

Put pressure on Myanmar

PM asks US as Rohingyas continue to enter Bangladesh amid persecution

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday called upon the United States to put pressure on Myanmar to stop pushing Rohingyas into Bangladesh.

"We have given shelter to a large number of Rohingya refugees on humanitarian grounds and it's a big problem for us.... So I urge you to mount pressure on Myanmar in this regard," she said.

Hasina made the appeal when US Acting Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Alice Wells met her at her office. PM's Press Secretary Ihsanul Karim briefed reporters after the meeting, reports BSS.

The Myanmar Rohingyas, one of the most persecuted communities in the world, have been fleeing to Bangladesh since late '80s. Presently, an estimated 500,000 Rohingyas live in Bangladesh.



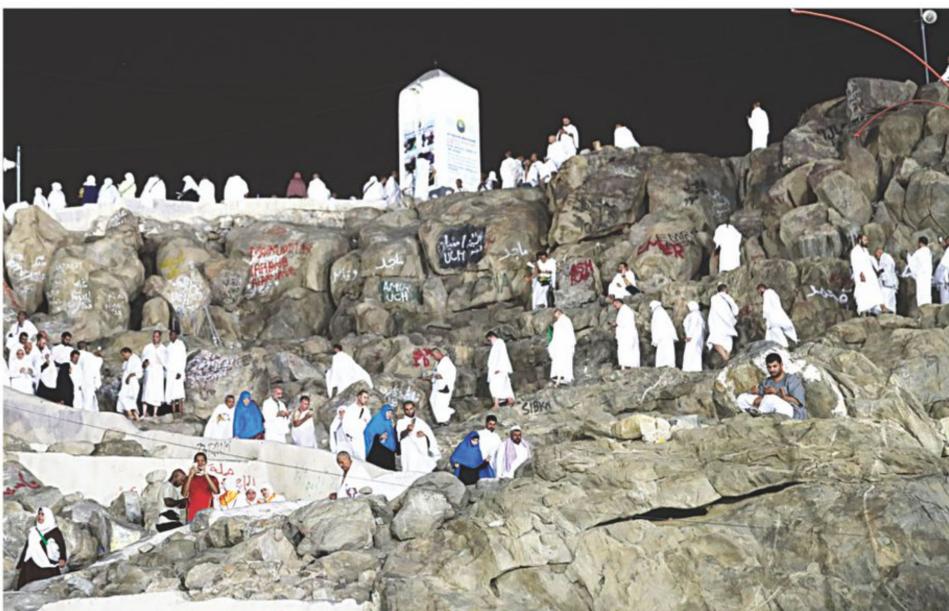
Ihsanul said Wells wanted to know whether there had been any political dialogue between Bangladesh and Myanmar on the Rohingya issue. Hasina in reply said Bangladesh's foreign office was in contact with the Myanmar authorities.

The issue came up at the meeting as thousands of Rohingyas entered Bangladesh since Friday after Myanmar security forces launched a drive in Rakhine State in the face of attacks on 30 police posts and an army base.

The Myanmar government claimed the attackers killed 10 policemen, a soldier and an immigration official. A total of 77 "insurgents" were also killed.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Foreign Minister AH Mahmood Ali yesterday sought UN support to resolve the Rohingya crisis during a farewell call

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Muslim pilgrims walk and pray on Mount Arafat, also known as Jabal al-Rahma (Mount of Mercy), southeast of the Saudi holy city of Mecca, on the eve of Arafat Day which is the climax of the Hajj pilgrimage on August 30.

PHOTO: AFP

Hajj begins

AFP, Makkah

More than two million Muslims from around the world began the hajj pilgrimage at Islam's holiest sites yesterday, a religious duty and an epic multi-stage journey.

This year sees pilgrims from Shia Iran return to Makkah in Saudi Arabia after a hiatus following a diplomatic spat between the regional rivals and a deadly stampede in 2015.

