

World News Roundup



Supporters of the hardline Hefazat-e-Islam shout slogans after police prevented them from marching towards Myanmar Embassy to protest against the persecution of Rohingya Muslims, in Dhaka, Bangladesh on Sept 18. (AP)

Pakistan

Boost for ruling party

Wife of Sharif wins his parliament seat

LAHORE, Pakistan, Sept 18, (RTRS): The wife of ousted Pakistani prime minister Nawaz Sharif on Sunday captured his parliamentary seat with a reduced majority in a by-election seen as a test of support for the Sharif dynasty ahead of the 2018 general election.

Sharif's daughter Maryam said her mother **Kulsoom** won despite Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) party workers being threatened and kidnapped. Although she did not name anyone, PML-N sources said she was referring to alleged intimidation by parts of Pakistan's powerful military.

The military could not be reached for comment. "This is not an ordinary victory," Maryam said in a speech to jubilant PML-N supporters. "You have defeated not only people who were in the field but also those who are invisible."

The main opposition Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party made gains but alleged voter irregularities in the eastern city of Lahore, the electoral heartlands of the Sharif family since 1980s.

Official results are yet to be announced but party officials who also tallied the numbers say Kulsoom, who did not campaign as she is receiving treatment for cancer in London, scooped about 53.5 percent of the vote, with the party's majority reduced from about 61 percent in the 2013 general election.

Support

The PML-N wanted to demonstrate that support for the Sharif family was undiminished despite the Supreme Court's removal of Nawaz, who has kept control of the party and installed long-term ally Shahid Khaqan Abbasi as prime minister.

Maryam said dozens of PML-N activists were blindfolded and picked up from their homes at night, while others received threatening phone calls from unknown numbers during the campaign.

"This victory is a message to the forces hatching conspiracies against Nawaz Sharif that there would be only rules of people and democracy," added Maryam.

Maryam, who some PML-N leaders see as a future leader, spearheaded the PML-N campaign for her mother with fiery speeches denouncing the judiciary. In an interview with Reuters before the vote, she hinted at military involvement in her father's ouster.

Nawaz, who served two stints in power in 1990s until he was deposed in a military coup in 1999, had strained ties with the military during his third stint in power that ended in his ouster, when the Supreme Court disqualified him for failure to declare a monthly salary, equivalent to around \$2,700, from a company owned by his son. Sharif denies receiving the salary.

Rule

Tensions between civilian governments and the military have been a constant source of instability in Pakistan, with the military staging coups and running the country for nearly half the time since independence from British colonial rule in 1947.

Opposition leader Imran Khan — whose threats of street protests pushed the Supreme Court to launch a probe into Nawaz's wealth — had sought to build on the success of his anti-graft crusade by making inroads into Sharif's power base in Punjab.

Khan turned the by-election into a plebiscite about corruption and has accused the provincial Punjab government, which is run by Nawaz's brother Shahbaz, of abusing state resources to help the PML-N campaign.



Kulsoom



A health worker gives a polio vaccine to a child in Peshawar, Pakistan on Sept 18. Polio remains endemic in Pakistan after the Taliban banned vaccinations, instigated attacks targeting medical staffers and spread suspicions about the vaccine. (AP)

Subcontinent

Tributes for Indian war hero:

Tributes poured in Sunday for late Indian war hero **Marshal Arjan Singh**, who rose to prominence during World War II and for his leadership in the country's 1965 war against Pakistan.

Singh, the only officer ever to be named Marshal of the Indian Air Force owing to his achievements, died after suffering a cardiac arrest at the age of 98 at an army hospital in Delhi on Saturday.

The Indian government announced that a state funeral would be held for Singh on Monday.

"Marshal of the Indian Air Force (IAF) was a hero of World War II and won our nation's gratitude for his military leadership in the War of 1965," Indian President Ram Nath Kovind said in a statement.

"He served the nation with distinction and was the first and only officer of the IAF who was honoured with the five-star rank as Marshal of the Air Force," he added.

Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** also mourned Singh on Twitter.

"India will never forget excellent leadership of Marshal of the IAF Arjan Singh in 1965, when the IAF saw substantial action," he said. (AFP)

9 die in India river boat race:

Indian police have recovered at least nine bodies after three to four boats capsized in stormy conditions during a race on the Sabang river in the country's remote northeast.

Police officer **Mukesh Sahay** says the boats were caught in a sudden rainstorm on Sunday in the town of Tikri Killa in Assam state.

Rescuers were searching for several people missing in the accident about 255 kms (155 miles) west of Gauhati, Assam state's capital.

