

Obama holds lead with boost from women

AFP, Washington

Women voters have lifted President Barack Obama over his Republican rival in the latest national poll out yesterday, just five weeks ahead of the November 6 presidential election.

Obama remains ahead of former Massachusetts governor Mitt Romney 49-45 percent among voters nationwide, with a 56-38 percent lead among women, according to the Quinnipiac University poll.

Romney leads 52-42 percent among white voters and 53-42 percent among men, it found.

The poll came out a day before the first of three presidential debates, high-stake bouts that could offer Romney his last opportunity to reverse the momentum of the race.

which has been against him for weeks. The two candidates have long been running neck-and-neck in nationwide



ate in Libya and a video of remarks dismissing 47 percent of Americans as unmotivated government dependents.

The poll found that 54-28 percent of voters expect Obama to win Wednesday's debate, which could work in Romney's favor by raising expectations about the president's performance.

However, debates are only believed to have decided elections on rare occasions, further ratcheting up pressure on Romney to deliver.

Quinnipiac surveyed 1,912 likely voters nationwide from September 25-30 by phone, with a margin of error of 2.2 percent.

Assad orders more troops into Aleppo battle

REUTERS, Beirut

Syrian President Bashar al-Assad is visiting the city of Aleppo to take a first-hand look at the fighting between government forces and rebels and has ordered 30,000 more troops into the battle, a Lebanese paper said yesterday.

Al-Diyar newspaper, which is known for its pro-Assad stance, said the president had flown by helicopter at dawn from the presidential palace in Damascus to Aleppo.

It did not specify what day the trip started but said that Assad was still in Aleppo. The visit was decided on after reports that the situation in the city, Syria's largest and its commercial centre, had become very serious.

Reuters was unable to independently verify the report.

White House confirms cyber attack

BBC ONLINE

The White House has confirmed on late Monday it was the target of a cyber-attack but says the breach hit an unclassified network.

An unnamed administration official told US media that there was no indication any data had been removed.

The conservative Washington Free Beacon reported on Sunday that hackers linked to the Chinese government had breached the White House Military Office.

The White House would not say if the attack originated in China, describing it as a "spear-phishing" attempt.

"Spear-phishing" typically works by sending fake e-mails that look like legitimate correspondence, but which link to a malicious website or file attachment.

"These types of attacks are not infrequent and we have mitigation measures in place," the official, who was not authorised to speak on the record, told the Associated Press and other US media.

Cyber-attacks from Chinese-linked hackers have been an increasing concern among US government offices, including the Pentagon, the head of intelligence for US cyber defence told Reuters last week.

"Their level of effort against the Department of Defense is constant," Rear Admiral Samuel Cox said.

In 2011, Google blamed computer hackers in China for a phishing effort against Gmail accounts of several hundred people, including senior US government officials and military personnel.



The dwarfs

FROM PAGE 1

Where were you? Were you at home?

First she nods. Then mutters, almost inaudibly, "No".

Then where? "In the field. In the betel nut plantation." She mutters again. We had to get down on our knees to pick up her voice.

Why? "Because they came." Who came?

"They." Who are they?

Silence. Who? Who are they?

More silence. Why did they come?

Silence again. Tell us.

"To kill us." To kill you? Why? Silence. And then: "Because we are Buddhists." Because you are Buddhist? "Yes." Itimoni's lips quiver. But she does not cry. She keeps rolling her mother's "anchal" around her fingers. Her hair is now neatly combed. A red hair clip on one side. She looks frail. She looks tired. Naturally. What else do you expect of an eight-year-old girl who had spent the whole night without any food or water in the plantation? Who tried to kill you? "They. The Muslims." She looks away.

India out of World T20

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needed to restrict South Africa to 121 runs or less to reach the last four at Pakistan's expense. In the event they bowled their opponents out for 151 in a narrow but academic victory.

Pakistan will meet hosts Sri Lanka in the first semi-final in Colombo on Thursday while Australia, who went through on run-rate despite losing to Pakistan, will play West Indies on Friday.