It also comes with the Gulf mired in a major political crisis that has seen thousands of faithful who would usually make the journey from neighbouring Qatar stay away.

On the esplanade of Makkah's Grand Mosque, the excitement was palpable as crowds from all four corners of the world gathered for a pilgrimage that all able Muslims are required to perform at least once in their lives.

Tidjani Traore, a public service consultant from Benin, said he was on his 22nd pilgrimage at the age of 53.

"Every time, there are new emotions," he said. "There are new innovations for organising and hosting the

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Settling an old score?

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Here are some examples of his comments on the CJ.

On last Saturday at a programme, Justice Manik wondered whether CJ Sinha had indeed written the 16th amendment verdict.

"He had taken only 25 days to write 400 pages, it's impossible. The verdict was not written by him at all," he asserted.

"If you go through the verdict, you will find words that have been never used in verdicts written by him. It's clear that someone else -- probably some Pakistani ISI (agents) -- wrote it," alleged Justice Manik.

"He [CJ Sinha] has violated the constitution, his oath and has no right to remain in office. You will not only resign, but leave this country. You have no right to live here as you do not recognize Bangabandhu's leadership," said an angry Justice Manik.

On Tuesday at a programme, he alleged that the verdict was prepared before. "It is impossible to write this verdict in such short period. Vested quarter worked behind this," he said.

On the channel News24 talk show on August 18, he also accused the chief justice of undermining Bangabandhu. "The most objectionable remarks [of CJ] that the country has not been liberated under one person's leadership. It is a very audacious remark," commented Justice Manik, a complete distortion of what the CJ wrote in the verdict.

In an interview with daily Samakal published on August 12, he alleged that the chief justice violated the constitution by denying the leadership of Bangabandhu in the country's Liberation War. The CJ never did so.

"It's a hotchpotch judgement," he said in a talk show on Channel-I on August 18.

During a talk show on television channel '71' on August 10, Justice Manik said the observations made by the CJ in the verdict are "irrelevant" to the case. He termed the observations as "satire" and "peculiar story."

Justice Manik's anger at the chief justice is nothing new. He also tried to brand the chief justice as "Razakar" in last two years by twisting the CJ's remarks.

On August 18, on the News24 talk show Justice Manik said: "he [Justice Sinha] himself said that he was a member of Peace Committee. Being a member of the Peace Committee, he helped Pakistani occupational forces. This should be investigated."

In a talk show on DBC channel on March 15 this year, he also described Justice Sinha "a self-proclaimed Razakar and anti-liberation element."

This was a complete distortion of Justice Sinha's statement about his role in 1971.

On September 10 of 2014, during the hearing in war criminal Kamaruzzaman appeals, the defence lawyer argued how a freedom fighter could take shelter in the home of a Peace Committee member.

In response, Justice Sinha, who was presiding over a four-member Appellate Division bench, said: "It may happen. There was a situation during the war when in every family if one was an Awami League supporter, another was pro-Pakistani. I myself was a member of the Peace Committee."

Justice Sinha clarified: "I used to accompany the Pakistani army personnel during the day time, but at night I passed down information to the freedom fighters."

Justice Hasan Foz Siddique, who was a member of the four-member bench, instantly said: "By enlisting as Razakars, many people gave their arms to the freedom fighters."

But whenever Justice Manik has spoken about Justice Sinha's role in 1971, he spoke half-truths. He intentionally refrained from speaking about Justice Sinha's role on how he helped freedom fighters.

In past, Justice Manik had demanded the CJ's resignation in public. He had

even sent a letter to the president requesting him to remove Justice Sinha from the office of CJ on charge of "violation of the constitution."

ARE JUSTICE MANIK'S STATEMENTS BASED ON FACTS?

To answer this question we have to recall the circumstances of Justice Manik's retirement.

He was scheduled to go into retirement on October 1, 2015 as a judge of the Appellate Division. He was not included in any bench by CJ Sinha during the last few weeks of his term. According to the CJ this exclusive time was given him to complete 65 judgments and orders that were pending with him.

