

Clinton on the attack

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40 percent.

The Florida poll, conducted with the College of William and Mary, used only a small sample of voters but crucially it targeted those who had already cast ballots under the state's early voting law.

An average of earlier Florida polls by tracker RealClearPolitics gives Trump a narrow one point lead there, but TargetSmart's survey suggests that many registered Republicans have switched camps.

The 70-year-old real estate mogul will be undaunted by the numbers, claiming at his own Wisconsin rally to be ahead in all the key battlegrounds and citing a new nationwide poll that pits him in the lead.

The ABC News/Washington Post tracking poll showed him leading Clinton by 46 to 45 percent, reflecting other polls that still put Clinton in the lead but suggest the race has narrowed as November 8 looms.

And renewed FBI scrutiny of Clinton's controversial use of a private email server as secretary of state has excited Republicans and underlined public doubts about the Democrat's trustworthiness.

Trump boasted about the new numbers as he addressed a raucous crowd -- chanting "Lock her up!" and "Drain the swamp!" -- in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, before turning the knife.

"The Clintons are the sordid past. And we will be the bright and clean

future," he declared.

Also on the attack, Clinton was introduced by Alicia Machado, a former Miss Universe whom Trump, then the owner of the pageant, publicly humiliated by mocking her post-victory weight gain.

"Can we just stop for a minute and reflect on the absurdity of Donald Trump finding fault with Miss Universe?" Clinton snorted.

Trump's doctor says he is more than overweight at 236 pounds (107 kilograms).

"What about our girls? What happens to their confidence, their sense of self-worth?" she demanded, warning against a president "who insults more than half the population."

And she again cited a notorious tape where Trump is overheard on a hot mic bragging about being able to grope women and get away with because he is a star.

The surprise close poll spooked the markets, which had expected the former secretary of state to comfortably defeat a populist who economists fear could plunge the world into recession.

US stocks on the S&P 500 index closed down 0.7 percent and the Vix Volatility or "fear index" briefly jumped to its highest level since Britain voted to leave the European Union.

But no matter how close the popular vote, in order to win the White House, Trump must take at least one normally Democratic state like Wisconsin, swing states like Florida and the Republican

heartland.

Wisconsin backed President Barack Obama in 2012, but if Trump can win its 10 votes, it could put him over the 270 threshold and win him the keys to 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue.

But this remains a long shot. The New York Times statistical model gives Clinton an 88 percent chance of winning, while data tracking website FiveThirtyEight says she has a 74 percent chance.

Nevertheless, the tumultuous race -- which has featured footage showing Trump boasting of sexual assault and claims of Russian interference in the contest -- may have a few twists left.

On Monday, Trump was hit by fresh allegations in a detailed report by The New York Times that he not only dodged paying income tax but did so in a way that has since been outlawed.

This may not be enough to turn public attention away from a revived FBI investigation into whether Clinton put US secrets at risk by using a private email server while serving as secretary of state.

Clinton's campaign has spent three days berating FBI Director James Comey for revealing to lawmakers that the bureau is looking anew at her use of a private email server while at the State Department.

Obama and Vice President Joe Biden both hit the campaign trail for Clinton on Tuesday and have a full schedule for the week, hoping to push her past Trump in the home stretch.

ADB to lend

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Half of the loan amount would be given on concessional terms while the remainder would carry market-based interest rates, according to an ADB official.

The concessional part carries interest rates of less than 2 percent, with a 25-year repayment period, including an eight-year grace period. The market-based lending carries interest rates of the London Interbank Offered Rate plus 0.5 percent, 1 percent commitment charge on undisbursed funds, and it would be offered for up to 20 years with a five-year grace period.

Higuchi said the new CPS was aligned with Bangladesh's Seventh Five-Year Plan.

In the previous CPS period of 2011-2015, the ADB's lending to Bangladesh exceeded \$5 billion.

Jubo Dal

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OC Biplob said Anis was killed in a "gunfight" between two groups of criminals. He stood accused in many cases, including murder.

Police rushed him to Jessore General Hospital after rescuing him from the spot around 12:50am. He died there around 2:00am, the police official added.

Violence against

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after two autopsies, it is established that she was raped, but police have not even pressed charges in the case in seven months."

