonesia, Thailand, India and several other countries.

How statelessness affects the rights of Rohingya children

As many as 700,000 Rohingya children live in five countries (Myanmar, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia). None of these countries have ratified the 1951 Refugee Convention, the 1954 Convention Relating to the Status of Statelessness Persons, and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. But all have ratified the UNCRC, prevent the statelessness of children Rohingya children often struggle to access

birth registration, which means they have no official records regarding their existence. This makes them vulnerable to abuse and exploitation, prevents them from exercising other rights, and receiving legal recognition and protection as children. As they grow up, they are unable to acquire other important identity documents such as national IDs. This affects their future prospects, limits their freedom of movement, and they find themselves in a vicious cycle of poverty and marginalisation.

Rohingya children struggle to access comprehensive, quality education. The reasons for this are varied. In Myanmar, Rohingya children face strict restrictions on accessing formal education. This includes restrictions on the movement of the Rohingya, the government teachers' reluctance to teach in Rohingya schools, and intercommunal fear and distrust. In Bangladesh and Malaysia. Rohingya children are not allowed access to formal education. They rely on UN agencies, NGOs and local communities to provide informal education. Thailand and Indonesia have policies that ensure that refugee and undocumented children can access education at all levels. However, there are challenges in implementation.

While primary level education is usually more available for Rohingva children. secondary level students struggle to continue studies. This is due to a lack of schools and limited financial resources. Even when children have access to secondary schools, education is often not accredited. This means these children leave school with no officially recognised qualification.

The UNHCR Education Strategy 2012-2016 articulated an approach of including refugee students in educational structures of the host countries instead of isolating them in parallel systems. The 2018 Global Compact on Refugees, the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework, and the 2019-2030 UNHCR Education Strategy have further codified it. The approach of including refugees in national education systems is described in global instruments as "responsibility sharing." But it can only be such if it includes financial support from the developed countries to the low- and middle-income countries that host most of the refugees. Over the past decade, an average of less than two percent of all humanitarian funding was allocated to education. Without funding, the integration approach places the responsibility of refugee education on the host countries. It is important to ensure the accountability of the host countries as well as the countries of Global North, so that refugee children can realise their right to education. This is relevant for the education of Rohingya children as well.

How to end the statelessness of Rohingva children

One of the goals of the UNHCR Global Action which means they have certain obligations to Plan to End Statelessness (to be achieved by

2024) is that all states have a provision in comprehensive, quality, accredited, and to stateless children born in their territory, children of unknown origin found in their territory, and children born to nationals abroad who are unable to acquire another nationality. Myanmar, Bangladesh, of Rohingya children and contribute to realising their rights:

* The states should give all Rohingya children born in the country access to universal birth registration. The states should immediately grant citizenship status to children born in the country who would otherwise be stateless. The states should take effective steps to register children born in the country whose births have not yet been officially registered.

The states must introduce full legal safeguards in their nationality laws to ensure that childhood statelessness is prevented.

The states should take measures so that all Rohingya children are able to access

their nationality laws to grant nationality inclusive education. Donors should provide the required funding for education of Rohingya children.

* The states should recognise child protection activities as lifesaving services and ensure that UN agencies and NGOs Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia should have full access to communities in need. do the following to end the statelessness

In addition to education, donors should provide adequate funding for child protection interventions.

* The states should ratify the 1951 Refugee Convention, 1954 Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons, and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. Measures should also be taken to incorporate their provisions into domestic law and there should be initiatives to implement them fully in policy and practice.

States can end the statelessness of Rohingva children if they want to. Do they have the required political will to make that

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Executive Engineer (RHD) Road Division, Pirojpur

11-Apr-2023 at 16:00

E-mail: pirdivisionrhd@gmail.com Memo No. 35.01.7980.462.07.001.20-647(3)

e-GP/Pird/ADP/02/2022-2023 & 798233

Date: 09/03/2023

Invitation for e-Tender (Corrected)

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal for the following works: Tender Package & ID No. e-GP/Pird/ADP/01/2022-2023 & 798158

Construction of 2 Nos. PC Girder Bridge (75.848m), 5 Nos. RCC Box Culvert (18m), Diversion Road, RCC Drain, RCC Retaining Wall, Concrete Slope protection with Geotextile, Toe Wall, Sign-Signal, Road Marking etc. from chainage 0+000 km to 4+650 km of Charkhali-Tushkhali-Mathbaria-Patharghata (Z-8701) Zilla Road under Road Division, Projpur during the year 2022-23. (WP-01)

Marking etc. from chainage 4+650 km to 11+200 km of Charkhali-

Tender last selling date and time

Tender closing & opening 12-Apr-2023 at 12:00

date and time

Tender Package & ID No.

Name of tender

Name of tender

Construction of 3 Nos. PC Girder Bridge (116.814m), 5 Nos. RCC Box Culvert (18m), Diversion Road, RCC Drain, RCC Retaining Wall, Concrete Slope protection with Geotextile, Toe Wall, Sign-Signal, Road

Tushkhali-Mathbaria-Patharghata (Z-8701) Zilla Road under Road Division, Pirojpur during the year 2022-23. (WP-02)

Tender last selling date 11-Apr-2023 at 16:00

and time Tender closing & opening

12-Apr-2023 at 12:15 date and time

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copy will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, please register on e-GP System For more details please contact e-GP help

(http://www.eprocure.gov.bd). (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

> Tanvir Ahmed ID No. 602308

GD-462

Executive Engineer (C.C.), RHD Road Division, Pirojpur