



Ambassadors and high commissioners of different countries to Bangladesh talk to Rohingyas at Kutupalong and Balukhali areas in Cox's Bazar yesterday.

Come forward in a big way

Foreign diplomats urge int'l community while meeting refugees

Foreign Minister AH Mahmud Ali, State Minister for External Affairs M Shahrinar Alam, Foreign Secretary Shahidul Haque and senior foreign ministry officials accompanied the diplomats.

Talking to reporters, Shahrinar Alam said, "Although the Rohingya crisis is Myanmar's own problem, Bangladesh is being affected by it. Bangladesh is facing a fresh influx of Rohingyas amid persecution by the Myanmar security forces. The problem was created by the Myanmar government and they'll have to address it."

He added upon the United Nations and other international organisations to mount pressure on Myanmar to take back Rohingyas refugees from Bangladesh.

Some Rohingyas told diplomats that villages and townships were being set on fire in the bordering areas within Myanmar. The diplomats made it was a sense of fear and insecurity in the refugees. They tried to provide the Rohingyas with a sense of security.

All the envoys lauded Bangladesh for providing aid and assistance to the refugees. The generosity of Bangladesh to provide shelter to a huge number of Rohingyas was widely acclaimed.

UNB, Cox's Bazar

A group of foreign diplomats yesterday acknowledged that the world community has to come forward in a big way in aid of the Myanmar refugees in Bangladesh.

They were visiting the Kutupalong and Balukhali Rohingya camps in Ukhiya upazila. A total of 63 diplomats, including 30 ambassadors and high commissioners, stationed in Dhaka, flew to Cox's Bazar around noon to see the condition of the refugees.

The Rohingyas fled to Bangladesh in the face of persecution by Myanmar security forces since August 25.

The envoys said it was a disaster of unimaginable proportions. The Rohingyas lost everything and left behind all their belongings while fleeing to seek the Rakhine State. Those who fled from persecution need urgent help and continued assistance, they added.

From near the border, the diplomats could see smoke billowing from the other side of the border (Maungdaw). They heard from refugees that villages and townships had been torches.

They also visited the Ukhiya points of refugees along Cox's Bazar-Teknaf road, including Chumdhum area.

Come up with help 'regardless of politics'

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Myanmar, and the amount of money needed to help them has risen sharply.

As Bangladesh struggles to cope with the unprecedented refugee influx, two planes have arrived here with supplies for 25,000 Rohingyas, and further flights are planned so that 1,20,000 people can be reached in total.

One of the two flights that arrived on Tuesday was chartered by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). It carried shelter materials, sleeping mats and other emergency supplies.

The cargo has been loaded onto trucks which will transport the supplies to the refugee camps in Cox's Bazar, said Stephanie Djurjic, spokesperson for the UN secretary-general.

A second flight, donated by the United Arab Emirates, came with some 2,000 family tents.

"We will all have to ramp up our response massively, from food to shelter," George William Okoth-Obbo, assistant high commissioner for operations at the UN refugee agency, told Reuters during a visit to the Kutupalong refugee camp yesterday.

"We have an emergency within an emergency with conditions in existing camps," he said, pointing to a mid-clogged road in the camp.

The call came as the UN Security Council was slated to hold a closed-door meeting on the deteriorating situation in Myanmar's Rakhine State at the request of Sweden and Britain.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres urged the Security Council to press for restraint and calm, sending the 15-member body a rare letter on September 5.

He expressed concern that the violence could spiral into a "humanitarian catastrophe with implications for peace and security that could continue to expand beyond Myanmar's borders."

Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have also accused the UNHCR of ignoring the "textbook case of ethnic cleansing" as dubbed by the UN human rights chief.

"We have had very clear our concern at the ongoing tragedy of the Rohingyas, people who have been forced to leave their homes. The reports we're getting, the pictures all of us are seeing are heart-breaking to say the least," Djurjic told reporters at his trip to Cox's Bazar, where he met UN headquarters in New York on Tuesday.

"I think the entire international community should support the ongoing humanitarian efforts, regardless of politics. These are people in need. These are very vulnerable people who have crossed the border, who've said, we are hungry and are malnourished."

"She is concentrating on establishing stability," the spokesman said, adding that preventing any spread of communal violence was a priority and "textbook example of ethnic cleansing."

Suu Kyi won't attend key UN summit

and deserve to be helped," he said. The spokesperson was responding to a question on role of regional players in helping Rohingyas refugees.

"Are you disappointed that major regional players, including India, in particular, have actually sort of made their stand about this Rohingya crisis very clear and actually not come out and supported when their support could have been quite crucial?" he was asked.

"As of yesterday, an estimated 3.89 million Myanmar nationals have arrived in Bangladesh in the face of what Bangladesh government and many others internationally called "genocide".

In Bangladesh, the UN humanitarian agencies operating in Cox's Bazar called for urgent need of \$77 million to assist people who have fled violence in Rakhine.

The Response Plan, developed as a result of the influx of people to Cox's Bazar, outlines the life-saving support UN agencies and international NGOs are aiming to provide 3,00,000 people until the end of 2017, according to a statement of Office of the UN Resident Coordinator in Bangladesh on September 9.

