



Staff members take down the United Kingdom's flag from outside the European Parliament building in Brussels on Brexit Day, January 31, 2020. Britain leaves the European Union at 2300 GMT on January 31, 2020, 43 months after the country voted in a June 2016 referendum to leave the block. The withdrawal from the union ends more than four decades of economic, political and legal integration with its closest neighbours. PHOTO: AFP

## Fourth death as protests grow in Chile

AFP, Santiago

A man died of carbon monoxide poisoning after a supermarket was torched in Chile's capital Friday, and another succumbed to injuries sustained in clashes with police, bringing the death toll in a new wave of unrest to four.

Protests that flared up in October -- initially over a rise in metro fares -- had appeared to have calmed down during the summer holidays in Chile.

But there has been a spike in violent protests this week.

A mob looted and then set fire to the supermarket in southern Santiago in the early hours of Friday.

When firefighters arrived they found a dead man aged 30 to 40 and two other people suffering from signs of asphyxiation.

He died from "asphyxiation by inhaling carbon monoxide," police chief Carolina Nunez told local media.

Another man died Friday, two days after being shot in the head during a protest near a police station in southern Santiago.

On Wednesday a young man died after being hit by a hijacked bus and a football fan was killed on Tuesday after he was hit by a police van.

Another supermarket in the capital was looted overnight while police arrested 16 people.

Burning barricades could be seen in several roads in Santiago on Friday morning.

More than 30 people have died in protests that began initially as a reaction to a modest hike in metro fares in the capital.

They quickly mushroomed into wider discontent at inequality and the rejection of billionaire President Sebastian Pinera and his government.

## 14-year-old girl

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several on-duty policemen present there.

Hearing the girl's screams, the law enforcers rescued her and arrested Shimul on the spot, they said.

After being rescued, the victim was first taken to Lama Upazila Health Complex and then referred to Bandarban Sadar Hospital.

Aung Shwe Prue Marma, civil surgeon of Bandarban, said, "The victim said she was raped. We are examining her and giving her treatment."

He did not disclose further.

Asked, Oppela Raju Naha, officer-in-charge of Lama Police Station, confirmed that Shimul was arrested.

"The place where the incident happened is in Chakaria. So we handed the accused to Chakaria police," he said.

A case was filed by the manager of the hostel with Chakaria Police Station, said its OC Habbibur Rahman.

Locals claimed Shimul was an AL activist, but the party's local unit said it had nothing to do with him.

After the incident, panic gripped around 150 students, including 74 females, living in the hostel, said its superintendent.

The superintendent said they had to allow such political programmes in face of pressure from ruling party leaders.

Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs Minister Bir Bahadur U Shwe Sing, among others, was present at the programme on Friday.

said Mostafa Jamal, vice president of the AL in Lama upazila.

"It is unfortunate that an unexpected incident has happened there," he said.

## AL says 'better than ever'

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the way it was held," he said, adding that the election was not free and fair at all.

BNP yesterday also submitted a written complaint to the Election Commission over irregularities centring the polls.

A BNP delegation led by the party's standing committee member Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury handed over the complaint to the commission.

PEOPLE HAVE NO FAITH IN ELECTION SYSTEM: DR KAMAL

After casting his vote at Viqarunnisa Noon School and College yesterday morning, Gonoforum President and Jatiya Oikya Front Convener Dr Kamal Hossain expressed his dissatisfaction over the low number of voters, and hassles of casting votes through EVM.

Talking to reporters there, he said the low turnout shows that voters have no confidence in the election system.

ONLY ONE PARTY ON THE FIELD: EC MAHBUB TALUKDAR

Election Commissioner Mahbub

Talukdar yesterday in a statement said the no party except for one was seen on the voting field.

"The reason behind other parties' absence in the voting field is unknown to me," he said, adding that he was shocked at the violation of the electoral code of conduct after the election schedule was declared.

There is no point of having a code of conduct if no action is taken against its violations, he said in the statement.

He said, "I visited 12 polling centres between 10am to 2pm. I did not find any agent of any other mayor candidates other than those of the ruling party-nominated mayor candidates at any of these 12 centres. Around 10 percent votes were cast since 8am to 1:30pm at these polling centres."

Mahbub Talukdar, however, said the election was very peaceful, as no clash or bloodshed other than some isolated incidents took place.

The biggest achievement is that 100 percent votes were not cast in the election, and there was not scope

to seal ballot boxes the night before election day -- due to the use of EVM in this election, he said.

GOVT HAS FAILED TO HOLD PARTICIPATORY POLLS: CPB

Besides, Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) President Mujahidul Islam Selim and its General Secretary Mohammad Shah Alam yesterday said in a statement that the Election Commission and the government have completely failed to hold a participatory election of people in Dhaka city.

"Most people could not get to polling centres and could not cast their votes, as the ruling political party has created panic among the people in various ways. City dwellers have witnessed another new farce staged in the name of voting," they said.

In their statement, the CPB leaders said the ruling party men have created a fearful environment at most of the polling centres, and frightened people so that they lost their enthusiasm to go to polling centres.

