

ROHINGYA INFLUX

Delhi pledges full support for Dhaka

Foreign secy meets Indian counterpart

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

India yesterday pledged its full support to Bangladesh to effectively cope with different dimensions of the crisis emanating from the huge influx of Rohingya refugees from Myanmar.

The assurance came during a meeting between visiting Bangladesh Foreign Secretary Shahidul Haque and his Indian counterpart S Jaishankar at the latter's South Block office here.

The meeting lasted for about half an hour.

Shahidul, who arrived in New Delhi on Wednesday night on a two-day visit, will address a press conference at the Bangladesh High Commission here at 10:00am today before returning home.

Earlier in the afternoon, Shahidul met India's National Security Adviser

Ajit Doval, a close aide of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Diplomatic sources said the two foreign secretaries discussed mainly two key aspects associated with the Rohingya issue -- humanitarian assistance and diplomatic initiatives to solve the crisis.

India urged Bangladesh to take extra care to plug all routes along the border to ensure Rohingyas do not find their way to India. India conveyed that it has stepped up vigil at the around 4,000-km border with Bangladesh to check influx of Rohingyas, particularly along West Bengal's border with that country. The issue was discussed at the BSF-BGB biannual meeting here where both sides agreed to share information and enhance coordination on it.

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Having crossed the border, Rohingyas from Myanmar walk on the shore of the Naf in Teknaf on their way to refugee camps in Cox's Bazar yesterday.



PHOTO: AFP

Boy hospitalised being caned by madrasa teacher

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A nine-year-old boy was mercilessly caned by his madrasa teacher in Alamnagar area of Rangpur on Wednesday.

The victim Al Muhi Hossain Adnan, a student of class II, has been "groaning in pain at a hospital with bruises all over his body", said his father Shah Alam.

Adnan's classmates in Talimul Quraan Madrasa said their teacher Iqbal Hossain came to the class in the afternoon "looking a little angry".

When Adnan failed to answer a question, the teacher started caning him.

The boy collapsed to the floor at one point, but that did not stop Iqbal, they added.

After class, the students informed Adnan's parents, who came to the madrasa and took him to a hospital.

Shah Alam said he will go to police and has been waiting for the madrasa authorities to take action against the teacher.

Contacted, Iqbal said he had caned the boy.

UN 'suppressed' Rakhine report

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In the last one month, over half a million Rohingya fled to Bangladesh amid allegations of massacres by Myanmar's armed forces and Rohingya insurgents.

Ever since the refugee crisis began, the UN has been at the forefront of the response, delivering aid and making strong statements condemning the Myanmar authorities.

Worried by the scale of violence and the refugee influx, the UN secretary general in an unprecedented move penned a letter to the UN Security Council, expressing his concern.

"The international community must undertake concerted efforts to prevent any further escalation and to seek a holistic solution," António Guterres said, a call he repeated several times since.

The UNHCR denounced Myanmar's campaign against Rohingya, saying it was "a textbook example of ethnic cleansing," while French President Emmanuel Macron went further to describe it as "genocide".

The UN report, titled 'The Role of the United Nations in Rakhine state, was commissioned by Renata Lok-Dessallien, the UN resident coordinator in Myanmar.

She held the same UN post in Bangladesh during 2007-2010.

'DISAPPEARED OFF THE AGENDA' In the 28-page report, Horsey made 16

recommendations.

The UN was urged to ensure that the human rights up front initiative, a strategy introduced by former secretary general Ban Ki-moon to prevent mass atrocities, was fully implemented.

Horsey said the initiative should "be at the core of how the UN operates", adding that there should be "no silence on human rights and protection concerns".

But sources within the UN and humanitarian community claimed the recommendations were ignored and the report was suppressed, according to the Guardian report.

One source told the British newspaper that the report was "spiked" and not circulated among UN and aid agencies "because Renata didn't like the analysis".

"It was given to Renata and she didn't distribute it further because she wasn't happy with it," said another well-placed source.

Sources in Myanmar said the report was "mentioned at meetings on two occasions" before it "disappeared off the agenda". No one was able to access the document afterwards.

A BBC report on September 28 also revealed how the UN leadership in Myanmar tried to stop the Rohingya rights issue being raised with the government.

Sources in Myanmar's aid community told the BBC that at high-level UN meetings in Myanmar any question of

asking the Burmese authorities to respect the Rohingyas' human rights became almost impossible.

Renata, a Canadian, also isolated staff who tried to warn that ethnic cleansing might be on the way, according to the BBC report.

Talking to the Guardian, Horsey, the author of the UN report, said, "The UN knew, or should have known, that the status quo in Rakhine was likely to evolve into a major crisis."

But he added that the severity of the criticism directed at Renata Lok-Dessallien was unwarranted.

"It may be true that the resident coordinator could have done some things differently or better, [but] primary responsibility for any UN failings lies with its headquarters over the last several years.

"They did not have a coherent or well-coordinated approach to Myanmar, and especially Rakhine, and did not provide the required political support and guidance to their in-country team."

