

THAI POLLS Opposition in early election lead

REUTERS, Bangkok

A preliminary vote count in Thailand's election yesterday indicated an early lead for the country's progressive opposition, trailed by ruling coalition parties backed by the military and establishment.

The Pheu Thai Party was ahead with 6.45 percent of eligible votes counted by 1500 GMT, followed by another opposition party, Move Forward, according to the election commission's preliminary count.

The election pits a progressive opposition against parties backed by a nexus of old money, conservatives and generals at the heart of two decades of upheaval in Southeast Asia's second-biggest economy.

An opposition win would bring no guarantees that



Local residents ride their motorbike amid a damaged street after Cyclone Mocha crashed ashore, in Kyauktaw in Myanmar's Rakhine state yesterday. Thousands of people hunkered down in monasteries, pagodas and schools, seeking shelter from the powerful storm that slammed into the coast of Myanmar, tearing the roofs off buildings and killing at least three people.

PHOTO: AFP

India's Congress gains key foothold with state polls win

Say top politicians, analysts

REUTERS, New Delhi

India's embattled Congress party won big in a southern state election this weekend, exceeding expectations and gaining fresh momentum to take on entrenched Prime Minister Narendra Modi in national elections next year, top politicians and analysts said.

At the same time, they cautioned that Congress' victory on Saturday in Karnataka state, home to the booming tech hub of Bengaluru, was largely due to local factors.

The popular Modi's strongman image and Hindu polarisation strategy, they said, would likely power his ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) to victory in upcoming elections in the heartland states and nationally.

But for the beleaguered opposition party, which won fewer than 10 percent of the 545 seats in parliament's lower house in 2019,

the win provides a foothold to re-establish itself as a political force to be reckoned with in the world's largest democracy.

"This is an opportunity for Congress to enhance state efficiencies in Karnataka, build a new governance model and showcase that to the country," said Prithvi Datta Chandra Shobhi, a political commentator who teaches at Krea University in southern India.

For the near term, however, he added: "These results have no bearing on the 2024 elections, they don't help us to predict what might happen either in Karnataka or nationally so far as Congress' chances are concerned."

The impressive win in Karnataka, the BJP's only stronghold in the south and where Modi invested personally in campaigning, was touted by Congress officials as the beginning of its comeback nationally.

"This is an amazing beginning," said Rajeev Gowda, the head of research at Congress and a former federal lawmaker. "The momentum is picking up for a fight back... Each state victory can help keep the momentum."

The bread-and-butter issues of unemployment and inflation that Congress highlighted in Karnataka, Gowda said, are critical issues nationally as well, especially as the Indian economy's recovery after the pandemic was uneven.

Milind Deora, a former federal minister from Congress, said there was new momentum after Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's 135-day cross-country march to revive the party, a win last November in Himachal Pradesh state, and now Karnataka.

"We need to adapt these learnings to every election-going state in 2023 and more importantly to parliamentary elections next year," he said. "Nothing is impossible in politics."

Zelensky calls Germany 'true friend'

Ukraine prepares counter-offensive

AFP, Berlin

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky yesterday called Germany a "true friend" in his country's battle against Russia, as Berlin pledged unwavering support for Kyiv ahead of a widely expected counter-offensive.

Berlin unveiled a new military package for Kyiv worth 2.7 billion euros, its biggest yet for Ukraine, since Russia's invasion.

"In the most challenging time in the modern history of Ukraine, Germany proved to be our true friend and reliable ally, which stands decisively side-by-side with the Ukrainian people in the struggle to defend freedom and democratic values," Zelensky wrote in guestbook at the German president's official residence.

Pak democracy at 'an all-time low'

Says Imran Khan in an interview with Sky News



SKY NEWS ONLINE

Pakistan's former prime minister Imran Khan has claimed democracy in Pakistan is at "an all-time low" in an exclusive interview with Sky News.

The PTI chairman said - in his first interview since being bailed - that the government is "petrified of elections" and they fear being "wiped out" by his party at the polls.

He continued: "So they have decided that the only way they will allow elections is if I am inside jail or killed."

Khan revealed that "there have been two attempts" on his life and his house was raided while he was detained. One of the "assassination attempts" was in November last year when Khan was shot in the leg during a rally in Punjab province.

Khan condemned "all violence" when asked about alleged violence by protesters. "Democracy is at an all-time low. The only hope we have is the judiciary," he said.

