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6 YEARS OF ROHINGYA INFLUX

2023



The Balukhali Rohingya camp-9 in Ukhiya upazila of Cox's Bazar is now crammed with shanties, *top*. The Rohingyas had fewer shanties there back in 2018, *bottom*. The Myanmar citizens had crossed into Bangladesh fleeing a military crackdown in Rakhine six years ago.

PHOTO: RAJIB RATHAN, ANISUR RAHMAN

2018



WHERE DO THEY STAY?

CAMPS IN COX'S BAZAR
9,54,707

OUTSIDE THE CAMPS
3,00,000 (Approx)

TOTAL
12,54,707

FUNDING KEEPS DECLINING

YEAR	REQUIREMENT	FUND RECEIVED
2017	\$434m	\$317m -- 73%
2018	\$951m	\$688m -- 72%
2019	\$920m	\$692m -- 75%
2020	\$1,058m	\$684m -- 65%
2021	\$943m	\$679m -- 72%
2022	\$881m	\$426m -- 49%
2023	\$875m	\$260m -- 30%

“If the Myanmar junta was really sincere, it would amend the citizenship law and recognise our ethnic identity. That has not happened, however.”

Nay San Lwin, Rohingya activist

Trapped in a geopolitical bind

PORIMOL PALMA

Six years into one of the world's biggest refugee crises, the fate of more than one million Rohingyas sheltered in Cox's Bazar hangs in the balance as efforts to repatriate them see little progress due to increased global geopolitical tension.

Geopolitical analysts and diplomats say while Myanmar continues to deny citizenship and ethnicity to the Rohingyas, polarisation between the global powers has intensified on account of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, casting doubt on the possible solution to the crisis.

“China has recently ratcheted up its engagement with Myanmar for Rohingya repatriation. However, the US does not want the repatriation under Chinese leadership, especially when the Myanmar military is in power, oppressing pro-democracy civilians,” a foreign diplomat based in Dhaka said requesting anonymity.

Washington, which gives the most

amount of money to deal with the crisis, does not support the Beijing-led repatriation efforts as it will not be sustainable under the current political and security conditions in Rakhine, the diplomat said.

The UN also thinks that the conditions in Rakhine are not conducive to repatriation.

Since the beginning of the Rohingya crisis in 2017, there has been geopolitical tension with the UN Security Council divided over the issue. The situation has worsened following the Russian invasion of Ukraine, in which the US and its allies have taken a strong position against Russia and its allies, including China.

Meanwhile, as of mid-August, funding for the Joint Response Plan for the Rohingya Humanitarian Crisis totalled less than a third of its \$876 million overall appeal, according to a statement issued by the UN refugee agency, UNHCR.

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen said the Rohingya crisis appears to become a “geopolitical game”.

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REFUGEE CAMPS Killings, narco crimes on rise

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN and
MOHAMMAD ALI JINNAT

Crimes, particularly those related to narcotics and murders, have witnessed a significant rise inside the Cox's Bazar Rohingya camps over the last seven months.

At least 43 Rohingyas have been killed in the camps in the first seven months this year. The figure was 132 from August 25, 2017, to December 31, 2022, according to police data.

Rohingya leaders said Myanmar-based armed groups Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (Arsa) and Arakan Solidarity Organisation (RSO) are mainly responsible for those killings. The murders were carried out in order to gain control of the narcotics and arms trade inside the camps.

Officials, however, blamed the uncertainty over the Rohingya repatriation for the rising crimes.

“Arsa and RSO have been committing crimes to get their hand on different trades, including narcotics and arms trades. Their objective is to impede the repatriation process by creating chaos,” said Mohammed Zobayer, a Rohingya leader and also the chairman of Arakan Rohingya Society for Peace and Human Rights.

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End cycle of sanctions and counter-sanctions

PM urges world leaders while addressing BRICS summit

STAR REPORT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has called on world leaders to end the cycle of sanctions and counter-sanctions and to raise voices against all threats,

India, China and South Africa, was formed in 2010 as an alternative to the West-influenced World Bank and International Monetary Fund.

