

AAP stuns

FROM PAGE 16
70 seats.

The Congress party, led by Italian-born Sonia Gandhi, repeated its 2015 performance and once again drew a blank. Full results were expected later yesterday.

"Dilliwalon [residents of Delhi], I love you," said AAP leader Arvind Kejriwal addressing party workers in New Delhi. He called the verdict a "win for Bharat Mata (Mother India)".

Modi, whose party swept to power in national elections last year, congratulated Kejriwal, the incumbent Delhi chief minister.

"Wishing them the very best in fulfilling the aspirations of the people of Delhi," Modi tweeted.

The BJP had launched an aggressive campaign to win the city of nearly 20 million people from the AAP, using the election to rally support for the law easing citizenship rules for religious minorities from Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan, but excluding Muslims.

At least 25 people have been killed in protests over the legislation so far.

The defeat in Delhi is the latest in a string of setbacks for the BJP at regional elections over the past two years.

The results show the BJP's divisive campaigning did not seem to pay off, as voters opted for incumbent Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's pro-poor policies, say experts.

"The Delhi result is extremely important because it signals a defeat of the politics of polarisation and division that BJP unleashed here," political analyst Zoya Hasan told Al Jazeera.

"This election was perhaps the most hate-filled election in India's electoral history. The Delhi voter has given a very good message to the country that hate politics doesn't work..." said Hasan, who is also Professor Emeritus at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU).

"I hope the BJP will learn a lesson and shouldn't repeat this kind of blatant hate politics in other states that are going to elections in the next two years."

Nearly 61 percent of the capital's 14.7 million voters cast their ballots on Saturday in elections believed to be a litmus test for Modi in the wake of

deadly anti-government protests that erupted nearly two months ago.

Neha Tyagi, vice president of AAP's women wing, said: "We were expecting a win, but the way it is trending we are happy."

"People have voted for the development work that AAP has been able to deliver in the last tenure," she told Al Jazeera.

The AAP's pro-poor policies have focused on fixing state-run schools and providing free healthcare and bus fares for women during its first term.

The BJP was accused of running a campaign based on religious polarisation, with many of its leaders targeting the Muslim community, who form a little more than 10 percent of the capital's population.

The New Delhi election is being seen as a test of Modi's popularity following months of deadly nationwide anti-government protests against a new Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) that saw thousands of people take to the streets daily in the capital and across India.

The law makes it easier for non-Muslim immigrants from three neighbouring countries who came to India before 2015 to become Indian citizens, a provision that forces critics to call the legislation anti-Muslim.

The CAA and a proposed nationwide National Register of Citizens have stoked suspicion that Modi wants to turn secular India into a Hindu nation, something his party denies.

"People of Delhi have rejected BJP's politics of hate and divide," Gurucharan Singh, an AAP supporter, told Al Jazeera.

"BJP tried its best to make CAA a big election issue, but people gave its mandate to AAP on the development work it has done in the last five years and rejected BJP."

The Hindu-nationalist BJP led by Modi won a bigger majority in a general election in May, but it has lost a string of state elections since then. The party ran a campaign accusing protesters of supporting India's archrival Pakistan.



Migrants from Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Pakistan wait to be rescued by Spanish NGO Maydayteraneo's Aita Mari rescue boat in the Mediterranean international waters off the Libyan coast on Monday. 65 migrants were rescued in the operation.

PHOTO: AFP

Dhaka to seek help to stop visa trade

FROM PAGE 16

foreign affairs ministry, and the expatriates' welfare and overseas employment ministry.

The two-day meeting of the commission will be held at the Economic Relations Division (ERD). The Bangladesh team will be headed by Monowar Ahmed, secretary of the ERD, while Mahir Al Gassim, Saudi deputy minister for international affairs at the labour ministry, will lead the Saudi side.

Saudi Arabia is Bangladesh's largest trade partner in the Middle East, with an annual trade of around \$1.5 billion. An estimated 15 lakh Bangladeshis are working in the oil-rich country. Last year, they sent home remittance of \$3.65 billion -- almost 20 percent of the country's total remittance of \$18.35 billion that year.

Experts say workers going to Saudi Arabia have to pay a high cost because of brokers, who secure work visas from Saudi employers and then sell those at exorbitant prices.

A worker now has to pay up to Tk 3 lakh to go to Saudi Arabia, compared to around Tk 8 lakh in the past. Though the recruitment cost has come down, it is still very high, said an official of the expatriates' welfare ministry.

