

Obama

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the contest, although by a narrower margin than his opponent was perceived to have won the first.

But analysts say the race is tight.

BBC North America editor Mark Mardell says Obama has stopped the panic in his camp.

What Team Obama would have dreaded was anything that contributed to a narrative of decline and defeat for the Democrat as he bids for a second term, our correspondent adds.

A CBS poll of undecided voters who watched the debate gave it to Obama, 37pc to 30pc with 33pc calling the debate a tie.

Meanwhile, a CNN poll of registered voters who watched not just undecideds - gave the debate to Obama 46-39.

'SAY IT LOUDER'

In the town hall-style forum at Hofstra University on Long Island, the candidates roamed the stage, circling, interrupting and at times heckling one another as they took questions from an audience of 80 undecided voters.

The moderator, CNN's Candy Crowley, often had to intervene to keep order.

The 11 questions from the voters present ranged from gun control to Libya to immigration, but the main focus was on the economy.

The most dramatic clash came over foreign policy, and the attack last month on the US consulate in Benghazi, Libya, which left the US ambassador and three other Americans dead.

Romney sought to portray the attack as evidence of the Obama administration's failing foreign policy and he suggested Obama had dithered over admitting a terrorist attack had occurred.

Obama shot back that he had said so the day after the attack, in an appearance at the White House.

The Republican challenged this, saying: "It took the president 14 days before he called the attack in Benghazi an act of terror."

When Crowley confirmed that Obama had indeed called the attack an "act of terror" the day after the attack, the president told the moderator: "Say that a little louder, Candy."

The president also accused Romney of using the Libyan events for political purposes.

"While we were still dealing with our diplomats being threatened, Governor Romney put out a press release, trying to make political points, and that's not how a commander-in-chief operates," he said.

'ROAD TO GREECE'

Obama accused Romney of inconsistency, and contrasted his own bailout of the US car industry with the Republican's position that car-makers should have been allowed to go bankrupt.

In turn, Romney blamed the president for unemployment of 20 million and bloated federal deficits.

America, he insisted, could not afford another four years with Obama at the helm, warning that Mr Obama's policies would ultimately prove as disastrous as the euro debt crisis.

"We've gone from \$10tn of national debt to \$16tn of national debt," he said.

"If the president were re-elected, we'd go to almost \$20tn of national debt. This puts us on a road to Greece."

Obama said voters had heard no specifics on Romney's "sketchy" economic plan apart from eliminating Sesame Street's Big Bird and cutting funding for Planned Parenthood, a family planning organisation Republicans say promotes abortion.

But Romney insisted his budget would add up, and cited his experience in balancing budgets in business while running the 2002 Olympics and as governor of Massachusetts.

While answering a question about equality in the workplace, Romney said that he had sought out female employees as governor of Massachusetts.

"I went to a number of women's groups and said, 'Can you help us find folks, and they brought us whole binders full of women,'" Romney said.

The report quickly went viral online, prompting a deluge of commentary on Twitter and other social media.

Another facebook

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Chittagong. He is an eighth-semester student of automobile department at Bangladesh Sweden Polytechnic Institute in Kaptai.

ASM Nizam Uddin, additional superintendent of police (ASP) of Hathazari circle, told The Daily Star that Nirjan had subscribed to a facebook page Uchcha Shikkhai Bidesh Jatra [Going abroad for higher education], where somebody had shared the anti-Islam image from another page named "I hate Islam".

The ASP said Nirjan had found the image two to three days ago. Below the photo, he had written a comment to the page administrator to delete it because this kind of images would get the members of the page into trouble.

What Nirjan did not know that writing a comment on any other facebook page would show the whole content on his facebook page, the ASP added.

He said when some facebook friends of Nirjan had seen the image, they informed him of it. He immediately deleted the image from his page, but in the meantime, the news had spread in his locality.

On Tuesday morning, some locals went to his house to enquire about the image. He told them the whole story but could not convince them. In the evening, police came to know about the matter and called Nirjan to Rangunia Police Station around 10:00pm.

Police had checked the "activity log" of Nirjan's facebook account and found the comment with the image, said ASP Nizam, adding that police also found that he had deleted the image from his account.

The law enforcers were convinced that the youth was innocent but the locals could not understand the technical matters involved with the incident.

On Tuesday night, police called four of the locals, who had visited Nirjan's house, to brief them about what had actually happened. Of the four, one person has an account in the facebook.

"I explained to them how the image came to Nirjan's page by performing the same actions in my facebook account and convinced them," said the ASP.

Since the issue is quite sensitive, police kept Nirjan in safe custody. They would free him once law enforcers became sure that nothing untoward would take place, said Monjurul Morshed, officer-in-charge of Rangunia Police Station.

HC ON UTTAM'S FAMILY MEMBERS
The High Court (HC) in a suo moto rule yesterday expressed anxiety over the detention of Uttam's

Muhibh berates

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said, requesting anonymity.

No other BB officials commented about the finance minister's observation.

Meanwhile, Pradip Kumar Dutta, managing director of Sonali Bank, said the state-run bank had already appointed two lawyers to file money recovery case against the Hall-Mark.

The Anti-Corruption Commission invited him yesterday to discuss the ongoing probe into the embezzlement.

The managing director told reporters at the ACC office in Segunbagicha that the Hall-Mark had refunded Tk 232 crore from its total outstanding loans of Tk 2,667 crore. The repayment of another Tk 48 crore is under process.

"We've also ordered steps to halt payment of Hall Mark's LC amounting Tk 300 to 400 crore pending with us," said Pradip, who joined as MD of the bank.

They are on their 24-day remand and being grilled by the ACC.

JHENIDAH BORDER
BSF kills one, injures fiveOUR CORRESPONDENT,
Jhenidah

mother and his aunt, if they had been arrested illegally and were not released by 10:30am today.

The bench of Justice A H M Shamsuddin Choudhury Manik and Justice Farid Ahmed also asked the deputy attorney general (DAG) to inform it about the legal status of the detained members of Uttam's family by the stipulated time.

Madhu Barua, 40, mother of Uttam whose fabricated facebook page was used to stir up the September 29 attacks on the Buddhists in Ramu, and his aunt Adi Barua, 26, were arrested on the next day of the violence in connection with a case that was actually filed on October 1, a day after the arrest.

Anisha, two-year-old daughter of Adi Barua, is now in custody with her mother.

The HC bench passed the order verbally following the reports published yesterday in a few national dailies including The Daily Star over the detention of Madhu, Adi and Anisha.

It also said the rule would not be executed if the detainees were released by 10:30am today [Thursday].

Meanwhile, a Cox's Bazar court yesterday sent Madhu and Adi to jail after a day's remand cancelling their bail, reports our Chittagong correspondent.

DAG Amit Talukder told The Daily Star that he had informed the superintendent of police in Cox's Bazar of the HC order over the phone.

The inspector general of police (IGP) yesterday submitted a report to another HC bench saying that additional forces of police, Rapid Action Battalion and Border Guard Bangladesh had been deployed in Ramu to avoid further untoward incidents and so that the non-Muslim minority could perform their religious activities smoothly.

According to the IGP, a total of 211 people had been arrested in 16 cases filed in connection with the incidents and many of them had been placed on remand.

The bench of Justice Mirza Hussain Haider and Justice Kazi Md Ejaryl Haque Akondo ordered the government to submit the investigation report on Ramu violence in two weeks.

A correspondent from Cox's Bazar reports that three more cases had been filed with Ukhia Police Station last night on charges of torching, vandalising and looting Buddhist and Hindu temples on September 30.

APP, Washington

The United States plans to help Libya build a commando force to fight extremists like those that staged the deadly attack on the US consulate in Benghazi, officials said Tuesday.

President Barack Obama's administration is seeking congressional approval for \$6.2 million in Pentagon funds and \$1.6 million from the State Department's budget for the initiative, according to documents from each department.

Plans to train a Libyan security force were already in the works before dozens of heavily-armed militants laid siege to the American mission in Benghazi last month, killing the ambassador and three US staff.

The initiative is designed to "train and equip Libya Special Operations Forces to counter and defeat terrorist and violent extremist organizations," said an August 24 Pentagon document.

According to the Pentagon document, the proposed funding for the Libya commando force was part of a larger plan for counterterrorism assistance to the Philippines, Nigeria, Bangladesh, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia.

On whether the ACC will arrest ex-Sonali MD Humayun Kabir, the commissioner said the investigation officer would look into the matter.

Hu m a y u n s t a n d s accused in 11 cases filed by the ACC against 27 officials of Hall-Mark and Sonali Bank for misappropriating Tk 1,568 crore.

Shahabuddin said the ACC was trying whether the misappropriated money is in the country and how much of the money taken by Hall-Mark was invested and spent on buying properties.

Hall-Mark MD Tanvir and General Manager Tushar Ahmed and AKM Azizur Rahman, the suspended manager of Sonali Bank Ruposhi Bangla branch have already been taken into custody.

They are on their 24-day remand and being grilled by the ACC.

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Muhith hopes

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secretariat.

The minister said the implementation of the project was no longer a problem.

His comments came a day after the WB's external panel concluded its maiden Bangladesh visit to assess the conduct of the ACC probe into the corruption allegations over the Padma bridge project.

"They [the WB team] have taken quite a lot of material and will perhaps give a preliminary report on their visit in several days," said Muhith and hoped the report would help rebuild the confidence.

The injured -- Razu Ahmed, Mohor Ali, Shonkor Ali, Imran Hossain and Abdullah Mamun -- were rushed to Jessore Medical College and Hospital.

Subedar Amir Khashru, company commander of Kushumpur camp of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB), said the BSF personnel of Fatepur camp opened fire on a group of eight cattle traders along the border around 11:30pm, leaving Rabul spot dead.

Five others sustained bullet injuries. The group was going to India to receive a consignment of cattle.

The BSF dragged the body into Indian territory. The BGB yesterday sent a letter to BSF for returning the body, Amir Khashru added.

US plans to help Libya build commando force

APP, Washington

The full survey report, the minister added.

"We came to know that the proposal has been sent back. We can now say that we will continue issuing the MRPs only if the proposal is approved unchanged," Noor A Alam Chowdhury of Dataedge Ltd, the local partner of the Malaysian firm.

"We didn't demand any extra money from the government.... We wanted our payments are made in current rate of US dollar as almost all pieces of the equipment are imported from several countries."

Noor questioned, "Can you buy anything from abroad with the dollar rate of 2010 when a US dollar was equivalent to Tk 69?"

The Malaysian firm

pulled out its entire staff on Monday as the government failed to renew the contract.

Meanwhile, Director General of DIP Abdul Mabud and Project Director of MRP project Brig Gen Refayet Ullah met Home Secretary CQK Mustak Ahmed at the home ministry yesterday afternoon to convince him to approve the proposal.

"We explained everything to him [secretary]," mentioned the DG, adding that the proposal was sent back for fine-tuning in line with the Public Procurement Regulation (PPR).

Asked whether the proposal was prepared without following the PPR, he said, "We followed the PPR but the secretary wanted a recheck of it."

The DG hoped that the

TIB-bashing

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the full survey report, the minister added.

His comments came three days after the TIB report said 97 percent of the 149 sitting MPs surveyed were involved in "negative activities" while 70 percent of them were engaged in "criminal activities". Of those surveyed, 53.5 percent MPs directly took part in criminal activities.

The negative activities include involvement in or being supportive of criminal activities, misuse of government funds and influencing government decisions while the criminal activities include killing, land and river grabbing, extortion, tender manipulation and cheating, according to the report.

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Of the 149 lawmakers, 141 are male and eight female while 136 are treasury bench lawmakers (27 ministers or state ministers) and 13 opposition lawmakers. The report, however, did not

name the MPs.

Speaking at a function at the Jatiya Press Club, Commissioner of Information Commission Prof Dr Sadeka Halim yesterday dismissed the TIB report as "nothing but rubbish".

"As a student of social science, I can say the sampling process was not followed properly while preparing the report. It's not a qualitative report either," she told the programme organised by Prottasha 2021 Forum, a social organisation.

Meanwhile, minister without portfolio Suranjit Sengupta urged the Speaker to form a committee to probe the TIB report, reports BSS.

"I will appeal to Speaker Abdul Hamid Advocate to constitute a committee with senior members of the two major political parties exercising the special power vested upon him in the rules of procedure [of parliament].

Asked, a staff of Eagle Paribahan told the correspondent: "Ministers and other governmental high-ups are indulging in massive corruption. But you have no headache about it. You are much more enthusiastic about our small irregularities."

In response to the anomalies, Abdul Mannan, a staff at the counter, said they had increased the fare as per the direction of Bangladesh Bus & Truck Owners' Association (BBTOA).

Visiting Gabtoli bus terminal, it was noticed that the BBTOA-approved fare chart varied in terms of bus companies for same routes and same distances.

However, state-run Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation (BRTC) will operate special bus service from October 22 to October 26 since October 13.

LAUNCH TERMINAL

Private launch owners started selling advance tickets for cabin from last Monday and they will start special service from October 22.

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