

Who will win?

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issues, instead of on their personality and popularity. "We talk about exact facts and issues and put them on two sides of a spreadsheet. Then the students debate the facts in class," Principal Patricia Moore says.

Eventually, the kids are told which candidate they had been siding with, and with this last piece of information in mind, they are ready to cast their vote. The same scenario is unfolding every four years since 1968, since Tom McAdams, a fifth-grade social studies teacher initiated the tradition, and the kids have predicted the result of the election every time.

"Every year since Nixon, we've correctly predicted [the outcome of the election] based on the popular vote. We do our own electoral votes based on enrollment in the classes," Moore told CBS News. "We're pretty proud of it. Every four years we continue it. We can't skip an election nationwide, so we can't skip it in our school."

Regarding the reason for their impeccable track record of predicting the outcome of the presidential elections, principal Moore thinks that diversity may play a big part. "We have minority groups, students that speak English as a second language, white collar, blue collar," she said. "It could be representative of the nation."

The mock election of Benjamin Franklin Elementary School took place again this year, and after calculating the votes and adding them to a spreadsheet, the teachers announced the winner: Hillary Clinton. The Democratic candidate got 52% of the votes (277), while the Republican nominee, Donald Trump, only 43% (230). Everyone is now waiting for the results of the actual Election Day, on November 8. Our "palms are sweaty," Moore jokingly said.

Libya

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Libya also suspended recruitment of workers against the backdrop of the troubling situation in the North African country, Ashraf said.

However, several syndicates of human traffickers target foreign workers including Bangladeshis and entrap them promising lucrative jobs in some companies that don't even exist in Libya, he said, adding that they bring jobseekers to Libya through Egypt and Tunisian borders. "They keep the jobseekers in remote areas where the security situation is very bad," the labour counsellor said.

These traffickers have been working for the last two or three years for some recruiting and travel agents based in Bangladesh.

Two months ago, Libyan police arrested three other Bangladeshis -- Monir Bhandari, Imran and Tajul Islam -- for the same offence.

"They admitted that they had abducted 140 Bangladeshis. But we think the figure may be larger," Ashraf said.

Meanwhile, the Bangladesh Embassy officials held a meeting on Sunday with Tripoli's Metropolitan Police Commissioner Col Sala Al Samauh and emphasized the need for security measures for Bangladeshi migrants.

Bangladesh Ambassador to Libya Maj Gen (ret'd) Shahidul Haque sought the Libyan police's help to stop the abduction, torture of Bangladeshis and realising ransoms from their families.

Currently, more than 30,000 Bangladeshis are working in a risky situation in the North African country that repatriated 32,000 Bangladeshis in 2011 soon after the overthrow of long-time military ruler Muammer Gaddafi.

Forests

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India's forests cover 24.1 percent of its total land area, even though its total forest area is significantly higher than many other Asian countries.

Pakistan, on the other hand, fares poorly. The country has just 1.9 percent of its land covered by forests.

In terms of numbers, China, Indonesia, and Malaysia make up more than half of the forest land in Asia. China's forest cover remains 24.8 percent of the country's land area, Indonesia's has 62.7 percent and Malaysia 67.6 percent.

While China is a major exporter of wood products, ranking first globally in wood-based panel production, Indonesia and Malaysia are top producers of tropical timber.

Globally, forests cover 30 percent of the total land area, according to the latest report from Global Forest Resources Assessment 2005, led by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations.

However, the world is still losing forests equivalent to the total area of Bhutan, Fiji and Brunei Darussalam combined each year -- or 200sqkm a day, as per the report.

Overall, Asia and the Pacific have lost around 10 million hectares of forest between 1990 and 2005 or 1.1 percent over 15 years, as per the latest data available.

MPs can't

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form by the HC to hold elections within six months.

Yesterday, a four-member bench of the Appellate Division led by Chief Justice Surendra Kumar Sinha dismissed three leave to appeal petitions filed by the authorities concerned of the government and Viharunnisa Noon School and College, challenging the HC judgment.

Following two writ petitions, the HC on June 1 declared the provisions of Non-government Educational Institutions Governing Body Regulations-2009 illegal.

Eunus Ali Akond, who filed and moved the writ petitions, told The Daily Star that without being elected, lawmakers cannot be the head of the governing body of any private educational institutions from now on.

