Myanmar wiping out Rohingya homes

FROM PAGE 2

The Muslim minority are not recognised as an ethnic group in Myanmar and have faced decades of persecution.

Many fear the recent crackdown is a push to rid the country of the Rohingya for good.

Photos posted on social media after a diplomatic tour of the conflict zone in northern Rakhine state last week appear to back that up. The haunting pictures, posted on the Twitter account of the European

Union Ambassador to Myanmar Kristian Schmidt, show a scarred territory with large patches of levelled land. Villages incinerated during the army crackdown now appear to have been

completely bulldozed, devoid of all structures and even trees. "The Rohingyas are shocked to see

their villages razed," said Chris Lewa, head of the NGO the Arakan Project, which has worked for years with Rohingya in Rakhine state. They fear the upcoming rainy sea-

son will further wash away any signs of their past lives, she added. "The Rohingya have the feeling that

they (the military) are doing away with the last traces of their presence in the region," she said. Myanmar and Bangladesh signed a

repatriation agreement last year that was supposed to commence in January. But many Rohingya refuse to return

without the guarantee of basic rights and safety. Authorities in Myanmar also insist they will heavily vet all returnees and

only take back those "verified" as residents -- a complex and controversial process critics say is likely to exclude large numbers of people. Myanmar's Social Welfare Minister

Win Myat Aye, the lead official in the



and received by AFP yesterday allegedly shows bulldozed Rohingya villages in Myanmar's northern Rakhine state.

PHOTO: AFP

resettlement process, said the bulldozing was part of a plan to "build back" villages to a higher standard than before. "We are trying to have the new village

plan," he said. "When they come back they can live in their place of origin or nearest to their place of origin." He said it is taking time because of a labour shortage sparked by the

Rohingya exodus and that the government plans to pay returnees to help rebuild their own homes. Accusations of a systematic cam-

paign to rid Rakhine of Rohingya history are not new. Last year the United Nations human

rights office alleged efforts were underway to "effectively erase signs of memothe Rohingya landscape and memory". Access to Rakhine remains tightly

The arrest of two Reuters journalists

investigating the extra-judicial killing of ten Rohingya "terrorist" suspects in

power-sharing arrangement with the army, which ruled with an iron fist for five decades.

India, China in race for stake

'UN to take part' FROM PAGE 2

"We want to fill up the (repatriation) forms in their (UN) presence so that no one can say they been forced by someone or sent back against their will," he told reporters at a Rohingya refugee camp in Bangladesh's southeastern border district of Cox's Bazar.

There was no immediate comment from the UN, which has said previously that any repatriation must be voluntary.

Shahriar urged patience and said Bangladesh did not want to send back the refugees only to have them return, as has happened after past rounds of repatriation.

Bangladesh "wants to make sure the situation in Myanmar is safe and secure", he said.

Baskets made

FROM PAGE 18

"You can use magazine paper or newspaper pulp, but currency notes are better because they are not worth anything, they are all the same size and you don't have to waste time cutting them.

"These things are no good for buying anything. At least I am putting them to good use rather than throwing them away."

With two, five and 10 bolivar notes 'you can't even buy a piece of candy", he added.

A bank note hat can require hundreds of bolivars, but is only worth the equivalent of a pack of cigarettes.

Some of the woven creations sell for 300,000 bolivars -- enough to buy a kilo of meat. Jose Leon, a 26-year-old designer,

draws the faces of Star Wars characters over the image of Simon Bolivar and other famous Venezuelans pictured on the notes.

Foreign customers pay him up to £14 (\$20) for each piece of 'money art', which he said increases the note's value by nearly 5,000 percent.

Thousands of desperate Venezuelans are currently trying to enter Colombia in a bid to escape the hunger and soaring crime rate caused by the economic crisis.

Incredible pictures show the mass exodus of refugees crossing the Simon Bolivar international bridge trying to flee the political crisis threatening to engulf the country.

Pakistan

FROM PAGE 18 India has long accused Pakistan of training and arming militants and helping them infiltrate across the heavily militarised Line of Control into Jammu and Kashmir, its only Muslim majority state.

The head of the Jammu and Kashmir state police, S P Vaid, told reporters over the weekend that they had communications intercepts pointing to the JeM, which has emerged as a top group fighting hundreds of thousands of Indian forces in Kashmir.

