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Depression forms in the Bay of Bengal

8 powerful cyclones hit country in the month of May since 2009

PINAKI ROY

The Met office yesterday said the depression over the Bay of Bengal may intensify and turn into a cyclone before making landfall on the Bangladesh coast tomorrow.

At noon yesterday, the depression was centred at 805 km southwest of Chattogram Port, 740 km southwest of Cox's Bazar Port, 765 km south of Mongla Port, and 730 km south of Payra Port.

The depression was moving toward the coast at a speed of 16 km/h and is expected to develop into a cyclone today, according to Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD).

"It may cross the Bangladesh coast between Payra and Khepupara. However, it is difficult to predict its trajectory at this time because it has not yet turned into a cyclone," said Abul Kalam Mallik, a meteorologist at BMD.

He said that once the cyclone is formed, the BMD will release information about its trajectory.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 2



Displaced Palestinian children search for recyclables at a garbage dump in Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP



Nazrul's 125th birth anniversary today

BSS, Dhaka

The 125th birth anniversary of National Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam will be celebrated across the country today in a befitting manner.

Ministry of Cultural Affairs has chalked out elaborate programmes to mark the day at the national level.

Different organisations and cultural bodies, including Dhaka University, have also taken programmes to celebrate the day amid various functions.

President Mohammed Shahbuddin and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

58 constituencies go to polls today

BJP and Congress-AAP alliance fight it out in the 7 seats in Delhi

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
New Delhi

An estimated 11.13 crore people are expected to vote in the sixth phase of polling in India's Lok Sabha elections covering 58 constituencies across six states and two union territories today.

The sixth phase will include all seven parliamentary seats in the national capital Delhi where the main fight will take place between BJP and Congress-Aam Aadmi Party alliance.

The states and union territories voting in the sixth phase are: Bihar (8 seats), Haryana (all 10 seats), Jammu and Kashmir (1 seat), Jharkhand (4 seats), Delhi (all 7 seats), Odisha (6 seats), Uttar Pradesh (14 seats) and West Bengal (8 seats).

Voting for the 543-member Lok Sabha is being held in seven phases until June 1, with polling for five phases already completed. The vote counting is scheduled for June 4. The seventh and final round of polling will be held on June 6 across 57 constituencies, including Kolkata.

After the completion of the sixth phase, polling will be completed in 486 constituencies.

The prominent candidates in the sixth phase are Dharmendra Pradhan (BJP) from Sambalpur (Odisha), Manoj Tiwari (BJP) and Kanhaiya Kumar (Congress) from North East Delhi, Maneka Gandhi (BJP) from Sultanpur (Uttar Pradesh), Mehbooba Mufti (PDP) from Anantnag-Rajouri (Jammu and Kashmir), Abhijit Gangopadhyay (BJP) from Tamluk (West Bengal) and BJP's former chief minister of Haryana Manohar Lal Khattar (Karnal).

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1



ICJ orders Israel to halt offensive in Rafah

UN top court calls for 'unconditional release' of hostages taken by Hamas; court order binding for parties involved, says UN chief

REUTERS, Cairo

Judges at the top United Nations court yesterday ordered Israel to immediately halt its military assault on the southern Gaza city of Rafah, in a landmark emergency ruling in South Africa's case accusing Israel of genocide.

While the International Court of Justice (ICJ), or World Court, has no means to enforce its orders, the case was a stark sign of Israel's global isolation over its campaign in Gaza, particularly since it began its offensive against Rafah this month against the pleas of its closest ally, the United States.

Reading out the ruling, World Court president Nawaf Salam said the situation in the Palestinian enclave had deteriorated since the court last ordered Israel to take steps to improve it, and conditions had been met for a new emergency order.

"The state of Israel shall (...) immediately halt its military offensive, and any other action in the Rafah governorate, which may inflict on the Palestinian group in Gaza conditions of life that could bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part," he said.

Israel had not explained how it would keep the population safe during an evacuation of Rafah, or provide food, water, sanitation and medicine for the

800,000 Palestinians that had already fled the Israeli advance, he said.

The ICJ ordered Israel to open the Rafah crossing between Egypt and Gaza to let in aid. Israel, it added, must provide access for investigators and report back on its progress within one month. The court also urged the "unconditional release" of hostages taken by Hamas.

