

Thai PM survives vote of no confidence

THE GUARDIAN ONLINE

Thailand's embattled prime minister, Yingluck Shinawatra, has breezed through a no-confidence vote in parliament where her party holds a commanding majority but still faces mounting pressure from widening anti-government protests.

The vote is unlikely to defuse tensions or end the biggest anti-government protests since deadly political unrest three years ago. Shinawatra's opponents have managed to shut down government offices in days of demonstrations.

"I will not dissolve the house," a defiant Yingluck told reporters before the vote. "It is clear the protesters are not looking for house dissolution so, starting today, let us find a way out this together."

Yingluck needed more than half, or 246 votes, out of the 492 votes in the lower house to prevail. She won 297, with 134 votes against her.

Her Puea Thai party and coalition partners dominate the lower house with 299 seats and comfortably survived the

three-day debate during which the opposition grilled Yingluck on a 3.5 billion baht (£66m/US\$108m) water management scheme and financially troubled government rice intervention scheme.

The protests' leader, Suthep Thaugsuban, has ruled out talks with the government or other parties. "No more negotiations," he told cheering crowds after thousands massed outside four Thai government ministries, a major state office complex and 31 provincial halls.

Waving multi-coloured flags, tooting on whistles and backing up traffic, the protesters have occupied the finance ministry since Monday but have failed to force their way into other ministries. Instead they gathered at the gates, prompting evacuations.

The demonstrators, a motley collection aligned with Bangkok's royalist civilian and military elite, accuse Yingluck of being an illegitimate proxy for her billionaire brother Thaksin Shinawatra, a former prime minister and populist hero of the rural poor who was ousted in a 2006 military coup.



This handout picture taken by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) yesterday shows member members of the IAEA inspecting the crippled TEPCO Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear power plant in the town of Okuma in Fukushima prefecture. The UN's nuclear watchdog kicked off a review of Japan's efforts to shut down the disaster-hit Fukushima plant after its operator began removing nuclear fuel.

PHOTO: AFP

NEWSIN brief

Bombings across Iraq kill 13

AP, Baghdad

A series of bombings across Iraq targeting shoppers, security forces and a militia group killed at least 13 people yesterday, officials said.

The deadliest attack took place in the town of Suwayrah, 40 kilometers south of Baghdad, where a car bomb ripped through a commercial area, killing

Fifty police hurt in Tunisia violence

AFP, Siliiana

Fifty Tunisian policemen were injured in clashes with protesters in the marginalised town of Siliiana where a general strike degenerated into violence, the interior ministry said yesterday.

The violence broke out on Wednesday as the town observed a strike to mark the first anniversary of riots that left more than 300 people injured, and as strikes were held in two other regions amid rising social discontent and polit-

Tuaregs stop Mali PM visiting town

AFP, Bamako

Tuareg demonstrators yesterday occupied an airport runway to prevent Mali's Prime Minister Oumar Tatam Ly visiting the rebel-controlled north-eastern town of Kidal, officials said.

Protesters said Malian soldiers shot and wounded three of the demonstrators, but the Malian army denied that.

An African military source said troops with the UN military support mission in Mali, MINUSMA, had tried but failed to stop the demonstrators occupying and blocking the runway.

Dubai wins Expo 2020

AFP, Dubai

Dubai beat off opposition from Brazil, Russia and Turkey on Wednesday to win the right to host the 2020 World Expo, sparking celebrations in the Gulf city and a stunning fireworks display at the world's tallest building.

City authorities declared yesterday a school holiday to celebrate the victory.

The Burj Khalifa tower, which stands 828-metres high, was lit up with the pyrotechnics, while fireworks were also set off elsewhere in the coastal city.

There were jubilant crowds at the foot of the tower and in Dubai's shopping malls.

"I am so proud to be living in the city of the future," beamed Indian student Depika, who said he was born in Dubai and had seen the city "develop

Iran invites UN experts to nuke linked site

AP, Vienna

After keeping away inspectors for two years, Iran has invited the UN nuclear agency to a facility linked to a still unfinished reactor that could produce enough plutonium for up to two warheads a year, the agency's head said yesterday.

