

JS polls in UK model

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 unconstitutional by the country's apex court and abolished through the 15th amendment to the constitution.
 Stressing the need for continuation of democratic trend, she said the desired development of a nation could not be possible without uninterrupted democracy.
 Hasina said her government has strengthened democratic institutions including the election commission to keep democracy on a solid footing.
 In this connection, she mentioned the holding of about 6,000 elections, including the recent four city corporation polls, in a free, fair, neutral and peaceful manner.
 "None could raise any allegation about the polls," she said.
 About the ongoing trial

of war criminals, Hasina said the International War Crimes Tribunals are doing good works by trying those who committed crimes against humanity in 1971.
 Referring to the recent violence committed by Jamaat-e-Islami and Hefajat-e-Islam activists, she said "We cannot allow that as our government is against all forms of extremism."
 On the present situation in garment sector in Bangladesh, the premier said her government has taken various initiatives to ensure welfare of four million RMG workers.
 "The present government has raised their [workers] pay by 80 percent," she added.
 About Rana Plaza collapse in Savar, Hasina said her government took prompt action to rescue the workers who were trapped under the rubbles of the

eight-storey building.
 She said her government was providing financial assistance to the family members of Rana Plaza victims.
 The premier listed her government's impressive successes in the fields of agriculture, health, education, food security, women empowerment and social safety net.
 She thanked the British government for extending its help to Bangladesh in attaining some MDGs before 2015.
 The British secretary of state praised Bangladesh for its progress in various sectors under the stewardship of Hasina.
 Foreign Minister Dipu Moni, Ambassador at Large M Ziauddin, Bangladesh High Commissioner to Britain Mijarul Quayes, among others, were present at the meeting.

H1N1 flu outbreak in northern Chile kills 11

AFP, Santiago
 At least 11 people have been killed in an outbreak of H1N1 flu virus in northern Chile, where the rate of infection is more than six times higher than the rest of the country, authorities said Thursday.
 "The average across the country is 24 patients per 100,000 residents, but in Tarapaca, in the past week, the rate was 148 patients per 100,000 residents," Medical Association president Enrique Paris said.
 Citing fears of aggravating the outbreak, Paris recommended postponing or cancelling the upcoming Fiesta de la Tirana, a religious celebration planned for July 15-17 where 200,000 people are expected.

Morsi backers protest ouster

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 shot dead at a Cairo rally.
 As military helicopters flew low overhead, Badie appeared on stage to screams of joy from jubilant supporters, following reports he had been detained in the wake of Wednesday's ouster of the president.
 "Millions will remain in the squares until we carry our elected president, Mohamed Morsi, on our shoulders," Badie told the crowd outside Rabaa al-Adawiya mosque, before leading chants of "Military coup!" and "Invalid!"
 Badie's impassioned speech came just three hours after three protesters were killed outside the Republican Guard headquarters after breaking away from the demonstration outside the mosque.
 The Islamists accuse the military of conducting a brazen coup against Morsi, Egypt's first democratically elected president, after millions called for his ouster on the June 30 anniversary of his first turbulent year in power.
 The armed forces have already sworn in an interim president, however, and the newly appointed Adly Mansour issued his first decree yesterday, dissolving the Islamist-led parliament and appointing a new intelligence chief.
 A senior Brotherhood official, Ahmed Fahmy, later urged Morsi's supporters to back off and not to confront the military.
 Morsi, who has not been seen since Wednesday, had

issued a defiant call for supporters to protect his elected "legitimacy", in a recorded speech aired on Britain's Channel 4 hours after his removal.
 The military had said it supported the right to peaceful protest, but warned against violence and acts of civil disobedience.
 Elsewhere, gunmen killed two policemen in the restive Sinai peninsula, after Islamist militants killed a soldier in a machinegun and rocket attack. Earlier in the same town, Morsi supporters attacked a government building, MENA said, adding that security forces had fired shots in the air to disperse the crowd.
 The health ministry said one person had been killed near the Rabaa al-Adawiya mosque in Cairo's Nasr City where tens of thousands of Morsi supporters had gathered to denounce his ouster by the military.
 In the canal city of Ismailiya, army troops fired shots in the air to disperse pro-Morsi protesters who tried to storm a government building.
 Anti-riot police also deployed in the coastal city of Alexandria, firing tear gas to control clashes between supporters and opponents of Morsi in the neighbourhood of Sidi Gaber.
 The northern province of Beheira also saw confrontations between pro- and anti-Morsi protesters that left six people injured. In the canal city of Suez, Islamists hurled stones at security forces before being dispersed.
 Prominent liberal leader

Mohamed ElBaradei defended the military's intervention.
 "We asked the army to intervene because the other option was a civil war. We were between a rock and a hard place, and people need to understand that," the former UN nuclear watchdog chief told the BBC.
 Army chief General Abdel Fattah al-Sisi announced Morsi's overthrow on Wednesday night, citing his inability to end a deepening political crisis, as dozens of armoured personnel carriers streamed onto Cairo's streets.
 Military police have since rounded up senior members of Morsi's Brotherhood.
 Morsi himself was "preventively detained" by the military, a senior officer told AFP hours after his overthrow, suggesting he might face trial.
 A judicial source said the prosecution would on Monday begin questioning Brotherhood members, including Morsi, for "insulting the judiciary". Thirty-five of them have been banned from travel.
 Morsi's rule was marked by accusations he concentrated power in the hands of the Brotherhood. He was also blamed for a spiralling economic crisis.
 His supporters argue Morsi was confronted at every turn with a hostile bureaucracy left over by former strongman Hosni Mubarak, overthrown in the country's Arab Spring-inspired uprising of 2011.