It comes after he was arrested earlier this week on corruption charges, then released on bail on Friday following a ruling from Pakistan's High Court.

On Friday, he said: "The first time they showed me an arrest warrant was inside the jail. It happens in the law of the jungle, the military abducted me. Where were the police? Where is the law? It's the law of the jungle. It seems there is martial law declared here."

HOSTAGE-TAKING ATTACK 13 killed in Pak security base

AFP, Quetta

More than a dozen people were killed in an overnight battle between Pakistan paramilitary troops and militants who stormed their base and took families hostage, the army said. "Well equipped" fighters assaulted a Frontier Corps compound in Muslim Bagh, Balochistan province, and captured three families in a residential block, the military said. Fighting raged from Friday evening until Saturday morning and "the complex clearance operation involved hostage rescue operation", the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said in a statement. No group immediately claimed responsibility for the attack but ethnic Baloch separatist groups have for decades waged a rebellion against the state in the province, frequently targeting security forces. The Pakistan Taliban is also active in the region. "The terrorists had not even spared children" in their hostage-taking, ISPR said. All six militants who breached the compound were killed, it said. Seven "sons of the soil" - a term generally used for state security forces - were killed but one individual was a civilian, ISPR said. Six more people were wounded. Separately on Saturday, the ethnic separatist Baloch Liberation Army claimed to have staged an attack on security forces guarding an oil and gas survey team further south in Kalat region.



either party would govern, however, even as an alliance, because of parliamentary rules written by the military after its 2014 coup that are skewed in its favour.

Electing a prime minister and forming a government requires the backing of a majority of the lower and upper houses combined.

The Senate was appointed by the former junta and is expected to vote in favour of parties or blocs allied with the military.

The election follows 9 years of government led or backed by a military that staged two coups in the space of 8 years against governments controlled by billionaire Shinawatra family, Pheu Thai's driving force.

The election is the first since major youth-led pro-democracy protests erupted across Bangkok in 2020 with demands to curb the power and spending of Thailand's king - breaching a long-held taboo on questioning the monarchy.

Shelling, air strikes rock Sudan capital

Warring factions hold talks

REUTERS, Khartoum

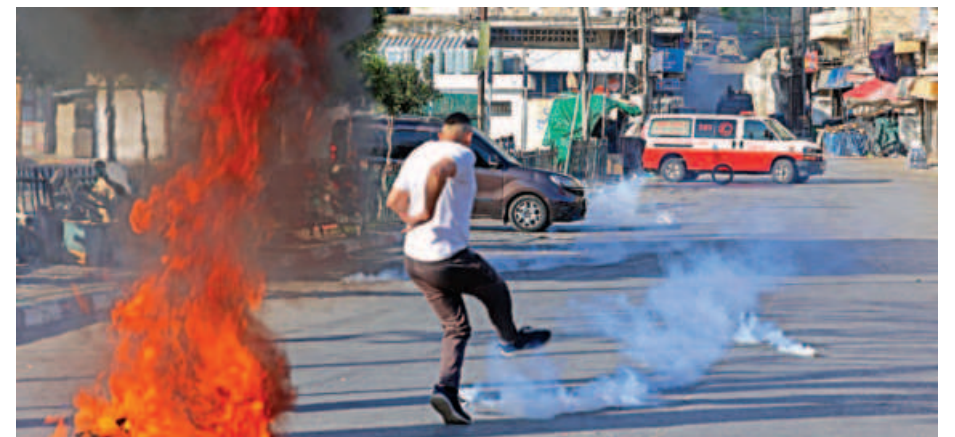
Shelling and air strikes pounded parts of Sudan's capital yesterday with little sign that warring military factions were ready to back down in a conflict that has killed hundreds despite ceasefire talks in Saudi Arabia.

Khartoum and the adjoining cities of Bahri and Omdurman across the Nile's two branches have been the main theatre of conflict along with western Darfur province since the army and Rapid Support Forces paramilitary started fighting a month ago.

Shelling struck Bahri and air strikes hit Omdurman early yesterday, according to a Reuters reporter and witnesses. Al Arabiya television reported heavy clashes in central Khartoum.

"There were heavy air strikes near us in Saliha that shook the doors of the house," said Salma Yassin, a teacher in Omdurman.

