

LACK OF PROGRESS ON ROHINGYA RETURN

UN envoy will ‘ring alarm bell’ if no action taken

AP, United Nations

The UN envoy for Myanmar said Monday that progress on alleviating the crisis that led more than 720,000 Rohingya Muslims to flee to neighboring Bangladesh has been slow and if there is no action it will be time to “ring the alarm bell.”

Christine Schraner-Burgener was responding to frustrated speeches and questions from many countries — from Bangladesh to Saudi Arabia to the United States — on the lack of progress in returning Rohingya nearly two years after they fled a violent crackdown by Myanmar’s military.

She told the General Assembly there are “not a lot of changes on the ground,” pointing to “many challenges” including Myanmar’s civilian leaders having “to navigate an extremely difficult environment in which the military continues to have considerable political influence.”

In addition, Schraner-Burgener said, “immense complexities” inside the country have been “an impediment” in addition to the Rohingya crisis. She cited Myanmar’s 70 years of isolation, 21 armed groups still operating in the country, a lack of development, drug production and human trafficking.

She said her highest priority remains “ending the vicious cycle of discrimination and violence, especially in Rakhine,” the western state that was home to the Rohingya who fled — and where she said 128,000 displaced Rohingya languish in camps, many for nearly seven years.

As a first step, Schraner-Burgener called for more to be done to end fighting in Rakhine between Myanmar’s military and the Arakan Army, a well-trained guerrilla force from the Buddhist ethnic group seeking autonomy for Rakhine. She said the fighting has displaced 30,000 Buddhists and Muslims.

Buddhist-majority Myanmar has long considered the Rohingya to be

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Tigers’ dream over

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and Saifuddin which only prolonged hope before India made use of the ground Bangladesh had given up.

Earlier, the match started with both teams trying to prove a point in the first 10 overs India had come in for sharp criticism two days ago when they scored just 28 for one in the first 10 in response to England’s 337. Bangladesh had taken a wicket in the first 10 overs only twice in six previous matches. It was India who made their point by reaching 69 without loss in the first Powerplay.

India were helped in that endeavour by Tamim, who dropped Sharma on nine in the fifth over off Mustafizur when the right-hander miscued a pull towards Tamim’s left at deep square leg. Sharma went on to score 104 runs, his fourth century of the edition and 26th in ODI cricket, and the opening stand added 180 runs at six runs an over.

After that bit of fortune, Sharma was flawless, punishing any wayward offerings from Bangladesh -- and there were many in the first 20 overs. He cleared both the short and long boundaries with ease as Bangladesh’s bowlers, with the exception of Shakib Al Hasan generally and two overs from skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza after the first Powerplay, bowled at both sides of the wicket and leaked runs. Mashrafe conceded 36 runs from five wicketless overs and then took himself off. He did not bowl again in

the match and it was instead the part-time medium pace of Soumya Sarkar that brought relief for the Tigers when he had Sharma caught off a miscued drive at cover for a 92-ball 104 in the 30th over.

That was when a fightback of sorts began from Bangladesh, with Rubel Hossain -- playing just his second match of this World Cup -- having Rahul caught behind for 77 in the 33rd over. It was a double-wicket maiden from Mustafizur in the 39th over -- when he had Kohli caught in the deep for 26 and Pandya caught behind for a second-ball duck, that the brakes were truly applied on India. At the end of the 40th over, India were still sitting pretty on 251 for four with MS Dhoni and Rishabh Pant at the crease. Shakib then bowled his last three overs for just nine runs, getting the wicket of Pant in the bargain, to finish as the most economical bowler on either side with one for 41 from 10 overs.

But it was Mustafizur who stole the show from Bangladesh’s perspective, dismissing Dinesh Karthik in the 48th over with a slower bouncer, before surprising Dhoni with a bouncer and then taking his fifth wicket off the last ball of the innings, which was another double-wicket over. Mustafizur ended with figures of 59 for five in 10 overs -- his third five-wicket haul in ODI cricket. It was one of two bright spots in the last match Bangladesh.

