



PHOTO: AFP

Syrians arrive at the Abu Duhur crossing on the eastern edge of Idlib province yesterday, as they cross from rebel-held areas to regime-held areas. Russian President Vladimir Putin and his Turkish counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdogan agreed on September 17, to create a demilitarised zone along the line of contact between rebels and regime troops, which has temporarily averted a regime offensive on the jihadist and rebel-held Idlib region on the border with Turkey.

UN chief warns

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funding to the United Nations.
UN diplomats say the US stance has emboldened Russia and China to push their view of the global order in which human rights take a second seat to development and sovereignty rights.
"Today, with shifts in the balance of power, the risk of confrontation may increase," warned Guterres.
The human rights agenda is losing ground and "authoritarianism is on the rise," he said.
Guterres urged world leaders to renew their commitment to a rules-based order, with the United Nations at its centre to confront "massive, existential threats to

people and planet."
"There is no way forward but collective, common-sense action for the common good," he said.
Drawing a list of global problems, Guterres acknowledged that peace efforts were failing and that respect for international humanitarian norms was unravelling.
"There is outrage at our inability to end the wars in Syria, Yemen and elsewhere," he said.
"The Rohingya people remain exiled, traumatized and in misery, still yearning for safety and justice."
The two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has become "more

and more distant" while the nuclear threat "has not eased".
Guterres zeroed in on climate change as an urgent priority, warning that if no concrete action is taken in the next two years to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, the world risks facing runaway climate change.
"Climate change is moving faster than we are -- and its speed has provoked a sonic boom SOS across our world," he said.
About 130 world leaders are attending this year's annual session including Trump and Iranian leader Hassan Rouhani. France's Emmanuel Macron, a champion of multilateralism, also

US approval of military sale to Taiwan draws China's ire

AFP, Beijing
China yesterday expressed "strong dissatisfaction" over US plans to sell a batch of military parts to the self-governing island of Taiwan, adding to tensions between the global superpowers.
The \$330 million contract would see the US ship standard spare parts for several aircraft including the F-16 fighter and the C-130 cargo plane, the State Department said in a statement on Monday.
China lashed out at the deal, saying it "severely violates" international laws and norms governing foreign relations, and expressed "strong dissatisfaction and firm opposition" to the sales.
Beijing sees Taiwan as part of its territory awaiting unification, and is deeply suspicious of the island's relations with the US.
Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Geng Shuang told a regular press briefing that Beijing has lodged "solemn representations" -- an official protest -- with the United States.
"We urge the US side to... immediately withdraw this armed sales plan and stop military contact with Taiwan lest it should cause severe damage to US-China relations, cross-straits stability and peace, and our cooperation in other important areas," he said.
Congress has 30 days to raise objections to the sale, though this is unlikely given the State Department has determined Taiwan continues to be "an important force for political stability, military balance, and economic progress in the region."
Washington remains Taipei's most powerful unofficial ally and its main arms supplier despite switching diplomatic recognition to Beijing in 1979.
China has stepped up diplomatic and military pressure on Taiwan since the Beijing-septic President Tsai Ing-wen took office two years ago, including staging a series of military exercises near the island.
Taiwan yesterday welcomed the US announcement, saying it would help the island strengthen its defence capabilities.
"As Taiwan faces gradually heightened threats, the US arms sales would... also boost Taiwan's confidence in strengthening self-defence to help maintain peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait," the foreign ministry said in a statement.
Taiwan's presidential office said the island's government would continue to increase its defence investment and "maintain close communication and cooperation" with the US on security issues.
Beijing has been incensed by recent warming ties between Washington and Taipei, including the approval by the US State Department of a preliminary licence to sell submarine technology to the island.
The US recently sanctioned a Chinese military procurement organisation, drawing a sharp protest from Beijing and a decision to postpone planned military talks.

Create secure cyberspace

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"Development partners should consider this to be part of their internationally agreed commitments. In Bangladesh, we're working on building a complete cyber security ecosystem," she said.
She mentioned that the Bangladesh Parliament had recently enacted the Digital Security Act.
A Cyber Security Incident Response Team is in place, which cooperates with other countries, she said, adding that a digital forensic laboratory has been set up for training purposes. A process is underway to set up a National Cyber Security Agency.
"We hope to keep learning from the experiences of other friendly countries," she said.
The PM also said the cyberspace had no physical borders and states' capacity for securing it was far from even.
"In an inter-connected world, the weaker links can cause disruption for others. Cyber security should thus become a concern for all, and not just a select few."

The PM also mentioned that identifying the actual source of wrongful activity remained a challenge.
Developing countries should have access to technologies and information to detect such sources and the UN can play a critical role in making the digital world safer, she said.
"The work on norm-setting in information security should continue. The mechanisms used so far should be made more inclusive. Developing countries should be given a chance to voice their concerns. The Secretary General's Agenda for Disarmament recognises that," Hasina said.
She said states should promote the use of non-offensive means to prevent and counter harmful cyber activity.
The question of rights and freedoms in cyberspace needs to be duly addressed, and the role of the private sector and civil society must be factored in, she added.
Hasina mentioned that the norms and principles for responsible state behaviour in cyberspace should receive unconditional support. "The

principles of the UN charter and relevant international law should be applied in the cyberspace."
She mentioned that the states should also prevent their territory from being used for wrongful acts against other nations' interests.
Hasina said Bangladesh took these commitments seriously. "We expect others to do the same."
The PM said some states were even working on using ICT for military purposes. "Terrorists and violent extremists are using it to spread their toxic narratives. The risks from misuse of ICT can be serious for international peace and security."
UN Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Izumi Nakamitsu, Singaporean Foreign Minister Dr Vivian Balakrishnan, Estonian Deputy Foreign Minister Paul Tesaalu and Ambassador-in-charge of Cyber Policy of Japan Masato Otaka also spoke at the High-Level Side Event on Cyber Security and International Cooperation.

Tigers braced for virtual semi

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have beaten Hong Kong in the group stage and just gotten across the line against Afghanistan on Friday, but their most recent outing was a morale-shattering nine-wicket loss to India on Sunday.
But Bangladesh will actually start as firm underdogs. That is not just because of the fact that -- despite winning the teams' last three matches in a whitewash at home in 2015 -- they have a 4-35 head-to-head record against the two-time champions. Even if Shakib plays today, the real disadvantage here would be that the Tigers will be without opener and highest run-scorer Tamim Iqbal, who often shapes the way the innings unfolds.
Tamim sustained a fracture to his left hand in the tournament opener and flew back home last Tuesday. In his absence, top order collapses have become a regular feature and the success Bangladesh have had so far relied on one or two batsmen standing up and making telling contributions -- not a formula that can be trusted day in, day out as their sub-200 scores against India and Afghanistan showed.
Nazmul Hossain Shanto, who replaced Tamim at the top in his debut in the group game against Afghanistan

on Thursday, has managed to score just 20 runs in three innings. With the other opener Liton Das scoring 41 in the last match, Nazmul may get the axe today.
"We picked Shanto to take Tamim's place and give him an opportunity as a young man who has got a lot of talent, as a lot of Bangladeshi young batsmen have," head coach Steve Rhodes said yesterday. "And he's not quite done it yet, so his place will be looked at in selection. We'll go through the side this afternoon -- [skipper] Mashrafe [Bin Mortaza], myself and the selectors -- and we will be looking at all the team."
The openers' failures prompted the team management to fly in discarded national openers Imrul Kayes and Soumya Sarkar at the 11th over, and the move has already half paid off with Imrul striking a match-winning 72 from number six against Afghanistan on Sunday, less than 24 hours after flying into the UAE heat. The left-handed Imrul was played down the order to tackle Afghanistan leg-spinner Rashid Khan, and it is likely he will play the same role today as Pakistan have a leg-spinner in Shadab Khan. In that case, and if Nazmul is dropped, Soumya may come in at the opening slot to play his first ODI innings since

October 2017.
There may be another change with pacer Rubel Hossain coming in place of left-arm spinner Nazmul Islam, who made his debut against Afghanistan on Sunday.
"We played Nazmul because we felt a left-arm spinner would be useful against the Afghanistan top order," Mashrafe told reporters yesterday. Bangladesh usually prefer to play with three pacers, and given Mustafizur Rahman's cramping problems against Afghanistan and also that they play spin very well, it is likely that Rubel will slot back in for Nazmul.
Pakistan coach Mickey Arthur said on Monday that Pakistan were suffering from a crisis of confidence. Their vaunted bowling attack, especially left-arm pacer Mohammad Amir, has been witless for the last five matches. However, the unpredictability that has been Pakistan's trademark over the years means that they may be most dangerous when they are at their most vulnerable.
It looks set to be a fascinating encounter between two flawed but talented teams battling to light up what have so far been faltering campaigns.

