

PAK PARLIAMENT PM proposes its dissolution on Aug 9

REUTERS, Islamabad

Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has proposed that parliament be dissolved on August 9, three days before the end of its term, political sources said yesterday, paving way for a general election by November.

The elections are due to go ahead after speculation they might have to be postponed because of months of political turmoil in the country of 220 million people.

Two members of parliament who attended a dinner hosted by Sharif on Thursday told Reuters that he confided in his allies that he would seek a dissolution on August 9 and hand over to a caretaker government to organise the polls.

Parliament's five-year term is set to expire on August 12. The Ministry of Information did not respond to a request for comment.



Mourners attend the funeral of Mahmoud Abo Sa'an, a Palestinian who was killed in an Israeli raid, in Tulkarm, in the Israeli-occupied West Bank yesterday. One mourner, who said he witnessed the incident from about 200 metres away, added that he did not see Abu Sa'an carrying weapons or explosives.

PHOTO: REUTERS

NIGER COUP Junta breaks off military co-op with France

AFP, Niamey

A West African delegation failed to secure the return to power of Niger's elected government yesterday despite proposals to resolve the crisis as the junta curtailed military cooperation with former colonial power France.

The ECOWAS regional bloc's team arrived Thursday in Niamey "but did not spend night" as scheduled, nor meet with coup leader Abdourahamane Tiani or detained President Bazoum, a delegation member said yesterday.

At the same time, the junta announced that it was scrapping military pacts between Niger and France, citing former ruler's "careless attitude and its reaction to the situation".

EU CLIMATE OBSERVATORY DATA

World's oceans set new surface temp record

AGENCIES

The world's oceans set a temperature record in the past week, with their surface hitting 20.96 degrees Celsius (69.7 Fahrenheit), European Union climate observatory data showed yesterday.

Ocean surface temperature reached 20.96C on July 30, according to the ERA5 database, while the previous record was 20.95C in March 2016, a spokeswoman told AFP.

The samples tested excluded polar regions. Oceans have absorbed 90 percent of the excess heat produced by human activity since the dawn of the industrial age, according to scientists.

Globally, the average ocean temperature has been besting seasonal heat records on a regular basis since April.

"The ocean heatwave is an immediate threat to some marine



life. We are already seeing coral bleaching in Florida as a direct result and I expect more impacts will surface," said Piers Forster of the International Centre for Climate at the University of Leeds.

Scientists are worried about the timing of this broken record. Dr Samantha Burgess, from the Copernicus Climate Change Service, said March should be when the oceans globally are

warmest, not August, reports BBC.

"The fact that we've seen the record now makes me nervous about how much warmer the ocean may get between now and next March," she said.

"It is sobering to see this change happening so quickly," said Prof Mike Burrows, who is monitoring impacts on Scottish sea shores with the Scottish Association for Marine Science.

Scientists are investigating why the oceans are so hot right now but say that climate change is making the seas warmer as they absorb most of the heating from greenhouse gas emissions.

The new average temperature record beats one set in 2016 when the naturally occurring climate fluctuation El Niño was in full swing and at its most powerful.

El Niño happens when warm water rises to the surface off the west coast of South America, pushing up global temperatures.

Putin critic Navalny gets further 19 year jail term

REUTERS, Melekhovo

Jailed Russian opposition politician Alexei Navalny was sentenced yesterday to an additional 19 years in prison after being found guilty on a series of new charges, Navalny's supporters said on social media.

The battery of new charges related to alleged extremist activity by the 47-year-old politician.

In a video feed from a court hearing at a penal colony east of Moscow, Navalny could be seen wearing a black prison uniform and standing with his arms folded as he listened to the verdicts.

The audio feed from the court was so poor that it was practically impossible to make out what the judge was saying.

2020 POLLS CHARGES

Trump pleads not guilty

AFP, Washington

Former US president Donald Trump pleaded not guilty on Thursday to criminal charges that he conspired to overturn the results of the 2020 election and defraud the American people.

Trump, the frontrunner for the 2024 Republican presidential nomination, entered his plea during a nearly 30-minute hearing at the same Washington courthouse where hundreds of his supporters have been convicted for their roles in the January 6, 2021 attack on the US Capitol.

