

Rohingya refugees rally in Bangladesh camps to demand safe return to Myanmar

DHAKA (BANGLADESH), AUG 26: Tens of thousands of Rohingya refugees from Myanmar living in dozens of camps in Bangladesh held a rally Tuesday to demand their safe return to their home state, nine years after they fled a government crackdown.

The demonstrators urged the international community to ensure security in Rakhine state as they marked what they call the "Ninth Anniversary of Rohingya Genocide Day".

More than 1 million refugees from Myanmar's Rohingya ethnic and religious minority now live in the sprawling camps around the Cox's Bazar district of southeastern Bangladesh.

Most of them fled across the border in a mass exodus in 2017 after Buddhist-majority Myanmar launched a crackdown in Rakhine, following an attack by a Rohingya Muslim insurgent group.

The Bangladesh government earlier attempted to start the repatriation at least twice, but it did not work out as none of the refugees was willing to go back, citing security concerns. Bangladesh says it will not force anyone to return.

In January the International Court of Justice held hearings in a case accusing Myanmar of genocide against the Rohingya in Rakhine state in 2017.



During three weeks of hearings, the court reviewed documentary evidence, expert testimony, and private witness statements concerning mass killings, systematic sexual violence, and the destruction of villages.

The scale, organisation and ferocity of the operation led to accusations of ethnic cleansing and genocide from the international community, including the United Nations.

Myanmar told the court that its deadly military campaign against the Rohingya was a legitimate counter-terrorism operation and did not amount to genocide.

After the 2017 crackdown, hundreds of thousands of Rohingya Muslims crossed from Rakhine into neighbouring Bangladesh on foot and by boat during shelling, indiscriminate killings and

other violence. Rakhine was captured by the insurgent Arakan Army that is fighting Myanmar government forces. The Bangladesh government opened the border, eventually allowing more than 700,000 refugees to take shelter in the Muslim-majority nation.

The influx was in addition to more than 300,000 refugees who already had lived in Bangladesh for decades in the wake of previous violence perpetrated by Myanmar's military and other forces. In recent years, the security situation in Rakhine state has become more volatile.

"Whether it is the Arakan Army or the Myanmar military, as long as they continue playing this double game, the situation in Arakan, or Rakhine, will not become safe. Does that mean we are

expected to remain here for another 50 years," Rohingya refugee leader Sayed Ullah said Tuesday. Arakan is the old name of Rakhine.

"We cannot stay here for 50 years. Given the current situation in Arakan, we need to determine how an environment conducive to peace can be created," he said.

Earlier this month, Myanmar's military-backed government said that more than 300,000 Rohingya refugees living in camps in Bangladesh are former residents of Rakhine state and that it will accept their return once security conditions improve.

But Bangladesh has disputed Myanmar's statistics and its persistent refusal to use the term "Rohingya" noting that labelling them as "Bengali" is an attempt to deny their identity. (AP)

Indian sarees displayed at New York's Times Square

NEW YORK, AUG 25: Diverse hues and varieties of India's sarees inundated the iconic Times Square here as women from the diaspora community proudly showcased the timeless elegance, heritage and cultural diversity of the garment at a special event.

The third edition of the 'Saree Goes Global' event was organised by New York-based philanthropic organisation Uma Global at Times Square on Sunday.

Women and girls flaunted their exquisitely embroidered, painted and embellished sarees -- from traditional Assamese weaves, Lucknow's Chikankari to Banarasi Silk and splendid Kanjeevarams -- reflecting the diversity of the nine-yard garment from across the length and breadth of India.

Adorning the vibrant sarees with exquisite embellishments, styles and fabrics, the women proudly showcased their collection as they waved the national flags, danced together, took pictures and shared stories about their sarees, culture and heritage.

In her message that was read out at the event, New York State Governor Kathy Hochul said the event was a celebration of the women who "positively transform our communities, while wearing sarees in proud celebration of your heritage in Times Square."

Hochul commended Uma Global for being an "invaluable resource" for women, minorities, and business professionals.

"When we empower professionals of all genders and backgrounds to succeed, we help build a future that works for all of us," Hochul's message said.

In her message on the occasion, Rajlakshmi Appasaheb Kadam (Consul Trade)



at the Consulate General of India in New York said the saree is a living legacy of Indian art, traditions, culture and hard-working weavers.

"From the saree's ancient roots dating back to the Indus Valley civilisation to its modern legacy where young designers are mixing old weaves with new modern cuts, women wear the saree proudly at weddings, work, and global events. It remains a zero-waste, sustainable choice for the future," Kadam said.

On the occasion, inspiring women were honoured for their achievements and contributions to their respective fields.

The honourees included Shaila Rizvi, interior designer and Creative Director of Bungalow, the acclaimed New York restaurant from Michelin-starred chef Vikas Khanna and restaurateur Jimmy Rizvi.

