

Violence rules first

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around 12:00pm over casting of fake votes at Kamalapur Government Primary School Centre.

During the clash, several crude bombs went off. Ali, who was going to cast his ballot at the centre, was seriously injured in one of the blasts.

He was rushed to a local health complex where doctors declared him dead, said Md Maruf Hossain Khan, superintendent of police in Barisal.

Returning Officer Mamunur Rahman said voting at the centre was suspended for around one hour.

In a separate incident in Barishal, a youth was killed and another was injured in post-polls violence in Khanajpur union in Gournadi upazila.

The dead was identified as Abu Fakir, 25, a supporter of member candidate Giasuddin, said police.

After voting, the presiding officer at Pangashia Secondary School Centre announced Giasuddin victorious.

Following the announcement, the supporters of member candidate Arot Ali Sarder swooped on the followers of Giasuddin and exploded a crude bomb around 6:00pm, leaving Abu Fakir fatally injured.

He was rushed to hospital where he died from his wounds, said Touhiduzzaman, inspector at Gournadi Police Station.

Meanwhile, a man was killed and two others were injured in a clash between supporters of two member candidates in Hazariganj union in Bhola.

The deceased was identified as Monir Hossain (23) of the same union.

The clash took place between supporters of two member candidates around 11:30am when voting was going on at South Char Fakira Kuayed Primary School Centre in Char Fasson upazila.

Monir sustained bullet injuries in the clash. He was taken to hospital

where he succumbed to his wound, said police.

"We suspect that the deceased was supporter of a candidate. But it is yet to be confirmed..." said Sarkar Md. Kaysar, SP of Bhola.

Besides, two persons suffered bullet injuries in Barguna as supporters of two chairman candidates clashed in Badarkhali union of sadar upazila.

The clash broke out over establishing supremacy near South Badarkhali Government Primary School Centre around 3:45pm, said KM Tariqul Islam, officer-in-charge of Barguna Sadar Police Station.

In the meantime, at least 15 AL men were injured in Laxmipur as supporters of an AL-nominated chairman candidate and a rebel candidate clashed in Torabganj union of Kamalganj upazila yesterday.

In Patakhali, three supporters of two chairman candidates were stabbed outside Keshobpur High School centre in Keshobpur union of Baufal upazila.

Voting at the centre remained suspended for about one and a half hours following the incident.

In Baufal upazila, two independent chairman candidates of Konakdia Union boycotted the polls, bringing allegations of vote rigging.

Besides, seven out of eight chairman candidates in Sapelea union in Pirojpur's Mathbaria upazila boycotted elections over allegations of vote rigging by the AL-nominated candidate.

An independent chairman candidate also alleged that he was physically assaulted by the supporters of an AL-backed candidate who refuted the allegation.

A mobile court sentenced a youth to eight months' imprisonment for trying to cast a fake vote at Patherhat Government Primary School Centre in Indurkani upazila.

[Our correspondents from respective districts contributed to this report]

It's unfortunate if confession

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HC bench that a father in Bogura has lost his eight-year-old son, but his another son aged 12 has been implicated in the murder case.

The father and his family have been compelled to leave their home, he said.

The lawyer said the 12-year-old boy was tortured and forced to give confessional statement, but the juvenile court concerned in Bogura has not taken any legal steps to this effect although there is a law in this regard.

He added that his clients have submitted this criminal revision petition to the HC for necessary directives on the authorities concerned to conduct a fair inquiry into the incident.

Deputy Attorney General Md Bashir Ullah opposed the criminal revision petition saying that the petitioners could have sought necessary directives through a writ petition.

Five Supreme Court lawyers --

Ahammed Abdullah Khan, Md Zahirul Islam, Md Mustafizur Rahman, Md Zobaidur Rahman and Imrul Kayes -- jointly filed the criminal revision petition as a public interest litigation before the HC on Sunday challenging the legality of the trial proceedings at the Juvenile Court in Bogura.

Lawyer Shishir placed the petition before the HC bench along with a copy of The Daily Star report on the matter, as well as its video report, as supportive documents.

In the petition, the petitioners prayed to the HC bench to summon case documents from the juvenile court and take necessary steps to give remedy for the "gross injustice".

On June 11, The Daily Star published a report titled "Bearing the unbearable", and a follow-up video about the ordeal of the family.

On August 25, 2015, the body of eight-year-old was found in a jute field in Bogura's Katakhal. A day later, the father filed a case with Sariakandi Police Station.

Moves ahead finally

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Mymensingh National Highway along with some regional highways and district roads.