Yukiya Amano, who heads the UN's International Atomic Energy Agency, said the IAEA will accept the offer to visit the heavy water plant in the central city of Arak, which comes less than a week after a landmark nuclear deal between Iran and six world powers.

He also said his agency first learned that it would be tasked with supervising Iranian compliance with that deal as an agreement was struck over the weekend. Amano didn't give a date for when the IAEA would start implementing its role under the Geneva deal, but suggested that it would take some time, in part because his agency wasn't informed earlier to prepare for the mission.

The invitation for Dec. 8 is not

part of the six-power deal, which commits Iran to freeze its nuclear program for six months in return for limited relief from economic sanctions. But it shows Tehran is starting to comply with separate commitments to open previously off-limits sites to IAEA inspectors.

The status of the Arak plant had been one of the major issues during negotiations leading to last week-end's agreement in Geneva.

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said Wednesday some construction will continue at Arak. When completed, Arak could produce plutonium which could be used for nuclear weapons, although Iran insists its program is entirely for peaceful purposes such as producing electricity, and for scientific and medical research.

Iran had scheduled completion for next year, a timetable described by experts as too ambitious.

US State Department spokeswoman Jen Psaki said Zarif's comments didn't constitute a violation of the agreement.

South Korea, Japan defy Chinese air defence zone

AP, Beijing

South Korean and Japanese flights through China's new maritime air defence zone added to the international defiance yesterday of rules Beijing says it has imposed in East China Sea but that neighbors and the US have vowed to ignore.

While China's surprise announcement last week to create the zone initially raised some tensions in the region, analysts say Beijing's motive is not to trigger an aerial confrontation but is a more long-term strategy to solidify claims to disputed territory by simply marking the area as its own.

China's lack of a response so far to the flights -- including two US B-52s that flew through the zone on Tuesday -- has been an embarrassment for Beijing. Even some Chinese state media outlets suggested yesterday that Beijing may have mishandled the episodes.

"Beijing needs to reform its information release mechanism to win the psychological battles waged by Washington and Tokyo," the Global Times, a nationalist tabloid published by the Communist Party's flag-

ship People's Daily, said in an editorial.

Without prior notice, Beijing began demanding Saturday that passing aircraft identify themselves and accept Chinese instructions or face consequences in an East China Sea zone that overlaps a similar air defense identification zone overseen by Japan since 1969 and initially part of one set up by the US military.

But when tested just days later by US B-52 flights -- with Washington saying it made no effort to comply with China's rules, and would not do so in the future -- Beijing merely noted, belatedly, that it had seen the flights and taken no further action.

South Korea's military said yesterday its planes flew through the zone this week without informing China and with no apparent interference. Japan also said its planes have continuing to fly through it after the Chinese announcement, while the Philippines, locked in an increasingly bitter dispute with Beijing over South China Sea islands, said it also was rejecting China's declaration.

Analysts question China's technical ability to enforce the zone due to a shortage of early warning radar aircraft and in-flight

S Lanka begins war tally after int'l pressure

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka was to begin compiling a death toll from its ethnic conflict yesterday as it seeks to fend off growing pressure over allegations of mass killings at the end of the war.

Some 16,000 officials are expected to fan out across the island at the start of a six-month operation to compile a definitive toll from the conflict, which dragged on for 37 years and was one of the bloodiest in post-colonial Asia.

But rights groups voiced scepticism over the credibility of the survey.

In a brief statement on President Mahinda Rajapakse's website on Wednesday, the government said the department of census of statistics would conduct what it called an "island-wide census to assess the loss of human life and damage to property", adding that the work would begin on November 28.

UN bodies and rights groups have said that as many as 40,000 civilians may have died in the final phase of the conflict when the army routed the Tamil Tiger rebel movement in its last northern stronghold.



