NEWS IN BRIEF

Hyderabad flood toll hits 30

At least 30 people have been killed because of sudden torrential rains and flooding in southern India, officials said yesterday. In Hyderabad city, home to top IT companies, nine people were killed when a wall collapsed on them and 10 others died from electrocution and drowning, a local official told AFP. Dramatic images showed cars being washed away by swirling waters, bridges submerged by swollen rivers and trucks stranded on roads inundated by flooding Wednesday. Personnel from the army and the National Disaster Response Force have been deployed to evacuate stranded residents.

Kyrgyzstan president resigns

Kyrgyz President Sooronbai Jeenbekov resigned yesterday after days of unrest following a disputed election, saying he wanted to prevent clashes between security forces and protesters who have demanded his removal from office. He becomes the third president of the Central Asian nation since 2005 to be toppled in a popular uprising. Kyrgyzstan, a Russian ally that borders China, has been in turmoil since the Oct 4 parliamentary polls, which the opposition rejected after Jeenbekov's allies were declared the winners. After the election, opposition supporters took to the streets and seized government buildings, prompting the authorities to annul the vote.

Oxford scientists develop 5 mins Covid-19 antigen test

Scientists from Britain's University of Oxford have developed a rapid Covid-19 test able to identify the coronavirus in less than five minutes, researchers said yesterday, adding it could be used in mass testing at airports and businesses. The university said it hoped to start product development of the testing device in early 2021 and have an approved device available six months afterwards. The device is able to detect the coronavirus and distinguish it from other viruses with high accuracy, the researchers said in a pre-print study.

Anwar summoned over list of backers for Malaysia PM bid

Malaysian police have summoned opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim to assist investigations into a viral list of federal lawmakers allegedly backing his bid to claim the premiership, a senior police official said yesterday. Anwar had been asked to give a statement today over complaints filed with the police about a list of 121 lawmakers said to be backing his bid for the premiership, which had gone viral on social media. Huzir said investigations were guided by provisions under the penal code and a separate multimedia law covering statements that could cause public mischief or harassment.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS

Vote early, vote massively

Democrats tells Americans as Trump stokes fears of contested election

AGENCIES

US ELECTION 2020 | 17 DAYS TO GO

Democratic leaders have been urging Joe Biden supporters to show up in huge numbers and vote early amid concerns that nothing short of a decisive victory will prevent Republican President Donald Trump from contesting the results, potentially opening the way for state legislatures, the courts or Congress to decide the outcome.

Trump continues to trail Biden by as much as 17 points in the national polls and acknowledged his concern during his latest rally appearance in Des Moines, Iowa, on Wednesday night, telling his loyal crowd: "For me to only be up six [in Iowa], I'm a little bit concerned, I'll tell you that."

> The US president admits concern over polls and begs for fresh support
>
> Biden camp raised record $383 million in September

In a further sign of his desperation, the president later tweeted an astonishing plea to voters in the solidly-Democratic state of California, asking them "WHAT THE HELL DO YOU HAVE TO LOSE?" in voting for him.

Biden announced via Twitter that his campaign raised a record $383 million in September, adding to a campaign warchest that is already dwarfing the Trump campaign. Biden has $432 million cash on hand, the campaign said.

Trump has repeatedly and without evidence declared mail voting to be riddled with fraud and the election "rigged" in favor of Democrats, all the while refusing to commit to ceding power peacefully if he loses.

Nationally, 14.6 million people have already cast ballots by mail or through in-person voting, compared to roughly 1.4 million at the same point four years ago, according to the United States Elections Project. And, data shows, most of them are Democrats.

While early turnout is encouraging for Democrats, the Biden camp is preparing for the worst.

Democrats say their turnout campaign is especially critical this year as Republicans seek to restrict mail-in voting despite the pandemic, and both parties fight over how votes are tallied in key states. Dozens of lawsuits have been filed in multiple states, many focused on mail-in voting.

Then there are the post-election preparations. Biden's national legal team is examining a series of scenarios, including those in which Trump casts doubt on the integrity of a close contest, campaign advisors said. Among them is the possibility that a lengthy or disputed count of mail ballots could result in Republican-controlled legislatures in key states intervening to award their Electoral College vote to Trump.