Mob beats

catch the other robbers.

FROM PAGE 18 of Ayub Ali Sheikh at Belua in Dhipur union and committed robbery there early Sunday.

When the gang was fleeing the

scene after the robbery, locals chased them and caught Babul. Police rescued him from mob beating and sent him to Tongibari Health Complex. He was being shifted to Dhaka when he succumbed to his injuries on the way.

Babul's body was sent to Munshiganj General Hospital for

autopsy. The OC said they are trying to

but it did not mention the monetary value.

The NSE also demanded two posts of directors at the board and the option of leaving the board after five years. As the Chinese consortium's bid-

ding price is nearly 47 percent higher than that of the Indian one, the DSE approved the Chinese proposal at its board meeting on Saturday, said sources at the stock exchange. But the share market regulator,

Bangladesh Securities and Exchange

Commission, declined to give the work order a go ahead and asked the DSE to further scrutinise the proposals, the sources said. In the meantime, the Indian side, anticipating that the Chinese consor-

tium might win the work order, apparently is lobbying the DSE and the BSEC to buy the stake. Vikram Limaye, managing director and CEO of the NSE, arrived in Dhaka

on Sunday to discuss the issue with the

authorities concerned, said BSEC

On that day, he had two separate meetings with the managements of the DSE and the BSEC. He proposed that both the authorities accept their investment proposal, claiming that though their offer price was lower than that of the Chinese consortium, they were more experienced in stock exchange develop-

Soon after the meeting with Limaye, the BSEC authorities asked the management of the DSE to scrutinise both the proposals again, the official said.

ment, according to a BSEC official.

The country's premier bourse took the initiative to include strategic partners in it to get modern technological

facilities, and services for management and business development as part of its demutualisation scheme taken up in 2013. The move separated the bourse's management from ownership.

According to the demutualisation scheme, 25 percent of the 180 crore DSE shares would be sold to strategic partners, 35 percent to small investors, and 40 percent would be with the Trading Right Entitlement Certificate or TREC holders.

"We will select the investor who will be more appropriate for development of our stock exchange" said KAM Majedur Rahman, managing director of DSE.

ity, a member of the bourse said the DSE board had approved the Chinese proposal as per the bidding rules.

scrutinising further the proposals, there was no scope for accepting the proposal that offered a lower price.

the rules. In June last year, the DSE invited

tender for the first time and received an investment proposal from a local investor.

posed more than Tk 30 for each DSE share. But the board did not accept the proposal as they were interested to take foreign investors as strategic partners considering their technical knowledge and experience, according to a DSE

Ensure their safety

FROM PAGE 18

sources.

civil engineering but suspended his PhD to focus on Rohingya rights after mass violence was inflicted on them in 2012. Khin is a key figure coordinating over 20 Rohingya organisations across

Myanmar signed with Bangladesh without involving the international community is merely a tactic to divert international pressure, and warned that Bangladesh should not fall into its trap.

23 amid global pressure after nearly 700,000 Rohingyas fled to Bangladesh to escape atrocities unleashed by Myanmar's security forces. Doctors Without Borders said at least 6,700 Rohingyas were killed between August and September last year.

nity, including the UN, has condemned the atrocities by Myanmar, but has not taken effective steps for holding Myanmar security forces accountable, ensuring citizenship of the Rohingyas and their safety in Rakhine.

still fleeing to Bangladesh everyday because mass arrests are going on in Rakhine using false allegations, while there is no food or access to local markets.

away and houses burnt down...This is systematic destruction of the whole community intentionally," he said. Farcically, Myanmar is now build-

ing camps as shelters for the returnee Rohingyas, he said, adding: "These camps will be nothing but prison

camps."

there will be no safety, security and protection for the Rohingyas and they will again face mass atrocities by the Burmese military, Tun Khin said.

"So, before we talk about repatriation, we need to hold the Myanmar security forces accountable for the atrocities they committed," he said, demanding trial of the Burmese security forces in the International Criminal Court

other international communities in the repatriation process, no mention of trying the perpetrators who killed and raped the Rohingyas and no guarantee of citizenship for the Rohingyas, he said.

U.S. diplomat Bill Richardson's tainable solution to it, he said.

Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) in Rakhine where there is limited aid, and

he asked while urging the world community to not become a silent witness to the "genocide".

and said the Rohingya communities across the globe are uniting against it. Khin thanked Bangladesh for provid-

powers for a sustainable solution.

rable landmarks in the geography of

controlled, despite a snowballing number of allegations of massacres of Rohingya villagers in Rakhine.

custody has upped pressure on civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi to condemn the army. Her administration is in a delicate

Speaking on condition of anonym-

Quoting the tender rules, the member said though the BSEC advised

It is mandatory for the DSE to sell shares to strategic partners within five years of demutualisation, according to

LankaBangla Finance in partnership with Delta Life Insurance had pro-

He moved to the UK in 2004 to study the world and lobbying world powers.

He thinks the repatriation deal that The deal was signed on November

Khin said the international commu-

Meanwhile, he said the Rohingyas are

"The only thing that we had is our land. Now, our land has been taken

The Rohingyas need a safe zone to be maintained by the UN. Otherwise,

There is no involvement of the UN or

resignation from an international panel set up by Myanmar to advise on the Rohingya crisis proves Myanmar's lack of willingness for finding a sus-Tun Khin said there are 140,000

they cannot get out of the camps, creating an utterly miserable situation that should not happen in 21st cen-"How can the Rohingya from Bangladesh return to the killing field?"

He compared the persecution of Rohingyas by Myanmar to Nazi Germany's genocide against the Jews

ing shelter and humanitarian assistance to the Rohingyas, but requested a stronger role from them, the UN and global

"We want our identity, our culture

Hasina meets

FROM PAGE 1 months after the spiritual leader

visited Dhaka from November 31 to December 2. The premier also had a meeting

with Cardinal Pietro Parolin, secretary of state of Vatican City. She visited Sistine Chapel and Saint

Peter's Basilica. The Sistine Chapel is a chapel in the Apostolic Palace, the official residence of the Pope, from where he carries out the religious and functionary papal activities. St Peter's Basilica is an Italian

the papal enclave within the city of Rome. Hasina arrived in Rome on Sunday evening on a four-day official visit to

Renaissance church in Vatican City,

Italy and Vatican City to attend the 41st session of the governing council of International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). ON ROHINGYA CRISIS Also yesterday, Hasina renewed her

call to the international community, including the Holy See, for continuing their pressure on Myanmar to take back their nationals from Bangladesh as she met Vatican's Secretary of State Cardinal Pietro Parolin.

Foreign Secretary Shahidul Huq

and Ambassador to the Vatican City

Shamim Ahsan briefed reporters after the meeting. Shamim Ahsan said the prime minister informed the secretary of state that Bangladesh and Myanmar

signed an agreement to send back over one million Rohingyas from Bangladesh to their homeland. "The problem has been created on the other side of the border and the solution of this problem also lies there. That's why the bigger responsibility of implementing the agreement

Hasina said the process of repatriation of the Rohingyas has to be started

lies on Myanmar shoulder, but we

haven't got that kind of response

from Myanmar yet," she said.

"The situation which will encourage the Rohingyas to go back to their homeland has to be created by Myanmar. Myanmar has to take that responsibility," the PM was quoted as telling Parolin.

Hasina also mentioned that the Annan Commission's recommendations are yet to be implemented by Myanmar. She urged the Holy See and the international community to keep up their pressure on the Myanmar government to implement the commission's report.

MK Alamgir

FROM PAGE 18

"No such money entered my account from July 17 to the next seven to 10 days," he said, adding that such allegation was a "barrier to creating a healthy atmosphere in society".

Muhiuddin also called upon Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, who was presiding over the sitting, to take necessary measures so that Bangladesh Bank could not reveal private commercial bank's loan disbursement information before the media.

Amid widespread criticism over financial scams of Farmers Bank, established around four years ago, Muhiuddin on November 27 last year resigned from its board after the central bank had asked him to quit.

Non-performing loans at the bank increased significantly in recent months as the board continued to sanction and disburse loans in breach of the banking rules.

Between September and November in 2015, the BB conducted special inspections at the commercial bank's three branches in the city's Gulshan, Motijheel and Shyampur, and found a gross violation of the banking rules in disbursing loans of around Tk 400 crore.

Some directors of the bank were allegedly involved in sanctioning loans, violating the credit rules.

