

26 dead in central China tour bus fire

AFP, Beijing

Twenty six people were killed and 30 injured after a tourist bus caught fire in central China, local officials said. The vehicle burst into flames as it drove through Hunan province Friday with 56 people on board -- including 53 passengers, two drivers and a tour guide -- according to local authorities. The two drivers were detained and an investigation into the cause of the accident is under way.

2 men arrested over UK mosque attacks

AFP, London

Two men have been arrested on suspicion of "racially aggravated criminal damage" after windows at five mosques in Britain's second city Birmingham were smashed earlier this week, police said Friday. Anti-racism groups have warned that Islamophobia is on the rise in Britain and spurring a spike in far-right activity in the country.

Twin cyclones batter Australia

AFP, Cairns

A "very destructive" category 4 cyclone slammed into Australia's remote northern coast yesterday, while a second, equally powerful storm bore down on the country's west. Cyclone Trevor made landfall on the sparsely populated Northern Territory coast. There were no immediate reports of deaths or injuries from the storm. Meanwhile another category 4 cyclone, Veronica, was bearing down on the more heavily populated mining region of Pilbara in Western Australia state, where it was expected to make landfall late yesterday or today.

Twin blasts hit Afghan ceremony

3 killed, 30 wounded

AFP, Kandahar

At least three people were killed and 30 wounded in twin explosions inside a stadium hosting an agricultural show in southern Afghanistan yesterday, officials said. The blasts happened in Lashkar Gah, the capital of volatile Helmand province, as people marked Farmers' Day as part of Persian New Year celebrations, provincial governor spokesman Omar Zhwak told AFP. People had put their agricultural products on display in the city's main stadium when the explosions happened, said witness Omidullah Zaheer. Among the wounded were the deputy governor, deputy head of the provincial council, head of the information and the heads of the culture and agricultural departments. Neither the Taliban nor any other group immediately claimed the blasts.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Local Government Engineering Department

Need Based Infrastructure Development of Newly Nationalized Government Primary Schools (1st Phase) Project

Agargaon, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207

Corrigendum

RFA Ref. No. 46.02.0000.888.11.23.19.2112 Date: 21-03-2019

All concerned are hereby notified that due to some unavoidable circumstances the following changes of the invitation of Request for Application (RFA) for Selection of Individual National Consultant vide Memo No. 46.02.0000.888.11.23.19.1755, dated: 11-03-2019 have been made. All other terms and conditions will remain unchanged.

Original	Changed
Application shall be submitted by 28 May within 3:00pm.	Application shall be submitted by 08 April within 3:00pm.
	Additional Chief Engineer LGED Bhaban (Level-8) Agargaon, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Dhaka-1207

GD-549

Thailand goes to polls

51.4m people to exercise their voting rights since 2014 coup

REUTERS, Bangkok

Voters in Thailand go to the polls today in the first election since a 2014 military coup in a race broadly cast as between the current junta leader, who is seeking to stay on through the ballot, and anti-junta parties led by loyalists to exiled former premier Thaksin Shinawatra.

An international observer group said it would face limitations in judging to what extent Thailand's general election is free and fair, partly because it was granted accreditation too late to get more than 35 monitors into the country.

The Bangkok-based Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL), which sought accreditation in November, had hoped to deploy 80 observers for an electorate of 51.4 million people.

But permission to monitor the poll was only granted on March 14 and so less than half that number will be on the ground for an election critics say has been stacked in favour of the military by the country's junta.

Thailand's vote comes after nearly five years of direct military rule and is viewed as a contest between junta leader Prayuth Chan-ocha - who wants to stay on as elected leader - and a "democratic front" of parties led by the ousted pro-Thaksin Pheu Thai.

A third faction, led the anti-Thaksin establish-

ment Democrat Party, argues it can form a government that is neutral.

A parliamentary system created by a new military-backed constitution, however, gives pro-junta parties a huge advantage over their rivals, including Pheu Thai, which is expected to win the most votes.

Rights groups had called on the military government to allow foreign observers to monitor the election, but only ANFREL was given permission last week.



