

# Impose arms embargo on Myanmar army

## Asean Parliamentarians for Human Rights suggest targeted sanctions

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Asean Parliamentarians for Human Rights yesterday demanded that the Southeast Asian regional bloc mount pressure on Myanmar to ensure safe and voluntary repatriation of the Rohingya refugees from Bangladesh.

It also wants the Association of the Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) to hold talks with India, China and Russia in order to impose an arms embargo and targeted sanctions on the Myanmar military accused of ethnic cleansing.

"It is their [China, Russia and India] arms being used against the Rohingyas," said Asean Parliamentarians for Human Rights (APHR) Chairperson Charles Santiago at a press conference following a four-day visit to Bangladesh.

"We urge the Asean foreign ministers to hold an emergency meeting to discuss the Rohingya repatriation plan and put pressure on Myanmar to take the onus of the repatriation," he added.

A fact-finding mission of APHR talked to the Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar, MPs of Bangladesh, and

officials of Bangladesh government and the UN in last four days.

They lauded Bangladesh for sheltering more than 688,000 refugees who fled military crackdown in Rakhine since August 25. However, they were also critical of the repatriation deal signed between Bangladesh and Myanmar on November 23.

The repatriation was scheduled to begin on January 23 amid concerns from the refugees as well as from the international community on the safety issue in Rakhine.

"Most of the Rohingyas we talked to said they want to return to Rakhine because they were born there and lived there for decades. They had their houses and property but cannot return under the present circumstances," said Charles Santiago, an MP from the Democratic Action Party of Malaysia.

Based on the talks with the Rohingyas, the fact-finding mission said the refugees have four specific demands -- ensuring safety in Rakhine, compensating them as their houses and property were damaged and members of their community killed and

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Both sides on Bijoy Sarani-Tejgaon flyover are packed with vehicles yesterday afternoon. According to a survey report, Dhaka's average traffic speed is just above walking speed and it could be worse in the coming years if measures are not taken.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS



## Son beats up mother mercilessly

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

Lying on a hospital bed, 55-year-old Bulbuli Begum could barely keep her eyes open. Her right leg was swollen and there were bruises all over her hands. Doctor said there were many more injury marks on her body.

The woman was tied to a tree and beaten mercilessly allegedly by her son in Satnai Balapara village of Nilphamari's Dimla yesterday morning. Her only "fault" was she did not let him take loans from others by mortgaging her land.

Bulbuli's husband Rafiqul Islam demanded immediate arrest of Liton, their 30-year-old son who went into hiding soon after the incident.

Rafiqul, 60, said his wife inherited some land from her father at some important places in the upazila. On several occasions, Liton took money from others after convincing Bulbuli to mortgage her property.

"I have two sons and my elder son [Liton] seems to be totally spoiled. He does many illicit things," he said.

"On Tuesday night, Liton again took Tk 50,000 from a person against a 15-decimal plot in Kharibari market area. At this, Bulbuli became furious and asked him to return the money."

Over the same matter, the mother and the son had a fight yesterday morning when there was no one else at home. At one point, Liton tied her to a tree on their yard and started to beat her with a stick. Bulbuli fainted a couple of minutes later, according to Rafiqul and witnesses, who wanted to remain unnamed.

Liton fled. Their neighbours took Bulbuli to Dimla upazila health complex.

Talking to The Daily Star there, Bulbuli was fumbling for the right words. She could only say her attacker was her son.

Rasheduzzaman Rashed, residential medial officer at the hospital, said the woman was beaten brutally and was still traumatised.

Dimla Upazila Nirbahi Officer

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## 'Innovation' in tax dodging

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RamaDBK Limited. The LC issued by the First Security Islami Bank Limited (FSIBL) against the consignment showed the invoice value at \$47,400 (around Tk 39 lakh).

According to the tariff rules, the tax on import of such vehicles is 366.06 percent. This means the total tax against the invoice value was Tk 1.43 crore.

