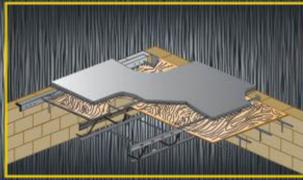


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Russian plane crash kills 224

IS claims credit, Moscow sceptical

AFP, Cairo

A Russian airliner carrying 224 people crashed in a mountainous area of Egypt's Sinai Peninsula yesterday, killing everyone on board, officials said.

It was one of the deadliest incidents involving Airbus aircraft over the past decade.

The Islamic State (IS) group affiliate in Egypt claimed it downed the plane, without saying how.

Egyptian Prime Minister Sharif Ismail expressed doubt about the claim, saying "experts confirmed that a plane cannot be downed at such an altitude", and Russian Transport Minister Maksim Sokolov said the claim "cannot be considered accurate".

Germany's Lufthansa and Air France said they would halt flights over Sinai until the reasons behind the crash became clear.

The Airbus A321 with 214 Russian and three Ukrainian passengers and seven crew, had taken off from the Red Sea resort of Sharm el-Sheikh in south Sinai bound for Saint Petersburg.

It lost contact with air traffic control 23 minutes later.

"Unfortunately, all passengers of Kogalymavia flight 9268 Sharm el-Sheikh-Saint Petersburg have died. We issue condolences to family and friends," the Russian embassy in Cairo said.

The wreckage was found roughly 100 kilometres (60 miles) south of the North Sinai town of El-Arish, Egyptian officials said.

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Relatives cry at Pulkovo International Airport outside Saint Petersburg after a Russian plane crashed in a mountainous part of Egypt's Sinai Peninsula yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

SHAMSHER MOBIN CHY AL, BNP trade barbs over resignation reason

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The ruling Awami League and its rival BNP continued their verbal duel yesterday on Shamsheer Mobin Chowdhury's resignation from the BNP.

While BNP Standing Committee Member Nazrul Islam Khan blamed "government pressure" for the resignation, AL General Secretary Syed Ashraf Islam said he quit the party for not seeing eye to eye with BNP Senior Vice Chairman Tarique Rahman, son of Khaleda Zia.

Calling the resignation an outcome of BNP's political bankruptcy, Ashraf said many other senior BNP leaders may quit the party soon because of Tarique. The BNP was being run according to Tarique's wishes, which has left many senior party leaders frustrated, he commented.

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Judiciary separated, not effectively yet

SHAKHAWAT LITON

An effective and meaningful separation of lower judiciary from the executive has not really worked out as expected even after eight years of an official separation of judiciary.

The government has not really done anything meaningful to restore the Supreme Court's authority over the lower courts. The apex body used to have control over the appointments,

postings, promotions and granting of leave, and disciplining persons employed in the judicial service until the fourth amendment to the constitution in 1975.

To bring back those powers to the SC, the original articles 115 and 116 of the 1972 constitution needs to be amended. The changes, according to legal experts, are also required, to ensure independence of the judiciary.

The apex court in several judgments

has also spoken for reinstating the original articles 115 and 116 for an effective separation of judiciary.

The lower judiciary was officially separated from the executive branch on November 1, 2007 following the Appellate Division's directives in a case known as "Masdar Hossain's Case". But the government has done nothing since then.

Some laws were amended and new

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

MURDER ATTEMPT

Pastor leaves Pabna over security fears

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Pastor Luke Sarkar of Faith Bible Church left his rented home in Ishwardi upazila on Tuesday, around three weeks after he survived an attempt on his life.

Worried about his security and that of his family members, the 52-year-old asked the church authorities to release him, Christian community leaders said yesterday.

Alok Majumder, coordinator of the



Luke Sarkar

church, said they would send Sarkar to a southern district as he was feeling insecure in Ishwardi.

Visiting the pastor's former home in Schoolpara on Friday afternoon, this correspondent found the front door of the house to be padlocked. House owner Md Monirul Islam said his tenant vacated the house on Tuesday, but didn't tell him about where he was going.

Sarkar along with his wife and two

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PRAYER TIMING

NOVEMBER 1

	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	4-55	12-45	4-00	5-30	7-15
JAMAAT	5-30	1-15	4-15	5-34	7-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



Auto-rickshaws queue up, inset, for hours at a workshop in Eskaton Garden in the capital yesterday to repair and update their fare meters. The government plans to make sure such vehicles use the meters from today.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

'Khaleda may leave UK for home Nov 7'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia is likely to leave the UK for Bangladesh on November 7, says one of her party leaders.

"Madam [Khaleda] is scheduled to fly to Dhaka in an Emirates flight," a BNP leader, who is also in London with her, told The Daily Star over phone yesterday.

Khaleda is expected to address a meeting with non-resident Bangladeshis there at Hilton hotel around 5:00pm (local time) today, added the leader, wishing not to be named.

Before returning to Bangladesh, she is

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Total weirdness

BBC ONLINE

A man has spoken of the "total weirdness" of encountering his doppelganger on a flight. Neil Thomas Douglas boarded a flight on Thursday night and came face-to-face with his lookalike.

Douglas, a photographer from Glasgow, said: "Everyone around us had a laugh, we took a selfie and that was it."

The selfie was posted on Twitter and has been retweeted thousands of times.

The photographer explained that when he boarded the Ryanair flight to Galway via London

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