

Thousands join 'final push' to oust Thaksin

REUTERS, Bangkok
Thousands of protesters marched through Bangkok's busy shopping district yesterday in a second day of a "final push" to oust Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra before April 2 elections.

They chanted "Vote no vote" and handed out pink flags bearing the same slogan, urging people to mark the abstention box on ballot papers for the snap election Thaksin called three years early in hopes of ending a political crisis.

It was the first time the anti-Thaksin campaign, which intensified in January after his family sold their stake in the telecommunications empire he founded for a tax-free \$1.9 billion, has called systematically on people to cast their ballots.

Cellphone sets worth Tk 1.66cr seized at ZIA

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Customs officials seized cellphones along with battery packs worth around Tk 1.66 crore at the Zia International Airport (ZIA) yesterday.

Acting on a tip-off that a huge quantity of cellphones will be smuggled under false declaration, the customs officials inquired about the goods came on flight MH-196 and seized a wooden box.

They found 12 paper cartons inside it containing 4,000 cellphones and battery packs. The declaration for the shipment was 'sewing machinery,' a customs press release said.

The seized goods were sent to the customs warehouse.



President Iajuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Khaleda Zia stand in silence to pay tribute to the Liberation War martyrs after placing wreaths at the National Memorial in Savar yesterday.

Scientists say sea rise could be catastrophic

BBC ONLINE

Earth could be headed for catastrophic sea level rise in the next few centuries if greenhouse gases continue to rise at present rates, experts say.

A study in the US journal Science suggests a threshold triggering a rise in sea level of several metres could be reached before the end of the century.

Scientists used an ancient period of warming to predict future changes.

Greenland could be as warm by 2100 as it was 130,000 years ago, when melting ice raised sea levels by 3-4m.

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Clue to slow human bird flu jump

BBC ONLINE

Scientists believe they may have discovered a reason why the deadly H5N1 bird flu virus cannot yet jump easily between humans.

Flu viruses which target man tend to attach to cells further up the airway - maximising their chances of being passed on by coughing or sneezing.

Researchers found the bird flu

US to query Russia on reports of help to Iraq

AFP, Washington

The United States takes "very seriously" reports Russia gave Saddam Hussein intelligence after the 2003 invasion of Iraq and will raise them with Moscow, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said yesterday.

"We would take very seriously any suggestion that was done, maybe to the detriment of American forces," Rice said on NBC television's "Meet the Press" programme.

"Definitely we will raise it with the Russian government," the chief US diplomat said. "I would hope the Russian government would take it very seriously."

A Pentagon report released Friday said Russia gave Saddam intelligence from inside the US military command on US troop movements after the invasion that led to his ouster three years ago.

Russia's SVR foreign intelligence service however has denied the Pentagon report, which said the Russians collected information from sources in the US Central Command in Doha, Qatar, and then delivered it to Saddam.

Rice talks of conditional troops pullout from Iraq

AP, Washington

Echoing military commanders, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said yesterday the US could withdraw a significant number of troops from Iraq this year if Iraqi forces are able to assume greater control of the country's security.

"I think it's entirely probable that we will see a significant drawdown of American forces over the next year. ... It's all dependent on events on the ground," the chief American diplomat said.

Just this past week, Defence Secretary Donald H Rumsfeld declined to predict when US forces would be out of Iraq. President Bush has said that decision would be up to a future US president and a future Iraqi government.

"The level of the forces in Iraq will depend on conditions on the ground and the recommendations of the commanders," Rumsfeld

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CTG GARMENT SAFETY Move on to relocate units to industrial area

ABDULLAH AL MAHMUD, Ctg

The Chittagong Development Authority (CDA) has initiated a move against the use of residential or commercial buildings for industrial purposes to prevent frequent fire incidents in garment factories.

They fear the drastic relocation measure might leave an adverse effect on the readymade garment sector.

The Building Construction Committee (BCC) of the CDA in a recent drive identified 59 garment factories set-up in residential or commercial buildings without following proper safety and security measures as prescribed in National

Building Code.

They issued show-cause notices to the owners of the factories and the buildings, sources said. The notices asked why they were using residential or commercial buildings for garment factories.

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INDIAN OFFICE OF PROFIT ROW Congress asks partymen to stop resign spree

AGENCIES, New Delhi

Congress on Saturday said it would soon take a "joint decision" regarding the partymen involved in the office of profit controversy and asked its MPs and MLAs not to resign unnecessarily.

"The stand of the Congress is very clear. For those whose names are part of this issue, a joint decision would be taken soon," Congress General Secretary Janardhan Dwivedi told reporters.

He said whatever decision is taken would be applicable to all.

On MPs and MLAs submitting their resignations as a show of support to party president Sonia Gandhi, Dwivedi said people should not resign "in a fit of emotion."

"As far as MLAs and MPs are concerned there is no need for them to resign and give any statements in a fit of emotion since they have nothing to do with this issue," he said.

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Prayer Timing		
March 27		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-45	5-20
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-45	5-00
Maghrib	6-20	6-25
Esha	7-45	8-15

Source: Islamic Foundation

