

EU receives Nobel Peace Prize
Winners pledge to 'stand by' euro

AGENCIES

The presidents of the EU's three main institutions yesterday collected the Nobel Peace Prize in Norway's capital Oslo, reports BBC.

The EU was awarded the prize for its role in uniting the continent after two world wars.

At the ceremony there was applause when the leaders of France and Germany stood up, holding hands.

The winners pledged "to stand by" the euro, saying the single currency was one of the strongest symbols of unity in the bloc's 60-year history, reports AFP.

Most of Europe's national leaders were at the event, but not the UK's David Cameron.

The British prime minister's deputy, Nick Clegg - a longstanding advocate of the European project - represented the UK at the ceremony.

Nobel committee chairman Thorbjørn Jagland told the audience that in the current economic crisis "the political framework in which the union is rooted is more important than ever".

The prize was received jointly by European Council President Herman Van Rompuy, European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso and European Parliament President Martin Schulz.

In his acceptance speech, Van Rompuy paid tribute to the post-war leaders of France and Germany who had forged the EU by uniting their economic interests.

Rebel seize key Aleppo army base
Nobel winners say Syria is stain on world conscience

AGENCIES

Syrian rebels captured parts of another large army base in the country's north, just west of the city of Aleppo, tightening the opposition's grip on areas close to the Turkish border, activists said yesterday, reports AP.

Elsewhere, the rebels killed 13 soldiers in an ambush near a strategic northern town along a road linking Aleppo with Damascus, activists reported.

Meanwhile, the European Union, winner of this year's Nobel Peace Prize, said at the award ceremony yesterday that the conflict in Syria was "a stain" on the world's conscience, reports AFP.

"Let me say it from here today," said European Commission president Jose Manuel Barroso. "The current situation in Syria is a stain on the world's conscience and the international community has a moral duty to address it."

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory

for Human Rights said the rebels entered the Sheik Suleiman military base on Sunday afternoon, after weeks of fighting around it.

The development was a significant boost for the rebels fighting to topple President Bashar Assad and defeat his military.

Rami Abdul-Rahman, who heads to Observatory, said the rebels who stormed Sheik Suleiman belong to hardline Islamic militant groups.

Abdul-Rahman told The Associated Press that fighters from Jabhat al-Nusra, Mujahideen Shura Council and the Muhajireen group took part in the battle for the Sheik Suleiman base.

Fighting around Syria has intensified in the past few months. The uprising, which began with peaceful protests against Assad's regime in March 2011, has escalated into a civil war that has killed more than 40,000 people, according to activists.



From left, European Council President Herman Van Rompuy, European Commission President Jose Manuel and European Parliament President Martin Schulz pose with the Nobel diploma during the Nobel Peace Prize ceremony at the Oslo City Hall Norway yesterday. Inset, European leaders and dignitaries applaud.



PHOTO: AFP

Windies have last laugh

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The 16th over bowled by mystery spinner Sunil Narine.

But they needed at least two more overs like that, which Chris Gayle and Samuels did not allow with their fired-in off-spinning yorkers. Needing 37 runs off the last over, Mahmudullah hit two sixes and a four to end up with a 48-ball 63 featuring three fours and four sixes, while Tamim was unbeaten on 88 at the other end with ten boundaries and two sixes.

In chase of a mammoth

198, the Tigers started like a house on fire, with Tamim and Anamul Haque looting 17 runs off the first over by captain Darren Sammy. Anamul hit a four and a six over mid-wicket off the last two balls. Nine followed off the next over from Kemar Roach. Andre Russell came on to bowl the third over, and Tamim hit him for three successive fours before Anamul hit the last ball for another to collect 17 and take Bangladesh to 43 for no loss.

Anamul, however, went in the fifth over, caught at

mid-off trying to hit Roach over the top. That brought to the crease the player-of-the-match in the ODI series decider on Saturday, Mahmudullah. He was dropped off his first ball by keeper Devon Thomas off Samuels, and went on to hit the third over deep square-leg for six.