The Farmers Bank doesn't have the capacity to pay back the depositors' money and refund the credit taken from other banks, a BB report said. Muhiuddin, also chairman of the

parliamentary standing committee or Public Accounts, said he was a managing director of Bangladesh Shilpa Bank and presidents of BASIC Bank Ltd and Bangladesh Shilpa Rin Sangstha. But nobody raised any allegations of corruption or irregular ities against him. Pointing to the media reports on

the loan scam, he claimed that Farmers Bank did not sanction any loan without proper approval. He also said an observer of the BB was in the governing body of Farmers

Bank. The body was aware of the loan disbursement, he claimed. He sought the speaker's interference so that media could not make any "imaginary" report on the financial sector as this type of report

sector. He said Farmers Bank had appointed quality officials and staffers following necessary rules.

would have a negative impact on the

Muhiuddin said in the media reports, it was mentioned that they got information on Farmers Bank from Bangladesh Bank. But according to the BB order, nobody could provide private bank's information to the media, he added.

Stone traders

FROM PAGE 18

Ecologically Critical Area (ECA), the country's burgeoning construction industry added fuel to stone extraction in the area over the years. Stone traders continue to grab land either to extract stone by digging deeper into the ground, or to crush and dump stone and sand.

Dulal Miah, a stone trader, who has put up a sign inside the compound under the name of Shanto Enterprise, said he sold the stone, now piled up on the school ground, to a client a year ago, but he was yet to collect it. Claiming part of the school ground

his inherited property, another stone trader, Dilu Bakht, took the matter to a local court. This disrupted the development of

the school ground, said Mahfuzur Rahman, the headmaster. "There was no boundary wall when the school was set up in 1978. That is

why stone traders took the liberty of dumping stone inside the compound." The construction of the boundary wall began last year under the Primary Education Development

On August 23 last year, the High Court stayed the construction work, the headmaster said. "We filed a writ petition with the

Project, he added.

High Court. The court on December 14 ordered continuation of the construction work." On January 14 this year, Dilu's lawyer sent a legal notice, saying the

court issued an order staying the con-

struction work again. Dilu said the six bigha school land originally belonged to his aunt Kasindur Kashiani, who gave it to his mother Kabe Khasiani. His mother later gave one

bigha land to the school, he claimed.

"School records show that my aunt gave the land to the school in 1973,

but my aunt died in 1971. It was my mother who gave part of the land to

the school authorities." He also claimed that he was not using the school ground to dump stones.

Neither the stone traders nor the school authorities could say about the ownership of the stone crushing

machine on the school ground. Bishwajit Kumar Paul, UNO of Gowainghat, said they received a legal notice from Dilu's lawyer, but there was no court order attached to it. "So

we are legally not bound to stop the

construction work."

Although the stone crusher inside the school compound was currently out of order, around five to six crushers on the periphery of the school were causing serious noise pollution in the area. There are at least 100 stone crushers in the locality as well.

In January last year, the High Court ordered the government to remove all unauthorised stone crushing machines in five upazilas of Sylhet in the next three months to save public health and environment.

It also ordered the authorities con-

cerned to implement the Stone

Crushing Policy 2000, which stipu-

lates that no stone crushing machine can be set up within the 500-metre radius of a town, upazila, municipality, academic institution and hospital. Despite the noise pollution from stone crushers run from dawn to dusk, the school of around 500 students

According to him, the stone extraction work has another negative impact

on the school. "Some students prefer working in stone quarries to attending the school

Tarique was behind it

Bangladesh High Commission in

London on Wednesday and assaulted

its employees and vandalised some

FROM PAGE 18 also gave jail sentences to Tarique and four others for 10 years and slapped a fine of Tk 2.10 crore on each.

Tarique, the second man in the BNP,

now functions as the acting chairperson in Khaleda's absence. The government has already informed Interpol about the attack, said Quader, adding that Tarique was conducting such activities while stay-

ing in London. In reply to a query, he said no outsider was needed to split the BNP. Its own people were enough for that.

The 85km Cox's Bazar-Teknaf high-

way was renamed in commemoration

of Saheed ATM Jafor Alam, who was killed by Pakistan occupation forces on the night of March 25, 1971. Jafor was killed at the then Iqbal Hall, now Zahurul Haque Hall, of Dhaka University. He is one of the very first martyrs of the Liberation War. His

Ukhia upazila. Jafor was the elder brother of incumbent Cabinet Secretary Shafiul

Alam. Three lawmakers, among others,

on Bangladesh," said the statement.