Once the project is completed, buses, trucks and other vehicles will be able to easily travel from northern and western parts of the country to eastern and southern parts without entering Dhaka city.

In September 2012, Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs gave approval in principle to the project to be implemented under PPP.

In March 2016, Ecnec approved the support project for land acquisition, resettlement and shifting of utility lines for the expansion works.

The RHD on December 6, 2018 signed a contract with a China-Bangladesh consortium to upgrade the road to a four-lane access-controlled expressway.

The companies are: Sichuan Road and Bridge (Group) Corporation Ltd of China (60 percent), and Shamim Enterprise (Pvt) Ltd (30 percent) and UDC Corporation Ltd (10 percent) of Bangladesh.

As per the deal, the road authority will provide land, carry out

resettlement and shift utility lines while the private partner will finance, build, operate and maintain the road for a concession period of 25 years.

The partner will collect toll from vehicles following a fixed rate.

At the time of signing of the agreement, the estimated cost of the physical project was Tk 3,039 crore. Of the amount, the government was supposed to provide Tk 224 crore as viability gap financing.

The work for expansion of the highway, with service lanes on both sides, was supposed to be started within nine months of signing of the deal and the road was expected to be fully operational by 2022, officials said previously.

But the private partner could not manage funds until April this year and the RHD could not complete land acquisition, causing the delay in project implementation.

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader had laid the foundation stone of the project in December 2019, but it did not see any progress mainly due to Covid-19 pandemic, said officials.

Israel to allow Gaza 'limited' export of farm produce

AFP, Jerusalem

Israel said Sunday it will allow the "limited export" of farm produce from Gaza, one month after a ceasefire with the enclave's Hamas rulers to end an 11-day conflict.

The crowded Mediterranean territory, home to around two million Palestinians, has been under an Israeli blockade since 2007.

Extra restrictions since intense violence last month has meant Gaza's farmers have been unable to export goods as usual, creating a glut of produce such as tomatoes and strawberries, causing prices to tumble.

"Limited export of agricultural produce from the Gaza Strip" was set to begin yesterday, said COGAT in a statement, the Israeli military body that administers civilian affairs in Palestinian territories.

It added that "this civilian measure, which was approved by the political echelon, is conditional upon the preservation of security stability".

Goods will be allowed out of the Gaza Strip through the Kerem Shalom crossing.

The fragile ceasefire that ended 11-days of air strikes by Israel and rockets fired from Gaza came into place on May 21.

The conflict killed 260 Palestinians including some fighters, according to Gaza authorities.

In Israel, 13 people were killed, including a soldier, by rockets fired from Gaza, the police and army said.

In recent days, ceasefire violations have included Palestinian militants setting off incendiary balloons to spark fires in farm land -- and Israel responding with two rounds of air strikes.

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The incident happened on Sunday when the inspector stormed a residential estate in Enugu and opened fire on people there, state



People take part in a yoga session at the Kanheri Caves on the outskirts of Mumbai, India to mark International Yoga Day yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

India begins free vaccination drive

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The government aims to inoculate all of India's almost 1.1 billion adults by the end of the year.

"The vaccination drive is expected to pick up speed now... the daily vaccination has picked up over the last week and is expected to strengthen further," community health expert

"However, both existing inequities as well as hesitancy merit deeper attention to make this a success."

YOGA PUSH

The free roll-out came as Modi marked the annual Yoga event with an early-morning address to the nation as it emerges from the surge, saying the practice had again proved itself to be a source of "inner strength".

"When I speak to frontline warriors, they tell me that they have adopted yoga as a protective shield in their fight against coronavirus. Doctors have strengthened themselves with yoga and also used yoga to treat their patients," Modi said.

Public parks were re-opened in Delhi yesterday, but the number of events for Yoga Day was cut back around the country for the second year running because of the pandemic.

Yoga Day -- proposed by Modi and adopted by the United Nations in 2014 -- is observed mostly in India, but also worldwide on the Northern Hemisphere's longest day.

Throughout the pandemic, India's government has touted yoga and

herbal medicines -- sales of which have boomed -- to protect and give relief to people infected with the virus.

But evidence is scant and the claims have faced pushback from India's doctors, who wore black armbands last month to protest Baba Ramdev, a guru with ties to the Modi administration who has said yoga can cure Covid-19.

India is the world's second most infected nation with nearly 30 million cases and more than 388,000 deaths, although experts say the actual toll could be much higher due to underreporting.