On August 25, in a letter to him, the CJ asked him to complete writing the pending judgements before taking retirement benefits.

On August 31, Justice Manik sent a letter to the chief justice questioning the validity of his letter.

After that the CJ, on September 2, sent another letter insisting that Justice Manik finished the judgements and orders pending with him before retirement.

In response, Justice Manik on September 8 in another letter said that the letter sent to him by the CJ was "tantamount to violation of constitutional oath."

A furious Justice Manik, on September 13, 2015, took the unprecedented step, perhaps for the first time in Bangladesh, of sending a letter to President Abdul Hamid seeking the CJ's removal on charge of "violation of the constitution."

In the letter, he alleged that the CJ showed "bias" against him by not including him in any Bench since September 8.

He said, "As per Article 107(3) of the constitution, the chief justice forms benches of the judges. But, the constitution did not empower the chief justice to keep any sitting judge out of bench."

The letter also reads: "The chief justice kept me out of bench at a time when some cases were partly heard before my court and some cases were put on cause list for hearing this week."

He also alleged, "I have been subjected to discriminatory behaviour and vengeful attitude by the chief justice."

"Following the discriminatory attitude towards me, it is clear that the honourable chief justice is a person, who is unable to deliver justice impartially. Such unjust and personal vindictive decision is bound to hamper the freedom of other judges in delivering justice independently," reads Justice Manik's letter.

"I am a colleague of Chief Justice Sinha. The decision of the chief justice against me shows that he is not able to deliver justice staying above aversion and devotion," the letter added.

His move drew criticism as he was accused by many senior lawyers for acting out of personal vengeance.

After over five months of his retirement on February 8, 2016, he submitted 65 judgments and orders he finished after retirement as an Appellate Division judge.

"JUSTICE MANIK VIOLATED CONSTITUTION"

Interestingly enough, when Justice Manik was a High Court judge in 2012, he himself was accused by the Speaker and parliamentarians of violating the Constitution for his derogatory remarks against the then Speaker Abdul Hamid.

During the hearing of a case in 2012, he had accused then Speaker Hamid, now the President, of committing an offence tantamount to sedition. He accused Hamid of making a comment in the House on a High Court order. Justice Manik also said the Speaker was completely ignorant of the apex court and of the constitution.

MPs reacted sharply and blasted Justice Manik. In an unscheduled discussion in the parliament on June 5, 2012, they accused him of violating the constitution for making "derogatory remarks" about the Speaker.

Participating in the discussion,

senior Awami League lawmaker Tofail Ahmed, now commerce minister, said, "I was surprised to see how Justice Manik spoke against the Speaker and accused him of sedition. We are at a loss for words to censure him."

The same judge, Tofail, added, had once punished a simple traffic police officer for failing to salute him on the road.

Workers Party MP Rashed Khan Menon, now civil aviation minister, said Justice Manik's remarks were a clear violation of Article 78 of the constitution. "We can in no way accept such behaviour."

During this discussion treasury bench MPs chanted "shame" "shame" when their fellow lawmakers were blasting Justice Manik over his remarks about the Speaker.

On June 18, then Speaker Abdul Hamid came up with a ruling on the discussion saying Justice Manik had violated the constitution by making derogatory remarks about the parliament and the Speaker.

"I doubt if a conscientious person can make remarks like the ones an honourable High Court judge [Justice Manik] has made about parliament and me by violating Article 78 (1) of the constitution," Hamid said.

Article 78 (1) of the constitution says the validity of the proceedings in parliament shall not be questioned in any court.

Putting the onus on the then chief justice, the Speaker said, "We will support whatever steps the chief justice may take with regard to such behaviour by a court. Hopefully, that will prevent a recurrence of such incidents."

The then chief justice, Muzammel Hossain, did not take any action as expected by the Speaker.