"Overall I am quite happy with how the team performed, but there were instances where we should have had 10-15 runs more on the board. We lost too many wickets early in this match," said Indian captain

Mahendra Singh Dhoni.

South African captain AB de Villiers said his team, who lost all three games in the Super Eights, "didn't click" and had let their country down.

"Disappointed isn't the word to describe it, we've had a poor tournament," said De Villiers. "We've let the country down and that's what hurts the most. We did all the preparation possible, we thought we were ready but the guys didn't click."

Faf du Plessis led the South African reply with an aggressive 65, studded with two towering sixes and six boundaries off just 38 balls.

When he fell in the 13th over with 58 runs were still

needed but India's bowlers led by Zaheer Khan (3-22) kept their nerve to record their second win in three Super Eights encounters.

South Africa, who had lost both of their two earlier matches in the round of eight, needed 14 off the last Lakshmi pathy Balaji over. Albie Morkel hit a six off the first ball but was bowled off the second.

Morne Morkel also hit a six off the fourth ball but Balaji snatched the win when he bowled the last man with a full-length delivery, ending on figures of 3-37.

India owed their total of 152-6 to Suresh Raina's 45. Raina hit five boundaries during his 34-ball knock and

added 44 for the fifth wicket with Rohit Sharma, who made 25.

India were off to a disastrous start as opener Gautam Gambhir was bowled by Morne Morkel in the fourth over for eight, before the in-form Virat Kohli was caught behind off a rising delivery from Jacques Kallis for two in the next.

It became 36-3 when Peterson bowled Virender Sehwag for 17, after the Indian opener hit him for a big six a ball earlier. Dhoni chipped in with a quick 13-ball 23 with three boundaries.

Morkel finished with 2-28 while Peterson took 2-25.

Real Tom Sawyer revealed

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Author Mark Twain was thought to have based his adventurous Southern child character on his acquaintance named Tom Sawyer, and the writer's admiration for his fire-fighting friend was so strong that he gave the character the man's name in homage.

A lengthy article published by The Smithsonian details the relationship between Twain, whose real name was Samuel Clemens, and Sawyer who met in a bath house in San Francisco during the mid 19th century.

The two had many adventures together, gambling in Nevada and drinking in seemingly every saloon that San Francisco had to offer.

Sawyer was born in Brooklyn and moved to California where he worked as a volunteer fire fighter, policeman and customs officer.

Sawyer and Twain connected over their shared experiences with steamboats. Before making his way out West, Sawyer used his notable strength to save 90 people from a fiery shipwreck.

Though such actions would rightfully earn anyone's respect, Twain was particularly moved by the story because his own brother

died in a tragic fire while working on a similar steamboat.

The two men became fast friends after meeting in 1863, with Sawyer travelling to Virginia City, Nevada, at one point to visit Twain while he was working as a correspondent there.

After one particularly heady night once the two men returned to San Francisco, Twain put his infamous hallow leg to the test and proclaimed to his friend that he would base a character in his yet-unwritten book on him.

"He walks up to me and puts both hands on my shoulders. 'Tom,' he says, 'I'm going to write a book

about a boy and the kind I have in mind was just about the toughest boy in the world. Tom, he was just such a boy you must have been... How many copies will you take, Tom, half cash?" Sawyer told a local reporter shortly after Twain's first usage of the character in a book in 1876.

On another - potentially more sober - instance, Twain repeated the plan to Sawyer, who always referred to him by his given name.

"One day he says to me: 'I am going to put you between the covers of a book some of these days, Tom.' 'Go ahead, Sam,' I said, 'but don't disgrace my name,'" Sawyer said. Besides their fondness of

brandy, the two men also shared a propensity for storytelling, and Sawyer believed that it was his anecdotes about his own childhood inspired Twain to create a version of his friend in his child form.

Initially Twain said that the character of Tom Sawyer was based a compilation of three real people: John B Briggs, William Bowen, and Twain himself.

In spite of such pronouncements, the historical evidence that Twain and the fire fighter version of Sawyer were close proves that there was likely a fourth, more prominent influencer in the creative mix.

