

Imran Khan ousted

Loses no-trust motion ending weeks of high drama; Speaker quits moments before vote

AGENCIES

Pakistan's lower house of parliament today voted in favour of removing Prime Minister Imran Khan from office, following a nearly 14-hour standoff between the opposition and Khan's ruling party that started yesterday morning.

Opposition parties were able to secure 174 votes in the 342-member house in support of the no-confidence motion, the house speaker said, making it a majority vote. There were just a few legislators of Khan's ruling PTI party present for the process.

The vote means Khan will no longer hold office and the country's lower house will now elect a new prime minister and government.

Asad Qaiser said he was resigning because he could not take part in a foreign conspiracy to oust the prime minister.

"Because this is a national duty and it is the Supreme Court's decision, I will ask the panel chairman Ayaz Sadiq to run the session," Qaiser said.

After Sadiq took the chair, he asked for bells to be rung in the house for five minutes to notify members that the voting process was about to begin, after which the doors of the assembly were closed.

Voting on the resolution then began at 11:58pm, and members in favour of the resolution were asked to exit the gate Sadiq's left. Sadiq then adjourned the



The Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority is building paved embankments along both banks of the Shitalakkhya river to make walkways and prevent erosion and encroachment in the Kanchpur area of the capital. The place is also popular among traders who bring bamboos from different parts of the country using the waterways.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN



✓ Imran first Pak PM to be ousted via no-trust vote

✓ New PM can stay till August, 2023, and has to call an election by then

✓ No Pakistani PM has completed full five-year term

No prime minister has ever served a full term in Pakistan, but Khan is the first to lose office through a vote of no confidence.

It was not immediately clear when the assembly will choose a new premier but, opposition leader Shehbaz Sharif was almost certain to be picked to lead the nuclear-armed nation of 220 million people after weeks of high political drama.

The voting came after the country's powerful army chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa met Khan, two sources said, as criticism mounted over the delay in the parliamentary process.

Lower house Speaker Asad Qaiser, a member of Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party, who had adjourned the house four times yesterday, announced his resignation, heightening the drama in the chamber.

session for four minutes since according to rules, the same session cannot continue past midnight.

Earlier, the National Assembly session, called to decide the fate of Imran Khan, was adjourned multiple times before voting on the resolution could take place.

The last adjournment was the fourth of the day as the opposition's clamour for immediate voting throughout the day had fallen on deaf ears amid lengthy speeches delivered from treasury members on the floor of the house.

Members of Imran Khan's party had suggested on Friday they would try to delay the vote as much as possible.

Khan's allies blocked the no-confidence motion last week and dissolved the lower house of parliament, prompting the country's Supreme Court to intervene and allow the vote to go through. The prime

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The 'harasser' doubles down on his act

ZYMA ISLAM

A woman who had sued a man for sexually harassing her on a moving bus is now facing a case filed by him under the Digital Security Act.

Monjila Sultana had to spend six days in jail last month after being arrested in the case.

Talking to The Daily Star recently, she said Shah Paran, a lawyer, groped her thighs while she was travelling back to Dhaka from Cox's Bazar on the night of December 4, 2020.

She asked the driver to pull over, dialed 999, and then filed a case for sexual harassment with the

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BIMAN'S DHAKA-TORONTO FLIGHT

Costly cart before horse

RASHIDUL HASAN

After spending Tk 4 crore on an experimental direct flight to Toronto, Biman is now studying the feasibility of commercial flights to the Canadian city with stopovers.

Top officials said they formed a committee to assess the pros and cons of operating such a long-haul route.

Before chucking the plan for the direct flight, officials of the national flag carrier said they were sure that such flights would be commercially viable even as aviation experts said otherwise.

On March 26, a Boeing 787-9, which has 298 seats, left Dhaka for Toronto with just about 70 people on board, leaving more than half the seats empty. That plane flew back with even fewer



In 2006 Biman had 17 planes and served 22-26 int'l destinations



In 2022 Biman has 21 planes and serves 19 int'l destinations

people.

Biman Managing Director Mokammel Hossain told this correspondent on March 31 that the plan for the direct flights was abandoned.

It took Biman a maiden flight and Tk 4 crore to realise what many have been saying all along: Direct flights to Toronto are not commercially viable due to the "load factor". A stopover is needed in an European or Asian country

to refuel and there has to be enough flyers to make the route sustainable.

Biman last week formed a four-member committee led by Flight Operations Director Capt ABM Ismail to do the feasibility study on the Dhaka-Toronto route, sources said.

Biman plans to use one of its Boeing 787-9 Dreamliners to operate three weekly flights to Toronto.

The committee was asked to find an ideal place to refuel with a view to maximise the number of passengers and cargo. The committee will also decide the air fare.

Aviation experts slammed Biman for operating the direct flight without properly weighing the pros and cons.

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PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

Villagers protecting an embankment -- the only thing standing between impending flash floods and their fields of half-ripe paddy -- at the Khorchar Haor in Sunamganj's Bishwambarpur. The photo was taken yesterday.

Haor recoils in horror

Flash floods inundate 7,000 hectares of croplands

DWOHA CHOWDHURY, Sylhet

Farmers in the northern region of the country are fearing huge financial loss in this Boro season because of flash floods.

Around 7,083 hectares of croplands with Boro harvest, including 4,900 hectares in Sunamganj alone, were submerged till yesterday in the region.

Farmers in Sunamganj, Sylhet, Netrakona and Kishoreganj are the worst affected by the first blow of flash flood originating for the torrential rain in India's Meghalaya.

The Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) officials could not confirm the estimated financial loss.

However, according to the statistical data of

production, 6.5 tonnes per hectare on average, the loss is estimated at around Tk 125 crore.

Meanwhile, the Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC) of the Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB) forecasted another flash flood by the end of the week.

Farmers in the haor areas are suffering the most because of the flash flood.

Farmer Aynal Miah, 60, of Joypur village in Sunamganj's Tahirpur upazila, said he cultivated Boro on two acres of land in the Tanguar Haor.

The flash flood that hit the district on April 1, submerged and destroyed his hard-laboured yield.

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