

US ELECTION 2004

Colorado may become the Florida of 2004

Whether President George W. Bush serves another four years or is ousted by challenger John Kerry may depend on a last-minute amendment to the Colorado constitution that has deeply divided residents of the western state.

On Tuesday, Coloradans will choose between Bush and Kerry, and will vote on Amendment 36, which, if passed, would hand out the state's nine electoral votes in proportion to the votes each candidate gets.

If that does not sound too controversial, consider this:

"If the initiative had been in place in 2000, Al Gore would be president today," said James Gimpel, an Electoral College expert at the University of Maryland.

Colorado has nine electoral votes. Under the new system, Bush could win five votes and the other four could go to Kerry, according to recent polls.

"These four votes could be crucial and determine the outcome of the election," said University of Denver law professor Robert Hardaway.

The amendment, critics say, would end Colorado as a contender in federal elections, undermine constitutional law and make it an oddball among the states.

Proponents say it guarantees the principle of one person, one vote. "In the last election we ignored 49 percent of the vote in the state," said Julie Brown of Make Your Vote Count.

This is possible because of the curious US system of proportioning votes. Americans do not, in fact, vote for president. They vote for members of the Electoral College, who will meet on December 13 in their state capitals to cast their ballots.

In most states, all of the state's Electoral College votes go to the top vote-getter in the state. Second place gets nothing.

Brown wants to end this. "A proportional system with each candidate getting a share of the vote is a much more fair and accurate measure of the will of the people," she said.

In the current winner-take-all system, in which electors are apportioned according to each state's population, she said, many citizens feel their vote does not count, so they do not bother.

The proposed amendment to the state constitution is itself "unconstitutional," because voters do not make the laws, Hardaway said, their representatives in the legislature do.

In 2000, vote recounts in Florida delayed the selection of a president for more than a month. In the end, Bush won 271 of the 538 Electoral College votes, while Gore won 266 - despite the fact that Gore pulled half a million more popular votes.

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Top outlaw Tushar lynched by mob in Khulna

A top leader of outlawed Purba Banglar Communist Party (PBCP-Janajuddho) was lynched by a mob in the city on Thursday night.

Police said Abul Kalam Azad alias Tushar, 32, a regional leader of the underground outfit, went to Shaikpara under Sonadanga Police Station along with his accomplice Shamim at about 11:30pm to collect Tk 2 lakh in toll from the owner of a private clinic.

When Tushar and Shamim reached near Hotel Holiday International, plainclothes policemen, who having been informed earlier were lying in wait, caught the PBCP men. Locals then snatched the outlaws from the policemen and beat them up mercilessly, leaving Tushar dead on the spot and injuring Shamim. They also gouged out the eyes of Shamim.

Police rescued Shamim and took him to Khulna Medical College Hospital in critical condition.

According to Assistant Commissioner (AC) Anisur Rahman of Khulna Metropolitan Police (KMP), Tushar had earlier given death threats to Dr Gazi Mizanur Rahman, founder of Khulna Surgical Clinic, for Tk 5 lakh in toll.

On Thursday morning Tushar and Shamim threw two hand bombs on the private car Dr Mizan at Masjid Sarani in Sonadanga by which his 15-year-old daughter was returning home from Coronation Girls' High School. No one was injured in the bomb attack although splinters caused damage to windshields of the vehicle.

AC Anis said Tushar again threatened Dr Mizan over cellphone with death 15 minutes after the bomb attack. The outlaw insisted on demanding toll, lessening the amount from Tk 5 lakh to Tk 1 lakh.

Tushar, son of Sultan Shaikh of Boyra under Sonadanga Police Station, was accused in 14 murder cases committed during the last three years in the southwestern region, while Shamim, son of Moteleb Hossain of Dailimill road under the same police station, was 15-year-old daughter was returning

Kerry will win, predict Indian astrologers

Indian astrologers say that the planets favour Democratic candidate John Kerry to win the White House race over US President George W. Bush in next Tuesday's polls.

"For months opinion polls have shown the race between Bush and Kerry, his challenger, to be neck and neck," said author and astrologer Lachhman Das Madan, who also heads the Astrology Study and Research Institute in Delhi.

"But the cosmic writ reveals Bush cannot become the president of the US again. On the other hand, Kerry's horoscope

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Police make the overbridge linking Gausia Market and New Market free from hawkers yesterday for the first time in many years, facilitating easy passage of shoppers to the two busy markets, while rickshaws and motorised vehicles get stuck in the traffic tailback on the New Elephant Road nearby.

Cool response to KL amnesty by migrants

Illegal immigrants in Malaysia appeared cool to an amnesty programme, which began yesterday despite threats of jail and whipping if they do not leave, senior officials said.

