

India : Third round of poll today

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rival parties struggle to form and maintain coalitions.

To form the government, a winning party or alliance will need 257 representatives in the Lok Sabha. The policy-making lower house of Parliament will have a total of 512 elected seats.

The poll showed that Gandhi's assassination had led to an increase in support for the Congress in northern India, but had the opposite effect in the south.

Counting of votes begins Sunday. The government is to be sworn in before June 20, when the newly elected Lok Sabha, or house of the people, will be called into session.

The elections, the most violent in the history of the world's largest democracy, began May 20 but were postponed three weeks because of the assassination of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi the next day. The second round of voting was conducted Wednesday, and the final round will be held Saturday. At stake tomorrow are the electoral fortunes of some 2,653 candidates running for 186 seats in the Lok Sabha.

At least 250 people have been killed in the campaign and in the voting. Polarised political campaigning led to religious rioting between majority Hindus and minority Muslims in some areas last

month.

Divisiveness has also spread because of caste divisions among Hindus and separatist revolts by minorities in at least three states. The country's economy is in bad shape — it had to pledge part of its gold reserves last month to earn the foreign exchange needed to purchase essential imports.

Chandra Shekhar

Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar said he does not think a situation would arise after the poll in which no government is able to be constituted.

"If no party gets a majority, then two or three parties can combine to work for a majority," he told "Onlooker" magazine in an interview carried by its latest issue.

Asked if he saw the prospect of another election, immediately, the Prime Minister said "I don't know, if no government is constituted, then we may have, but I don't think that situation is going to arise."

Chandra Shekhar said there is no need to take a pessimistic view, "the Indian people are mature enough."

Asked about reports that his friends in the Congress were trying to induct him to the party, Chandra Shekhar said no friend had met him to invite him to the Congress.

"If the invitation comes I shall think over it," he said.

'No more pledging of gold'

Chandra Shekhar today ruled out further pledging of gold abroad and said instead "other avenues" to get assistance to improve the foreign exchange reserve were being tried.

Strongly defending the move by the Reserve Bank of India to pledge 20 tonnes of confiscated gold, the Prime Minister said the government did not commit "a crime" through this measure. It had helped in improving the balance of payment position and the reserves to meet exigencies, he said.

In an exclusive interview with the PTI in New Delhi, the Prime Minister said that the decision to pledge the confiscated gold from smugglers was taken by the Reserve Bank of India "with my consent."

This was discussed at all levels "but I take the responsibility. I don't want to involve anybody," he said adding that the measure was taken to "retrieve" the economic situation worsened by foreign loans taken by his predecessor, V P Singh.

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JP calls half-day hartal in Rangpur

RANGPUR, June 14: A half-day hartal called by Ershad Mukti Parishad begins here from 6 am to 2 pm tomorrow (Saturday) to protest the verdict of the Special Tribunal which awarded former President Hussain Mohammad Ershad 10 years rigorous imprisonment Wednesday, reports UNB.

BNP's amendment bill

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ther restrict floor crossing in the House by prohibiting even formation of groups by dissent or deserting members or parties.

Article 70 of the Constitution provides that "A person elected as a member of parliament in an election in which he was nominated as a candidate by a political party shall vacate his seat if he resigns from the party or votes against that party."

Similar provision is there also in the Indian Constitution. But in the recent past, MPs, deserting a party, successfully evaded punishment by identifying themselves as new groups.

A proposal to make a provision against desertion by coalition partners before the expiry of the term of a parliament was dropped at a high level meeting of BNP at the Prime Minister's office 'Sugandha' late Thursday night on the plea that it would be too undemocratic.

The amendment bill will seek to abolish the posts of Vice-President and Deputy Prime Ministers.

The bill will propose a transitional provision in the Fourth Schedule under Article 150 of the Constitution to validate the appointment of Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed as Vice-President and to allow him to go back to the Supreme Court Bench.

Reliable sources say BNP leaders have started informal exchange of ideas with opposition political parties to ensure smooth passage of the proposed bill. "Areas of differences have been minimised in the proposed bill," said one of the members of BNP's bill drafting body.