Justice Manik was appointed by the government as a judge to the Appellate Division in March 2013.

Facts presented above clearly show the motivation behind Justice Manik's bitter attack on the chief justice. He appears to be taking advantage of the ruling party's umbrage regarding the annulment of the 16th amendment and denigrating the CJ to settle his old score. An institution is being denigrated for personal vengeance.

Kalyan Party

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Meanwhile, BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, in a statement, said Aminur was abducted while he was on the way to his home in Savar.

Bangladesh Kalyan Party is a component of the BNP-led 20-party alliance.

Khaleda slammed the government, saying, "Since Awami League's ascension to power, the country has turned into a ground for unbridled murders, abductions and enforced disappearances."

She also alleged that the government was creating a "single-party social and political system" to cling to power.

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, meanwhile, claimed that over a thousand people have fallen victim to enforced disappearances since 2009.

"Incidents of enforced disappearance are on the rise and it rose sharply in last one week. This is a crime against humanity," he told reporters at a press conference at the party's Nayapaltan office.

He also said it was the responsibility of the government to find the disappeared ones and return them to their families.

Fakhrul alleged that the government did not even observe the UN International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances as it kept committing the crime.

After showing a documentary on BNP leaders and activists allegedly abducted by law enforcers, the BNP leader, citing Ain O Salish Kendra data, said around 539 people fell victim to enforced disappearances from 2009 to last June.

"The actual figure is much higher," he concluded.

Tigers do it

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exactly that on an absorbing fourth day against the 'never-say-die' Aussies as the Tigers posted a 20-run victory and took a 1-0 lead in a series where they had mostly garnered attention for the pre-series buzz over a possible 2-0 sweep.

His 84 runs in the first innings and match haul of 10 wickets are definitely gigantic numbers, but his impact on the match beyond numbers can be depicted by a simple anecdote from the last moments of the match, when he advised Taijul Islam to bowl around the wicket instead of over the wicket to change the length of the ball and shape it into the left-hander.

Taijul did exactly that and was rewarded with the final wicket of Australia's second innings, dismissing Josh Hazlewood and simultaneously discarding the lower-order efforts of Pat Cummins, who was stranded on an unbeaten 33.

The great triumph was orchestrated by the great contributions from two of Bangladesh's biggest stalwarts -- Shakib and Tamim Iqbal, who could not have celebrated their 50 Test in better fashion -- with young off-spinner Mehedi Hasan and Taijul offering significant input as Australia were lured into a spin web.

Yet, it was Shakib who took centre stage by wrapping up the drama with such aplomb that the world's cricket fraternity is bound to conclude that wins against England at home, against Sri Lanka in the Island, and the latest against Australia have provided strong statements of the materialization of a good, exciting Test team.

Bangladesh's tight grip loosened suddenly in the late hours of the third day after complete domination over the prior

two and the anxiety only mounted on the morning of the fourth day as two of Australia's best batsmen, David Warner and Steve Smith, resumed their innings at 109 for two in chase of 265 and gained a stranglehold, with the former completing his 19th Test century in the first session.

However, one man was on the spot, bowling in the right channels on a pitch that was offering turn and variable bounce, knowing that one success could change the game's complexion and that the only requirement was patience. He kept at it and drama unfolded in the 12th over of the day just before the first drink's break.

The racous crowd erupted with joy when Warner, who hit 116 fours and one six during his sublime 112-run knock, was trapped leg before while attempting to pull Shakib. It came as a tonic, suddenly changing the body language of the whole team. And when Shakib struck again after three overs to remove the other dangerman, Smith, for 37, the writing was all but on the wall as Australia still needed 94 runs with six wickets in hand.

After arguably starting the day ahead, Australia limped to lunch at 199 for seven.

