

# Bangladesh may not broach NRC

KALLOL BHATTACHERJEE  
NEW DELHI

Bangladesh will discuss water-sharing with India rather than the issue of the National Register of Citizens, a senior Minister of the country said on Wednesday.

Hasanul Haque Inu, Information Minister in the Sheikh Hasina government, told *The Hindu* that India had not raised the issue of human movements from Bangladesh since the creation of the country in 1971, and termed the exclusion of four million individuals from the NRC as the sign of a “democracy deficit” in India.

“The NRC in Assam is a product of a century-old ethnic conflict of a particular province of India. It is well known that the conflict of Assam began even before modern India and Bangladesh were born in 1947 and 1971. Bangladesh is interested in getting its due share of water from India, rather than a part of the citizens of Assam,” Mr. Inu said on the phone from Dhaka, hinting at the stalled negotiation with Delhi over the sharing of Teesta waters.

Mr. Inu, a former guerrilla who fought in the 1971 Liberation War, said Dhaka hoped that the Modi government would ensure an amicable settlement of the controversy that had arisen after more than four million people were excluded from the NRC.

The Minister said “democracy deficit” was a trend in major democracies of the world. “Mature constitutional democracies that have handled issues of identity and distribution of resources without creating hu-



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Information Minister

man tragedies are failing to do so in recent years. That is why an NRC-like problem emerged in India,” he said.

Diplomatic sources said Bangladesh had no plans to engage India on the NRC. However, Indian diplomats had begun to engage Bangladeshi opinion-makers on the developments in Assam, said the editor of a prominent Dhaka daily, *Bhorer Kagoj*.

“Indian High Commissioner Harsh Vardhan Shringla met a group of 12 senior editors today [Wednesday] in Dhaka and briefed us about the history of the NRC and how it had been drafted over the past few years. He informed us about the 1985 Assam Accord. He, however, did not mention that India would try to deport the NRC-excluded four million citizens to our country,” Mr. Datta said.

An editorial published in *Bhorer Kagoj* on July 31 had cautioned that Dhaka should remain alert so that the NRC would not trigger an influx from Assam to Bangladesh.