The lawmakers, however, can become the heads of the governing bodies if they are voted in, he said.

The government has formed ad-hoc

committees for many institutions, including Viharunnisa Noon School and College, after the HC had delivered the verdict, but no election was held at any institutions for electing their governing bodies, he said.

Eunus also said he would move a contempt of court petition before the HC against the authorities concerned of the government, as they did not yet amend the Non-government Educational Institutions Governing Body Regulations-2009.

Attorney General Mahbubey Alam, who appeared for the government and Viharunnisa Noon School and College, refused to comment on the issue.

Eunus filed the two separate writ petitions with the HC, challenging the legality of Non-government Educational Institutions Governing Body Regulations-2009 and the legality of special governing body, led by Civil Aviation and Tourism Minister Rashed Khan Menon for Viharunnisa Noon School and College.

Daud Merchant

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"He [Daud] is a free man now... It is up to him whether he will go to India or stay in Bangladesh," he said, adding, "We have not assisted in pushing back or pushing in anyone."

In January, the home minister said an initiative had been taken for Daud's repatriation. However, the criminal had been in jail since then.

"There are some foreign nationals in Bangladesh jails who have served their sentences. We are contacting the embassies concerned to send them back," the minister had said.

Daud Merchant, a convicted killer of Indian music baron Gulshan Kumar, was arrested in Brahmanbaria in 2009 for intruding into Bangladesh.

He was arrested along with another Indian national, Mohammad Zahid. Daud had been hiding in the district in

guise of a Bangladeshi citizen for around a month.

He also had managed a Bangladeshi passport from a broker where his name was mentioned as Shomr Patel. During his arrest, police seized his driving license and the passport.

Earlier in December, 2014, he had obtained bail in another case and was released from Kashimpur Central Jail in Gazipur. He, however, was rearrested outside the jail.

He was then produced before a Dhaka court and it placed him on a three-day remand in a case filed under section 54 of the Code of Criminal Procedure for his suspicious movement in Bangladesh. He had been in jail since this Sunday.

Daud has a wife, a son, a daughter and a brother in Mumbai, India.

Govt inaction

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have been involved in corruption and anomalies and have gone beyond discipline, but steps cannot be taken against them, it said while hearing the Masdar Hossain case, popularly known as the judiciary separation case.

The SC said the law ministry has taken over the power of the president regarding control of the judicial officers through making the rules of business.

"An additional district judge has sent a letter to the president for impeachment of the chief justice. How dare! The file regarding taking action against him has been kept in the deep freeze," said the apex court.

Pointing to the attorney general, the court said, "Surrender, if you cannot do it. We will look into it."

A nine-member bench of the Appellate Division headed by Chief Justice Surendra Kumar Sinha, however, gave two weeks' time to the government to finalise the rules and issue a gazette notification to that effect and fixed November 24 for further hearing.

At the beginning of the hearing, Attorney General Mahbubey Alam submitted a petition before the bench seeking eight weeks' time for finalising the rules.

The SC said it would not give even eight days, as the government was asked around two and a half months ago to do the task.

In response, the attorney general said the law ministry has sent the rules to the president for approval.

"If you [AG] think the court will grant time whenever the state applies for it, it is really very saddening," the court observed.

In reply, the top state law officer said, "I have appeared before this court many times in the Masdar Hossain case like an offender."

The court added, "We have asked to remove one word. But you couldn't do that in last five years. One of the significant directives of the verdict in the Masdar Hossain case was not implemented in 14 years."

The attorney general said the directives would be implemented.

The court said the statement made in the time petition is vague, as it is not mentioned when the file regarding the rules was sent to the president.

The attorney general said the law minister [Anisul Huq] has gone abroad and no information about this issue can be known until his return.

The SC said there was no necessity for sending the rules to the president, as the government is supposed to execute the court's order.

At one stage, the SC said 170 lower court judges cannot work as they have no courtrooms.

Besides, delay is being observed in construction and operation of the chief judicial magistrates' court buildings, it mentioned.

Earlier, the government framed the rules according to the SC order. Later the apex court corrected the rules in line with its guidelines in the Masdar Hossain case verdict.

21 more held, 8 remanded

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Khan said people who would be found guilty of carrying out the attack would be brought to book.

"What happened in Brahmanbaria is unexpected and we all are concerned about the incident," he told reporters at the secretariat.

