



PHOTO: AFP
Congress general secretary Rahul Gandhi (R), Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah (C) and Indian Minister for Water Resources Salfuddin Soz (L) are garlanded during an election campaign rally at Anantnag, south of Srinagar, on Monday. The rally was jointly organised by the ruling Congress party and National Conference (NC) in support of NC candidate Mehboob Beg from the Anantnag parliamentary constituency.

Scramble for Muslim votes in UP

INDO ASIAN NEWS SERVICE, Lucknow

Three major political parties in Uttar Pradesh are locked in a race for the Muslim vote, seen to be floating in these Lok Sabha polls rather than being tethered to any political outfit as in the past.

The Congress and the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) are trying their best to woo the Muslim voters away from the Samajwadi Party (SP).

Thanks to Samajwadi Party chief Mulayam Singh Yadav's marriage of convenience with Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) rebel Kalyan Singh - better known as the Babri Masjid demolition man - a good chunk of Muslim voters who had remained closely wedded to Yadav are ready to look for other options.

That has led to a scramble for the crucial 19 percent Muslim vote in a state with a population of 170 million that sends 80 MPs to the Lok Sabha, the highest among all states. Yadav remains ahead of others in the race, but not without devoting a lot of his time and energy towards re-establishing his bonafides with a

community that was willing to swear by him until not very long ago.

Both the BSP and the Congress have left no stone unturned to woo the Muslim voter.

That has forced Yadav to rush to India's pre-eminent Muslim seminary - Darul-Uloom in Deoband - to seek support, after his party's general secretary Amar Singh was given the cold shoulder. Elsewhere too, Yadav has been busy knocking on almost every possible Islamic door to explain his handshake with Kalyan Singh.

While his clarification that Kalyan Singh - once a powerful BJP leader - had sworn to strengthen Yadav's own mission of crippling the saffron brigade has failed to jell with a large chunk of Muslim voters, there is a small section that appears to be getting convinced by the argument. And though many of Yadav's own Muslim leaders chose to part ways with him on this account, he was busy arguing with others that the alliance with Kalyan Singh would benefit the Samajwadi Party with the en bloc support of the Lodhi caste that has a dominant presence in several parts of central Uttar Pradesh.

Campaign for 3rd phase of Indian polls ends

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

Indian politicians yesterday winded down their campaign for the third phase of parliamentary elections set for tomorrow.

In this phase the electoral fate of ruling Congress party President Sonia Gandhi, the leader of the opposition LK Advani, BJP's prime ministerial candidate and 1565 other candidates would be decided by an estimated 14.40 crore voters.

The third round of the five-phase polling will cover 107 constituencies across 11 states and federally-administered territories including Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Jammu and Kashmir.

Sonia Gandhi is in fray from Rae Bareilly constituency, the pocket borough of the Nehru-Gandhi dynasty since long, where her son Rahul and daughter Priyanka are busy electioneering for most of the time as the Congress chief

travels in other parts of the country to drum up support for her party and allies.

Like Sonia Gandhi, Advani, who is contesting from Gandhinagar in Gujarat, too has been busy criss-crossing the country for BJP's campaign and his daughter Pratibha is appealing to the people in the constituency to elect her father like they have done every time since 1991.

Other prominent candidates in the third phase include former prime minister HD Deve Gowda, chief of Janata Dal (Secular), Sharad Yadav, President of BJP ally Janata Dal (United) and federal ministers Jyotiraditya Scindia and Sri Prakash Jaiswal.

The first two phases of polling have covered 265 of the total of 543 seats in Lok Sabha and the results will be out on May 16 after two more rounds of voting.

Polling to elect a new 32-member legislature in the North eastern border state of Sikkim will also be held on Thursday.

Up to 1m displaced in northwest Pakistan

AFP, Geneva

Up to one million people are displaced in northwestern Pakistan where militants are feeding on local discontent and strife, humanitarian and local officials from Pakistan warned yesterday.

Officials from Pakistan's North West Frontier Province appealed for international relief aid at an unprecedented meeting with relief agencies and donor countries in

Geneva.

"We are hearing a lot of pledges and promises made from the international community to Pakistan, and many of them are for security, for the police and the army, but the civilians are not getting what they are supposed to," said Sitara Ayaz, minister for social welfare and development in the province.

"In our province we need more support and help from the international commu-

nity," she said after the two-day meeting in Geneva.

The UN's World Food Programme is working on an estimate of about 600,000 people for food aid in the area, spokeswoman Emilia Casella told AFP.

Local officials put the figure at closer to one million, with about 80 percent of them housed with friends or relatives -- sometimes five or six families to a home.