As many as 294 women and children were admitted to eight OCCs across the country between July and September, indicating a rise of above 10 percent compared to the period from April to June, said Abul Hossain, project director of the OCC.

The actual number of victims would be more than twice the number of women and children seeking institutional help, Salma said.

The OCC at the DMCH alone received 81 victims of abuse in October, said doctors at the centre. Of them, 25 children and 13 women had been raped.

The number of women and girls taken to the DMCH crisis centre in the last six months is 20 percent more than the previous six months, said Khwaja Abdul Gofur, deputy director of the DMCH.

"Fear of being ostracised in society, being victimised again and losing status and sometimes monetary compensations are the reasons why so many incidents of rape and other forms of violence remain unreported," Salma said.

The recent rise in the rape cases came under media attention on October 25 when a five-year-old girl was brought to the DMCH in a critical condition.

The brutal nature of torture leaving marks of bites, burns and scratches on her body shocked the nation.

Visiting her on Wednesday, National Human Rights Commission Chairman Kazi Reazul Haque demanded quick disposal of rape cases.

In another incident on October 20, a restaurant owner beat up teenage twin sisters in the capital's Mirpur for protesting abusive language used by him. They were returning home from college at the time.

Echoing Salma Ali of the lawyers' association, human rights activist Sultana Kamal said lengthy legal process was one of the reasons why fear of justice didn't deter perpetrators.

"Except a handful of cases, most of the perpetrators of violence in the sensational cases were arrested in recent months. But we can't cite a single example of the perpetrators being punished.... The cases hardly move."

Pro-independence lawmakers brawl in HK parliament

AFP, Hong Kong

Two lawmakers who want Hong Kong to split from China wrestled with security in parliament yesterday, with one of them dragged from the chamber and security staff left injured, as fears grow Beijing will step in over the saga.

Widespread concerns that China is tightening its grip on the semi-autonomous city are fuelling an independence movement in Hong Kong.

In the third consecutive week of chaos in the legislature, pro-independence lawmakers Baggio Leung and Yau Wai-ching entered the chamber despite being banned from doing so, pending the result of a judicial review into whether they can take up their seats.

Yau ran up to a table at the front, set up her own microphone and proceeded to read out her oath of office.

Social networking

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Scientists have long known that people with stronger social networks and relationships also tend to live longer. The new study shows that the same is true of the online world.

"Interacting online seems to be healthy when the online activity is moderate and complements interactions offline," said author William Hobbs in a statement. "It is only on the extreme end, spending a lot of time online with little evidence of being connected to people otherwise, that we see a negative association."

The researchers stress that the study looks only at the association between using Facebook and life expectancy. As such, it can't say which causes the other -- only that people who use the site tend also to live longer than those who don't.

The study looked at 12 million Facebook users, and was led by University of California, San Diego in partnership with Yale and Facebook.

The work matched Californian Facebook users with their records from the California Department of Public Health. It automatically connected the two together and then aggregated them so that people's privacy wasn't

infringed.

The researchers then looked at the online activity of the 12 million people over six months, comparing how people who were still living used the site compared to those who had since died.

They found that in any given year, someone who uses Facebook is about 12 percent less likely to die than someone who doesn't.

They then also looked at how people used Facebook -- the number of friends they have, how many photos and status updates they post and how many messages they sent.

It found that people who have big social networks tended to live much longer. And it found too that people who used the site in a way that appeared to indicate offline social interaction -- like posting photos -- tended to live longest.

Similarly, Facebook users who accepted the most friendship requests tended to live longer -- but there didn't seem to be any connection between the number of friend requests a person sent and whether they might die.

The researchers said it might suggest that making more friends might not actually help with people's health.

One of five accused arrested

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Alam yesterday, seeking a 10-day day remand for the arrestee. But the court granted a five-day remand, said Inspector (investigation) Abdul Aziz, also investigation officer of the case.

Quoting the case statement, ABM Zahidul Islam, officer-in-charge of Rangpur Sadar Police Station, said the girls went to a student mess at Sardarpara in the city on October 27 evening to collect class notes from their classmate Nimai Chandra Sharma.

Alamgir, who stays in the same mess, took them inside the mess when the girls reached there. He then went out of the mess and returned after a while with four other youths.