Exactly the same

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In June last year, the road transport and bridges ministry rejected a Samity report that said the number of road accidents and deaths saw a sharp rise during the Eid-ul-Fitr rush. The ministry also said the Samity was not a registered organisation and that it dished out “confusing information” on several occasions.

The motive behind the extortion charges against Mozammel came under the scanner soon after the case was filed on September 4 last year.

The complainant of the case, Md Dulal, told the media at the time that he was not aware of the case. He said he only signed on a piece of paper without knowing what was written on it. His wife has confirmed that Dulal cannot read or write.

According to the case statement, Mozammel demanded Tk 2 lakh from Dulal, a transport worker in the capital’s Mirpur, in extortion money every month.

Pressured and threatened, Dulal gave Mozammel Tk 10,000 in front of Sony Cinema Hall in Mirpur on September 3 last year, it alleges.

After the case was filed, Dulal told journalists that the Mirpur Zoo unit president and secretary of Bus-Minibus Sramik Committee were with him when the case was filed.

Dulal’s wife Nasima had said that the president and the secretary asked her husband to sign on a paper and he complied. They did not even read out the statement for him to understand what was on the paper, she claimed.

The case statement has Dulal’s address wrong as well, indicating how little he was involved when the case was filed. In the case statement, his address is: house-9, road-18 in Gudaraghat under Shah Ali Police Station. But at the time, he used to live at house-7, road-22, which is about one kilometre away.

ADDRESS MISMATCH
The two other witnesses are Bappi Hossain and Al Mamun.

According to the charge sheet, Jahangir, the number one witness, and Mamun live at Fatema Tower on road-7 in Mirpur-1. But Faruk, the house caretaker for five years, confirmed to The Daily Star that no one named Jahangir ever lived in that house. And there is a man named Mamun living in the house, but he is about 25, more

than 20 years younger than Mamun the witness.

The address of Bappi, the other witness, is: house-44, road-6 in Mirpur-1, according to the charge sheet. However, the caretaker of this house as well as tenants said there was no one named Bappi in that building.

Contacted by phone, Jahangir said, “A transport leader told me that I had to be a witness in a case with Mirpur police. When I asked why, he told me that they have already made me a witness. Then I told them it is alright.”

Asked if he knew anything about the case, he said, “I was made a witness in a case against a man whose name is something like Mozammel or something,” he said.

On whether he knows what Mozammel did, he said, “I am totally unaware.”

Another witness, Bappi Hossain, could not recall his statement at first. He then sought to see his statement in the case record. After being read out, he said it was his statement.

He was flanked by around 15 transport leaders, including the president and the general secretary of Mirpur Zoo road unit Bus-Minibus Sramik Committee.

When this paper asked Bappi about the wrong address, Delwar Hossain Khan, general secretary of the committee, intervened. He said it was his address, where the other witnesses came over sometimes. “They mentioned my address so that people can find it easily.”

At the time of departure, a transport leader offered Tk 1,000 to one of these reporters, which he refused to accept.

Asked about Dulal’s statement in the media that he was in the dark about filing any case, SI Sarwar Jahan said the complainant did not say anything like that to police.

About the wrong addresses, he said the witnesses may have lived in those places in the past and then moved elsewhere.

He also defended the identical statements of the witnesses, saying, “Statements of witnesses in a case will be more or less the same, because they are talking about the same incident.”

But he could not explain how every line, every word and every punctuation of three statements could be in the exact same order.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addresses a panel discussion on “Cooperation in the Pacific Rim” during the World Economic Forum’s annual meeting at Dalian International Conference Centre in China’s Dalian city yesterday.

PHOTO: PTID

Peace and fair contest, not rivalry

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on mutual trust and mutual respect for mutual benefit; focusing on wealth creation for all, development must be inclusive; and creating fair competition, not rivalries,” she said.

Hasina was addressing a panel discussion during the “Annual Meeting of the New Champions 2019” of the World Economic Forum (WEF) at Dalian International Conference Centre in Dalian city.

The July 1-3 meeting, also known as WEF Summer Davos, is being held with the theme of “Leadership 4.0 - Succeeding in a New Era of Globalisation”.

