

Same chair

FROM PAGE 1
Leaving a bungalow, 15 acres of land and several cattle behind, the family along with 200 other refugees from different villages of Rakhine has taken shelter at Hazi Md Hossain Government Primary School near Lambabil area. As Samir cannot walk, his grandsons carried him along with the easy chair to Teknaf.

"I never imagined that I would ever have to leave my village this way," said an emotional Samir who was accompanied by his elder son Abdul Habib, aged over 70 years, and one of his daughters, Bilkis, 65.

Though Samir is now around 100, he still remembers a lot about the past. Clad in a white panjabi and a lungi, which became quite dirty over the days, he recalled some of his memories.

"I gave shelter to some refugees from Bangladesh during the 1971 Liberation War. A few Bengali families lived in my house for months," he said sitting on the easy chair at the school.

Later in 1978, Samir fled to Bangladesh along with his family members during an army crackdown on the Rohingyas in Myanmar.

"During that time, we stayed at Arzumanpara [in Teknaf] for days. I thought I got shelter because I gave shelter to someone in the past. I thought the equation was over. But I have come here once again."

Samir said he did not want to stay here as a refugee for long.

His son Abdul said their home was in Aischor village, around eight kilometres off the banks of the Naf river.

"My sons used to cultivate rice in a few acres of land. We had plenty of food at home. My father even used to donate money to the poor and local mosques," he said, adding now his family depends entirely on relief to survive.

"One Abdul Zalil and his family from Maheshkaliapara had taken shelter in our home in 1971. Zalil is dead and we are looking for his sons," said Abdul.

Zafar Alam Chowdhury, former president of Teknaf Upazila Awami League, lives a few hundred yards from the Hazi Md Hossain Government Primary School.

Asked, he said he himself along with his family took shelter in Arakan during the war in 1971.

"Nearly one lakh people from Teknaf took refuge in different villages in Arakan. I stayed in a village called Guruterbil near Bolibazar," said Zafar, 82.

Nibedita Bhattacharya, headmistress of the school, said nearly 300 people from Myanmar came and started staying at the institution a few days ago.

"We are facing difficulties in running our regular academic activities. But still, I don't know how to tell the Rohingyas to leave. Where would they go?" she asked.

3 Bangladeshi

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Aadhaar is allocated to every Indian and remains their national identity document forever.

Asim said that they were later put under arrest.

This was the second time in just over a month that Bangladeshi nationals were held by Uttar Pradesh ATS for suspected links with Ansarul.

The names of the three brothers cropped up after an ATS team on August 6 arrested a suspected Bangladeshi terrorist, Abdullah al-Mamun, a resident of Mymensingh, from Muzaffarnagar district of the state.

During the questioning of Abdullah, the name of some persons came to the fore and a probe was done in Deoband madrasas to find his links, Asim said.

It was found that three persons -- a madrasa teacher and his two brothers -- were missing after which ATS team swung into action and the three were arrested.

Global voices

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Hasina said she had a meeting on the issue with the navy chief last night when she asked him to complete some preparatory work in this regard.

"I want to complete some work [arrangement of temporary accommodation for Rohingyas at Thengar Char in Noakhali's Hatia Island] before leaving the country for the US on September 16 to attend the UN General Assembly," she mentioned.

Sharing her experience of visiting Rohingyas in Ukhia, the PM in an emotional voice said the atrocities carried out by the Myanmar authorities were beyond description.

"It's hard to hold back tears when I heard about the ordeal and atrocities," Hasina said.

"That's why, we have given them shelter on humanitarian grounds although it is a burning question for us where and how we will keep them," she mentioned.

"But if necessary, we will share our food with Rohingyas," she added.

Hasina hoped that the Myanmar government would take back all Rohingyas and provide them accommodation and security.

The PM said she and her younger sister Sheikh Rehana had to stay abroad as refugees, and they knew it very well how disgraceful it was to live as a refugee.

New Delhi with Dhaka

FROM PAGE 20
Swaraj told the prime minister.

Hasina said Bangladesh has given shelter to the Rohingyas only on humanitarian ground. Myanmar must acknowledge the Rohingyas as their nationals, she said, reports UNB.