The order was adopted by the panel of 15 international judges in a 13-2 vote, opposed only by judges from Uganda and Israel itself.

South Africa hailed the ruling as ground-breaking. The internationally recognised Palestinian Authority said it represented a global consensus that the offensive must end.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres stressed that "decisions of the Court are binding and trusts that the parties will duly comply with the Order from the Court," reports AFP.

Senior Hamas official Basem Naim told Reuters: "We call upon the UN Security Council to immediately implement this demand by the World Court into practical measures to compel the Zionist enemy to implement the decision."

Naim also welcomed the court's request to allow investigation committees to reach the Gaza Strip to probe allegations of genocide against the Palestinian people.

- ICJ orders Israel to open Rafah crossing to allow in aid
- Hamas welcomes ICJ plan to send probe committee to Gaza
- Israeli forces step up strikes on the enclave

Scientists find Earth-like planet that may support alien life

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Scientists have found a new Earth-like planet that could support alien life — just 40 light-years away.

The planet is a remarkable discovery in the search for habitable worlds: it is slightly smaller than the Earth, and thought to be just a little hotter.

Many planets outside our solar system, called exoplanets,

tend to be much larger and hotter than our own world.

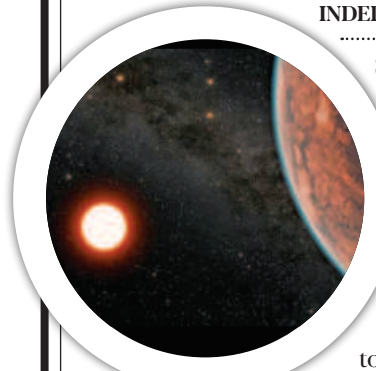
The newly discovered planet is called Gliese 12b and researchers say that even if we cannot find whether it is home to alien life then it will help in our search for other worlds that might be.

The planet orbits its host star every 12.8 days, and is comparable in size to Venus — so slightly smaller than Earth.

It has an estimated surface temperature of 42C, which is lower than most of the 5,000-odd exoplanets (planets outside of the solar system) confirmed so far.

Astronomers suggest Gliese 12 b is one of the few known planets where humans could theoretically survive, but they are still unsure what its atmosphere looks like, if it has one at all.

Masayuki Kuzuhara, a project assistant professor at the Astrobiology Centre in Tokyo, who co-led one research team with Akihiko Fukui, said: "We've found the nearest, transiting, temperate, Earth-size world located to date."



230 shanties go up in flames at Ukhiya camp

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

At least 230 shanties and 100 other establishments were gutted in a fire that broke out at a refugee camp in Ukhiya upazila of Cox's Bazar yesterday.

Besides, over 200 more shanties were damaged in the fire, said Shafiqul Islam, station officer at Ukhiya Fire Service and Civil Defence.

At least 10 people suffered injuries in the blaze, he added.

The fire broke out at Camp-13 in the Tanzimarkhola area around 11:00am, Mohammad Samsudduza, additional Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner.

The fire originated from a warehouse of a non-government organisation (NGO), he added.

However, the cause of the fire could not be known immediately.

Shafiqul said firefighters from Ukhiya and Cox's Bazar along with local volunteers doused the blaze around 1:00pm.

Many refugees became homeless after the fire ripped through their shelters, he added.

A local NGO claimed that at least 4,000 Rohingyas have become homeless after their homes were burned to the ground.



Sewage water inundates Mazed Sardar Road in Old Dhaka's Bongshal due to poor drainage. Locals say the problem has been persisting for several months, causing suffering to them. The photo was taken around noon yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Iran denies foul play in Raisi helicopter crash

AFP, Tehran

Iran's army has so far found no evidence of criminal activity in a helicopter crash that killed the country's president Ebrahim Raisi and seven others, state media reported.

The 63-year-old died on May 19 after his helicopter went down in the country's mountainous northwest while returning from a dam inauguration on the border with Azerbaijan.

"No bullet holes or similar impacts were observed on the helicopter wreckage," said a preliminary report by the general staff of the armed forces published by the official IRNA news agency late Thursday.

"The helicopter caught fire after hitting an elevated area," it said, adding that "no suspicious content was observed during the communications between the watch tower and the flight crew."

Raisi's helicopter had been flying on a "pre-planned route and did not leave the designated flight path" before the crash.

The report said the wreckage of

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