Authorities said late yesterday that the Amarnath Yatra -- an annual Hindu pilgrimage to a cave shrine in Kashmir that draws some 300,000 participants -- would be cancelled for the second straight year due to the pandemic.

INDONESIA HITS 2M CASES

Indonesia passed two million coronavirus cases yesterday as infection rates soar and hospitals are flooded with new patients, prompting warnings that the Southeast Asian nation's health crisis could spiral out of control.

The unwanted milestone comes after daily case rates more than doubled in recent weeks and authorities identified the presence of highly infectious Covid-19 variants.

The authorities announced tighter curbs to contain the spread of virus. The regulations will apply for two

weeks in 29 "red zones" nationwide where infection rates are high, with religious activities at houses of worship suspended and restaurants, cafes and malls required to operate at 25% capacity, Coordinating Economic Minister Airlangga Hartarto said.

Yesterday, official figures showed that Indonesia had recorded daily record high of 14,536 cases, taking the total to just over two million with nearly 55,000 deaths, among a population of nearly 270 million.

But those figures are widely thought to be a severe undercount, due to low testing and contact tracing -- some experts have said that official cases may only be about 10 percent of the real number.

The Indonesian Medical Association said the variants appeared to be sickening younger people.

"Previously, Covid-19 patients were elderly or those with [pre-existing conditions]," the association's Covid-19 spokeswoman Erlina Burhan said earlier.

Meanwhile, South Africa was set to host a "technology transfer hub" for coronavirus vaccines to scale up production know-how in Africa's worst-hit nation, President Cyril Ramaphosa said yesterday.

Ramaphosa said French President Emmanuel Macron and World Health Organisation chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus would join him at a media briefing to announce the initiative.

Senator urges Nixon to halt Pakistani ship

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SEN CHURCH URGES NIXON TO HALT AMRS SHIPMENT

Senator Frank Church urged President Richard Nixon in a letter to order the Coast Guard to intercept the freighter Padma, which left New York on June 21, to prevent the delivery of military equipment to Pakistan. He said if this could not be accomplished, the United States should seek Canada's co-operation in halting the ship. The Padma's first port of call is Montreal.

REFUGEE PROBLEM NOT JUST A MATTER OF CHARITY: INDIRA GANDHI

The international community should concentrate on all aspects of the Pakistani refugee problem, not only relief aid, Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi said in an interview on the Italian Television today. She added that India was bearing the brunt of the burden although it was one of the poorest countries in the world, but the situation was not simply a matter of charity.

"Future peace is at stake along with stability in that part of the world. If there is no peaceful stability, I believe there will be repercussions on the rest

of the world," she said. There was already huge unemployment, she added, and work could not be given to non-Indian nationals.

BANGLADESH CABINET MEETS

Cabinet meeting of the exiled Bangladeshi government was held today. The members discussed various issues including war strategies and selection and training of freedom fighters. It may be noted that the cabinet used to meet regularly on Monday and Friday.

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hope for the future of my country, and believe voting is part of that," she said as around 100 other voters queued behind her, wrapped in blankets against the pre-dawn chill.

The elections will choose national and regional parliamentarians. The national MPs elect the prime minister, who is head of government, as well as the president -- a largely ceremonial role.

Abiy's ruling Prosperity Party has fielded the most candidates for national parliamentary races, and is the firm favourite to win a majority and form the next government.

Security has been ramped up, with police marching in force in Addis Ababa over the weekend, and reinforcements deployed "to all corners of the country" of 110 million inhabitants, Abiy's office said.

A small contingent of police standing beneath a large Ethiopian flag helped prepare the polling station workers finalised preparations.

"I believe this election will shine a light of democracy on Ethiopia," said Yordanos Berhanu, a 26-year-old accountant who was first in line to vote.

The election was twice delayed -- once for the coronavirus pandemic, and again to allow more time to organise the ballot across a huge nation.

Some 38 million Ethiopians are registered but many will not vote on June 21, with polls not going ahead in close to one-fifth of the country's 547 constituencies.

Some areas were deemed too insecure, plagued by armed insurrections and ethnic violence, while in others logistical setbacks made arranging a vote in time impossible.

A second batch of voting is to take place on September 6 to accommodate many of the districts not taking part yesterday.

But there is no election date set for Tigray, where UN agencies say 350,000 people face famine conditions, and atrocities have been documented.

The northernmost region represents 38 seats in national parliament, and has been governed by an interim administration since November, when Abiy sent troops into Tigray, promising a swift campaign to oust its ruling party.

Seven months later the conflict drags on, damaging Abiy's