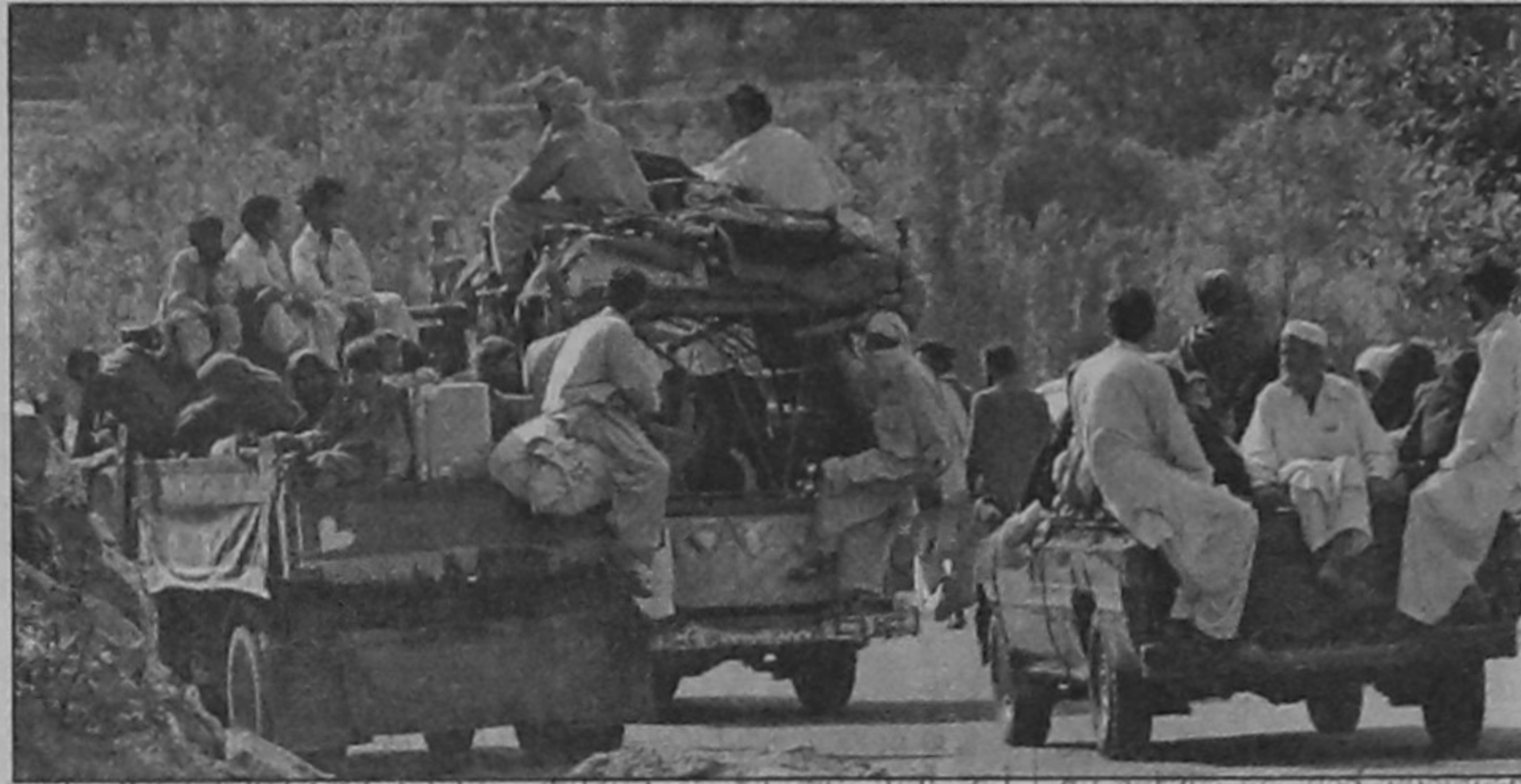


PHOTO: AFP
Local residents flee from a troubled area in Lower Dir on Monday where the Pakistani military launched an operation against the Taliban. Around 30,000 people in northwest Pakistan have been displaced by a military offensive to flush out Taliban militants, a provincial minister said.

Kasab is over 20 years old, says medical examiners

INDO ASIAN NEWS SERVICE, Mumbai

Mohammed Ajmal Amir Kasab, the lone terrorist captured alive after the 26/11 attack on Mumbai, is over 20, according to a medical report submitted here Tuesday before the Special Court hearing the terror attacks trial.

Special Judge ML Tahilyani, who had ordered the medical test last Friday to determine Kasab's age, will give his ruling on the matter Wednesday, Special Public Prosecutor Ujjwal Nikam told reporters after Tuesday's hearing.