US President Barack Obama (2nd R) pardons the 2013 National Thanksgiving Turkey "Popcorn" with his daughters Sasha (3rd R) and Malia (R) and Chairman of the National Turkey Federation John Burkel (2nd L) during an event at the White House in Washington, DC, Wednesday.

PHOTO: AFP

Hernandez declared winner of disputed Honduras vote

AFP, Tegucigalpa

The ruling conservative party's candidate in Honduras' presidential election has won, the electoral tribunal said, but he stopped short of making it official.

The leftist rival's camp insisted there was fraud and called street protests.

The apparent winner, Juan Orlando Hernandez, is a law-and-order conservative who has promised a militarized program to improve public safety in the nation with the world's highest murder rate, which is also among the poorest in Latin America.

Gangs run whole neighborhoods, extorting businesses as large as factories and as small as tortilla stands. Drug cartels use Honduras as a transfer point for shipping illegal drugs, especially cocaine, from South America to the United States.

The tribunal said the numbers indicate Hernandez won last weekend's election over leftist Xiomara Castro of the leftist Libre party.

"These numbers that we released today

clearly indicate that the winner of the general election is Juan Orlando Hernandez," said David Matamoros, president of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal, on radio and television.

Figures from 81.5 percent of polling stations give Hernandez 35.88 percent to Xiomara Castro's 29.14 percent.

"In the coming days, we will issue the official declaration, once we have added the records that are needed," he added.

The electoral tribunal had already said Hernandez's lead was irreversible given the number of votes remaining to be counted.

But Castro's campaign accuses the Supreme Electoral Tribunal of manipulating 19 percent of the votes to favor Hernandez and plans to call massive street protests over the alleged fraud.

"On Saturday, we are going to summon people to protest. The Libre (Party) and Xiomara (Castro) have been robbed of their victory, and we are going to show it," her husband, ousted ex-president Manuel Zelaya, told Radio and TV Globo.



Tehelka managing editor resigns

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

Tehelka magazine's Managing Editor Shoma Chaudhury, who faces a barrage of criticism of the way she handled a young journalist's complaint that the magazine's founder-editor Tarun Tejpal had sexually assaulted molested her at an event in Goa earlier this month, has resigned.

In a letter sent at 6 am yesterday to colleagues, Chaudhury, a familiar face in Indian TV channels' debates, said she did not want her integrity questioned.

"Over the past week, I have been accused of an attempt to 'cover-up' and for not standing by my feminist positions. While I accept that I could have done many things differently and in a more measured way, I reject the allegations of a cover-up because in no way could the first actions that were taken be deemed suppression of any kind," she wrote.

The journalist, who had charged Tejpal, 50, of sexually assaulting her, resigned on Monday, alleging Chaudhury had tried to organize a "cover-up." She said she felt especially betrayed by Chaudhury's refusal to describe Tejpal's actions as "sexual

misconduct" in an email circulated to Tehelka employees.

Chaudhury had said "an untoward incident" had led Mr Tejpal to "recuse himself" from office for six months.

Legal experts have said that given the nature of offences outlined by the journalist in an email, Chaudhury should have reported the matter to the police. Chaudhury claimed she did not do so as the journalist had asked for it to be dealt with internally.

In her resignation letter, Chaudhury, who has already been questioned by Goa police, said she "would have liked to continue at Tehelka to see us through this dark time, but I am no longer sure whether my presence is harming or helping Tehelka".

She said many of her actions have been "misconstrued and have snowballed exponentially in the media, based on half-facts and selective leaks."

Tejpal has already been booked for the charge of rape and his plea for anticipatory bail will be decided today by the Delhi High Court which refused to grant him interim bail in order to stop the Goa Police from arresting him till then.

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STEP 1
CHARGE

STEP 2
SCANNING

STEP 3
SCANNING

STEP 4
BALANCE CHECK!!

* পরীক্ষামূলক প্রকল্পের মেয়াদ : ২১ অক্টোবর'১৩ থেকে ২০ ফেব্রুয়ারি '১৪
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মেয়াদ বৃদ্ধি : বিবেচনাদ্বারা