

Mass turnout in Harare as Zimbabweans cast votes

Press differs on election predictions

HARARE, June 24 : Zimbabweans turned out en masse in the capital today as voting started in a two-day parliamentary election in which the newly formed Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) is presenting a strong challenge to the ruling party of President Robert Mugabe, reports AFP.

The voting at 4,000 polling stations in 120 constituencies throughout the country is taking place against a backdrop of murder, beatings, rape, abductions and arson throughout this southern African nation -- a "terror campaign" designed to crush the opposition, human rights organisations charged -- and the often violent invasion and occupation of some 1,500 white-owned farms.

In Harare's densely populated working-class suburbs, thousands were in line at the crack of dawn, the mood a joyful anticipation of change tinged with fear of violence after clashes Friday in which a bus was burnt out.

Said Austin Mhangara, a presiding officer in the Glen Norah district: "This is unbelievable. I have never seen anything like this since the 1980 (independence) election. Queues started forming around 5:00 o'clock, and I'm sure most people won't be able to vote today."

At one polling station in Harare's affluent Mount Pleasant suburb, one woman said she was going on to a prayer meeting "to pray for peace."

In the leafy gardens of

Prince Edward School in the Harare Central constituency, around 200 people -- many of them whites -- were in line three-quarters of an hour after the voting had started.

"This is the first time there has been a choice," said a middle-aged white woman. "We hope it works out all right. It has to -- we live here."

Meanwhile, President Robert Mugabe's Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) will win parliamentary elections this weekend by a landslide, the state-owned Herald predicted today, as the independent Daily News forecast the opposite.

"ZANU-PF set for landslide win" screamed the banner

headline across the front page of the Herald.

ZANU-PF is headed for a landslide victory, shuffling off a token challenge from the white-backed opposition Movement for Democratic Change," it said, quoting "analysts."

Headlined the pro-MDC Daily News: "ZANU-PF heaves face defeat in poll."

It quoted an opinion poll it commissioned recently which predicted that the MDC, headed by Morgan Tsvangirai, who used to head the powerful trade union movement here, would win at least 70 of the 120 electorates.

The opposition needs to win 71 seats to win a majority in the 150-seat parliament, as Mugabe appoints 30 members on top of the 120 elected.



Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe greets Zanu PF supporters on his arrival for a rally in the Harare high-density suburb of Chitungwiza on Friday. A day before the June 24-25 parliamentary elections President Mugabe held his last rally with some 8,000 followers attending.

Police begin manhunt after 15 die in Australian hostel blaze

CHILDERS, Australia, June 24 : Police investigating the hostel fire in which at least 15 backpackers died issued an appeal today for help in tracing a man they want to interview in connection with the fire, reports AFP.

Sydney-born Robert Paul Long, 37, was seen just before the fire broke out about 12:30 a.m. (20:00 BST) on Friday at the Palace Backpackers Hostel where 88 backpackers slept, officers believe.

The appeal came as homicide and arson squad detectives began their hunt for clues to what caused the fire, amid intensifying local speculation it was started deliberately.

Children residents and some hostel guests told police a man who had stayed in the hostel until he was ejected a week ago had threatened to return and burn it down.

Mori ridicules opponent

TOKYO, June 24 : Japanese Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori turned up the heat today on the last day of his blunder-strewn campaign for elections, ridiculing the opposition leader, reports AFP.

Mori, a burly 62-year-old rugby fanatic who leads the powerful Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), launched his attack on the eve of Sunday's vote for the lower house of parliament.

The main opposition Democratic Party of Japan's leader, Yukio Hatoyama, had failed to unite even his own party against a law enshrining Japan's flag and anthem last year, he said.

"Half of the Democratic Party supported the national flag and anthem legislation and the other half opposed it," Mori said, while on the campaign trail in Yokohama, south of Tokyo.

"Can a leader who is unable to manage his own party manage the country?" Mori asked, according to Jiji Press news agency.

