

Myanmar boy can't swim but floats on oil drum to Bangladesh

By Bernat Armangue
The Associated Press

SHAH PORIR DWIP, Bangladesh — Nabi Hussain owes his life to a yellow plastic oil drum. The 13-year-old Rohingya boy couldn't swim, and had never even seen the sea before fleeing his village in Myanmar. But he clung to the empty drum and struggled across the water with it for about 2.5 miles, all the way to Bangladesh.

Rohingya Muslims escaping the violence in their homeland of Myanmar are now so desperate that some are trying to swim to safety in neighboring Bangladesh. In the span of just a week, more than three dozen boys and young men used cooking oil drums like life rafts to swim across the mouth of the Naf River and wash up ashore in Shah Porir Dwip, a fishing town and cattle trade spot.

"I was so scared of dying," said Nabi, a lanky boy in a striped polo shirt and checkered *dhoti*. "I thought it was going to be my last day."

Although Rohingya Muslims have lived in Myanmar for decades, the country's Buddhist majority still sees them as invaders from Bangladesh. The government denies them basic rights, and the United Nations has called them the most persecuted minority in the world. Just since August, after their homes were torched by Buddhist mobs and soldiers, more than 600,000 Rohingya have risked the trip to Bangladesh.

"We had a lot of suffering, so we thought drowning in the water was a better option," said Kamal Hussain, 18, who also swam to Bangladesh using an oil drum.

Nabi knows almost no one in this new country, and his parents back in Myanmar don't know he is alive. He doesn't smile and rarely maintains eye contact.

Nabi grew up in the mountains of Myanmar, the fourth of nine children of a farmer who grows paan, the betel leaf used as chewing tobacco. He never went to school.

The trouble started two months ago when Rohingya insurgents attacked Myanmar security forces. The Myanmar military responded with a brutal crackdown,



killing men, raping women, and burning homes and property. The last Nabi saw of his village, all the homes were on fire.

Nabi's family fled, heading toward the coast, passing dead bodies. But when they arrived at the coast with a float of other Rohingya refugees, they had no money for a boat and a smuggler.

Every day, there was less food. So after four days, Nabi told his parents he wanted to swim the delta to reach the thin line of land he could see in the distance — Shah Porir Dwip.

His parents didn't want him to go. One of his older

DESPERATE MEASURES. Rohingya Muslim Nabi Hussain, 13, poses for a portrait with the yellow plastic drum he used as a flotation device while crossing the Naf River in Shah Porir Dwip, south Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. The Naf River is a natural border between Myanmar and Bangladesh. Nabi couldn't swim, and had never even seen the sea before fleeing his village in Myanmar. But he clung to the empty drum and struggled across the water with it for about 2.5 miles, all the way to Bangladesh. (AP Photo/Bernat Armangue)

brothers had left for Bangladesh two months ago, and they had no idea what had happened to him. They knew the strong currents could carry Nabi into the ocean.

Eventually, though, they agreed, on the condition that he not go alone. So on the afternoon of November 3, Nabi joined a group of 23 other young men, and his family came to see him off.

"Please keep me in your prayers," he told his mother, while everyone around him wept.

Nabi and the others strapped the cooking oil drums to their chests as floats, and stepped into the water just as the current started to shift toward Bangladesh. The men stayed in groups of three, tied together with ropes. Nabi was in the middle, because he was young and didn't know how to swim.

Nabi remembers swallowing water, in part because of the waves and in part to quench his thirst. The water was salty. His legs ached. But he never looked behind him.

Just after sundown, the group reached Shah Porir Dwip, exhausted, hungry, and dehydrated.

Nabi is now alone, one of an estimated 40,000 unaccompanied Rohingya Muslim children living in Bangladesh. He looks down as he speaks, just a few feet from the water, and murmurs his biggest wish: "I want my parents and peace."

Late afternoon on the next day, authorities spotted a few dots in the middle of the water. It was another group of Rohingya swimming to Bangladesh with yellow drums. They arrived at the same time as a pack of cattle — except that the cows came by boat.

Bernat Armangue is the South Asia news director for The Associated Press, based in New Delhi.

Hospital says North Korean soldier's condition stabilizing

By Kim Tong-Hyung
The Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea — The condition of a North Korean soldier severely wounded by gunfire while escaping to South Korea is gradually improving after two surgeries, but it's too early to tell whether he will make a recovery, hospital officials said.

While the soldier's vital signs are stabilizing, he continues to remain unconscious, relying on a breathing machine. After consecutive surgeries to repair damage to internal organs and other injuries, no further surgeries were currently planned, said Shin Mi-jeong, an official at the Ajou University Medical Center near Seoul.