The US presidency is clinched by winning a majority of the 538 votes apportioned to the 50 states and Washington DC in the Electoral College. Hillary Clinton, the 2016 Democratic nominee, won the national popular vote by nearly three million votes but lost the Electoral College, and thus the presidency.

Typically, governors certify the results in their respective states and share the information with Congress. But it is possible for "dueling" slates of electors to emerge, in which the governor and the legislature in a closely contested state could submit two different election results.

The risk of this happening is heightened in states where the legislature is controlled by a different party than the governor. Several battleground states, including Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin, have Democratic governors and Republican-controlled legislatures.

According to legal experts, it is unclear in this scenario whether Congress should accept the governor's electoral slate or not count the state's electoral votes at all.

PROTESTS IN THAILAND

THINGS TO KNOW

WHAT DO THE PROTESTERS WANT?

The protesters are rallying against the government of Prime Minister Prayut Chan-O-Cha. The former army chief led a coup in 2014 and kept the kingdom under military rule for five years. Under the junta, a new constitution was drafted before elections were held last year. Prayut was voted in to lead a civilian government -- a win analysts say was tilted by the new charter's provisions. Protesters say the whole process was a stitch-up and are calling for parliament to be dissolved, the constitution rewritten. They also have a list of 10 demands for the monarchy, including throwing out a defamation law that shields the powerful royal family from criticism.

WHY NOW?

Discontent has been simmering since February when the leaders of Future Forward Party, popular among young people, were banned from politics. A pandemic lockdown, which sent Thailand's economy into freefall, exposed the chasm between the billionaire class and the poor. And in June, prominent activist Wanchalearm Satsaksit disappeared triggering huge outcry online. The online campaign spilled offline mid-July and a wave of protests across the country began. Wednesday's demonstration in particular has drawn the ire of authorities because of the reaction of protesters encountering a royal motorcade.

WHAT'S DIFFERENT THIS TIME?

True, Thailand has seen a cycle of violent street protests and military coups over the decades. But in the past the protest movements had vast financial and political clout behind them. Today's student demonstrators say there is no single leader -- a strategy partly inspired by the Hong Kong pro-democracy protests. Daring to take on the taboo topic of the monarchy is also a first. Under the constitution, the royals -- including super-rich King Maha Vajiralongkorn -- are supposed to stay out of politics, but they wield enormous clout in politics and military.

WHAT COMES NEXT?

Despite the emergency decree banning protests and gathering of more than four people, protest leaders vowed to push ahead with demonstrations. Political analyst Thitinan Pongsudhirak from Chulalongkorn University says the situation is now "fluid and combustible". While the movement has suffered a setback because of the arrests of key leaders, it is likely to "maintain traction because popular grievances are so wide and deep", Thitinan says. "Repression without any reform will lead to more radicalisation and conflict... This is Thailand's grinding transformation to arrive in the 21st century."

SOURCE: AFP

Fate of Brexit talks hangs in balance at EU summit

AFP, *Brussels*

European leaders meet yesterday seemingly determined to resist pressure from Prime Minister Boris Johnson to give ground in post-Brexit trade negotiations.

The 27 leaders have tried to keep Brexit off the agenda at their recent summits, trusting in EU negotiator Michel Barnier to defend their interests. But Johnson, frustrated at the slow progress towards a new trade deal, warned on Wednesday that he would decide after the meeting whether to pull the plug on talks.

He has warned that he could walk away from the negotiations unless the results of the latest two-day Brussels' summit point the way to a breakthrough, but EU officials do not recognise his deadline, and insist they remain united in their demands.

The leaders were to tackle Brexit first when the gather for their summit in Brussels yesterday, but a draft of their conclusions seen by AFP offered little to London.

A earlier version circulating on Wednesday had proposed that Barnier "intensify" his discussions with UK negotiator David Frost in order to reach a deal quickly that could be ratified and implemented before Britain leaves the single market on December 31.

But the latest draft seen by AFP as the leaders gathered had dropped this word and says merely that the summit urges negotiators "to continue negotiations in the coming weeks, and calls on the UK to make the necessary moves to make an agreement possible."

During a cross-Channel call on the eve of the crunch talks, EU chief Ursula von der Leyen warned that there was "still a lot of work ahead of us" adding that Brussels wants a deal but "not at any price".