## As we saw

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2,468 polling centres in Dhaka city.

The mood of voters, however, was as festive as it was in the parliamentary elections held more than a year ago.

FESTIVITY OUTSIDE, CENTRES ALMOST EMPTY

The Daily Star visited 207 polling centres in Dhaka south and north city corporation areas, but found helpdesks set up by BNP men at only three places -- Mohammadpur, Khilgaon and New Market areas. At such helpdesks, voters are given slips with their voting serial numbers.

In Mohammadpur, BNP men could not distribute such slips among voters even after setting up the desk.

"We are not being allowed to hand the slips to our supporters as they [AL men] have threatened us saying they will drive us from here if we do so," Md Al Amin, a BNP activist, told The Daily Star. "They've already broke our desk on Nurjahan Road."

For the AL, the scenario was totally different.

There was a good number of supporters, mostly youths, in front of every polling station. They were wearing badges with photo of "boat", the party's electoral symbol.

Rickshaws and some motorised vehicles, with posters and festoons of AL candidates, were seen transporting people. Supporters and followers of the mayor and councillor candidates were seen eating snacks, and even playing cricket outside polling centres at places.

The situation inside the centres, however, was different. Long queues of voters -- a common sight on election day -- was not scene on most occasions.

Inside some centres, AL men made fake queues of voters, apparently to show a higher turnout.

At the Dhaka University Laboratory School polling centre, supporters of AL mayor candidate for Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC), Fazle Noor Taposh, formed once such queue, one of these correspondents found.

At Adarsha High School centre in Mirpur-10, supporters of Atiqul Islam the party's mayor candidate for the Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC), also made a fake queue after locking the centre's main gate, reported another correspondent, who was present there.

At Cherry Grammar School centre at Ibrahimpur in Kafrul, voters expressed their frustration as they had

to wait long to go in.

Talking to The Daily Star, some city dwellers alleged although the centre was mostly empty, voters were not being allowed in. "One or two voters could go inside in every 10 minutes," said a man from the area.

Voters at many places alleged they could not vote as it had already been cast.

For example, a man in his late 60s said he was obstructed by ruling party men from voting for a candidate of his choice. This centre was on Green Road.

AGENTS OF OPPOSITION PARTIES MISSING

The Daily Star correspondents found agents hired by candidates from the BNP at around 20 polling centres, but the number of agents was very low.

There were a few agents of Islami Andolan Bangladesh.

But agents of AL candidates were everywhere.

There were some allegations that agents of candidates from opposition parties, including the BNP, were forced out of the centres by the ruling party men.

One of these correspondents saw 10 polling agents of Tabitha Awal, BNP's mayor candidate in the DNCC, around 8:10am at a centre at MDC Model Institute at Pallabi, Mirpur.

When the reporter went to the centre again around 2:00pm, there were only two of the agents left.

"We were two female and eight male polling agents. But the males were driven out of the centre by ruling party men around 8:30am," said Liton Hawlader, one of the male polling agents.

Around 2:30pm, The Daily Star found a polling agent of Tabitha, named Mofidul Alam, at Motherland International School centre at Shewrapara in Mirpur.

Mofidul said, "Four of our men were supposed to come to this centre. But three did not show up for reasons unknown."

Contacted after the voting counting, Mofidul said he was at the centre till the last time and his candidate won at the centre.

Visiting 24 centres in Rampura, Badda and Gulshan areas, these correspondents found no agents of BNP candidates at 13 centres.

Asked about the absence of the agents, Touhidul Haq, presiding officers of a centre set up at Rampura's Ideal School and College, said, "I

## 'I was scared of Harvey'

Weinstein accuser tells court relationship was based on fear

AFP, New York

An actress accusing disgraced Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein of rape told a court Friday she had only stayed in contact with him out of fear.

Jessica Mann said she had been naive when she first met Weinstein and then so scared of him that she would agree to massage him, fake an orgasm or stay in contact with him even after he allegedly raped her.

Dozens of women have accused Weinstein of sexual abuse but only the cases of Mann and fellow actress Mimi Haley have led to criminal charges in a New York court.

Three other women -- Annabella Sciorra, Dawn Dunning and Tarale Wulff -- have testified that Weinstein sexually assaulted them, but their cases are not the subject of the trial, which was sitting for the eighth day of testimony.

Weinstein denies the predatory assault charges and maintains that all his relationships were consensual.

Mann, 34, grew up on a farm in Washington state and was on the streets for a while before becoming an actress. She was the only Weinstein accuser who had not heard of him before they met, seven years ago.

She began weeping Friday even before prosecutor Joan Illuzzi-Orbon's questioning started and,

at times, was so emotional she had trouble speaking.

She described her first encounters with the producer as a mixture of seduction, humiliation and manipulation.

Then, in a hotel in Los Angeles, she said she agreed to give him a massage. "He'd make me feel stupid, saying it was not a big deal," she said.

