

Rigging, violence mark voting in Lanka

COLOMBO, Oct 10: Sri Lanka's national elections closed today after nine hours of balloting marred by allegations of rigging and violence as well as with the sudden death of matriarch politician Sirima Bandaranaike, reports AFP.

Election officials said more than 300 cases of violence, voter impersonation and the seizing of ballot boxes were reported and that the authorities were looking at them on a case-by-case basis. The poll was marred early Tuesday when it was announced Sirima Bandaranaike, the world's first woman prime minister and Sri Lanka's best known politician, had died after casting her vote in the morning.

Bandaranaike, 84, suffered a heart attack while returning to the capital Colombo from the nearby family constituency of Attanagalle, her son, opposition leader Anura Bandaranaike, said.

As the election progressed Tuesday, the largest number of complaints came from the central district of Kandy where ruling People's Alliance (PA) general secretary D. M. Jayaratne made allegations of foul play.

Another ally of the ruling party, the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress, also said the Kandy poll had been heavily rigged.

Reports of sporadic violence included ruling party supporters grabbing automatic weapons from two police constables guarding a booth in the tea-growing district of Nuwara Eliya.

Ballot papers were also stolen in Nuwara Eliya while in the southern district of Matara, police arrested at least 10 men who tried to pose as voters and cast ballots.

The private Centre for Monitoring Election Violence (CMEV) asked Elections Commissioner Dayananda Dissanayake to order a re-poll in six provinces where there had been intensive rigging. "We urge you to consider annulling the votes in

the polling centres in the 11 electorates (in six provinces) identified by us... in order to safeguard the integrity and credibility of both the democratic election process as well as the dignity and impartiality of your office," the CMEV said in a letter to the Commissioner.

The commissioner was also attacked again by the government Tuesday.

The People's Alliance said the election chief's move to stamp ballot papers with a unique seal could impair the democratic process.

"It is essential to ensure that voters are able to cast their vote secretly, but the work of commissioner should not be done secretly," the party said.

The commissioner had vowed secret measures to surprise those who were planning to stuff boxes with forged ballot papers.

Officials reported brisk voting with queues forming outside polling booths as balloting began at 7:00 am (0700 BST) across the country's 22 electoral districts. Voting ended at 4:00 pm (1600 BST).

There was tight nationwide security after unprecedented violence in the five-week run-up to the polls which claimed at least 65 lives. Most died in suicide bombings and attacks by Tamil Tiger separatist rebels.

The election is expected to be a closely-fought race between President Kumaratunga's PA and the main opposition UNP, with the Marxist JVP, or People's Liberation Front, a distant third.

In the island's northern Jaffna peninsula, there were reports of heavy artillery duels between government forces and Tamil Tiger rebels, but the voting appeared to have taken place.

Some 12.07 million men and women over the age of 18 years were eligible to vote for 225 members of parliament out of a record 5,477 candidates representing 29 political parties and 99 independent groups.



Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga casts her ballot as people went to the polls in nationwide parliamentary elections yesterday. Voting was brisk despite allegation of rigging and the death of Kumaratunga's mother and former Sri Lankan prime minister Sirima Bandaranaike who died shortly after casting her vote here. --AFP photo

Vajpayee undergoes knee surgery

BOMBAY, Oct 10: Doctors completed knee replacement surgery on Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee today as members of his party offered prayers in Hindu temples, reports AP.

"The operation went well. The prime minister is in the recovery room," said Dr Chittaranjan Ranawat, the New York-based orthopedic surgeon who flew to Bombay to perform the operation.

He said local anesthesia was used and Vajpayee, 75, was conscious throughout the operation to replace the eroded cartilage around his knee with an artificial knee joint.

"The prime minister did not require much sedatives. We were able to control the pain," said Dr Ranawat.

With police blocking off streets and surrounding the Breach Candy Hospital in downtown Bombay hospital, Ranawat completed the operation in 65 minutes, as expected. He was assisted by Dr Nandu Laud, a consulting orthopedic surgeon.

