

No game with voting rights will be allowed

UNB warns

PM, Dhaka

Reiterating that the next general election would be held in a free, fair and impartial manner, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said no one would be allowed to play ducks and drakes with people's voting rights.

She was addressing a meeting of the Awami League Central Working Committee at the National Press Club in Dhaka.

Hasina, also the AL president, said the Election Commission would hold the next parliamentary elections independently.

Asked the BNP's demand for holding a pre and fair party election in the country, the PM said the party should look in the mirror as it had "first staged farcical elections".

Bad incidents took place in the run-up to elections during the rule of the BNP, she added.

Hasina alleged that General Zia had

Desmond Tutu slams

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disparate apartheid in South Africa and became the moral voice of the nation, joined in the condemnation, reports AFP.

"If political price of your assent to the highest office in Myanmar is your silence, the price is surely too steep," Tutu said in a statement.

"It is incongruous for a symbol of righteousness to be in a situation, it is adding to our pain," he said noting that "the images we are seeing of the suffering of the Rohingya fill us with pain and dread."

"As we witness the unfolding horror we are shocked, but we are courageous and resilient again... for you to speak out for justice, human rights and the unity of your people," said Tutu.

Meanwhile, meeting sources told The Daily Star that the AL chief alleged that a gap had been created between the party leaders and activists. She asked AL leaders, ministers and lawmakers to redress their.

Hasina also advised party MPs to visit their electoral areas frequently and maintain close relations with voters to strengthen organizational activities ahead of the next national polls.

She asked party leaders to boost the ongoing member recruitment drive.

The organizations are deeply concerned by sustained reports of significant violence and the impact on civilian populations, including the Rohingya community.

OIC Secretary General Dr Youssef A Al-Othaimen on Wednesday in separate letters to EU High Representative Federica Mogherini, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein and UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi and urged them to take action to alleviate the sufferings of the Rohingyas of Myanmar.

The secretary general reiterated that the OIC joined the international community in calling for the implementation of Annan Commission's recommendations, saying these are long-term goals and there is an urgent and immediate need for lifesaving intervention.

"The OIC stands the ready to provide humanitarian assistance," he said and reiterated the call on the Myanmar government to end the cycle of violence and inhumane treatment of the Rohingya people and provide a lasting solution to

the question of their legal status.

Since 2014, the OIC has warned that if the government of Myanmar continues to destroy homes, kill innocent civilians and humiliate entire population without any recourse to justice, this is tantamount to a genocide or recruitment by extremist elements. Now the international community must act to prevent the genocide of the Rohingyas.

"The EU high representative in her statement said the situation in Northern Rakhine State in Myanmar is extremely serious. She said there is an urgent need for de-escalation of tension in Rakhine, on all side, and for full observance of international human rights law."

She said unrestricted humanitarian access, including for aid workers, is essential in order to reach those who desperately need it.

"The European Union stands in solidarity with the Bangladeshi authorities, who have played a crucial humanitarian role in welcoming the refugees who have arrived as a result of the crisis," said the EU official in a statement.

The government of Myanmar has committed to implementing the recommendations of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State. This should be done without delay, read the statement.

Earlier, UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres stepped up pressure on the authorities, warning of ethnic cleansing against minorities in the region.

In a rare letter to the UN Security Council on Tuesday, he expressed concern that the violence could spiral into a "humanitarian catastrophe".

The UN official said there was a risk of ethnic cleansing in Myanmar that could destabilise the region.

In Bangladesh, National Human Rights Commission Chairman Kazi Rezaul Hoque on Wednesday said the persecution of Rohingyas in Myanmar is tantamount to genocide.

"It is extreme violation of human rights to persecute Rohingya and force them to leave their homeland in Myanmar," he said in a statement.

US to send 3,500 more troops in Afghanistan

REUTERS, Washington

The United States will send about 3,500 additional US troops to Afghanistan, US officials said. The move broadly in line with expectations as the United States boosts support for the Afghan military.

The disclosure by the officials on Wednesday, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, comes as Defense Secretary Jim Mattis and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Marine General Joseph Dunford held closed door briefings with members of Congress about President Donald Trump's regional strategy.

The Pentagon said it would not comment on additional troop numbers until Mattis makes an announcement.

