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*The World On Time*

## Russia goes to polls tomorrow

MOSCOW, June 14: More than 1,000 international election observers are converging on Russia to monitor Sunday's hotly contested presidential election, in an effort to quell mounting concerns about vote fraud, reports AP.

They will join the hundreds of thousands of Russian observers expected at the 93,500 polling stations across Russia's 11 time zones.

The leading two contenders, President Boris Yeltsin and Communist leader Gennady Zyuganov, have accused each other of planning to rig the vote, and have both vowed to send representatives to each polling place.

The international observers, like similar delegations in Russia for parliamentary polls in 1993 and 1995, are allowed to monitor the entire process, from ballot distribution to the final counting.

But many are expected to leave Monday or Tuesday, which some warn is too early. It takes days, even weeks for votes to trickle in from Russia's far-flung provinces.

The morning after last December's parliamentary elections - when just a fraction of the vote had been

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**PHILIPS**

## Election free, fair: Observers

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said. "We are impressed by the fact that only 123 polling stations of a total of 25,957 - less than one half of one per cent - were to be discontinued due to disruptions. This testifies to the administrative achievement and the generally peaceful condition that prevailed," Peacock observed.

Solarz however said that many places were quite crowded early in the day and more could perhaps be done to streamline the process.

Andrew Ellis, former chief adviser, Palestinian Election Commission said his team observed harassment of minority voters in Chittagong-6 and Chittagong-7 constituencies where threats of violence were made to discourage many who wanted to cast vote.

In response to a question on BNP's complaint of widespread rigging, Solarz said, "They provided us with little specific information." "We assume that they will file with the electoral authorities those complaints for which they have well-documented evidence," he added.

Peacock said, "It is not only in the interest of the people, but in their personal political interest that those who will not take part in the next government should accept the results with grace."

Peacock also praised Sheikh Hasina for her yesterday's statement that her party would immediately initiate consultation with all the political parties and begin a process of reconciliation.

### European Union

The outcome of June 12 elections accurately reflected the way the Bangladesh people voted, said the European Union (EU) election observer team.

The team urged all the political parties to accept the polls results.

Speaking at a press briefing organised by the Centre for Analysis and Choice and held at a city hotel yesterday, the EU observers said voting was

conducted in a calm and friendly manner.

In a written statement read out by leader of the team Senator Cayetana De Zulueta (Italy), it said that the polling procedures were properly followed on the whole.

Among others, the press conference was attended and addressed by Head of the European Commission Delegation in Bangladesh Micheal Drury, British High Commissioner in Bangladesh Peter J Fowier, Ambassador of Italy in Bangladesh Raffaele Mniro, Journalist Inge Estvad Petersen (Denmark), Ronan Brady (Ireland), Andrew Bruce (UK).

In reply to questions, the pressmen were told that the 1996 election was much fairer than it was in 1991.

The EU mission that included 29 observers from EU countries and three from Norway, noted that there were some problems on the day in a very small number of polling centres where polling had to be suspended. "But the EU observer group is convinced that the electors were very well served by the election officials and that, on the whole, the voting took place in a calm atmosphere."

Admitting the limitations of the EU group that visited only 170 polling centres out of the 2,600, the observers said that it had been possible for them to come to conclusions in an entirely independent fashion.

Answering a question, Zulueta said, allegation of massive rigging was not supported by documents and sufficient evidence. She hoped that all parties would help further the process of democracy in the country. Expressing satisfaction over the turn out especially over women voters' turn out, Zulueta said people were growing conscious day by day.

The newsmen were told that in a couple of cases indelible ink was not being used and a few polling boxes were closed without being sealed.

Replying to another question, the team leader said there were something for the

developed countries to learn from this election (under a caretaker government).

### Japanese team

Shin Sakurai, leader of nine-member Japanese election observation team, yesterday said the June 12 general elections in Bangladesh were free, fair and impartial, according to BSS.

"We have an impression that this election was conducted fairly, peacefully and in an orderly manner on the whole," Sakurai, a member of house of representative told a news conference here.

The team, which visited polling centres in 7 constituencies in Dhaka and Comilla, smoothly carried out their observation, Sakurai, who belongs to Liberal Democratic Party, said the team includes four sitting MPs and two former members of house of representatives.

Sakurai in a written statement said "we found that election executing bodies generally well organised and operating in an orderly manner," he, however, noted the team came to learn some cases of concern that included confusion among voters created by inadequate

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### Accident

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Hospital (DMCH) said, Robi was playing at roadside.

The injured was taken to the DMCH where the doctors declared him dead, medical sources added.

Our Staff Correspondent from Sylhet writes: An oldman was killed in a road accident on Jagannathpur-Sylhet road yesterday morning. The unidentified victims 70 was crushed under the wheels of a speeding minibus at Shahonhabli. The bus was going to Sylhet from Jagannathpur thana headquarters, after the accident, the agitated villagers seized the vehicle (Sylhet JA-0012) and handed it over to the police. They blocked the road for about two hours.

## Polls observers meet Hasina

A number of international polls observers yesterday met Awami League President Sheikh Hasina at her Dhanmondi residence yesterday, reports BSS.

