

# N Korea slams South for 'meddling' in US talks

AFP, Seoul

North Korea yesterday warned the South to stop "meddling" in nuclear talks between Pyongyang and Washington, denying President Moon Jae-in's assertion that dialogue was under way between the two Koreas.

"The reality is the contrary," senior foreign ministry official Kwon Jong Gun said in a statement carried by the state news agency KCNA.

"The south Korean authorities would better mind their own internal business," he added, in a stinging rebuke to the North's neighbour days before US President Donald Trump arrives in Seoul amid a nuclear deadlock.

Negotiations between Pyongyang and Washington have been stalled since February when a second summit between Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un collapsed in Hanoi as the pair failed to agree on what the North would be willing to give up in exchange for sanctions relief.

The two sides have had minimal contact since -- aside from exchanges of letters between their leaders.

The dovish Moon said Wednesday that "behind-the-scenes talks" were going on between the US and the North with a view to preparing for a third summit.

"Also under way is dialogue between the South and the North through diverse channels," he added in a written interview with leading media.

But Kwon, the director-general of the North's Department of American Affairs, slammed the South on Thursday, denying that "various forms of exchanges and closed-door meetings" were under way between the Koreans.

Trump is due to fly to Seoul at the weekend for a summit with Moon Jae-in, and the US special representative for North Korea Stephen Biegun arrived yesterday to prepare the visit.

The North's statement reminded Washington that it did not have much time left until Kim's end-of-year deadline to adopt "a correct method of calculation" to revive dialogue, Kwon said.

Trump's visit to the South had fuelled media speculation over a possible trilateral summit with Kim and Moon, but Trump himself has said he will not be meeting Kim.



France's President Emmanuel Macron (2nd L) and his wife Brigitte Macron (C) are greeted by maiko (apprentice geishas) following their arrival in Kyoto yesterday, after their journey by Shinkansen bullet train from Tokyo.

PHOTO: AFP

# 'Short war' is an illusion

Says Iran, warns US of stronger reaction if its borders violated again; Washington tells Nato it wants no war

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Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif yesterday warned that US President Donald Trump was mistaken in thinking a war between their countries would not last long.

"Short war with Iran is an illusion," Zarif tweeted a day after Trump said he does not want a war with Iran but warned that if fighting did break out, it "wouldn't last very long".

The foreign minister also tweeted: "Whoever begins war will not be the one ending it."

On Wednesday, Trump hinted that any conflict would be waged with air strikes, saying there would be no US boots on the ground.

In an interview on Fox Business Network, Trump was asked if America was going to go to war with Iran.

"Well, I hope we don't but we're in a very strong position if something should happen. We're in a very strong position," Trump said.

"It wouldn't last very long. I can tell you that. And I'm not talking boots on

the ground."

His remarks came after Iranian President Hassan Rouhani tried to rein in the crisis between the archfoes, saying that Tehran "never seeks war" with Washington.

The United States has ratcheted up economic sanctions on Iran after Tehran shot down an unmanned

US drone in the Gulf region on June 20, following a series of attacks on tankers that Washington blamed on the Islamic republic.

Earlier yesterday, Iran warned the United States against violating its borders, with parliament speaker Ali Larijani threatening a stronger reaction, the Tasnim news agency said.

"The downing of their drone was a good experience for them to avoid any aggression against our borders," the semi-official agency quoted Larijani as saying late on Wednesday.

"Iran's reaction will be stronger if they repeat their mistake of violating our borders."

Iran said the unmanned US aircraft was in its air space, which Washington denied. Trump ordered retaliatory air strikes but called them off at the last minute, later saying too many people would have died.

Meanwhile, acting US Defense Secretary Mark Esper yesterday told Nato allies that Washington did not want to go to war with Iran but also could not tolerate any further incidents, according to allied diplomats present.

Speaking to Nato defence ministers in a closed-door session, Esper said the United States held Iran responsible for attacks on two oil tankers in the Gulf of Oman but did not want the situation to escalate.

The court threw out the case lodged by ex-general Prabowo Subianto, saying he did not prove he lost the April vote because of widespread cheating and voter fraud -- allegations that sparked deadly rioting in the capital of the world's third-biggest democracy.

"The plaintiff's case is legally groundless," said chief Justice Anwar Usman. "We reject (his) demand in its entirety."

The ruling paves the way for Widodo and vice-presidential running mate Ma'ruf Amin to be inaugurated later this year.