Vajpayee required the surgery due to acute pain from osteoarthritis, in which the cartilage around the knee wears down.

Vajpayee will be allowed visitors after two days, doctors said. "At the moment his health is of prime concern and he should not be disturbed," said Dr Ranawat.

Light physiotherapy exercises were to begin later Tuesday evening and Vajpayee would be helped to stand upright.

"In five to 15 days the prime minister can walk with the help of a cane," Dr Ranawat said. "Everything went to my satisfaction."

Earlier, hundreds of activists from Bharatiya Janata Party offered prayers for Vajpayee's quick recovery in two Hindu temples near the hospital.

"We are praying for a safe operation for the prime minister," said Vinod Tawade, president of the Bombay unit of the party.

Vajpayee was in intense pain for much of his visit to the United States last month. He had to sit down while addressing the US Congress. He was also helped by US President Bill Clinton when the two leaders sprinkled rose petals on the statue of India's non-violence movement leader, Mohandas Gandhi, in Washington, D.C.

Police set up barricades around the hospital, which overlooks a rocky seaford. Metal detectors were used to check relatives and visitors of other patients admitted to the hospital.

All 14 rooms on the seventh floor of the hospital were reserved for Vajpayee and his staff.

Commandos patrolled the sea near the hospital and the coast guard warned fishermen to stay away.

Philippine President Joseph Estrada salutes during a turnover ceremony for the chief of the air forces in Manila yesterday in his first public appearance after being accused by a former friend, Luis Singson, of pocketing millions in pesos of bribes from gambling barons. Estrada's aides say the president was considering legal action against the accuser, whose allegations shattered investor confidence in the financial markets. Opposition legislators, meanwhile, have announced plans to file impeachment proceedings against Estrada. --AFP photo

Blasts outside Supreme Court in Delhi: One arrested

NEW DELHI, Oct 10: Indian police today arrested a man who threw three small crude explosives outside the Supreme Court in New Delhi, injuring several people, reports AFP.

There were three small blasts and some people received minor injuries," said an official in the court's administrative section.

Police said they were questioning a 25-year-old man, Upendra Mohanty, in relation to the incident.

The suspect appears slightly unhinged. He shouted patriotic slogans while he was being brought to the police station, but did not resist arrest," said police man Narayan Singh at the Tilak Marg Police Station.

Police said Mohanty was carrying a bag slung over his shoulder which contained a picture of Indian independence leader Subhas Chandra Bose.

During World War II Bose led an Indian national army against the British and established an independent provisional government of Azad Hind (Free India). Bose died in 1945, two years before India gained independence.

Police officials said Mohanty's precise motives were unknown.

Two security guards posted at the entrance of the Supreme Court were injured by flying splinters. A fruit vendor also sustained burns.

North Korean leader in US for talks with Clinton

WASHINGTON, Oct 10: Jo Myung Rok, North Korea's number two official, arrived late Monday for talks with US President Bill Clinton and other top US officials beginning today, reports DPA.

US officials have great expectations for the visit, ranging from symbolism of improving ties to "tangible signs" of a military detente on the Korean peninsula.

Clinton said Friday he would "explore the possibilities" of diplomatic reconciliation with North Korea. But he also sought to measure South Korea and Japan that the United States would respect their interest in its dealings with the Stalinist North Korean regime.

Vice Marshal Jo Myung Rok is vice chairman of Pyongyang's National Defence Commission and considered the right hand man of supreme leader Kim Jong Il.

Clinton said South Korean President Kim Dae Jung had paved the way for dramatic improvements in US-North Korean ties by visiting Pyongyang in June.

China-Africa talks begin Zemin calls for new world order

BEIJING, Oct 10: China opened its first-ever China-Africa talks today, with President Jiang Zemin warning officials from 44 African countries that "hegemonism and power politics" was preventing the establishment of an equitable world order, reports AFP.