Shaila Rizvi was honoured for her creative achievements, while Mysha Rizvi, Guest Relations Manager of Bungalow, was recognised for the warmth and hospitality she brings to the celebrated restaurant.

"It was also wonderful to see the men proudly joining

us in their 'dhotis'. Saree Goes Global is about much more than what we wear. It is about confidence, heritage, connection, and creating a space where cultures and communities can be celebrated together," President of Uma Global Dr Rita Kakati-Shah said.

In a message, Dilip Chauhan, Deputy Chief Business Diversity Officer and Senior Advisor for MWBE (Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprise) Business Opportunities, New York City Mayor's Office of M/WBEs, said "I also want to recognise Mayor Zohran Mamdani, the first South Asian mayor, whose vision reflects that New York's success should not be limited to a few but that opportunity should be accessible to everyone, regardless of background, culture, where they come from."

The cultural event, organised in partnership with the Consulate General of India in New York, showcased the timeless elegance of the saree through music, dance and a vibrant saree ramp walk.

The program featured performances from 'Dance X Studio', live music and the

sounds of flute and dhol.

Among the highlights was a flash dance that took over Times Square, led by celebrity choreographer Jayshree Srikanth and Dance X Studio dancers, and joined by Saree Goes Global participants and members of the public.

The Ramp Walk, led by Host Committee member Garima Agrawal, showcased sarees and traditional weaves from across India, celebrating the extraordinary diversity of regional textiles, drapes, and craftsmanship.

The festivities culminated in the signature Saree Walkathon in the heart of Times Square, bringing participants, families, and supporters together in a display of cultural pride and unity.

Dr Dipti Jain, founder of the Saree Goes Global initiative in the UK, said sarees create a vibrant platform to celebrate "our shared heritage and foster a deep sense of belonging."

Uma Global is a New York-based philanthropic organisation empowering youth and women through education, leadership development, and cross-cultural initiatives. (PTI)

USS Abraham Lincoln heads to Thailand for brief stop after lengthy deployment at sea

BANGKOK, AUG 26: The US aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln will make a stop in Thailand after its gruelling deployment in the Middle East, Thai officials said Wednesday.

The Lincoln was supporting the US war against Iran, and its deployment included a record-setting uninterrupted time at sea of more than 250 days. Concerns have grown about the Lincoln's lengthy deployment following reports of deteriorating mental health among the crew and shortages of supplies, including food and hygiene products.

A Thai government official, speaking on condition of



anonymity because they were not authorised to brief the press, confirmed that the Lincoln will make a brief visit in Thailand for rest and recovery.

A statement from the Royal Thai Navy on Tuesday said three ships from a US

Navy carrier strike group were scheduled to make a short stopover in eastern Thailand for recuperation and that no military exercises would be carried out during the visit.

It did not identify the ships nor specify the port or their

arrival date, citing security concerns.

The US embassy in Bangkok did not immediately respond to a request for comment, and the US Navy declined to comment.

The deployments of carriers wear on service members who are away from home for long periods and increase strain on the ship and its equipment. While renewed hostilities between the US and Iran calmed in recent weeks, the Navy is enforcing a reimposed blockade on Iranian ports in the Strait of Hormuz, and the Trump administration has offered no clarity on how it intends to wind down the war. (AP)

Sudden flood sweeps through northern Nepal, alert issued

KATHMANDU, AUG 26: A sudden and massive flood swept through northern Nepal on Wednesday morning, causing extensive damage to the border settlement and placing multiple downstream districts on high alert, officials said.

The flood surged through the Bhote Koshi River at around 9 am (local time), reportedly coming from the direction of Tibet. The sudden rise in water caused widespread destruction in Timure á Shin Rasuwa district and the nearby Syafrubesi area, with vehicles, goods and other property washed away, the Nepal Army said in a statement.

Rasuwa district lies in the North-East of Kathmandu, around 125 km from the Tibet border. The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority (NDRRM) Nepal has issued a statement calling people residing near river banks of Rasuwa, Nuwakot, Dhading, Chitawan and Gorkha to remain on high alert and take safety measures until further notice. Rasuwa Assistant Chief District Officer Dhruva Prasad Adhikari said the scale of the flooding was unusually large and that the two settlements had suffered significant damage.



Rasuwa Chief Customs Officer Rajendra Dhungana said numerous vehicles and goods kept at the customs premises were swept away. A recently constructed bridge was also destroyed.

The Prime Minister's Office has said that Nepal Army, Armed Police Force and Nepal Police personnel have been mobilised in Rasuwa and surrounding areas to intensify efforts for rescue and relief activities in view of the devastating flood.

A high-level meeting is be-

ing called to discuss the situation in the aftermath of the flood and to take necessary measures to deal with the situation, according to the PM office. Nepal Army has already dispatched two helicopters to areas near the Trishuli River to carry out search and rescue work. An Army helicopter (MI 17) equipped with an Emergency Medical Rescue Team has already been mobilised towards the district hospital in Trishuli, the army said in a statement.