"Since the visa trade is taking place in Saudi Arabia, we will request the Saudi delegation to address the issue," the official told The Daily Star

yesterday.

In many cases, brokers trap jobseekers by saying that if they go overseas with "free visas", they can work freely. This is illegal in Saudi Arabia, the official mentioned.

Bangladesh Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Golam Moshi, on several occasions told this newspaper that the Saudi authorities detained and deported many Bangladeshi workers because they were working on such "free visas".

Under such illegal arrangement, a worker goes to the Arab country as an employee of a company there, but in reality he or she works for another firm.

The expatriates' welfare ministry official said the Bangladesh delegation at the meeting would seek Saudi intervention to stop such illegal practice.

"Also, we will request the Saudi delegation to make sure that if any Bangladeshi woman migrant worker escapes from her abusive employer, she has to be sent to the Bangladesh embassy, not back to her employer," he said.

There were cases that when abused female workers approached police, they were sent back to their employers. In such cases, these migrants faced even more abuses, the official pointed out.

Dhaka will also request Riyadh to ensure that all Bangladeshi

workers in Saudi Arabia come under insurance coverage. It is important because if a migrant worker is injured in an accident, he or she becomes vulnerable, added the official.

According to officials of the ERD and the foreign ministry, relations between the two countries have deepened in the recent years. Riyadh is keen to invest more in various sectors including energy, power, infrastructure, communication networks, high tech parks, IT, textiles and agro-based industries.

During her visit to the Kingdom in October 2018, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina urged Saudi entrepreneurs and businessmen to invest in Special Economic Zones in Bangladesh.

A ministerial-level delegation from Saudi Arabia visited Bangladesh on March 7 last year to explore business and investment opportunities here.

Seeking anonymity, an official of the foreign affairs ministry said, "Saudi Arabia is interested in a number of major projects... Issues related to the projects will feature prominently at the joint commission meeting."

The Bangladesh team is comprised of officials from the ministries of finance, foreign affairs, commerce, expatriates' welfare, home affairs, agriculture, power and energy, education, ICT, agriculture and fisheries.

War dominates Africa summit as leaders vow Libya support

AFP, Addis Ababa

African Union leaders vowed on Monday to push peace efforts in Libya, a sign of the bloc's desire to play a bigger role in resolving the continent's conflicts.

The AU leadership has complained about being overlooked in Libya-related peacemaking efforts, which have been led primarily by the UN and heavily involved European nations.

As the 55-member group wrapped up a summit, Smail Chergui, the AU's Peace and Security Council chief, offered assistance to revive Libya's faltering peace process.

"It's (the) UN itself which needs us now," Chergui said. "It's time to bring this situation to an end... the two organisations should work hand-in-hand for that goal," he added.

Libya has been torn by fighting between rival factions since a 2011 NATO-backed uprising killed dictator Muammar Gaddafi.

South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, who took over as AU chair on Sunday, has said Libya is one of two conflicts he wants to focus on during his tenure.

DU teachers

FROM PAGE 1

council, most teachers opposed the move. They again reiterate their stance during a meeting with Vice-Chancellor Md Aktaruzzaman on February 7.

A day later, Dhaka University Central Students' Union (Ducus) leaders in their executive meeting opposed the move.

The test would harm the "uniqueness and tradition" of DU admission test, they said.

DU Prof Emeritus Serajul Islam Choudhury said, "I am not in favour of introducing uniform test in public universities for two reasons."

"Firstly, there is no reliable institution in our country which can hold such a massive test. Under the system, the examinees of groups will sit for a single test, which will complicate the procedure more."

"Every university is autonomous and there are two important aspects of autonomy -- appointing teachers and enrolling students. Both should be done as per the organisation's own decisions and universities should not adopt any system that may curtail their autonomy."

DU social science faculty dean Prof Sadeka Halim said good students could be left out and the uniqueness of DU would be compromised if uniform entrance tests were given.

She said uniform admission test were being given at medical colleges and that such tests could be given at engineering universities since the subjects taught there were similar.

"In general universities, the subjects are diverse. Coordinating the large numbers of diverse subjects with other universities is no easy matter. There will be complexities in students choosing their subjects," she added.

DU Pro VC Samad said no decision has been made. "The decision of the committee comprising deans of faculties and the academic council will be final."

Sources said during the DU VC's February 7 meeting with several former vice-chancellors, emeritus professors, deans of faculties, provosts of dormitories, most participants opposed uniform entrance exams.

A section of the teachers opined that the university would lose earnings from the sale of admission forms and

teachers would lose remuneration for invigilation and answer-script checking, said a senior teacher of arts faculty.