Speaking to some 80 African ministers in Beijing's Great Hall of the People in talks widely expected to boost Sino-African ties, Jiang called on Africa to stand with China in addressing global inequalities and a widening gap between developed and developing nations.

"Hegemonism and power politics still exist, and developing countries are still faced with an arduous task of safeguarding their sovereignty, security and interests," Jiang said.

Developing nations should unite and demand equal rights on the global stage in an effort to establish "an equitable and just new international political and economic order."

Besides having to fight poverty and ethnic strife at home, developing nations were also faced with interference from developed powers, he said.

"The right of all countries to sovereign equality and to freedom from outside interference in



Chinese President Jiang Zemin opens China's first ever China-Africa talks yesterday in Beijing's Great Hall of the People. --AFP photo

their internal affairs must be ensured to them."

Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, Tanzanian President Benjamin Mkapa, Zambian President Frederick Chiluba, Togo President Gnassingbe and secretary general of the Organization of African States Salim Ahmed Salim, were among those gathered at Tuesday's session.

The three-day forum is "an important step and meaningful initiative taken by the Chinese government to consolidate and

strengthen Sino-African friendship and cooperation at the start of the new millennium," Chinese Foreign Affairs Minister Tang Jiaxuan said last month.

"Africa is waiting for this forum with lots of interest. It will be a chance for each country to discuss its bilateral relations with China, but also tackle some large multilateral questions such as external debt," a West African diplomat told AFP.

Before the forum China announced it would reduce the

debt owed to China by poorer African states, but did not reveal how much debt would be reduced or to which nations.

The meeting has also been scheduled to adopt a "Beijing declaration" reflecting a Sino-African consensus on larger political questions, including the "new international order," a euphemism often used by Beijing that refers to the global domination of the United States and its Western allies.

"Beijing is trying to get more countries on its side in its struggle against US hegemonism," said a Western diplomat.

In a surprise move, Beijing invited eight African countries that maintain diplomatic ties with Taiwan to attend the forum as observers, following pressure from the Organization of African Unity.

The eight are Senegal, Gambia, Burkina Faso, Liberia, Malawi, Chad, Swaziland, and Sao Tome and Principe, but only Liberia and Malawi accepted the invitations.

China traditionally shuns all nations that diplomatically recognize Taiwan as an independent nation, but at the same time is eager to urge such countries to cut ties with Taipei.

Musharraf pledges return to democracy by 2002

LAHORE, Pakistan, Oct 10: Almost a year after seizing power in a coup, military ruler General Pervez Musharraf said today Pakistan's armed forces would return the country to civilian rule before October 12, 2002, reports AFP.

"Armed forces have no intention to prolong their rule," he told a news conference ahead of the first anniversary of the coup that ousted the elected government of prime minister Nawaz Sharif on October 12, 1999.

"We will return to our place exactly after three years in accordance with the deadline given by the Supreme Court" in May, Musharraf said.

Musharraf said he had no plans to form a political party. "I can give a surety bond that I will not form a political party. All such talk is nonsense," he said.

"We will hand over power to elected people and we have an elaborate plan to achieve this."

After district-level elections to be held in phases starting in December and ending by July next year, the military government will hold provincial and national elections, he said.

Musharraf additionally gave an overview of his government's

performance in its first year, during which it faced the tough tasks of reviving the economy and eliminating corruption.

Pakistan would continue to exercise "maximum restraint" in Kashmir despite Indian "provocations," he added.

Musharraf rejected suggestions that Pakistan's economic difficulties were the result of its Kashmir policy, calling them "absolute fallacy."

Pakistan gives political and diplomatic support to the 11-year-old Muslim separatist drive in the Indian zone of Kashmir. Islamabad controls the northern third of the disputed Himalayan territory.

"We are showing maximum restraint despite India's continuous aggressive actions along the Line of Control," the de facto border in Kashmir, he said.