The minister is scheduled to visit the district today. He is likely to exchange views with people in Nasirnagar around noon.

EIGHT REMANDED
A Brahmanbaria court yesterday placed eight suspects on three-day remand each in a case filed in connection with the October 30 attack.

The Chief Judicial Magistrate's Court passed the order after they were produced before it, Court Inspector Mahbubur Rahman told this newspaper.

The district administration yesterday distributed Tk 3 lakh and 114 bundles of corrugated iron sheets among 51 Hindu families as compensation, reports UNB.

Brahmanbaria Deputy Commissioner Rezaunur Rahman handed over the cash and iron sheets to the families in the morning. Chairman ATM Moniruzzaman Sarker of Nasirnagar upazila and Vice Chairman Anjan Kumar Deb were present.

Four cases have been filed with Nasirnagar Police Station in connection with the attacks.
BNP BLAMES AL
Blaming the ruling Awami League men

for Nasirnagar attacks, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir yesterday said such atrocities were carried out repeatedly to tarnish the country's image.

The names of attackers' leaders appeared in media reports, he said, alleging that the AL men were involved in the attacks which were orchestrated to shift the blame on the BNP.

PROTESTS CONTINUE
Teachers and students of Barisal University formed a human chain on the campus yesterday, demanding speedy trial of Nasirnagar attackers.

They also demanded the government constitute a judicial inquiry committee to investigate the incidents and ensure proper rehabilitation and compensation for victims.

Teachers of Jahangirnagar University, under the banner of "Sammilita Shikshok Parishad", formed a human chain protesting the attacks.

The programme was held on Shaheed Minar premises of the campus around noon. The teachers demanded exemplary punishment to the attackers.

Another human chain was formed by students of Rajshahi University near the main entrance to the institution around 11:00am. The protesters demanded judicial inquiry into the attack and resignation of Fisheries and Livestock Minister Sayedul Hoque.

Faraaz

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upon anyone in its 12th edition, he added.

The award, instituted in 2005 in the memory of Mother Teresa, is the only one in the world recognised by the institution she founded, the Missionaries of Charity, Kolkata, and the first time after she was canonised to Sainthood on September 4 by Pope Francis at the Vatican.

Some of the past recipients have been Medecines Sans Frontiers, the Dalai Lama, Malala Yousafzai, Dr Mahathir Mohammad, Baroness Caroline Cox and other global personalities or organisations, Mathai said.

Accepting the Harmony Foundation's decision, Faraaz's family said: "On behalf of my son, it is an absolute honour and a privilege to have the opportunity to accept the award. Though in deep grief, we cling onto the immense pride with which Faraaz has filled our hearts. He stood up for what was right by paying the highest cost any human can pay and we hope every day that his sacrifice does not go in vain."

Mathai said the 20-year-old Faraaz was "the obvious choice" and the world needs heroes like him for his act of selflessness and choosing to lay down his life for his friends.

"He displayed courage and bravado when faced with life and death. We consider it our most humble privilege to bestow this honour on Faraaz," Mathai said.

As part of the award ceremony, the Harmony Foundation has organised an International Conference on Combating Terrorism, which is likely to be addressed by former Afghan president Hamid Karzai, Saarc Secretary-General Arjun Thapa, former union minister Farooq Abdullah and others.

Push for plan

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Royal announced that 100 countries have ratified the Paris Agreement, which entered into force last Friday, a record time for an international treaty.

She appealed to other nations to do so by the end of the year.

Amid growing alarm at the gathering pace of climate change and its impacts - rising seas, deadly storms, drought and wildfires -- the world's nations have moved quickly over the last year to tackle the still-growing problem.

But as 15,000 negotiators, CEOs and activists settle in for the 12-day talks in Marrakesh, all eyes are on the United States, where voting today could thrust Trump into the White House.

When it comes to global warming, the stakes could hardly be higher, US President Barack Obama has warned.

"All the progress we've made on climate change" -- including the Paris pact, decades in the making -- "is going to be on the ballot," he told TV talk show host Bill Maher on Friday.

Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton has vowed to uphold Obama's domestic energy policies and international climate commitments.

Experts in Marrakesh say the Republican candidate cannot carry out his threat to "cancel" the still-fragile accord, but a Trump victory might cripple it.

"It would be a shock, and I hope we don't see it," Laurence Tubiana, France's top climate negotiator told AFP.

