



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

FROM PAGE 18
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

FROM PAGE 18
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 organizations 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

AFP, 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."

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

AFP, 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 Hapsburg Group of onetime 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.

Odisha files

FROM PAGE 2

"GI application for the #OdisharaRasagola filed with the GI Registry, Chennai by Odisha Small Industrial Corporation," Odisha's Medium Small and Micro Enterprises department tweeted today.

Ratnakar Rout, managing director of Odisha Small Industries Corporation (OSIC) filed the application with the GI Registry in Chennai on Friday.

The Odisha version of rosogolla was mentioned in a 16th century Odia epic, Dandi Ramayana, the state government said in its claim to the GI Registry.

Minister defends

FROM PAGE 2

"India's service chiefs have a long and healthy tradition of keeping away from political subjects in their public comments. But at a seminar in Delhi this week, General Rawat strayed into political commentary when he talked about issues of religious identity, demographics and India's relations with its neighbours," it said.

"There is a risk of hostile rejoinders from India's regional rivals. It also risks reactions from home, which have already come in the form of a sharp response from the All India United Democratic Front," commented the newspaper.

According to The Hindu, this is not the first time that Gen Rawat's comments have evoked a response from political quarters. Last month, the Jammu and Kashmir education minister reacted when Gen Rawat criticised government schools in the state for mounting two maps, "one of India and the other of J&K".

"Even if such remarks were made in good faith, the point is that they can result in needless controversies that do nothing to promote the Army's strong and fully deserving image of an institution that is above politics," the daily said.

Attacks kill 23

FROM PAGE 18

well-dressed with a necktie on, was identified at a checkpoint. He blew up his explosives, killing three and wounding five others," he said, updating an earlier toll.

A security source who requested not to be named said the explosion happened near a compound belonging to the National Directorate of Security (NDS), the Afghan intelligence agency. The NDS compound is located near the NATO headquarters and the US embassy.

"I was driving nearby when I heard a big explosion, the windows of my car were smashed. I saw several wounded people on the street near me," a witness told Tolonews TV adding that security forces had since swarmed the area, closing off the main road leading to the attack site.

The Islamic State group, which is trying to make inroads in Afghanistan, claimed the responsibility for the Kabul attack.

In December, a suicide attacker on foot blew himself up near the same compound, killing at least six civilians.

Kabul has recently seen an increase in attacks by both Taliban and the IS group.

Since mid-January, militants have stormed a luxury hotel, bombed a crowded street and raided a military compound in the capital, killing more than 130 people as the city remains on high alert fearing further violence.

CAR BOMBINGS

In two other attacks yesterday in volatile southern Helmand province, suicide car bombs killed at least two soldiers and wounded more than a dozen others, officials said.

In the first incident, militants used a Humvee to attack an army base in Nad Ali district but the vehicle was destroyed when soldiers identified it and hit it with a rocket propelled grenade, provincial spokesman Omar Zawak told AFP.

"Unfortunately, two soldiers were killed in the attack and seven wounded," he said.

The Nad Ali attack was followed by a second suicide car bombing in the provincial capital Lashkar Gah that wounded seven people.

The attack was against an NDS

compound and near a police headquarters in the city, Helmand police spokesman Salaam Afghan told AFP.

The Taliban claimed both attacks in Helmand.

Militants including the Taliban and the Islamic State group have stepped up their attacks on Afghan troops and police in recent months, sapping morale already hit by desertions and corruption.

Afghan soldiers have taken what the UN describes as "shocking" casualties since international forces ended their combat role at the end of 2014, though troop casualty figures are no longer released.

Teen's burnt

FROM PAGE 18

bathroom of the madrasa while the azaan for Fazr prayers was being rendered and the door was found locked from the inside.

The madrasa then informed police of the matter, he said.

Officer-in-Charge Abdul Latif Mia of Thakurgaon Police Station said, "We went to the spot around 9:00am and recovered a burnt body from a bathroom and sent it to Thakurgaon Sadar Hospital morgue."

Police have arrested 10 people including Yasin in this connection.

The OC said the door of the bathroom was open when they reached the madrasa.

After visiting the spot Superintendent of Police Farhad Ahmed told this correspondent, "It has been ascertained primarily that the student was murdered elsewhere and then burnt in the bathroom to make it look like a suicide."

"Investigation is underway and we will have more information soon," the SP said.

Abu Bakkar's classmate Monirul Islam said Abu returned from a visit home Friday evening and seemed cheerful.