If no deal is reached, trade rules will revert to the bare bones of World Trade Organization regulations.

US moves on Tibet, Taiwan anger China

REUTERS, *Washington*

China yesterday accused the United States of seeking to destabilise Tibet, after the Trump administration appointed a senior human rights official as special coordinator for Tibetan issues.

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced on Wednesday that Robert Destro, Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, would assume the additional post, which has been vacant since 2017.

China has consistently refused to deal with the US coordinator, seeing it as interference in its internal affairs.

The appointment comes at a time when US-China relations have sunk to the lowest point in decades over a range of issues, including trade, Taiwan, human rights, the South China Sea and the coronavirus.

Meanwhile Beijing said yesterday accused Washington of seriously undermining peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait after a US Navy destroyer sailed through the waters amid escalating tensions between Beijing and Taipei.

China considers Taiwan a wayward province that needs to be reunited with the mainland, by force if needed. The US, on the other hand, has stepped up support, including high-tech military equipment and fighter jets, for the island recently to support what it considers an important democratic outpost.

Pro-democracy protesters hold up flashlights on the phones during a demonstration in Bangkok yesterday, after Thailand issued an emergency decree following an anti-government rally the previous day. PHOTO: AFP

Experts slam 'dangerous fallacy' of herd immunity

WHO chief warns thousands more underfed children may die due to coronavirus pandemic

AGENCIES

Proponents of allowing the new coronavirus to circulate among populations in the hope of achieving herd immunity are promoting a "dangerous fallacy" devoid of scientific proof, dozens of health experts said Thursday.

In an open letter published in The Lancet medical journal, more than 80 specialists from universities across the world said that the only effective way of limiting excess deaths during the pandemic was to control the disease's spread.

The letter comes after numerous US media this week reported that senior Trump administration officials had voiced support for an online declaration advocating herd immunity which gathered more than 9,000 signatories worldwide.

The authors of yesterday's letter said that the social and economic impacts of confinement had led to "widespread demoralisation and diminishing trust" in government measures to get a handle on the virus.

The second wave has also led to a renewed interest in so-called herd immunity, which suggests allowing a large uncontrolled outbreak among people considered to be at low risk of death or serious illness from the virus.

The health experts listed numerous flaws in the concept.

Firstly, "uncontrolled transmission in younger people risks significant morbidity and mortality across the whole population," the letter said.

This would have a catastrophic human and financial cost, besides overwhelming healthcare systems.

The authors also noted that it is possible to become reinfected with Covid-19. Herd immunity offers no guarantee that those who caught the virus would remain immune to it for any meaningful length of time. This would present a risk to vulnerable populations for "the indefinite future", the authors said. Such a strategy would result in "recurrent epidemics" of Covid-19 similar to those caused by numerous infectious diseases before vaccines were invented.

Meanwhile, WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus on Wednesday said an extra 10,000 children per month may die this year from malnutrition due to the Covid-19 crisis. He told a UN Food and Agriculture (FAO) conference that due to the pandemic he expected a 14% rise in cases of severe child malnutrition this year - or 6.7 million more people - mostly in sub-Saharan Africa and south Asia.

Presidential self-pardon an 'open question'

Says Trump's SC pick

REUTERS, *Washington*

President Donald Trump's Supreme Court nominee, Amy Coney Barrett, said on Wednesday it was an "open question" whether Trump could pardon himself and added that the top US judicial body "can't control" whether a president obeys its decisions.

She also sought to allay Democratic fears that she would be an automatic vote to strike down the Obamacare healthcare law in a case due to be argued Nov. 10, promising an "open mind."

Barrett wrapped up about eight hours of questioning on the third day of her four-day Senate Judiciary Committee confirmation hearing. The committee was to hear yesterday from witnesses both for and against her confirmation, but Barrett herself will not be present.

Trump has said he has the "absolute power" to pardon himself, part of his executive clemency authority. Asked by Democratic Senator Patrick Leahy whether a president could pardon himself for a crime, Barrett said the "question has never been litigated."

"That question may or may not arise but it's one that calls for legal analysis of what the scope of the pardon power is. So because it would be opining on an open question when I haven't gone through the judicial process to decide it, it's not one on which I can offer a view," Barrett added.

Trump also has issued executive clemency to political allies and friends.