About UN appeals of \$77 million to cope with the crisis, George William Okoth-Obbo of UNHCR said that would not be enough.

"The UN has issued \$77 million on behalf of the aid agencies was based on the situation as it was about two weeks ago," he said.

"There were only 1,00,000 Rohingya there. We are already four times that figure now."

In the UN press briefing, spokesperson Djurjic said: "Whether it's UNHCR, WFP and other agencies [we] are trying to get as much aid into the country as quickly as possible. Obviously, from what we've read out, we haven't been able to reach all the people that we need to."

"The added challenge is that a lot of people are crossing the border, going to makeshift settlements, or otherwise living outside more organised structures, which could make it easier for us to reach them."

The UN spokesperson said the government of Bangladesh has asked the UN to help establish a new camp to house the newly arrived refugees.

He noted that the UN World Food Programme is providing food to some 70,000 people as they arrive in Cox's Bazar and to nearly 60,000 people living

in camps and makeshift settlements. The spokesperson also said most activities in northern Rakhine state remain either suspended or severely interrupted, although the government is delivering some-aid through the Red Cross.

"Most aid activities on the part of UN agencies and international non-governmental organisations across northern Rakhine remain either suspended or severely interrupted, although some assistance is being delivered by the government and through the Red Cross," he said.

"The UN and its partners continue to offer support to the government to meet the needs of all affected communities and are liaising with authorities to resume humanitarian operations as soon as possible."

EU STEPS UP ASSISTANCE The European Commission announced additional humanitarian aid of €3 million to address the most pressing needs of Rohingya civilians.

The funding comes on top of the €12 million announced in May 2017 when Commissioner Stylianides visited Rakhine. "The European Union is providing further emergency humanitarian aid as the situation continues to be critical."

This additional funding will help provide emergency shelter, water, food and health assistance for newly arrived refugees in Bangladesh and people in need in Myanmar, as soon as humanitarian access to the latter is restored.

The EU continues to call for full humanitarian access and the respect for international human rights law in Myanmar.

"The immediate restoration of humanitarian assistance in northern Rakhine State is needed in order to address what is already a precarious humanitarian situation, and to avoid an escalation of the crisis. I thank the government and people in Bangladesh for their hospitality in sheltering many refugees. The European Union remains committed to support those who are forced to flee their homes during these difficult times," said the Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management, Christos Stylianides.

EU High Representative Federica Mogherini in a statement in Brussels on Monday said that she is following the government's lead in Bangladesh and at the border region in Bangladesh closely.

"The European Union has raised its concerns as recently as last Friday in direct contacts with Myanmar government members... the priority is now to obtain immediate humanitarian access to the camps and address in parallel and the root causes of the conflict by implementing the Annan Advisory

Commission recommendations to this end," she said.

We are in close contact with Bangladeshi authorities and are stepping up our humanitarian and emergency support, she said.

INDONESIA Four Hercules planes carrying 34 tonnes of aid for Rohingya refugees will arrive in Chittagong today while Indonesia's President Joko Widodo calls for an immediate end to violence in Myanmar's Rakhine state and promised significant humanitarian aid.

Presidential spokesman Johan Budi said the planes are carrying rice, instant meals, family kits, water, tanks and blankets, have departed for Bangladesh from an air force base in the Indonesian capital.

It's the first batch of aid from Indonesia following discussions with India and Bangladesh, he added.

INDIA "Which has been facing criticism at home and abroad for its anti-Rohingya stance, yesterday announced that an aircraft carrying first consignment of humanitarian assistance will land in Chittagong airport at 10:0am today."

"This relief is coming for Rohingyas in Dhaka," said an Indian diplomat in Dhaka, adding that Indian High Commissioner Harsh Vardhan Shringla will hand over the relief material to Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his Myanmar visit expressed concern over "extremist violence" in Rakhine but did not mention the persecution of minority Rohingyas.

Later, the official spokesperson of Ministry of External Affairs on September 9 urged that the situation in Rakhine be handled with "restraint and civility", with focus on the "welfare of the civilian population alongside those of the security forces."

MOROCCO Morocco has sent humanitarian aid to support refugees in Bangladesh, said the country's foreign ministry on Monday. The Moroccan aid supply includes tents, covers, basic food and medicines, the statement noted.

Also on Monday, the UN refugee agency on Monday welcomed a personal donation of \$1 million from Tadashi Yanai, chairman, president and CEO of Fast Retailing Co, parent company of Japan's leading apparel brand, UNIQLO.

The funds donated by Yanai will be used for UNHCR to provide life-saving humanitarian assistance to Rohingya refugees newly arrived in Bangladesh.

significant political powers and has full control of security.

Nevertheless, critics say Suu Kyi could speak out against the violence and demand respect for the rule of law. Suu Kyi, whom the military blocked from becoming president and who says Myanmar is at the beginning of the road to democracy, could risk being denounced as unpatriotic if she were seen to be criticising a military operation that enjoys widespread support.