But what will be the differences between the bill being introduced by BNP and the one submitted by Awami League leader Abdus Samad Azad? The text of the AL-proposed bill has already been made public.

An analysis of the bill prepared by AL shows that it has not touched the preamble and the first 10 articles of the Constitution. BNP also wants to retain those provisions.

In respect of the remaining part of the Constitution, the AL bill seeks to omit or substitute certain provisions under a total of 30 articles to the extent that the 1972 Constitution stands revived. The only deviation is the proposal to make a transitional provision to ensure the return of the Acting President to the Supreme Court Bench.

A constitutional expert of BNP said their bill in essence would be similar to that of AL. "But this is 1990, not 1972," he said adding, some provisions would be slightly updated.

He said there might be differences over the provision enabling the government to appoint up to one-fifth of the ministers from among non-MPs, which BNP will prefer to retain in order to get the services of capable persons in running the government.

Indications are there that AL and its allies may oppose this provision and instead press for reviving a clause of the 1972 Constitution which reads: "A minister who at the time of his appointment is not a member of parliament, shall unless elected as a member of parliament within a period of six months from the date of appointment, cease to be a minister."



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia Friday visited the bereaved family of Mohammadpur Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal leader Zafar Islam Runu who was slaughtered by miscreants Tuesday night. —PID photo

Pinatubo shoots ash cloud 15 miles up in the air

MANILA, June 14: Mount Pinatubo exploded again under heavy rains today, heightening the danger of mudflows cascading down the volcano, reports AFP.

Pinatubo's fourth major eruption in three days sent a massive ash cloud shooting 25 kilometers (15 miles) up in the air, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (PHIVOLCS) said.

A siren sounded inside the US Clark Air Base as the volcano exploded at about 1:30 pm (0530 GMT), but some 1,500 base personnel who were massed for an evacuation did not immediately leave the base.

Philippine Defence Secretary Fidel Ramos was at Clark when the volcano went off. After viewing the volcano, he left for Camp O' Donnell, a nearby communication facility.

The ash cloud and rain darkened the mid-afternoon sky over the base, witnesses said.

Radio station DZMM, re-

ported from the other side of the volcano, said ash particles were "falling like rain" on surrounding cities and towns as winds blew the volcanic emissions southward.

AP adds: President Corason Aquino on Friday described as "baseless" a British report that Washington warned the Philippine and Hong Kong governments of a possible nuclear accident because of volcanic activity near Clark Air Base.

On Thursday, the London-based Guardian newspaper said the Americans declared a nuclear alert at Clark late Wednesday and the "Hong Kong and the Philippine governments were both informed that a nuclear accident in the region was possible."

In Washington, Defence Department spokesman Pete Williams said munitions stored at Clark are "safe and secure" but he refused to say whether they included nuclear weapons.

The US Embassy has also denied that any nuclear alert was called.

AFP adds: Typhoon Yunia, packing maximum winds of 140 kilometers (87 miles) per hour was charted today approaching the main Philippine island of Luzon, the government weather station reported here.

The typhoon was charted shortly before sundown 250 kilometers (155 miles) east of Manila, moving at 11 kilometers (6.8 miles) per hour northwest towards the western side of Luzon.

In Japan, a volcano that erupted earlier this month and killed 39 people could explode again soon, according to scientists studying Mount Unzen's growing lava dome.

"It's in a danger situation," Makoto Nishiwaki, an official with the Meteorological Agency's Seismological and Volcanological Department, said Friday. "It wouldn't be strange if it were to erupt at any time."



A Tamil couple in Madras looks on Friday at posters of Sonia Gandhi with her husband's ashes in urns and the mutilated body of Rajiv Gandhi. The third round of voting in takes place in India today. —AFP photo

UN to take control of Dohuk

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the first from a front-line position.

Iraq resisted allied efforts to make Dohuk part of the security zone, saying the city was a provincial capital.

Earlier this week, allied military officials told The Associated Press that coalition forces will leave Iraq in less than two months.