The order to carry out the medical test had come after Kasab claimed in court that he was below 18 and should be tried in a court meant for juveniles.

The medical report submitted in court Tuesday is based on two separate tests conducted at Mumbai's Sir JJ Hospital. Kasab underwent a dental and bone test to determine his age.

BOFORS SCAM Quattrocchi no longer on CBI's most wanted list

ANI, New Delhi

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has removed the name of the lone surviving suspect in the Bofors payoff case Ottavio Quattrocchi from its list of most wanted persons.

The 12-year Interpol Red Corner Notice against the Italian businessman, has been removed from the "Interpol Notices" section of CBI's website.

The agency's decision is based on the legal advice of the Attorney General Milon Banerjee. On October 28, last year, Banerjee had described the RCN as "a continued embarrassment."

Afghan unrest kills 6 cops, 12 militants

AFP, Kabul

Afghan police clashed with Taliban fighters outside the capital Kabul, leaving a dozen militants and an officer dead, while bombs blasts killed five more policemen, the government said yesterday.

The fresh violence was linked to a deadly insurgency led by the extremist Taliban, who are battling to wrest back power after being ousted from government by the 2001 US-led invasion.

The militants were killed on Monday in a sweep to clear Taliban from Musayid district about 15 kilometres (nine miles) south of Kabul, interior ministry spokesman Zemarai Bashary told AFP.

"The head of the district criminal investigation department was wounded and later died in hospital. Twelve enemies were also killed," Bashary said.

Separately a rocket landed inside an international military base on the outskirts of Kabul early Tuesday and wounded three French sol-

diers preparing to head out in a convoy, a French military spokesman said.

One of the soldiers would be evacuated to France for treatment, Lieutenant Colonel Bertrand Fayet told AFP.

The French soldiers are among about 70,000 US-led and Nato-led troops deployed in Afghanistan to help the fragile nation fight extremism, which the West brands a direct threat.

In a suspected militant attack on the Afghan security forces, a roadside bomb blew up a police vehicle in the eastern province of Paktia on Monday and killed four policemen, the interior ministry said in a statement.

The vehicle was struck while taking part in an operation with the army and US-led troops in Zurmat district, it said.

A bomb ripped through another police vehicle on Tuesday in the eastern province of Nangarhar, killing a policeman and wounding two others, provincial government spokesman Ahmad Zia Ahmadzai said.

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Northern General Insurance Co. Ltd.
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First Lease International Limited

Jahangir Tower (3rd Floor), 10, Kawranbazar C/A, Dhaka - 1215

PRICE-SENSITIVE INFORMATION NOTICE

This is for information of all concerned that in the 146th Board Meeting of First Lease International Limited was held on April 28, 2009 at 4.30 PM at Jahangir Tower (3rd Floor), 10, Kawranbazar C/A, Dhaka - 1215, the following pricesensitive decisions were taken:-

1. Proposed Dividend for the year 2008:- 10% Cash Dividend and 10% Stock Dividend (01 Bonus Share for each 10 shares held);
2. 16th Annual General Meeting for the year 2009 to be held:
 - (a) Date and time :- May 26, 2009 at 10.00 AM
 - (b) Place :- Bangladesh Institute of Administration and Management (BIAM) Foundation, 63, New Eskaton, Dhaka - 1000
 - (c) The Record date :- May 11, 2009

By order of the Board of Directors
Sd/-
(Sajib Godfrey Purification)
Company Secretary & SAVP
First Lease International Limited



BANGLADESH INSTITUTE OF HEALTH SCIENCES

125/1, Darus Salam, Mirpur, Dhaka-1207. Phone: 9010932/8035502 (Ext. 102); 01674237114 (M)
e-mail: dirbihs@bihs.edu.bd, website: www.dab-bd.org

Admission in MPhil and MPH Courses in Public Health under University of Dhaka

The Division of Public Health of the Bangladesh Institute of Health Sciences (BIHS), through a collaborative program with the University of Oslo supported by a NOMA Grant, is announcing the admission of the 2nd Batch of students (Session 2009 - 10) in MPhil and MPH Courses in the following disciplines under the Faculty of Postgraduate Medical Sciences and Research, University of Dhaka.

Two Years Courses	One Year Courses
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- ◆ MPH Courses dedicated to individual disciplines in Public Health.
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- ◆ Intensive and research based programs having possibility of collaborative studies with advanced institutes of the world.
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Interested candidates are requested to submit their Application and CV together with certified copies of all relevant documents and a recent passport size photograph. The course sought should be clearly marked on the envelop and sent to the above address. Application through e-mail: (dirbihs@bihs.edu.bd) will be accepted.

The last date for submission of application is 10 May 2009.



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