



Voters queue outside a polling station in Thakurganj village in India's Bihar state yesterday. Moderate voting was reported in the first phase of Bihar state assembly elections where polling began in 47 constituencies across the Kosi-Seemanchal and Mithilanchal belts.

PHOTO: AFP

BIHAR POLLS

54 percent polling in first phase

PTI, Bihar

An estimated 54 per cent of 1.07 crore voters exercised their franchise till yesterday in 47 of the 243 Assembly constituencies that went to poll in the first phase of Bihar elections.

The voting was "absolutely peaceful" Director-General of Police Neelmani said.

He said about 300 people were arrested from different places for electoral malpractices and for trying to disturb the polling.

Several vehicles, including motorcycles, were seized by the police, he added.

While 85 per cent of booths were being manned by central paramilitary forces and armed police from other states, the remaining were being guarded by the Bihar Military Police, the DGP said.

A bomb exploded outside a booth at Laukha in Madhubani district, but there was no injury, police sources said.

A presiding officer died of cardiac arrest at a booth at Pranpur in Katihar district before polling. A replacement was sent and polling was held on schedule, the sources said.

The presiding officer at Chhathapur in Supaul district was beaten up by local people for allegedly playing partisan role, the sources said.

Five security personnel were injured when a tractor-trolley carrying them overturned at Phulparas in Madhubani district.

State Chief Electoral Officer S K Rakesh said the EC has introduced live webcast at 169

booths and the entire process was being videographed.

There were special ramps and braille EVMs for the physically and visually challenged voters, he said.

Initially, problems in EVMs were reported from a number of booths in Supaul, Kishanganj, Arria and Katihar, Saharsa and Madhepura districts, but they were promptly attended to and polling continued uninterrupted, the sources said.

A report from Kishanganj said voters boycotted the polling at a booth in Bahadurganj constituency and at another polling station at Kochadhaman.

People boycotted polling for some time at a booth alleging that a presiding officer had influenced a voter to cast his vote in favour of a candidate in Kishanganj.

Reports of election boycott were also received from a couple of booths in Almannagar, Jokihat, Laukaha constituencies with voters staying away claiming that no development work had been done.

Prominent among the 631 contestants in the fray are senior Janata Dal (United) ministers Vijendra Prasad Yadav, Narendra Narain Yadav, Renu Kumari, Hari Prasad Sah, Congress nominee Ranjeet Ranjan, wife of former MP Rajesh Ranjan alias Pappu Yadav, state Congress chief Choudhary Mehboob Ali Kaiser and Lovely Anand, the wife of former MP Anand Mohan.

Rushdie signs memoirs deal

Say publishers

AFP, London

Indian-born British writer Salman Rushdie, who spent a decade in hiding after his novel, "The Satanic Verses", sparked threats against his life, is writing his memoirs, the publishers said yesterday.

"I have waited a long time to write this memoir, until I felt I was ready to do it. I'm ready now," said Rushdie, adding that he was "delighted" that his long-term publishers Random House were producing the book.

The 63-year-old has already written a first draft and expects to finish the manuscript by the end of the year, with a view to publishing it in 2012.

It will be issued in Spanish, German and in audio and e-book versions at the same time in 17 countries, in what Random House said was "one of the most far-reaching multi-national and multi-language book publishing deals".

The autobiography will chart Rushdie's life from his arrival in Britain as a child to attend a boarding school and then Cambridge University, to his evolution as a writer and his experience of love and children.

It will also relate his years in hiding after Iranian spiritual leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini issued a "fatwa" or decree calling for his death on grounds of blasphemy for writing "The Satanic Verses" in 1988.

Pakistan court orders review of judicial reform

AFP, Islamabad

Pakistan's Supreme Court yesterday ordered parliament to review a controversial new procedure of appointing judges but stopped short of scrapping the constitutional amendment introduced this year.