"Not guilty," Trump said after magistrate judge Moxila Upadhyaya read the four criminal counts -- and the potential maximum prison sentences -- in the 45-page indictment brought by special counsel Jack Smith. The 77-year-old has already been charged in two other criminal cases, and the new conspiracy charges raise the prospect of his being further embroiled in legal proceedings at the height of next year's election campaign.

Speaking to reporters at Reagan National airport before leaving Washington on his private plane, Trump said the cases brought against him were "persecution of a political opponent." "This is a very sad day for America," he said.



N Zealand military 'not in a fit state' Says government

AFP, Wellington

Facing ageing equipment and difficulties recruiting personnel, New Zealand's military needs a revamp, the government said yesterday.

The South Pacific nation's roughly 15,000-strong defence force "is not in a fit state to respond to future challenges", according to a policy review presented by Prime Minister Chris Hipkins and Defence Minister

Andrew Little.

According to the review, New Zealand's military is designed for a "relatively benign strategic environment" rather than the region's current predicaments, including climate-fuelled challenges and intense strategic competition between China and the West.

Little said New Zealand needs to invest in a "combat-capable" force and cannot count on being protected

by its remoteness.

"The changes in the domestic and international security environment mean our response and preparedness must change too," Little told reporters yesterday.

"We must be prepared to equip ourselves with trained personnel, assets and material, and appropriate international relationships in order to protect our own defence and national security."

Panna Kaiser passes away

FROM PAGE 12

In achieving the Independence of Bangladesh.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina also expressed deep shock at the passing of Kaiser. The premier also prayed for eternal peace of the departed soul and conveyed deep sympathy to the members of the bereaved family.

Ekatore Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Committee extended its sympathy to the deceased's family.

The death of Kaiser has left a vacuum in the leadership of the progressive socio-cultural movement, which cannot be easily filled, said leaders of Nirmul Committee.

Born on May 25, 1950, Panna Kaiser led an impactful life through her active involvement with "Khelaghar", an organisation committed to nurturing a new generation inspired by the spirit of the Liberation War.

She played a pivotal role in holding the war crimes trials.

Panna had married Shahidullah Kaiser in 1969. In 1971, he was picked up from his house by Al-Badr forces; his body was never found. Faced with numerous challenges after the country's independence, she finished her postgraduation in Bangla Literature from Dhaka University before embarking on a career in the

teaching profession.

She authored many books on different aspects of the Liberation War. In recognition of her contribution to research on the Liberation War, she received the prestigious Bangla Academy Literary Award in 2021.

Her body will be placed in front of the Central Shahid Minar at 10:30am tomorrow, so that people from all walks of life can pay their respects to the former lawmaker.

Kaiser's third namaz-e-janaza will be held at the Dhaka University mosque after Zohr prayers tomorrow. After the janaza, she will be buried at Mirpur Martyred Intellectuals' Graveyard.

Rice for poor in the hands of clubs

FROM PAGE 12

now a member of the club's convening committee, claimed that they did not initially submit any application for the rice.

"During the June-closing time for the relief allocation, the upazila administration informed us about the allotment of rice for the club. After that we formed a project implementation committee for getting it."

He added that after getting the demand order letter for 2 tonnes of rice, they sold it for Tk 38,500 per tonne. "The money will be spent for development work of the club."

Manik Mia Rana, president of

Santhia Press Club, said they got 2 tonnes of rice. "We have sold the rice for Tk 35,000 per tonne to a syndicate of rice traders who controls the price of relief rice."

Contacted, Md Rejaul Karim, district relief and rehabilitation officer, said around 800 tonnes of rice were distributed among different institutions, including religious, social, cultural and government, through various relief programmes in 2022-23 fiscal year.

"Those who got the allocation submitted applications for getting the support," Karim said, adding that everything was done following due procedure.

Then Panna DC Biswas Russel told this correspondent that he did not find any irregularities in the distribution of relief rice.

"According to need of the organisations, we have allocated relief rice following the rules. So, who is involved that is not important," said Russel, who has recently been transferred to the Economic Relations Department as a deputy secretary.

Enamur Rahman, state minister for disaster management and relief, told The Daily Star that he was not aware of GR rice being distributed to privileged organisations. "The GR rice is meant for the poor. It is not for the privileged class like officers."

Rahul set to return

FROM PAGE 12

insulting to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and others with the same name, including the lawmaker.