But a tampered LC was submitted to the customs authorities, lowering the invoice value to \$27,400 (about Tk 22.75 lakh). This helped the company dodge tax of around Tk 60 lakh by paying Tk 83 lakh in tax.

Atiar Rahman, C&F agent responsible for releasing the consignment, said it was a mistake.

"We are ready to cooperate with the authorities in all possible ways. The authorities informed us that around Tk 1.5 crore has to be paid in tax against this consignment.

"We have already paid around Tk 90 lakh. We are ready to pay the rest of the money as well as a fine if imposed by the authorities," he added.

Directorate officials filed a case with the customs house against the importer and the C&F agent on December 3. The case is yet to be disposed of.

Earlier on November 8 last year, Apparel Options Private Limited in Chittagong's Chatteshwari area imported goods worth Tk 1.5 crore in a consignment from China against the Free of Cost (FOC) facility.

The company forged the certification letter issued by the United Commercial Bank Ltd, the commercial invoice, the packing list as well as the sales contract.

In case of FOC, a bank issues a certification letter, not an LC.

Directorate officials on November 15 filed a case with the customs house against the importer and the C&F

agent.

The customs authorities also seized consignments of several other firms for forging bank documents. Those include FT Corporation, AS Enterprise, Sardar Agro Products, Yunus Auto Rice Mill and exporter M/S SM Design.

Himalaya, a firm based in the capital's Motijheel, gave a declaration of importing two elevators worth \$9,950 (around Tk 8.25 lakh) from China in December. But examining the container, the customs officials found 175 photocopiers worth around Tk 1 crore, instead of elevators.

The firm doctored all the documents, including the LC and packing list, submitted against the consignment. The Chittagong Express Agency was responsible for releasing the consignment, said several officials at the Audit Investigation and Research Department of the customs house.

Seeking anonymity, a number of

customs officials said that despite their recommendations for taking action against the culprits, the higher authorities let them off the hook by only slapping fines.

As per the Customs Act 1969, the authorities can confiscate goods and cancel the licences of the importers and the C&F agents involved in such forgery. However, this Act is hardly enforced, they pointed out.

Asked, AKM Nuruzzaman, commissioner of the customs house, said they have taken steps to stop such tax evasion and also ensure that the culprits are brought to book.

Talking to this correspondent, National Board of Revenue Member Lutfor Rahman (customs policy) said they have already taken some measures to check such tax dodging.

"We will have a tougher approach towards such fraudulence and hope these measures will yield positive results in the coming days," he added.

## Ship-breaking bill passed in parliament

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Parliament last night passed "Bangladesh Ship Recycling Bill, 2018", which has provisions for imprisonment and fines for violation of the law.

According to the bill placed by Industries Minister Amir Hossain Amu, a zone would be established in Chittagong for the ship-recycling industry under section 4 of the draft law and the owners would have to run their yards there.

The draft law makes it mandatory for yard owners to have the lives of every employee in their yards insured.

The yards would also have to abide by the relevant international laws and conventions, the bill said.

The bill said if anyone established a yard without permits, the punishment could be up to two years' jail or a fine between Tk 10 lakh and Tk 30 lakh or both.

The punishment for importing a ship without a no-objection certificate (NOC) from the shipping ministry was set at two years' jail or a fine between Tk 10 lakh and Tk 30 lakh.

Recycling a ship without NOC could result in a jail sentence of up to two years or a fine between Tk 10 lakh and Tk 30 lakh.

The punishment for producing a fake NOC was set at five years' jail or a fine between Tk 5 lakh and Tk 20 lakh.

In the case of setting up yards outside the zone, the punishment would be up to two years' jail or a fine between Tk 10 lakh and Tk 30 lakh, according to the bill.

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## Four currency forgers held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Detective Branch (DB) of police arrested four members of two separate money counterfeiting gangs and seized fake Indian rupees worth Rs 12.28 lakh and Bangladeshi currency worth Tk 20 lakh from their possessions on Tuesday night.

The arrestees -- Duruduzzaman Biswas alias Jaman, Tariqul Islam, Mojibur Rahman and Joynal Abedin -- were arrested from Dhaka, Gazipur and Rajshahi.

