

UN chief calls for credible, peaceful Thai polls

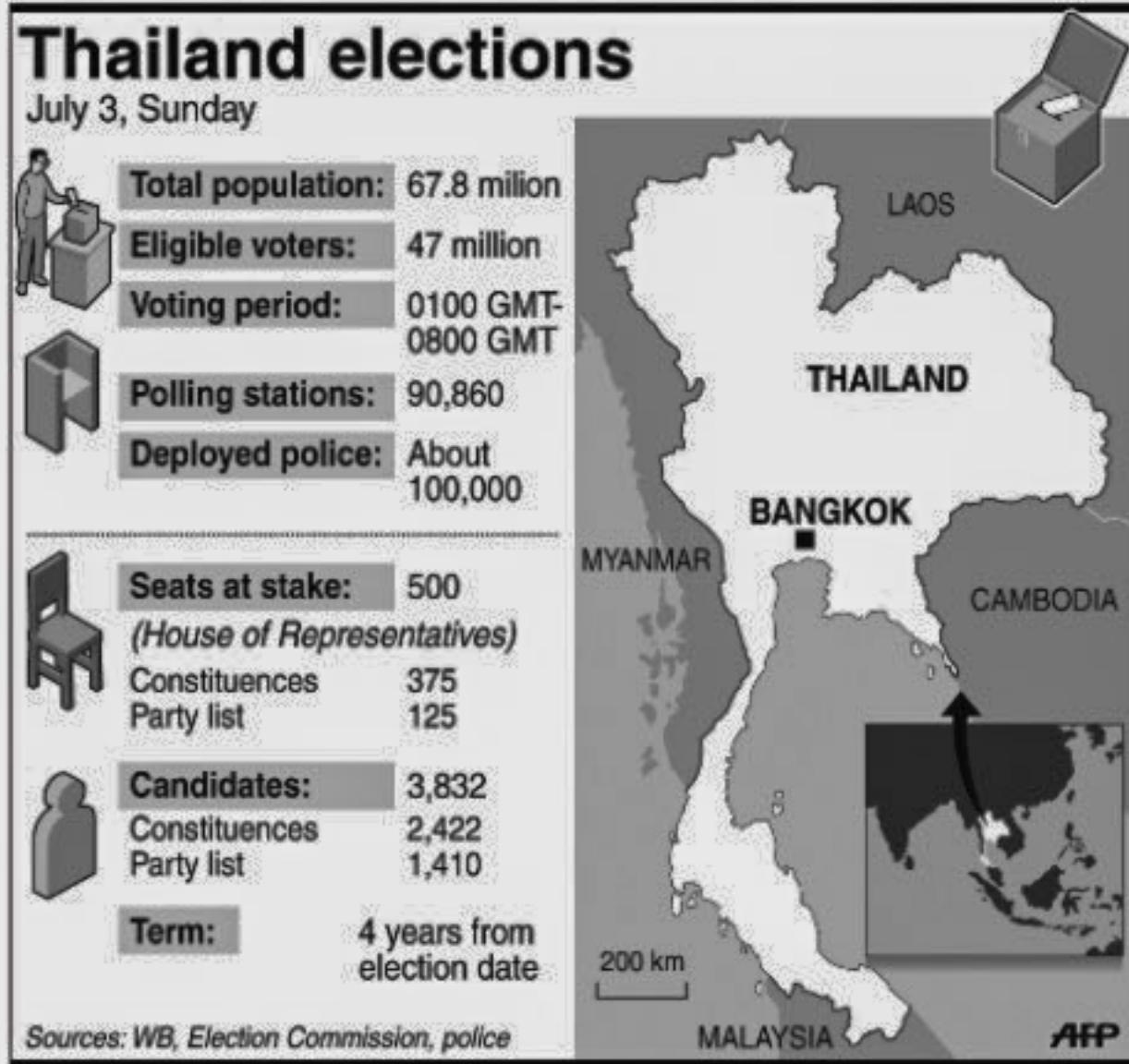
Thai PM accuses rivals of hidden agenda

AFP, Bangkok

UN chief Ban Ki-moon called yesterday for the upcoming crucial election in Thailand to be conducted peacefully and in a "fair, credible and transparent" way.