The UGC moved for uniform admission tests after Chancellor and President Abdul Hamid on several occasions asked public universities to hold uniform admission tests to ease sufferings of students and their guardians.

According to the plan, students of humanities, science, and business studies would be eligible to take the tests on HSC syllabus.

UGC officials said several universities, including Dhaka University and Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology, were showing no interest in the uniform admission test.

UGC Chairman Prof Kazi Shahidullah on Monday said, "Expectations of the whole nation cannot remain unfulfilled due to the indecision of some universities...."

"We should be alert so that the pride of some does not affect others."

UGC member Prof Dil Afroza Begum yesterday told The Daily Star, "We are determined to hold the uniform intake test this year. If some universities, including Dhaka University, do not want to accept the process, then we will hold the test excluding them."

The education ministry in 2010 had decided to introduce a uniform admission test, dubbed the "cluster system". But it did not happen due to opposition from several major universities.

Seven public agricultural universities last year introduced a uniform admission test while 38 other public universities held separate entrance exams.

VCS FOR UNIFORM TEST
Bangladesh Bishwabidyalaya Parishad, an association of public university vice-chancellors, in a meeting yesterday decided that all universities would have a uniform admission test for the 2020-2021 academic session.

The parishad in a statement said, "The vice chancellors of all universities unanimously took the decision giving importance to the wish of the president and to reduce the hassles of students."

The VCs of DU, Buet, and Jahangirnagar University did not attend the meeting held at the Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University.

CO2 emissions

FROM PAGE 16

just another pause in growth," said Fatih Birol, the IEA's executive director.

"We have the energy technologies to do this, and we have to make use of them all," he said.

The fall in CO2 emissions in advanced economies offset growth elsewhere.

Emissions from the power industry in advanced economies fell to levels last seen in the late 1980s, when electricity demand was one third lower than today, the IEA said.

Power generation from coal plants fell by almost 15% last year due to the growth of renewable energy, fuel switching to gas, a rise in nuclear power and weaker electricity demand.

European Union emissions fell by 160 million tonnes or 5% last year from a year earlier due to more use of natural gas and wind power in electricity generation.

The United States recorded a fall of 140 million tonnes or 2.9% in

emissions from the previous year.

Japan's emissions fell by 45 million tonnes, or around 4%, as output from recently restarted nuclear reactors increased.

But emissions in the rest of the world increased by nearly 400 million tonnes in 2019, with almost 80% of the growth coming from countries in Asia where coal-fired power generation continued to rise.

China's emissions rose at a slower pace than previously due slower economic growth and higher output from low-carbon sources of electricity such as nuclear and renewables.

Emissions growth in India was "moderate" last year, according to the IEA. Coal-fired power generation in the country fell for the first time since 1973 but fossil fuel demand in other areas such as transport offset the decline in India's power industry.

Emissions grew strongly in south east Asia, driven by robust coal demand, the IEA said.

Good news for kidney patients

FROM PAGE 16

and December 2022.

The decision came up at the Ecnecc meeting with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair.

Experts have welcomed the decision and said the mass people would be benefitted if the project is implemented properly.

Chronic kidney diseases (CKD) is a slow and progressive loss of kidney function over a period of several years.

In Bangladesh, around two

crore people suffer from CKD each year, according to the Kidney Foundation.

Of them, some 40,000 suffer from complete kidney failure and only 20 percent of this 40,000 patients receive treatment.

"Our study reveals that 75 percent of patients who start kidney dialysis stop taking it within six months due to their inability to bear the expenses," Prof Harun-Ur-Rashid, president of Kidney Foundation recently told The

Daily Star.

Prof AK Azad Khan, president of Bangladesh Diabetic Association yesterday told this newspaper, "This is certainly a good decision. People would get benefit from it."

"Any dialysis centre requires operation cost. We hope these would run properly," he added.

Meanwhile, the Ecnecc also approved eight more projects in the same meeting involving around Tk 2,167 crore.

Family calls for release of Khaleda

FROM PAGE 16

government to consider her ailment, physical condition, and age. "She should either be released or granted bail on humanitarian grounds. We make this call to the government and demand her unconditional release."

Selima said the BNP chief even cannot stand for five minutes without help from others. "The distance from her room to the washroom is very short, but it takes her around 20 minutes to get there. Her left hand has got bent completely while the right one is also getting bent."

She also said her sister was unable to eat due to vomiting problem as she was suffering from fever and serious pains in her body. Besides, her diabetic problem also remains beyond control.

