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MYANMAR AND ASIAN NEWS

1. Japanese government to provide assistance for repatriation of refugees to Myanmar from Bangladesh

According to the AFP news report, the Japanese government will provide an assistance for repatriating refugees to Myanmar from Bangladesh.

The press release issued by the Japanese Embassy in Yangon states that the Government of Japan will provide a grant aid of US \$ 30,595, under the "Grassroots Grant Assistance Scheme", to "CARE Myanmar", for the project of "Income Generation through Agro-forestry in Northern Rakhine State".

CARE Myanmar will procure seeds of vegetables and fruits and provide them to approximately 2,500 households of returnees. They will be able to get income generation opportunities through marketing of agricultural produce.

It is learnt that if the Myanmar military government makes more reforms, the Japanese government will provide more humanitarian assistance to Myanmar.

During 1991-92, hundreds of thousands of Rohingya refugees fled to Bangladesh due to the Myanmar Army's persecution of Rohingyas. Although many refugees have been deported to Myanmar, about 20,000 refugees still remain at the Cox's Bazaar up to now, the news report said.

2. Senior General Than Shwe's visit to Bangladesh is likely to take place

According to the AFP news report from Yangon, Senior General Than Shwe, Chairman of the SPDC, is likely to pay an official visit to Bangladesh as he has been restored to health.

Senior General Than Shwe cancelled his visit to Bangladesh earlier on the grounds of ill health, a spokesman of the Bangladeshi Foreign Ministry told the AFP News Agency. He added that Bangladesh wishes Myanmar to fix a date for the visit and Bangladesh welcomes the Myanmar leader's visit to Dhaka.

The AFP reported that according to some sources, Senior General Than Shwe cancelled his visit because he may have been in ill health or he may have been less enthusiastic to visit Bangladesh while he was planning to retire from his post.

The relation between Myanmar and Bangladesh has been strained because 250,000 Rohingya refugees have fled to Bangladesh since 1990 due to the Myanmar military government's persecution of Rohingyas.