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PHASE-4 WB POLLS BJP, TMC poised for tough fight

PARITHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE

Today's fourth phase voting for West Bengal Assembly elections is expected to be balanced on a knife's edge between Trinamool Congress (TMC) and India's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), considering the voting ratio of the last Lok Sabha polls.

Under the 4th phase, elections will be held in 44 constituencies covering Cooch Behar and Alipurduar districts in north Bengal and parts of South 24 Parganas, Howrah and Hoogly in the southern part of the state.

In last assembly election in 2016, TMC won 39 seats and Communist Party of India (Marxist) bagged three while National Congress and BJP shared the remaining two seats.

In that election, TMC won 46 percent votes, while CPIM got 28.79 percent, Congress 6.71 percent and BJP 12.13 percent of the total cast votes.

The scenario, however, changed within three years and in the last Lok Sabha election (national polls) in 2019. The TMC's vote decreased to 44.73 percent. The BJP on the other hand secured 40.88 percent votes, three times higher than it got in 2016.

The stupendous success in Lok Sabha polls made BJP believe that they can overthrow Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee in the assembly polls this time around.

Mamata is looking to win a third straight term in office. Before the 4th phase of the polls, in which a number

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A large number of customers shopping for health safety equipment in an open-air market in front of Mitford Hospital in the capital yesterday. Not only are health safety guidelines being ignored, but there appeared to be very little supervision of products being sold here.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

SINKING OF LAUNCH 9 staffers of bulk carrier land in jail

5 others remanded

STAR REPORT

Nine staffers of the cargo vessel, which rammed a launch causing it to sink in the Shitalakhya in Narayanganj on Sunday, were sent to jail and five others placed on a two-day remand yesterday.

Thirty-four people of the cargo vessel were shown arrested in the case filed in this connection by Babu Lal Baidya, an official of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority.

Police yesterday produced them before a Narayanganj court, seeking a five-day remand for each of them.

But Senior Judicial Magistrate Ahmed Humayun Kabir sent nine of them to jail and granted a two-day remand for each of the five others.

On Thursday, Bangladesh Coast Guard

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Stop export of Covid vaccine immediately

Rahul writes to Modi as Indian states report vaccine shortages

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

Indian opposition Congress leader Rahul Gandhi yesterday called for an immediate halt to export of Covid-19 vaccine amid a record-setting spike in fresh cases of the virus.

From under 15,000 cases a day at the beginning of March, India yesterday reported its all-time high of 131,968 new Covid-19 cases – a record increase for a third straight day – pushing the country's total infection tally to more than 13 million.

Amid the record surge, many Indian states have reported running out of vaccines even as Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government continues to insist there is enough stock. India is the largest producer of vaccines and is known as the "pharmacy of the world".

The opposition parties have blamed Modi's government for exporting 64.5 million vaccine doses while itself covering only a fraction of India's 1.35 billion people.

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ROAD TO FREEDOM THIS DAY IN BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR HISTORY

Independence proclaimed

APRIL 10, 1971

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

THE PROCLAMATION OF INDEPENDENCE

The Mujibnagar Government was formed today to conduct the Bangladesh War of Liberation. The official announcement declaring independence of Bangladesh, known as the Proclamation of Independence, was also issued today. The cabinet of the government-in-exile took oath on 17 April, 1971 at Baidyanathpala (renamed Mujibnagar after the proclamation), a border area in the present Meherpur district, where Professor M Yusuf Ali, an MNA, formally read out the Proclamation of Independence.

The proclamation was drafted by Barrister M Amir-ul Islam and reviewed by Indian Barrister Subrata Roy Chowdhury. The proclamation was patterned after the American Declaration of Independence.

The Proclamation read: "... Whereas in the facts



and circumstances of such treacherous conduct Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the undisputed leader of the 75 million people of Bangladesh, in due fulfillment of the legitimate right of self-determination of the people of Bangladesh, duly made a declaration of independence at Dacca on March 26, 1971, and urged upon the people of Bangladesh to defend the honour and integrity of Bangladesh,

AND "Whereas in the conduct of a ruthless and savage war the Pakistani authorities committed and are still continuously committing numerous acts of genocide and unprecedented

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Huge plumes of methane spotted over Bangladesh

Says Paris-based firm

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Analysing satellite images, Paris-based company Kayros SAS has detected huge plumes of methane gas over Bangladesh, reports the Bloomberg.