14-party, BNP plan rallies

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14-party alliance, asked of his party men.
The AL-led alliance will hold a rally starting from 3:00pm on Saturday at Mahanagar Natya Mancha, he said, adding, "Dhaka was controlled by us earlier and will be in our control [now]. Not only Dhaka, the whole of Bangladesh will be under Sheikh Hasina's control."
Nazim made the announcement of occupying Dhaka streets at a meeting of the 14-party alliance, Dhaka city unit, at AL's old temporary office on Bangabandhu Avenue.
BNP Senior Joint

Nasim, also a coordinator of the 14-party alliance, said, "The conspirators will take to the streets. We will see who will take to the streets and who will not. For the next one month you do not have any work...[but to] stay watchful and resist any conspiracy."
Regarding election campaign, he said it had started as they wanted a competitive election. "But when dishonest politicians talk about democracy, it creates doubt that an evil conspiracy has started again."
Earlier at a press conference at the BNP Naya Paltan headquarters yesterday morning, BNP Senior Joint

Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi announced that they would hold a rally on Suhrawardy Udyan on September 29 instead of September 27.
"We have deferred the date considering public convenience as Saturday is a holiday," he said.
Asked whether they had permission to hold the rally there, he replied in the negative. "But, we hope we'll get the permission."
At the conference, Rizvi said leaders and activists of his party and its different units had started working in full swing to make the rally a success.

Myanmar army carried out

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men, and victims buried alive or thrown into pits of mass graves. They told of widespread sexual assault by Myanmar's military of Rohingya women, often carried out in public.
Myanmar government spokesman Zaw Htay declined to comment when reached yesterday and said he was unable to answer questions by telephone.
Calls to military spokesman Major General Tun Tun Nyi were unanswered.
One witness described four Rohingya girls who were abducted, tied up with ropes and raped for three days. They were left "half dead," he said, according to the report.
Human rights groups and Rohingya activists have put the death toll in the thousands from the crackdown, which followed attacks by Rohingya insurgents on security forces in Rakhine State in August 2017.
'GENOCIDAL INTENT'
The results of the US investigation were released in low-key fashion - posted on the State Department's website - nearly a month after UN investigators issued their own report accusing Myanmar's military of acting with "genocidal intent" and calling for the country's commander-in-chief and five generals to be prosecuted under international law.
The military in Myanmar, previously known as Burma, where Buddhism is the main religion, has denied accusations of ethnic cleansing and says its actions were part of a fight against terrorism.
US Senior State Department officials said the objective of the investigation was not to determine genocide but to "document the facts" on the atrocities to guide US policy aimed at holding the perpetrators accountable. The report, however, proposes no new steps.
One of the officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, said it would be up to US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo whether to make such a "legal" designation in the future and did not rule out the possibility.
A declaration of genocide by the US government, which has only gone as far as labelling the crackdown "ethnic cleansing," could have legal implications of committing Washington to stronger punitive measures against Myanmar. This has made some in the Trump administration wary of issuing such an assessment.
The International Criminal Court last week said it had begun an examination of whether the alleged forced deportations of Rohingya could constitute war crimes or crimes against humanity.
Asked whether the new US findings could be used to bolster such international prosecution, the State Department official said no decision had been made on seeking "judicial accountability" over the Rohingya crisis.
The Trump administration, which has been criticised by human rights groups and some US lawmakers for a cautious response to Myanmar, could now face added pressure to take a tougher stand.
Sarah Margon, director of the Washington office of Human Right