The pair carried on at a good rate, picking singles and taking full toll of the bad deliveries. But the middle overs were off-spinner Narine's territory. He bowled two overs for just eight runs, invaluable

in those circumstances, and the good work was carried on by Gayle who dried up the flow of boundaries.

Tamim and Mahmudullah tried their best to stay abreast of the increasing required run-rate, but by the last three overs the task proved to be too hot to handle, even with nine wickets in the bag.

Earlier, Samuels reprised his ICC World Twenty20 final heroics as the right-hander brushed aside the early losses of Gayle and Dwayne Smith

Clashes in Lebanon

BBC ONLINE

Six people were killed and at least 40 injured in the Lebanese city of Tripoli in clashes on Sunday between opponents and supporters of Syria's president.



Lebanese army soldiers deployed at the entrance of Tripoli.

Since Tuesday, 19 people have died in the fighting between residents of the Alawite district of Jabal Muhsin and the Sunni Muslim Bab al-Tabbana area.

Sectarian tensions in Tripoli have been aggravated by the conflict in Syria.

The group of Lebanese and Palestinian nationals appears to have joined the armed rebellion against Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.

Syrian state TV broadcast footage of their bullet-ridden bodies, prompting their families to stage a demonstration demanding their repatriation.

An agreement was eventually reached by the Syrian and Lebanese authorities for the bodies to be returned gradually, with the first three being handed over for burial on Sunday.

The Lebanese army deployed additional troops in parts of Tripoli on Friday in an effort to end the fighting, but they failed to stop people in Jabal Muhsin and Bab al-Tabbana firing machine-guns and rocket-propelled grenades at each other from dawn on Sunday.

Xi Jinping stresses reform

Censors relax grasp on internet

REUTERS, Beijing

China must deepen reforms to perfect its market economy and strengthen rule of law, Communist Party chief Xi Jinping said in southern Guangdong, echoing ground-breaking comments by reformist senior leader Deng Xiaoping in the same province 20 years ago.



Xi Jinping

Xi's call for reform was reported yesterday, coinciding with an apparent easing of Internet search restrictions that the party has energetically used to suppress information that could threaten one-party rule.

China's largest microblog service unblocked searches for the names of many top political leaders in a possible sign of looser controls a month after new senior officials were named to head the ruling party.

Searches on the popular Twitter-like Sina Weibo microblog for party chief Xi Jinping, Vice Premier Li Keqiang and other leaders - terms that have long been barred under strict censorship rules - revealed detailed lists of news reports and user comments.

and scored a sublime, unbeaten 85 off 43 balls to lift the Caribbeans to a formidable 197 for four in the first innings.

It was Gayle's final chance to make an impression on an otherwise indifferent tour of Bangladesh, but the feared Jamaican went in the third over for just six, playing all around a slower off-cutter from Rubel Hossain to have his middle stump uprooted. Rubel repeated the dose in his next over by cleaning up Smith.

Darren Bravo, with Samuels, added 66 runs in only seven overs for the third wicket. Bravo was the dominant partner, hitting five fours and two sixes in his 28-ball 41 before being stumped off Shohag Gazi.

Samuels, who was as easy on the eyes as ever, owed a debt of gratitude for his player-of-the-match

performance to Bangladesh skipper and wicketkeeper Mushfiqur Rahim, who dropped him twice -- first when Samuels was on 10 and then on 23 -- in successive overs from Ziaur Rahman, the 11th and 13th of the innings.

Kieron Pollard came in after Bravo and hit two sixes in his 15 before being bowled off a wild heave by Ziaur, who was the best bowler for the Tigers with figures of one for 16 from his four overs. Samuels took full toll after that, combining with Lendl Simmons to take 76 runs off the last 32 balls, of which his share was 58 off 20.