If confirmed, it would bring the total number of US troops in Afghanistan to about 14,500.

After a monthlong review of his Afghanistan policy, Trump committed the United States last week to open

ended conflict in the country and promised a stepped-up campaign against Taliban insurgents.

Last week Mattis said he had signed orders to send additional troops to Afghanistan but did not specify the size of the force, saying he first needed to brief Congress.

US officials have for months told Reuters that Trump had given Mattis the authority to send about 4,000 additional troops to Afghanistan.

The US presence in Afghanistan peaked at more than 100,000 troops in 2011, when Washington was under domestic political pressure to draw down from operations.

Some US officials have been telling Reuters they questioned the benefit of sending more troops to Afghanistan because any politically palatable number would not be enough to turn the tide, much less create stability and security.

To date, more than 2,300 Americans have been killed and over 17,000 wounded in Afghanistan.

Duterte sons deny philippine drug smuggling claims

APP, Manila

Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte's son and son-in-law yesterday denied allegations that they belonged to a drug trafficking gang, with the explosive claims raising questions about the president's bloody anti-narcotics crackdown.

Duterte came to power last year promising to wage a brutal and unprecedented war on drugs. Since then, police have killed around 3,800 people, including Duterte's sons, while thousands of other people have been murdered in unexplained circumstances.

His son Paolo Duterte and son-in-law Manuel Antonio Carpio appeared at a Senate inquiry yesterday to answer

accusations that they helped facilitate the shipment of crystal methamphetamine worth \$125 million (to the Philippines from China in exchange for payment).

The allegations emerged last month when a customs broker told the Senate they had heard the names of Duterte's son and son-in-law during the visit while seeking to expedite the shipment.

The broker later issued a statement clearing the two men of involvement.

Senate committee senators Antonio Trillanes at the inquiry accused Duterte's son of belonging to a drug trafficking gang, saying a 42-year-old had a tattoo on his back, resembling a dragon, that had the "proof... of his membership" in the gang.

15 US states sue Trump

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Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program argues their state economies will be hurt if residents lose their status.

The lawsuit seeks to block Trump's decision and maintain DACA.

The lawsuit claims Trump's decision was "motivated, at least in part, by a discriminatory motive" against Mexicans, who are the largest beneficiaries of the program.

The attorneys general also argue the government has not guaranteed DACA recipients the right to apply for citizenship.

"It is not used to be used for purposes of immigration enforcement, including identifying, apprehending, detaining, or deporting non-citizens."

New York's Attorney General Eric Schneiderman took the lead in filing the case in the Eastern District of New York. He said that 42,000 New Yorkers participate in DACA, and the end of the program will be "devastating for them and would cause 'huge economic pain' to the state."

In commenting on the suit, the US Department of Justice noted that DACA was implemented under an executive order by former President Barack Obama, not through Congressional action.

"While the plaintiffs in today's lawsuits may believe that an arbitrary circumvention of Congress is lawful, the Department of Justice looks forward to the Supreme Court's ruling in this Administration's position," spokesman Devin M O'Malley said.

Trump's decision on Tuesday to end the five-year-old program instituted by former President Barack Obama plunged almost 800,000 young people, known as Dreamers, "into uncertainty. The move drew criticism from business and political leaders, mayors, governors, Democratic lawmakers, unions and civil liberties advocates."

Trump, who delayed the end of the program until March 5, shifted responsibility to a Congress controlled by his own party.

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Four killed in AI infighting

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Both Keramat and Bokhtar have criminal records, and they had been involved in a feud over territory in the early 2009, claimed police.

Keramat was elected Ihoudia Lip chairman in 2016 defeating Bokhtar. The latter was arrested in 2016.

Ratan Sheikh, officer-in-charge of Islamic University Police Station, said some supporters of both groups were locked in an altercation at Ihoudia Bazar over the sale of water, body and cattle market around 1:30pm.

Around 2:30pm, both groups, equipped with firearms and sharp weapons, attacked each other. The clash that lasted about 15 minutes, killed four and injured 25 others.

The OC added that several gunshot wounds were heard during the clash.

The bodies were admitted to different hospitals and clinics in Kushtia and Rajshahi, while the deceased bodies were sent to Kushtia General Hospital morgue for autopsy.