Sahay said it was not clear whether the dead were all participants in the rowing boat race because some people were traveling on the same river stretch in motor boats when the accident happened. (AP)

Activists won't give up: A day after the inauguration of India's biggest dam, activists vowed to keep fighting for the tens of thousands of people displaced by the project to be resettled and compensated.

Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** on Sunday dedicated the controversial **Sardar Sarovar Dam** on the Narmada river to the people of India.

The project will provide power and water to millions in Gujarat, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh states.

Ahead of the inauguration ceremony, protesters led by social activist **Medha Patkar** of the Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA) movement, stood in waist-deep Narmada water, demanding help for the some 40,000 families uprooted by the project.

Unrest

20K hardliners rally for Rohingya

Extremists 'threat': India

NEW DELHI, Sept 18, (Agencies): India's government said Monday that it has evidence there are extremists who pose a threat to the country's security among the Rohingya Muslims who have fled Myanmar and settled in many Indian cities.

India's Supreme Court was hearing a petition filed on behalf of two Rohingya refugees challenging a government decision to deport the ethnic group from India.

The lawyer representing the Rohingya said the decision was discriminatory.

"This is clearly a case of religious discrimination and an attempt to arouse an anti-Muslim feeling," Prashant Bhushan said.

He said the government had evidence of the presence of militants among the refugees who fled a crackdown by the Myanmar government.

The government said the decision on whether Rohingya refugees should be allowed to remain in the country should be made by the government.

"The court has no business to interfere in such matters of what they call illegal immigrants or illegal migrants," the government said in an affidavit.

Additional Solicitor General **Tushar Mehta** told the court that the government will provide evidence of Rohingya links with extremist Islamic groups and illegal transfer of money at the next hearing.

Crackdown

Many Rohingya living in India fled persecution in Myanmar in 2012. According to the United Nations, hundreds of thousands of Rohingya have fled Myanmar since a renewed military crackdown began on Aug 25. About 412,000 fled to Bangladesh, but some have also reached India, Nepal and Pakistan in recent weeks.

The next hearing in the case is set for Oct 3.

At least 20,000 Islamist hardliners marched in Bangladesh on Monday in protest against the violence which has driven the Rohingya Muslim minority from neighbouring Myanmar across the border into squalid refugee camps.

White-robed protesters chanting "God is great" assembled outside Bangladesh's largest mosque before a planned "siege" of the Myanmar

embassy in the capital Dhaka.

The turnout eclipsed a similar rally after weekly prayers last Friday, when 15,000 demonstrators urged the government to go to war against Buddhist-majority Myanmar over the "genocide" of Rohingya Muslims.

Police strengthened security before Monday's rally, deploying extra officers around Dhaka amid fears the demonstrators could turn violent.

Meanwhile, pressure grew on Myanmar Monday as a rights group urged world leaders to impose sanctions on its military, which is accused of driving out more than 410,000 Rohingya Muslims in an orchestrated "ethnic cleansing" campaign.

Crisis

The call from Human Rights Watch came as the UN General Assembly prepared to convene in New York, with the crisis in Myanmar one of the most pressing topics.

It also came on the eve of a highly-anticipated national address by Myanmar's civilian leader **Aung San Suu Kyi** — her first on the Rakhine crisis.

The exodus of Rohingya refugees from mainly Buddhist Myanmar to neighbouring Bangladesh has sparked a humanitarian emergency. Aid groups are struggling to provide relief to a daily stream of new arrivals, more than half of whom are children.

Myanmar has suggested it will not take back all who had fled across the border, accusing those refugees of having links to the Rohingya militants whose raids on police posts in August triggered the army backlash.

Any clear moves to block the refugees' return will likely anger Bangladesh Prime Minister **Sheik Hasina**, who will press the General Assembly to raise global pressure Myanmar to take back all the Rohingya massing in shanty towns and camps near the border.

Meanwhile, a lawyer for two Myanmar journalists detained in Bangladesh while reporting on the influx of thousands of Rohingya Muslims from Myanmar said on Monday he had been denied access to them amid concern over their well-being.

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"The dam may be complete, but the project is not complete, the resettlement and rehabilitation of people is not complete," said **Madhuresh Kumar**, an NBA campaigner.

"In the past, the inauguration of a project meant people were forgotten and left to



Singh



Modi

fend for themselves. But where people have continued to fight, there have been victories, so we will continue to fight," he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. (RTRS)

Voting peaceful in S. Nepal: Tens of thousands of people voted peacefully Monday in a previously troubled southern Nepal province where ethnic violence demanding constitution changes had led to dozens of deaths in recent years.

Police said there was no trouble during the voting in the No. 2 province, where security had been stepped up for the municipal and village council elections.