Hasina said, “We sometimes look just in terms of the capacity of a few large economies or their needs. But we must address the key concerns of smaller communities or relatively weaker economies for our collective journey and sustainable world.”

She said it is widely recognised that the Indo-Pacific region is the most dynamic in the world, while the Bay of Bengal, home to 1.5 billion people, is equally a rich and growing region.

“People living around our Bay of Bengal have so much potential to develop and grow. There is a tendency to look at Indo-Pacific in respect of trade or security issues.”

Talking about bilateral issues, the PM said Bangladesh amicably delimited its maritime boundary with Myanmar and India. “And now, Bangladesh and India are joining hands to uniquely develop our trans-

boundary river navigation.”

About geopolitics, she said, “Yes, geopolitics will always be part of life. But we’ve to carefully appreciate and balance issues. We cannot trade off long-term interests for short-term gains. A cooperative yet competitive environment among all countries is the insurance of our shared prosperity.”

In reply to a question as to how Bangladesh maintains good relations with China and India simultaneously, Hasina said the principle of Bangladesh’s foreign policy is “friendship to all, malice to none”.

“We don’t want to engage in a war or conflict with anyone. Any issue between them [any two countries] is their internal matter. We’ve been working to maintain good relations with all and so far we have gained success in this regard,” the PM was quoted as saying by Foreign Secretary Md Shahidul Haque. He was briefing reporters after the panel discussion.

Asked whether Bangladesh faces a debt trap taking up a number of mega projects with foreign loan, Hasina said, “Our external debt is around 14.3 percent of the GDP -- clearly it is a sign of a healthy economy.”

China is involved in some mega infrastructure projects in Bangladesh. Chinese companies are employed in the construction of the longest 6.9km river bridge in Bangladesh, which is fully funded by the Bangladesh government, she said. “Many people talk about debt trap. I’ve a simple

answer-- as long as these mega projects are in our people’s interest, has the right pay-off and negotiated rightly, we must not be worried.”

In reply to another query, the PM said Bangladesh is ready to join Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) as the country is always interested in joining any connectivity and regional cooperation.

Delegates, including heads of state and government, businessmen and civil society members, from more than 100 countries across the world joined the WEF meeting in Dalian, a trading and financial centre in Northeastern Asia.

WEF FOUNDER MEETS PM

The WEF will arrange a large event in Davos, Switzerland, in 2021 with its focus on Bangladesh. The organisation will also arrange an event in Bangladesh next year on the occasion of the birth centenary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

The decisions came at a meeting held between Hasina and WEF Founder and Executive Chairman Klaus Schwab on the sidelines of its annual meeting in Dalian.

Briefing reporters after the meeting, the Bangladesh foreign secretary said

Schwab confirmed that he would attend the WEF event, to be held in Bangladesh next year, focusing on Bangladesh and Bangabandhu.

The WEF founder highly praised the PM for sheltering over one million Rohingyas in Bangladesh.