Suu Kyi won't attend key UN summit

Suu Kyi would address the nation on reconciliation and peace next Tuesday. International pressure has been growing on Myanmar to end the violence in the western state of Rakhine that began on Aug 25 when militants attacked 30 police posts and an army camp.

The raids triggered a sweeping military counter-offensive against the insurgents whom the government labels terrorists. Refugees say the offensive is aimed at pushing Rohingyas out of Myanmar.

Numerous Rohingya villages in the north of Rakhine have been torched but authorities have denied that security forces or Buddhist civilians have been setting the fires. Instead, they blame the insurgents.

north of Rakhine on Tuesday. There were no reports of casualties. Myanmar's president office says a committee has been formed to implement the Kofi Annan Commission recommendations for improving the security and livelihoods of its ethnic Rohingya minority, adds AP.

The president's office said in a statement Tuesday that the new 15-member Implementation Committee of Rakhine Advisory Committee would work on improving security, economic development and social affairs in Rohingya area, as well as maintaining the sustainability of ethnic villages and removing camps for the displaced.

It said the committee would also work to speed progress on verifying the Rohingyas under the country's citizenship laws so they can be recognised as citizens.

Myanmar's military, which ruled for almost 50 years until it began a transition to democracy in 2011, still retains

WB offers to help Dhaka

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PERIPHERAL ISSUES as well, a small portion of the fund will be given in loan.

As per the purpose outlined by the WB, the fund for refugees would support projects in host countries that focus on the medium to longer term developmental needs of refugees and host communities, not humanitarian needs that are the mandate of other organisations.

Priority initiatives would include projects that promote refugees' welfare and inclusion in the host country's socio-economic structure. The fund also would support local solutions and policy reforms with regard to refugees, for example, extend the awards are presented in labour force participation, identity document and identification permit.

It will help ensure refugees' and host communities' access to quality services and basic infrastructure,

WB offers to help Dhaka

support the host population whose livelihood is negatively affected by the refugee influx. The fund will support policy dialogue and activities to ensure refugees return to their country of origin.

The fund is also intended to strengthen the government finances that have been strained for expenditures related to hosting responsibilities.

About 34,000 officially registered Rohingya refugees are staying in Bangladesh. Besides, after the recent crackdown on the Rohingya community in Myanmar's Rakhine state by its army, as many as 3 lakh Rohingyas have entered Bangladesh.

The number of Rohingyas - registered and otherwise - living in the country has reached 7 lakh. The government has already allocated 2,000 acres of land in Cox's Bazar for Rohingyas camps. It has also taken steps for the refugees' biometric registration.

Star wins 2 gold

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prestigious recognition for publishers for their outstanding works in digital media. The awards are presented in every region - South Asia, Asia, Middle East, Africa, Europe and Latin America.

This year, the winners of South Asian Digital Media Awards were chosen from ten categories - Best News Mobile Service, Best Lifestyle, Sports and Entertainment Mobile Service, Best Use of Online Video, Best Data Visualisation, Best News Mobile Service, Best Lifestyle, Sports and Entertainment Mobile Services, Best Innovation New Product, Best in Social Media Engagement and Best Livestream to Engage Youth Audiences.

The award giving ceremony was held yesterday at ICT Grand Chola in Chennai, India. Md Tajdin Hassan, head of marketing, and Shuvashish Roy, digital marketing manager of The Daily Star, received 'best in social media engagement' for 'Mayer DakaNaam', a social media campaign launched to celebrate Mother's Day, a joint initiative with CBL Advertising. It received 'best in digital marketing campaign' for Rise High Bangladesh, a university based export idea contest that highlights local products of Bangladesh to a global arena. Crown Cement is the partner of the project and season 2 of the project is currently underway. WebAble Digital was also a digital partner of the Rise High Bangladesh project.

Star wins 2 gold

Over 3,000 people submitted the pictures along with the special names and 10 were awarded based on the social media voting. A total number of 290,000 votes were cast on the nano site of the campaign. The campaign had a reach of 2.1 million in social media out of which 71.4 per cent was organic.

The other winning campaign was "Rise High Bangladesh". To uplift the sporting scenario in the country, a series of initiatives were launched last year jointly with Crown Cement. The primary objective of that initiative was to extract expert ideas from current university students and the secondary was to award a few of the people who have contributed effectively in the international arena and improved the country's image.

The whole campaign was designed in three phases - University campus activation, making a shortlist of 10 best ideas by an expert jury panel, social media voting to get top 3 winners and selecting the champion through a gala event.

Marketing activation took place in 15 universities and more 100 ideas were submitted from different universities. The campaign generated additional 15,000 visitors and 480,000 votes were cast in social media. The winning team was IBA, University of Dhaka.

ASC-IFRA, which organises the award ceremony jointly with Google, is the global organisation of the world's press which derives its authority from its global network of 3,000 news publishing companies and technology entrepreneurs, and its legitimacy from its 80 member publisher associations representing 18,000 publications in 120 countries.

Star is thankful to its readers and partners for their continuous support and pledge to deliver more in the coming days to meet the needs of news and information consumers in a fast-changing digital world.