The Malaysian government hopes some 400,000 people, mainly Indonesians working illegally, will head home during the 17-day amnesty programme to mark the Muslim holy month of Ramadan.

If they do not, they face jail sentences of up to five years or fines of up to 10,000 ringgit (2,632 dollars), or both, plus whipping. Thousands of illegal immigrants have reportedly been whipped in Malaysian prisons since harsh new laws were introduced two years ago.

"There was not much response early today (Friday). Only 251 Indonesians, mainly men, have left Port Klang" west of the capital Kuala Lumpur, the Selangor state immigration director, Che Mamat Abdullah, told AFP.

"We expect more people to leave in the coming days."

In southern Johor state, the three ports of Stulang Laut, Pasir Gudang and Kukup were also quiet, officials said.

"The departure of illegals is not so encouraging. So far only 800 people have left," Mohamad Nasir Osman, acting Johor immigration director told AFP.

The immigration chiefs said they expected the volume of departures to pick up in the next few days and cautioned the migrants not to leave at the last minute.

Che Mamat said the illegal immigrants could only depart if they had valid travel documents and a ferry ticket. All those leaving are fingerprinted, he said.

Home Affairs Minister Azmi Khalid said Indonesia would send two naval vessels to Malaysia on Thursday.

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CTG GARMENTS CLASH Woman arrestees get bail, male colleagues sent to jail

Seventy-two garments workers - all women - yesterday got bail in the police assault case filed in connection with Thursday's workers-police clash at Lagoon Garments Ltd in the port city's Bahodderhat area.

The Court of Metropolitan Magistrate Shafiqul Islam however sent to jail custody 13 of their male colleagues arrested with them on Thursday.

The clash took place as the workers agitated over three months' arrear wages. The factory employs around 4,000 of workers. The clash left 30 people including 10 cops injured and two army vehicles damaged. Police nabbed 85 workers including 72 female ones.

A sub-inspector at Panchlaish Police Station filed a case accusing the workers of assaulting police.

Besides, an army person filed a case with Panchlaish police under Speedy Trial Act (SPA) accusing nine male workers and some others of damaging army vehicles that were passing by the road near the factory.

Hearing of the case is scheduled for today in the same court. Meanwhile, Garments Mazdoor Union yesterday condemned 'harassment, assault and arrest of the garments workers'.

Bidyut Bhounmik and Kamrul Islam, convener and joint-convenor of the organisation, in a press statement said police attacked and arrested innocent workers when they were agitating for payment of three months' outstanding wages before the ensuing Eid-ul-Fitr.

The regretted that instead of helping the poor workers to realise their wages, police sided with the factory authorities who were depriving the workers of their dues.

MEHDI MURDER BNP drops its protest plan

District BNP and its front organisations yesterday cancelled all protest programmes against the death of ward commissioner and Jubo Dal leader Mahbub Alam Mehdi in 'crossfire' with Rapid Action Battalion (Rab).

Leaders of district and city units of BNP at a press conference at BDS auditorium denied any involvement of lawmaker Mujibur Rahman Sarwar, mayor of Barisal City Corporation, minister in-charge of the district and party's district president, in the killing.

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Kidnapped schoolboy killed in Kushtia Trader held hostage for ransom

Extortionists killed an abducted schoolboy in Kushtia on Thursday as his father declined to pay them toll.

Meanwhile, kidnappers still hold hostage the Chuadanga businessman abducted on Wednesday.

Minhazul Alam Shipon, 7, son of Zinnat Ali of village Rifayatpur under Daulatpur upazila in Kushtia was missing since Thursday morning when the boy, a student of class two of Rifayatpur primary school went out from home.

In the evening local people found his dead body at a sugarcane field of the village.

He was strangled, police said.

A gang of the area demanded toll to Zinnat Ali several months ago and threatened of dire consequences when he declined to pay, family sources said.

Police recovered the body and sent to Kushtia General Hospital. A case was filed with Daulatpur Police Station.

In Chuadanga, armed criminals threatened a human chain and held a protest rally in the city Thursday afternoon demanding the same. Several trade organisations joined the human chain and rally and expressed support for the strike.

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Dhaka, Kathmandu likely to sign flood management deal next year

Bangladesh and Nepal may sign a bilateral treaty next year to work together on different aspects of flood mitigation and management programmes.

A joint technical committee of Bangladesh and Nepal today, the last day of two-day talks, is likely to reach a consensus to form a joint committee of experts. The joint committee will draw a work plan on the treaty, sources said.

"We've been exchanging information relating to flood with Nepal. Now our joint technical committee is trying to explore other ways to mitigate floods," said Dr Tauhidul Anwar Khan. Tauhidul is a member of the joint river commission who led the home experts in the talks.