Barrett, a conservative federal appellate judge, is Trump's third selection for a lifetime Supreme Court post. Trump has asked the Senate to confirm Barrett before the Nov 3 US election.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change
Bangladesh Climate Change Trust
Old "Ban Bhaban (6th floor)-101, Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212.

Request for Expression of Interest (EOI)

1.	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change.
2.	Agency	Bangladesh Climate Change Trust (BCCT).
3.	Procuring Entity Name	Bangladesh Climate Change Trust (BCCT).
4.	Procuring Entity Code	None
5.	Procuring Entity District	Dhaka
6.	Invitation for	Hiring of Consultant for delivering expert services to the Bangladesh Climate Change Trust for being 1. National Implementing Entity (NIE) to access Green Climate Fund and 2. To formulate a unique and coordinated work-plan for BCCT considering its dynamic activities.
7.	Number of Consultant	1 (One)
8.	Invitation Ref. No	22.06.0000.120.14.25-2018
9.	Date	08th October 2020
10.	Budget & Source of Funds	BCCT Knowledge hub Project (GoB)
11.	Development Partners (if applicable)	None
12.	Project/Program Code (if applicable)	None
13.	Project/Program Name (if applicable)	Institutionalization of BCCT as a Centre of Excellence through Co-ordination of Climate Finance, Research and Knowledge Management.
14.	EOI Package Nos	S1 (Procurement of Service) and
15.	EOI Package Name	Selection Consultant
16.	Procurement Methood	QCBS (Quality and Cost base Selection)
17.	EOI Publication Date	10th October 2020 03.00 pm
18.	EOI submission Closing Date & Time	05th November 2020 03.00 pm
19.	EOI Opening Date & Time	05th November 2020 03.10 pm
20.	EOI submission Place	Old "Ban Bhaban (6th Floor), 101 Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212.
21.	Brief description of Assignment	Considering the demands of the accreditation process, Bangladesh Climate Change Trust (BCCT under MoEFCC) requires the services of consultants who are familiar with environmental, climate change, gender and development issues and have an understanding and experience of the funding landscape for Climate Change related activities and of the workings of the Green Climate Fund. The consultant's main responsibility would be (1) to prepare and fulfill the requirements of the accreditation process, assess BCCT's readiness and take adequate steps, produce as well as formulate any additional required papers and policies for being National Implementing Entity (NIE). (2) a unique and coordinated work-plan formulation for BCCT considering its dynamic activities.
22.	Qualification & Experience of the Consultant	• Minimum 10 years of experience in the field of Environmental/Climate Change and/or social sustainability and assessment in an national and international development context • Minimum master's degree in field related to Development studies, Economics, Environmental and/or social Science, Finance, Environmental Politics, International Relations, Geography and Environment, Agriculture, Climate Change and others related subjects/studies. • Familiarity with the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and its procedures relating to Accreditation of National Implementing Entities (NIE). • Excellent communication and drafting skills in English. • Ability to work with limited supervision, self-motivated, objective-oriented. The details will be available in ToR
23.	Other information	1) Consultant will be selected in accordiance with the Public Procurement Act 2006 & Public Procurement Rules-2008. 2) Interested applicants may obtain related information (if required) from the office of undersigned from 9.00 am to 4.00 pm. (except holidays). 3) Envelop containing one original application/proposal (EOI) along with relevant supporting documents to be maked on envelop "Expression of Interest (EOI) for selection of Consultaunt". 4) Late Submission will be rejected.
24.	Name of Official Inviting EOI	Bangladesh Climate Change Trust (BCCT).
25.	Designation of Official EOI	Director (Development, Planning & Negotiation) and Project Director
26.	Address of Official EOI	Old "Ban Bhaban (6th Floor), 101 Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212.
27.	Contact details of Official Inviting Tender	Ph: 01716414659 E-mail: nasir6318@gmail.com
28.	The EOI will be available in the website of Bangladesh Climate Change Trust.	
29.	The authority reserves all rights to accept or reject any/all EOIs without assigning any reason thereof.	
30.	Those who have applied for the same post against the previous circular, need not to apply.	

(Nasir-ud-Doula)
Director (Deputy Secretary)
Planning, Development & Negotiation, BCCT
and
Project Director

GD-1645