UN Secretary General Ban urged all parties to refrain from violence before, during and after the July 3 poll and "to accept and respect the will of the people as expressed at the ballot box," his spokesman said in a statement.

Amid fears that the vote could bring unrest, more than 430 candidates have sought protection, according to police, and more than 170,000 police officers are due to be deployed to protect polling



stations on voting day. Meanwhile, Thailand's embattled premier yesterday lashed out against his opponents accusing them of talking of reconciliation as a

"cloak" to bring back his arch-rival.

Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva's Democrat Party campaign is struggling to match the appeal of the opposition Puea Thai, unofficially led from abroad by Thaksin Shinawatra, who was ousted from power by a military coup in 2006.

Puea Thai's main candidate for the top job is Thaksin's sister Yingluck Shinawatra, who has discussed an amnesty for convicted politicians to bring reconciliation to Thailand -- which could pave the way for her brother's return.

"Reconciliation is now being used as a cloak for amnesty for Thaksin so far as Puea Thai is concerned.

S Korea on alert after North's threat

AFP, Seoul

South Korea is closely watching North Korea's military after it warned of "merciless" retaliation for anti-Pyongyang slogans displayed by Seoul's frontline troops, the defence ministry said yesterday.

The North's government and military this week lambasted the South's troops for displaying slogans heaping "malignant slanders and calumnies at the army, system and dignity" of the communist state.

Pyongyang late Wednesday revealed details of a warning message it tried to send to the South's presidential Blue House through Panmunjom, the cross-border contact venue, after Seoul refused to accept it.

Defaming the Kims, the object of a Stalinist-style personality cult, is considered blasphemy in the isolated communist state.

STATEHOOD BID AT UN Palestinians defy US Senate's warning

AFP, Ramallah

The Palestinians yesterday brushed off pressure from the US Senate to drop their bid for UN recognition of a future state, saying it sprang from pro-Israel bias.

"It is a new attempt by the US Congress to pressure us and it is blindly biased toward Israel," Nimer Hammad, a senior political adviser to president Mahmud Abbas, told AFP.

"We reject this decision and the Palestinian people will not succumb to such pressure and attempts."

The Senate on Tuesday unanimously approved a resolution warning the Palestinians they could face cuts in US aid for pursuing UN endorsement of a future state not defined as a result of direct negotiations with Israel.

The measure also raises the prospects of halting assistance to any Palestinian unity government that includes Hamas -- unless the radical movement renounces violence and accepts Israel's right to exist.

The House of Representatives is expected to consider a companion measure.

Israeli-Palestinian peace talks ground to a halt in September 2010 when Israel failed to renew a partial freeze on settlement construction in the occupied West Bank.

Since then, the Palestinians have refused to return to talks as long as Israel builds on land they want for a future state.

The Senate resolution supports US President Barack Obama's opposition to the Palestinian strategy and urges him to pledge that Washington will veto any resolution on Palestinian statehood before the UN Security Council unless it is the result of Israel-Palestinian talks.

The measure also warns that US lawmakers "will consider restrictions on aid to the Palestinian Authority should it persist in efforts to circumvent direct negotiations by turning to the United Nations or other international bodies."

9 arrested, looted gold seized

FROM PAGE 20

Comilla Highway Police (east) authority suspended Sergeant Bulbul Farajji of Bhaberchar Highway Police Outpost in Munshiganj. The cop captured one of the robbers at a check post near the outpost on June 28 and freed him after taking a portion of looted gold as bribe, officials of Detective Branch (DB) of police said.

Police recovered eight looted gold bangles from Bulbul's possession.

A team of Rapid Action Battalion-8 yesterday recovered 221 tolas of looted gold jewellery of Heera Jewellers from Vepti village of Mathbaria upazila in Pirojpur, reports our Barisal correspondent.

The Rab team raided the houses of three siblings Yusuf Ali Mal, Yasin Ali Mal and Khadija Begum. They had the clue from a confessional statement of one arrestee Yahiya, according to Rab officials.

Members of Rab dug up

the ground at different parts of their houses and recovered the jewellery concealed under the ground.