The prime minister turned the tables after a campaign littered with verbal gaffes which has caused support for his administration to tumble to less than 20 per cent in most surveys.

Despite Mori's slump, his LDP-dominated coalition, which also incorporates the Buddhist-backed Komeito Party and the Conservative Party, is expected to get most of the 480 seats up for grabs.

The governing alliance is still considered the safest pair of hands for the fragile economy by many voters, and the top opposition party has yet to gain their trust, analysts say.

But on the last day before Japan's 101 million voters

make their decision, the coalition took no chances, pressing its attack on the opposition leader's perceived lack of credibility.

The head of the Democratic Party of Japan, Yukio Hatoyama, does not have the qualities to become the prime minister," said Conservative Party chief Chikage Ohgi.

But the opposition leader, who has had a field day with Mori's repeated verbal blunders, struck back.

On Tuesday, the prime minister told wavering voters -- estimated to make up 40 percent of the electorate -- to stay in bed on election day. A higher turnout rate generally helps the opposition.

He had already outraged large swathes of the electorate May 15 by describing Japan as "God's country, centred on the emperor."

26 Chinese immigrants found in truck in Croatia

ZAGREB, June 24 : Twenty-six illegal Chinese immigrants were discovered in Croatia Friday hiding inside a tanker truck, the Croatian press reported today, says AFP.

The Chinese who were trying to reach Western Europe through Slovenia, were found when the Bosnian-registered vehicle was searched in Cabar, 100 km west of Zagreb.

Croatia is a major route for an increasing number of cases of smuggling illegal immigrants, police said. By late May, 6,000 immigrants had been caught this year compared to 4,500 at the same stage last year.

British police charged two Chinese people on Friday over the deaths of 58 young Chinese immigrants found dead in a truck at the port of Dover.

Talks to end Fiji crisis stalled

SUVA, June 24 : Fiji crisis talks stalled today and George Speight's coup plotters warned it could be another month before the 31 hostages held in the country's parliament are released, sources said, reports AFP.

Speight's camp told the military Saturday that the hostages would not be freed until executive authority was transferred from the military to the Great Council of Chiefs (GCC), a source close to the talks told AFP.

The GCC legally requires up to a month before it can meet, and its current chairman, former coup leader Sitiveni Rabuka has previously expressed reluctance to call emergency sessions.

Local radio reported that Speight had presented new demands leading to a breakdown in talks to end the crisis here.

The radio, quoting unnamed sources, said it was extremely unlikely that any agreement would be signed Saturday.

Military sources said one of the sticking points preventing signing of the agreement was a refusal by Speight to agree to his men laying down their arms.

Martial law commander Commodore Voreqe Bainimarama and his deputy Colonel Filipo Tarakinikini left the talks shortly before 1 p.m. (7:00 BST).

Sources said later the families of the hostages had been told they would not be released today.

Speight and a group of soldiers seized parliament on May 19 and have held Prime Minister Mahendra Chaudhry, his cabinet and government hostage ever since.

Earlier Saturday, Tarakinikini said the meeting between military officials and the coup plotters would review a draft accord and he expressed confidence it would be signed later in the day.

All that is known of the agreement now is its name, the "Muanikau Accord", and it is believed to include a procedure for the handing over of weapons by the coup plotters.

Muanikau -- which in Fijian means "the end of a stick" -- is named for the street intersection where talks have been going on all week between Speight and martial law head Bainimarama.

The military has been running Fiji since May 29 when it declared martial law after Speight supporters went on the rampage in Suva, killing one policeman.

It refused however to countenance military action against Speight and has publicly promised that he, and at least some of his accomplices, will benefit from an amnesty.

Speight and his group have demanded a new constitution to reserve political power for indigenous Fijians. Chaudhry was Fiji's first ethnic Indian leader.

Ethnic Indians, the descendants of workers imported by Britain to work in the sugar plantations in the 19th century, account for over 40 percent of the population.