"But if Trump is elected, I am sure that Wednesday morning you will hear everyone at the COP say, 'We'll stick to the Paris Agreement'," she added, using the acronym for the Conference of the Parties meeting.

'AVOIDABLE HUMAN TRAGEDY'
In Marrakesh, front-line diplomats must roll up their sleeves and work through scores of procedural issues that will make the difference between success and failure.

They have informally set 2018 as the deadline for laying that groundwork, Royal told journalists Sunday.

Concretely, these include how to measure and track each nation's CO2 emissions; disbursing hundreds of billions of dollars in financing in a way that reassures both rich and recipient nations; and setting criteria for compensating poor countries devastated by climate-fuelled storms, droughts or floods.

China passes controversial cybersecurity law

AFP, Beijing

China yesterday passed a controversial cybersecurity bill tightening restrictions on online freedom of speech and imposing new rules on online service providers, raising concerns it is further cloistering its heavily controlled internet.

The ruling Communist Party oversees a vast censorship system -- dubbed the Great Firewall -- that aggressively blocks sites or snuffs out internet content and commentary on topics considered sensitive, such as Beijing's human rights record and criticism of the government.

And it has aggressively blocked major companies such as Google and Facebook from offering their services in its domestic cyber space.

The law, which was approved by the National People's Congress Standing Committee, is largely focused on protecting the country's networks and private user information.

The attacker's identity

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capture. But yesterday, he said his name is not Shihab, two police officials, who interrogated him yesterday, told The Daily Star.

They said the youth sometimes identified himself as Ripon, but later he said his name was Asad.

"He kept mum whenever he was asked to give his father's name or address. He is giving confusing information," said one of the two officials, seeking anonymity.

A police official said they collected the youth's fingerprints on Sunday night and checked if those matched with any of the fingerprints on the national identification database. But no information on him was found on the database as he was not on the voter list.

Ansar platoon Commander Ashraf Alam yesterday filed a murder case against the attacker.

The youth was wearing the yellow uniform of a maintenance firm tasked with keeping the airport clean.

Police later found out that he was not employed by the company.

According to the case statement, carrying a small sharp knife, the youth approached the airport's terminal no-1 from the driveway on the first floor and tried to enter the international departure lounge through gate-4.

When members of Ansar and airport Armed Police Battalion tried to stop him, he knifed Ansar member Sohag Ali to death and wounded Ansar Assistant Platoon Commander Ziaur Rahman and APBn constables Ashik and Ishtaq.

He then entered the terminal through the gate where other security men stopped him. He suffered injuries in head and legs during a tussle with the security personnel.

Ezaz Shafi, investigation officer of the case, said, "We are trying to find out the motive behind the attack."

Asked whether the attacker had any links with militancy, he said, "We are yet to find out... He is giving us confusing statements."

Once he recovers, he will be produced at court with a remand prayer for interrogation, added Shafi, also inspector (investigation) of the Airport Police Station.

Earlier on October 22 last year, police captured a man after he along with another stabbed assistant sub-inspector Ibrahim Mollah at a check point in the capital's Darussalam.

The detained man pretended to be a mentally challenged person and gave confusing statements for several days after his arrest.

Later, law enforcers found out that he is a militant named Masud. On his information, police arrested a number of "Neo-JMB" militants and thwarted plots to carry out subversive activities.

SECURITY BEEFED UP
Security has been beefed up at the airport. Only passengers are allowed to enter the departure lounge on the first floor. And drivers have been told to leave the airport after dropping off passengers.

Tanjina Akhter, assistant superintendent of APBn, said people were not allowed to gather on airport premises.

The APBn official said police could not open fire on the attacker, as there were many passengers and visitors at the driveway on the first floor at that time.

Noor-E-Azam, officer-in-charge of the Airport Police Station, said security around the airport has been heightened with deployment of additional law enforcers.

Meanwhile, a three-member committee, headed by APBn Additional Deputy Inspector General Hasib Aziz, was formed to probe the incident.

It has been asked to submit its report within 48 hours, Tanjina said.

Earlier, the authorities had taken a number of security measures, and also employed British firm Redline Aviation Security Ltd in March to train security personnel at the airport after Australia and the UK imposed a ban on direct cargo flights from Bangladesh to any airports in the two countries.