Phil Robertson, deputy Asia director at Human Rights Watch, said: "The UN is going to have to acknowledge their significant share of blame in letting this situation descend this far, this fast."

'CAN'T TAKE EVERYBODY' But even as human rights groups document an ethnic cleansing of Rohingya,

the country's National Security Adviser Thaug Tun told a closed-door audience in New York that he did not see evidence of war crimes committed by its military, according to The Daily Beast.

He indicated at the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) that the Rohingya refugees who fled the country may not want to return to their homes anyway.

The government of Myanmar, "headed by Aung San Suu Kyi, has indicated that we know it's a problem, we're willing to resolve it, we're happy to receive back people who want to come into their homes," Tun said on Tuesday afternoon.

But "we can't take just everybody," Tun continued. "They must want to come back."

On October 2, Myanmar formally proposed taking back the Rohingyas sheltered in Bangladesh but offered no specifics on the repatriation process or the timetable.

Tun was initially supposed to speak before an open audience at the Council. But on Monday, his hosts abruptly announced that the planned address would occur without press access.

But The Daily Beast still managed to obtain audio of Tun's talk.

Derek Mitchell of Albright Stonebridge Group, who advises American businesses on investing in Myanmar, moderated the discussion.

'WILL TAKE ACTION'

In his remarks, Thaug Tun suggested the most significant problem were the conditions in the Bangladeshi refugee camps that are now home to more than half a million Rohingya fleeing the Burmese military.

"In the immediate time right now, we recognise that we need to alleviate the suffering of people in these camps," he said. "It is not humane. We need to help them. So on our side, we have been using scarce funds to provide aid and assistance."

After his opening remarks, Thaug Tun began fielding questions.

"We have your evidence," Minky Worden, Human Rights Watch's director of global initiatives, said. "I'm here to actually share some of that with you."

Over the past several weeks, the Amnesty International and the HRW have already released ample evidence showing that the Myanmar army deliberately burned Rohingya villages and shoot people at random.

Worden then asked when human rights groups would have access to Rakhine State.

"I will be happy to see the allegations," Thaug Tun replied.

"We will take action," he added. "Give us the evidence, we will take action. And we are going to be very transparent."

CJ at home, taking rest

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correspondent over phone in the afternoon, the law minister said the CJ was taking rest. "I spoke to him."

Asked whether Justice Sinha was going abroad, he said he did not discuss the issue with the CJ.

Earlier, the law minister had said the CJ went on leave for treatment as he had cancer.

CJ AT DHAKESHWARI TEMPLE

The CJ visited the Dhakeshwari Temple in the capital yesterday evening to participate in Laxmi Puja, said Rana Dashgupta, general secretary of Bangladesh Hindu-Buddha-Christian Oikya Parishad.

"Justice Sinha along with his wife went to the temple around 6:10pm and exchanged greetings with devotees after offering puja," he told The Daily Star.

The CJ stayed at the VIP room of the temple for around 15 minutes, Rana Dashgupta said, adding that he was looking "quite healthy and sound".

Two members of Bangladesh Puja Udjapon Parishad said the CJ stayed at the temple for over half an hour.

In the morning, a group of SC lawyers, led by Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) President Zainul Abedin, went to the acting CJ's court

and sought its interference so that an SCBA delegation could meet Justice Sinha.

Zainul said they went to the CJ's residence around 5:30pm on Monday, but were not allowed in.

"Since we've heard he [chief justice]

is sick, we thought we should meet him on behalf of Supreme Court Bar Association. But the law enforcement agencies are not allowing us to visit him. You're the guardian of the constitution and that's why we need a proper step from you," he said.

In reply, Justice Wahhab Miah, chair of the five-member SC bench, said, "I'm sure he [Justice Sinha] is at his residence. It depends on him whom he will meet."

However, the lawyers continued pleading for steps.

At one stage, the acting CJ said, "We've heard your submission. We will think about the matter."

Speaking at a press briefing, Attorney General Mahbubey Alam said the SCBA's plea "does not have any legal basis".

"They [SCBA members] should have met Justice Wahhab Miah on the very day he took charge [as acting chief justice]. But they didn't do that. Rather, they appeared before the court," he said.

'CJ TO RETIRE WITH HONOUR'

The ruling Awami League-led 14-party alliance yesterday expressed optimism the CJ would go into retirement with honour.

"Chief Justice Surendra Kumar Sinha is a respected person. The 14-party alliance also honours him. But unfortunately Justice Sinha repeatedly made the chief justice's post controversial," said Health Minister Mohammed Nasim.

He was briefing reporters after a meeting of alliance leaders at the AL president's Dhanmondi office.

Nasim, also an AL presidium member, alleged the CJ had created controversy over installing the statue of Lady Justice on the SC premises.

"Besides, the whole nation was frustrated with his observations in the

16th amendment case verdict," he added.

'CJ UNDER HOUSE ARREST'

BNP standing committee member Moudud Ahmed yesterday alleged that the CJ has been put under "house arrest" by the government.