DB police said they arrested Yakub Mal alias Kalaiya, 28, and Chandu Karmokar, 58, from Porirkhal in Barguna, Amir Hossain Hamza, 55, from Bakerganj in Patuakhali and Mohammad Milon, 26, from Shewrapara in the capital. Chandu owns a jewellery shop in Barguna.

They recovered 50 tolas of gold from the arrestees' possession.

Rab personnel yesterday arrested Jewel Mridha, 26, and Sagir, 26, Mohammad Kabir Hossain, 38, Farukh Sikder, 45, and Rokeya Begum, 55, from different parts in the capital in connection with the burglary, said Commander Sohail, director (media) of Rab headquarters, at a press briefing.

Of them, Sagir and Milon drove the auto-rickshaws. The law enforcers recovered 70

tolas of gold.

A gang of eight robbers in two auto rickshaws reached the spot and entered the shop on the ground floor of Iqbal Centre on Kamal Ataturk Avenue. The gang looted gold jewellery holding the staff at gunpoint, admitted the arrestees during a preliminary interrogation.

The gang was led by Yakub, also the main accused of looting another jewellery shop in Mirpur on March 9 last year.

He was arrested following the incident and later walked free on bail, DB Deputy Commissioner (North) Mahbubor Rahman told newsmen at a press briefing at its headquarters yesterday.

Yakub said they plotted to rob Heera Jewellers a month back and accordingly rented a house at Shewrapara of Mirpur.

They kept an eye on the outlet and finally managed to loot jewellery. It took just 15

minutes for them to rob and make escape, he mentioned.

After committing the burglary the ring went back to the rented house and shared the loot among themselves. Then they left the place and went into hiding, maintained Yakub.

Jewel Mridha said he went to Chittagong for hiding. While coming back to Dhaka on June 28, he was caught with gold at the highway police check post at Munshiganj.

The sergeant of the check post freed Jewel taking 17 looted gold bangles and some money.

Around five more robbery suspects with a firearm remain absconding, noted Mahbubor Rahman, DC (North) of DB.

Police, however, found no involvement of shop employees in the crime.

The shop owner filed a case with Gulshan Police Station that robbers looted 1166 tolas of gold from the outlet.

Nation exposed to confrontation

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The provision of caretaker government was repealed through passing of the Constitution (15th amendment) Bill, 2011 by overwhelming margin of vote in the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday.

The amendment requires parliamentary polls to be held under an interim government led by the ruling party discharging only the routine duties.

Earlier on May 10, the Supreme Court declared illegal the 13th amendment to the constitution that mandates an elected government, on completion of its term, to transfer power to an unelected non-partisan caretaker administration.

However, Hafizuddin Khan said polls will not be

credible even if the interim government acts impartially. It is not possible to hold a fair election for any of the political parties as they, assuming power, politicise the administration.

Referring to the SC verdict, he said the court even did not ask to abolish the system right now. Rather, it said next two elections could be held under a caretaker government.

Had the government felt the necessity for an interim government, the matter should have been discussed with the opposition, added Hafizuddin Khan.

"[Only] the verbal assurance of talks on the issue in future lacks merit and sincerity after it is passed with-

out any discussion," he said.

Former caretaker government adviser Akbar Ali Khan said credible election cannot be held without a consensus with the opposition.

"The constitution has been amended in a frantic rush although there was scope for discussion. The decision would definitely have an adverse effect on politics," he said.

Prof Muzaffer Ahmad, a trustee of Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB), observed the government should have waited until the release of full text of the SC judgement as nobody knows the details.

"Constitutional amendment is a serious business and it should not be done for

the sake of a party or a person," he added.

Prof Imtiaz Ahmed, a teacher of Dhaka University international relations department, said he is sure that the next general election will not be held unless a new formula acceptable to all is introduced.

"The demand of caretaker government for a free and fair election is always the demand of the opposition," he said adding that the party in power never likes it.

Now the opposition is compelled to call strike and the formula of holding the next polls depends on opposition activities, he said. "Before that, I hope the government would come up with a solution."

Amendment empowered people: PM

FROM PAGE 1

amendment bill in the House.

