

Turkish reform vote gets Western backing

BBC ONLINE

The US and European Union have welcomed the result of the Turkish constitutional referendum.

Voters in Turkey gave strong backing to a package of changes to the country's military-era constitution. The changes are aimed at bringing Turkey more in line with the EU, which the government wants to join.

This result will help PM Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who made the reform a test of his leadership, ahead of elections next year, correspondents say.

With nearly all votes in the referendum counted, about 58% had voted "Yes" to amending the constitution.

Mr Erdogan said the result meant the country had "crossed a historic threshold toward advanced democracy and the supremacy of law".

The European Commission has welcomed the results. "As we consistently said in the past months, these reforms are a step in the right direction as they address a number of long-standing priorities in Turkey's efforts towards fully complying with the accession criteria," enlargement Commissioner Stefan Fuele said in a statement.

The US president "acknowledged the vibrancy of Turkey's democracy as reflected in the turnout for the referendum that took place across Turkey today", a statement released by the White House said.

German Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle said the vote was critical for Turkey's bid to join the European Union.

"This discussion in society, also about the concrete form of the balance of power in the state, is very much to be welcomed," Mr Westerwelle said.

BDR man

FROM PAGE 16
done in presence of Executive Magistrate Johirul Islam yesterday afternoon.

On completion of all formalities, the body was handed over to Salim's relatives, the jail superintendent said.

On April 12, Salim was convicted by the BDR Special Court-2 for his involvement in Thakurgaon BDR mutiny in February last year.

Maruf placed

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threat, the accused needs to be remanded again, said the DB official.

On September 7 detectives arrested Maruf from Natun Babupara in Saidpur upazila of Nilphamari district.

He sent the e-mail on August 25 in the guise of a Jamaat-e-Islami Majlishe-Sura member to the science and information and communication technology ministry using his client Mohammad Monir's e-mail address.

In the e-mail he threatened to blow up Key Point Installations (KPI) and carry out attack on police and ministry officials unless the four top Jamaat leaders are freed. He did so in a bid to implicate his client in a legal tangle so that Monir cannot realise the money from him (Maruf) which was given for sending him to Dubai in 2007, said DB police.

Tremors jolt

FROM PAGE 1
Daily Star that the second tremor was in the Dhaleshwari fault line near the confluence of the Dhaleshwari and the Shitalakhyia.

Panicked people especially of Dhaka rushed out of their homes.

Naznin Sultana Popy, a resident of Mirpur-12, came out of her house with her six-year-old daughter Sauda Hossain just after the second tremor and did not go back in until midnight.

"All the tin-built structures (houses) were shaking and we were praying to Allah to save us," said Shima Akhtar, a resident of Tungibari in Bikrampur.

Cracks developed in Lutfa Tower and Paneros Tower in Narayanganj, said locals.

It was felt in Dhaka, Narayanganj, Gazipur, Manikganj, Munshiganj, Jamalpur, Tangail, Sirajganj, Kishoreganj, Natore, Pabna, Brahmanbaria, Comilla, Chandpur, Narsingdi, Habiganj, Bagerhat, Kushtia, Magura, Khulna, Bhairab, Laxmipur, Feni, Noakhali, Shariatpur, Madaripur, Barisal, Bhola and Gopalganj among other places.

According to the Met

in a statement.

The result gives a boost to Mr Erdogan's political standing, after a hard-fought campaign in which the main opposition accused him and his party, the AKP, which has its roots in political Islam, of trying to take control of the judiciary, says the BBC's Jonathan Head in Istanbul.

"Islamist coup"
Mr Erdogan and his Justice and Development Party (AKP) are now in a stronger position to seek a third term of office in the general election due in the middle of next year, our correspondent adds.

The Turkish prime minister put a lot of effort into persuading voters to back his reform plan, travelling constantly across the country over the past month to drum up support.

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Plane with 47 onboard crashes in Venezuela

AFP, Caracas

A passenger plane carrying 47 people crashed yesterday in southeastern Venezuela, Transport Minister Francisco Garces said, adding there was no word yet about possible survivors.

The Conviasa Airline plane was en route to the resort city of Isla Margarita when it went down "about six miles (10 kilometers) from Puerto Ordaz," Garces told state television.

"We don't have any information" about the number of possible dead and injured in the crash, he said, adding rescue teams were heading to the site.

Garces said the aircraft was carrying 43 passengers and four crew.

Eid-ul-Fitr

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military officials as well as cross-section of the people attended the receptions.

The president and the prime minister exchanged Eid greetings with the guests.

In capital Dhaka, the main Eid congregation was held at the National Eidgah at 8:30am. President Zillur Rahman offered his Eid prayer at the National Eidgah.

Five Eid congregations were also held at the Baitul Mukarram National Mosque at 7:30am, 8:30am, 9:30am, 10:30am and 11:15am.

The biggest Eid congregation was held at Sholakia Eidgah in Kishoreganj district.

The authorities took fool-proof security measures for peaceful holding of the Eid congregations.

The national flag was hoisted atop government and non-government offices on the occasion. Main city streets were decorated with miniature flags inscribed with "Eid Mubarak" in Bengali and Arabic.

The holy Eid-ul-Fitr was also celebrated at the Bangladesh missions abroad.

Special diets were served in hospitals, jails, government-run orphanages, homes for the socially handicapped and vagabonds and shelter homes for the destitute.

The Children Park in the city was open for the underprivileged children on Eid day. Cultural functions, friendly football matches and Eid gatherings of children were held across the country.

State-owned Bangladesh Betar and Bangladesh Television as well as private television channels and radio stations broadcast special programmes on the occasion.

US Open

FROM PAGE 16
by American Chris Evert in her 6-3, 6-0 demolition of Australian Evonne Goolagong in 1976.

Clijsters, 27, extended her Flushing Meadows match-winning streak to 21 in a row, having also won the title in 2005 before missing a year due to injury and two more to start a family.

"It's been an incredible year, being back in the Open and for the first time I'm able to defend my title," Clijsters said at the trophy ceremony.

Last year her infant daughter Jada came on court to cavort around the shiny silver trophy after Clijsters struck a blow for working mothers everywhere with a Grand Slam victory in just her third tournament back from her hiatus.

Saturday, curly-haired Jada looked on from the stands, sucking a lollipop as her mom made quick work of Zvonareva.

Clijsters cruised through the first set in 27 minutes after twice breaking Zvonareva's serve. The Russian, appearing in her first final at Flushing Meadows, gifted Clijsters a break in the sixth game with a double fault and three unforced errors.

Then Clijsters wrapped up the set with a service break when Zvonareva slapped a backhand into the net.

Another double fault by the Russian, who was also runner-up at Wimbledon this season, in the sixth game of the second set put Clijsters up by two breaks and she quickly ended the 59-minute match with a forehand winner in the next game.

It was the quickest women's final since officials started keeping track of match times in 1980.

Hasina alerts

FROM PAGE 1
"The opposition was saying that they will launch a movement after the Eid. We will have no objection if they do that staying within the legal bounds. But the fear is that they might carry out destabilising activities in a planned way in the name of a movement," the premier was quoted as saying, by a cabinet member.

The sources told The Daily Star that the warning came following information from different intelligence agencies at home and abroad that an attempt on the prime minister's life might be carried out between this month and November.

The intelligence agencies also said simultaneous multiple sabotage might be carried out as well during the period by the anti-liberation war forces, in collaboration with an Indian separatist organisation and different local militant outfits.

They said the opposition might take the chance to mislead the people about some of the government's major initiatives including the move to try the war criminals, according to one of the sources who had talked to the prime minister recently.

AL insiders said before the premier departs for the US on September 18 to attend the UN general assembly, she might brief some of her close aides about the latest situation of the country and their tasks.

Mahbul Alam Hanif, a special assistant to the prime minister, said Sheikh Hasina's life is under threat at all times.

The defeated forces of the liberation war, the killers of

the father of the nation and their collaborators, the masterminds and patrons of the August 21, 2004 grenade attack, and the international arms smugglers who tried to smuggle 10 trucks of arms and ammunition through Bangladesh the same year, might try to assassinate the premier, he said yesterday.

"As she is the leader of the House, the prime minister, and the president of ruling Awami League -- the administration, and the law enforcement and intelligence agencies will take all possible measures to thwart any attempt on her life," he added.

About the ruling party's preparation to thwart any such attempt, Hanif, also the acting general secretary of AL, said they will organise rallies at district headquarters, and grand rallies at divisional headquarters to mobilise public support for the government's move to try the war criminals, and to counter the opposition's anti-government propaganda.

Welcoming opposition leader Khaleda Zia's statement that they want to help the government, the AL spokesperson urged her to join the parliament to criticise the government.

"But the people won't allow any movement to save the war criminals, and to cover up the corruption and misdeeds of the Zia family including Tarique Rahman and Arafat Rahman Koko," he said.

He hoped that the opposition leader will understand the pulse of the people, and refrain from engaging in negative and destructive politics.

HC pulls

FROM PAGE 1
An HC bench of Justice Md Imman Ali and Justice Md Abu Tariq on Thursday delivered the verdict saying the government cannot lease out reserve forest area for constructing shipyards that cause environmental damage.

The verdict came following a writ petition filed as public interest litigation by Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers' Association (BELA).

Bela's lawyer Syeda Rizwana Hasan told The Daily Star the companies cannot use the Sonaichhari reserve forest area, and their ship breaking yards should go following the HC judgment.

Deputy Attorney General Nazrul Islam Talukder, standing in for the government, said he was yet to get any instructions from the government to appeal with the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court against the HC verdict.

He, however, said the government is for protecting the environment as well as lives and properties of the people.

Bela filed the writ petition with the HC in February last year stating that the government has leased out the land under Sitakunda upazila in violation of the existing laws.

The HC in the same month restricted operation of ship breaking yards there, and issued a rule upon the authorities concerned to explain why the government action should not be declared illegal.

Secretaries to the ministries of environment and forest and industries, deputy commissioner of Chittagong, president of Bangladesh Ship Breakers' Association, and F&F Shipping Recycling, MS Tania Enterprise, Mbia Enterprise and Unique Traders, among others, were the respondents to the HC ruling.

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Blacklisted firm

FROM PAGE 1
The Tk 4,000 crore bridge in June 1998 with an expected lifespan of 100 years.

Documents show that the Chinese firm obtained the repair task in its third attempt. They failed to qualify in 2008 and 2009.

Meanwhile, officials concerned gave contradictory views on whether a blacklisted firm could be given the work. Most of them, however, said a banned firm should not be considered on moral ground. There is also the risk of poor performance, they added.

The evaluation body on August 12 recommended China Road and Bridge Corporation as it fulfilled the technical requirement and quoted Tk 165 crore, the lowest. Two Japanese firms World Kaihatsu Kogyo and Nippon Road also qualified for the task and quoted the closest Tk 285 crore and Tk 299 crore respectively.

"The Chinese firm can obtain work from the bridge division as it is the Roads and Highways Department that banned it. However, the quality of the work might be compromised," said a CPTU official requesting anonymity.

TEC members Prof Md Anwarul Mostafa of Ahsanullah University of Science and Technology and Prof Khan Mahmud Amanat of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) said they knew nothing about the Roads and Highways Department's actions against the firm.

"I am concerned whether the firm would ensure quality works," Prof Md Mostafa told The Daily Star.

TEC convener Md Abdul Wadud, also the chief engineer of Bangladesh Bridge Authority, said their task was to see whether the bidding firms were technically sound.

Prof Alamgir Mojibul Hoque of Buet Civil Engineering Department, who along with two other teachers had investigated the construction works of 25 kilometres road in Chalan Beel, said anomalies were evident in some portion of the road.

"The bitumen content was 1 percent less than the approved requirement while filter content in the asphalt mix was not adequate. This caused damage to about 10 kilometres of the road within several months," he said, adding that there was also a deviation from the specification.

He, however, said that increasing vehicular movement and overloading on the road were also responsible for the damage.

Meanwhile, Prof Jamilur Reza Chowdhury and two other experts of BUET at a meeting on Thursday decided to write the communications ministry about the selected firm's fraudulence and ban.

The government earlier requested the experts to verify whether the Chinese firm is capable of doing the repair work of the bridge that connects the capital with the country's northern districts.

Edn policy

FROM PAGE 16
priority to the education sector. The government is considering providing tiffin to school students to check dropout.

Hasina said the government is also working to reach healthcare facilities to common people through community clinics as well as to reduce women and child mortality rate, secure food security and establish women rights.

The PM sought British cooperation for power generation and exploration of gas and oil in Bangladesh.