The pair were especially hard on Rubel, whose last two overs, the 18th and 20th, went for 46 runs. The last over produced 29 with Samuels hitting four sixes and a four.

Wedding boom

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some to guarantee a happy marriage.

Dates like 10/10/10 or 11/11/11 have traditionally seen couples from the two places rush to get married, with registrations set to surge on December 12 this year, which is viewed as signifying "love".

Hong Kong's marriage registry said it has received 696 notifications from couples planning to get married on Wednesday, nearly four times the daily average of 177 registrations in October, according to a spokesman.

In Singapore, which is three-fourths ethnic Chinese, 540 couples have applied to be married Wednesday, statistics from the Registry of Marriages website showed -- an eight-fold increase in the daily average for non-

Muslim weddings compared to a year earlier.

Muslim weddings are recorded separately.

A wedding planner in Singapore said the date will be one of the busiest of the year for marriage-linked businesses.

"It is a hot date," said Renee Leung, founder and chief executive officer of marriage planning firm The Wedding Butler, adding that her company was handling 20 weddings on the day itself, up from the usual one or two per day.

"It's just an auspicious calendar number... a lot of people say it's an easy number to remember," she told AFP.

The 12/12/12 registrations however have shrunk in both places compared to previous sequential dates.

Quit war tribunal

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and its judges by discussing the cases and the probable verdicts relating to crimes against humanity.

BNP leader Moudud Ahmed said the judge should quit immediately not only for moral reason but also on constitutional grounds to uphold the dignity, honour and the image of the judges and the court.

"Otherwise, the government should dissolve the tribunal," he said.

A former BNP law minister, Moudud also urged the president to remove Justice Nizamul through Supreme Judicial Council as per the constitution if no action was taken by the government.

Abdur Razzak, chief of defence team for the detained Jamaat leaders, said it would be better if the judge stepped down sooner, "as he has violated the code of conduct, the constitution and his oath".

Tajul Islam, a member of

the defence team, in a statement said the reported conversations had serious implications in the ongoing trials.

The disclosures have seriously undermined the integrity of the entire trial process, he said.

"We doubt whether the [trial] process will regain its credibility. The only honourable option open for the [tribunal] chairman is his resignation," added Tajul.

At another event, Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) President Zainul Abedin demanded resignation of three SC judges including Justice Nizamul within seven days on different reasons.

The two other judges are Justice SK Sinha of the Appellate Division and Justice A H M Shamsuddin Chowdhury. The Daily Star that as the plaintiff, they wanted justice from the tribunal.

"Holding the war crimes trial is our electoral pledge. So it is obvious that we, the government, will seek

a body of pro-BNP lawyers, on the SCBA premises in protest against the police torture on BNP leaders and workers.

Citing the news reports, he said Justice SK Sinha told the tribunal chief that he would help the tribunal judge by elevating him as a judge at the Appellate Division after delivering three verdicts on the ongoing cases.

The SCBA president said there were allegations against Justice Shamsuddin of committing misconduct.

GOVT WANTS JUSTICE

Asked about the government's position over the report, Agriculture Minister and a ruling Awami League presidium member Matia Chowdhury yesterday told The Daily Star that as the plaintiff, they wanted justice from the tribunal.

"Holding the war crimes trial is our electoral pledge. So it is obvious that we, the government, will seek