The European Union said in a statement on Friday that it had not received an invitation to observe the election in time and would deploy staff members on a "diplomatic watch" for internal reporting only.

The United States, which downgraded ties with Thailand following the 2014 coup, said it was "very keen" to see Thailand return to an elected government.

Major parties held their largest rallies yet on

Friday evening, ahead of the campaign cut-off time at 6:00pm (1100 GMT) yesterday. More than 93,200 polling stations in 77 provinces will open at 8:00am (0100 GMT) today.

Junta leader Prayuth Chan-ocha crooned a ballad at a Friday rally of the military proxy Palang Pracharat Party's in Bangkok to make his final pitch for staying on as prime minister. Singing to the crowd and collecting roses from supporters, he promised to "save the country, save the religion, save the monarchy" and lead the country out of divisive politics of the past 15 years.

Almost simultaneously, Thaksin, whose affiliated parties have won every election since 2001, said at his daughter's wedding reception in Hong Kong: "We will win for sure."

Pheu Thai's long-time rival, the Democrat Party, told voters at its Friday rally that they did not have to choose between "dictatorship" and "corruption", respectively referring to Prayuth and Thaksin, who fled the country to avoid corruption charges in 2008.

"Time's up for dictatorship. Time's up for corruption," said its leader, Abhisit Vejjajiva, who could hold the key to power after what is expected to be an inconclusive poll that triggers intense horse-trading among parties to form a government.

"It's time for 'democracy with integrity.' Vote Democrat."



Flooded buildings are seen in Beira, Mozambique, in the aftermath of Cyclone Idai, yesterday. The death toll in Mozambique has climbed to 417 after the cyclone devastated swathes of the southern African country, flooding thousands of square kilometres (miles), the government said.

NUMBERS GAME

How Thai election system favours pro-army parties

Thailand goes to the polls today under a new system that critics say the military government has devised to prevent the most popular political party, which has won every election since 2001, from returning to power. The military government says the new rules will usher in stability after more than a decade of fractious, at times violent, politics. Following are some details about the new system:

THE SENATE: The 250-seat upper house Senate is entirely appointed by the ruling junta. Under the previous constitution, the Senate was only partially appointed. The Senate will for the first time since 1978 vote along with the lower house, the 500-seat House of Representatives, to choose the new prime minister and government. Previously, only members of the lower house voted for prime minister. The magic number of seats parties or alliances need to secure to form a government is 376 - 50 percent plus one of the total number in the two houses of parliament. With the military choosing all Senate members, including seats reserved for six heads of different armed forces branches, pro-military parties would likely need to win only



126 seats in the House of Representatives to win a majority in a combined vote. Anti-junta parties, on the other hand, which can't count on any Senate votes, would need to win 376 seats lower house seats to gain a majority.

THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES: The makeup of the 500-seat House of Representatives is what will be decided yesterday, but not all seats are directly elected. Under the new constitution, the House of Representatives has 350 "constituency seats", to which voters will directly elect a candidate and, by default, their preferred party. It also has 150 "party seats", up from 125 previously.

THE FORMULA FOR PARTY SEATS: Party seats are allocated under a complicated system that big parties, like Pheu Thai, the main pro-Thaksin party, say is disadvantageous for them. Party seats are distributed by a system that "caps" the total number of seats any one party can gain, based on their percentage of total votes cast nationwide. The "value" one seat in the House of Representatives is assigned is based on a formula that takes the total number of votes cast and divides it by the 500 seats. So, if 40 million people were to vote yesterday, the value of one House seat would be 80,000 votes. A party cannot win more seats than it has "earned" in total votes nationwide. And if a party has already reached or is close to its cap in constituency seats, then it cannot get any more party seats than that cap allows. If a party wins more constituency seats than its cap, then it keeps those seats but cannot be awarded any party seats even if it was the top vote getter. The system leaves a bigger pie of party seats for smaller parties to divide up. This will likely result in numerous smaller parties that normally would not have won any seats, awarded one or more party seats. To illustrate the impact of the new rules, Pheu Thai won the last election, in 2011, with 204 constituency seats and then 61 party seats - awarded under a directly proportional system - as it won 48 percent of the total vote. That gave it a majority of 265 seats in the House of Representatives. If it were to win the same number of votes this time, the new rules would mean it would end up with 42 fewer seats, which would leave it short of a majority.