"People had to suffer a lot in the past. But they will not suffer in the future, as we have been able to ensure people's empowerment through passage of the constitution amendment bill," Hasina, also chief of ruling Awami League, said in an instant reaction after the passage of the 15th amendment to the constitution.

The caretaker government system has become void through the bill's passage, and from now on, parliamentary polls will be held the way it is done in other democratic countries, she said.

"And it is the Election

Commission that will conduct the polls."

Hasina, also the leader of the House, said the opposition can still come to parliament with a proposal and place it before the House.

In her half-an-hour speech, Hasina requested the opposition several times to refrain from creating any chaos over the issue, which may cause sufferings to people.

Referring to the union parishad polls being held under her government, the prime minister said most of those who died in election violence were ruling party activists.

She also defended the

government's stance on sensitive issues such as retaining Islam as the state religion, and Bismillah-Rahmanir Rahim in the charter, Bangalee identity as a nation, and Bangladeshis as citizens.

"We took part in the Liberation War as Bangalees, but we will be identified as Bangladeshis when it comes to citizenship," said the prime minister.

"Minority communities are also part of our nation. We do not want to hurt their sentiment," she said.

On the process of the amendment, Hasina said it was done maintaining transparency and accountability.

"The parliamentary spe-

cial committee on constitution amendment invited different political parties, civil society members, former chief justices, eminent jurists and media personalities to provide ideas off each other. But BNP did not join the dialogue," she said.

On retaining Islam as the state religion, Hasina said alongside Islam, other religions have been given due respect and equal rights through the amendment, as people irrespective of their religious faith fought and achieved independence in 1971.

Pointing to the opposition, Hasina quoted from Sura al-Imran, and said, "If you have faith in the holy Quran and the blessings of Almighty Allah, you may come to power, otherwise not."

Earlier, the Awami League Parliamentary Party had held a meeting at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban at 10:30am before the House sat at 11:30am.

The lawmakers were given instructions on the vote on the constitution amendment bill.

After the meeting, Hasina and Jatiya Party President HM Ershad held a meeting at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban.

Ershad assured Hasina of cooperation and support for the passage of the constitution amendment bill, said Jatiya Party sources.

The JP chief later sat with party lawmakers at the Jatiya Party office in the parliament building, and asked them not to talk against the bill, the sources said.

Meanwhile, lawmakers of Workers Party and Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal submitted more than 35 amendment notices on several issues including those against retaining Islam as the state religion and Bismillah-Rahmanir Rahim in the constitution. They also placed amendment notices on issues related to minority communities.

However, no Jatiya Party lawmaker submitted any amendment notice on any of those issues.

12 babies die in WB govt hospital

Mamata orders probe

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

Twelve babies died at a children's hospital run by West Bengal government in Kolkata since Wednesday night, triggering public protests as Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee ordered an inquiry into the incident.

Family members of the children and local people alleged negligence by doctors and barged into the main building of the hospital. A road blockade was also set up before the hospital, police said.

Superintendent of B C Roy Hospital D Pal said most of the 12 babies were either pre-mature or suffering from septicemia or low-birth weight problems.

"I have come to know that the babies were brought to the hospital at the last stage... I have ordered a probe and asked the authorities to submit a report to me," Mamata Banerjee, who is in charge of Health Department, told reporters.

Earlier in September 2002, there were protests in the same hospital when 14 children died of broncho-pneumonia and gastro-enteritis.

The 10th Executive Certificate Course on 'Understanding Development' (22 sessions in 52 hours)

(22 July - 20 August 2011, only on Fridays (15:30 - 20:00) and Saturdays (9:30 - 17:00))

The Department of Development Studies of the University of Dhaka is going to organize the 10th 'Executive Certificate Course on Understanding Development', to be held between 22 July and 20 August 2011. Classes will be held only on Fridays (15:30 - 20:00) and Saturdays (9:30 - 17:00). The course will span over 52 hours which will include 22 classroom lectures and hands-on sessions.

