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Bodies of Rohingya refugees lying on Inani beach in Cox's Bazar yesterday. At least 15 people drowned when a boat carrying Rohingyas fleeing violence in Myanmar capsized off Bangladesh coast.

32,000 MT of poor quality rice imported

Govt rejects the consignments; importer looks for pvt buyers

REAZ AHMAD

The first two consignments of rice imported for replenishing the government's low food stock have been rejected over quality concern.



Govt is struggling to start 10 taka/kg rice sale for ultra poor as stock remains low

However, the Singapore-based Olam International, which brought the grains from Thailand, has kept two ships with over 32,000 tonnes of parboiled rice at the outer anchorage of Chittagong port for almost a month with intent to sell those to private buyers in Bangladesh.

Food department sources told The Daily Star that they had to reject the two shipments brought through international tender process at a time when the public granaries require immediate replenishment for running various food-aid programmes like Tk 10-a-kg rice for ultra poor and the Open Market Sale (OMS).

The government is already one month behind the schedule in the Tk 10-a-kg rice programme. It deferred twice the launch of the scheme under which some 50 lakh ultra poor were supposed to get 4.5 lakh tonnes of rice in September, October and November.

In such a situation, the food ministry plans to meet on **SEE PAGE 17 COL 2**

At least 15 killed as Rohingya boat sinks

10 children among victims

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

At least 10 children and five women were killed when a trawler carrying Rohingyas from Myanmar capsized in the Bay near Inani beach in Cox's Bazar yesterday, police said.

The death toll may rise further as more than 50 refugees remain missing.

The trawler overturned in the rough sea just yards from the shore after hitting some submerged object, survivors and witnesses said.

It was raining hard when the boat was trying to anchor in Patuarek area of Ukhia around 5:00pm amid strong wind and high tide.

One survivor told The Daily Star that the boat was carrying about 90 people, many of them women and children. AFP news agency put the figure at about 120.

Coastguards said the craft was too small to carry that many people.

By the look of it, the boat could carry maximum 50 people, they added.

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ROHINGYA INFLUX 5,01,800 AND COUNTING

Humanitarian nightmare

UN chief briefs Security Council, calls upon Myanmar to end military ops, warns violence could spread, displace more Rohingyas

AFP, REUTERS

UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres condemned the "humanitarian nightmare" for Myanmar's Rohingyas yesterday and demanded that the government end military operations and open humanitarian access to its conflict-ravaged western region.

"The situation has spiraled into the world's fastest developing refugee emergency, a humanitarian and human rights nightmare," Guterres said in a speech to the UN Security Council.

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres warned on

Thursday that the violence against Myanmar's Rohingya minorities in the northern part of Rakhine state could spread to central Rakhine, where 250,000 more people were at risk of displacement.

Guterres told the UN Security Council during its first public meeting on Myanmar in eight years, that the violence had spiraled into the "world's fastest developing refugee emergency, a humanitarian and human rights nightmare."

"We have received bone-chilling accounts from those who fled - mainly women, children and the elderly," he said. These testimonials

point to excessive violence and serious violations of human rights, including indiscriminate firing of weapons, the use of landmines against civilians and sexual violence."

Sweden, the United States, Britain, France, Egypt, Senegal, and Kazakhstan requested yesterday's council meeting.

Guterres demanded immediate humanitarian aid access to areas affected by the violence and expressed concern "by the current climate of antagonism towards the United Nations" and aid groups, reports Reuters.

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US senators call for sanction

American envoy at UN asks countries to stop supply of weapons to Myanmar

AGENCIES

Members of Congress are sharpening their criticism of Myanmar's crackdown that has forced a half-million Rohingyas to flee to Bangladesh. Republicans and Democrats said yesterday they want the Trump administration to consider sanctions against the perpetrators and to re-evaluate US policy towards the Southeast Asian nation.

Twenty-one senators said in a letter to Secretary of State Rex Tillerson that there's a risk of genocide against the Rohingyas, who have fled en masse in the past month, reports The Associated Press.

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They pour in, through rain, rough water

WASIM BIN HABIB and MOHAMMAD ALI JINNAH, from Cox's Bazar

Dark clouds started to gather on the horizon near Teknal yesterday morning and soon they covered the entire sky. The wind picked up as well. Four-month pregnant Setara Begum took a quick glance at her three-year-old daughter in her arms and paced towards Hariakhal on a muddy road. She then looked at Senawara, her seven-year-old daughter trailing behind, and said, "Walk faster ma. It may rain anytime."

Setara had reached mainland Bangladesh on a boat only a few minutes ago. The woman from Bagguna of Maungda in Myanmar had reached Shah Porir Dwip of Teknal the previous night.

Her boat had many more fellow Rohingyas fleeing persecution across the border and they headed towards Hariakhal.

First a few drops and then the heavens opened. Some women tried to cover their infants with their veils while others with towels.

Barefoot, Setara and her daughter stopped, looked around for cover and then kept on moving again like the others heading towards Hariakhal.

The people on the muddy road were carrying and dragging whatever they could bring from their homes across the border.

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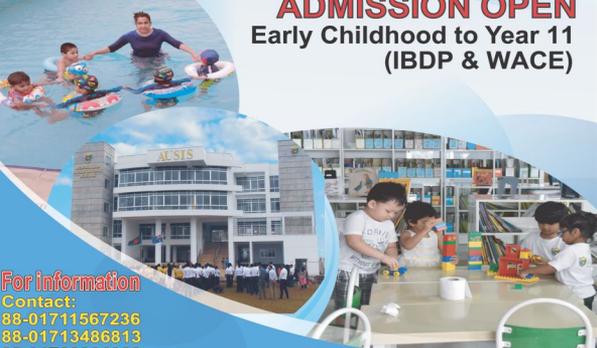
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