

India for safe return of Myanmar nationals

The Commission has suggested a number of measures for a “peaceful, fair and prosperous future for the people of Rakhine.”

Ms Swaraj said the only long-term solution to the situation in Rakhine is rapid socio-economic and infrastructure development that would have a positive impact on all the communities living in the state. India, for its part has committed to providing financial and technical assistance for specific projects to be undertaken in Rakhine in conjunction with the local authorities, she added.

Mr. Mahmud Ali said Dhaka has urged India “to contribute towards exerting sustained pressure on Myanmar to find a peaceful solution to the crisis including the sustainable return of all Rohingya to their homeland.”

Though the Minister was in Dhaka for the India-Bangladesh Joint Consultative Commission meeting, the Rohingya issue dominated talks as the crisis took a new turn, with more than half a million of them entering Bangladesh since August 25, fleeing ethnic cleansing. Bangladesh has been seeking international support, including from India, for their safe return.

The Bangladesh Foreign Minister thanked India for its support and said India is “our most important, trusted and friendly neighbour.” He added that the relations now stand on a “historic new height” due to initiatives taken across sectors.

Attaching the “utmost importance” to its relations with Bangladesh, Ms. Swaraj said, “Our relations are based on fraternal ties and are reflective of an all-encompassing partnership based on sovereignty, equality, trust and understanding that goes far beyond a strategic partnership.”

“India has always stepped in to assist Bangladesh in times of need,” she said recalling the 1971 war of independence when the Indian army shed blood with Bangladeshis to liberate the country.

The India-Bangladesh meeting, which was co-chaired by Sushma Swaraj and her Bangladesh counterpart, reviewed cooperation in countering terrorism and extremism with both sides vowing to maintain zero tolerance to terrorism and extremism.

Bangladesh Foreign Minister Ali said both reiterated their commitment “not to allow use of our soils against each other’s interest”.

Teesta sharing

The pending Teesta water sharing issue was also discussed, with Mr. Ali recalling the statement by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in April during Sheikh Hasina’s visit to India that the Teesta agreement would be signed during the current tenure of the two Prime Ministers.

Both ministers also witnessed the signing of three bilateral documents which include capacity building in SMEs, sale-purchase agreement between Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation and Numaligarh Refinery of India. Ms Swaraj also met Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Leader of the Opposition Raushan Ershad and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia on Sunday.

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