

NEWS IN BRIEF

Palestinians approve 36 groups to run in May vote

Palestinian election officials announced Sunday that 36 candidate lists had been approved to run in legislative elections set for next month, the first Palestinian polls in 15 years. The vote, which precedes a presidential election called for July 31, is part of an effort by the dominant Palestinian movements -- Fatah secularists and Hamas Islamists -- to boost international support for Palestinian governance. Groups had until Wednesday to submit their lists of candidates to contest in the May 22 legislative polls. Individual names on each list are due to be published today, but the Palestinian electoral commission announced on its website that it had approved all 36 applications. President Mahmud Abbas's Fatah movement, which controls the Palestinian Authority in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, is contesting the polls, as is Hamas, which has run the Israeli-blockaded Gaza Strip since 2007.

Putin signs law allowing him to serve two more terms

Russian President Vladimir Putin yesterday gave final approval to legislation allowing him to hold office for two additional six-year terms, giving himself the possibility to stay in power



until 2036. The 68-year-old Russian leader, who has already been in power for more than two decades, signed off on the bill yesterday, according to a copy posted on the government's legal information portal. Putin proposed the change last year as part of constitutional reforms that Russians overwhelmingly backed in a vote in July. Lawmakers approved the new bill last month. Putin was first elected president in 2000 and served two consecutive four-year terms.

Vietnam's pandemic response leader sworn in as president

The man behind Vietnam's successful handling of the coronavirus pandemic, Nguyen Xuan Phuc, was formally sworn in as president in Hanoi yesterday. Phuc, 66, was Vietnam's prime minister for the last five years, a period in which the economy boomed, and his government's Covid-19 response won plaudits at home and abroad. Following secret voting yesterday, Phuc scored the maximum votes among the almost 500-member rubber-stamp national assembly. "This is his well-deserved award," said Nguyen Khac Giang, a Vietnamese politics expert from New Zealand's Victoria University of Wellington.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS



Indonesia rescue agencies search for bodies at an area affected by flash floods after heavy rains in East Flores, East Nusa Tenggara province yesterday. Floods and landslides triggered by tropical cyclone Seroja in a cluster of islands in southeast Indonesia and East Timor have killed more than 100 people, with many still unaccounted for and thousands displaced, officials said.

PHOTO: REUTERS

'Will win Bengal on one leg'

Mamata tells rally as West Bengal gears up for third phase polls in 31 assembly constituencies today

HINDUSTAN TIMES ONLINE

Ahead of the third phase of assembly elections in West Bengal, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee yesterday expressed confidence in her chances to win the assembly election. She said, "I will win Bengal on one leg and in the future, will get victory in Delhi on two legs."



Mamata was addressing a public meeting in Hooghly's Debanandapur. The comments were in reference to the leg injury she sustained in an alleged attack in Nandigram last month. Mamata has been campaigning on a wheelchair since the incident.

The Trinamool Congress (TMC) supremo also attacked the Election Commission of India (ECI) reiterating that the polls should have been held in a short period of time in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic. She also accused the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led central government of meddling in ECI's affairs.

"What was the need for an eight-phase election?"

It was done by BJP Mandal. Given the present situation (Covid-19), shouldn't they have wrapped up the election within a short period of time?" she asked.

Mamata slammed the BJP for not being able to find a local candidate to contest polls. "BJP, can't you find a local candidate to contest elections? They don't have locals, all their people are borrowed from either TMC or CPM. They're sprinkling money like water from a hosepipe. They who can't say Sonar Bangla properly, can't rule Bengal," she said.

Meanwhile, the ECI rejected Mamata's claims about the presence of outsiders at a polling booth in Nandigram as "factually incorrect" and "devoid of substance". A total of 31 Assembly constituencies including eight in Hooghly, seven in Howrah and 16 in South 24 Parganas will go to polls in phase 3 today. The counting of votes will take place on May 2.

Myanmar protesters clap to denounce junta

REUTERS

Protesters in Myanmar clapped together yesterday in the latest show of dissent against the military junta, as a regional bloc prepared for talks on the crisis that has killed nearly 600 people.

Clapping began in various parts of the main city Yangon at 5:00 pm in response to a call by protest organisers, residents said.