Bangladesh's catching has not always been sharp, as evidenced by Tamim dropping Smith during a crucial juncture on the fourth day, but a culprit from the day before, Soumya Sarkar -- who had dropped Warner when he was on 14 -- took a brilliant catch at first slip, somehow getting his hands to the flying ball and ending Peter Handscomb's innings on 15 after the batsman tried to cut a Taijul delivery.

An uncomfortable Matthew Wade

'Thank you for your trust in us'

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premier all-rounder told the audience, which included the sports-savvy Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, after Bangladesh's historic 20-run win over the mighty Australia in the first of the two-Test series.

In a chirpy mood during the presentation ceremony, Shakib has been a man oozing confidence right from the build-up to the last ball of the absorbing opening Test. Animated at the fall of every Australian wicket, whether or not he was part of it; aggressive in every step on that lush green; dominating the opposition's bowling with his trusty bat (in the first innings where he scored an imperious 84); he was emotionally involved in everything.

He was so engrossed that he was leaving a long discussion with fellow left-arm spinner Taijul Islam when Pat Cummins was threatening to take the game away from the firm grip of the Tigers.

Soon, umpire Nigel Llong raised the simultaneously dreading and cherished finger, not only stamping Bangladesh's first-ever win against Australia but also confirming the continuation of newfound belief, the seeds of which were sowed on this very ground exactly 10 months ago when the Tigers floored England for their first Test win of substance.

Bangladesh, EU finalise

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(Bilateral and Consular) of the foreign ministry, led the Bangladesh side in the meeting, while the EU side was headed by Paola Pampaloni, deputy managing director for Asia and Pacific of EU Foreign Service.

The meeting was followed by signing of an agreed minutes between Bangladesh and EU delegation at State Guesthouse Meghna.

The Bangladesh side assured that the government would do everything to bring back the irregular citizens.

Meeting sources said the repatriation

After so many plots and sub-plots it was almost the same scenario with the Tigers wrestling back the initiative against Australia as they did against England. The only difference was that the Aussies were a tad more resolute than their great rivals.

Shakib was generous in crediting the victory to the fans (including his wife) for believing -- something they have earned since their spectacular journey from the 2015 World Cup. Over the course of three years they have won so many games that 'historic win' has now become an overused word.

But it is the self-belief of Shakib and Co. that is producing more positive results. When Shakib said ahead of the series that Bangladesh had the ability to win 2-0 and that the home spin attack was better than the touring team (in these conditions), cricket experts thought that it was done as part of a mind game rather than any serious concern.

This is not the first time Shakib served a salvo that irked an opposing captain. He had done it in the past -- ahead of the home series against Pakistan, England and South Africa. Known for his cutthroat attitude, the best all-rounder in the world also made an interesting remark after that washed-out Champions Trophy game

process would begin after those irregular Bangladeshis completed all the legal procedures in the EU countries they are staying in.

However, no one could give any specific timeframe for starting the repatriation process.

Foreign ministry officials said as per the draft SOPs finalised yesterday, Bangladesh would first verify the citizenship of those who were said to be irregular.

They said the government might form a taskforce for internal coordination, and the setup of a special cell had already

against Australia, who were deprived of a victory due to the rain at the Oval in England earlier this year.

He was very annoyed with his dismissal (he was adjudged leg-before) and said that had he been there with Tamim Iqbal he could have exposed the weak link in the Australian bowling attack. It was not a veiled threat then, neither was it a veiled threat ahead of the home series against Steven Smith's men.

Playing their 50th Test, both Shakib and Tamim not only made it a memorable one but also provided the strongest of statements of their transformation as the pillars of Bangladesh, on which the Tigers can only build on.

They are now not only a team that believes in their ability but also translates those to the field. The 155-run partnership between Tamim and Shakib in the first innings, which decided the game, is not something rare. It's a continuation of many outstanding partnerships over the course of the last three years.

Shakib is a born champion. He's born to dominate and not afraid of failure. He is leading a group that injected the belief in the fans that the Tigers can win.

It's a day not for Shakib, but for us, to salute the Tigers for the injection of belief.