The Madhesi ethnic group wants their provinces to have more territory than was assigned under the constitution adopted in 2015. (AP)

Africa

Chibok mediator wins prize: A Nigerian lawyer who helped to secure the release of dozens of the Chibok schoolgirls kidnapped by Boko Haram in 2014 was on Monday announced the winner of a UN prize for providing an education to children uprooted by violence in northeast Nigeria.

Zannah Mustapha is the founder of two schools which offer free education, meals and healthcare to its pupils, and even enrol children born to Boko Haram fighters to learn alongside those orphaned by the Islamist group's eight-year insurgency.

The Nansen Refugee Award, which is bestowed by the UN refugee agency (UNHCR), has been won in the past by Eleanor Roosevelt and Luciano Pavarotti, and the winner receives \$150,000 to fund a project complementing their existing work.

"I am exceedingly happy and motivated to do more ... I will scale up my efforts," Mustapha told the Thomson Reuters Foundation by phone from Maiduguri, the capital of Borno state.

"Some of the students that started in my school have graduated, and they are now going into university — I can use this money to help them complete the cycle," Mustapha added.

His first venture, Future Prowess, opened a decade ago and was the only school in Borno state in northeast Nigeria to remain open when Boko Haram in 2009 began their brutal campaign to carve out an Islamic state. (RTRS)



Mustapha

Uganda accident kills 13: Ugandan police say 13 people, including 12 Tanzanian nationals, have been killed in a motor accident on a highway in central Uganda.

Ugandan police spokesman **Asan Kasingye** told reporters Monday that most of the victims were traveling in a minibus that crashed head-on with a truck Sunday night. The Tanzanians were returning home from a wedding in Uganda.

He said seven other passengers in the minibus were seriously injured and "in critical condition." A passenger in the truck was killed while the driver was seriously injured.

The highway leading to western Uganda has been notorious over the years for the high number of lethal accidents often blamed on irresponsible drivers.

Deadly motor accidents are frequent in Uganda where roads and highways are narrow and often have many potholes. (AP)

Clashes in Ethiopia kill 50: Clashes along the border of Ethiopia's Oromiya and Somali regions have displaced around 50,000 people, a senior regional official said on Sunday, in violence that has prompted the government to send the military in.

Spokesmen from the two regions told regional news outlets earlier this week that at least 50 people were killed. Each side blames the other.

Lema Megersa, president of Oromiya province, told local journalists on Sunday: "It is not just deaths that occurred. More than 50,000 people were displaced from their homes."

"Those responsible should also be held to account," he added. He did not give a death toll.

The area has been plagued by sporadic clashes for decades. A referendum held in 2004 to determine the status of disputed settlements failed to ease tensions.

Unrest in 2015 and 2016 in Oromiya — and to a lesser extent other regions — killed 669 people, according to a parliament-mandated investigation. (RTRS)

Guinea quells deadly unrest:

Guinea's government said Sunday that it was sending electric generators to the mining town of **Boke** to help ease tensions after deadly clashes sparked by protests against water and power cuts.

The town's prefect has also been dismissed as officials try to restore order to the town, where shops and markets have been looted and vehicles destroyed during protests which have also seen armed youths set up barricades to take de facto control.

Boureima Conde, minister for territorial administration and decentralisation, said in a statement on state TV that the town's prefect, **Mohamed Lamine Doumbouya**, was fired by President **Alpha Conde** on Saturday.

The president has also instructed Prime Minister **Mamadou Youla** "to take measures designed to shine a light on the two deaths and that those responsible face the law," the minister said.

The protests began on Tuesday against electricity and power cuts in a city known for its bauxite mines, where residents have long claimed they have not profited from the area's mineral wealth.

Hundreds of people remain stuck at the entrance and exit of the town, **Boureima Conde** said, unable to pass through with goods from neighbouring **Gambia**, **Guinea-Bissau** and **Senegal**. (AFP)

Hundreds massacred in DR Congo:

Congolese army commanders orchestrated a wave of massacres that killed hundreds of people between 2014-2016 as they vied for influence with anti-government insurgents in northeastern Democratic Republic of Congo, a new report said on Monday.

The report by the Congo Research Group (CRG) at New York University is the most comprehensive to date on the killings of more than 800 people and the first to offer a definite theory of the perpetrators' motives.

It is based on 249 interviews with perpetrators, eyewitnesses and victims as well as internal UN reports and arrest records that document participation in the killings.

Millions died in eastern Congo between 1996-2003 in regional conflicts and dozens of militia groups continue to operate there. But the massacres around the town of **Beni** were the most macabre and mysterious in recent memory. (RTRS)