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Refer Rohingya genocide to ICC

3 Nobel Peace laureates urge UN, Bangladesh, other state parties; ask Suu Kyi to take action or quit

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The three female Nobel Peace laureates have urged Bangladesh, the UN and other state parties to refer Myanmar military and other perpetrators to the International Criminal Court for the "genocide" against the Rohingyas.

"Alternatively, the ICC prosecutor should open an independent investigation into the crimes against humanity and genocide perpetrated in Rakhine state," they said in a statement following their three-day visit to the refugee camps in Cox's Bazar.

"If today we turn a blind eye to the genocide against the Rohingya people, be sure that in the future there will be many similar acts of genocide against the Muslims," Nobel Peace Prize winner from Iran Shirin Ebadi said at a press conference in the city's Pan Pacific Sonargaon hotel yesterday.

Tawakkol Karman of Yemen, Mairead Maguire of Northern Ireland and Shirin Ebadi -- who all played revolutionary roles in establishing human rights in their native countries and beyond -- visited the Rohingya camps and other refugees living in the no-man's land near Bandarban's

Ghundhum to assess the crisis on the ground.

During the visit organised by the Nobel Women's Initiative, a platform of six Nobel Peace laureates, and Bangladesh's women rights organisation Naripokkho, the trio talked to over 100 Rohingya women and children.

"All the women we met were raped. Most of the children that we met fled to Bangladesh without families. Their fathers and mothers were killed and their villages burnt," Tawakkol Karman said at the press conference.

The Myanmar soldiers raped women in front of their children and husbands, while babies were thrown to the fire, she said, adding that the violent acts by the Myanmar army were "nothing but genocide".

"How can we remain silent in front of all these crimes? We are in the 21st century. We should stop all these crimes...killings, hatred, racism," Tawakkol Karman told journalists.

Nearly 700,000 Rohingyas have fled atrocities in Myanmar and entered

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Nobel Laureates Shirin Ebadi of Iran, left, Mairead Maguire of Northern Ireland, second from left, and Tawakkol Karman of Yemen, right, meet Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the Gono Bhaban yesterday.

PHOTO: BSS



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World must stand against atrocities on Rohingyas

Nobel laureates tell PM

UNB, Dhaka

Describing the atrocities carried out on Rohingyas in Rakhine as genocide, visiting three female Nobel Peace laureates yesterday said the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

Nobel laureates Tawakkol Karman of Yemen, Shirin Ebadi of Iran and Mairead Maguire of Northern Ireland said the Myanmar government must be taken to task for committing genocide in Rakhine and the world must take a stance against such atrocities.

They made the comments when they met Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the Gono Bhaban.

PM's Press Secretary Ihsanul Karim briefed reporters after the meeting.

The Nobel laureates said it was a systematic policy of ethnic cleansing by the Myanmar government.

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MINE EXPLOSION

4 Bangladeshi peacekeepers killed in Mali

STAR REPORT

Four Bangladeshi UN peacekeepers were killed and four others injured in a mine explosion near Douentza in the Mopti region of Mali, said Inter Service Public Relations.

The troops were driving on a road linking the towns of Boni and Douentza in the region where six Malian soldiers were killed in a similar incident a day earlier, the West African nation's UN mission said.

The dead are Warrant Officer Abul Kalam; Lance Corporal Aktar; Sainik Rayhan and Sainik (cook) Jamal.

The injured are Corporal Raseel; Sainik Akram; Sainik Newton and Sanik Rashed.

Rezaul Karim, assistant director of ISPR, in an SMS said the injured are currently undergoing treatment.

According to the ISPR, other Bangladeshi peacekeepers in Mali are safe.

Bangladesh is the second largest troop contributor to the mission in Mali, according to the UN Peacekeeping website.

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Toxic politics aided 'jihadist resurgence'

Int'l Crisis Group on Bangladesh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

International Crisis Group has warned that Bangladesh's contentious national politics have played a role in "enabling the jihadist resurgence".

"Political polarisation has contributed to the growth of militancy in less direct ways, too," said the group in a report yesterday.

There was a growing risk that Islamist militants would exploit the fallout created by political polarisation with the general elections approaching, it added.

The study titled "Countering Jihadist Militancy in Bangladesh" said the lull in

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'Police seize yaba, become dealers'

Three probe bodies formed as a complaint says detectives in Cox's Bazar seized 7.30 lakh pills in Sept last year, sold most of them for Tk 8cr

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detectives in Cox's Bazar sold off 7.22 lakh yaba pills they had seized for Tk 8 crore, according to a complaint filed by a sub-inspector.