Students try to set teacher afire

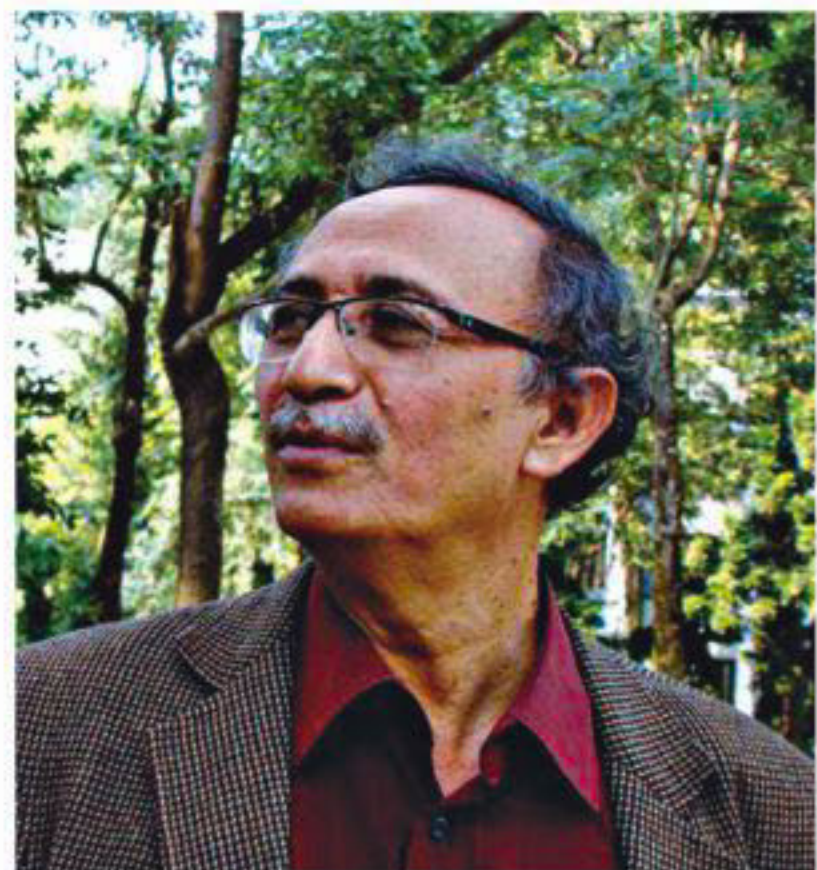
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USTC Registrar (acting) Dilip Kumar Barua said, “The students were pouring kerosene on Prof Masud and trying to set him on fire when we rescued him and informed police about the matter.”

“We caught the student who poured kerosene. He admitted his attempt to set the teacher on fire in front of police and the university administration. We have handed him over to police.”

Gazi Rakayat, a third-year student of the department, said the students got locked in an altercation with Masud when a few teachers tried to rescue him, but the students dragged him out and one of them poured kerosene on him.

Prof Jahangir Alam, USTC vice-chancellor, told The Daily Star, “We have formed a three-member panel, headed by Prof Jasim Uddin of the



Prof Masud Mahmood

medical science department, to investigate the incident.

“After the probe, action will be taken against those responsible.”

Campus sources said that on April 16 a group of students of the English department raised allegations against the professor of delivering

obscene lectures and demanded his termination by launching protests.

In May, the authority formed a probe committee, who did not find the allegation to be true, they said.

The demonstration was called off at the beginning of June. It resumed yesterday at the university gate when Prof Masud came to the campus in the morning, witnesses said.

After the incident, the students barricaded Jakir Hossain Road, triggering traffic jam on both sides of the road for an hour.

Officer-in-Charge Pranab Chowdhury of Khulshi Police Station said they rushed to the spot after being informed, and traffic movement resumed after the blockade was lifted.

He added that USTC’s acting registrar filed a case against Mahmudul in connection with the incident.

Prime accused killed in ‘gunfight’

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25-year-old Rifat, an internet service provider, with sharp weapons in front of Barguna Government College when Rifat and his wife Ayesha Siddika Minni were leaving the college premises on June 26 morning.

Later at night, the victim’s father filed a murder case with Barguna Sadar Police Station, accusing 12 people including Nayan and Farazi.

Talking to The Daily Star over phone, Abir Hossain Mohammad, officer-in-charge of the police station, said Nayan had been accused in eight cases filed earlier over illegal arms, narcotics and mugging.

He further said Additional Superintendent of Police Shajahan Mia, who led the police team that came under attack, was injured along with three other policemen. Two of them were sent to Barishal as their condition was bad.

Police recovered three sharp weapons, a pistol and three bullets from the spot, the OC added.

Talking to this newspaper, some locals said they heard gunshots early in the morning.

“We heard gunshots around 4:00am. Later, I along with several

others went to the spot around 5:00am and saw the body [of Nayan],” said Md Kabir, a resident of Purbo Burirchar.

Police have so far arrested eight persons in connection with Rifat murder. Of them, Chandan, Hasan, Oli and Ridoy are on the list of 12 accused in the First Information Report.

Oli and Tanvir on Monday gave confessional statements before a local court, admitting their involvement in the murder.