The ruling followed legal challenges to isolated points of a widely popular package of constitutional reforms against a backdrop of a separate standoff between Pakistan's highest court and the government over corruption charges.

But the verdict appeared to stop short of causing another confrontation with the government, in a move welcomed by legal and rights experts.

"We would like to refer to the parliament for reconsideration, the issue of appointment process of judges to the superior courts," said the judgement read out in English by chief justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry.

Lawyers argue that appointing judges through a commission headed by the chief justice, but with nominations approved by lawmakers, infringes the independence of the judiciary.

"To enable the parliament to proceed and re-examine the matter in terms of the observations made above, these petitions are adjourned to a date in the last week of January 2011," said the order signed by 17 Supreme Court judges.

But the ruling upheld the appointments of judges already made under the new procedure and fresh appointments likely to be made in the future.

"In these circumstances and till such time these petitions are decided, Article 175A has to be given judicial enforcement," it said.

Neither did the ruling refer to other objections raised over a quota of parliamentary seats for women, renaming Pakistan's northwestern province and rules for political parties.

Six people were killed in April when mobs protested against the amendment renaming North West Frontier Province as Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, angered that the name failed to acknowledge the ethnic Hazara minority.

Pakistan's highest court has been locked in a standoff with Zardari's administration since December, when its judges

scrapped an amnesty that protected the president and 8,000 others from corruption charges.

Yesterday's ruling comes just days after Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani sought to ease fears of a looming clash between the executive and judiciary, pledging to work with judges to uphold justice.

Gilani welcomed the verdict as showing "great respect to parliament" and said the government would get the ball rolling on a review.

"We will consult the speaker of the national assembly and discuss it with chairman and members of the committee which drafted the amendment, and move forward with consultations," Gilani told reporters.

Experts said the ruling would ease tensions between the judiciary and the executive, which have been whipped up by a domestic media highly critical of President Asif Ali Zardari's weak government.

"The court has accepted parliament's jurisdiction under the constitution and it has also conveyed its apprehensions (to parliament)," said prominent human rights activist Asma Jahangir.

Court fines Russia over gay rights

ALJAZEERA ONLINE

The European Court of Human Rights has fined Russia for banning parades organised by the country's gay community.

Nikolai Alexeyev, a gay rights activist, had lodged three cases with the court arguing that the government had violated the European Convention on Human Rights, to which Russia subscribes as a member state of the Council of Europe.

The Strasbourg-based court ruled yesterday that Moscow had violated rights of assembly and had discriminated on grounds of sexual orientation.

It also ordered Russia to pay \$41,090 to Alexeyev in damages and for legal fees.

"This is a crippling blow to Russian homophobia on all accounts," Alexeyev said in a statement after the verdict was announced.

The court also said the gay community's claims were not given a fair hearing in Russia, whose constitution guarantees the right to hold demonstrations.

Alexeyev has said men connected to the authorities abducted him and pressured him to drop the cases.

The Russian authorities have for years denied homosexuals permission to hold demonstrations on the grounds that they would cause a violent reaction in the country, where prejudice against gay people runs deep.

Gas field sales must benefit Iraqis

Sunnis warn

AFP, Iraq

Sunni leaders in Anbar, an ex-habitat of insurgents, warned yesterday that foreign firms will not be allowed to work unless the Iraqi province's residents benefit from a gas field development.

"We will not help the companies and the population could even create trouble preventing companies from working if the gas is not used to feed electricity stations and give work to residents," said Mukhles Ibrahim, a prominent Anbar businessman in Qaim, a town near the Syrian border.

A South Korean company, the Korean Gas Corp, and KazMunai of Kazakhstan have secured a 50-50 joint venture to develop the Akkaz gas field in Anbar province, 25 kilometres (15 miles) from Qaim.

Discovered in 1992 and covering an area of 50 kilometres by 18 kilometres, with estimated capacity of 158 billion cubic metres (5.6 trillion cubic feet), Akkaz is the largest of three gas fields awarded at an international auction in Baghdad on Wednesday.