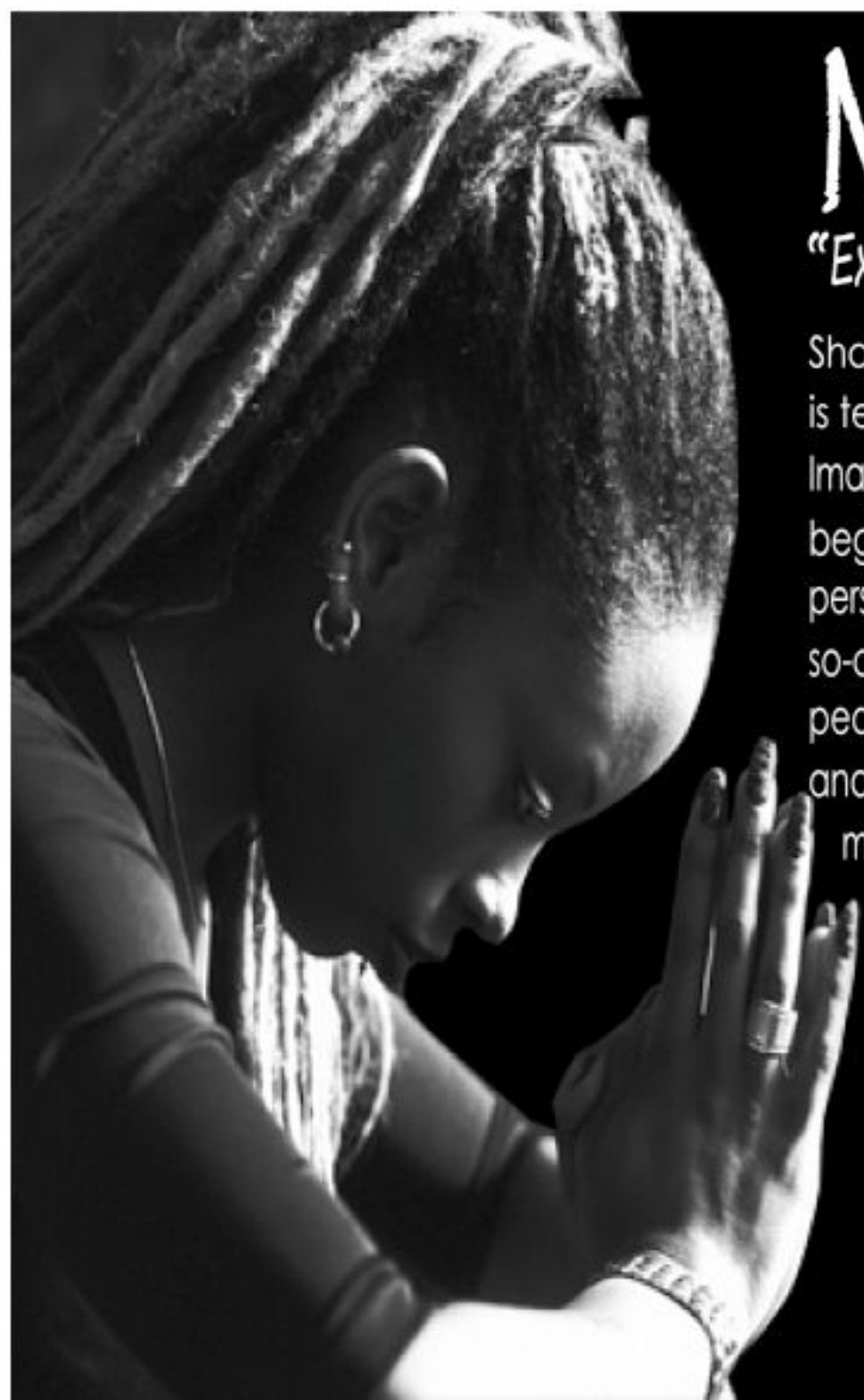
judgement and justice from the tribunal on behalf of the people who gave us [Awami League] mandate to hold the trial. So there is nothing wrong in seeking justice," she said.

Matia said the government did neither interfere nor dictate the tribunal to get the judgement or justice. "Nothing came out in the speech of the justice [Huq] that the government was forcing the tribunal to deliver the judgement," claimed the minister.

She questioned as to whether the government instructed the ICT-1 chairman to deliver any specific kind of judgement against the accused or put any pressure on the internationally-accepted tribunal.

"We did nothing in this regard," said Matia, who is considered to be one of the top policymakers of the present government.

About the Skype conversation, she said only the judge could explain about his statements.



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