

Suu Kyi's last chance

UN chief says Rohingya tragedy will be horrible if Myanmar does not halt army offensive

STAR REPORT

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres says Myanmar's de facto leader Aung San Suu Kyi has "a last chance" to halt an army offensive that has forced tens of thousands of Rohingyas to flee to Bangladesh.

"The tragedy will be absolutely horrible" unless she acted now, Guterres told BBC's HARDtalk ahead of UN General Assembly that will feature the Rohingya refugee crisis, one of the fastest growing in recent years.

The UN chief said Suu Kyi had a last chance to stop the brutal crackdown during her address to the nation tomorrow. "If she does not reverse the situation now, then I think the tragedy will be absolutely horrible, and unfortunately then I don't see how this can be reversed in the future."

The remarks came as more than 4,00,000 people from the minority group in Buddhist-majority Myanmar crossed over into Bangladesh in less than three weeks.

Bangladesh authorities, UN agencies and NGOs have been struggling to provide food, shelter, water and medicine to so many people in such a short period of time.

The UN Migration Agency fears if the trend continues, entire Rohingya population of 1.1 million may come to Bangladesh.

The influx was triggered by Myanmar army's response to insurgent attacks on 30 police posts and an army base in Rakhine State on August 25.

According to refugees now sheltered in Cox's Bazar, Myanmar security forces are torching houses, killing unarmed men and raping women.

Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, analysing photographic and satellite images, said security forces and vigilante mobs are carrying out a scorched-earth policy in Rakhine, burning down entire Rohingya villages and shooting at people as they try to flee.

The rights groups say the atrocity is a targeted campaign to push the Rohingya people out of Myanmar, bearing the hallmarks of "ethnic cleansing".

The United Nations too denounced the "brutal security operation" against Rohingyas in Rakhine State as a "textbook example of ethnic cleansing".

Talking to the BBC on Saturday, the UN secretary general reiterated that

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António Guterres



Suu Kyi



An elderly Rohingya woman and two barefoot children wait apparently for aid in the rain. Left, children have lunch on the muddy floor in a shelter. Right, medics assist relief effort. The photos were taken near Kutupalong Camp yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN



Rohingya was never ethnic group
Claims Myanmar army chief

AFP, Yangon

Myanmar's army chief has urged the country to unite over the "issue" of the



Gen Hlaing

Rohingya, a minority group he says was never an ethnic group, and which his troops are accused of systematically purging.

The military says its "clearance operations" in northern Rakhine state are aimed at taking out Rohingya militants who attacked police posts on August 25.

But the violence has engulfed the border region and triggered an exodus of more than 4,00,000 Rohingyas to Bangladesh, where they have told of soldiers slaughtering civilians and burning down entire villages.

The status of the Muslim minority has long been an explosive topic in Myanmar.

Many in the Buddhist majority view the group as foreign interlopers from Bangladesh and deny the existence of a Rohingya ethnicity, insisting they be called "Bengalis".

General Min Aung Hlaing, Myanmar's globe-trotting army chief, trumpeted that view in comments posted on his official

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A friend in need is a friend indeed

INAM AHMED and SHAKHAWAT LITON

Two years ago, Bangladesh felt a "strengthened bond" with India that "would benefit people of the two countries as well as of the region" when Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi flew into Dhaka. A year later, Dhaka found a "new strategic partner" in Beijing when Chinese President Xi Jinping landed at Shahjalal International Airport.

But another two years down the line, Bangladesh had a new dawn of realisation -- that in the world of diplomacy and geo-political exigency these words may not mean much -- evident in the hundreds of thousands of Rohingyas streaming into Teknaf in the face of unimaginable ruthlessness of Myanmar.

For many in Dhaka it was a shock when Modi during his trip to Myanmar did not

utter a single word about the plight of the Rohingyas, and China's silence was a pain.

They thought at the present level of relationship with India, Bangladesh should have been a priority than a faraway country like Myanmar. Many thought because of the economic relationship, Bangladesh at least deserved some sympathy from China. But that was not to be.

As the Indian Express maintained in its September 7 report titled "India adrift on its Myanmar policy", "the Chinese have a better appreciation of what the ground situation is in Myanmar". It juxtaposed the joint statement by India and Myanmar on September 6 and the Chinese foreign ministry's statement on August 31.

The joint statement said: "India condemned the recent terrorist attacks in northern Rakhine State, wherein several members

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Cheaper Atap or pricey Shiddho?

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Tofayel Alam has been facing economic hardship with the rice price skyrocketing these days.

Still, old habits die hard and so he refused to buy cheaper white rice (Atap) on offer under Open Market Sale yesterday. Tofayel would rather go for the pricey parboiled rice (Shiddho) in the retail market than the subsidised one.

It's all about habit and consumers' preference for one over another.

A fourth-class employee of the Geological Survey of Bangladesh, Tofayel went

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SOARING PRICE OF RICE

Govt intervenes to stabilise market

Starts selling rice, flour under OMS programme

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With rice prices soaring across the country, the government yesterday made a rather delayed intervention in the form of selling the staple at a subsidised price under a nationwide Open Market Sale programme.

Engaging nearly a thousand dealers, the food ministry channelled OMS rice for Tk 30 a kg to people lining up at designated sale points.

Though the price of OMS rice has doubled this time to Tk 30 from Tk 15 a kg, it is still lower by at least Tk 20 a kg from yesterday's retail market price.

The state-run Trading Corporation of

Bangladesh (TCB) said the coarse varieties of rice were on sale in the capital's retail markets for Tk 50 to 54 a kg yesterday, Tk 10 higher than that only a month ago.

The government would also launch its Food-Friendly Programme tomorrow under which 1.5 lakh tonnes of rice would be sold to five million ultra-poor for only Tk 10 a kg. They can buy 30 kg of rice each.

Besides, the government directed the local administrations in major rice-trade zones to strengthen monitoring to prevent hoarding of rice.

Food ministry sources told The Daily Star that such interventions could not be made

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OMS POINTS
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RICE
TK 30 A KG

COARSE FLOUR
TK 17 A KG

- Retail price of coarse rice rises to Tk 50-55 a kg
- 50 lakh ultra-poor to get 1.5 lakh tonnes of rice for Tk 10 a kg from tomorrow
- Govt has 3.4 lakh tonnes of rice in stock, Another 1.2 lakh in import pipeline
- Myanmar team in Dhaka to fix export price of 3 lakh tonnes rice

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Dear Relatives, Friends and Well-wishers,

Our mother, Abeda Islam Amy, wife of Mr. Nurul Islam of Faridpur, Managing Director of EPSI Shoes, and daughter of Prof. Omdatul Islam of Chittagong, passed away at her residence in Banani on September 14, 2017.

She was the founder of Bangladesh Bonsai Society. She left behind her husband, a daughter, two sons, grandchildren and many well-wishers.

A Doa Mehfil for our beloved mother will be held at Lakeshore (La Vita Hall) Road No 41, House No 46, Gulshan-2, on Monday 18th of September, 2017 after Maghrib prayers. Please kindly attend the Doa Mehfil to pray for her departed soul.

Regards,
Farmin Islam, Reaz Islam and Fyaz Islam.

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