Modan Lal Shrestha, director general of the hydrology department of Nepal, told journalists after the meeting that they had fruitful

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MISSING MAGNATE Sylhet traders call half-day strike tomorrow

The agitated traders in Sylhet called a half-day strike tomorrow to press their demand for immediate rescue of business magnate Md Habibur Rahman who has been missing for the last 12 days.

The Sylhet Bayboshayee Samity also formed a human chain and held a protest rally in the city Thursday afternoon demanding the same. Several trade organisations joined the human chain and rally and expressed support for the strike.

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Kiwis complete formalities

New Zealand expectedly completed a 2-0 series sweep against Bangladesh with an innings and 101-run romp on the fourth day of the second Test at the MA Aziz Stadium in Chittagong yesterday.

Resuming on 210-8, Bangladesh were bundled out for 262 in their second innings as Daniel Vettori took the remaining two wickets in less than half an hour to record New Zealand's biggest ever Test victory.

New Zealand, who have now won all their four Tests against Bangladesh by innings margins, were victorious in the first Test in Dhaka by an innings and 99 runs.

Mohammad Rafique added one run to his overnight score of 30 before the left-hander was caught by Matthew Sinclair at silly mid-off in the second over of the day.

But Tapash Baisya sparked the home crowd to life with a swash-buckling 66 to prolong the inevitable.

The number ten batsman, whose

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EU leaders trumpet historic constitution

What the European Constitution changes

A government for Europe

- A president for the European Council
- A foreign minister for the EU
- Directed by qualified majority in the Council
- End of the double majority voting in the Council

More powers for the Parliament

- Power of co-decision on law, budget, policy

Right to veto limited

- No, health, education, trade agreements, culture and multilateral
- Qualified majority voting in the Council

Decision-making simplified

- Qualified majority voting
- Qualified majority voting in the Council

EU leaders yesterday signed a historic constitution for the expanding bloc in a fanfare ceremony on the spot where the EU was born half a century ago, but doubts remain over whether it will ever come into force.

Putting aside for a few hours at least an institutional row over the European Union's incoming executive, they trumpeted the pact as a "new beginning" for Europe.

But the assembled leaders were also urged to press ahead speedily with ratifying the constitution, which must pass referenda in at least 10 EU countries over the next two years to enter into force.

"Those decisions we cannot take for granted," said outgoing European Commission chief Romano Prodi in a series of speeches ahead of the signing itself.

Host Silvio Berlusconi added: "The constitution that we are signing today will therefore need to be backed up by a continually renewed commitment on the part of both

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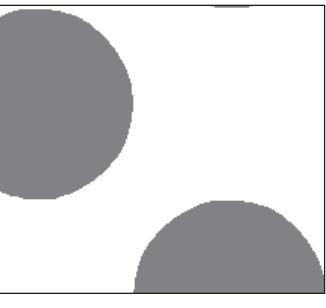
Sehri-Iftar

Ramadan	Oct	Sehri	Iftar
15	30	5-24	
16	31	4-42	5-24

Prayer Timing October 30

	Azan	Jamaat
Fair	4-42	4-48
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-00	4-15
Maghrib	5-24	5-29
Esha	7-15	7-45

Source: Islamic Foundation



CHITTAGONG MAYORAL POLLS Mohiuddin, Nasir locked in 'covert' campaign

Mayor of Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) and city Awami League (AL) stalwart A B M Mohiuddin Chowdhury, and State Minister for Civil Aviation and former CCC mayor Mir Mohammad Nasiruddin of the ruling BNP are now apparently locked in a covert campaign over the mayoral polls in the port city due in May next year, sources in the two parties said.

Mohiuddin, general secretary of city AL, and Nasiruddin, president of city unit of BNP, both aspiring to be candidates of their respective parties for the mayoral race, are apparently busy with ground work to woo voters.

Both the leaders have started attending their party meetings, rallies and functions besides staging showdowns at different places in the city to drum up support for winning the next mayoral election, the sources mentioned.

Mohiuddin has floated a platform of local units of like-minded opposition parties under the banner of 'Sammilita Birodhi Oikya Parishad (SBOP)', and launched a movement with a 40-point demand for the development of Chittagong city.

The demands include installation of a hanging bridge over the river Kamaphuli, development of roads, increase of infrastructural facilities in the city and adequate funds to implement development projects here.

Mohiuddin is said to have formed the SBOP just to run a covert campaign for the mayoral polls in the name of a movement for development of the city.

Ahead of the first mayoral polls of CCC in 1994, Mohiuddin had floated a similar platform with a 28-point demand and he own the polls race defeating BNP candidate Mir

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