Jerusalem monastery vandalised

AFP, Jerusalem

Attackers spray-painted anti-Christian graffiti in Hebrew on a Franciscan monastery just outside Jerusalem's Old City, the church and Israeli police yesterday said, in an apparent "price-tag" hate crime.

Photos on a church website showed blue graffiti scrawled on the monastery's front door denigrating Jesus, the central figure in Christianity, and adding the words "price tag" -- a euphemism for revenge hate crimes by Israeli extremists.

Court issues

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Hossain, and its two directors Gofranul Huq and Sayed-ur-Rahman.

The accounts were opened in 31 banks, including the state-owned Janata, Sonali and Agrani banks.

On Monday, Judge (in-charge) Md Akhtaruzzaman of the same court had ordered freezing of 252 bank accounts of Destiny officials. But he withdrew the order just an hour later.

The ACC filed the petitions, requesting the freeze so that the Destiny officials could not launder or transfer money to other accounts.

Earlier on September 12, Akhtaruzzaman cancelled bail to five Destiny Group officials, including its managing director Rafiqul Amin. But the regular judge, Md Zahurul Haque, stayed the cancellation order the next day.

On September 27, the same court cancelled bail to 22 high officials of Destiny Group, including Rafiqul Amin, in the two money laundering cases.

The officials were granted bail by three lower courts even though the courts had no jurisdiction over money laundering cases.

On July 31, the ACC sued the Destiny officials on charges of siphoning off Tk 3,285.26 crore.

The multilevel company officials allegedly transferred crores of taka from the company accounts to their personal accounts. Meanwhile, the parliamentary standing committee on Chittagong Hill Tracts Ministry yesterday asked the ministry to investigate the allegation of land grabbing by the controversial MLM company for its tree plantation project in the hills.

Fury rages on

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action to dissuade a mob during the violence, Selim Md Jahangir, superintendent of police in Cox's Bazar, told The Daily Star.

Incensed apparently by a Facebook posting of a photo defaming the holy Quran, the mob destroyed 12 Buddhist temples and monasteries and more than 50 houses in Ramu, Ukhiya and Teknaf upazilas of Cox's Bazar and Patiya upazila in Chittagong.

The law enforcers arrested 76 more people from the three upazilas in Cox's Bazar in 14 cases filed in connection with the violence, raising the total number of arrestees to 169 in the district.

Police reinforcements have been deployed there to avoid any law and order situation.

Seven more people were picked up by police in three cases in connection with arson attacks in Patiya of Chittagong early on Sunday, raising the total number of detainees there to 33.

The Cox's Bazar district administration has allocated 6.5 metric tonnes of rice and a cash amount of Tk 77,000 for the affected people, reports our correspondent.

Bangladesh Red Crescent Society has distributed tents and nets among 28 affected families in Ramu. Each of the families was given 30 kg of rice.

The government has

further sanctioned Tk 5 lakh which will be distributed very soon, said Md Jasim Uddin, additional deputy commissioner (revenue) of Cox's Bazar.

NO JUDICIAL PROBE
Home Minister Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir yesterday said the government would not form any judicial probe committee to investigate the arson attacks in Cox's Bazar and Chittagong.

"There is no need to form a judicial probe body. An administrative probe committee has been formed to investigate the matter," he told newsmen at his secretariat office.

Addressing a discussion in Dhaka, Law Minister Shafique Ahmed said the government through investigation would identify the persons involved in the arson attacks and would bring them to book to prevent any repetition of such incidents in future.

Speaking at the event, United Nations Resident Representative Neal Walker said the recent sectarian violence was totally unacceptable as Bangladesh was known as a tolerant and peace-loving country.

In a statement yesterday, former co-chair of the International Commission on Chittagong Hill Tracts Lord Eric Aveybury expressed sympathy with the victims of the attack and called for mutual tolerance and peace among followers of all faiths.

BNP stages rowdy

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the spot during chase and counter chase between the police and the agitators. Even Rab personnel were called in to control the situation.

Vehicular movement on the busy Kakrail-Nayapalton-Fakirapul road was halted for nearly two hours.

The clash began around 4:10pm when a car was torched near BNP central office just before a protest procession had set out from there. Another car and a bus were torched later on during the clash.