"The government has annihilated the independence of the judiciary by putting him under the house arrest," he said at a discussion at the Jatiya Press Club.

The former law minister claimed nobody, including relatives of Justice Sinha, was being allowed to meet him and even his land phone connection was severed.

Doubting the authenticity of the CJ's leave application, Moudud said there were five mistakes in it which went viral in social media. "A responsible man like him cannot sign an application full of mistakes. It's impossible."

The BNP leader also claimed that there was no similarity between Justice Sinha's usual signature and the one shown in the leave application.

Moudud, also a senior lawyer, said "the plot was devised to send Justice Sinha abroad by force only for delivering a verdict against the government's will".



Chief Justice Surendra Kumar Sinha visits Dhakeshwari Temple in Dhaka with his wife by his side yesterday evening.

British author wins Nobel Literature Prize

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was awarded the Order of the British Empire for his services to literature.

AN EXQUISITE NOVELIST

"This year's laureate is a brilliant and even exquisite novelist," Sara Danius, the permanent secretary of the Swedish Academy, told the TT news agency after the announcement.

She called "The Remains of the Day" a "masterpiece", and described the author as a "writer of great integrity" who developed his own "aesthetic universe".

Born in Nagasaki in 1954, nine years after the US dropped a nuclear bomb on the city, Ishiguro moved to Britain with his family when he was five years old. He only returned to visit Japan as an adult some three decades later.

Both his first novel "A Pale View of Hills" from 1982 and the subsequent one, "An Artist of the Floating World" from 1986, take place in Nagasaki a

few years after World War II.

"The themes Ishiguro is most associated with are already present here: memory, time, and self-delusion," the Academy said.

"This is particularly notable in his most renowned novel, 'The Remains of the Day', which was turned into a 1993 film starring Anthony Hopkins and Emma Thompson. Charting the life of a painfully shy, duty-obsessed English butler, the film was nominated for eight Oscars.

"Ishiguro's writings are marked by a carefully restrained mode of expression, independent of whatever events are taking place," the Academy said. 'I WAS TAKEN AWAY'

In a 1989 interview with Bomb Magazine, Ishiguro said: "I tend to be attracted to pre-war and post-war settings because I'm interested in this business of values and ideals being tested, and people having to face up to the notion that their ideals weren't

quite what they thought they were before the test came."

In a 1991 interview with former Nobel laureate Kenzaburo Oe of Japan, he said the Japan he wrote about in "An Artist in the Floating World" was "very much my own personal, imaginary Japan."

"This may have a lot to do with my own personal history. As a small child, I was taken away from the people I knew, like my grandparents and my friends.

"I couldn't forget Japan because I had to prepare myself for returning to it. So I grew up with a very strong image in my head of this other country, a very important other country to which I had a strong emotional tie," he said.

"I'm beginning to see as I get older that my leaving Japan at the point when I did was, in complicated ways, a key defining thing," he said in a 1995 interview with the Financial Times. JANE AUSTEN WITH KAFKA

His more recent fiction contains elements of fantasy.

With the critically-acclaimed dystopian work "Never Let Me Go" from 2005, Ishiguro introduced "a cold undercurrent" of science fiction into his work.

Inspired by Fyodor Dostoyevsky and Marcel Proust, Ishiguro's characters often painfully come to terms with who they are without closure.

"If you mix Jane Austen and Franz Kafka then you have Kazuo Ishiguro in a nutshell -- but you have to add a little bit of Marcel Proust into the mix. And then you stir but not too much, and then you have his writings," Danius said.

His latest novel, "The Buried Giant" from 2015 explores "in a moving manner, how memory relates to oblivion, history to the present, and fantasy to reality," the Academy noted.

In the book, an elderly couple go on a road trip through an archaic English

landscape, hoping to reunite with their adult son, whom they have not seen for years.

EMULATING DYLAN

His publisher Faber & Faber wrote on Twitter after the announcement, "We're THRILLED Kazuo Ishiguro has won the Nobel Prize!"

Ishiguro, who early in his life wanted to be a rock star, "a new Dylan or something", was not among those tipped for this year's Nobel.

Now, he and Bob Dylan have something in common.

Last year, the Swedish Academy stunned the world by awarding the prestigious honour to the American rock legend and counter-culture icon.

The Nobel comes with a prize of nine million kronor (\$1.1 million, 945,000 euros).

Ishiguro will receive his prize at a ceremony in Stockholm on December 10.

Japan sending

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making, Tokyo has decided to tackle the problem head-on by sending in expert gardeners to the worst-affected sites, starting with a five-person team travelling to Romania this year and then on to California.

Japanese gardens are distinguished by unique aesthetic features such as stone bridges, ponds, mossy paths, lanterns and perfectly pruned bonsai-like trees.

Most are maintained at a near-obsessive level, but many of the ones built outside Japan since the late 19th century -- often as part of expositions -- lack the experienced staff needed to keep them in good shape.

"Japanese gardeners left manuals after building the sites, but it's difficult to maintain them," the ministry official said.

"We hope these... gardens can be a place for spreading Japanese culture to people overseas."