Later, when she was with one of Weinstein's assistants, he called her into a room and tried to kiss her. She said she tried to resist but he succeeded in performing oral sex on her.

"I started to fake an orgasm to get out of it," she said, adding that she escaped as soon as she could.

"I was confused about it," she said when asked about her later relations with Weinstein.

"I made the decision to be in a relationship with him," she added. "It was extremely degrading."

Several weeks later, in March 2013, when she was already in a relationship with another man, Weinstein ambushed her in a Manhattan hotel, forced her into a room and raped her, she said.

She did not tell anyone about the encounter.

"I was scared of Harvey," she told the court. "I was pretty concerned about protecting the actor I was dating."

## China virus silences Macau's bustling casinos

AFP, Macau

Macau is usually bustling with gamblers during China's Lunar New Year holiday but the flood of tourists has been reduced to a trickle this year as fears grow over a coronavirus that has killed almost 260 people.

The number of visitors to the world's largest casino hub has plunged nearly 80 percent in the past week, transforming the city into a shadow of its former self.

As the only place in China that allows gambling, the former Portuguese colony is normally a huge draw for people from other parts of the vast country.

But on the sixth day of the holiday, only several dozen people were seen at the usually teeming ruins of the 17th-century St Paul's church -- a tourist hotspot.

Most wore surgical masks as a preventative measure against the novel coronavirus, which has infected almost 12,000 people across the nation.

"Everyone is wearing a mask. It is not convenient to take pictures -- we dare not remove the masks," 23-year-old Wei I Ting, a tourist from Taiwan, told AFP.

Shotah Zhang, who owns a pastry shop, said he was worried about the future of his business.

"As you can see, almost no one is here. We have quite a big problem because we are a small business," Zhang said.

The outbreak is dealing a heavy blow to Macau's economy, which has bet most of its chips on gambling and

tourism. Figures for January show gaming revenue fell 11.3 percent on the same month last year.

The city had confirmed seven cases of the virus as of Saturday and authorities have announced measures to curb its spread, including temperature checks and mandatory health declarations for visitors at the border with mainland China.

In casinos, all staff have been ordered to wear masks and temperature checks are being carried out at entrances.

The government has also banned anyone who has visited Hubei province -- the epicentre of the outbreak -- from entering casinos altogether.

But a 24-year-old marketing supervisor for a coffee shop was more hopeful.

"We believe that after the virus is gone, customers will come back," she said.

## 312 return

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Earlier on Friday, Health Minister Zahid Maleque said a total of 361 Bangladeshis would flow back as part of a voluntary evacuation.

Foreign ministry officials, however, said 49 Bangladeshis withdrew themselves from the registry.

Later in the evening, the health minister told journalists that they had managed to finish every arrangement inside the camp.

"We have served necessary things for the returnees. Our team would solve all other problems," the minister said.

## Diplomats

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last moment if they would include their Bangladeshi employees in the election observer teams.

"There was a meeting today [yesterday] morning and it was decided that local staffers would not be kept with the observer teams," the official told The Daily Star.

"There was dissatisfaction over the issue, but they [diplomats] did not express it," he said, wishing anonymity.

The EC approved the names of 74 officials -- 46 foreigners and 28 Bangladeshis -- from 10 foreign missions in Dhaka for inclusion in foreign observer teams.

The officials are from missions of the US, the UK, the European Union, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Japan, Denmark, Norway, Canada, and Australia.

On Thursday, the foreign ministry wrote to the missions in Dhaka, saying it would be highly appreciated if they do not include their local employees, who are Bangladeshi citizens, in teams of foreign observers.

The ministry said it was a violation of electoral code of conduct to include the Bangladeshi citizens, who are employed in the foreign missions, in the international observer teams.

As the confusion mounted, Chief Election Commissioner KM Nurul Huda on Friday evening said

Bangladeshi nationals working at foreign missions in Dhaka and international organisations would be able to work as local observers, not as foreign observers, in the elections to Dhaka south and north

city corporations.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday criticised the EC for accepting the locals as foreign election observers, reports UNB.

"...This isn't right. There are many Bangladeshis working at foreign missions here ...They [foreign missions] have appointed them [Bangladeshis] as foreign election observers ...This is outrageous!" she told reporters after casting her vote at Dhaka City College centre.

## PM flies

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In the evening, she will attend a community event at Parco dei Principi Grand Hotel.

On February 5, the PM will inaugurate the Chancery Building of Bangladesh Embassy at Via Dell'Antartide in Rome, Italy.

After that, she will hold her bilateral talks with Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte at Palazzo Chigi and join the official lunch.

In the afternoon, high officials of Italian business companies will meet her at Parco dei Principi Grand Hotel.

In the evening, she will attend a dinner to be hosted by the Bangladesh Ambassador.

On February 6, Pope Francis will give audience to Sheikh Hasina. After that, she will leave Rome for Milan.

On February 7, she will leave Milan for Dhaka by Emirates Airlines from Milan Malpensa International Airport at 1:40pm (local time).

She will arrive at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport (HSIA) on February 8.