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VIOLENCE IN RAKHINE STATE

Deadly attacks in Myanmar kill 89

30 police posts, one army base attacked; Rohingya insurgents' group claims responsibility



An empty street of Maungdaw in Rakhine State of Myanmar following yesterday's violence. PHOTO: AFP



Rohingyas from Rakhine State in Myanmar gather near the border yesterday in Ukhia where border guards stopped them from entering. At least 89 people, including 12 security forces, were killed as insurgents besieged border posts in Rakhine, triggering a fresh exodus of refugees towards Bangladesh. PHOTO: AFP

AGENCIES

At least 89 people were killed as Rohingya militants besieged border posts in northern Rakhine State of Myanmar yesterday, triggering a fresh exodus of refugees towards Bangladesh.

The office of de-facto leader Aung San Suu Kyi said 12 security officials had been killed alongside 77 militants -- the highest declared single-day toll since fighting broke out last year.

The fighting -- still going on in some areas -- marked a major escalation in a simmering conflict in the northwestern state since last October, when similar attacks prompted a big military sweep beset by allegations of serious human rights abuses.

The offensive encompassed Maungdaw, Buthidaung and Rathedaung townships -- a much wider area compared with October. According to military sources, it involved around 1,000 insurgents.

The Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA), a group previously known as Harakah al-Yaqin, which instigated the October attacks, claimed responsibility for the early morning offensive, and warned of more.

The treatment of approximately 1.1 million Rohingyas has emerged as majority Buddhist Myanmar's most contentious human rights issue as it makes a transition from decades of harsh military rule. It now appears to have spawned a potent insur-

gency which has grown in size, observers say.

They worry that the attacks -- much larger and better organised than those in October -- will spark an even more aggressive army response and trigger communal clashes between Muslims and Buddhist ethnic Rakhines.

"In the early morning at 1:00am, the extremist Bengali insurgents started their attack on the police post ... with the man-made bombs and small weapons," said the army in a statement, using the state's description for Rohingya militants.

The militants also used sticks and swords and destroyed bridges with explosives, the army said.

The UN condemned the militant attacks and called for all parties to refrain from violence.

The Rohingyas are denied citizenship and are seen by many in Myanmar as illegal immigrants from Bangladesh, despite claiming roots in the region that go back centuries, with communities marginalised and occasionally subjected to communal violence.

Yesterday's violence pushed new waves of Rohingyas to flee towards Bangladesh. But border guards there said they would not be allowed to cross, reports AFP.

FIRE AND FEAR
 The military counter-offensive in October resulted

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Fresh influx on

Around 1,000 Rohingyas reportedly sneak into Bangladesh; BGB sends back 146

- Bangladesh hosting up to **500,000** Rohingyas for over three decades
- Over **32,000** registered Rohingya refugees living in two camps in Cox's Bazar
- More than **75,000** Rohingyas fled to Bangladesh after army operation in Rakhine State in October last year

STAR REPORT

In the wake of Rohingya insurgents' attacks on police and army personnel in Rakhine State, Bangladesh yesterday saw a sudden influx of Rohingyas who fled Myanmar for fear of persecution.

More than a thousand Rohingyas, including women and children, crossed the Naf river early in the morning and entered Bangladesh through several points along the Teknaf and Ukhia borders, say locals.

They made their way through Kharraingaghona, Lambabel and Ulubunia in Teknaf upazila, and Anjumanpara and Thaingkhali Rahmaterbeel in Ukhia upazila.

Villagers in Teknaf and Ukhia said they heard gunfire from the bordering Myanmar villages from Thursday night to yesterday morning.

Contacted, Cox's Bazar Deputy Commissioner Ali Hossain said he was aware of the Rohingya influx.

He, however, refused to speak further.

Border Guard Bangladesh said it yesterday sent back 146 Rohingyas

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India to send back Rohingyas to Myanmar

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

India has said that Rohingyas living in Jammu and Kashmir states will be sent back to Myanmar.

"The Rohingyas have no right to live in Jammu and Kashmir and therefore will be sent back at an appropriate moment," Hansraj Ahir, state minister for home, was quoted by media as saying at a press conference in Jammu city on Thursday.

"We have asked the state government to collect all details of Rohingyas living in Jammu, their families, what business they do, how

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TIME OF DISTRESS

Flood-hit people of all ages waded into the river Jamuna as volunteers on boats arrive to distribute relief at Belgachha union of Islampur upazila in Jamalpur yesterday. Over one lakh people have been affected and 20,000 houses damaged in the district. A UN report has identified Jamalpur, Kurigram, Sirajganj, Tangail and Gaibandha as the worst-hit districts and said at least 10 lakh people are in need of immediate assistance.

PHOTO: STAR



Suspected militant killed in 'gunfight'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

A suspected "Neo JMB" operative was killed in a "gunfight" with police in Boalia village of Kushtia's Daulatpur upazila early yesterday.

The deceased is Arman Ali, 42, of Thakurpur village under Bheramara upazila.

Shah Dara Khan, officer-in-charge of Daulatpur Police Station, said two police teams, led by him, raided Boalia around 3:30am, acting on information that a secret meeting of "Neo JMB", an offshoot of banned militant outfit Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh, was going on near Boalia intersection.

"Sensing the presence of law enforcers, the militants

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COMBATING NATURAL DISASTERS World Bank offers \$250m soft loan

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The World Bank has offered a low-cost loan of \$250 million to Bangladesh for tackling natural disasters.

The loan is available from a new financing window, Catastrophe Deferred Drawdown Option (Cat DDO), of the global financial institution at an interest rate of 0.75 percent. It is repayable in 38 years, with a grace period of eight years.

The WB made the offer to the Economic Relations Division (ERD) early this month. It came at a time when the country's many northern and central districts have been witnessing flood.

Bangladesh is the sixth most climate-vulnerable country in the world, according to Global Climate Risk Index 2017.

A finance ministry official said Bangladesh for the first time received a financing proposal from the WB's new financing window.

According to the offer, the loan will be disbursed over three years. However, the tenure can be extended for another three years if the total amount is not drawn within this period.

An ERD official said they sent the WB proposal to the related ministries and the Finance Division. After getting opinion from the ministries, the ERD will convey to the global financier whether the government would take the loan.

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BARGUNA 'GANG-RAPE' Key accused arrested

UNB, Laxmipur

Police have arrested the prime accused in the gang rape case of a Barguna schoolteacher.

Law enforcers picked up Sumon Biswas from Charsita area in Laxmipur's Ramgati upazila on Thursday, said Iqbal Hossain, officer-in-charge of Ramgati Police Station.

The 35-year-old arrestee was from Hosnabad area in Barguna's Betagi upazila.

Tipped off, a team of Barguna police with the help of Laxmipur police carried out a drive at the house of Sumon's father-in-law and arrested him.

The assistant teacher of a primary school was allegedly gang raped in a classroom of her school in Betagi upazila on August 17. The victim filed the case with

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