Hasina also held bilateral meetings with heads of the state of four countries



COURTESY: FOCUS BANGLA

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina exchanges greetings with her Indian counterpart Narendra Modi during the BRICS summit on Wednesday.

provocations and commission of war.

“We must reject attempts to weaponize universal norms and values,” she said, addressing BRICS-Africa Outreach and the BRICS Plus Dialogues at Sandton Convention Centre in Johannesburg yesterday, reports UNB.

She then urged the leaders to spend resources on what is good for the people, not on the arms race.

BRICS, an alliance of Brazil, Russia,

on the sidelines of the Summit. She met Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, President of Mozambique Filipe Jacinto Nyusi, President of Tanzania Saima Sulluhu, and Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi.

“Let BRICS be a lighthouse in a multi-polar world, emerge as an inclusive platform, and take responsibility for peace, justice and stability around the globe,” she said in her speech.

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GOVT JOBS Jobseekers to pay extra for applying online

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

From now on, jobseekers have to pay commission and value-added tax on top of the application fee when applying for different government jobs online.

However, such VAT and commission will not be applicable if the application is submitted in person, as per a circular from the finance ministry yesterday.

The authorities will be able to receive the application fee through Teletalk Bangladesh Ltd, the notice said.

In such case, there will be a 10 percent commission on the application fee and a 15 percent VAT on the commission.

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BRICS admits 6 countries to bloc

Leaves door open to further expansion; Xi hails it as ‘new starting point for cooperation’

AFP, Johannesburg

BRICS leaders yesterday announced the “historic” admission of six new countries from next year as the club of large and populous emerging economies seeks to reshape the global order.

The BRICS – Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa – agreed at their annual summit to make Argentina, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates full members from January 1.

“This membership expansion is historic,” said Chinese President Xi Jinping, whose nation is the most powerful in the group of non-Western states that represents a quarter of the world's economy.

“The expansion is also a new starting point for BRICS cooperation. It will bring new vigour to the BRICS cooperation mechanism and further strengthen the force for world peace and development”.

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Bribe incidence less here than in India, Pakistan

Says ADB report

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The incidence of bribe requests in Bangladesh is less than in India and Pakistan, according to a recent report from the Asian Development Bank.

In Bangladesh, 23 percent of the firms said they have been solicited for gifts or informal payments (i.e., bribes) when meeting with tax officials, according to the ADB's ‘Key Indicators for Asia and the Pacific 2023’ released yesterday.

In Pakistan, the proportion of firms reported getting such requests is 30.8 percent, which is the highest in South Asia. In India, it is 27.2 percent, which is the second-highest in the region.

“Paying taxes is required of formal forms in most economies, and the rationale for this indicator is to measure the incidence of corruption during this routine interaction.”

Both Bangladesh and India's figures are based on 2022 data, while Pakistan's figure is from 2013.

This year's report, which is the 54th edition of the publication, highlights the importance of better and more timely data for policymaking as many of the comparisons were made on dated information.

For instance, the cross-country comparison of aid received was based on data from 2021.

In 2021, Bangladesh saw the second-highest aid commitment among the 49 countries in the Asia and the Pacific region, behind only India.

Bangladesh got \$3.05 billion in aid commitments and

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A crowded corridor of the medicine outpatient department at the capital's Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College and Hospital. The dengue outbreak has been straining many health facilities in the country for months.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

6 JCD MEN'S ARREST

It's a ‘poorly scripted drama’

Says pro-BNP student body

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal has said that law enforcement agencies' claim of arresting six of its leaders with firearms was nothing but “a poorly written play”.

While speaking at a press conference at the BNP's Nayapaltan central office yesterday, JCD central committee leaders said their activists are not involved in “gun politics”.

Recently, the Detective Branch of Dhaka Metropolitan Police claimed to have arrested six JCD leaders with firearms and ammunition. It said these were collected to destabilise the country before the upcoming national election.

According to the JCD, 20 leaders of the pro-BNP student body have

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