Hasina noted that the government has allocated land as a makeshift arrangement to shelter the Rohingyas. But their long-term stay will certainly create a big problem for Bangladesh.

India High Commissioner Harsh Vardhan Shringla was present at Gono Bhaban at that time. He informed the prime minister of the first consignment of Indian relief materials sent for the Rohingya refugees.

TRUDEAU CALLS SUU KYI
As the condemnation of Rakhine violence keeps pouring in, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has spoken with Myanmar's de facto leader Aung San Suu Kyi to express "deep concerns" over treatment of minorities in her country.

The phone call followed a chorus of cries for Canada to revoke the honorary citizenship it granted Suu Kyi in 2007, according to a news report of thecanadianpress.com yesterday.

Trudeau stressed to Suu Kyi the urgent need for Myanmar's military and civilian leaders to take a strong stand in ending the violence and promote the protection of civilians and access for the United Nations and humanitarian groups.

AID FOR REFUGEES
In another development, aircrafts from India, Indonesia and Morocco arrived in Chittagong yesterday with relief materials for Rohingya refugees. According to local officials, more aircrafts carrying relief goods from Iran and Indonesia are scheduled to land in the airport today.

"We are arranging to supply to each and every family of newly arrived refugees a 15-kg pack consisting of parboiled rice, lentils, sugar, salt, biscuits, milk powder and other edibles, in addition to soap, mosquito nets and other items of utility," Harsh Vardhan Shringla said while handing over an aircraft full of relief materials to Road, Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader, according to a press release.

The release also reads that India has expressed deep concern at the recent spate of violence in Rakhine, resulting in the outflow of a huge number of refugees into Bangladesh.

"This has created unprecedented challenges for the government and

people of Bangladesh. We appreciate the actions of the government of Bangladesh in making every effort to deal with the urgent requirements of food, clothing and shelter for the large number of refugees that have placed a huge demand on its resources."

A second aircraft with relief material was due to arrive later yesterday.

The British government is also providing an additional 25 million pounds (\$33 million) to Bangladesh and Myanmar to help them cope with a humanitarian disaster caused by the dislocation of hundreds of thousands of Rohingyas.

British officials said yesterday that most of the money will be spent in Bangladesh to provide assistance including food, shelter, water and sanitation for Rohingya refugees fleeing violence in Buddhist-majority Myanmar.

Also, the government of South Africa expressed its concern over the refugee crisis. It urged all parties to halt the violence in order to avoid further human suffering.

THE STANCE OF CHINA
China endorsed Myanmar's offensive against Rohingya insurgents, Reuters reported citing Myanmar's official media yesterday.

"The stance of China regarding the terrorist attacks in Rakhine is clear, it is just an internal affair," the state-run Global New Light of Myanmar newspaper yesterday quoted China's ambassador, as telling top government officials.

But at the UN in New York, China set a different tone, joining UN Security Council expression of concern about reports of excessive violence and calling for immediate steps to end it.

Also yesterday, Rohingya militants, whose raids in Western Myanmar provoked an army crackdown that spurred a humanitarian crisis, denied any links to global terror groups, days after al-Qaeda urged Muslims to rally to their cause.

'ORCHESTRATED CAMPAIGN'
Amnesty International yesterday said it has turned up evidence of an "orchestrated campaign of systematic burnings" by Myanmar security forces Myanmar security forces and vigilante mobs are burning down entire Rohingya villages and shooting people at random as they try to flee last three weeks.

The advocacy group is releasing a new analysis of video, satellite photos, witness accounts and other data that found over 80 sites were torched in northern Rakhine State since an August 25 militant attack on a border post.

Persecution must stop

FROM PAGE 1
"We need to support Aung San Suu Kyi and her leadership but also be very clear and unequivocal to the military power sharing in that government that this is unacceptable," Rex Tillerson said of Myanmar's first civilian leader in decades.

"This violence must stop. This persecution must stop. It has been characterised by many as ethnic cleansing. That must stop," he said during a visit to London, speaking alongside British counterpart Boris Johnson.

Johnson also called on Myanmar's de facto leader to use her "moral capital" to highlight the plight of the Rohingyas, reported AFP.