The bid which won the contract with Iraq's oil ministry offered 5.50 dollars per oil-barrel-equivalent and a plateau production of 400 million cubic feet (11 million cubic metres) per day over a 13-year period.

China opposes UN Darfur report

ALJAZEERA ONLINE

China will try to prevent the publication of a United Nations report that alleges Chinese bullets were used in attacks on UN peacekeepers in Darfur.

The report was discussed at a UN committee that monitors sanctions against Sudan, including an arms embargo against the Darfur region, on Wednesday.

Under the 2005 embargo, arms sales to Sudan are legal but the Khartoum government must give guarantees that the supplies will not end up in Darfur, where the UN estimates that at least 300,000 people have been killed since rebels took arms against the government in 2003.

According to diplomats, the report says that bullet casings found at the scene of attacks on UN troops were made in China, Sudan and Israel.

But Zhao Baogang, a Chinese representative to the UN, criticised the conclusions of the report, saying it "is full of flaws with too many unconfirmed facts".

"Where did they get the informed sources? No evidence is given."

"The report lacks confirmed facts, how can we agree on those recommendations? We ask them to improve the work of the methodology," Zhao said.

It was unclear if the report was able to establish if the bullets were supplied directly to Sudan or were bought elsewhere on the African arms market.

The full details of the accusations are likely to be revealed next week when the report will be submitted to the Security Council.

"China has always argued that it abides by the embargo rules in its arms sales to Sudan, equally human rights groups have long accused China of allowing its military equipment to end up in the Darfur conflict," Al Jazeera's Harry Fawcett, reporting from Beijing, said.

"According to the embargo all states should take the necessary steps to prevent the supplies of arms in the region."

"Many say that it is a major flaw in the embargo by allowing weapons sales to Sudan as long as the government can guarantee that no arms will be used in Darfur, it is a difficult task for external government to police."

Fawcett also said that China has very strong interest in Sudan, which produces half a million barrels of oil a day. Beijing is its biggest customer.

China is one of five permanent members of the Security Council and can block any of its resolutions.

Invitation of International Tender for Procurement of ARV Drugs

Country: Bangladesh
Name of project: "Expanding HIV Prevention in Bangladesh"
Description of Goods: Anti-Retroviral Drugs
GFATM Grant number: BAN-202-G12-H-00
IFB Title: Procurement of Anti-Retroviral Drugs under the Global Fund funded HIV/AIDS Program
IFB number: SC/HIV/AIDS/2010/HG Contract Package No. HG 10/10

1. Save the Children USA (SCUSA), Bangladesh Country Office, has received a grant from the Global Funds toward the cost of "Expanding HIV Prevention in Bangladesh", and it intends to apply part of the proceeds of this grant to payments under the contract for Procurement of Anti-Retroviral Drugs; of either of the following quality criteria:

- WHO Pre-qualified
- Authorized for use by Stringent Regulatory Authorities
- Permitted for use by Expert Review Panel (ERP) of the Global Fund

2. Save the Children USA now invites sealed bids from qualified manufacturers or their authorized local agents for procurement of the products in the following schedule.

Product	Strength	Schedule of Requirement			
		Quantities (in bottles) under Schedule-1 (December 15, 2010)	Quantities (in bottles) under Schedule-2 (April, 2011)	Quantities (in bottles) under Schedule-3 (Sep, 2011)	Quantities (in bottles) under Schedule-4 (March, 2012)
AZT/3TC/NVP	FDC	984	984	1,426	1,426
AZT/3TC	FDC	911	911	1,430	1,430
Efavirenz	600 mg	1,245	1,245	2,039	2,039
Lamivudine	150 mg	315	315	613	613
Zidovudine	300 mg	0	0	4	5
Nevirapine	200 mg	0	5	0	5
Tenofovir	300 mg	380	381	609	609
Lamivudine Oral Solution	10mg/ml (240 ml)	345	345	600	600
Nevirapine Oral solution	10mg/ml (240 ml)	0	240	600	600
Zidovudine Oral Solution	10mg/ml (240 ml)	250	250	750	750
Total		4,430	4,676	8,070	8,077