Citing 12 highest rates of methane emission over Bangladesh this year, the report published on Thursday said, "One of the countries vulnerable to climate change has also been revealed as a major contributor of methane."

The report titled "Mysterious Plumes of Methane Gas Appear Over Bangladesh" came to this conclusion observing satellites images that show large, frequent emissions over Dhaka.

It quoted Yotam Ariel, founder of Bluefield Technologies Inc, saying: "Our analysis shows that

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Archaeologists unearth lost Egyptian city



AFP, Cairo

Archaeologists have uncovered the remains of an ancient city in the desert outside Luxor that they say is the "largest" ever found in Egypt and dates back to a golden age of the pharaohs 3,000 years ago.

Famed Egyptologist Zahi Hawass announced the discovery of the "lost golden city", saying the site was uncovered near Luxor, home of the legendary Valley of the Kings.

"The Egyptian mission under Dr. Zahi Hawass found the city that was lost under the sands," the excavation team said in a statement Thursday.

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B'BARIA MAYHEM Offer apology or else face sedition cases

BCL tells Hefajat

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Brahmanbaria

Brahmanbaria unit of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) yesterday said they would file sedition cases against Hefajat-e-Islam leaders if the latter did not seek an apology for "spreading lies" about the recent mayhem in the district.

They came up with the statement during a press conference at Brahmanbaria Press Club.

Hefajat's Nayeb-e Ameer and Brahmanbaria District unit president Sajedur Rahman, in a recent visit to Brahmanbaria Press Club, claimed none of their members was involved in the vandalism incident.

Protesting the claim, Brahmanbaria district BCL General Secretary Shahadat Hossain Shovon, at the press conference, said such

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Day labourer drowns while lifting stones from river

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

A day labourer drowned while extracting stones from the Dahug river at Mandulpara village in Tentulia upazila of Panchagarh yesterday noon.

The victim is Joynul Haque, 50, of Mandulpara village in the same upazila.

Quoting witnesses, local UP Chairman Tareq Hossain said Joynul fell inside a hole under the river and a chunk of sand collapsed on him.

Failing to rescue the victim, other stone lifters informed fire

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Nurul Islam pulling a rickshaw van that has the words Motijheel Model High School and College painted on its side. He had been driving school vans for the last 30 years, but has had to switch to carrying regular passengers as educational institutions have been closed for more than a year due to the coronavirus pandemic. The photo was taken yesterday in the capital's Mugdapara.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

COUP IN MYANMAR Junta promises election in 2 yrs

Claims protests dwindling as 10 reported killed by troops; UN envoy barred from visit

AGENCIES

Myanmar's junta said yesterday that a protest campaign against its rule was dwindling since people wanted peace, and that it would hold elections within two years, the first timeframe it has given for a return to democracy since its February 1 coup.

Troops fired rifle grenades at anti-coup protesters yesterday in the town of Bago, near the main city Yangon, witnesses and news reports said. At least 10 people were killed and their bodies piled up in the corner of a pagoda, they said.

Myanmar Now news and Mawkun, an online news magazine, said at least 20 people were killed and many wounded. It was not possible to get a precise toll because troops had cordoned off the area near the pagoda, they said.

Junta spokesman Brigadier General Zaw Min Tun told a news conference in the capital, Naypyitaw, that the country was returning to normal and government ministries and banks would resume full operations soon.

More than 600 people have been killed by security forces cracking down on protests against the coup, according to an activist group. The country has ground to a standstill because of the protest campaign and widespread strikes against military rule.

"The reason of reducing protests is due to cooperation of people who want peace, which we value," Zaw Min Tun

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PRAYER TIMING APRIL 10

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4:35 12:45 4:45 6:24 7:45
JAMAAT 5:10 1:15 5:00 6:28 8:15

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION