

INDIA ELECTION

Low turnout a worry for Modi's campaign

REUTERS, New Delhi

A lower turnout so far in India's long general election has rattled Prime Minister Narendra Modi's campaign managers, raising into question whether his Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and its allies can achieve the landslide victory predicted by opinion polls just one month ago.

The lack of momentum has been partly blamed on apathy among party workers believing victory is assured and seems to have prompted Modi to change tack in his campaign speeches to try to fire up the Hindu majority, the party's support base, and get them out to voting stations, political analysts said.

The last major opinion poll had predicted that the BJP and its allies could win three-fourths of parliament's 543 seats at stake on the back of Modi's popularity, strong economic growth, handouts and



the inauguration of a Hindu temple on a contested site in Hindu majority country.

At the last election in 2019, the BJP won 303 seats and its allies won around 50 seats. Its slogan before this year's election began was "Ab ki baar, 400 paar" or "This time, above 400".

More than half a dozen BJP leaders and political analysts that Reuters spoke to said a lack of momentum in the two initial phases of the seven-phase election have dampened hopes of a huge majority for the party, although they said it was still likely to retain power in the world's most populous nation.

What could be affected is the BJP's aim to get a two-thirds majority in the chamber, or 362 seats. "The fall in polling turnout is mainly due to apathy among party workers and voters," said Sanjay Sharma, one of the members of the BJP's campaign committee in Haryana.



Palestinians transport their belongings on a cart on a road lined with damaged buildings in Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip yesterday. The Palestinian Embassy in Egypt is seeking temporary residency permits for tens of thousands of people who have arrived from Gaza during the Israeli offensive. PHOTO: AFP

Rebuilding bombed Gaza homes may take 80 yrs: UN

REUTERS, Geneva

Rebuilding homes in the Gaza Strip could drag into the next century if the pace follows the trend of previous conflicts, according to a UN report released yesterday.

Nearly seven months of Israeli bombardment have caused billions of dollars in damage, leaving many of the crowded strip's high-rise concrete buildings reduced to heaps, with a UN official referring to a "moonscape" of destruction.

Palestinian data shows that around 80,000 homes have been destroyed in the conflict. Israeli strikes have killed tens of thousands of Palestinians.

The assessment, released by the UN

Development Programme, said Gaza needs "approximately 80 years to restore all the fully destroyed housing units".

However, in a best-case scenario in which construction materials are delivered five times as fast as in the last crisis in 2021, it could be done by 2040, the report said.

The UNDP assessment makes a series of projections on the offensive's socioeconomic impact based on the duration of the current conflict, projecting decades of ongoing suffering.

"Unprecedented levels of human losses, capital destruction, and the steep rise in poverty in such a short period of time will precipitate a serious development crisis that jeopardises the future of generations to come," said

UNDP Administrator Achim Steiner.

In a scenario where the offensive lasts nine months, poverty is set to increase from 38.8 percent of Gaza's population at the end of 2023 to 60.7 percent, dragging a large portion of the middle class below the poverty line, the report said.

Meanwhile, the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) said on Wednesday that Gaza is filled with more debris and rubble than Ukraine, with the mammoth task of clearing it made all the more costly and dangerous by the sheer amount of asbestos and unexploded ordnance.

Six months into the offensive, the UNMAS estimated the amount of debris in the Gaza Strip at 37 million tonnes in mid-April, or 300 kgs per square metre.

WORLD PRESS FREEDOM DAY

Gaza mourns death of over 140 journos in Israeli attacks

AGENCIES

At least 141 Palestinian journalists and media professionals have been killed and 70 others injured in Israel's ongoing offensive in the Gaza Strip, the government media office said yesterday. In a statement marking the World Press Freedom Day today, the media office said at least 20 journalists are still held in Israeli prisons, reports Anadolu news agency. "This is part of the genocidal war waged by the Israeli occupation army against civilians, especially children and women in the Gaza Strip," it added. The media office held Israel and the US "fully responsible for the Israeli crimes against journalists and media professionals." It called on the international community to "protect Palestinian journalists and pressure the Israeli occupation to stop its genocidal war against journalists, civilians, children, women, and the Palestinian people." Israel has waged an unrelenting offensive on the enclave since a cross-border attack by Hamas last October. Nearly 34,600 Palestinians have since been killed amid mass destruction and shortages of necessities.

POST-COUP MYANMAR

Grid meeting half of power needs amid conflict: junta

AFP, Yangon

Myanmar is producing about half of the electricity it needs each day, the junta has said, blaming scant rainfall for hydropower, lower natural gas yields and attacks by its opponents on infrastructure. Rolling power cuts have battered an economy already reeling from unrest sparked by the military's 2021 coup, most recently causing misery across the country as it bakes in a heatwave. Myanmar's electricity grid is producing only 2,800 megawatts of the required 5,443 megawatts needed each day, said the junta's information team late Wednesday. Domestic power production from natural gas was about 446 megawatts less than the normal daily capacity, it said.

India lodges protest against China's construction in Shaksgam Valley

THE HINDU ONLINE

India has registered its protest with China against their "illegal attempts to alter facts" in connection with Beijing's construction activities in the Shaksgam Valley, the Indian Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said.

China has invested in the construction of military infrastructure in the Shaksgam Valley, reports suggested.

