



Paramedics tend to the injuries of a Syrian child who was wounded during reported regime bombardment, at a make-shift clinic in the rebel-held town of Douma, in the besieged Eastern Ghouta region on the outskirts of the capital Damascus, yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Syria ceasefire

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start 72 hours after the adoption of the draft was scrapped, replaced by "without delay," and the term "immediate" was also dropped in reference to the aid deliveries and evacuations.

Diplomats said they were confident that this would not open the door to postponing the ceasefire, as council members had made clear in negotiations that the truce must quickly come into force.

Guterres is to report to the council in 15 days on the ceasefire, diplomats said.

In another concession to Russia, the resolution said the ceasefire will not apply to operations against the Islamic State group or al-Qaeda, along with "individuals, groups, undertakings and entities" associated with the terror groups.

That would allow the Syrian government offensive to continue against al-Qaeda-linked jihadists in Idlib, the last province in Syria outside the control of Damascus.

The text demands the lifting of all sieges including in Eastern Ghouta, Yarmouk, Foua and Kefraya and order all sides to "cease depriving civilians of food and medicine indispensable to their survival."

Female Nobel trio

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Initiative, a platform of six female peace laureates established in 2006.

They will seek to gain a better understanding of the assistance and protection being provided by the Bangladeshi government and local communities, including the challenges they face.

The trio will also see the role of local and international organisations providing support to the Rohingya women in the camps and elsewhere.

The Nobel Women's Initiative, in partnership with local Bangladeshi women's organisation, Naripokkho, is hosting the delegation to Bangladesh to witness and highlight the situation of refugees and the violence against Rohingya women.

The laureates will spend time in Dhaka and in refugee camps near Cox's Bazar meeting with female Rohingya refugees, Bangladesh government officials, human rights organisations and Canadian and other diplomats.

The delegation builds on more than a decade of work of the Nobel Women's Initiative in the region and with women's rights organisations in Burma.

In an email to The Associated Press yesterday, Karman said that she and her colleagues were standing "in solidarity with displaced Rohingya women and calling for Rohingya women's voices to be heard."

She said Rohingya women are twice victimised -- for being Rohingya and for being women -- and "are affected by the ethnic cleansing and are also subject to high levels of sexual and gender-based violence."

"Rohingya women's unique needs are largely unmet in refugee camps in Bangladesh," she said. "Less than 20 percent of displaced Rohingya women who have survived sexual violence have access to post-rape care."

Human Rights Watch has said in a report that Myanmar security forces raped and sexually assaulted women and girls before and during major attacks on villages.

Karman said that "accountability and justice" for crimes against the Rohingya people must be a priority for the international community.

"The refugee problem stems from the crimes against humanity being committed by the Myanmar military and government against the Rohingya," she said in the email.

The laureates will meet Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and other officials and volunteers during their trip.

[From UNB, AP]

US MASS SHOOTING

Florida to station police officer at every school

APP, Miami

A police officer will be stationed at every public school in Florida, the state's governor announced Friday as part of a plan to improve security following last week's deadly high school shooting.

President Donald Trump repeated his call, meanwhile, for arming some of America's teachers and claimed the controversial proposal was increasingly drawing support.

The push to make schools safer came as the local sheriff's office released details of nearly two dozen visits to the residences of Nikolas Cruz, the 19-year-old behind the assault at Marjory Douglas Stoneman High School in Parkland, Florida.

Speaking at a news conference in the state capital Tallahassee, Republican Governor Rick Scott unveiled a \$450 million security plan in response to the Valentine's Day rampage.

"There is nothing more important than the safety of our children," Scott said. "We must take care of our kids."

"I am proposing at least one law enforcement officer for every 1,000 students," Scott said of putting police in public schools.

Asked about Trump's proposal that teachers carry concealed weapons, Scott replied: "My focus is on providing more law enforcement officers, not on arming the teachers."

Scott proposed a ban on "bump stocks" -- an accessory which turns a semi-automatic weapon into an automatic one -- and making it easier for courts "to prohibit a violent or mentally ill person from purchasing or possessing a firearm."

Scott also said the age for gun buyers in the state would be raised from 18 to 21 -- a move opposed by the powerful National Rifle Association (NRA) gun lobby.

The governor stopped short, however, of endorsing a ban on assault weapons -- a demand of many of the teenagers who survived the shooting at Stoneman Douglas that left 14 of their classmates and three staff dead.

"I know there are some who are advocating a mass takeaway of Second Amendment rights for all Americans," Scott said -- referring to America's constitutional right to bear arms. "That is not the answer."

"Keeping guns away from danger-

ous people and people with mental issues is what we need to do," he said.

Trump also does not support a ban on semi-automatic weapons and in a speech to a conservative gathering near Washington, he returned again to his idea of arming teachers.

'SHOT THE HELL OUT OF HIM'

Speaking to a receptive crowd of thousands of fellow Republicans at the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC), Trump said "well-trained" teachers could help stop school shootings.

"Maybe 10 percent or 20 percent of the population of teachers," he said. "Not all of them, but you would have a lot."