The fighting has killed hundreds of people, sent 200,000 into neighbouring countries as refugees, displaced another 700,000 inside Sudan triggering a humanitarian catastrophe and threatens to draw in outside powers and destabilise the region.



A Palestinian kicks back a tear gas canister fired by Israeli security forces amid a raid in West Bank city of Nablus, yesterday as a ceasefire in Gaza held.

PHOTO: AFP

Dhaka Power Distribution Co. Ltd.
ঢাকা পাওয়ার ডিস্ট্রিবিউশন কোম্পানি লিমিটেড (ডিপিডি)
(An Enterprise of the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh)
বিদ্যুৎ ভবন (৩য় তলা), ১ আব্দুল গণি রোড, ঢাকা-১০০০।
Web site : www.dpdc.gov.bd

Memo No: 87.402.105.00.00.182.2021.474 Date: 11.05.2023

"1st TIME EXTENSION NOTICE OF INTERNATIONAL TENDER"

The Following date of the below mentioned tender is hereby extended as shown below:

Sl. No. in the IFB	Item	Description				
4.	Invitation for Bids for (Package-2)	Renovation, Reinforcement and Augmentation (RRA) of 3 nos. 33/11kV Substations and AIS breaker replacement with GIS breakers at different substations under DPDC.				
5.	Invitation for Bids (IFB) No	87.139.103.00.00.2023.641; Date: 15.03.2023				
10.	Deadline for submission of Bid, Time and Place	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 50%;">Original</th> <th style="width: 50%;">Extended</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Date: May 16, 2023, Time: 12:00 PM (Bangladesh Standard Time)</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Date: June 06, 2023, Time: 12:00 PM (Bangladesh Standard Time)</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Address: Office of the Project Director, Construction and Augmentation of Substation, Installation of Capacitor Bank and Introduction of Smart Grid in Power System under DPDC Area (CSCSG Project), DPDC, House # 7(Ground Floor), Road # 17, Block-C, Banani, Dhaka-1213, Bangladesh. Email: cscsg@dpdc.org.bd; Mobile: +8801730335207; +8801730335121</p>	Original	Extended	Date: May 16, 2023, Time: 12:00 PM (Bangladesh Standard Time)	Date: June 06, 2023, Time: 12:00 PM (Bangladesh Standard Time)
Original	Extended					
Date: May 16, 2023, Time: 12:00 PM (Bangladesh Standard Time)	Date: June 06, 2023, Time: 12:00 PM (Bangladesh Standard Time)					
11.	Bid Opening Date, Time and Place	<p>Bids will be opened in the presence of Bidders' representatives [limited two members from each Bidder who submitted the bids and the bid security acceptable to representative of DPDC] at the following schedule:</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 50%;">Original</th> <th style="width: 50%;">Extended</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Date: May 16, 2023, Time: 1:30 PM (Bangladesh Standard Time)</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Date: June 06, 2023, Time: 01:30 PM (Bangladesh Standard Time)</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Address: Office of the Project Director, Construction and Augmentation of Substation, Installation of Capacitor Bank and Introduction of Smart Grid in Power System under DPDC Area (CSCSG Project), DPDC, House # 7(Ground Floor), Road # 17, Block-C, Banani, Dhaka-1213, Bangladesh. Email: cscsg@dpdc.org.bd; Mobile: +8801730335207; +8801730335121</p>	Original	Extended	Date: May 16, 2023, Time: 1:30 PM (Bangladesh Standard Time)	Date: June 06, 2023, Time: 01:30 PM (Bangladesh Standard Time)
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All other terms and conditions of the tender will remain unchanged.

(Md. Asaduzzaman)
Deputy Secretary
&
Company Secretary
Dhaka Power Distribution Company Ltd.

United Commercial Bank PLC
Corporate Office: Plot - CWS(A)-1, Road No - 34
Gulshan Avenue, Dhaka-1212, Bangladesh
Phone +88-02-55668070

Price Sensitive Information

This is information for all concerned that Emerging Credit Rating Limited (ECRL) rated United Commercial Bank PLC as follows based on Audited Financial Statements for the year ended 2022:

For Long Term	AA
For Short Term	ST-2

The rating will remain valid up to May 06, 2024. The information will also be available on the website of the Bank i.e. www.ucb.com.bd.

By order of the Board

ATM Tahmiduzzaman, FCS
Company Secretary

Dated: Dhaka
May 14, 2023