



Iraqi Kurds take part in a demonstration at Arbil airport, in the capital of Iraq's autonomous northern Kurdish region, after the central government ordered an indefinite halt to all foreign flights to and from Iraqi Kurdistan yesterday. Baghdad's decision to cut Kurdish region's direct air links comes after Kurds voted a massive "yes" in a referendum on independence.

PHOTO: AFP

RAKHINE STATE OF MYANMAR

# UN extends probe into rights abuses

AFP, Geneva

The UN decided yesterday to extend an investigation into abuses committed in Myanmar, especially in Rakhine state, where violence has forced hundreds of thousands of Rohingya Muslims to flee. The UN Human Rights Council adopted a resolution tabled by the European Union calling for the international fact-finding mission to be given another six months. Several countries distanced themselves from the resolution, including China, but none demanded a vote in the 47-member council, and the measure was adopted by consensus. The council set up the mission in March to investigate possible violations across Myanmar, with a particular focus on alleged crimes against Rohingyas in Rakhine state. The Muslim minority is loathed in Myanmar, denied citizenship and are

instead branded "Bengalis" -- or illegal migrants who do not belong in the Buddhist-majority country. Half a million Rohingyas have crushed into camps in Bangladesh since August 25, fleeing a Myanmar army campaign and communal violence that the UN describes as "ethnic cleansing". Earlier this month, the UN fact-finding mission asked for more time, lamenting a lack of access to the country. Friday's decision gives them until next September to present their final report. Myanmar's civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi has repeatedly denounced the UN probe as unhelpful and vowed that her government would not cooperate. But after an outcry, Suu Kyi said earlier this month that her government was open to foreign scrutiny of the situation in Rakhine. "We hope the government will see the benefit of cooperating," Estonian ambas-

sador Andre Pung told the council on Friday, speaking on behalf of the EU. But Myanmar representative Hau Khan Sum said his country vehemently rejected the resolution, saying it continues "to believe that the establishment of a fact-finding mission is not helpful", and "counter-productive in our efforts to achieve national reconciliation." While welcoming the extension of the UN fact-finding mission, activists said that the resolution's wording had been weakened to help it pass. An earlier version called "for an end to ... violations and abuses" in Myanmar, but the document that passed Friday called only for "and end to the violence." "It's baffling that it decided not to clearly call for an immediate end to grave and serious rights violations," Niyan Ilango of the Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development told AFP.

## Militants attack Somali base, kill at least 15

REUTERS, Mogadishu

Al Shabaab fighters killed at least 15 soldiers in an attack on a military base near Somalia's capital, Mogadishu, the militant group and Somali officials said yesterday. The militants used guns and car bombs to take control of the base and a nearby town, Barire, 50 km (30 miles) southwest of Mogadishu, in an early-morning attack. The fighters also took 11 pickup trucks mounted with machine guns, known as "technicals", said Abdiasis Abu Musab, al Shabaab's military operation spokesman. "The other soldiers ran helter-skelter into the woods. We now control the base and the village," he said. A Somali military officer put the number of dead at 15; al Shabaab said 21 were killed. The government and al Shabaab often give differing accounts of death tolls. "There was a battalion of soldiers but it was a fierce fighting; twin suicide car bombs and hand-to-hand fighting," Captain Osman Ali told Reuters. "The attacked soldiers were Somali military and the special forces trained by the U.S. called Danab. There were neither AMISOM nor other foreigners there," Ali added, referring to African Union peacekeeping troops. Reinforcements were being sent, he said. Al Shabaab aims to topple the government in Mogadishu and impose its own strict interpretation of Islam. Somalia has been at war since 1991, when clan-based warlords overthrew dictator Siad Barre and then on each other. The al Qaeda-linked group was driven out of the capital in 2011, but it still carries out frequent attacks on security and government targets and African Union peacekeeping troops. Civilians sometimes get caught in the crossfire. Ali Nur, the deputy governor of Lower Shabelle region where Barire is situated, confirmed the fighting. So did local residents. "First we heard two huge blasts at the base and then heavy exchange of gunfire followed. Now it looks like the fighting died down," Ali Farah told Reuters from Barire village.