Two police probe bodies are investigating the matter and the police headquarters recently gave the nod for a third enquiry.

However, officials concerned are very tight lipped about the matter.

SI Bashir Uddin of Feni Model Police Station filed the complaint with the IGP's complaint cell and Cox's Bazar Police Superintendent on December 27 last year.

In his complaint, Bashir said a team of the Detective Branch of Cox's Bazar seized 7.30 lakh yaba pills at Teknaf on September 27. But the team showed seizure of only



8,000 pieces in a case filed with Teknaf Police Station the next day.

Bashir was a member of Cox's Bazar DB then.

The rest 7.22 lakh pills were sold off in phases in Ukhia which made Tk 8 crore,

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25 defaulters owe banks Tk 9,696cr

JS body asks BB, finance ministry to find ways to realise the sum

RASHIDUL HASAN

The amount of defaulted loans of top 25 defaulters stood at Tk 9,696 crore as of September last year, according to a Bangladesh Bank list.

The central bank submitted the list at a meeting of the parliamentary standing committee on finance ministry at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban yesterday.

The committee had asked the BB to submit a report detailing the loan defaulters' family identities and how much money each of them took and from which bank.

The amount of loan defaults of Mohammad Ilias Brothers is Tk 889.49 crore, Quantum Power Systems Ltd Tk 558.9 crore, Jashim Vegetable Oil Ltd Tk 547.95 crore, Max Spinning Mills Tk 525.60 crore, Benetex Industries Tk 516.94 crore, Dhaka Trade Housing Tk 485.29 crore, Anwar Spinning Mills Tk 474.37 crore, Siddique Traders Tk 428.57 crore, Yasir Enterprise Tk 414.80 crore, Alfa Composite Towels Ltd Tk 401.73 crore, Legend Holdings Tk 347.85 crore, Hallmark Fashion Ltd Tk 339.34 crore, Mac International Tk 338.74 crore, Monno Fabrics Tk 338.37 crore, Fair Trade Fabrics Tk 322.4 crore, Saharis Composite

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PM thanks JP for role in JS

Says the party helps democratic practices take institutional shape

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday thanked Leader of the Opposition Raushan Ershad and opposition Jatiya Party leaders for "giving democratic practices an institutional shape".

Present opposition party leaders, including the leader of the opposition, have shown that democratic practices can be followed properly, the PM told parliament, adding that use of abusive language and throwing of files, chairs and microphones do not happen in this parliament like in the past.

She made the comments while giving her closing speech in the 19th session of the current parliament.

Her remarks came a day after Raushan at the House urged Hasina to relieve three JP lawmakers from cabinet posts to help it emerge as the "real opposition" party and thus help the JP survive with dignity.

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Crisscrossing utility lines under a dug up road in the capital's Moghbazar. Dhaka North City Corporation has been working for the last two months to install a large concrete pipe under the road to upgrade the sewer in the area. However, the officials came upon these utility connections while trying to connect the large pipe to the city's main sewer system. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

'ISIS-BANGLADESH' ON US BLACKLIST Consequences may be grave

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The US decision to blacklist seven Islamic State groups from around the world, including one linked to Bangladesh, is a blow to Dhaka's image and may leave an adverse impact on the country in the long run, diplomats and foreign affairs experts have said.

Bangladesh has never faced such a situation and there has not been any such branding or restriction on this country by any state or global body, they told The Daily Star yesterday.

For long, Bangladesh has been following a "zero tolerance policy" on terrorism, and is now an important global and regional counter-terrorism partner of the UN, the US and other countries, they added.

"This blacklisting will adversely affect Bangladesh nationals travelling to the US as it might lead to hassles for Bangladeshis seeking visas. Financial transactions by Bangladesh businessmen may also face difficulties because of unnecessary scrutiny and suspicion by the US authorities," said a senior Bangladeshi diplomat with expertise on US systems.

"Our people already face many difficulties while travelling to the US. The inclusion of Bangladesh in the terror list will increase their trouble," he said, adding, "Bangladeshis who have kept their black money secretly in US banks and in other financial institutions will have their accounts blocked."

On Tuesday, the US Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control said on its website it added two individuals, and seven groups from Bangladesh, Egypt, the Philippines, Somalia, Nigeria and Tunisia to its sanctions list.

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