The EP, which had its session in Strasbourg, France, passed a resolution urging Suu Kyi to "condemn unequivocally" all incitement to racial and religious hatred and to combat discrimination and hostilities against Rohingya minority.

It demanded the Myanmar military and security forces to end its crackdown on the Rohingyas in the country's Rakhine.

The parliamentary resolution also called upon the military "to immediately cease the killings, harassment and rape of the Rohingya people, and the burning of their homes."

The EP has called on the vice-president of European Commission and high representatives of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the EU Member States to "significantly" increase their pressure on the Myanmar government and security forces.

This is to push the Myanmar rulers to stop violence, fully cooperate with UN investigators and international humanitarian agencies and ensure accountability for grave violations of international law.

The parliament also called on the EU and its member states, "to take an active role in supporting immediate action at UN level and making clear that the EU stands ready to consider targeted punitive sanctions against individuals and entities".

The resolution called on the EU to make it clear that the "EU stands ready to consider targeted punitive sanctions against individuals and entities, and to consider consequences in the context of the trade preferences Myanmar

enjoys, should grave violations in international law continue with impunity."

The members of the European Parliament (MEPs) reminded Suu Kyi that she was the recipient of the European Parliament's Sakharov Prize, awarded to those "who defend human rights, safeguard the rights of minorities and respect international law."

The lawmakers questioned if the Sakharov Prize could be revoked in cases where laureates violate those criteria after the prize has been awarded.

The resolution acknowledged the efforts by Bangladesh in the face of this humanitarian catastrophe. The resolution called on the EC and the member states to increase financial and material support for these refugees.

The European Parliament urged China and other international and regional actors to use all channels to demand an end to the atrocities and bring about a peaceful resolution.

Also yesterday, European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker condemned the crisis in Myanmar as a "shocking catastrophe."

23 killed

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opposite the school, told AFP she heard screams as the morning call to prayer rang out.

"I thought there were people fighting," the 46-year-old said. "I opened the window to my house and I could see the school on fire -- they cried for help but I couldn't do anything."

By the time firefighters arrived at the Darul Quran Itifaqiyah school in the heart of the capital, "the screams had stopped", she added.

Officials said that the children were unable to escape the fire because the blaze blocked the only door to the top-floor dormitory and the windows were closed off with metal security grilles.

Fourteen students managed to get out, and seven are being treated in hospital.

"They escaped by breaking through a grille, and then jumping down, some of them came down holding onto (drain) pipes," said Health Minister S Subramaniam.

Fire officials said they suspected the blaze -- one of the deadliest in Malaysia for two decades -- was caused by an electrical short circuit, or a mosquito repelling device.

Endless influx

FROM PAGE 1
an AFP report.

The number of refugees is going up so fast that the administration is struggling to ensure food and shelter for them.

Md Ali Hossain, deputy commissioner of Cox's Bazar, said, "We are busy managing relief for Rohingyas."

He further said 14 shelters were set up for them in the last 20 Days.

Mahmud Sharif, lessee of Hariakhali terminal on Shah Porir Dwip channel, said, "Rohingyas are arriving both day and night. But over the last two days, the flow of refugees seems to have increased."

He said there were 57 boats at the terminal and almost all of those were busy ferrying Rohingyas from Myanmar.

Sabrang Union Parishad Chairman Noor Hossain said the flow of Rohingyas arriving through Shah Porir Dwip was a bit slow from Saturday to Tuesday, but it gained momentum again since Wednesday.

He estimated that around 25,000 Rohingyas arrived via Shah Porir Dwip alone in the last two days.

A number of newly arrived Rohingyas and local boatmen told this newspaper that 50,000 to 60,000 refugees were still waiting on the other side of the Naf river to enter Bangladesh.

With her 18-month-old daughter, Shahina, a Rohingya woman in her 20s, fled home in Garzania village of Rakhine State four days ago.

She finally reached Shah Porir Dwip yesterday morning after walking through hills and forests for four days.

She was on her way to Teknaf terminal on Shah Porir Dwip.

Shahina said she had lost almost all her family members. The Myanmar

army took away her husband, and she lost her two sons while coming to Bangladesh from her village.

"I was captured by the Myanmar army. They have taken away everything I had. They asked me to go to Bangladesh," said Shahina.