11,000-strong

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 and Sylhet city corporations.
 During the polls in the four city corporations, authorities had deployed a total of about 20,000 law enforcers. But they deployed more than 11,000 in Gazipur alone considering its huge number of voters.
 As per a home ministry circular, 12 platoons of BGB and 28 teams of Rab had been working as striking force in the electoral areas since Thursday to strengthen security before and during the polls.
 Each Rab team will cover two general wards of the corporation, it said, adding that both the forces will be ready to take immediate action in case of necessity.
 The Election Commission (EC) has appointed its 19 officers from different parts of the country as poll observers, an EC high official said.
 Besides, 50 executive magistrates and 10 judicial magistrates have been working in the corporation areas with striking force and powers to hold summary trials.
 A 22-member team, including police and Ansar members, will be deployed in every general polling centre and it will follow orders of the presiding officers, according to the circular.
 Though the BNP has repeatedly asked for deployment of army in the Gazipur City Corporation polls, the EC remains confident about the security arrangements, saying the situation is under control.
 The ruling Awami League, however, said the deployment of the army was not needed. The ultimate decision in this regard rests with the EC, it added.
BOMBS, LEAFLETS RECOVERED
 Rapid Action Battalion yesterday arrested a person with four homemade bombs, and anti-government and provocative leaflets in Outpara area under Joydevpur Police Station.
 The team, led by Rab Assistant Director Ziaur Rahman, had been tipped off that a man was making bombs to create panic during the Gazipur City Corporation polls.
 The elite force later handed arrestee Mahmud Hasan over to police, says a press release.
 Meanwhile in Bymile area, supporters of councillor candidates for Ward-12 Afza Hossain Khokon and Shafiqul Islam clashed centring arguments over the city polls, reports our Gazipur correspondent.
 Sub-Inspector Rabiul Islam of Konabari Police Outpost said three people were injured in the clash. They had been treated in sadar hospital and local clinics.

Ajmat, or Mannan?

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 of the city corporation.
 Also the general secretary of Gazipur district unit of Awami League, Ajmat is likely to get mileage out of AL's popularity in the city. If he fails to win the mayoral race, it would be his first defeat in his political career.
 He obtained his LLM from University of Dhaka.
 The 58-year-old lawyer-turned-politician was confident of winning the maiden city polls.
 "I believe the election will be free and fair. People will vote for me giving scope to serve them," Ajmat's personal secretary Shajahan told The Daily Star as Ajmat saying to his supporters who called on him yesterday.
 He has promised that if elected, he would form a City Development Coordination Committee comprised of different political, social and professional representatives to carry out development activities in the city.
 The city, he noted, will be divided in three zones -- industrial, residential and commercial.
 He also vowed to take necessary initiatives to hike

salaries of workers, arrange accommodation and ensure security for them. Steps will be taken to arrange jobs for the wards of workers after their retirement and death, he added.
 Currently, Ajmat was facing no criminal case. **MANNAN'S TURN?**
 If MA Mannan wins the mayoral race in today's polls, he will regain the status of a public representative after more than 20 years.
 The 63-year-old businessman last won a public election when he was elected MP from a Gazipur constituency in 1991 parliamentary polls. But he lost in the following three parliamentary polls in 1996, 2001 and 2008.
 This time around, the BNP-backed candidate was confident to win the battle of ballots by beating his rivals including Ajmat Ullah Khan backed by the ruling Awami League.
 Also an advisor to BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, Mannan completed his Masters of Science in applied chemistry from Dhaka University.
 "I will win by a margin of tens of thousands of votes if

the election is held in a free and fair manner," Mannan told at a press conference at the office of Tongi Thana unit of BNP yesterday afternoon.
 He, however, was skeptical about the fairness of the polls.
 Before being elected as MP, Mannan became chairman of Kautalia Union Parishad in 1980s. He had contested the upazila parishad election in 1985, but failed to get elected.
 His victory in 1991 polls, however, brought him fortune as he was inducted as a state minister in the then cabinet led by Khaleda Zia.
 Seeking people's mandate in the mayoral balloting, Mannan promised to carry out massive development work in the city.
 In his electoral manifesto, he vowed to develop the city's different sectors including education, health and medical services, law and order, transportation and communication, drainage and wastage management, gas, water, and electricity.
 Currently, he was facing two criminal cases.