"How come all thieves have the name Modi?" Gandhi had asked in an election campaign speech, referring to two fugitive businessmen, both surnamed Modi.

Gandhi, 53, from a dynasty that has given India three prime ministers, was sentenced to two years' imprisonment but the jail term was put on hold and he was granted bail.

He also lost his parliamentary seat following the conviction, since lawmakers sentenced to jail terms of two years or more are automatically disqualified.

After the Supreme Court's ruling, the lower house of parliament should now formally reinstate Gandhi.

Lower courts and the high court in Gujarat, where the BJP holds power, had rejected appeals by Gandhi to suspend the conviction, prompting the appeal to the Supreme Court.

Besides seeking suspension of the conviction, Gandhi has also sought to overturn it. That challenge has yet to be heard by the lower court in Gujarat.

"Come what may, my duty remains the same. Protect the idea of India," Gandhi said in a post on social media platform X, formerly Twitter, in his first comments since the court ruling.

"If not today then tomorrow, if not tomorrow then the next day, truth prevails. But whatever happens, my path is clear," he later told reporters at a party news conference. But he did not take questions.

Coal miners

FROM PAGE 12

Lead archaeologist Miomir Korac said previous findings suggest the ship may date back as far as the 3rd or 4th century AD when Viminacium was capital of the Roman province of Moesia Superior and had a port near a tributary of the Danube River.

"We may assume that this ship is Roman, but we are unsure of its exact age," he told Reuters at the dusty site hanging precariously above a vast open coal pit.

Fresh violence in Manipur

FROM PAGE 12

suffered gunshots when unidentified gunmen opened fire at Senjam Chirang in Imphal West district early in the morning.

A confrontation between a mob and security forces occurred in Imphal West and Imphal East districts as well, with hundreds of people attempting to storm the battalion headquarters of 2nd and 7th Manipur Rifles, demanding arms

and ammunition.

The forces repelled the attack. The violence prompted authorities to re-impose a total curfew in both districts.

Tensions escalated in Bishnupur after the Indigenous Tribal Leaders' Forum announced Tuesday its plan to honour the 35 people killed in the violence since May 3 at the Peace ground at Tuibuong, followed by a burial ceremony at S Boljang village.

AL can't stop

FROM PAGE 1

rallies later that night.

The rally, initially scheduled for 2:00pm, was delayed by an hour due to rain, which started around 12:30pm and persisted till 3:25pm. The heavy downpour caused knee-deep water to accumulate in front of the party's Nayapalton office.

BNP leaders and activists joined the rally, defying the challenging conditions.

Before the rain started, a temporary stage had been set up in front of the BNP's central office where party activists were seen chanting slogans demanding a retrial and acquittal of charges against Tarique and his wife.

The BNP also demands the government quit power and come out on the streets if they want to play, noted Fakhrul.

"You [AL] find joy in coming to power without holding elections? Earlier, you said you wanted to play. If you want so, then quit power and come out on the streets," he said.

Calling upon the people of the country to join its movement, he said everyone should resist the AL government.

"We don't care what the US or India says. We'll listen to what people say," he said.

Reiterating that the BNP would not take part in any election under the Sheikh Hasina-led government, he said they would not allow the AL to stay in power.

BNP standing committee member

Abdul Moeen Khan said the current government is deceiving people in the name of Constitution.

Referring to the three pillars of a Constitution -- the legislative, the executive and the judiciary -- he said, "The government talks about the Constitution but in reality, it has created a fake parliament by casting votes a day before the election and used the judiciary and executive branches for their benefits."

Standing Committee Member Goyeswar Chandra Roy said, "The people do not want to see the Hasina government in power anymore."

The protest rally in Dhaka was presided over by Aman Ullah Aman, convener of BNP's Dhaka City North unit. BNP Standing Committee Members Mirza Abbas and Nazrul Islam Khan, among others, spoke at the event.

As part of the countrywide programme, different district units of the BNP also organised protest rallies in their respective areas across the country.

Addressing a rally in Chattogram, BNP Standing Committee member Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury said it was the ruling AL government that was looking for foreign forces to stay in power again.

"BNP does not depend on foreign forces to come to power like the AL does," he said while addressing the rally as chief guest in the city's Kazir Dewri area.