"Thank you to the Constitutional Court which has settled the election dispute openly and transparently," the 58-year-old Widodo said in a televised address.

"I'm calling on all Indonesians to come together to develop our nation."

The court, which questioned the quality of the evidence and credibility of witnesses, said voter-fraud claims were the responsibility of Indonesia's elections supervisory agency and beyond its jurisdiction.

Subianto claimed the vote was plagued by "systematic, structured and massive" electoral fraud that cost him victory.

His lawyers sought to overturn the official results that declared Widodo the winner with 55.5 percent of votes, against Subianto's 44.5 percent.

# Heatwave peaks in Europe

AFP, Paris

Europeans yesterday braced for the expected peak of a sweltering heatwave that has sent temperatures soaring above 40 degrees Celsius (104 Fahrenheit), with schools in France closing and wildfires in Spain spinning out of control.

Governments warned citizens to take extra precautions, with the high temperatures also causing a build-up of pollution, and emergency calls to hospitals increased.

Exceptional for arriving so early in summer, the heatwave was on Thursday and Friday likely send thermometers above 40C in France, Spain and Greece.

A forest fire in Torre del Espanol in Spain's northeastern Catalonia region raged out of control, devouring land despite the efforts of hundreds of firefighters who worked through the night.

In the Italian city of Milan, a 72-year-old homeless man was found dead at the main train station after falling ill due to the heatwave, the local authorities said.

Across Europe people frolicked in fountains to stay cool while zookeepers handed out cakes of ice packed with fish, mango or cherries to keep the animals cool.

French Health Minister Agnes Buzyn

said people had to be prepared for the peak of the heatwave and expressed irritation that some appeared not to be taking the advice on board.

Some four days into the heatwave, Buzyn said French authorities were seeing an increase in the number of calls to emergency services and that she was concerned there would be an influx of people going to hospital.

The average maximum temperature recorded Wednesday in France of 34.9 C was already a record for the month of June, said state weather forecaster Météo France. Even higher temperatures are expected today, where areas in the south could see peaks of 42 to 44 C.

Germany on Wednesday saw its June temperature record broken, with a 38.6 C reading in Coschen, near the Polish border, breaking a previous record dating back to 1947.

Scientists warn that global warming linked to human fossil fuel use could make such scorchers more frequent.

"Global temperatures are increasing due to climate change," said Len Shaffrey, professor of climate science at the University of Reading in Britain.

"The global rise in temperatures means the probability that an extreme heatwave will occur is also increasing."

PHOTO: AFP



DEMOCRATIC DEBATE

# Warren emerges unscathed

AFP, Miami

A lot could have gone wrong for Elizabeth Warren at Wednesday's Democratic presidential debate. It didn't.

Warren, a US senator from Massachusetts, arrived in Miami riding a wave of momentum among the race's more than 20 candidates. By luck of the draw, she was onstage a night before most of the other top-tier Democratic contenders, such as former Vice President Joe Biden and US Senator Bernie Sanders.

As the first night's top-polling candidate, she did not falter. Her progressive platform -- similar to Sanders' -- largely went unchallenged by the moderates standing alongside her.

Most important, her status in the race to take on Republican President Donald Trump in the November 2020 election placed her front and center for the Democratic voters watching at home, and she was given ample time at the outset to detail the populist, anti-corporate themes of her candidacy.

Warren benefited as well from the sheer chaos of the program. With 10 candidates onstage clamoring for attention and each given only a minute to respond, the evening often felt like a 10-car pileup or a round of speed dating.

Warren's moment in the sun likely will be short-lived. Biden and Sanders were to take the stage yesterday along with other top-tier White House hopefuls, including South Bend, Indiana, Mayor Pete Buttigieg and US Senator Kamala Harris of California.

PHOTO: AFP

# Uncontrollable trembling sparks Merkel health fears

German Chancellor Angela Merkel yesterday suffered another episode of uncontrolled trembling, a week after a similar incident that sparked questions about her health. The latest lapse came hours before Merkel was due to board a plane for the G20 summit in Osaka, Japan. The German leader began to tremble as she stood next to President Frank-Walter Steinmeier, who was giving a speech at a ceremony to formally appoint a new justice minister. The shaking went on for two minutes, according to a DPA photographer who was present at the event. Merkel folded her arms visibly in a bid to stop the trembling. She only finally brought it under control once she was able to take a few steps. She was offered a glass of water but turned it down. Her previous bout of shaking last Tuesday had been blamed on dehydration on a hot summer's day.