She was looking for her aunt and uncle who had reached Bangladesh three days ago.

With the help of his son, Habibur Rahman, a Rohingya farmer, was carrying his 90-year-old father who was too weak to walk.

"We left home nine days ago. But we could not travel to Bangladesh directly as we didn't have the money to hire a boat to cross the Naf river."

They hid in the jungle and sold the belongings they brought with them from home.

The 40-year-old farmer said they paid 7,000 Myanmar Kyat (around Tk 420) each as boat fare.

From Shah Porir Dwip and bordering areas in Teknaf, plumes of smoke were seen on the Myanmar side of the border from noon till around 4:00pm.

Several newly arrived Rohingyas said the Myanmar army continued to set fire to Rohingya houses in villages along the Naf river.

Many locals were seen providing dry food, oral saline and cash to distressed Rohingyas on their arrival at Shah Porir Dwip.

Some were handing out money and arranging boats for Rohingya refugees.

MORE SUPPORT NEEDED
UNHCR Assistant High Commissioner (operations) George Okoth-Obbo and IOM Director Mohamud, who visited Rohingya camps in Cox's Bazar on Wednesday, lauded Bangladesh's support for the Rohingya refugees.

They, however, voiced concern over the huge need for life-saving assistance

for the large number of refugees.

"They are coming in large numbers - traumatised, injured, tired. And a lot of them are staying under the open sky," Mohamud said yesterday.

The Rohingya refugees are in urgent need for food, water, medicine and shelter, he added.

Okoth-Obbo said, "There are people who have lost everything... children abandoned by the parents. They need protection."

"You could have a risk, for example health epidemic... it would be an emergency within an emergency," he said.

In a statement yesterday, Unicef said the sheer number of refugees has overwhelmed pre-existing camps, with new arrivals seeking shelter anywhere they can find space.

"Conditions on the ground place children at high risk of water-borne disease. We have a monumental task ahead of us to protect these extremely vulnerable children," it said.

The UN agencies last week estimated the need for \$77.1 million as immediate life-saving assistance for some 300,000 Rohingyas.

"As the numbers are rising every day, the figure has to be drastically revised," said Okoth-Obbo.

"That is putting us under stress."

Asked if the response from the international community is enough, he said assistance is coming in, but that is not enough yet.

"We urge the international community to step up their support."

About the coordination between different agencies addressing the Rohingya crisis in Cox's Bazar, he said the Bangladesh government is in the position of leadership.

"We are here just to support the government," added Okoth-Obbo.

Rice price soars

FROM PAGE 1
Responding to a point of order by Jatiya Party lawmaker Nurul Islam Milon, the minister said a vested quarter was trying to create an artificial crisis in the rice market in a bid to increase the prices.

According to Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB), the retail price of coarse rice rose by Tk 1 a kg every day from September 11. Yesterday, the price soared by Tk 2.

Each kg of coarse rice, mainly consumed by low-income people, was sold at Tk 47 to Tk 50 yesterday, up from Tk 43 to Tk 45 on September 10.

Prices of the staple eased slightly and remained stable last month after the government had cut the rice import tariff to 2 percent from 10 percent.

Some media outlets recently ran news based on a fake Indian government notification that the neighbouring country has banned rice export.

Several ministers and rice industry stakeholders said a section of traders made a hefty profit in the last few days after spreading fake information that the Indian government imposed a ban on rice export to Bangladesh.

The food minister said a section of unscrupulous businessmen and rice millers started using tricks to hike rice prices. The government would take several steps to stabilise the rice market, he added.

Qamrul said rice traders and millers from across the country would meet at the food ministry on Tuesday to find out the reasons for the price hike. The commerce and agriculture ministers will also be present at the meeting.

The government would introduce Open Market Sale (OMS) of rice in divisional and district towns from Sunday, he added.

He said distribution of rice among some 50 lakh ultra-poor families at Tk 10 per kg would begin on September 20 under the "Food Friendly Programme".

Rice will be distributed among the rural poor at union levels during the lean periods of September-November and March-April, the minister told reporters.

He said the launch of the "Food Friendly Programme" was delayed due to Eid holidays and heavy rains. The rice meant for distribution in September would be given away to cardholder ultra-poor people till

October 15, said the minister.

