



A mob blocks the Dinajpur-Dhaka highway in Birampur upazila of Dinajpur yesterday after BGB members opened fire on smugglers, killing two people.

Israel says Syria's Assad may be left with rump state

REUTERS, Tel Aviv

A senior Israeli defense official said President Bashar al-Assad controlled just a fifth of Syria and may end up in charge of a rump state dominated by his minority Alawite sect.

Israel and its neighbor Syria are long-term enemies, but the remarks by Amos Gilad, strategic adviser to Israeli Defense Minister Moshe Yaalon, reflect concerns by states across the region that Syria is undergoing a de facto partition after four years of civil war.

"Syria is gone. Syria is dying. The funeral will be declared in due time. This Bashar Assad, he will be remembered in history textbooks as the one who lost Syria," Gilad told an intelligence conference organized by the Israel Defense Journal on Monday.

"Until now he has lost 75 percent of Syria ... He is, practically, governor of 20 percent of Syria. And his future, if I may predict it, is shrinking all of the time. And maybe we will have him as the president of 'Alawistan,'" Gilad added.

Since March, Assad has steadily lost territory in the northwest, south and central Syria to an array of groups including Islamic State, al Qaeda-linked Nusra Front, and rebels who profess a more moderate vision for Syria.

Complainant goes missing

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SUV -- a Toyota Land Cruiser Prado [Dhaka Metro Gha -11-1610] -- from Rahim, Tahmina said.

As he was preparing to testify before the police in this connection, those DB men on June 25 again kidnapped him, she alleged, adding that since then, she had no clue to her husband's whereabouts.

Police, however, outright denied all the allegations made by Tahmina.

'THE FIRST KIDNAP'

On February 28 around 2:45pm, Rahim was picked up from behind Samarita Hospital on Pathapath Road by the DB team led by Alim and Nazrul, according to a complaint submitted to the police headquarters by the victim.

He was blindfolded and taken to the DB office on Minto Road where he was tortured, reads the letter, a copy of which has been obtained by this paper.

They demanded Tk 1 crore and threatened to kill him in staged firecracker otherwise.

The next day, Tahmina gave Tk 10

Muntassir Mamoon

FROM PAGE 5

"19 Shotoke Bangladesher Sangbadh Shamayik Patra".

Prof Muntassir said he was delighted to win the award, which is an acknowledgment of his work.

Born in 1951, Prof Muntassir has been a teacher in Dhaka University's history department.

He received many awards, including Ekushey Padak and Bangla Academy Award.

Cops 'torture'

FROM PAGE 5

investigate the torture, said Proctor Prof Tarikul Hasan.

Meanwhile, Lingcon refuted police's allegations, saying he, his girlfriend, and another girl were visiting the mass graveyard, leaving their shoes at the bottom of the staircase.

But one shoe was missing when they came back, he said. "He asked the duty police about his shoe but police replied 'are we here to guard your shoe?'" Lingcon said.

At one stage of altercation, they

Indonesia plane crash

FROM PAGE 16

The local search and rescue agency also said that three people were killed on the ground when the 51-year-old plane went down near a newly built residential area, hitting a massage parlour and a small hotel.

Police said rescuers were still trying to get into the ruined massage parlour, a three-storey building, and they did not know whether there were people inside.

A rescue operation swung into action following the crash, with ambulances ferrying bodies from the site, and crowds of anxious people gathering around a police cordon to view the smouldering wreckage.

Residents described the terrifying moment just after midday when the plane came down.

"It was very scary," said Novi, an employee of an international school who goes by one name, describing how she heard the plane and saw it flying very low before the crash.

Another local resident Januar, 26, said the aircraft appeared to be in trouble just before the accident: "I saw the plane from the direction of the airport and it was tilting already, then I saw smoke billowing."

Medan's police chief said the bodies had been "crushed" under the wreckage of the plane and buildings.

Indonesian President Joko Widodo expressed sorrow at the accident, tweeting: "May the families be given patience and strength... May we remain protected from disaster."

The disaster once again shone a harsh

light on Indonesia's poor aviation safety record. It came just six months after an AirAsia plane crashed into the Java Sea, killing all 162 people on board.

It also raised questions about the Indonesian military's aircraft -- it was the sixth fatal crash involving an Indonesian air force plane in the past decade, according to the Aviation Safety Network.

Following the crash, Supriatna said the military was grounding some of its Hercules planes.

The last fatal air force crash was in June 2012. Eleven people were killed when a Fokker-27 military jet crashed into a housing complex in the capital Jakarta.

The plane involved in yesterday's accident took off at 12:08 pm (0508 GMT) from the airbase and crashed in the city about two minutes later, about five kilometres (three miles) from the base, according to the military.

Shortly after take-off, the pilot had asked to return to base, Supriatna said, adding the aircraft might have suffered engine trouble.

But he added the plane was in "very good condition" and had made several stops before arriving in Medan.

It was the second time in a decade that Medan had suffered a fatal plane accident. A Mandala Airlines domestic flight crashed shortly after take-off in 2005 into a densely populated suburb, killing at least 150 including passengers, crew and people on the ground.

Medan is the biggest Indonesian city outside the main island of Java and a major economic centre.

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