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EXPORT-IMPORT WITH MYANMAR THRU TEKNAF SUSPENDED FOR FOUR MONTHS



Almost all export and import activities between Bangladesh and Myanmar through Teknaf Land Port in Cox's Bazar have remained suspended for nearly four months, putting hundreds of traders involved the sectors in trouble.

Due to the closure of the port's operation, export-import goods worth crores of taka stored in the warehouses are rotting and getting waste.

The government is losing a huge amount of revenue for non-delivery of the goods. In

addition, thousands of port-dependent workers have been deprived of their daily income and also become unemployed.

On the spot, it was seen that the entire port is lying empty. There is no product stored in the field. There are no trawlers or ships loaded with goods at the jetty on the Naf River. There is no movement of traders. All the doors of the godowns are locked.

Port-dependent workers said that about 1,500 of them are engaged in export-import

activities here. Their work has been stopped for the past four months due to which they are unable to make a daily living. They have no alternative work. In this situation, they have to live a very helpless and measurable life. If the situation continues, their family members will have no choice but to starve to death.

Port traders claim that cement and potatoes worth crores of taka, which were stored for export to Myanmar, have been destroyed. They do not know why border trade was stopped. As a result, hundreds of importers and exporters have faced financial losses.

"Goods cannot be exported due to lack of consent from the Arakan Army, the occupier of Rakhine State. No goods are being allowed to enter Teknaf Land Port from Myanmar. This has put hundreds of traders in trouble," an agency

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Export-import with Myanmar
thru Teknaf suspended

representative named Mohammad Ullah said. "Now government intervention is needed to restart trade between the two countries. In addition, there are cement, potatoes and some other food products in the port's godown. All of them have been destroyed. This has caused a loss of about half a crore taka," he added.

Port trader Md Abdullah said that some goods were stuck in the port. There were 15 carts of potatoes. All of them have been destroyed. Besides, there are more than 20 shops in front of Teknaf Land Port where there was always a hustle and bustle of port workers. But now the whole picture is different with many shops remaining closed due to absence of the workers.

Port worker Sardar Alam said, "There are 1,500 workers at Teknaf Land Port. Now we all are unemployed as the port has remained closed for 4-5 months. Financially, everyone is struggling with their families."

Teknaf Land Port Revenue Officer Md. Sohel Uddin said the port collected Tk 6.4 billion (Tk640 crore) revenue in the fiscal year 2022-23, Tk4.04 billion (Tk404 crore) in the FY 2023-24 and Tk1.1 billion (Tk110 crore) revenue in the FY 2024-25; but on the contrary

the port has not received any revenue in the past four months. He expressed unawareness of the reason for the land port closure. Cox's Bazar Chamber of Commerce and Industry President Abu Morshed Chowdhury said, "Teknaf Land Port is also one of the places where huge foreign currency is earned.

The prevailing problem can be solved through discussions. Then the traders will survive and products will be exported and imported through the port. Border trade between Bangladesh and Myanmar was introduced in 1995 to discourage smuggling on the border."

■ Source: thefinancialexpress.com.bd

**Myanmar opposition
court sentences 9
men to 20 years for
killing priest**

A court affiliated with Myanmar's exiled National Unity Government has sentenced nine men to 20 years in prison for the killing of a Catholic priest in the country's conflict-torn Sagaing region earlier this year, according to Fides agency. The news outlet, linked to the Pontifical Mission Societies and Dicastery of Evangelization, reported the sentence July 17.

■ Source: osvnews.com

**MYANMAR OP-
POSITION COURT
SENTENCES 9
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In the second week of July UNHCR spokesperson Babar Baloch in a press briefing at the Palais des Nations in Geneva has indicated that UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, and humanitarian partners are mobilising to respond to the needs of up to 150,000 Rohingya refugees who have arrived at Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh over the last 18 months.

In this context, it has been highlighted that "targeted violence and persecution in Rakhine State and the ongoing conflict in Myanmar have continued to force thousands of Rohingyas to seek protection in Bangladesh". This movement of Rohingya refugees into Bangladesh, spread over months, has been the largest from Myanmar since 2017, when some 750,000 fled the deadly violence in their native Rakhine State.

While this was the largest Rohingya exodus into Bangladesh, it was not the first. Myanmar's persecution of the Rohingya has long been an issue of concern, with

Plight of Rohingya refugees continues to intensify

significant refugee flows into Bangladesh in 1978 and 1991-92.

Since the civil war erupted in Myanmar in 2021, this influx has continued unabated. As of today, over one million Rohingya live in Bangladesh. Most of them are hosted in 33 camps in Cox's Bazar district and over 36,000 have been relocated to Bhasan Char, an island in Noakhali district.

Bangladesh has been generously hosting Rohingya refugees from Myanmar for more than three decades. In Cox's Bazar, these new arrivals join another nearly 1 million Rohingya refugees crowded in just 24 square kilometres of space - making the camps one of the world's most densely populated places. To ease the situation a good number of them has been moved to Bhasan Char where different facilities, including healthcare have been made available.

Bangladesh is home to the largest number of Rohingya refugees in the world. Understanding the country's role is therefore essential to comprehend the complexities of the Rohingya condition.

It needs to be understood that Bangladesh does not have a

national refugee policy. Therefore, it deals with refugees on a largely ad-hoc basis, relying on administrative instruments and directives. It is not a signatory to the international refugee instruments of 1951 and 1967. Consequently, the Rohingya are not legally recognised as refugees. However, the Chief Adviser of the current Interim Government, Prof. Muhammad Yunus, has recently indicated that the Rohingya in Bangladesh are considered refugees for all practical purposes. However, as refugees, though Rohingyas do not get the same rights as citizens, they according to Article 31 of Bangladesh's Constitution (which protects every person within Bangladesh against any action detrimental to their life, liberty, and property) have an unalienable right to the application of the provision under Article 31.

Consequently, Bangladesh works with UN agencies and a vast network of domestic and foreign non-profit organisations to provide shelter, food, water, healthcare, and basic assistance to the Rohingyas. Such engagement includes adult education, vocational training, and social awareness campaigns. It also needs to be mentioned here that

immunisation programmes for them have been successful in reducing outbreak of cholera and curbing the spread of Covid-19 during the pandemic. Although there is no access to formal education, the Rohingya refugees are taught through over 3,000 community learning centres that are mostly supported by UNICEF. Though legally forbidden from working in Bangladesh, nearly half of the Rohingya residents in the country claim to be engaged in the informal sector. The camps are also active sites of economic activity, like trade, services, and small manufacturing.

Dhaka's widely-praised efforts to address the Rohingya crisis are shaped by a range of factors that include both practicality and altruism. Its appeal for a 'sustainable' repatriation of the Rohingya is a demonstration of the intermingling of these factors. This emphasis puts the onus on Myanmar to find a durable solution for the Rohingya and assure long-term rights.

Unfortunately, as evident from Bangladesh's experience, without an enduring political solution from within Myanmar, this cyclical influx will be perpetual.

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■ Source: thefinancialexpress.com.bd