## Russia, N Korea to discuss nuclear crisis in Moscow

REUTERS, Moscow/Washington

Russian and North Korean officials will meet in Moscow yesterday to discuss the North Korea crisis, a move welcomed by the United States, which has been locked in an increasingly heated war of words with Pyongyang over its nuclear and missile programs. Russia's Foreign Ministry said Oleg Burmistrov, Russia's ambassador-at-large, would meet Choe Son-hui, director-general of the North American department of the North Korea's foreign ministry. Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova declined to give details, but said her ministry would issue a statement after the meeting. The United States welcomed the planned meeting, with U.S. State Department spokeswoman Heather Nauert saying: "I can't see that as a bad thing." "Diplomacy is our preferred approach," Nauert told a regular briefing. "If Russia can be successful in getting North Korea to move in a better direction, we would certainly welcome that." Privately, however, U.S. officials have played down the likely effect of the Russian effort. Recent days have seen exchanges of heated rhetoric and threats between U.S. President Donald Trump's administration and North Korea over the latter's bid to develop nuclear-tipped missiles capable of hitting the United States. Nauert said Friday's talks would follow a visit to Moscow by the U.S. special envoy for North Korea, Joseph Yun, about two weeks ago. Attending the U.N. General Assembly in New York last week, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov pushed a proposal by Moscow and Beijing for a dual suspension of North Korean weapons tests and the U.S.-South Korean military drills to kick-start negotiations. He suggested then that a neutral European country could mediate. Washington has said its joint military drills are essential to guard against North Korea and that Pyongyang must show it is serious about giving up its nuclear weapons before any return to talks. North Korea, for its part, says it needs to develop its weapons to

defend itself against what it sees as U.S. aggression. Last week, Lavrov said North Korea and the United States should tone down their bellicose rhetoric, calling the exchange of threats between the two "quite bad, unacceptable." **Backing** FROM PAGE 2 The UN's priorities in Rakhine were examined in a report commissioned by the UN in 2015 entitled "Slippery Slope: Helping Victims or Supporting Systems of Abuse". Leaked to the BBC, it is damning of the UNCT approach. "The UNCT strategy with respect to human rights focuses too heavily on the over-simplified hope that development investment itself will reduce tensions, failing to take into account that investing in a discriminatory structure run by discriminatory state actors is more likely to reinforce discrimination than change it." Ms Dessallien declined to give an interview to the BBC to respond to this article. The UN in Myanmar said its approach was to be "fully inclusive" and ensure the participation of all relevant experts. One source said the UN now appeared to be preparing itself for an inquiry into its response to Rakhine. **Durga Puja** FROM PAGE 16 of Maha Shashti, adds BSS. Maha Saptami Puja was observed on Wednesday while Maha Ashtami, Kumari Puja and Sandhi Puja were observed on Thursday. As many as 30,077 permanent and temporary mandaps, including 231 in the capital, have been set up across the country this year. The number of puja mandaps was 29,395 in the previous year. Security measures have been beefed up in and around the temples and mandaps with the deployment of additional members of law enforcement agencies for peaceful celebration of the festival. According to the government directives, the immersion of idols of goddess Durga should be completed between 3:00pm to 8:00pm today.

## 22 killed

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Local resident Dhanashree Dhananjay Dagare, who lives opposite the bridge, said he saw commuters pushing forward towards a narrow exit on the bridge. "Many people fell over with their clothes ripped off," Dagare said. The stampede is the latest disaster to hit Indian Railways -- the world's fourth largest network -- which is struggling to upgrade infrastructure and safety after a series of deadly crashes in recent years. Prime Minister Narendra Modi in a tweet expressed sympathies with the families of those killed and assured all possible assistance. Last month, 23 people were killed after a train derailed in a northern city. Nearly 150 died in November in a crash. Shiv Sena, Modi's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party alliance partner in western Maharashtra state which includes Mumbai -- called the tragedy a "public massacre" and slammed the government for investing in bullet trains instead of the crumbling railway system. Last month Modi and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe launched India's first high speed rail project, which is funded by the Japan. A series of accidents on the rail network forced Modi last month to replace the railway minister. He has pledged to invest billions of dollars to make railways safer. Nearly \$8 billion has been promised to upgrade the suburban trains in Mumbai that are a lifeline for city's 20 million people. Some 7.5 million passengers commute in nearly 2,500 trains daily but hundreds die every year due to losing their grip on the doors, falling while trying to get into packed compartments and hitting electric poles outside. Official figures say some 3,400 people died in 2016 either from falling off the trains or while crossing the tracks of what is the world's most overcrowded suburban rail network.