More than 70 killed in warlords' battle in Somalia

AFP, Mogadishu
 Battles between rival warlords in Somalia's key southern port city of Kismayo killed at least 71 people last month, UN officials said Friday, clashes Mogadishu has accused Kenyan troops of encouraging.
 "Recent fierce fighting... continues to have a profound impact on civilians and humanitarian aid work in the Lower Juba region," the UN's World Health Organisation (WHO) said, adding the clashes also left more than 300 injured in June.
 "Injuries and deaths outside the hospital are estimated to be much higher but cannot be confirmed," the WHO added, which supports hospitals treating the war-wounded in Kismayo.
 Clashes have put on hold a vital mass polio vaccination campaign in the troubled country, where the first cases were confirmed six years after Somalia was declared free of the crippling virus.

Spain urges calm in row over Bolivian leader's plane

AFP, Madrid
 Spain yesterday called for calm in a diplomatic row ignited when Bolivian President Evo Morales's plane was diverted because of suspicions that fugitive US intelligence leaker Edward Snowden was aboard.
 "We have to try somehow to calm things down, relax the mood, and resume relations," Foreign Minister Jose Manuel Garcia Margallo said in an interview with public television.
 Bolivia reacted furiously after Morales, flying home from Moscow on Tuesday, had to land in Vienna, accusing several European nations of denying his jet overfly rights.
 Spain's foreign minister denied, however, that his country closed its airspace to the Bolivian leader's plane, which resumed its journey on Wednesday and refuelled in Las Palmas on the Spanish archipelago of the Canary Islands.
 "What Spain said was that

in no case was it going to restrict its airspace and that it would keep its authorisation in force so the plane could land and refuel in Las Palmas," Margallo said.
 Bolivia accused France, Portugal, Italy and Spain of denying flyover rights because they suspected the plane was carrying Snowden, who is seeking to avoid US espionage charges after leaking embarrassing details of a vast US phone and Internet surveillance programme.

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3 crew of MV Hope

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 Rescuers of Thai Navy with two helicopters and three naval vessels had resumed the search for the missing crew around 9:00am yesterday.
 On July 2, MV Hope had left Port Lumut of Malaysia for Chittagong Port with 17 crew members and 5,500 tonnes of Ball Clay.
 It met hostile weather early Thursday about 30 nautical miles off Phuket.
 Out of fear, all the men on board had abandoned the ship. Six of them were rescued on Thursday.
 Meanwhile, hearing the news of the rescue, family members of the victims yesterday thronged the offices of the ship's owner firm Trade Breeze Shipping Ltd and its insurance company Interport

Maritime Ltd in Chittagong to enquire about their missing relatives.
 Kabir, elder brother of one of the missing crew members Nasir, said his parents in Chandpur had become sick hearing the news of the accident Thursday afternoon.
 "When we came to know about the rescue, we all became very excited," said Kabir, who went to Chittagong from the capital to get updates.
 Jakaria, son of missing Ali Hossain, said he had lost hope when the news of the accident came on television.
 "But now I have started believing that my father is alive and will soon be rescued," he said.

The owner firm of MV Hope belongs to Sama Quader, sister-in-law of BNP leader Salauddin Quader Chowdhury.
 Capt Mohiuddin Abdul Kadir, chief executive officer of Interport Maritime Ltd, said the owner firm of MV Hope had taken steps to salvage the ship. The vessel had moved about 20 nautical miles off the accident spot, and was still floating, he added.
 Meanwhile, the fishing boat, Pailin, which had lost radio contact while being in Andaman Sea with its Bangladesh firm on its way to Chittagong port since Wednesday afternoon, has been found to have reached Phuket safely.

UN food agencies appeal for more funds to help Syria

AFP, Rome
 The United Nations food agencies yesterday appealed for more funds to help an estimated four million Syrians unable to produce or buy enough to eat as a new report detailed a farming sector severely hit by the conflict.
 The Food and Agriculture Organisation said it had only received 10 percent of the \$41.7 million (32.4 million euros) it needed to assist 768,000 farmers, while the World Food Programme said its operations were "only 48 percent

resourced".
 WFP said it reached 2.5 million people with food aid in June, was planning to reach 3.0 million in July and 4.0 million people in need by October.
 "Crop and livestock production, food availability and access to food have all taken an increasingly heavy toll," said the report compiled following a joint mission by WFP and the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) to Syria between May and June.
 The report said that poultry production had gone down by 50 percent since the start of the uprising against President Bashar al-Assad in March

2011, while wheat output had declined by 40 percent and flour prices had more than doubled in a two-year period.
 "Domestic production over the next 12 months will be severely compromised," it said.
 Food production has been hampered by "massive population displacement", damage to infrastructure, economic sanctions, currency depreciation and high fuel prices, it added.
 FAO said it had supported some 70,000 farmers this year, providing them with animal feed, small ruminants, as well as seeds and tools.

Malaysia

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