Pro-opposition activist mainly workers of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal and Jatiyatabadi Swechhasebak Dal organised demonstration at Nayapalton in the capital to protest the "attack on BNP leader Mirza Abbas" motorcade in Netrakona".

Our Netrakona correspondent reports: At least 10 BNP activists and a journalist were injured when ruling party activists attacked a meeting of BNP-led 18 party alliance there.

BNP standing committee member Mirza Abbas was supposed to attend the meeting as chief guest but he was not there when the attack was made.

Witnesses said as the procession marched towards Kakrail intersection, some people torched a

car and then police charged truncheons and fired teargas shells to disperse the agitators.

Officer-in-Charge Golam Sarwar of Paltan Police Station told reporters that the situation came under control in the evening. **AGITATION PROGRAMME**
Earlier yesterday, the BNP-led 18-party alliance declared fresh anti-government agitation programmes, scheduled between October 7 and 20, to drum up support for their demand to restore the caretaker government system.

As part of the programme, the 18-party alliance would hold rallies at eight places in the capital from October 7 to 20 and mass procession in all divisional cities and district headquarters on October 17.

On October 10, the alliance would hold demonstration programme in all divisional cities, district and upazila headquarters protesting corruption and repression on opposition.

BNP Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi announced the programme after a meeting of the alliance leaders at the Naya Paltan central office of BNP.

The alliance would also hold rallies in Savar, Keraniganj, Rugganj and Tongi on the outskirts of the capital. The dates for the rallies were yet to be finalised.

NEWS IN brief

Maldivian MP assassinated

AFP, Male

An unidentified attacker stabbed and killed a Maldivian ruling party legislator yesterday in the first assassination of a lawmaker in the Indian Ocean archipelago, police said.

Afrasheem Ali, 46, a lawmaker from the Progressive Party of Maldives (PPM), was attacked on the steps of his apartment in the capital island Male early Tuesday, police spokesman Hassan Haneef told AFP.

"This is the first killing of an MP in the Maldives and we are yet to establish a motive," Haneef said, adding that investigations were underway to track

Georgia president concedes defeat

AFP, Tbilisi

Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili conceded defeat yesterday in parliamentary polls that handed a shock victory to an opposition coalition led by billionaire tycoon Bidzina Ivanishvili.

Although Saakashvili remains president, the defeat of his United National Movement to Ivanishvili's Georgian Dream coalition in Monday's elections spells the end of his nine years of largely

Reports that French agent killed Gaddafi 'nonsense'

FRANCE24 ONLINE

A French intelligence expert has poured cold water on allegations that a French agent killed Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi after making a deal with Syria to save then-President Nicolas Sarkozy from embarrassing campaign-funding revelations.

Reports that Libyan dictator Muammar Gaddafi was killed by a French operative after Syrian leader Bashar al-Assad sold vital intelligence to Paris are "patent nonsense", according to a leading French intelligence expert.

Mahmoud Jibril, who led Libya's first post-Gaddafi government in 2011, told Egyptian television channel Dream TV last week that "a foreign agent infiltrated the [rebel] Revolutionary Brigades

Trial of Pope's ex-butler resumes

AFP, Vatican City

Pope Benedict XVI's former butler Paolo Gabriele takes the stand yesterday at his historic trial for stealing secret memos in what he said was a bid to battle "evil and corruption" in the Vatican.

It will be the first time that Gabriele speaks out since his arrest in May this year and his 53-day detention in a Vatican security cell.

The hearing in the tiny state's 19th-century courtroom began at 0715 GMT, a Vatican spokesman said. Television cameras are banned and only 10 journalists are allowed access to the trial, details of which are expected later Tuesday.

Weiwei's co faces shutdown

AFP, Beijing

Chinese authorities will shut down the company founded by Ai Weiwei, his lawyer yesterday said, in the latest step in what the dissident artist has called a campaign of persecution to silence his activism.

AI's lawyer Liu Xiaoyuan said the business license of the company, Fake Cultural Development, would be revoked for failing to follow annual registration requirements.

VACANCY



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