However, the details of the

damage caused by the devastating flood are yet to arrive, as collection of data regarding the damage is underway, the Nepal Army said.

Just a year ago, two catastrophic floods hit Bhotekoshi, wreaking havoc in Rasuwa killing at least ten people. The flood was a consequence of the sudden draining of a previously unnoticed 'supraglacial' lake.

According to the Department of Hydrology and Meteorology, Wednesday's flooding was not caused by rainfall in Rasuwa.

Delhi Medical Association Issues Advisory Amid Rise In H1N1 Cases

NEW DELHI, AUG 26: The Delhi Medical Association has issued an advisory amid a rise in H1N1 cases in the national capital, urging people to follow respiratory and personal hygiene measures, avoid crowded places and seek timely medical advice if they develop flu-like symptoms.

Delhi has recorded 2,308 H1N1 cases so far in 2026, while cumulative Influenza A and B cases have crossed 3,000, with H1N1 currently the predominant influenza subtype in the city, according to an official statement issued on Tuesday. H3N2 was the predominant subtype in Delhi last year, Delhi

health minister Pankaj Singh said on Tuesday.

The association advised people to cover their mouth and nose while coughing or sneezing, wash their hands frequently and avoid touching their eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands. It also advised people to maintain distance from those suffering from H1N1 or influenza-like illness and avoid spitting in public places.

The DMA has recommended wearing an N95 mask while experiencing flu symptoms, while health care professionals have been advised to wear masks in clinics, hospitals and OPDs.

It also cautioned people against taking antibiotics or antiviral medicines without consulting a qualified physician and advised those with flu-like symptoms to avoid meeting relatives, friends and others to prevent the spread of infection.

The association further advised people returning from travel or areas witnessing increased influenza activity to monitor their health for at least 10 days and report to the nearest health facility if they develop symptoms. It also recommended using face masks in crowded areas, markets and public transport.

According to the DMA, the

Delhi government has taken steps to prepare hospitals for the seasonal rise in influenza cases, with adequate beds, doctors, medicines and essential medical equipment being made available.

Directions have also been issued for screening, reporting and monitoring of influenza-like illness and severe acute respiratory infection cases.

The association appealed to people not to panic but to remain cautious and responsible, saying simple preventive measures, timely medical consultation and respiratory hygiene can help limit the spread of influenza. (Agencies)

Wildberries depot in Russia is hit again, destroyed as Ukraine extends its drone campaign

MOSCOW, AUG 26: Ukrainian long-range drones struck a major warehouse belonging to Russia's biggest online retailer for the second time in just over a month, starting a massive fire that destroyed it completely, local authorities said on Wednesday.

Ukrainian forces previously hit the depot in the Tambov region southeast of Moscow, several hundred kilometres (miles) from the Ukrainian border, on July 18, killing seven people and heralding the start of an aerial campaign that has delivered repeated blows to Russian e-commerce giant Wildberries.

The company's size and commercial importance have brought comparisons

with Amazon.

Ukraine's cutting-edge drone capabilities developed since Russia's February 2022 invasion have allowed it to hit dozens of Wildberries facilities across Russia in recent weeks. Kyiv officials say goods sold by the company include gear and technical components used by Russia's military. The attacks have also served Ukraine's war goals by unsettling Russians living far from the front line and hurting the Russian economy.

Russia, meanwhile, has blasted Ukraine with ballistic and cruise missiles, powerful glide bombs and jet-powered drones, killing thousands of civilians.

Ukraine has been firing hundreds of drones at Rus-

sia almost nightly, hoping to overwhelm air defences. The Russian Defence Ministry said that its forces overnight shot down 426 Ukrainian drones over 15 Russian regions and illegally annexed Crimea.

Wildberries confirmed the overnight attack and fire at its depot in the Tambov region and said the facility was evacuated, but it didn't elaborate on the extent of the damage.

Tambov Governor Yevgeny Pervyshov said that the fire completely destroyed the logistical centre and injured two people - a 19-year-old man who suffered a concussion, and a 49-year-old woman, who broke her finger.

Elsewhere, two people were killed and two others

were wounded in Russia's Lipetsk region south of Moscow after a drone fell on a house, setting it ablaze, the region's Governor Igor Artamonov said.

Ukraine has also targeted Russian oil facilities that are the backbone of the country's economy. Russia is one of the world's largest energy producers.

Unconfirmed reports said that an oil refinery in Russia's Nizhny Novgorod region was on fire Wednesday.

The region has repeatedly been targeted by Ukraine. Local Governor Gleb Nikitin confirmed the attack and said that an unspecified "industrial facility" sustained damage, but didn't provide any details about that facility. (AP)