Fiji was suspended from the Commonwealth on June 6 and has been warned by its main Pacific neighbours, Australia and New Zealand, and the United States, that it faces further sanctions if it implements Speight's demands for Indians to be excluded from political power.

1 killed in police firing in Delhi

NEW DELHI, June 24 : One person died and 12 were injured early today when New Delhi police fired on a mob which ransacked a local police station, torching police vehicles to protest against the arrest of a Muslim man over a recent bomb attack.

Ajay Chaddha, joint commissioner in the New Delhi police force, told AFP the trouble started when police arrested Ishaq Mullah from a teeny New Delhi slum for questioning over a June 18 bomb blast in the city which killed two people.

2 Chinese charged over deaths of 58 immigrants in UK

DOVER, England, June 24 : British police charged two Chinese people on Friday over the deaths of 58 young Chinese immigrants found dead in a truck, as graphic details emerged of the frantic last moments of the victims, reports AFP.

The latest charges brought to three the number of people accused since the gruesome discovery overnight Sunday in Dover, southeast England.

Police said chief You Yi, 38, and 29-year-old female interpreter Ying Guo, both of South Woodford, east of London, were accused of conspiracy to smuggle illegal immigrants into Britain.

They are due to appear before magistrates in Dover early Saturday.

Eliau's Miami relatives to appeal to US SC

MIAMI, June 24 : The Miami relatives of Elian Gonzalez, the Cuban boy at the centre of an international custody battle, will go to the US Supreme Court to ask for the boy to receive a political asylum hearing, a spokesman for the family announced Friday, reports AFP.

"We believe that the Supreme Court is the appropriate forum and indeed the only proper tribunal for resolving this issue," said Armando Gutierrez, who added that proper papers would be filed at the Supreme Court Monday.

Meanwhile, seven months after his dramatic rescue at sea, a US appeals court on Friday cleared the way for six-year-old Elian Gonzalez to return with his father to Cuba.

An injunction barring the departure of the six-year-old for Cuba with his father will be lifted at 4:00 p.m. (2:00 BST) next Wednesday, the Appeals Court in Atlanta, Georgia said. The court said that any further legal action seeking to block his departure should be directed to the US Supreme Court.

Attorney General Janet Reno responded to the court's decision Friday with a statement saying that now that the court has conclusively upheld the Justice Department's decision "I am hopeful that this father and son will soon be able to move on with their lives together."

However Elian's Miami-based relatives swiftly announced their next move. "We believe that the

Supreme Court is the appropriate forum, and indeed the only proper tribunal, for resolving this issue," said Armando Gutierrez, a spokesman for the family, following the court's announcement.

"We are hopeful that our nation's Fourth of July celebration this year will not be tarnished by the removal of a child from this land of freedom to a land of gross, violent and extensively documented human rights violations," he said.

Members of the Cuban exile lobby opposed to the government of Cuban President Fidel Castro expressed indignation, but also degree of resignation late Friday. Ninoska Perez, a spokeswoman for the Cuban American National Foundation, described the court's ruling as "regrettable".

If the boy returns to Cuba, he will share the fate of all other boys living in the country," she said.

Gregory Craig, a lawyer for Elian's father Juan Miguel Gonzalez, said he believed the ruling was "consistent with the rule of law and our nation's core values and traditions".

In Cuba, state television meanwhile gave unusually extensive coverage to the news story.

The official response to the ruling noted that "the representatives of the mafia" -- that is, attorneys for Elian's Miami relatives -- had five days in which to appeal to the Supreme Court.

India to amend laws to curb HR violations

NEW DELHI, June 24 : India will soon amend laws to curb human rights violations, Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee said here Friday, reports AFP.

"The government will examine the suggestions given by the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) for amending the 1993 Act and take early steps," Vajpayee told a conference.

The prime minister, however, stressed that legislation alone would not stop rights abuses against lower-caste Hindus, women, the poor and the socially underprivileged.