Responding to a question of infrastructure construction in lower Shaksgam Valley in Kashmir by

China, MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal, in his weekly briefing said, "The Shaksgam Valley is a part of the territory of India. We have never accepted the so-called China Pakistan Boundary Agreement of 1963 through which Pakistan unlawfully attempted to cede the area to China, and have consistently conveyed our rejection of the same. We registered our protest with the Chinese side against illegal attempts to alter facts on the ground." Jaiswal further said that India reserves the right to take necessary



measures to safeguard the country's interests.

The MEA statement comes after recent media reports suggested China's road breaching the Indian border at Aghil Pass and entered the lower Shaksgam valley of Kashmir, less than 30 miles away from Siachen. Satellite images showed the Chinese road approaching Aghil Pass, with construction resuming this month advancing towards areas north of Siachen Glacier.

The Shaksgam valley in trans-Karakoram tract, part of Pakistan occupied Kashmir, was handed over on a platter by a supine Pakistan to China through an illegal border agreement on March 2, 1963.

COPYRIGHT VIOLATION

US newspapers sue OpenAI, Microsoft over AI chatbots

AFP, San Francisco

Eight US newspapers sued OpenAI and Microsoft in a New York federal court Tuesday for violating their copyright to train the technology behind the ChatGPT and Copilot chatbots.

The newspapers, which include The New York Daily News and The Chicago Tribune, are owned by Alden Global Capital, a Florida-based investment firm that created the second-largest US newspaper group behind USA Today owner Gannett when it bought the Tribune publishing chain in 2021.

"This lawsuit arises from defendants purloining millions of the publishers' copyrighted articles without permission and without payment to fuel the commercialization of their generative artificial intelligence products, including ChatGPT and (Microsoft's) Copilot," according to the filing.

"As this lawsuit will demonstrate, defendants must both obtain the publishers' consent to use their content and pay fair value for such use," the filing said. OpenAI and its Microsoft backer were also accused of offering up verbatim excerpts of full articles as well as attributing misleading or inaccurate reporting to the publications in certain requests.

Other newspapers involved in the suit were The Orlando Sentinel, The Sun Sentinel of Florida, The San Jose Mercury News, The Denver Post, The Orange County Register and The St Paul Pioneer Press.



PRICE SENSITIVE INFORMATION

This is to notify for kind information of all concerned that the Board of Directors of AB Bank PLC. in its 786th Meeting held on **May 02, 2024 (Thursday)** considered/adopted the Annual Audited Financial Statements of the Bank for the year ended December 31, 2023 and following decisions were taken:

A. Adopted Annual Audited Financial Statements for the year 2023 and holding 42nd Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Bank:

The Board declared the following financial indicators of the Bank in compliance with Regulation no. 19 of Dhaka Stock Exchange (Listing) Regulations, 2015 and Chittagong Stock Exchange (Listing) Regulations, 2015:

Financial Highlights	AB Bank PLC. (Consolidated)		AB Bank PLC. (Solo)	
	2023	2022	2023	2022
Taka in Crore				
Profit Before Tax & Provision	534.46	571.80	501.14	548.19
Profit After Tax (PAT)	89.37	71.44	72.18	67.72
Net Asset Value (NAV)	2,597.39	2,576.09	2,446.92	2,442.59
Amount in Taka				
Earnings Per Share (EPS)	1.02	0.81	0.82	0.77
Net Operating Cash Flow Per Share (NOCFPS)	11.20	(19.12)	12.31	(19.84)
Net Asset Value Per Share (NAVPS)	29.58	29.34	27.87	27.82

Board also considered and approved the Annual Audited Financial Statements for the year ended December 31, 2023 and recommended below:

- Recommended Dividend : 2% (Two Percent) Stock Dividend to all Shareholders subject to approval from Bangladesh Securities & Exchange Commission (BSEC)
- Record Date : May 26, 2024 (Sunday)
- Date, Day and Time of 42nd AGM : June 12, 2024 (Wednesday) at 10:30 a.m.
- Venue and Mode of 42nd AGM : **Hybrid System:**

For in physical presence: Sena Malancha, Dhaka Cantonment, Western side of Naval Headquarters on Airport Road, Dhaka 1206

For online Participation: Will be notified later

Reasons for Recommending Stock Dividend:

- Bonus shares have been declared to increase the paid-up Capital of the Company and the retained amount will be used to strengthen the Capital base which will help the Bank to increase business capacity.
- Bonus shares is declared out of accumulated profit.
- Bonus shares is not declared from capital reserve or revaluation reserve or any unrealized gain or out of profit earned to incorporation of the company or through reducing paid up capital or through doing anything so that the post dividend retained earnings become negative or debit balance.

B. Bangladesh Bank has given consent to AB Bank PLC. for declaring dividend for the year ended on December 31, 2023 vide letter no. DOS (CAMS)1157/41(Dividend)/2024-1842.

Dated: Dhaka, May 02, 2024

AB Bank PLC.
The Skymark, 18 Gulshan Avenue, Gulshan-1, Dhaka
www.abbl.com

By Order of the Board
Sd/-
Md. Jasim Uddin, FCS
Company Secretary

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Dr. Lubna Yasmin
Fertility & IVF Specialist
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9, 10, 11th May, 2024
10:30 AM - 8:00 PM

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