# Britain adopts 2050 net zero emissions target

Britain yesterday became the world's first major economy to adopt the tough new target of lowering fossil fuel emissions to a level of net zero by 2050. Energy and Clean Growth Minister Chris Skidmore signed an order paper enacting the legislation after it passed both houses of parliament without a vote earlier this week. Britain is already on course this year to make low-carbon sources such as wind and solar responsible for more than half of all its power generation for the first time since the 1800s. The deadline is more ambitious than Britain's previous policy of cutting emissions by 80 percent over the same period. The stringent new guidelines will require a fundamental change in how the UK economy functions that some have warned may carry prohibitive costs. Philip Hammond's finance ministry has reportedly issued a study showing that a shift to net zero from current targets could cost more than £1.0 trillion (\$1.3 trillion, 1.1 trillion euros) over 30 years.

# UK scrambles fighter jets after Air India 'bomb threat'

Britain yesterday scrambled fighter jets to escort an Air India passenger flight forced to land at London's Stansted Airport following a "bomb threat", according to security officials and the airline. The RAF (Royal Air Force) can confirm Quick Reaction Alert Typhoon aircraft were launched this morning... to intercept a civilian aircraft, Britain's defence ministry said in a statement. "The aircraft was safely escorted to Stansted Airport." The plane, en route from Mumbai to Newark in the United States, made a "precautionary landing" at the airport after a "bomb threat". Air India said in a tweet that was subsequently deleted. "The plane (is) currently at the airport," an Air India spokesperson added in a statement, noting all the 327 passengers were being cared for inside a terminal. SOURCE: AFP

# INDONESIA POLLS

## Court rejects bid to overturn Widodo's win

AFP, Jakarta

Indonesia's constitutional court yesterday rejected a bid to overturn President Joko Widodo's re-election victory and dismissed his defeated challenger's claims of widespread voter fraud as groundless.

The court threw out the case lodged by ex-general Prabowo Subianto, saying he did not prove he lost the April vote because of widespread cheating and voter fraud -- allegations that sparked deadly rioting in the capital of the world's third-biggest democracy.

"The plaintiff's case is legally groundless," said chief Justice Anwar Usman. "We reject (his) demand in its entirety."

The ruling paves the way for Widodo and vice-presidential running mate Ma'ruf Amin to be inaugurated later this year.

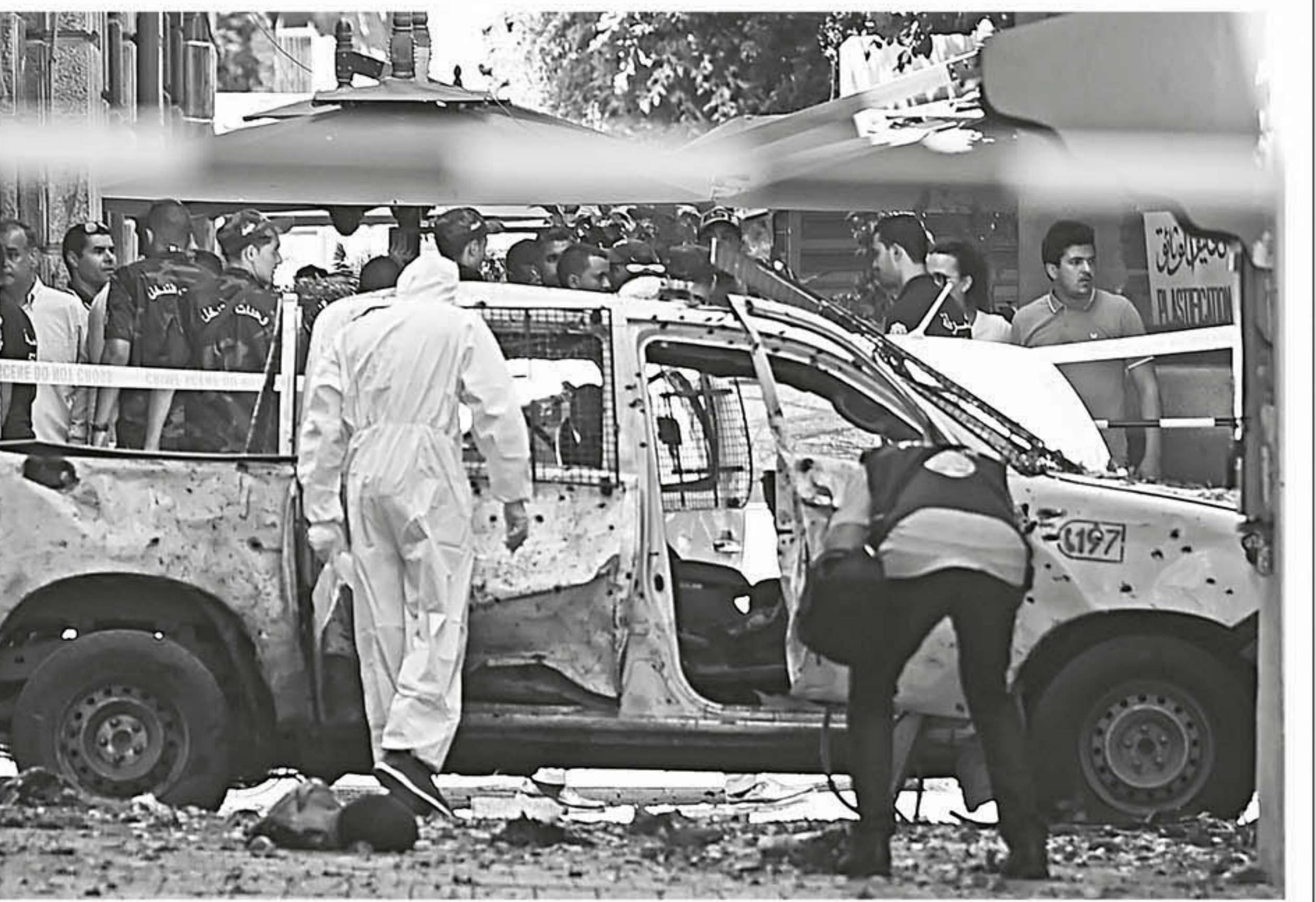
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Subianto claimed the vote was plagued by "systematic, structured and massive" electoral fraud that cost him victory.