Qamrul said the government had set the boro production target at 1.90 crore tonnes. But floods and the blast disease damaged around 20 lakh tonnes of standing crops. Besides, around 22 lakh tonnes of aus rice has been produced.

According to the minister, 1.92 lakh tonnes of rice have been harvested in the last four months. Private importers also imported 6 lakh tonnes of rice.

During the same period, people consumed 1.02 crore tonnes of the staple. The country's current rice stock of 1 crore tonnes is with businessmen, millers and consumers. There is no rice crisis in the country, he claimed.

About the government stock, the food minister said their target for internal procurement was 12.50 tonnes in the boro season. But the government could buy only 2.5 lakh tonnes as rice price soared. The government has taken an initiative to make up the stock deficit through import, he added.

Qamrul said 2.5 lakh tonnes of rice has already reached the country from Vietnam. Rice imported from some other countries would arrive in the next three months. The government can continue with its various rice aid programmes as it has enough stock, he claimed.

The government's stock, he said, would not increase till November as it would distribute 2 lakh tonnes of rice each month. However, the stock would rise from December.

A Myanmar team would arrive in Dhaka on Sunday to discuss purchase of two lakh tonnes of rice from that country, said the minister.

He had been to Myanmar early this week to negotiate the rice purchase with the neighbouring country. The minister made the visit at a time when thousands of Myanmar Rohingyas fled to Bangladesh escaping persecution.

Qamrul said he talked to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina a day before flying to Myanmar. "The honourable prime minister told me that diplomacy and trade would continue simultaneously."

Our Dinajpur correspondent reports: Rice prices in the district soared by Tk 200 to Tk 300 per 50kg bag in the last 10 days.

Local traders said prices started increasing on September 5.

'NO FOOD CRISIS IN COUNTRY'

Speaking at parliament, Tofail claimed there was no food crisis in the country now.

The minister informed the House that the prime minister on September 20 would inaugurate the "Food Friendly Programme" under which rice would be sold at Tk 10 a kg.

Jatiya Party lawmaker Milon drew the food minister's attention to some newspaper reports on a ban on rice export to Bangladesh by India.

The opposition MP expressed concern that the country might face a rice crisis if India took such a decision. He demanded respective ministers give statements on the issue in the House to clarify about it.

Tofail in reply said some journalists called on him at his secretariat office on Wednesday and showed him a circular saying that India has stopped rice export to Bangladesh.

"I told reporters that I would verify the information. But without verifying the information, some newspapers ran news which was totally false."

The minister said rice production decreased this year due to flash floods in haor areas.

"But I want to inform people that we have 4.47 lakh tonnes of rice in the warehouses. Besides, there is adequate rice and paddy in all rice mills."

Talking to reporters at his ministry office yesterday, Tofail said the government was conducting drives against hoarding of rice. The deputy commissioners and superintendents of police of all the districts have been asked to carry out such drives.

He said tough actions would be taken against those traders who were hoarding rice to "tarnish the government's image".

Survival instinct!

FROM PAGE 20
In an upcoming study, Ihwagi details his findings, based on data gathered from 60 elephants in northern Kenya tracked with GPS devices for up to three years during the period 2002 to 2012.

Working with the NGO Save the Elephants, which has fitted more than 100 of the animals with GPS collars, Ihwagi monitored the movements of 28 females and 32 males in and around the Laikipia-Samburu ecosystem.



INVITATION TO BID

Paper, Supplies, Stationeries and Cleaning Materials for UNDP and ILO on Long Term Agreement (LTA) Basis

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United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and ILO (International Labor Organizations) in Bangladesh Seek Bid from interested firms/ companies for procurement of Office Supplies and Stationery. Bids may be submitted on or before October 5, 2017, 12.00 NOON (BD Local Time) through online e-Tendering system in the following link: <https://etendering.partneragencies.org> using your username and password. If you have not registered in the system before, you can register now by logging in using

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A pre-bid meeting will be held on 28th September 2017 at 11:00 am (Local BD Time) at UNDP Bangladesh, IDB Bhaban, 19th Floor, Village Well, Agargaon, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

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