3. Bidding will be governed by the PSM Plan approved by the Global Fund and Save the Children USA Procurement Policy.

4. All countries under USAID code 935 are eligible to participate and provide goods and services.

5. Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information from Save the Children USA office and collect the bidding documents at the address given below on all working days from October 22 to November 13, 2010 (Sunday to Thursday) between 0900 to 1700 hours, Bangladesh Standard Time (BST).

6. A complete set of bidding documents in English may be obtained upon submission of a written application to the address below through local agent/authorized representatives.

7. Sealed bids must be dropped into the tender box kept in the reception area of Save the Children USA office to the address below at or before up to 1400 hours, Bangladesh Standard Time (BST) on November 14, 2010. Late bids will be rejected, and shall be returned unopened. Bids will be opened in presence of the bidders or their representatives at the address below at 1430 hours, BST on November 14, 2010.

Supply Chain Manager
Save the Children USA
House No. 1A (2) Road No. 91, Gulshan-2, Dhaka-1212, Bangladesh
Tel: 880-2-8828081, Fax: 880-2-9886372
E-mail: scusabfo@savechildren.org

8. Save the Children USA is not under any obligation to accept the lowest offer and reserves the right to accept or reject any or all offers in part or in full, without assigning any reason.




Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
House No. 37, Road No. 8, Dhanmondi R/A, Dhaka, Bangladesh
Telephone : (88 02) 8118015-8; FAX : (88 02) 8113446, E-mail : FAO-BD@fao.org

Vacancy Announcement

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Dhaka, invites applications from highly qualified, energetic and experienced development professionals who want to join in a dynamic, multicultural environment as **National Project Administrator of the "National Food Policy Capacity Strengthening Programme (NFPCSP) Phase-II"** funded by USAID and European Union.

The candidate to be selected for appointment will be given a contract renewable on yearly basis at least up to 31 December 2012. For details of the Post Description, minimum requirement, selection criteria and instructions to apply, please visit the website: <http://www.nfpcsp.org/recruitment.htm>
Applications should be received no later than 04 November 2010.



INDEPENDENT UNIVERSITY, BANGLADESH

TENDER NOTICE

INVITATION FOR SUPPLY & INSTALLATION OF DISTRIBUTION BOARDS AND POWER CABLES

For the IUB Campus at Bashundhara

- Sealed tenders are hereby invited from bonafide contractors for **Supply & Installation of Distribution Boards and Power Cabling Works** for Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB) campus at Bashundhara, Dhaka. The bidders will be required to submit a complete offer including the cost with detail design, drawing and specification.
- The bidder will apply in their official letterheads to the undersigned along with the following documents:
 - The experience certificate from the employer for supply & installation of Distribution Boards and Power Cable Works.
 - Copies of the latest Trade License, Income Tax and VAT Registration Certificates.
- The bidder shall furnish as part of the bid, an earnest money of 2.5% of the bid amount in favour of Independent University, Bangladesh in the form of a bank draft/pay order from a schedule bank located in the country.
- Interested bidders are requested to collect the Tender Schedule from the office of the undersigned between 9:30 am to 4:00 pm from 24 October 2010 to 26 October 2010 on payment of Taka 1,000/- only in cash (non-refundable) for each schedule.
- The tenders will be received at the office of the undersigned up to 2:00 pm of 31 October 2010 and shall be opened at 2:30 pm on the same day at the same place in presence of the bidders who may like to attend the tender opening.
- IUB reserves the right to accept only the technically responsive tender without any consideration of the lowest bid and shall have the right to reject any tender without assigning any reason whatsoever.

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