

BNP stages sit-in over Khaleda's conviction

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP top brass urged the party leaders and activists to intensify movement to ensure the release of Chairperson Khaleda Zia from jail. The party leaders and followers will observe a hunger strike from 9:00am to 5:00pm across the country today as part of the demonstration. "Our movement is to release Khaleda Zia, our leaders and activists, and democracy. Let us vow to make the programmes a success to bring Khaleda Zia out of jail," Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, secretary general of the party, said addressing a human chain yesterday. The party staged sit-in programmes in front of its Nayapaltan headquarters in Dhaka and some other districts yesterday in protest against the jail sentence of Khaleda in a graft case. Issuing a note of caution to the government, the BNP leader said it would not be possible to subdue the "movement of people by sending Khaleda to jail".



BNP leaders and activists stage a sit-in in front of its Nayapaltan central office yesterday protesting the jailing of party Chairperson Khaleda Zia in a graft case.

ROHINGYA GENOCIDE Fortify Rights for probe by int'l criminal court

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The United Nations Security Council should refer Myanmar to the International Criminal Court to investigate genocide and other atrocities against the Rohingyas, Fortify Rights said as the UNSC convenes a briefing on the Rohingya situation in New York today. "It's not too late for the Security Council to respond with action," said Matthew Smith, CEO of Fortify Rights, a regional rights body based in Bangkok, in a statement yesterday. "The civilian and military leadership in Myanmar are ensuring complete impunity for ongoing heinous crimes, and that's precisely why international action is warranted and overdue." In response to violent assaults on security forces by the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army in October 2016 and again in August 2017, the Myanmar army led a brutal attack on the Rohingya civilian population, forcing more than 775,000 refugees to take shelter in Bangladesh. In a report published in November 2017, Fortify Rights and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum documented Myanmar army-led massacres, mass gang-rapes and arsons against the

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Donors lose interest in Rohingyas: WFP

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Rohingyas a month. "He [David] informed the prime minister that the interest of the donor agencies to feed the Rohingyas was decreasing and the WFP was trying to keep the interest alive among the donor agencies under the UN system. But it is very difficult for them to keep it up," Shahidul said. The WFP chief also expressed concern over the possibility of mudslides in the Rohingya camps in Cox's Bazar during monsoon. "He drew the prime minister's attention to the matter [mudslide]. The prime minister said some Rohingyas would be shifted temporarily to Bhasan Char [an island in Noakhali] if needed," the foreign secretary said. David apprised Hasina about various campaigns the WFP was carrying out in the international arena over the Rohingya issue. He said he briefed the US president twice on the issue.

investing in sustainable rural economies," she said. Hasina was delivering her keynote speech at the 41st Session of the IFAD's Governing Council at the headquarters of International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) in Rome, with its President Gilbert Fossoun Houngbo in the chair. The theme of the session was "From fragility to long-term resilience: Investing in sustainable rural economics". Hasina said investment in rural economy is a key factor in ensuring resilience. "This, we believe, cannot be achieved without global partnership and cooperation." She said a comprehensive sustainable rural economy "requires investment in the development of the rural social fabric and climate resilience". Focusing on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030, the PM said, "Inclusive and sustainable rural transformation is the key to

Citing the World Economic Forum report, she said the world's population was projected to surpass 9 billion by 2050 and there would be a huge strain on declining global arable land, forests and water. She said rise in sea level would heavily reduce arable land in many countries and Bangladesh would be its victim again without contributing to sea level rise at all. "Global food demand in 2050 will increase by at least 60 percent over the 2006 levels and food prices are likely to increase by at least 84 percent." The PM mentioned the success story of Bangladesh regarding its response to such adverse developments. "First of all, let me tell you that the natural resilience of Bangladeshi people to any crisis did not allow the build-up of a food crisis in a year of climatic vagaries and reduced food production in the country." She said the resolve of Bangladeshis to tighten the belt,