Later, the youths tied up Nimai, confined the girls to a room and forced them to take off their clothes. They also recorded videos of the girls with their mobile phones and raped them in separate rooms. The "rapists" let the girls go after two hours, threatening them to upload the clips on the internet if the incident was disclosed to

anyone, the OC said.

Twelve students reside in the mess. But on that day, nobody was there except Nimai and Alamgir.

After coming back to their hostel, the girls informed their families of the incident.

Family members then informed the nursing institute authorities of the matter, but they urged the family members to settle the issue by negotiation, alleged family members of the complainant of the case while talking to this correspondent.

Contacted, Sufia Khatun, principal of the institute, said she learnt about the incident on Monday and sought police help for lodging a case.

Hearing the incident, Rahat Anwar, deputy commissioner of Rangpur, visited Rangpur Sadar Police Station on that night and assured the girls of providing support.

Medical tests of the victims were performed at Rangpur Medical College Hospital yesterday.

Police were trying to arrest the other accused in the case, the OC said.

2 'abductors'

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labourers and took them hostage around 9:00pm when they were returning home from a local market.

Hundreds of locals came out of their houses as the news of the abduction broke out. They tracked down and surrounded the gang of criminals around midnight in a remote, inaccessible area in the hills, said the OC.

At one stage the mob turned violent and attacked the kidnappers, leaving two of them dead on the spot, he said, adding that the other members of the gang managed to flee before the police arrived at the scene.

Police recovered and sent the corpses to Bandarban Sadar Hospital for autopsy.

Sanjit Kumar Banik, superintendent of Bandarban police, said at least 10 to 12 individuals were involved in the crime.

"A local Awami League leader was also kidnapped in the same area on July 29. Since the area is remote and inaccessible, it's difficult for us to apprehend them [criminals]," he added.

Mizanur Rahman, son of ward 2 AL leader, Nurul Absar, 52, said the kidnappers freed his father after a ransom of Tk 3 lakh was paid to them.

Zakir Hossain Mazumder, chairman of Fashiakhali union parishad, said a gang of around 18 to 20 criminals from adjacent Chakoria and Ramu upazilas under Cox's Bazar has been kidnapping people in the area over a long period of time. "We discussed the situation with the law enforcement agencies many times, but all to no avail."

Verdict any day

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Modhyapara in Palang upazila (now Shariatpur sadar) on May 22, killed 200 Hindus and one Abdus Samad Sikder, and looted and burnt all the houses.

The next day the accused, along with 100 Pakistani army men, attacked Malopara and Rudrakar villages and shot dead a priest before looting and burning all the houses, says the second charge.

They forcibly took around 20 women and 10 to 15 men from the villages to a Pakistani army camp in Madaripur, where the women were raped for three days before being released and the men shot dead, it adds.

According to the third charge, the duo along with eight to 10 Pakistani army men attacked and looted the home of one Shailendra Krishna Paul in June and killed two Hindu guards.

The fourth charge says, the accused and the Pakistani army intimidated around 1,500 people into leaving Bangladesh between March 25 and December 10.

MOULVIBAZAR CASE
Meanwhile, the tribunal yesterday fixed December 8 to decide whether it will frame charges brought against five Moulvibazar men for crimes they allegedly committed during the Liberation War.

It set the date after the prosecutor and defence counsel placed their submission on charges.

Of the accused, Yunus Ahmed, 71, and Ujer Ahmed Chowdhury, 63, are in jail, while Samsul Hossain Tarafder, 65, Nesar Ali, 75, and Mobarak Mia, 66, are on the run. They hail from Rajnagar upazila.

Shop owners in Dhaka

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and Green Road were seen closed.

However, shops on Shyamoli Ring Road, Sathmasjid Road in Dhanmondi, at Bashundhara City and New Market were open.

In a press release, Dhaka City Shop Owners Association yesterday said shops were closed from morning till evening.

Forum leader Salam said shop operators would not object to a change if the government raised the rate of package VAT by 20 percent on that of FY 2015-16.

Asked why they were reluctant to pay VAT which is paid by consumers, he said buyers do not want to pay the tax.

"It requires raising awareness," Salam added.

The package VAT for shops in other city corporation areas has been doubled to Tk 20,000 for the current FY. The National Board of Revenue (NBR) also hiked the fixed amount of VAT for shops in municipalities.