Responding to a query, Mahmood said the British police detained one of

were also present at yesterday's the attackers from the spot.

Sister Lucy

FROM PAGE 18 ministry and congratulated her with

flowers, sources said. Holt had said her last wish was to be a Bangladeshi citizen and to be buried in this land so that she could forever

Upon receiving the news of the citizenship, Holt was delighted and said she wants to thank Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. "We forwarded Lucy Holt's application to the home ministry to extend her

remain here.

visa extension.

ship," Habibur said. A letter was then sent from the home ministry, signed by Monira Haque, senior assistant secretary, security services division (immigration-II), to Holt on February 1 in response to her application sent on December 13, 2017, confirming the

On February 8, Holt was granted 15 years 'M' category visa (multiple entry) without visa fee by Sheikh Hasina at a programme in Barisal's Bangabandhu Udyan.

day with Bangladesh. After coming to Bangladesh in 1960, she was a witness to the 1971 war and had treated wounded freedom fighters and civilians during that time while

During the period, she wrote to her relatives, and had asked them to extend their support to the tortured people of then East Pakistan. Even though she was requested to

around the country since. In the 57 years, she has also worked

in Khulna, Naogaon, Dhaka, and Gopalganj. Sister Holt had joined Oxford Mission Church of Barisal at the age of 30 and spent most of her time here. She currently teaches English at the

church for free. Known in the mission and the locality for her compassion and love for people, Sister Holt said she wants

away from Myanmar land, or they

would face problems," said police

officer Mohammad Rashid by phone

Local Border Guard Bangladesh

(BGB) commander Manzurul Hasan

Khan said Myanmar authorities had

from the area.

Leave no man's land

repatriate all the newly-arrived refugees. But many say they do not want to return until Myanmar agrees to give them

Myanmar regards the Rohingya as immigrants from Bangladesh and denies them citizenship, even though they have been there for generations.

citizenship and guarantees their safety.

at around 6,000 refugees living in Tombru, an area of no man's land between Myanmar and Bangladesh.

Myanmar's jurisdiction. "If the Rohingya refuse the proposal put forward by the Myanmar govern-

Bangladesh security forces in the area

been using loudhailers since Friday to ask the refugees to leave. Rohingya living there told AFP soldiers had recently put up tents near the

heard they also set fire to nearby villages recently," said Dil Mohammad, one of the refugees.

Buddhist mobs.

operates from 8:00am till 4:00pm, Headmaster Mahfuzur Rahman told The Daily Star.

as they earn money from the job."

programme. THE ATTACK BNP activists "forcibly" entered the

valuables.

Following a demonstration by the UK chapter of BNP and its front organisations, a group of demonstrators entered the high commission in the name of submitting a memorandum, according to a press release issued by the high commission.

The release, which was given to journalists during a press conference by Foreign Minister AH Mahmood Ali at the ministry on Thursday, condemned the attack and said the incident tarnished the country's image. "Bangladesh High Commission in

London represents Bangladesh in the

UK. So, damaging the high commission's assets is the same as damaging the ancestral home was in Cox's Bazar's state assets, and the attack on the high commission is tantamount to an attack

Born in 1930, Holt shares her birth-

serving at Fatema Hospital in Jessore.

leave at the beginning of the war, she visa without visa-fee and recommended insisted on staying by the side of the that they grant her Bangladeshi citizen-"freedom-loving people". Holt was mesmerised by Bangladesh's natural beauty and its people, and has worked

FROM PAGE 18 has said amounts to ethnic cleansing, the two governments agreed late last year to

The minister's message was directed

In it, he tells them they must return or "suffer the consequences", and that the area they were living in was under

ment through this delegation, it will not bode well for the Rohingya living in no man's land," said the minister through a translator.

month of the violence that sparked the outpouring of refugees. Many of them have told harrowing

Myanmar's army denies the allega-

stories of rape, arson and mass executions at the hands of the military and

confirmed the minister's visit to AFP. "He kept telling the refugees to move tions.

barbed wire fence. "They (Myanmar army) often fire blank rounds to create panic. We've

Doctors Without Borders estimates at least 6,700 Rohingya died in the first