## Three workers

FROM PAGE 16

Anoy Chandra Paul, sub-inspector of Badda police, said Ihsan Tower is situated on a ten-katha land where a society of 54 people owns the flats. No official from the construction company was found at the site. Masum Munshi, a nephew of the deceased, said 12 of his relatives used to work at the building for nine months. Masum alleged that neglect of the building's owners was responsible for the tragic accident. "The bamboos were thin and got weak in the rain," he said. OC Kazi Wazed said they would investigate the matter, adding, they could not talk to any of the flat owners yet. A large number of workers are being killed at workplaces every year in Bangladesh because of poor safety standards and lax enforcement of existing regulations. Worker's death at construction sites is rising in the capital. According to Bangladesh Occupational Safety, Health and Environment Foundation, around 147 construction workers died last year.

## Mission Mars

FROM PAGE 16

but one that can... do everything that's needed in the greater Earth orbit activity." Musk said his firm had starting building the system, with the construction of the first ship to start in six to nine months. "I feel fairly confident that we can complete the ship and launch in about five years," he added. At least two cargo ships would land on the Red Planet in 2022, with the key mission of finding the best source of water -- currently mooted as a way to power rockets, he said. The rockets would place power, mining and life-support infrastructure on Mars to support future missions, with four ships set to take people, equipment and supplies to the planet in 2024. The trips would be funded by a range of activities, including launching satellites, servicing the space station and lunar missions, he said. Musk added that the rockets should also cater to Earth inhabitants by reducing the travel between major cities to less than half-an-hour. A trip from Bangkok to Dubai would take 27 minutes, and from Tokyo to Delhi in 30 minutes, according to his calculations. "Once you are out of the atmosphere, it would be as smooth as silk, no turbulence, nothing," he said. "There's no weather... and you can get to most long-distance places in less than half-an-hour. If we are building this thing to go to the Moon and Mars, then why not go to other places on Earth as well." The week-long annual International Astronautical Congress, which concluded Friday, has seen government space agencies and private firms outline their plans to send humans to the Moon and Mars in the next few decades. This included an agreement between Russian space agency Roscosmos and Nasa to work on the first lunar space station as part of a programme called the Deep Space Gateway.

## Chastised Tigers

FROM PAGE 1

Tamim ended the day with positive intent by hitting left-arm spinner Keshav Maharaj for a huge six over long on off the last ball of the day. Although the end was positive, it was a day that must have left Bangladesh chastised after their toothless toil in the field. It seemed to be a clever declaration on the part of Fakruddin Alamgir as Bangladesh opener Tamim Iqbal, who came into the game having just recovered from a thigh muscle injury, was off the field for 49 minutes before the tea interval. The declaration meant that Tamim could not open the innings for the first time in his 52-Test career nor bat until 49 minutes had elapsed in Bangladesh's innings, therefore exposing Liton Das -- who had kept wickets for 146 overs -- to the makeshift openers' role. According to Elgar, speaking after the day's play, it was not a deliberate tactic with the absence of Bangladesh's highest run-scorer in mind. Elgar said that the declaration had been on the hosts' mind since lunch, which they reached on 411 for one, but tight bowling from Bangladesh forced them to hold off till tea, when Elgar said they would have ideally liked to have a few more runs. There is precedence, however, of such a tactic being used by Du Plessis to wrong-foot the opposition -- he did the same to Australia opener David Warner in the day-night Adelaide Test in November 2016. If that was indeed the intention -- perhaps Elgar did not want to reveal the thought process of the team -- with Bangladesh cantering along at a good run rate, the declaration could be said to have borne mixed results for South Africa as they did make early inroads. Regardless, it showed an eagerness to create chances on a flat wicket, which was missing for large parts of Bangladesh's performance on the field.

After Imrul Kayes was bounced out by Kagiso Rabada in the sixth over for seven, Liton fished outside off stump to edge Morne Morkel to Hashim Amla at first slip in the 49th minute of the innings for 25. But it was skipper Mushfiqur Rahim, and not Tamim, who walked out with the score reading 36 for two. Mushfiqur started with aggressive intent against the pacers, opening his account with a scorching cut off Morkel. However, the Bangladesh captain did enjoy his fair share of fortune as he was dropped at slip twice off left-arm spinner Keshav Maharaj when he was on six and 15. The skipper hit a few more cut shots and a trademark slog-swept six off the unlucky bowler, but Maharaj had his revenge in the 26th over when Mushfiqur's defensive prod took the edge onto his front pad and was caught at short leg. The skipper scored a 57-ball 44 with seven fours and a six but Bangladesh probably needed more than that and the 67-run third-wicket stand with Mominul. Tamim and a sure-footed Mominul