The unarmed soldier, whose name and rank have not been disclosed, defected to the South by driving a military jeep near a line that divides the Koreas at the Joint Security Area (JSA) and then rushing across it under a barrage of bullets.

While treating the wounds, surgeons removed dozens of parasites from the soldier's ruptured small intestine, including presumed roundworms that were as long as 10.6 inches, which may be reflective of poor nutrition and health in North Korea's military. Doctors measured the soldier as 5'6" feet tall and 132 pounds.

"I [have] more than 20 years of experience as a surgeon, but I have not found parasites this big in the intestines of South Koreans," Lee Cook-jong, who leads the soldier's medical team, told reporters.

Lee is a famous trauma specialist who was hailed as a

hero in 2011 after conducting life-saving surgeries on the captain of a South Korean freighter ship who was shot during a rescue mission after being held by Somali pirates.

South Korea's military said four North Korean soldiers used handguns and AK rifles to fire about 40 rounds at their former comrade, who was hit at least five times. He was found beneath a pile of leaves on the southern side of the JSA, and South Korean troops crawled there to recover him. A United Nations Command helicopter later transported him to the Ajou hospital.

It remains unclear whether the North Koreans chasing the soldier fired at him even after he crossed into the southern side of the border, which would be a violation of an armistice agreement that ended the 1950-1953 Korean War. The U.N. Command, which is investigating the incident, postponed a plan to release video footage of the soldier's escape.

The JSA is jointly overseen by the American-led U.N. Command and by North Korea, with South Korean and North Korean border guards facing each other only feet apart. It is located inside the two-and-a-half-mile-wide Demilitarized Zone, which has formed the de facto border between the Koreas since the Korean War.

Age 60+? Need legal help for:

Keeping your income • getting medical care • moving into or out of a care facility • housing problems • utility shut-offs • stopping abuse • contesting a guardianship?

For referral to an attorney, call toll-free: 1-855-673-2372.

ADRC
Aging and Disability
Resource Connection
— of OREGON —

1-855-ORE-ADRC
(673-2372)

www.ADRCoforegon.org

ADRC operates through the Oregon Department of Human Services

For a free handbook, "Legal Issues for Older Adults," published by the Oregon State Bar, call: 503-945-6237 (available in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Russian, or Chinese).

SPiLk ink Gallery

Acrylic
Colour Pencil
Graphite
Oil
Pen & Ink
Watercolour



Pets • Holidays • Special Occasions • Just for Fun
www.spilkgallery.com (503) 442-6427

一圖千字

STUNNING PHOTOGRAPHY

WEDDINGS
SENIORS
BABIES
PREGNANCY
PORTRAITS
FUNERALS

LANDIS.PHOTOS@GMAIL.COM
JANLANDISPHOTOGRAPHY.COM
503•317•3759

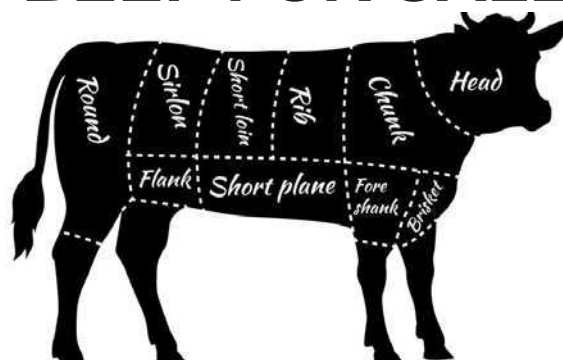
FAIRWAY
MEMBER OF THE MORTGAGE BANKERS ASSOCIATION

Tu Phan

Call for:
Refinances
Purchases
Offering:
FHA/VA/Conventional
Mortgages

NMLS # 2289
MLO # 7916
12817 S.E. 93rd Avenue
Clackamas, OR 97015
(503) 780-6872
<tu.phan@fairwaymc.com>
<www.LoansNow.com>

GRASS-FED BEEF FOR SALE



Call (503) 980-5900 for details

GRASS-FED & GRASS-FINISHED BEEF

Farm-raised in Newberg, Oregon

Beef available as:

Quarter cow Half cow Whole cow

Beef is processed by a Portland butcher.

Pickup available November at N.E. Sandy Blvd. location.

The Asian Reporter is published on the first & third Monday each month.

News page advertising deadlines for our next two issues are:

December 4 to 17, 2017 edition:

Space reservations due:

Wednesday, November 29 at 1:00pm

Artwork due:

Thursday, November 30 at 1:00pm

December 18 to 31, 2017 edition:

Space reservations due:

Wednesday, December 13 at 1:00pm

Artwork due:

Thursday, December 14 at 1:00pm

For more information, please contact our advertising department at (503) 283-4440.