"Law cannot teach a person to be compassionate, caring and sensitive to other people's sorrows and joys," he said, calling for more "education" and "socio-cultural reforms."

"This is especially urgent in the context of the untold difficulties faced by the poor and the illiterate in their dealings with the institutions of the state," he said.

The prime minister said two problem areas were the northern state of Uttar Pradesh and the eastern province of Bihar, which together accounted for 65 percent of the estimated 50,000 cases of rights abuses registered by the NHRC.

International rights bodies allege rampant abuses by Indian security troops in militancy-ridden areas such as the northern state of Kashmir and the country's sprawling and remote far-east.

New Delhi denies the charge and claims most violations are committed by various separatist rebel groups.

UN fears famine, exodus as drought hits Afghanistan

GENEVA, June 24 : The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) warned on Friday that up to two million people in Afghanistan face starvation following the worst drought in the country for 30 years, reports AFP.

"Without aid, it is likely that famine will ensue and the spectre of mass deaths cannot be ruled out," UNHCR spokesman Ron Redmond said.

Calling on the international community to take action, Redmond said hunger could cause a mass exodus of Afghans into neighbouring Iran and Pakistan.

The UNHCR says it has reports of groups of people wandering from village to village in a desperate attempt to find drinking water.

An appeal for 67 million dollars (71 million euros) in aid for a period of one year was launched on June 6. So far only 8.7 million dollars has been promised and only 200,000 dollars delivered.

In some parts of Afghanistan the harvest has failed completely because of a lack of rain. In other areas up to 35 percent of the livestock has died, the UNHCR says.

No rain is now expected until November.

Pakistan is already home to 1.2 million refugees from Afghanistan, while a further 1.4 million are in camps in Iran.

China executes 2 for murder: Two workers in south China's Guangdong province were executed after they were found guilty of bludgeoning two Taiwanese businessmen to death with metal pipes, state media reported Saturday, AFP says from Beijing.

Hu Zhongwang and Hu Luobing, both farmers from central Hubei province, were executed Friday after receiving death sentences earlier this month.

Greens elect 2 new leaders: The Greens elected two new top national leaders, Renate Kuenast and Fritz Kuhn, at a party congress today in the North Rhine-Westphalia town of Muenster, AFP reports from Berlin.

Kuenast and Kuhn, both 44, were elected without opposition from other candidates by the 672 delegates.

The crash of an ageing Chinese airliner killed seven people on the ground as well as all 44 on the domestic flight, Xinhua news agency reported yesterday. Reuters reports from Beijing.

It said seven people in a boat were swept overboard by a wave when the Chinese-built Yun-7 on Thursday crashed beside a river near the central city of Wuhan. It gave no further details.

4 die as aircraft collide in Florida: A Lear jet and a smaller airplane collided and crashed into a gated, golf course community on Friday, killing the three people aboard the jet and the pilot of the second craft, AP reports from Boca Raton.

There were no injuries on the ground when the planes crashed as one heap and burned inside the country club community of Boca Grove, said Paul Miller, spokesman for the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Department.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Executive Engineer

Public Works E/M Division-1, Dhaka

Memo No-14-2/5010

Date: 13-06-2000/30/2/1407 Bangla

Tender Notice

No-84 (99-2000)