Seven more accused, including Nayan’s close cohort Rifat Farazi and his brother Risan Farazi, are yet to be arrested.

The Barguna SP yesterday said the other accused would be arrested any time.

Locals said Nayan had gained notoriety as a criminal in Barguna town and kept committing crimes under the shelter of politically influential persons in the district.

Nayan, a fan of James Bond movies, wished to pursue the lifestyle shown in the films, they mentioned.

He created a Facebook group named “007” where he planned various crimes with the group members. The

plot to attack Rifat was hatched by this group, according to police.

REACTION OF RIFAT’S FAMILY

In an instant reaction, Rifat’s wife Ayesha told The Daily Star, “I am happy and grateful to the government and law enforcers as my husband’s murderer has been killed.”

She hoped that the other accused would be arrested soon.

Rifat’s father Dulal Sharif said, “I am happy with the police action and expect that law enforcers will catch the other accused soon.”

ASK’S STATEMENT

In a statement yesterday, Rights body Ain o Salish Kendra expressed deep concern over the killing of Nayan in a “gunfight”.

The rights body thinks this was an extrajudicial killing in the name of “gunfight” and also a heinous crime.

“We want to remind that the right to life and the right to get justice are the human rights of every individual, and this is recognised by Bangladesh constitution,” read the statement.

The rights body also called for fair and neutral probe into the incident and also fair trial.

[Our Jhalakathi Correspondent contributed to the story]

29 Bangladeshis return home from Libya

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Twenty-nine Bangladeshis, who remained stranded in the turbulent Libyan capital Tripoli and its suburbs, returned home early yesterday.

Assistant Director of the Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training Tanvir Hossain said, “They arrived at the airport [Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport] around 5:00am by a flight of Turkish Airlines.”

After verifying their identities, the immigration police released them in the evening, he added.

The government of Bangladesh in association with International Organization for Migration is repatriating the Bangladeshis stranded in Tripoli.

ASM Ashraful Islam, labour counsellor of Bangladesh embassy in Tripoli, said 35 more Bangladeshis were scheduled to arrive in Dhaka today.

Besides, the embassy was working to repatriate over 40 Bangladeshis by this week, he added.

The situation in the civil war-torn Libya turned worse after the Libyan National Army, led by Khalifa Haftar, started an offensive against the internationally recognised Government of National Accord in April.

Bangladesh embassy in Libya announced that it would arrange repatriation of those willing to return home. In response, some 300 were relocated to safe areas in Tripoli.

Of them, some 107, who had shown interest to return home are now being repatriated. Nearly 100 more have recently informed the embassy of their willingness to come home, Ashraful Islam said.

Around 800 Bangladeshi migrants, who were either stranded in the civil-war torn North African country or jailed or fell prey to human traffickers, were repatriated in 2018 and until June this year, he said.

NUSRAT MURDER

Witness narrates events of the day Siraj was arrested

A CORRESPONDENT, Feni

A peon of Sonagazi Islamia Senior Fazil Madrasa testified in court yesterday over the murder of student Nusrat Jahan Rafi and narrated the events of March 27, the day principal SM Siraj Ud Doula sexually harassed the girl, was sued for the crime, and got arrested.

Nurul Amin, the fourth witness, said the principal called Nusrat to his room from class around 11:00am, but he did not notice it because he was making tea.

Around that time, Nurul saw two of Nusrat’s friends -- Nishat and Foorty -- outside the principal’s room. When he went inside, he found Nusrat sitting in a chair in front of the principal. Siraj was holding a cane, and Nusrat was on the verge of tears.

When Nurul asked Nusrat to stand, she stormed out of the room and ran to the classroom on the second floor. Later she left for home with her two friends.

Around 12:00pm, Nusrat’s mother Shirin Akter, younger brother Raihan, Sonagazi municipality councilors Yasin Commissioner and Mamun Commissioner, and local resident Abu Sufian came to the principal’s room.

Shirin rebuked the principal for harassing her daughter. Siraj then threatened her, saying, “I’ll see how your son and daughter get certificates.”

Nusrat and her brother Raihan study in the madrasa.

Around this time, President of Sonagazi upazila Awami League

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