then carried the team to close of play without further damage. Mominul hit some eye-catching on-drives and displayed his organised game, playing within his limits close to his body. It will be imperative for the visitors' sake that these two continue for at least a session more today if Bangladesh are to fight in this Test. Earlier, that Bangladesh's best session of the match was one in which South Africa scored 85 for the loss of two wickets in 29 overs revealed the extent of the Proteas' dominance. After an insipid morning session which saw Amla reach his 27th Test century faced with field settings resembling the middle overs of an ODI innings and a few overs from part-time spinner Mahmudullah Riyad, Bangladesh emerged with fresh tactics in the second session. But it was a mixture of luck and good planning that gave Shaiful Islam the prized wicket, which also happened to be the 70,000th Test wicket for those who care, as Amla leaden-footedly slashed at a wide delivery to Mehedi Hasan Miraz at a close backward point. That ended a 215-run second-wicket stand with Elgar and produced the first wicket by a Bangladesh bowler in the 118th over with the score on 411. There were no more part-timers in the second session as the Tigers turned the screws on new man Temba Bavuma. While it was puzzling why this approach was not taken in the first session when the bowlers were at their freshest, but the next 12.5 overs after Amla's dismissal produced just 28 runs as tight fields kept even Elgar quiet. It produced a wicket when the left-handed opener, looking for the release just one short of his maiden double-ton, top-edged a pull off Mustafizur Rahman in the 131st over with the score on 445. He had played 388 balls for his 199 with 15 boundaries and three sixes. After that Du Plessis and Bavuma took the team to tea without further damage and it seemed that there was at least one more hour of toil for Bangladesh, but Du Plessis rolled the dice keeping the flat wicket, if not the instability caused by Tamim's absence, in mind. It will be interesting to see where it lands today.

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## Installation

FROM PAGE 16

According to project officials, about 47 percent work of the project had already been completed. The bridge, which will connect the country's southern region to the capital, will hugely boost communications and trade and economic activities. The rail network linking the bridge with the capital through Mawa will not be completed if the bridge opens to traffic next year. The government is building the bridge with its own fund as lending agencies cancelled loans over a graft allegation.

## Prime accused

FROM PAGE 1

The attackers beat up Sagor after tying his hands to a concrete pillar. At one stage of beating, Sagor crumpled to the ground and they untied his hands and left the place with him in a CNG-run auto-rickshaw, saying that they were taking him to a hospital, said witnesses. But the victim was never taken to hospital, and his body was dumped into a bush adjacent to the hatchery sometime later. On information, police recovered the body. After the incident, Akkas and his men went into hiding. On Tuesday, victim's father Shipon filed a case against 12 people with Gouripur Police Station, naming six of them. They are Akkas, his brothers



Akkas Ali

Hashu Mia, Abdus Sattar Chhuto, Jewel Mia and Sohel Mia and his employee Qaiyum. The case was later transferred to the DB. Earlier, police arrested Reaz Uddin, 50, and Fazlur Rahman, 50, of the same village, for their alleged involvement in the incident, said Delwar Ahmed, officer-in-charge of the police station. They were produced before a Mymensingh court that sent them to jail later, added the police official. Drives are on to arrest the other accused, said the OC. Locals and different organisations are demanding the arrest of all the culprits and exemplary punishment for them.

## Missing boy's body found

FROM PAGE 16

Pranta, said the two friends got down from a bus near Ganobhaban on Mirpur Road around 10:45am on Tuesday. After crossing the road, Pranta noticed that Siyam had disappeared. Siyam was supposed to sit for his last model test examination at 11:30am. Earlier in the day, his father accompanied him to the bus station near Mirpur Ansar Camp and left for his office. A teacher called his father in the afternoon and informed him that Siyam did not attend the exam, Kamal told The Daily Star. The teacher also reprimanded Harunur for not going to the school to have talks over his son's poor performance, Kamal alleged. The teacher had, in an earlier occasion, asked Siyam to bring his father to the school, but Siyam did not tell his father about it, Kamal said. His father filed a general diary with Mirpur Police Station on Wednesday as he did not return home.

"We looked for Siyam everywhere. We contacted his classmates who told us that Siyam was under a huge pressure from the teachers as he was not doing well in the exams," Kamal said. Kamal also said the boy wrote, "Life is too short to wake up..." on his Facebook page on September 17. Kamal added that Siyam might have killed himself as he was overstressed about the exams. **Factory worker** FROM PAGE 16 another worker of the factory, and Russell were using the air hose to remove dust stuck to their bodies, Jalil said. The workers were probably helping each other. Kahlalu police have detained Rubel and are further investigating the matter, said Officer-in-charge Noor-e-Alam Siddiqui. As Russell fell sick after the incident, his colleagues took him to Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital where he died hours later, said the OC.