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SEVERAL HUNDRED ROHINGYAS WAIT ALONG THE NAF IN MYANMAR



Several hundred Rohingyas are reportedly stranded just across the Naf River opposite Teknaf, unable to enter Bangladesh due to tightened border security, according to Rohingya community leaders.

They estimate that around 300-400 Rohingyas have gathered along the frontier, many fleeing fierce clashes in Myanmar's Rakhine State involving the Arakan Army, Rohingya armed groups, and junta forces seeking to regain control of lost territory.

Fourteen of Rakhine's 17 townships are now under Arakan Army control.

The matter of Rohingyas massing near the border was raised at a National Task Force meeting on Rohingya Affairs, chaired by Foreign Secretary Asad Alam Siam at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Dhaka on August 17. Officials at the meeting confirmed reports that some Rohingyas are crossing into Bangladesh despite heightened patrols.

Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner (RRRC) Mohammad Mizanur Rahman, however, told The Daily Star he had no official confirmation of such gatherings. He acknowledged, though, that Myanmar's military carried out airstrikes on Maungdaw and surrounding areas three days ago, intensifying violence there.

Mohammad Kamal, a leader from Camp-27 in Cox's Bazar, said more than 300 Rohingyas are sheltering near Laldwip in Myanmar, opposite Jaliya Dwip in Bangladesh. "Every day, some Rohingyas slip into the camps evading BGB patrols," he said.

"The junta is bombing towns to recapture them. At the same time, clashes are raging between the Arakan Army and Rohingya armed groups. Trapped in a three-way conflict, families fear for their lives and are desperate to flee to Bangladesh."

Source: thedailystar.net

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■ Myanmar will hold the initial phase of its general election on Dec 28, state television said on Aug 18, outlining a road map for the first polls in the war-torn country in nearly five years.



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MYANMAR BORDER CLOSURE CRIPPLES THAI EXPORTS WORTH BILLIONS



Exporters and businesses along the Thai-Myanmar border are facing a severe crisis after the Myanmar authorities suddenly closed the Second Thai-Myanmar Friendship Bridge. The closure, reportedly ordered to seize control of trade revenues, has brought the flow of large goods to a halt and is threatening trade worth an estimated 130 billion baht (S\$5.1 billion). On Aug 18, officials in Myawaddy, Kayin state, opposite Thailand’s Mae Sot

district, unexpectedly shut the border crossing to all large vehicles and commercial goods. The move came without any prior warning to the Thai authorities, including customs officials in Mae Sot. According to reports, the order originated from the capital, Naypyitaw, as part of a crackdown aimed at redirecting border trade profits to the central government.

For years, a significant portion of this revenue has benefited various ethnic armed groups, including the Border Guard Force, the dominant military force in the area. Myanmar’s government is now seeking to re-establish control and increase its own income. While the main trade bridge remains closed, the First Thai-Myanmar Friendship Bridge is still operating for pedestrians and small-scale local trade.

Source: straitstimes.com