Traders started protesting the hike in

package VAT since the government placed the national budget in parliament on June 2.

At present, the revenue authority collects 3 percent trade VAT from shops having an annual turnover of less than Tk 80 lakh, a senior revenue official said on condition of anonymity.

But traders usually do not submit VAT returns to the NBR to avoid showing their annual turnover, he added.

The government scrapped the package VAT system in the new law which would be in force from July 1 next year. This is because an insignificant amount of revenue is collected from package VAT, he said citing a previous study of NBR.

The administrative costs for collecting package VAT was around Tk 60 crore.

Under the new law, shops with an annual turnover of up to Tk 30 lakh would be exempted from VAT payment. A turnover tax would be applicable for turnovers of Tk 30 lakh to Tk 80 lakh a year, the revenue official told this correspondent.

Aid workers brace

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Civilians emerged with tales of brutality under IS.

"They confiscated my tractor and then threw me in jail for six days. They beat me and when I got out I couldn't do my work anymore," said Yusef Fariq.

The 40-year-old farmer, speaking from his home in Gogjali and surrounded by his mother and two sons, still had the long beard IS militants forced him to grow.

"They were killing us, always asking for money, we couldn't go anywhere. We went through hell," his mother said.

The Norwegian Refugee Council, one of the most active relief groups operating in Iraq, warned that a long-feared humanitarian crisis was closer than ever.

'TERRIFYING NIGHTMARE'

"We are now bracing ourselves for the worst. The lives of 1.2 million civilians are in grave danger, and the future of all of Iraq is now in the balance," NRC Iraq director Wolfgang Gressmann said in a statement.

"People in and around Mosul have lived for almost two and a half years in a relentless, terrifying nightmare. We are now all responsible to put an end to it," Gressmann said.

More than 20,000 people have already fled to government-held areas since the offensive was launched on October 17, according to the International Organization for Migration.

But civilians inside Mosul -- who according to aid group Save The Children include up to 600,000 children -- are trapped behind IS lines and the United Nations has said thousands are being held for possible use as human shields.

In Gogjali, fighters with Iraq's elite Counter-Terrorism Service (CTS) were screening civilians for any remaining members of IS.

One government fighter carried a black IS flag, saying: "We removed it and planted the Iraqi flag instead."

Backed by air and ground support from a US-led coalition, Iraqi federal forces and Kurdish peshmerga fighters are advancing on Mosul from the east, north and south.

Soldiers pushing down from the

north have moved within two kilometres (1.25 miles) of Mosul, military officials say, while forces moving from the south are still some distance from the city.

Paramilitary forces from the Hashed al-Shaabi (Popular Mobilisation), an umbrella organisation dominated by Iran-backed Shia militia, also launched an assault at the weekend to cut off the jihadists' escape route to Syria to the west of Mosul.

IS RADIO REVEALS TACTICS
IS is vastly outnumbered in the battle, with an estimated 4,000 to 7,000 jihadist fighters in Mosul and the surrounding area.

But the jihadists have put up stiff resistance with suicide bombers, mortars and small arms fire as Iraqi forces advance.

On the southern front, where Iraq's elite Rapid Response Division is advancing towards the IS-held town of Hamam al-Alil some 20 kilometres from Mosul, a captured IS radio provided rare insight into how the jihadists operate.

An AFP journalist embedded with Iraqi forces was present on Tuesday as they listened to IS fighters plan over the radio.

"Abu Dhiyab, let the istishhadi with you go," a jihadist who was referred to as Abu al-Layl said over the captured radio, using an Arabic word the jihadists use for suicide bombers.

Abu Dhiyab replied: "I brought the istishhadiyeen and left them behind the dirt berm. As soon as they (Iraqi forces) advance, they will go out to them."

A Rapid Response captain ordered two vehicles to approach the berm to draw the jihadists out, but the suicide bombers were hit by air strikes before that could happen.

After seizing control of large parts of Iraq and neighbouring Syria in mid-2014, IS declared a cross-border "caliphate", imposed its harsh interpretation of Islamic law and committed widespread atrocities.

IS has been losing ground steadily in Iraq since 2015 and the outcome of the Mosul battle is in little doubt, but commanders have warned it could last months.

If the city is retaken, only Raqa in Syria will remain as the last major city under the jihadists' control.