His lawyers sought to overturn the official results that declared Widodo the winner with 55.5 percent of votes, against Subianto's 44.5 percent.



Body parts lie next to a shrapnel riddled vehicle as Tunisian forensic work at the site of attack in the Tunisian capital's main avenue Habib Bourguiba, yesterday. Two suicide bombers attacked police and the national guard in the Tunisian capital, killing a police officer and wounding at least eight people including several civilians, the interior ministry said.

PHOTO: AFP

# Atrocities 'shook me to my core'

UN investigator says Myanmar must give Rohingyas 'pathway to citizenship', urges Suu Kyi to finally react; army rejects ICC bid for full probe

AGENCIES

Myanmar must grant citizenship to stateless Rohingya with roots in the country, a senior UN investigator said on Wednesday, as she urged the country's leader Aung San Suu Kyi to "be the democrat she once told us she was".

Buddhist-majority Myanmar does not recognise the Muslim Rohingyas as citizens despite a long history in the country.

Hundreds of thousands fled to neighbouring Bangladesh following a 2017 crackdown by the military, which UN investigators say was executed with "genocidal intent".

"I have seen such brutality in the different parts of my career but the rape and forced eviction of the Rohingya shook me to my core," said Radhika Coomaraswamy, a member of the UN fact-finding mission that gathered



evidence on the violence.

Coomaraswamy said statelessness was at the root of the "horrific" Rohingya crisis, which was among the worst she had seen, second only to the Rwandan genocide.

She told how soldiers shot at fleeing villagers, gang raped women and burned down houses with children inside. Myanmar has rejected a report

by the United Nations investigators calling for top generals to be prosecuted for genocide, saying the international community is making "false allegations".

Coomaraswamy was speaking after addressing a global conference on statelessness in The Hague where the plight of the Rohingya is in the spotlight. The Rohingya are the world's largest

stateless population. Myanmar has said it will take back some Rohingya who can show they have a long history in the country. But many fled to Bangladesh with nothing, and many do not want to return without full citizenship.

Meanwhile, Myanmar's military yesterday rejected an International Criminal Court (ICC) prosecutor's call for a full investigation into alleged crimes against Rohingya Muslims.

Fatou Bensouda launched a preliminary probe in September into the 2017 crackdown by Myanmar's military that forced some 740,000 Rohingya over the border into Bangladesh with accounts of rape, mass killings and razing of villages.

On Wednesday she said she would take the issue to the next stage by submitting a request to ICC judges to open a full investigation.

It is not clear when that decision would be made.