Tenders in Bangladesh Form No-2911 in sealed envelopes on percentage and item rate basis are invited from special class, special first class of Public Works Department and first class and class-II enlisted for E/M work are invited for the undermentioned work. Tenders will be received till 12:00 Noon during office hours till 04/07/2000 in the tender box kept at the offices of Public Works E/M Division 1/2/3/4/5/6/7/8/ Public Works Mechanical Workshop Division/Public Works Timber Workshop Division/Public Works Eden Building Division, Dhaka and will be opened the same day at 12:15 PM in presence of the tenderers or their nominated representatives (if anyone remains present). Tender schedule form and terms and conditions etc can be purchased till 03/07/2000 during office hours on payment of Taka 425/- (four hundred twenty-five) (non-refundable) from the offices of Public Works E/M Division-1/2/3/4/5/6/7/8/ Public Works Mechanical Workshop Division/Public Works Timber Workshop Division/Public Works Eden Building Division, Dhaka. Security money at the rate of 2% (two per cent) of the quoted cost in the form of Bank Draft/Pay Order from any scheduled bank of Bangladesh in favour of the Executive Engineer, Public Works E/M Division-1, Dhaka must be submitted alongwith tender. This office authority reserves the right to accept any tender or reject all tenders without assigning any reason. Contractor himself or his representative bearing an authorised letter from contractor and attested by contractor can purchase tender by producing all papers including registration book. Participants in tenders must submit the original receipt for purchasing tender and attested photocopies of TIN and VAT registration certificates with the tender.

Name of work	Security money	Time allowed
Change of main control board sub-main wiring with control according to load up to 3rd (Third floor) in each floor and inoperative electrical wiring on second and third floor and fittings.	Per cent and 2% of the months quoted cost.	2 (two)

A M Shafiqul Alam
Executive Engineer
Public Works E/M Division-1, Dhaka.
Phone: 9569820

DFP-15459-18/6
G-1211

BRIEFLY

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Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Ministry of Education

Bangladesh Secretariat, Dhaka

No Sha 13/1-22 (Fulbright)/98/128

Dated:19/6/2000

Notice

Subject: Application for Fulbright scholarship offered by the government of the United States of America for the academic session 2001.

Applications are invited from the junior faculty members of universities of Bangladesh for studying at the post-graduate levels in United States in the following subjects in two year Fulbright scholarship of the government of the United States of America during academic session 2001.

Subjects:

- History of America.
- American Literature.
- Economics.
- Political Science/International Relations.
- Social Science.
- Public Administration.
- Finance/Management.

Eligibility to apply:

- Should have at least 60% marks in BA (Honours) and MA (This grading will not be applicable for those who have studied under PPA grading. In that case they will have to obtain A average).
- Candidates who have earlier completed studies in the United States is not eligible to apply.
- Candidate should be capable of speaking English fluently.
- Should possess good physique.
- Should be a citizen of Bangladesh.
- Should submit an undertaking to return to Bangladesh on completion of studies.
- The money for the ticket will have to be refunded if any one comes back to country before completion of studies.
- Candidates will have to apply through proper channel on time.
- Candidates will have to apply with two copies of attested recent passport size photographs, two copies of attested marksheets of all examinations passed and certificates along with the following information. Applications will be of two sets and each set should include one photograph and bio-data etc. Biodata should contain the following information:

Application for scholarship at post-graduate level offered by the government of United States.

Subject of the candidate:

- Name of candidate.
- Father's name.
- Present address (including telegram office).
- Permanent address.
- Date of birth and present age.
- Profession.
- Telephone number (if any).
- Information regarding examination (from secondary/SSC to all examinations)

Name of examination and duration of course	Board/Uni and year of passing	Main subjects studied	Division/class obtained	Total marks in examination (the marks for which examination has been appeared)	Total marks obtained by candidate
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- Name of scholarship (Fulbright scholarship) and the subject applied for will have to be mentioned on the envelope.
- Application should reach by 5-7-2000 the undersigned by mail.
- One person cannot be candidate for more than one subject and cannot apply if one is selected for any other subject earlier.
- The decision of the authority in selecting candidate will be final. Incomplete application will be treated as rejected.
- Legal actions will be taken against anyone giving false statement/information willingly.
- Candidates selected provisionally for final nomination after scrutinising the applications will have to appear at viva-voce test.

Begum Kazol Islam

Senior Assistant Secretary

Baban No-6, Room No-1706

Ministry of Education,

Bangladesh Secretariat, Dhaka

Phone: 8615032

DFP-15740-21/6/00
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