Kuwait's government has asked US troops to stay at least through September.

On Thursday, the first of the 5,300 soldiers of the US Army's 3rd Armoured Division,

deployed in December, left Kuwait to be replaced by 3,700 from the 11th Armoured Cavalry Regiment based in Germany.

The 3rd Armoured Division fought in the 100-hour ground war that ended February 28, then helped with refugee relief efforts in southern Iraq.

The expected departure of allied forces from northern Iraq has some Kurds fearing another crackdown by Saddam Hussein's forces.

But tensions eased slightly Thursday when Iraq said it would help in the wheat har-

vest. About one-third of Iraq's total crop is growing in fields around the allied-controlled security zone, according to US State Department and UN figures. Iraq faces a severe food shortage and wheat is a staple of the Iraqi diet.

Fred Cuny, an official with the US State Department's Disaster Assistance Relief Team, said Baghdad only agreed to help with the harvest after the United States threatened to gather the wheat itself and give it all to the Kurds.



Samajtantrik Sramik Front brought out a procession in the capital yesterday demanding announcement of wage commission award. —Star photo

BFUJ will go for movement for pay hike

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) in a meeting of its executive committee on Friday decided to announce programme for movement to press home the demand for higher wages.

The meeting, presided over by BFUJ President Reazuddin Ahmed, viewed that the wages and allowances of the journalists did not increase since 1986. As prices of essentials have increased during the period, the working journalists are economically hard pressed, the meeting said.

The meeting also viewed with concern the dilly-dallying tactics of the newspaper authorities in realising the three-point demand of the Chittagong Union of Journalists and in implementing the agreement with them.

The meeting urged the newspaper authorities to accept the demands of the CUJ and sought government intervention in this regard.

The meeting also demanded reinstatement of those journalists who were terminated and reiterated the demand for arrest of the owner-editor and the adviser of the Dainik Desh. The meeting urged the government to rearrange publication of the only national daily from the North Bengal, the Dainik Barta, and solve the economic problems being faced by the newspapers of the Trustee Boards.

The meeting also expressed deep concern at the arbitrary use of the amended criminal penal code.

Kader Siddiky

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years under special circumstances". He returned to Bangladesh on December 16 last year after the ouster of the autocratic regime.

The statement deplored the arrest of Kader Siddiky on January 17 and alleged that the self-confessed killers of Bangabandhu were given shelter by the government while the man who protested the killing has been detained.

The AL MPs expressed concern about the illness of Kader Siddiky who was under treatment in the Prison Cell of P.O. Hospital.

Aspirin

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"encouraging" and adds to growing medical evidence, Collins said results from even larger, ongoing studies are needed to confirm that aspirin has no dangerous side effects, and to identify precisely who needs to be treated.

The team studied 229 women from 25 French medical centers who already had two pregnancies with a dangerously small fetus, among the smallest 5 per cent recorded at that center.

Only 13 per cent of babies born to women who received the drugs had growth problems in the womb, compared to 26 per cent of babies born to untreated women, said Breart.

The study showed no evidence that aspirin during pregnancy increases the risk of maternal or fetal bleeding, said Breart.

Gunbattle

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the clashes originated from hot exchange of words between the student groups over possession of a room (No. 337/Ka) of the Jagannath Hall.

BCL(S-A) workers had been residing in the two-seated room of the east block of the hall since long. But recently, the room was allotted by the authorities for the BCL (S-A) workers. Conflicts locked both the sides were adamant to keep the room under their occupations.

Witnesses said, the BCL(S-A) workers aided by some armed outsiders first started firing gunshots at their rivals belonging to BCL(S-A). The attackers chased the BCL (S-A) activists out of the hall.

Later, the BCL (S-A) workers of Jagannath hall along with a large number of their fellow workers from the Jahurul Huq hall, all armed with firearms and sticks, stormed the Jagannath hall area and started attacking their rivals. The gunbattle between the groups continued till 2.30 am.

BCL (S-A) workers, after eliminating their rivals from the area, started ransacking the rooms of BCL(S-A) workers. Earlier, BCL(S-A) workers also ransacked the October Memorial Museum and several BCL (S-A) rooms.