Recalling British support to the return of democracy in Bangladesh, Hasina thanked the UK government for its development assistance programme to attain the Millennium Development Goals and tackle the adverse impacts of the global climate change.

Appreciating the UK's role for duty free and quota free access of Bangladeshi goods to the EU market, Hasina expressed her happiness over the growing trade, investment and economic relation between the two countries.

She hoped that the bilateral trade would increase several folds given the existing potentials that would help overcome economic recession.

PM's Adviser Prof Gowher Rizvi, Ambassador at Large M Ziauddin, Principal Secretary MA Karim and Secretary to the P M Office Molla Waheeduzzaman were present in the meeting.

4 of a family
FROM PAGE 1
Khokon, 35, and Rajan, 25.

"They came to the village from the capital to celebrate Eid-ul-Fitr with their relatives," Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Srinagar police station Shakhwat Hossain told BSS.

They met the tragic end of their life at about 1:00am when they were going to a neighbour's house by the boat to sleep, he said, adding they did not know how to swim.

The villagers rescued the victims from the beel and sent them to Srinagar Upazila Health Complex where doctors declared them dead.

The victims are the residents of Gandaria area in the capital, the OC said.

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Khaleda alleged that the government has been detaining BNP leaders and activists by implicating them in false cases.

Replying to another question she said she talked with her sons Tarique Rahman and Arafat Rahman Koko over the phone on Friday. Tarique is now in London and Koko in Bangkok for medical treatment.

Meanwhile, BNP also observed the second anniversary of Khaleda's "jail release day" on Saturday. She was arrested on September 3, 2007 and released on September 11, 2008.

"I was released on this day two years ago. It appears that the incumbent government is repeating the things that the then caretaker government did," said Khaleda.

Senior BNP leaders including Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain were present at the Eid reception.

4 murdered

FROM PAGE 1
The identities of a teenage girl and a youth could not be known immediately.

Sources said unidentified criminals killed Rafique and left his body in front of Kaliganj Govt Primary School.

Mofizul Huq, father of Rafique, said he went missing after he had left the "Suvo Tailors" at Kaliganj for his Khejurerbagh residence to have Sehri (midnight meal for fasting) at around 3:30am on Thursday.

Mofizul Huq added they found Rafique's slaughtered body in the morning. Ferdousi's husband Abul Hossain Hira rescued her to death at their residence at around 9:00am on Thursday over dowry.

Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Dakkhin Keraniganj police station Abul Basher said Hira was having a quarrel with Ferdousi after she refused to bring the money that Hira demanded to lunch a business.

Hira, at one stage, stabbed her indiscriminately and left her dead, police said.

Locals caught Hira and handed him over to police.

The body of a teenage girl was found in a luggage near the Kilgaon flyover at Basabo at around 1:00am on Friday.

On information police recovered the body and sent it to Dhaka Medical College Morgue for autopsy.

Morgue sources said the girl was strangled to death.

Meanwhile, police recovered the body of a youth from Manda Khalpar on Thursday.

Police said the youth was stabbed to death.

FROM PAGE 1
accidents during the three-day Eid vacation.

Two of the incidents were head-on collisions involving motorcycles. The other accident occurred when a passenger on a bus roof got tangled with an electric wire at Moksudpur on Dhaka-Khulna highway.

In another accident, three people were killed and 50 others injured near the district's police lines intersection on Dhaka-Khulna highway around 6:00pm yesterday. Police said the number of casualties may rise.

Our Faridpur correspondent reports a police sub-inspector was killed when a passenger bus hit his motorcycle on Dhaka-Khulna highway on September 10.

Another sub-inspector was killed when a bus hit his bike from behind near Rupsha Bridge in Batiaghata upazila on Dhaka-Khulna highway yesterday.

At least eight people -- three in Dinajpur and five in Bogra -- got killed in separate accidents in the two northern districts since September 8. Two friends were killed on Lalmoni-Burimari highway in Lalmonirhat when a goods-

laden truck hit their bike on September 10.

Our Patuakhali and Barisal correspondents reported eight deaths in seven road mishaps since September 9.

News Agency UNB reports: A minor boy was crushed under the wheels of a speedy bus yesterday near Abdullapur bus stand on Dhaka-Mawa highway.

Road crashes