"And the beauty is it's concealed," Trump said.

Referring to Cruz, the Stoneman Douglas assailant, Trump said "a teacher would have shot the hell out of him before he knew what happened."

Trump claimed his proposal to arm teachers, which has been strongly criticized by the nation's largest teachers' unions, was drawing support.

"Since I started this two days ago, a lot of people that were totally opposed to it are now agreeing," he said. "They don't want their students to be killed or to be hurt."

Trump proposed measures preventing the mentally ill from obtaining weapons and to "really strengthen up background checks" for gun buyers.

"And I really believe that Congress is going to get it through this time," he said.

Lawmakers in Washington have been deadlocked on the gun debate, accomplishing nothing despite a spate of mass shootings and polls showing Americans support stricter gun laws by a two-to-one margin.

'COWARD'

Trump also criticized by name the sheriff's deputy who allegedly failed to take action against Cruz during the shooting spree, saying he had been a "coward."

Scot Peterson has resigned after being suspended without pay.

Three other Broward County Sheriff's deputies also stayed outside the school and did not enter as the crisis unfolded, US media reported.

The Wall Street Journal obtained a transcript of a call from a tipster to the FBI more than one month before the massacre, in which she expressed concern Cruz would "get into a school and just shoot the place up."

No going back

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written in Bangla whereas the higher courts still use English.

"We hope the verdicts in higher courts will be written in Bangla in future. As this has been a matter of long practise, it is not possible to change it overnight," she told the programme.

She said due to the delivery of verdicts in English, people were facing serious problems and they had to depend on their lawyers to understand those.

Hasina sharply criticised the recent trend of speaking Bangla in an English accent. "I don't know why some people started using this type of pronunciation. This is very unfortunate."

The premier, however, said she was not against learning other languages. She put emphasis on learning a second language to get jobs at home and abroad and earn money online.

"But we have to practise our language for which we had shed our blood. This is our mother tongue. We have to practice this language. We have to learn this from our families."

The AL president called upon the party leaders and workers to uphold the ideology with which the country

was liberated and devote themselves to building Bangladesh as a hunger- and poverty-free Sonar Bangla as dreamt by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Highlighting the history of the Language Movement, Hasina said the pride of Amar Ekushey now resounds in the hearts of the people of 193 countries.

She paid tributes to Bangabandhu and recalled his role in establishing Bangla as the country's state language.

She also remembered the AL's contributions to all movements -- from the Language Movement to the Liberation War.

AL presidium members Matia Chowdhury, Sheikh Fazlur Karim Selim, Abdur Razzaque and Abdul Matin Khasru, Prof Emeritus Rafiqul Islam and former Bangla Academy director general Syed Anwar Hossain took part in the discussion, conducted by AL Publicity and Publication Secretary Hasan Mahmud.

Earlier, a one-minute silence was observed as a mark of respect to the memory of Language Movement martyrs who laid down their lives on February 21 in 1952 for establishing Bangla as the state language.

Teen 'raped' in Habiganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

A teenage girl was allegedly gang-raped and her mother was "tied up" for trying to save her in Chunarughat of Habiganj early Saturday.

The alleged victim and her mother are under treatment in Habiganj Sadar Hospital.

The victim's mother told The Daily Star over the phone that one Mizan Mia and Fazul Haque, residents of Manikvandar village of the same upazila, had been stalking her daughter for a long time.

"They entered my house while my husband was away and raped my daughter," she said, adding, "They also tied me up as I was trying to save her."

"Later, locals rescued us and admitted us to Habiganj Sadar Hospital," she said.

Debashish Ray, a doctor at the hospital, said the victims were given primary treatment. "We found injury marks on the girl and her mother. After tests, we will be able to confirm about the rape."

Officer-in-Charge Md Azimuzzaman of Chunarughat Police Station said the alleged rapists were relatives of the "victims." They have a feud over properties in the area. Mizan and Fazul had beaten up the girl and her mother "but it was not a rape incident," he claimed.

Ex-Trump aide paid Europeans to lobby for pro-Russia Ukraine

APP, Washington

Donald Trump's ex-campaign chief Paul Manafort secretly paid a group of former senior European politicians more than two million euros (\$2.5 million) to lobby for Ukraine's then-leader backed by Russia, according to an indictment filed Friday.

The charges, lodged in a Washington federal court by Special Counsel Robert Mueller, said Manafort retained the so-called Hagsburg Group of one-time politicians to "take positions favorable to Ukraine, including by lobbying the United States."

The group, which operated from 2012-2013, was managed by an unnamed "former European chancellor," who along with other members of the group lobbied US legislators and White House officials, the indictment alleged.

They were to "appear to be providing their independent assessments of government of Ukraine actions, when in fact they were paid lobbyists for Ukraine," according to the indictment.

Manafort has been accused by the team investigating Russian meddling in the 2016 US presidential elections and possible collusion with the Trump campaign of money laundering, tax fraud and banking fraud connected to work he did for Viktor Yanukovich from 2006-2014.

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