Pakistan will have to pay for it

Says New Delhi after militant attack on Indian army camp in Kashmir

REUTERS, New Delhi

India has warned Pakistan that it would pay for a deadly militant attack on an Indian army camp in the northern state of Jammu and Kashmir, the latest violence in the disputed region to stoke tension between the nuclear-armed rivals. Pakistan responded by saying it was "fully committed and capable of defending itself against any act of aggression" and India had unfairly blamed it for the attack "without a shred of evidence". Saturday's attack on the camp near Jammu, in the Indian-controlled part of the Muslim-majority Himalayan region, was the worst in months with six soldiers and the father of a soldier killed. At least three militants were killed, according to Indian officials. Indian Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman told reporters the army had evidence the attack originated from Pakistan. "Intelligence inputs indicate that these terrorists were being controlled

by their handlers from across the border," the minister said late on Monday. "Pakistan is expanding the arc of terror ... resorting to ceasefire violations to assist infiltration," Sitharaman said. "Pakistan will pay for this misadventure." Pakistan rejected India's latest accusation. It denies giving material aid to Muslim separatist fighters in Kashmir. "We have repeatedly seen India arrogating to itself the role of judge, jury and executioner," the Pakistani foreign ministry said in a statement. Since their independence 71 years ago, India and Pakistan have fought three wars, two over the Kashmir region, which they both claim in full but rule in part. **SURGICAL STRIKES** India has long accused Pakistan of training and arming militants and helping them infiltrate across the heavily militarized Line of Control (LoC) that separates the two sides in the region.

How convicts hold party posts, pick candidates?

Asks India's apex court

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

India's apex court has said convicted people becoming office-bearers of a political party and selecting candidates for elections goes against the spirit of one of its judgments to ensure the "purity" of elections. "How can a convicted person be an office-bearer of a political party and select candidates to contest elections? This goes against our judgements that corruption in politics is to be ostracised for the purity of elections," a Supreme Court bench comprising Chief Justice Dipak Misra, Justice AM Khanwilkar and Justice DY Chandrachud said on Monday. The bench was hearing a public interest litigation petition seeking to restrain convicts from forming and holding posts in political parties for

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Tiger census begins today

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bagerhat

A survey in the Sundarbans begins today to know the number of tigers there. The survey will start from Nilkamal area at Hiron Point, said Amir Hossain Chowdhury, forest conservator of Khulna, adding that 60 forest officials would take part in the survey work. Some 478 cameras will be installed to take images of tigers at 239 points in the Sundarbans. The tiger census will continue for 75 days. Tiger population would be counted based on the pugmarks of tigers and their images, the forest official said. The tiger population is being counted by dividing the Sundarbans into three areas -- Khulna, Bagerhat and Sathkira. The tiger census in Sathkira was held last year. This time, the count would be held together in Khulna and Bagerhat areas, Amir said.

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Where is love?

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beings, motherland and mother earth? According to Rohingya survivors, Myanmar soldiers stabbed babies, gang-raped girls, burned entire families to death, and executed unarmed men. Human rights groups have alleged that the Myanmar troops had one goal: to erase entire Rohingya communities. Where is the love? You probably remember the image of Omran Daqneesh, a five-year-old Syrian boy, sitting alone in an ambulance chair, covered in dust and blood. His stare is blank. He became the face of Syria's children, whom the world can't seem to save. Where is the love? You may also recall Rajon, a Bangladesh teenager, tied to a pole and being beaten by a group of men who accused him of stealing a rickshaw van. One of the attackers filmed the whole episode. The video, which not shockingly went viral, showed Rajon pleading for his life. He died of brain haemorrhage and around 64 injury marks were found on his body. Where is the love? This Valentine's Day -- swimming in an ocean of love and flowers -- perhaps we should ponder: is there a serious dearth of love in this world? Does the world need a hug? Karim Waheed is the Editor of SHOUT.



WFP Executive Director David Beasley calls on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her hotel suite in Rome on Monday.

David said the WFP thought that the international community would take steps against the atrocities that took place against the Rohingyas in Myanmar's Rakhine State. During the meeting, Hasina focused on her five-point proposal she had placed in the last UN General Assembly in New York for solving the Rohingya crisis permanently. She said a bilateral agreement has been signed. She requested the international community to continue putting pressure on Myanmar for successful implementation of the agreement. The WFP is implementing 13 projects in Bangladesh worth about \$343 million for the 2017-2020 period. Later, the honorary consuls of Bangladesh in Rome called on the PM at her hotel suite. Hasina urged them to work sincerely to protect the interests of the Bangladeshis living in Italy. **INVEST IN RURAL ECONOMIES: PM** Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday called upon the development partners to invest in sustainable rural economies to ensure resilience to agricultural crisis as the inclusive and sustainable rural transformation hold the key to eliminate poverty and hunger. "The development partners have to be a little more generous in order to eliminate poverty and hunger. The world appears to me to be ready now for it. I would like to urge you for

