

WORLD
world**SriLankan flight hits runway light at Kochi airport**

IANS | Kochi

SriLankan Airlines yesterday said that all 228 passengers on board its flight UL 167 were safe after the aircraft, while landing at Kochi airport, "veered toward the runway edge and caused damage to some ground lights".

According to the airline, the flight en route from Colombo to Kochi landed during an intense rain shower caused by the onset of the monsoon at 3.30 p.m. yesterday.

"Due to the ambient conditions, strong winds and heavy rain, the aircraft veered toward the runway edge and caused damage to some ground lights," the airline said in a statement.

"The flight landed safely with no injuries to passengers or crew... There was minor damage to two lights on the runway."

The flight was ferrying a total 228 passengers and 12 crew members.

Pakistan to hold general elections on July 25

IANS | Islamabad

Pakistan President Mamnoon Hussain has set July 25 as the date for the country's next general elections, the media reported yesterday.

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) had sent a summary to the President on May 21, proposing the holding of the 2018 general elections on any date between July 25 and 27.

An official from the President's Office said that Hussain had signed the summary approving July 25 as the polling date.

US officials in North Korea to prepare for possible US summit

● **Kim Jong-un has reaffirmed his commitment to Trump summit**

Reuters | Seoul

US officials crossed into North Korea yesterday to hold talks on preparations for a possible summit, a US newspaper reported, as North Korean leader Kim Jong Un reaffirmed his commitment to meet with US President Donald Trump.

Both Pyongyang and Washington are pressing ahead on plans for a meeting between the two leaders after Trump pulled out of the scheduled June 12 summit on Thursday, only to reconsider the decision next day.

The Washington Post, citing a person familiar with the arrangements, said Sung Kim, a former US ambassador to South Korea and former nuclear negotiator with the North, was leading the preparations on the US side.

He crossed into North Korean territory with Allison Hooker, the Korea expert on the White



South Korean President Moon Jae-in shakes hands with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un as he leaves after their summit at the truce village of Panmunjom

House National Security Council. They met with Choe Son Hui, the North Korean vice foreign minister, the Post said. Pentagon official Randall Schriver is also in Seoul currently, the Post said.

The meetings are expected to continue on Monday and Tuesday and are focused on the issue of North Korea's nuclear weapons program, it said.

South Korean President Moon

Jae-in said earlier that he and North's Kim agreed at a surprise meeting on Saturday that the possible North Korea-US summit must be held, Moon told a news conference in Seoul.

Kim reaffirmed his commitment to "complete" denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and to a planned meeting with Trump, Moon told a news conference in Seoul.

"Chairman Kim and I have

agreed that the June 12 summit should be held successfully, and that our quest for the Korean peninsula's denuclearization and a perpetual peace regime should not be halted," Moon said.

The meeting was the latest dramatic turn in a week of diplomatic ups and downs surrounding the prospects for an unprecedented summit between the United States and North Korea,

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and the strongest sign yet that the leaders of the two Koreas are trying to keep the on-again off-again meeting on track.

While maintaining that Kim is committed to denuclearization, Moon acknowledged Pyongyang and Washington may have differing expectations of what that means and he urged both sides to hold working-level talks to resolve their differences.

A statement from North Korea's state news agency KCNA said Kim expressed "his fixed will" on the possibility of meeting Trump as previously planned.

Palestinian President's hospital stay extended

Reuters | Ramallah, West Bank

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, who officials said is being treated for a lung infection, will remain in hospital for an eighth day yesterday.

The 82-year-old leader had been expected to be released from hospital in the occupied West Bank yesterday, but this was postponed, Abbas' office

said in a text message to journalists.

Abbas, who is a heavy smoker, was admitted on May 20 for what doctors had initially said were medical tests following ear surgery. He was shown on Palestinian television last week walking along a hospital corridor and sitting in an armchair reading a newspaper.

A Palestinian official, who spoke on condition of anonymity,

said Abbas was still undergoing treatment and would not be released on Sunday, adding that he has been holding meetings with international and Palestinian officials at his bedside.

The official Palestinian news agency Wafa ran a statement which quoted Istishari Hospital's medical director, Said Sarahneh, as saying test results show an improvement in his health.

Massive beach clean-up for Hong Kong sea turtles

Participants take part in a beach cleanup on Hong Kong's outlying Lamma Island

AFP | Hong Kong

More than two thousand volunteers hit the beach on an outlying island of Hong Kong for a mass rubbish clean up yesterday as environment campaigners warned plastic is killing sea turtles and other wildlife.

There has been increasing concern over the amount of rubbish in Hong Kong waters which washes up on its numerous beaches. Authorities and environmentalists have pointed the finger at southern mainland China as the source.

Last year, a massive palm oil spillage from a ship collision in mainland Chinese waters clogged Hong Kong beaches.

But there is evidence that Hong Kong is also to blame. In 2016, local media reported that



The summer of 2012 was the last time a female turtle laid 5 clutches of a total of 550 eggs on the beach of Sham Wan

syringes and medical waste washed ashore from clinics in the city.

Yesterday's clean-up took place on Shek Pai Wan, near Sham Wan -- known as "Turtle Cove" -- on Hong Kong's Lamma Island.

Four-month-old Panda cub makes first public appearance at Malaysia zoo

AFP | Kuala Lumpur

A four-month-old panda cub made her first public appearance Saturday at the Malaysian zoo where she was born, to the delight of visitors.

The fluffy little cub was the second born to Liang Liang, who has been on loan to Malaysia since 2014, along with a male panda, a rare success story for natural reproduction among giant pandas which are notoriously clumsy at mating on rare occasions they are in mood.

The family of three were in good health, said Mat Naim Ramli, director of national zoo's panda centre in Kuala Lumpur.

"The cub weighs nine kilograms (20 pounds). She is so



A giant panda cub made its first public appearance at the National Zoo of Malaysia near Kuala Lumpur

cute. Her growth is quite fast and she is already able to move slowly," he told reporters.

The cub's sister Nuan Nuan was born in August 2015 and

sent to China in November last year as part of Beijing's agreement with Malaysia that cubs born in captivity must go back at the age of two.

Mat Naim attributed the success of having two baby pandas born in Malaysia to having a healthy pair that "are able to accept each other".



The female cub is the second offspring of parents, who arrived in Malaysia on a loan from China