"We had dinner together and went to sleep. He was not in bed when I woke up for Fazr prayers," Islam said.

Victim's father Sirajul Islam said, "Abu Bakkar had come home Friday morning and returned to the madrasa the same evening after taking Tk 200 from him. On Saturday morning, I came to know that he was found dead in a bathroom."

Still waiting for justice

FROM PAGE 18

Appellate Division of the Supreme Court.

Mehreen Ferdousi, wife of slain BDR official Col Mujibul Haque, said, "We are still waiting for justice...we want prompt execution of the verdict."

She demanded February 25 be declared "Sheheed Sena Dibosh".

Maj Yusuf Iqbal, brother of Maj Idris Iqbal who was killed during the February 25-26, 2009 munity, also made the same demand.

Ashraful Alam Hannan, son of slain central subedar major Nurul Islam, said, "We want completion of all legal procedures as soon as possible and the execution of the judgment promptly."

Nurul Islam was the only BDR man killed in the carnage for his attempt to tame the rebels.

On November 27 last year, the HC confirmed death penalty for 139 out of the 152 accused who were handed capital punishment by a lower court for their involvement in the killings during the mutiny.

Terming the offenders "most brutal" and "cold-blooded" murderers, a three-member special bench of the HC pronounced the verdict in the biggest-ever criminal case in the country's history in terms of numbers of accused and convicts.

The mutiny had left the nation benumbed, as people stood aghast at the extent of the barbarity perpetrated at the Pilkhana headquarters of the paramilitary force, later renamed Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB).

The massacre left 74 people, including 57 army officers, dead.

The mutineers revolted on February 25, 2009, which was fixed for the yearly Darbar (assembly) of the force

during the BDR Week-2009.

The massacre started when the former BDR director general Maj Gen Shakil Ahmed was addressing the Darbar around 9:00am. Among the gathering of officers and lower-tier personnel, a group of jawans created a commotion pressing for some demands, including pay and benefits.

As the jawans kept on arguing, another group suddenly opened fire on the dais. The former DG was believed to been killed first.

The mutineers took many officers hostage and seized control of the headquarters within a few minutes, spraying bullets indiscriminately in the HQ compound. Thick plumes of smoke were billowing out of the headquarters.

On November 5, 2013, a Dhaka court awarded death sentence to 150 BDR members and two civilians, and life imprisonment to 160 others in the case.

At least 78 jawans, accused both in the carnage and mutiny cases, died under mysterious circumstances after the mutiny. Many of them reportedly died of heart attack in police custody while a few others committed suicide.

Marking the day, a doa and milad mahfil would be held at Bir Uttam Fazlur Rahman Khandakar Auditorium of the BGB headquarters at Pilkhana after asar prayers today, seeking salvation of the departed souls, said a BGB press release.

Besides, representatives of the president, prime minister, home minister, chiefs of the three forces and the BGB director general will place wreaths at the memorial of the deceased in the city's Banani.

Stolen Degas painting

FROM PAGE 18

bus parked at a rest area in Seine-et-Marne, outside Paris, the French Ministry of Culture said in a press release Friday.

"In a suitcase, they discovered a work carrying the signature 'Degas' for which no passenger came forward as the owner," the ministry said. Officials did not indicate whether they have any leads on who might have put the painting on the bus.

So ends the unusual road trip for Degas' only work inspired by an opera that doesn't feature dancers. It depicts a scene from Mozart's opera "Don Giovanni."

The Musée d'Orsay in Paris, which owns the work, confirmed the painting's authenticity following an initial examination, officials said. The art was lifted while it was on loan in 2009 to the Musée Cantini in Marseille.

The statement gave no value for the pastel painting, though some reports indicated a sum of about \$1 million.

The Musée d'Orsay tweeted that it

was delighted by the discovery -- no doubt very happy to have the unframed canvas back in the fold of its extensive Degas collection.

Culture Minister Françoise Nyssen hailed the "rediscovery of a precious work belonging to the national collections, the disappearance of which represented a heavy loss for French impressionist heritage."

The painting will be featured in the "Degas at the Opera" exhibit that's planned for September 2019 at Musée D'Orsay.

Thieves have long targeted art. Another work by Degas, who was known for his paintings and sculpture during the Impressionist movement, was pilfered in 2008.

Four masterpieces by Paul Cezanne, Degas, Vincent Van Gogh and Claude Monet were stolen by masked raiders at the Buehrle Foundation museum in Switzerland. All were recovered, including Degas' "Count Lepic and his Daughters," which was retrieved with slight damage in 2012.