CHOOSING PRIME MINISTER: A party must have at least 25 seats in the House of Representatives to nominate a candidate for prime minister. After that, it will take the support of 376 out of 750 members of the combined houses to become prime minister. Because the junta will have already chosen all 250 seats of the Senate, the main Palang Pracharat party allied to the military needs to gain only 126 more votes in the lower house. That's a huge advantage, though not a guarantee. If no coalition can agree on prime minister, the new constitution also allows for an "outside" prime minister who is not a member of parliament.

RAK CERAMICS

RAK Ceramics (Bangladesh) Limited

RAK Tower (7th, 8th & 9th Floor), Plot # 1/A,
Jasimuddin Avenue, Sector # 3, Uttara Model Town, Dhaka- 1230

NOTICE OF THE 20th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the 20th Annual General Meeting of RAK Ceramics (Bangladesh) Limited will be held on Tuesday, April 09, 2019, at 10.00 a.m., at International Convention City, Bashundhara (Pushpoguscho), Joarshahara, Purbachal Link Road, Khilkhet, Dhaka-1229 to transact the following businesses:

AGENDA

1. To receive, consider and adopt the Audited Financial Statements of the Company for the year ended 31 December 2018, together with the reports of the Auditor and the Directors.

2. To declare dividend for the year ended 31 December 2018.

3. To elect/re-elect Director(s) of the Company.

4. To re-appoint the Managing Director of the Company.

5. To appoint the Statutory Auditors of the Company for the year 2019 and fix their remuneration.

6. To appoint the Chartered Secretary in Practice (Compliance Auditors) of the Company for the year 2019 for compliance certification on corporate governance and fix their remuneration.

By order of the Board of Directors

Sd/-

(Muhammad Shahidul Islam FCS)

Company Secretary

Dhaka, Bangladesh

Date: March 24, 2019

Notes:

1. The shareholders whose name appeared in the Share Register of the Company, or in the Depository Register on the 'Record Date' (i.e. March 03, 2019), will be entitled to attend the meeting and receive the dividend.

2. The Board unanimously recommended dividend @10% in cash and @ 10% in stock of the paid-up capital of the Company for the year 2018.

3. Shareholders may please note that pursuant to Corporate Governance Code, 2018 of the BSEC dated June 03, 2018, M/s. Jasmin & Associates, Chartered Secretaries & Corporate Affairs Consultants, has been recommended by the Board of Directors to be appointed as Compliance Auditors of the Company for the year 2019 for compliance certification on corporate governance subject to approval of the shareholders.

4. A shareholder entitled to attend and vote at the AGM may appoint a proxy to attend and vote in his/her behalf (such a proxy shall be a shareholder of the Company). The Proxy Form, duly filled and stamped, must be deposited at the Registered Office of the Company not later than 48 hours before the time fixed for the meeting.

5. Admission to the meeting will be strictly on production of the Attendance Slip.

6. Shareholders are requested to submit to the Registered Office of the Company on or before April 04, 2019, their written option to receive dividend in the form enclosed with the Annual Report. If the shareholder fails to submit such option within the stipulated time, the dividend will be paid-off as deemed appropriate by the Company.

7. In case of non-receipt of the Annual Report of the Company sent through email, shareholders may collect the same from the Registered Office of the Company, on or before April 04, 2019.

8. Brokerage houses/DPs are requested to provide the statement along with detail of their margin loan holders on or before April 04, 2019, who are entitled to receive cash dividend of the Company for the year ended December 31, 2018. The statement should include shareholder's name, BO ID number, client-wise shareholding position, gross dividend receivable, applicable tax rate, net dividend receivable, bank account number, routing number, contact person, etc.

Shareholders may please note that no food or gift or other benefits in cash or kind shall be given at the Annual General Meeting.