A broad multidisciplinary perspective on development will be offered covering such issues as Development Debates and Discourses, Sustainable Development, Poverty & Inequality Measurement, Poverty Alleviation & Six Five-year plan, Governance Challenges and Opportunities, Civil Society & NGOs, Gender issues, Human Development, Human Capital (Health & Education), Bangladesh Economy, Role of State vs Market, National Budget, Migration, EIA & SIA, Logframe, Writing Project Proposal, Development Evaluation and so on along with a field visit to experience development in practice.

Applications are invited from the professionals as well as graduates in any discipline. Total Seats are limited to only 40 which will be filled on a 'first-come first-served' basis. Each participant has to pay a total of Tk. 15000.00 (fifteen thousand) only for the whole course. Prospective participants should collect admission form from the office of the department on full payment of the course fee and apply with full CV along with one photograph and certificate of highest degree awarded on or before 21 July 2011 addressed to Chairman, Department of Development Studies, Arts Building (4th Floor), University of Dhaka.

For further information, please contact Sheikh Jafar Emran, Lecturer & Coordinator of the Course, Phone: 01721069529, Email: jafaremrans@gmail.com or Firoz, Office Staff, Phone: 01716336882. For detail visit www.devstud-udhaka.ac.bd

সোশ্যাল ইসলামী ব্যাংক লিমিটেড SOCIAL ISLAMI BANK LIMITED

Share Department, Head Office: 15, Dilkusha C/A, Dhaka-1000

Distribution of Fractional Dividend Warrant-2010

This is for kind information of all concerned that the Fractional Dividend Warrants for the year 2010 have already been dispatched through Courier Service to the registered address of the shareholders (whose entitlement has become fraction) as recorded in the Members Register of the Company on 31st March, 2011, the 'Record Date' for entitlement of 14% Stock Dividend.

For Social Islami Bank Ltd.
Sd/-
(Mahamud Hassan)
EVP & Company Secretary

June 30, 2011

জাতীয় শিক্ষাক্রম ও পাঠ্যপুস্তক বোর্ড
৬৯-৭০, মতিঝিল বাণিজ্যিক এলাকা, ঢাকা-১০০০
বিজ্ঞপ্তি নং বিত-২০-৮২(৭ম খণ্ড)/ তারিখ: /৬/২০১১ই

উচ্চমাধ্যমিক বাংলা ও ইংরেজি বই পাওয়া যাচ্ছে

উচ্চমাধ্যমিক স্তরের সকল শিক্ষার্থী, শিক্ষক, অভিভাবক ও প্রতিষ্ঠানপ্রধানসহ সংশ্লিষ্ট সকলকে জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, উচ্চমাধ্যমিক স্তরের বাংলা সংকলন (সৃজনশীল প্রশ্ন-পদ্ধতির ডিউপার্টসহ) ও ইংরেজি (English For Today) বইটি এনসিটিবি-এর বিক্রয় কেন্দ্র থেকে পাওয়া যাচ্ছে।

এনসিটিবি'র অনুমতিবিহীন, সিলেবাস বহির্ভূত বিষয়বস্তু ও বিভ্রান্তিকর তথ্যসংবলিত বাজারের নকল বই ক্রয় না করে এনসিটিবি থেকে বই ক্রয় করার জন্য সকলকে অনুরোধ করা হচ্ছে। উল্লেখ্য, প্রতিষ্ঠানকে ১৫% কমিশন প্রদান করা হয়।

(রাজ গোপাল ভৌমিক)
সচিব
জাতীয় শিক্ষাক্রম ও পাঠ্যপুস্তক বোর্ড, ঢাকা।
ফোন: ০২/৯৫৬৫৬৪৪

Vacancy Announcement

United Nations Development Programme in Bangladesh announces the vacancy for the following posts for the **Improving Democracy through Parliamentary Development Project**.

1. Project Coordinator- SC (SB4) - 1 Post
2. National Technical Adviser -SC (SB4)- 3 Posts

The duration of the Service Contract is one year initially, subject to renewal on an annual basis upon satisfactory performance and availability of funds

For details of the Terms of Reference and instructions to apply, please visit our website: <http://www.undp.org.bd/jobs>. Applications should be received no later than 17:00 pm, Saturday, 16 July 2011.

Only short-listed candidates will be contacted.
Female candidates are strongly encouraged to apply.