One of the dead said the deceased were involved with AL and claimed that they were his supporters.

He alleged that deflated in UP chairman election, Bokhtar and his men tried to attack him and his men several times to

I'm OK thanks

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Moulvibazar Puro Janomil Kendra.

The father of the child justice said they had to study on cybercrime.

"Respect for judges is the yardstick to gauge how civilised a country is. I urge you to show restraint and not to boycott courts. If any misunderstanding takes place with judges, settle it through discussions."

"We have made a lot of progress. Now, nobody calls us a bottomless basket."

District Bar Association President Ranjit Kumar Ghosh presided over the function where his General Secretary Mizanur Rahman, District and Sessions Judge Abu Taher, Chief Judicial Magistrate AGM AL Hossain and Moulvibazar Deputy Commissioner Tofayel Islam, among others, spoke.

Clothes that grow

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Yasin, from West London, said "Usually when parents buy ahead for their children [to save money], the clothes are big and floaty and massive garments, but this is comfortable and dynamic."

"I tried [the prototype] on my nephew and niece and they both loved the clothing, so my sister said I was on to something and I decided to pursue it properly."

The clothing design, called Peti Pili, is in the final stages of prototyping and will soon be on the production line.

Yasin says the clothing would be "competitively priced" and save parents money in the long run, costing tens of hundreds, not thousands of pounds.

Paradise in pieces

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Telephone networks were still down on both sides of the island and French officials warned the death toll would exceed 100.

As the storm raged westwards, it left scenes of widespread devastation on the islands with the roofs wrenched off many buildings, dozens of huge shipping containers tossed aside like toys.

Home to around 9,500 people, St Barts is known as a playground for the rich and famous, including Beyonce, Beyonce, Steven Spielberg and Gwyneth Paltrow.

As it raged through the region, Irma also laid waste to Barbuda, part of the twin island nation of Antigua and Barbuda, which suffered "absolute devastation" with up to 30 percent of properties demolished, Prime Minister Gaston Browne said.

"One person is now literally rubble," he said.

"Barbuda now is known to have died on the small island of 1,600 inhabitants, apparently a child whose family was trying to get to safer ground."

And on the island of Barbados, a 16-year-old professional soccer fan during Zander Venezia died while trying to ride a monster wave generated by the storm, the World Surf League said.

Irma was expected to hit the north-eastern coasts of the Dominican Republic and Haiti in the next 24 hours, coming from past eastern Cuba before veering north towards Florida.

More than half of Puerto Rico's population of three million is without power, with rivers in the popular Key West island packed with debris bags and a mandatory evacuation order, with a similar order for residents due to follow.

11 cops sued

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As the trader failed to meet their demands, the cops took the officer in charge of the police station and gouged his eyes, the lawyer said, adding that policemen admitted him to Khulna Medical College Hospital.

Shahajal was later shifted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital. He is now recovering treatment there.

Contacted, Officer-in-Charge Nasim claimed Shahajal was arrested in a case filed by a woman from Khalishpur area.

Quoting the case statement, he said Shahajal and his accomplices snatched jewellery and cash from the woman at around midnight on July 18.

Hearing her scream for help, locals rushed to the spot and beat up Shahajal, the OC added.

On information, police reached the spot and rescued him from the mob.

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PM criticises Myanmar's

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Myanmar government so that they take back their nationals who are now staying in Bangladesh," she said in her introductory speech.

"Incidents are happening one after another in Rohingya General Hospital as coming here for shelter after losing all they have. We're trying our best to help and assist them."

She said the intrusion of the Myanmar refugees since 1978.

"The most painful matter is that women and children die every day in boat capsize... it's intolerable," she said.

Tangal road

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Sohag lost control and he died on the spot.

Seriously injured Himel was first taken to Tangal General Hospital. As his condition was critical, doctors referred him to Dhaka Medical College Hospital but he died on his way to Dhaka, he added.

On Wednesday afternoon, a bus from the Tangal family, including two children, were killed when they ran over them at Dubail of Dhaka upazila on Dhaka-Tangal Highway.

On the French side, the storm destroyed 95 percent of homes, officials were said, as a 200-mile delegation flew in to Guadeloupe to coordinate rescue efforts, headed by France's Overseas Territories Minister Annick Girardin.