Musharraf, defending the performance of his government, said he had done "a lot" in one year but that this was not adequately recognised.

He accused vested interests and unidentified external forces of creating a sense of despondency in the society.

"I will not go into details to describe the external forces, but I

know they are trying to destabilise my government because it is putting the country on the path of progress," the general said.

He admitted the pace of the accountability process launched by the military government to punish corruption was slow. "I am disappointed, but it is not due to my government."

But he said the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) set in November last year had succeeded in recovering a total of 65 billion rupees (1.12 billion dollars), including stuck-up bank loans and the plundered money.

The military ruler denied allegations of torture and harassment of political leaders and workers during detention, but promised to look into any individual complaints and redress the grievances.

Musharraf suspended the constitution and parliament after seizing power and in March banned political activities and demonstrations.

Despite the restrictions Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League (PML) plans to observe October 12 as a "black day" and his wife Kulsom intends to lead a protest rally from Peshawar.

Scientists find way to program key cells

WASHINGTON, Oct 10: Scientists said on Monday they had taken a first step towards being able to control stem cells master cells that have the ability to become any kind of cell in the body, reports Reuters.

Doctors hope one day these cells can be directed to grow into organs or tissues for transplant, used to test drugs and potentially toxic chemicals, and studied to give insights into basic human biology.

But first they have to learn how to control them. "One obvious goal is to control the differentiation of human embryonic stem cells," Dr. Douglas Melton of the Howard Hughes Medical Institute at Harvard University and colleagues in Israel wrote in their report, published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

If this differentiation could be directed, the cells could be used as a source of brain cells for Parkinson's patients, pancreatic islet cells for diabetes patients, heart cells for heart patients and so on.

The researchers ran a series of tests on the obvious candidates for directing stem cell development chemicals known as

growth factors, which influence cell growth.

They tested them on what many scientists consider the most promising form of stem cells embryonic stem cells. Taken from very early embryos, only a few cells in size, embryonic stem cells have the potential to become any kind of cell in the body at all.

Embryonic stem cells also seem to have the ability to survive indefinitely, making them extremely valuable to laboratory scientists.

The researchers tried out eight different growth factors, including basic fibroblast growth factor, transforming growth factor and epidermal growth factor.

The stem cells had receptors, or molecular doorways, for all of the growth factors, which suggests they would be open to the influence of the compounds.

When exposed to one group of growth factors, the stem cells tended to develop into muscle cells, which belong to a family of cell type known as mesodermal cells. When exposed to a second class of factors, the stem cells became mesodermal or ectodermal cells, which include brain, skin, and adrenal tissues.

BRIEFLY



Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian (L) and Vice President Annette Lu (R) raise their fists while shouting slogans "long live the Republic of China", "long-live Taiwanese people" and "long-live freedom and democracy" as high-ranking military officials stand in front of the presidential office yesterday in the celebration of Taiwan's National Day. --AFP photo

Dalai Lama to visit Taiwan: The Dalai Lama will make his second visit to Taiwan next month, calling the trip a "religious tour" to allay China's objection, a leading Taiwanese newspaper reported Tuesday. AP reports from Taipei.

The exiled Tibetan spiritual leader was invited to Taiwan by 12 Buddhist, Christian and Catholic groups, the China Taiwan reported. He is scheduled to meet Taiwanese President Chen Shui-bian but has yet to give a specific date for the trip, the newspaper quoted unidentified sources in the presidential office as saying.

Two French planes collide: Two single-engine French planes collided Monday off the coast of Libya, with one plunging into the Mediterranean Sea and the other landing safely, Libyan television reported. AP reports from Cairo.

The report, monitored in Cairo, did not say how many people were aboard or whether there are any survivors of the afternoon crash, but Libyan authorities were still searching the sea several hours later. In Paris, the French Foreign Ministry confirmed a small plane had crashed and said three French citizens and a Libyan were aboard.

El Salvador liquor toll rises: A total of 66 people have died in El Salvador after drinking methanol-tainted locally made liquor, a Health Ministry spokeswoman said Monday, AFP reports from San Salvador.

"I'm sorry to say the number of dead has risen in areas in the center of the country," said spokeswoman Katia Jovel, noting that most of the deaths had occurred in communities not far from the capital. The director of the Santa Gertrudis hospital in San Vicente said that four others had survived the alcohol poisoning, but gone blind, while another 16 people were "fighting for their lives."

Kathmandu Airport closed

KATHMANDU, Oct 10: Kathmandu airport was closed today after a China South West Airlines flight probably hit a bird, forcing the pilot to brake hard stopping just before the end of the runway, officials said, reports AFP.

The Kathmandu International Airport has been closed indefinitely since Tuesday morning after the Boeing 757 of China South West Airlines probably hit a bird and the pilot braked and stopped the aircraft, airport officials said.

"It stopped a few feet short of the southern end of the runway before takeoff," they said, without saying if anyone was injured or if the aircraft was damaged.

It was not immediately known how many passengers were onboard the aircraft bound for Lhasa.

On Monday evening, an Indian Airlines plane with 184 passengers on board was forced to make an emergency landing at Kathmandu just after takeoff.

The right engine of an Indian Airlines Airbus-300 caught fire a minute after takeoff around 5:00 pm (1145 GMT) forcing pilots to make an emergency landing.

Obesity confines him in house for 25 years

LONDON, Oct 10: An Englishman weighing 318 kilograms stepped outside his house for the first time in 25 years on Monday to pose for the cameras as friends cheered him, reports DPA.

Jack Taylor, a 55-year-old former security guard who put his weight at 50 stone, said he had remained in his home in Manningham, Bradford, because of "personal tragedies".

"It feels great. It feels really good. It's been 25 years. It means a lot to me. It might start me going back out," he told journalists waiting outside.

Taylor remained inside his home from the mid-1970s because of his weight problem.

"I have had a lot of tragedy in my life and I just decided one day, I'll stop in (stay at home) and I just took off from there. In 1975 I just didn't go out no more. I just stopped in," Taylor said.

Indonesia to register E Timor refugees

JAKARTA, Oct 10: Indonesia is ready to start registering tens of thousands of refugees in squalid camps in Indonesian West Timor to determine whether they want to return to East Timor, a minister said Tuesday, reports AP.

Resettlement Minister Erna Witoelar said international observers would be invited to observe the process to ensure its credibility.

Indonesia is under intense international pressure to close down the West Timor camps and resettle the refugees. Foreign governments, as well as the

United Nations, also demand that Indonesia disarm militia gangs that have terrorised the refugees and prevented their return to East Timor.

The United Nations estimates there are currently 120,000 East Timorese sheltering in the camps on the western side of Timor island.

They fled their homeland after the militia gangs devastated it when the territory overwhelmingly voted in a UN-organised ballot to end Indonesian rule last year.

Bangladesh University of Engineering & Technology, Dhaka Tender Notice

No P&D/LP-1(605)/2000-2001/D
Sealed tenders are invited from bonafide suppliers for supply of SLR Camera Body, Macro Zoom Lens, Electronic Flash Gun, Disc Paper, Circular Saw Blade, Chisel, Hand Planer, Scroll Saw Blade, Platform Scale, Measuring Probe, Digital Tachometer & Digital Wattmeter.

Intending participants shall have to obtain permission for purchasing tender paper etc. on application to the undersigned. Application must accompany TIN certificate, Trade licence and certificate of experience about concern works/supplies etc. from reputed organisations. Tender paper and other terms & conditions will be available from the office of the undersigned on payment of Tk 400.00 (four hundred) (non-refundable) to the Sonali Bank, BUET Branch, Dhaka. Each tender must accompany a Bank Draft or Pay Order from nationalised bank amounting to 5% of the quoted amount as earnest money deposited in favour of the "Comptroller, BUET" without which no tender will be considered. Tenders must be put into the tender boxes kept for this purpose in this office or offices of the Heads of the Department of Civil Engineering and Mechanical Engineering (Civil Engineering Building and EME Building respectively) up to 12-00 Noon of 23.10.2000 and will be opened on the same day at 12-30 PM before the participants present.