At one stage, police entered the hall premises and asked the armed students to stop firing. But the clashing students did not pay heed to the police request and continued their violent acts. Later police came out of the hall and took position near the Central Shaheed Minar.

The Midnight File

Baghdad denies Iranian claims

NICOSIA, June 14: Baghdad on Friday denied Iranian claims that it was preparing to attack Shiite Muslims in southern Iran and warned Tehran that it should remember the lessons of the Iran-Iraq war. Also Friday, UN teams from both countries met on their southern border to discuss plans for displaced Iraqi Shiites to return from Iran to their homes in Iraq, the Tehran office of the UN High Commissioner on Refugees said, reports AP.

Not bomb but anti-theft alarm

MILAN, June 14: A man about to board a Pan Am flight to New York was held Friday for questioning after airport police seized his briefcase. But what police thought could be a detonator turned out to be an anti-theft alarm, the airline said. In New York, Pan Am spokesman Alan Loflin said that at first officials didn't know what the device was but "three independent inspections later determined it was a briefcase alarm, reports AP."

3 killed in rocket fire in Kabul

ISLAMABAD, June 14: Three people were killed and two injured today when two rockets fired by Afghan Mujahedeen fell on Kabul. The rockets, which fell on the fifth and sixth precincts also damaged two houses, the state run radio, monitored here, said, reports AFP.

June summit of G-15 postponed

CARACAS, June 14: The group of 15 developing nations has postponed a June summit in Venezuela until November since five members would not have been able to attend this month. Venezuelan Foreign Minister Armando Duran said. The group grew out of the Non-Aligned Movement with the goal of improving south-south relations, reports Reuter.

Peggy Ashcroft dead

LONDON, June 14: Oscar-winning British Actress Dame Peggy Ashcroft died in hospital here today aged 83. She was hospitalised three weeks ago and had been in a coma ever since, a hospital spokesman said, reports AFP.

Khaleda : China

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by us in our sorrows and happiness."

As regards economic and trade cooperation, the Prime Minister said, China is the most advanced among the developing countries and its economic and technological development is really remarkable. She said China could extend help and assistance in many ways to the poor developing countries like Bangladesh. "We can utilise Chinese experience in our development activities," she added.

Khaleda Zia said there was now a Joint Economic Commission to enhance bilateral economic cooperation between Bangladesh and China. Trade between the two countries has developed steadily over the years, she added.

The Prime Minister said Barter Protocol No 13 would be signed soon. She expressed the hope that barter trade should further be expanded and diversified in order to increase trade relations between the two countries.

She said this would result in the reduction of the trade imbalance now existing between the two countries.

On the economic side Khaleda Zia said Bangladesh could benefit from China's experiences in its various developmental activities like flood management, population control, communications, rural development, industry and infrastructure. "China is our sincere friend and it is this friendship that will impel expansion of cooperation in all fields between our two countries, she added.

Replying to questions on the present situation in South Asia, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia said Bangladesh was making sincere efforts in the pursuit of peace, stability and progress in this region.

She said it was for this reason that the first Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) government under the leadership of President Ziaur Rahman initiated the idea of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC).

The Prime Minister said Bangladesh would like to see concern over the deteriorating health of the ex-labour leader, Kazi Zafar, who is now detained under Special Powers Act. It also demanded his proper treatment. Signatories to the statement include: Hirron Miah, Kasimuddin, Mohammad Rashed Hossain and Mohammad Arshad.

Plea to release Kazi Zafar

By Staff Correspondent

Fifty-two labour leaders of 26 industries at Tongi Industrial Area in a joint statement Friday demanded release of former Prime Minister Kazi Zafar Ahmed, MP.

The statement expressed concern over the deteriorating health of the ex-labour leader, Kazi Zafar, who is now detained under Special Powers Act. It also demanded his proper treatment. Signatories to the statement include: Hirron Miah, Kasimuddin, Mohammad Rashed Hossain and Mohammad Arshad.

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