'Lethargy won't be tolerated'

FROM PAGE 16

introduction of Bangla as the medium of instruction in all educational institutions of the country up to secondary level with immediate effect.

The government also declares uniform tuition fees for all government and non-governmental educational institutions in the country, except universities.

The Bangladesh Television Corporation will start telecasting a local news bulletin in Bangla with effect from February 14.

FRANCE, ITALY AND IRISH REPUBLICALISE BANGLADESH

France, Italy and Irish Republic accord recognition to Bangladesh. In a press statement on the French decision to recognise Bangladesh, Bangabandhu says, "I am very happy indeed to get recognition from a great country like

France whose democratic tradition and rich cultural heritage are respected all over the world.

"It is our earnest hope that fruitful cooperation and understanding between our two countries will steadily develop in future in all possible fields."

"On this occasion, it is also gratifying for us to note that now three of the five permanent members of the Security Council have formally recognised Bangladesh as a sovereign and independent state."

FOREIGN TRADE WILL BE NATIONALISED

Commerce Minister MR Siddiqui announces that foreign trade will be nationalised. Referring to trade with India the minister says that it will be handled primarily by the government.

"While the export and import policies remain to be worked out it has already been decided that private

including Selima, her younger brother Shamim Eskandar's wife Kaniz Fatema and her son Ovik Eskandar, Tarique Rahman's sister-in-law Shahina Zaman Bindu and Arafat Rahman Koko's mother-in-law Mukrema Reza, went to meet Khaleda around 3:30pm. They stayed there for about an hour, said Shamsuddin Didar, a member of the BNP chairperson's media wing.

Khaleda has been behind bars since February 8, 2018 when she was convicted in the Zia Orphanage Trust corruption case. Later that year, she was found guilty in another graft case.

However, her party claims both cases are politically motivated.

The BNP chief has been receiving treatment at the BSMMU since April 1 last year.

agencies would continue to have trading licenses for the while. A new Bangalee business class has to be created to replace the past business community where Bangalees had little access," adds the minister.

REPATRIATION TO PAKISTAN WON'T BE DIFFICULT

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad says that those in Bangladesh who want to be repatriated to Pakistan will have no difficulties in doing so. "The UN have been told by certain quarters that the Non-Bengalis here are leading a wretched life. While this is misleading, the truth is that the recalcitrant among them have been disarmed and that is about all," he adds.

SOURCES: February 13, 1972 issues of Dainik Bangla, The Daily Ittefaq, Azad, Morning News, The Bangladesh Observer and Purbodesh.

OIC to sit

FROM PAGE 2

has set up a dedicated account to facilitate the resource mobilisation efforts.

The 45th OIC CFM held in Dhaka established an OIC Ad Hoc Ministerial Committee on Accountability for Human Rights Violations Against the Rohingya, with The Gambia as chair, with a view to mobilising and coordinate international political support, particularly through the 57-member OIC process.

Following a submission by the Gambia, on behalf of the OIC, the ICJ held its first hearing on December 10-12 in 2019 in the case against Myanmar for its gross violation of human rights against the Rohingya.

On the sidelines of the SOM, Foreign Secretary Momen held a meeting with the members of the Ad Hoc Ministerial Committee on Accountability for Human Rights Violations Against the Rohingya.

The Bangladesh foreign secretary appreciated the Gambian delegation for their dedication to the Rohingya cause in lodging the case with the ICJ.

Suspected drug

FROM PAGE 16

Jebu, 45, was accused in 12 drug cases, said Abdul Mannan Mia, superintendent of police (SP) in Noagaon.

The SP said detective branch (DB) of police arrested Jebu from Delubaria area of the upazila on Monday evening.

Gleaning information from him, a team of DB police, along with Jebu, went to Bharsho area in the upazila to recover more drugs around 3:00am.

Sensing presence of the law enforcers, a gang of drug peddlers opened fire on them, forcing them to retaliate that eventually triggered a "gunfight", SP Mannan said.

Three policemen and Jebu were injured during the incident and they were taken to Manda Upazila Health Complex were doctors declared Jebu dead, he said.

The three policemen -- Assistant Sub Inspector Mehdi Hasan, Constable Rupon Hossain and Constable Shimul Mir -- were shifted to Naogaon General Hospital for better treatment.

Talking to The Daily Star, Jebu's wife Nur Jahan Begum said her husband gave up drug dealing a couple of months ago.

"This is not justice. Killing someone in this way cannot be accepted," she said.