In June, Germany also imposed a similar ban, meaning any cargo flight from Bangladesh to Germany, the UK and Australia must be re-screened at a third-country airport.

EMERGENCY MEETING
Civil Aviation and Tourism Minister Rashed Khan Menon will hold an emergency meeting with officials of all security agencies at the airport today to review the security situation there.

SOHAG'S AUTOPSY
Ansar member Sohag died of excessive bleeding from the stab wound in his chest, said sources at Dhaka Medical College morgue.

His body was handed over to his family after autopsy. The body was then taken to his village home at Kursha in Kushtia's Mirpur Upazila for burial.

Clinton, Trump

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when we win tomorrow, we are going to drain the swamp," he told cheering supporters in Sarasota, Florida.

Chants of "Drain the swamp! Drain the swamp" rose from the crowd.

Despite his outward confidence, the 70-year-old mogul needs to break through a wall of Democratic support in industrial northern states like Michigan to win.

Trump, Clinton and Obama all focused precious final efforts campaigning there and other key states.

As she boarded her campaign plane in White Plains, New York for the day's first rally in Pennsylvania, Clinton admitted that bringing the country together again after one of the bitterest US elections ever will require "some work."

"I really do want to be the president for everybody -- people who vote for me, people who vote against me," she told reporters.

In a video message set to air during two prime-time television shows reaching millions of viewers, Clinton warns, "Our core values are being tested in this election."

"Is America dark and divisive, or hopeful and inclusive?" she asks as a piano trills in the background.

TWO TO ONE
On the eve of the vote, Clinton held a widening but still close 3 percent lead over Trump in a four way race including two fringe candidates, according to a RealClearPolitics average of national polls.

US media predicted substantial to big wins for the 69-year-old Democrat when electoral votes are counted. Influential election forecaster FiveThirtyEight gave her a two to one chance of winning the 270 votes needed to claim the White House.

Under the cloud of an FBI investigation, Clinton got good news Sunday when James Comey, the agency's director, cleared her again of criminal wrongdoing in her use of a private email server while serving as secretary of state.

But the damage may already have been done.

Her popularity had dipped and opinion polls tightened after Comey's campaign bombshell decision eight days ago to reopen the investigation.

It gave Trump a windfall opportunity to recover ground lost while battling accusations of sexual assault.

BATTLEGROUNDS
From Sarasota, Trump was headed to Raleigh, North Carolina; Scranton, Pennsylvania; Manchester, New Hampshire; and Grand Rapids, Michigan for a flurry of back-to-back rallies.

Besides Obama and First Lady Michelle, Clinton will draw on the star power of rockers Bruce Springsteen and Jon Bon Jovi at their final big rally in

Philadelphia Monday night.

"I ask you to do for Hillary what you did for me," Obama said at a rally in Ann Arbor, Michigan, the first of three he is holding for Clinton on the eve of the vote.

"You have the chance to reject a coarse, divisive, mean-spirited politics that would take us backwards," he said. "The chance to elect our first female president."

Clinton herself was holding rallies in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and Grand Rapids, Michigan, before ending her day in the closely contested swing state of North Carolina.

Her final appearances had a note of optimism mixed with warnings of the threat posed by Trump.

"We don't have to accept a dark and divisive vision for America," she told the crowd in Pittsburgh. "Tomorrow you can vote for a hopeful, inclusive, big-hearted America."

BREXIT PLUS?
The world has looked on aghast as Trump's sensationalist reality television style became a driving force propelling him toward the most powerful political post in the world.

Asian and European exchanges, which had been rocked by news of the FBI probe, surged yesterday morning and Wall Street rose as Clinton's position strengthened.

But Trump is predicting a ballot upset, or "Brexite plus, plus, plus" as he put it Sunday, referring to the poll-defying British vote to exit the EU.

"If we win, the corrupt politicians and their donors lose. If they win, the American people lose big league," he told his followers in Sarasota.

"This is it, folks. We will never have another opportunity. Not in four years, not in eight years. It will be over," he said.

"Our failed political establishment has delivered nothing but poverty at home and disaster overseas. They get rich making America poor. It's time to reject a media and political elite that's bled our country dry."

Austria calls for EU to get tough on Turkey

AFP, Vienna

Austria's foreign minister said yesterday the EU should change its stance on Turkey following the recent crackdown and stop the flow of billions of euros in aid if Ankara fails to stick to its migrants deal with the bloc.