The gesture would honour "Ethnic Armed Organisations and Gen Z defence youths from Myanmar including Yangon who are fighting in the revolution... on behalf of us," Ei Thinzar Maung, a protest leader, wrote on Facebook.

Despite the killing of at least 564 people by the security forces since the February 1 coup, protesters have been coming out every day, often in small groups in small towns, to voice opposition to the overthrow of an elected government led by Aung San Suu Kyi and the return of military rule.

The movement, which some protesters

are calling a "spring revolution", has included street marches, a civil disobedience campaign of strikes and quirky acts of rebellion organised via social media.

Yesterday, one person was killed in the central Sagaing region when security forces broke up a protest, the Myanmar Now news outlet reported. Earlier, demonstrators with placards of Suu Kyi and signs calling for international intervention marched through the second-biggest city Mandalay, images posted on social media showed.

Brunei, chair of the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean), threw its support yesterday behind a regional leaders' meeting to discuss Myanmar.

After talks between Malaysian Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin and Brunei Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah, Brunei said both countries had asked their ministers and officials to make the "necessary preparations for the meeting."

OPEN LETTER DEFENDING ACCORD
Turkey detains 10 retired admirals

AFP, Ankara

Turkey yesterday detained 10 retired admirals after a letter signed by more than 100 of them warned against a possible threat to a treaty governing the use of Turkey's key waterways.

Turkey's approval last month of plans to develop a shipping canal in Istanbul comparable to the Panama or Suez canals has opened up debate about the 1936 Montreux Convention.

In their letter, 104 retired admirals said it was "worrying" to open the Montreux treaty up to debate, calling it an agreement that "best protects Turkish interests".

The Ankara chief public prosecutor's office said arrest warrants were issued for the 10 and ordered four others suspects to report to Ankara police within three days, opting not to detain them because of their age.

They are accused of "using force and violence to get rid of the constitutional order", NTV broadcaster reported.

The prosecutor launched a probe on Sunday into the retired admirals on suspicion of an "agreement to commit a crime against the state's security and constitutional order".

Netanyahu back in court

Prosecutors accuse the Israeli PM of treating favours as 'currency' at the opening of graft trial

REUTERS, Jerusalem

Israeli prosecutors yesterday accused Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of treating favours as "currency" at the opening of a corruption trial which, along with an inconclusive election, has clouded his prospects of remaining in office.



Netanyahu, who has pleaded not guilty to charges of bribery, breach of trust and fraud, came to Jerusalem District Court in a dark suit and black protective mask, conferring quietly with lawyers as his supporters and critics held raucous demonstrations outside.

"The relationship between Netanyahu and the defendants became currency, something that could be traded," prosecutor Liat Ben-Ari said in presenting

so-called Case 4000, concerning the premier's alleged ties to the owners of an Israeli news-site.

"This currency could distort a public servant's judgment."

Netanyahu left before the first prosecution witness testified in the first such trial of a sitting Israeli prime minister. He has described himself as the victim of a politically motivated witch-hunt.

Meanwhile, Israeli President Reuven Rivlin began consulting with party heads on who might form the next coalition government - a toss-up after the March 23 election, the fourth in two years, gave neither Netanyahu nor his rivals a clear mandate.



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Ref: 06.02.6758.165.07.194.21.1637 Date: 05 April 2021

Invitation for Tender

01	Procuring entity name	Dockyard & Engineering Works (DEW) Ltd., BN, Narayanganj.
02	Invitation for	Supervision, Repair and/or Renewal of Propulsion System of 05 (five) Bangladesh Navy Ships during docking at DEW.
03	Procuring method	Open Tender.
04	Budget & source of funds	Own finance.
05	Last selling date & time	14 April 2021 Time: 16.00pm.
06	Tender closing date & time	15 April 2021 Time: 12.15pm.
07	Tender opening date & time	15 April 2021 Time: 12.30pm.
08	Name & address of the office: a. Selling of tender document	Cash Section, Account Department, Dockyard & Engineering Works Ltd., Bangladesh Navy, Sonakanda, Bandar, Narayanganj.
	b. Receiving tender document	Dockyard & Engineering Works Ltd., Bangladesh Navy, Sonakanda, Bandar, Narayanganj.
	c. Opening tender document	Dockyard & Engineering Works Ltd., Bangladesh Navy, Sonakanda, Bandar, Narayanganj. Tenderers and their authorized representative are allowed to attend.
09	Price of tender document	Tk 1,000.00 (one thousand only) (non-refundable).
10	Contact details	Mobile: 01769719887 Web: www.dewbn.gov.bd E-mail: commercial@dewbn.gov.bd
11	Eligibility	1) Company must have experience of carrying out similar repair works onboard ships of Bangladesh Navy/Coast Guard. 2) Company must have minimum 5 (five) years of experience of working in shafting system having hydraulic coupling. 3) Document required: a. Trade license. b. TIN certificate. c. VAT registration/BIN certificate. d. Bank statement. e. Experience/work completion certificate for carrying out similar repair works onboard ships of Bangladesh Navy/Coast Guard.
12	Special instructions	The procuring entity reserves the right to reject all or any part of the tender prior to acceptance without showing any reason.