Watch, said: "What's missing now is a clear indication of whether the US government intends to pursue meaningful accountability and help ensure justice for some victims."
The United States on Monday announced it was almost doubling its aid for displaced Rohingya Muslims in Bangladesh and Myanmar, with an extra \$185 million.
"The stories from some refugees show a pattern of planning and premeditation," the report said, citing the military's confiscation in advance of knives and other tools that could be used as weapons.
About 80 percent of refugees surveyed said they witnessed a killing most often by military or police according to the report.
"Reports of mutilation included the cutting and spreading of entrails, severed limbs or hands/feet, pulling out nails or burning beards and genitals to force a confession, or being burned alive," the report said.
Later on Monday, the Public International Law and Policy Group, a Washington-based human rights law firm contracted by the State Department to conduct the refugee interviews, issued a companion report saying it provided 15,000 pages of documentation of "atrocious crimes."
The State Department's investigation was modeled on a US forensic examination of mass atrocities in Sudan's Darfur region in 2004, which led to a US declaration of genocide that culminated in sanctions against the Sudanese government.
Any stiffer measures against Myanmar authorities could be tempered, though, by US concerns about complicating relations between civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi, a Nobel Peace Prize laureate, and the powerful military which might push Myanmar closer to China.
The US government on August 17 imposed sanctions on four military and police commanders and two army units but Myanmar's military chief, Min Aung Hlaing, was spared. Further targeted sanctions have been under consideration, officials said earlier.
Min Aung Hlaing made his first public comments since the UN report in a military-run newspaper on Monday, saying that Myanmar abided by UN pacts but "countries set different standards and norms" and outsiders have "no right to interfere".
The Rohingya, who regard themselves as native to Rakhine state, are widely considered as interlopers by Myanmar's Buddhist majority and are denied citizenship.

5 die

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After the accident, locals caught the truck driver, Shahin, 22, and handed him over to police.
Quoting the witnesses, police officials said that the truck driver was almost asleep while driving which may have been the cause of his reckless driving that led to the accident.

All licensed agencies

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Bangladeshi businessman with alleged political links with the Malaysian home ministry, raked in at least two billion Malaysian ringgits (around Tk 4,000 crore) from 100,000 Bangladeshi workers in just two years.
Considering that two lakh workers were recruited through the syndicate until suspension of the SPMA, the amount of money raked in would be Tk 8,000 crore.
On August 14, Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad said that the syndicate had resulted in a monopolistic situation, with some charging as high as RM20,000 from each prospective worker.
He had then said that all the Bangladeshi agents would be allowed to recruit workers.
The recruiting agencies of Bangladesh and migrant rights activists have lauded yesterday's decision.
"We appreciate the decision..." said Nurul Amin, former joint secretary general of Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies (Baira).
However, the statement issued by the expatriates' welfare ministry has made no mention of the recruitment cost, but Nurul Amin said it had approved a recruitment cost of Tk 1.6 lakh.
He could not exactly say why this amount would be required as documentation, medical tests, and one way airfare to Malaysia were not more than Tk 40,000.
"The minister [Nurul Islam] has approved this amount," Nurul Amin said, stressing that this cost must be strongly maintained and any agency charging higher than the amount should face cancellation of their licence.
Mohammad Harun Al Rashid, a Bangladeshi migrant rights activist living in Malaysia, said allowing all agencies to recruit labour was a good decision, but it was extremely impor-

tant that no parties were involved in corruption that led to labour exploitation.
"Corruption and monopoly in the labour recruitment process in the past caused massive problem. Malaysia had frozen labour recruitment from Bangladesh repeatedly," Rashid told this correspondent over phone yesterday.
He said the reported allegations of massive corruption by the syndicate of 10 agents, with the connivance of the previous Malaysian government, in recruitment of Bangladeshi workers must be investigated. Those involved must face legal action, he added.
Meanwhile, the expatriates' welfare ministry, in a statement, said Malaysia was positive about regularisation of the undocumented Bangladeshi workers now facing troubles in Malaysia.
Of some one million Bangladeshi workers in Malaysia, around five lakh are reportedly undocumented. Almost all of the undocumented ones had applied to the Malaysian immigration department for work permits under a rehiring programme, which ended on June 30, said an official of the Bangladesh high commission in Kuala Lumpur.
However, most of them have not gotten the work permit yet, he added.
Besides, thousands of foreign workers, including Bangladeshis, had remained detained since July 1.
Rashid said there were a lot of irregularities in the rehiring programme, where migrants paid hefty sums but could not get the work permits issued. He suggested that the new Malaysian government provide a fresh chance for the undocumented migrants to get work permits.
An 11-member Bangladesh delegation led by Shahidul Islam, Bangladesh High Commissioner to Malaysia, also held the first meeting of a joint working group with their Malaysian counterpart in Putrajaya yesterday.