

## US ELECTION 2004

# Colorado may become the Florida of 2004

AFP, DENVER, Colorado

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

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

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

Police said Abu 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.

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

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## Kidnapped schoolboy killed in Kushtia

Trader held hostage for ransom

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

MEHDI MURDER  
BNP drops its protest plan

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

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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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 Rifatpur under Daulatpur upazila in Kushtia was missing since Thursday morning when the boy, a student of class two of Rifatpur primary school went out from home.

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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

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## EU leaders trumpet historic constitution

What the European Constitution changes



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.

"These 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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Dhaka, Kathmandu likely to sign flood management deal next year

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

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 Taufiqul Anwar Khan. Taufiqul 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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## Sehri-Iftar

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

## Prayer Timing

October 30

	Azam	Jamaat
Fajr	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



MISSING MAGNATE  
Sylhet traders call half-day strike tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

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 Bayobashayee 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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## CHITTAGONG MAYORAL POLLS

## Mohiuddin, Nasir locked in 'covert' campaign

NURUL ALAM, Chittagong

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.

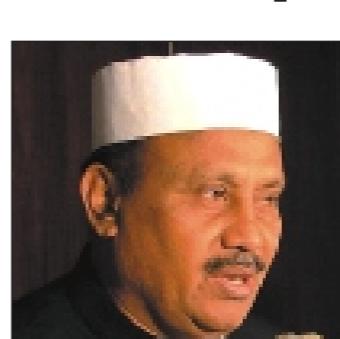
Mohiuddin, general secretary of city AL, and Nasiruddin, president of city unit of BNP, both aspiring to be candidates of their respective parties for the mayoral race, are apparently busy with ground work to woo voters.

Both the leaders have started attending their party meetings, rallies and functions besides staging shows 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 'Sammiti 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 Karnaphuli, development of roads, increase of infrastructural facilities in the city and adequate funds to implement development projects here.

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Mohiuddin



Nasiruddin

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 won the polls race defeating BNP candidate Mir

Abductors free 2 in Bandarban on payment of ransom

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bandarban

Abductors freed a retired army person and a fish farm employee after 41 days allegedly on payment of a hefty ransom.

Subader (retd) Siddique Rahman and Abdul Khaleque were picked up at gunpoint from Saingya on the bank of river Lulayene in Roangchhari upazila on September 18.

They said Arakan Peoples Army (APA), a separatist group of neighbouring Myanmar, kidnapped them. Cadres of the APA have reportedly taken refuge in the Chittagong Hill Tracts for long.

Patrolling troops found them on the bank of the river at around 4:00am. Army sources claimed the abductors were forced to release the hostages as the army and Bangladesh Rifles were on a drive to rescue the two.

Siddique and Khaleque said they were kidnapped for not giving toll to the criminals but denied having paid any ransom.

Reliable sources claimed the captors were paid a handsome amount of ransom and the first instalment was paid on October 21.



PHOTO: STAR

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.

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

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

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 Bohadherhat 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 Panchalish Police Station filed a case accusing the workers of assaulting police.

Besides, an army person filed a case with Panchalish police under Speedy Trial Act (STA) 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 Bhoumik and Kamrul Islam, convenor 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.

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