GD-684 For Managing Director

S'PORE PM'S DEFAMATION CASE
Blogger crowdfunds to pay damages

AFP, Singapore

A Singaporean blogger said he had crowdfunded almost \$100,000 that he was ordered to pay as damages for defaming the prime minister by sharing an article on Facebook.

Leong Sze Hian was sued by Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong after sharing the piece, which linked Lee to the money-laundering scandal at state fund 1MDB in Malaysia.

Critics say the case is the latest example of the government seeking to silence dissent online in the tightly regulated city-state.

A court last month found in Lee's favour and ordered the blogger to pay the prime minister Sg\$133,000 (US\$99,000) plus costs, which are yet to be determined.

Leong launched an online fundraising drive and said late Sunday more than 2,000 people had contributed the full amount after 11 days.

"We hit 133k, thanks to all Singaporeans," he wrote on Facebook.

"It's thanks to your help that we had the courage to face them."

The article that Leong shared, originally published on a Malaysian news portal, alleged that Lee was the target of an investigation in neighbouring Malaysia over the 1MDB state fund.

Billions of dollars were looted from the investment vehicle in a scandal that involved Malaysia's former leader Najib Razak and his inner circle. Lee took the stand at the start of the trial in October and accused Leong of making "malicious and baseless" allegations that had undermined the government's "integrity and honesty".

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SPECIAL CALL FOR PROPOSALS ON ENERGY AND POWER RELATED APPLIED RESEARCH PROJECTS
(9th Program Solicitation)

To bring technological innovation in energy and power sectors as well as to ensure energy security through research and development, BEPRC is looking forward to funding applied research projects. The idea is to seek innovative solutions for efficient, cost-effective and environmentally sustainable development of Bangladesh's energy and power infrastructure.

The Program Solicitations mainly focus to fund applied research based projects that would unfold technologies, tools, and strategies for upgrading, repowering and revolutionizing the over all energy and power sectors of Bangladesh.

Research Focus Areas
Proposers submitting applied research proposals should address one of the following key research areas:

1. Responsible Energy Conservation
2. Energy Efficiency and Demand Management
3. Renewable Energy
4. Conventional Energy
5. Transmission and Distribution Integration and Infrastructure
6. Energy Storage

For details of each of the above mentioned research areas, please refer to program solicitations at the link: <http://researchgrant.eprc.gov.bd/>

Who May Submit a Solicited Proposal?
Individuals and organizations in the following categories may submit proposals:

1. Universities and Colleges
2. Non-profit, non-academic organizations
3. For-profit organizations
4. Government Organizations
5. Individuals
6. Foreign organizations

For details, please refer to the BEPRC grants proposal submission guideline at: <http://researchgrant.eprc.gov.bd/>

How to Submit Proposals?
Proposals to BEPRC shall be submitted via online portal of BEPRC. For proposal submission via online, the guideline specified in the BEPRC Grants Proposal Submission Guideline applies. Proposal submission link: <http://researchgrant.eprc.gov.bd/>

No hard Copy Submission is allowed. Only proposals submitted online will be considered.

BEPRC will ensure maintenance of strict confidentiality of the proposals.

Details of Program Solicitations including Award Information, Key Activities Schedules and Eligibility information are available at <http://researchgrant.eprc.gov.bd/>

For any queries, Please contact:
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Solicitation Release Date
06.04.2021

Last Date of Proposal Submission
06.05.2021