The polls observers included US Congressman and NDI observer group leader Stephen Solarz, leader of Commonwealth polls observer delegation and former foreign minister of Malaysia Dr Gazali Shafie and SAARC observer team leader Anora Bandaranaike.

### JP: President

From page 1

Immediately after his return to Dhaka Thursday night from his constituency in Barisal, Manju on an invitation from Awami League Chief Sheikh Hasina, had a half-an-hour discussion with her on post-poll situation.

### Khaleda

From page 1

Even I myself talked to the high officials of the government who also failed to take any action... vote-rigging went on uninterrupted... she said.

Speaking on irregularities in the process of announcing election results, Begum Zia said, "Television and Radio announced BNP candidates winners and later the results were reversed... Announcement of results of those seats, where the BNP nominees were leading, was postponed."

Begum Zia also alleged that because of terrorism unleashed by a party, many of her party candidates including KM Anwar, Nurul Huda and Shahidul Haq Jamal had to flee from their respective areas.

She demanded immediate investigation into the matters, trial of the persons responsible and repolling in all those centres.

### Errata

On the Back Page of our Friday's issue, the photo of Dr Khandaker Mosharrar Hossain was inadvertently printed under caption "Stalwarts Who Lost Polls". In fact, the election result of his constituency (Comilla-2) was postponed by the EC. Repolling will be held in ten centres in the seat. We regret the mistake.

## India extends ban on LTTE

NEW DELHI, June 14: The Indian government has extended until July 1998 a ban on Sri Lanka's rebel Tamil Tiger organisation, accused of assassinating former prime minister Rajiv Gandhi, officials said today, reports AFP.

It was the first decision by the cabinet of new Prime Minister H D Deve Gowda after he won a crucial vote of confidence in parliament on Wednesday, the officials said.

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) was first outlawed by New Delhi after Gandhi was assassinated by a suicide bomber at an election rally near the southern Indian city of Madras on May 21, 1991.

The LTTE has denied killing Gandhi, who as prime minister sent Indian troops to Sri Lanka's embattled north east in 1987.

## Raushan demands recounting of votes in 2 constituencies

Jatiya Party senior president member Begum Raushan Ershad has demanded recounting of votes in her Sherpur-1 and Mymensingh-11 constituencies, alleging massive irregularities during the polling and vote counting there, reports BSS.

In a statement, she alleged that her agents were forcefully ousted from different centres of the constituencies during the polling "with the help of the administration."

Begum Ershad also claimed that proper procedures were not followed during the counting of votes in the constituencies.

## The Midnight File

### Turkish leaders yet to form coalition govt

ANAKARA, June 14: The leader of Turkey's pro-Islamic Welfare Party, Necmettin Erbakan, and former premier Tanu Ciller failed to form a coalition government but agreed to carry on talking, sources close to the leaders said. "We will evaluate Erbakan's proposals for a coalition," Ciller told reporters in a brief news conference after a three-hour meeting with Erbakan, reports AFP.

## 'Ureagate': Rao's son interrogated

NEW DELHI, June 14: Indian detectives questioned the son of former prime minister P V Narasimha Rao today for his alleged role in a shady fertilizer deal, the latest scandal to hit the embattled national leader, reports AFP.

A spokesman for the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) said detectives questioned Prabhakar Rao at the agency's headquarters here for about three hours in connection with the 38 million dollars scandal.

"He is being very cooperative. Beyond that I have nothing to say," said CBI official P C Sharma, adding Rao's son had denied any wrongdoing to the CBI and maintained that he had been falsely implicated.

Prabhakar Rao and a relative have been accused of receiving four million dollars for the 1995 deal struck between a little-known Turkish company and the state-run National Fertilisers Ltd (NFL) to import 200,000 tonnes of urea.

The consignment never reached India, but the Turkish firm was paid the full sum in advance against usual practice.

The junior Rao has said the charges filed against him were a political vendetta. "Linking my name in the scam is part of a political conspiracy to defame my father," Rao told a journalist here.

CBI officials have also interrogated another political scion, Prakash Chandra Yadav, whose father was the Chemicals and Fertilisers Minister in Rao's

Congress (I) government which was voted out in the April-May elections.

An Indian court on Friday jailed Sambasiva Rao, the Turkish company's Indian agent, former NFL Managing Director C K Ramakrishnan, and NFL official D S Karwar for 15 days each.

The State Bank of India said Thursday that four officials who had dealt with the Turkish deal had been suspended after preliminary investigation.

### Hasina

From page 1

sake of democracy and stability."

When the CNN correspondent observed that the BNP's getting more than 100 seats also demonstrated that it had not done bad in the election, Hasina said: "This shows it was a free election."

Asked about Bangladesh's relations with India, Hasina said her party believes in resolving the Ganges water dispute and other issues with India through bilateral negotiations. "We believe in friendship to all and malice to none."

### AL observes

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hui Haq, Siddiqur Rouf Khan, Dr Harun-ur-Rashid, Akhtarul Alam, Dr Mizanur Rahman and Saber Hussain Chowdhury, participated in milad mahfil and special prayers in the Baitul Mukarram Mosque.

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