reaching the goals of poverty elimination, hunger elimination and leaving no one behind." She said Bangladesh was poised to achieve the SDG goals well ahead of 2030 and it estimated that poverty would be eradicated altogether by 2024. But the country faces other formidable challenges as it is likely to lose 40 percent of its productive land by 2080 if sea levels rise 65 centimetres only, she pointed out. "Changes in crop production due to the impact of climate change will increase the number of people living in poverty. Therefore, significant resources must be tapped in order to ensure better adapted and resilient agricultural practices." About Bangladesh's remarkable achievements, Hasina said the country has been very lucky with stable governance for almost a decade. "We formulated our strategy of socio-economic growth very carefully over a period of about four years. And then we tried to implement it in the last nine years." Fortunately, she said, the development partners came forward with eager and generous hands and jointly made the progress. She said IFAD's model of mutual help and partnership was very different from that of other UN agencies and organisations. "We sincerely believe that this ideal model will work in the promising future that is before mankind now."

encounter difficulties with confidence and seek alternative ways of meeting the crisis enabled the country to overcome and succeed. "Bangladesh had about a decade of self-sufficiency in food and then this year there was an unexpected shortfall due to untimely and recurrent flooding. Some adjustment in import policy immediately made food readily available to the consumers." She mentioned that Bangladesh increased its food production from 11 million tonnes in 1971 to 39 million tonnes in 2017, although one third of the arable land was lost in the meantime. "From 2008 it has been an increase of 9 million tonnes. This was possible as we reached agri-inputs to the farmers with heavily subsidised prices, and soft and collateral-free loans were made available to the landless farmers." Hasina said Bangladesh used all options that ICT could offer to overcome the crisis. At present, ICT is helping the country to accelerate the efficiency and precision of research, particularly on issues related to climate change, she added. Noting that Bangladesh is the fourth largest producer of sweet water fish in the world, she said the total fish production reached up to 41.34 lakh tonnes in 2016-17 due to fisheries-friendly policies. "This has contributed to self-sufficiency in fish production."

Khaleda not shown

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On Tuesday, several media outlets ran reports claiming that Khaleda had been shown arrested in several cases. "There are production warrants against Khaleda Zia in the Barapukuria Coal Mine graft case and the Gatco corruption case. But she is on bail in both the cases. There is no need to show her arrested in them, if she appears before the court regularly," Kamal said. If the court considered summoning her, the matter would not be linked to the government, he said. The next hearings in Barapukuria coal mine case would be held on February 18 and the Gatco case on March 4, the home boss said, adding whether Khaleda would have to appear before the court in connection with the cases would depend on the court and the jail authorities. Responding to a query, Kamal said Khaleda was given all the facilities in prison as per the jail code, taking into consideration her social status as the chairperson of a major political party like the BNP and also as a former prime minister. "She has been kept at the old Dhaka central jail because of her health conditions as the Kashimpur jail is far away from Dhaka. There is also no female ward in the central jail in Keraniganj," he said. Yesterday noon, four lawyers, on behalf of Khaleda, submitted three Vokalatanamas to the authorities of the old Dhaka central jail on Nazimuddin Road. A top official from the prisons directorate confirmed the matter, saying that they would need Khaleda's signature on the papers. "Once she signed the Vokalatanamas, we will send them back to the lawyers," the official said. On February 8, a Dhaka court sentenced Khaleda to five year imprisonment and five others, including her elder son Tarique Rahman, to 10-year imprisonment each in the Zia

Orphanage Trust Corruption case. **MP DEMANDS TOUGHER PUNISHMENT** The entire jail was given to BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and she was kept in a comfortable environment there, Awami League lawmaker Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim told parliament yesterday. Speaking on the thanksgiving motion on the president's speech, Selim, also AL presidium member, said Khaleda should be kept in a "condemned cell" of the jail as she embezzled money from the orphanage fund. Pointing to BNP's allegation that Khaleda was not given division and other due facilities in jail, Selim asked whether Khaleda be kept in a five star hotel like Sonargaon. Referring to the August 21 grenade attack on an AL rally, Selim said Khaleda should be tried in the case as accused number 1. He also demanded that the government file a case against the BNP chief on charges of crimes against humanity as she "killed people with petrol bombs" during the anti-government movement in early 2015. Rejecting any possibility of holding dialogue with the BNP, Selim said there cannot be any discussion with those who killed people in the name of anti-government movement. The ruling party MP also called upon the UK government to hand over BNP senior vice-chairman (presently acting chairman of BNP) "for the attack on the Bangladesh High Commission in London." He also demanded taking action against Tarique in this regard. Selim raised the question to the UK government of how criminals had entered Bangladesh High Commission. "What actions have you taken [after the attack on the Bangladesh High Commission]? We would take immediate action if any such incident had taken place in your high commission here," Selim said.