The university authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the tenders or one or more items of any tender without assigning any reasons whatsoever.

No tender paper will be sold on the opening day of the tender.

Deputy Director
Planning & Development
GD-943

জাতীয় ক্রীড়া পরিষদ
৬২/৩, পুরানা পল্টন, ঢাকা-১০০০

নং-তারিখ: পরিষদ/প্র-০৯/৯৫/৫৮৯ তারিখ: ০৯-১০-২০০০ইং

দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

এতদ্বারা সেমিনার ব্যাগ প্রস্তুতকারী প্রতিষ্ঠান অথবা ঠিকাদার/সরবরাহকারীদের যাহাদের সরকারী/আধা-সরকারী/পায়ত্তশাসিত প্রতিষ্ঠানে অর্থাৎ নিম্নলিখিত পত্র ১.০০ (এক) লক্ষ টাকা মূল্যের সেমিনার ব্যাগ সরবরাহ কাজ সম্বন্ধে জ্ঞানক ভাবে সম্পাদনের পূর্ব অভিজ্ঞতা আছে এবং ভাটি রেজিস্ট্রেশন নম্বর রয়েছে, তাদের নিকট হতে নিম্নলিখিতকর্তার অফিসে রক্ষিত নমুনা অনুযায়ী ব্যাগ সরবরাহ করার সীলমোহরকৃত খামে দরপত্র আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে।

ক্রম নং	কাজের নাম	পরিমাণ	বায়নার টাকা	কার্য সম্পাদনের সময়
১	জাতীয় ক্রীড়া পরিষদের মনোমামন বাস্তব	১২৫ টি	২.৫%	১০ (দশ) দিন
	১৭"X১২" সেমিনার ব্যাগ সরবরাহ			

পরিচালক (পঃ ও উঃ), জাতীয় ক্রীড়া পরিষদ এর নিকট হতে (১) নির্ধারিত পূর্ব অভিজ্ঞতার মূল সনদ (২) ভাটি রেজিস্ট্রেশন নম্বর এবং (৩) এক্ষেপ্তি সার্টিফিকেট প্রদর্শন করে পূর্বনামিত মহৎ পূর্ব জাতীয় ক্রীড়া পরিষদের হিসাব শাখা হতে জাতীয় ক্রীড়া পরিষদের অনুমতি যে কোন ত্রুটিবিহীন ব্যাক হতে ইস্যুকৃত ৩০০.০০ (দুইশত) টাকার অফেরতযোগ্য পে-অর্ডার/ব্যাংক ড্রাফটের বিনিময়ে ১৫-১০-২০০০ইং হতে ২২-১০-২০০০ইং তারিখ অফিস চলাকালীন সময় পর্যন্ত দরপত্র দাখিল সম্ভব করা যাবে।

দরপত্র আদানী ২৩-১০-২০০০ইং তারিখ বেলা ১২:০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত নিম্নলিখিতকর্তার অফিসকক্ষে দরপত্র গ্রহণ করা হবে এবং ৫ দিন ১২:০০ ঘটিকায় উপস্থিত দরপত্রদাতাদের সম্মুখে (যদি কেহ উপস্থিত থাকেন) দরপত্র খোলা হবে।

কর্তৃপক্ষ যে কোন কারণে দরপত্র বাতিল করে দরপত্র গ্রহণ বা সকল দরপত্র বাতিল করিবার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।

বন্দকার আলোয়ারুল ইসলাম
পরিচালক (প্রশাসন)
জাতীয় ক্রীড়া পরিষদ, ঢাকা।

তারিখ: ৯৪৫