A team of DB (north) arrested Duruduzzaman and Tariqul from the capital's Farmgate area and Rajshahi and seized the fake Indian currencies from their possession, said Devdas Bhattacharya, additional commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) yesterday.

The DB team also seized equipment used for making fake notes, printers, laptops and scanners.

While addressing a briefing at DMP media centre, AC Devdas said the DB team first arrested Duruduzzaman in front of Shuktara Hotel at Farmgate. Duruduzzaman was involved in money counterfeiting business since 1988.

Duruduzzaman is an accused in six cases. He was arrested by Adabar police in April last year. After securing bail, he went back to his old profession.

Gleaning information from him, the team arrested Tariqul from Raipara area of Rajshahi along with Rs 10.28 lakh, said AC Devdas. During primary interrogation, the arrestees admitted that they used to sell the fake rupees in the bordering areas. They used to sell one lakh rupees for Tk 8,000.

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## UNO, 2 govt staffers face defamation charges

UNB, Habiganj

A Tk 1-crore defamation case has been filed against the Azmiriganj upazila nirbahi officer and two other government staffers for tearing off a festoon with photographs of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her ICT Affairs Adviser Sajeeb Wazed Joy.

Upazila Jubo League member Joydeep Roy Jony filed the case against UNO Pulak Kanti Chakrabarty, Upazila Project Implementation Officer Mohammad Ali and work assistant Md Sakaria of

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## IS attacks aid group office in Afghanistan

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said the last attacker was killed.

"The fight is over," the provincial governor's spokesman, Attaullah Khogyani told reporters.

Authorities said they believed six attackers were involved. Witnesses said at least some of them were in police uniform, a commonly used tactic.

Two of the dead were guards at the compound, and one was a civilian. It was not clear if the other two dead were attackers or civilians, the spokesman said.

The raid began with a huge blast at around 9:00 am that rocked the neighbourhood, where other aid groups and government buildings are based.

"Right after that children and people started running away," said Ghulam Nabi, who was nearby when the bomb exploded. "I saw a vehicle catch fire and then a gunfight started."

Islamic State said the attack targeted British, Swedish and Afghan government institutions in a statement on its Amaq news agency. Save the Children was founded in Britain, and a Swedish aid group office and a building of the Afghan Department of Women's Affairs are near the compound.

The attack underlines how difficult operating in Afghanistan has become for humanitarian aid groups, which have faced heavy pressure from armed groups and kidnappers. In 2017, a total of 17 aid workers were killed and 32 injured in the country.

OUTRAGEOUS

Save the Children, which says it reaches almost 1.4 million children in Afghanistan, said it had suspended its operations temporarily and closed its offices in Afghanistan, where it works in eight provinces as well as in three others through partnership agree-

ments.

"We remain committed to resuming our operations and lifesaving work as quickly as possible, as soon as we can be assured that it is safe to do so," a group representative said in an emailed statement.

In October, the Red Cross said it was drastically reducing operations in Afghanistan following attacks that killed seven of its staff.

"An attack against an organisation that helps children is outrageous. Civilians and aid workers must not be targeted," said Monica Zanarelli, head of the Red Cross delegation in Afghanistan, in response to yesterday's attack.

"Increased violence has made operating in Afghanistan increasingly difficult for many organisations."

President Ashraf Ghani, whose government has been under heavy

pressure to improve security, also condemned the attack in a statement in which he called on neighbouring countries not to help militant groups.

Jalalabad is the capital of Nangarhar province on the porous border with Pakistan. The province has become a stronghold of Islamic State, which has grown into one of Afghanistan's most dangerous militant groups since it appeared around the beginning of 2015.

Backed by intensive US air strikes, Afghan forces have claimed growing success against the Taliban and other militant groups, including Islamic State, but militant attacks on civilian targets have continued, causing heavy casualties.

The attack in Jalalabad came just days after Taliban militants attacked the Hotel Intercontinental in the capital, Kabul, killing at least 20 people, including 13 foreigners.