

**General Studies-2; Topic: Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests**

**China Mediating in Rohingya Crisis**

**1) Introduction**

- China, which has historically been wary of stepping into domestic conflicts in other countries, is being proactive in Rohingya crisis.
- A military operation by Myanmar in Rakhine resulted in around 600,000 Rohingya fleeing the province to Bangladesh.
- Now China has stepped in with its three-point plan.

**2) China's Three-stage Solution**

- Myanmar and Bangladesh must hold bilateral talks and reach a repatriation agreement – which has been achieved.
- Declaration of ceasefire in Rakhine to halt further displacement and bringing immediate relief to the state's devastated Rohingya
- China will provide economic assistance for the development of the Rakhine region and asking the international community to help develop the Rakhine state.

**3) Flaws in the agreement / Challenges**

- Details of the agreement, including the number of Rohingya who will be sent back, and the timeline, have not been revealed.
- It is not clear whether the refugees themselves want to go back to a place they had fled in such unsafe circumstances.
- It is also not clear where they will be resettled.
- An immediate ceasefire in Rakhine to halt further displacement as mentioned in the agreement hasn't been declared yet.
- There is no indication so far, that a resettlement plan is taking shape.

**4) China's interests in Myanmar**

- China sees the Rohingya crisis as an economic problem, given that its solution is centred on development.
- Beijing enjoys good relations with both Bangladesh and Myanmar
- China has emerged as a major investor in both Bangladesh and Myanmar
- Rakhine is an important link in China's Belt and Road Initiative.
- China is building a \$7.3 billion deep-water port in the Rakhine province and has invested \$2.45 billion to build an oil and gas pipeline connecting coastal Rakhine to Yunnan.
- China has put pressure on Myanmar because conflict in Rakhine will be against Beijing's economic interests.

**5) Concerns for India**

- India's has missed another opportunity to China's decisive and proactive diplomacy.
- China's new appetite to demonstrate regional leadership in India's traditional sphere of influence.
- China's credibility in financing, building, delivering and managing mega projects in South Asia provides Beijing's a clear edge over India.

- This is seen as more confident Chinese diplomacy in addressing regional problems.
- China has plans to build an economic corridor with Myanmar
- While India has described 40,000 Rohingyas in India as ‘illegal migrants’ who must be deported.
- Supreme Court declared them a threat to national security.

### 6) India's interests in Myanmar

- India too has similar interests to protect
- India’s construction of a deepwater port at Sittwe
- Its Kaladan multimodal transport project
- Peace in the North-eastern region
- Its image as the world’s largest democracy with an exemplary record of hosting refugees.
- All these call for a serious rethink on India’s engagement with the Rohingya crisis.

### 7) Way Forward

- While economic assistance is essential, the real problem is political, and there needs to be a political solution.
- Myanmar should roll back the institutional barriers that render Rohingyas as second-class people.
- Rohingyas must be accepted as equal citizens to have a long-term solution to the Rakhine unrest.

