

INTERNATIONAL

PARLIAMENTARY POLLS

S Africa heads for coalition as ANC support plunges

REUTERS, Midrand

South African parties geared up for coalition talks yesterday as the governing African National Congress (ANC) looked set to fall well short of a majority for the first time in 30 years of democracy.

While the party of the late Nelson Mandela looked likely to remain the largest political force after Wednesday's election, voters appeared to have punished the former liberation movement for years of decline.

With results in from 61.2 percent of polling stations, the ANC had 41.9 percent of votes, a precipitous drop from the 57.5 percent it secured in the last national election in 2019.

The pro-business Democratic Alliance (DA) was in second place on 23 percent. uMkhonto we Sizwe (MK), a new party led by former president Jacob Zuma, was at 11.7 percent and eating into ANC support, particularly in KwaZulu-Natal, Zuma's home province.

MK had overtaken the Marxist Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), currently the third biggest party in parliament, which was sitting on 9.5 percent.

Political parties' share of the vote will determine the number of seats they get in the National Assembly, which then elects the next president.

That could still be the ANC's leader, incumbent President Cyril Ramaphosa. However, an embarrassing showing at the polls risks fuelling a leadership challenge — but the ANC's Deputy Secretary-General Nomvula Mokonyane said he would not resign.

"Nobody is going to resign... Collectively, all of us, we still are confident that he (Ramaphosa) has to remain the president of the ANC," she told reporters at the results centre.

"The leadership of the ANC will meet, structures of the ANC will be consulted. For now we are not talking to anybody," she said.



TRUMP'S CRIMINAL CONVICTION

US election stumbles into new territory

AFP, New York

Torn apart and rewired by Donald Trump's historic criminal conviction, the 2024 presidential campaign moved into uncharted territory yesterday with all eyes on how the two main protagonists navigate the dangers.

Trump wasted no time in shifting from courtroom to campaign mode.

"I am a political prisoner!" he announced immediately after the guilty verdicts landed Thursday on all 34 charges in his New York hush-money trial.

In addition to the New York case, he faces three far more serious criminal indictments over his attempts to overturn his 2020 election loss to Joe Biden and hoarding of top-secret documents at his home in Florida.

Those cases, however, are not likely to go to trial before the November election.

And Trump has in any case turned what would immediately destroy an ordinary political career into a badge of honor, comparing himself to political prisoners like Nelson Mandela and telling supporters that the scandals prove his conspiracy theory about a "deep state" taking away his freedom.

Biden, by contrast, has so far avoided making Trump's multiple legal difficulties an issue. As president, he is keen to avoid giving ammunition to Republicans who claim he is meddling in the justice system.

Now he will have to decide



whether Trump's conviction changes the calculus.

Biden's campaign reacted to the verdicts by saying that "no one is above the law." It added, however, that the focus should turn to the election, because "the threat Trump poses to our democracy has never been greater."

Biden himself said nothing about the momentous events in New York.

Yesterday, he had a busy public schedule, including talks with the Belgian prime minister and a celebration for NFL Super Bowl champions the Kansas City Chiefs, which will offer frequent opportunities for him to make remarks to journalists.

Trump is now the first former US president ever convicted of a crime. He would be setting another, even more startling record if he wins on November 5 and replaces Biden in

the White House.

The jury found him guilty of falsifying business records to hide a payment meant to silence porn star Stormy Daniels and prevent her from publicizing an alleged sexual encounter that could have been fatal to his 2016 presidential campaign.

Prosecutors successfully laid out a case alleging the hush money and the illegal covering up of the payment was part of a broader crime to prevent voters from knowing about Trump's behavior just as he was about to face Hillary Clinton.

Robert F Kennedy, who is running as an independent in the presidential race, predicted on X that the New York trial would "backfire."

But Keith Gaddie, a political analyst and professor at Texas Christian University, said the political impact of the shocking events has yet to be determined.

Zelensky hails US weapons green light as 'step forward'

AFP, Stockholm

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky yesterday hailed a US decision to partially lift restrictions on using US-donated weapons to strike inside Russia as a "step forward".

Washington gave the green light on Thursday for Ukraine to use US weapons to defend its Kharkiv region on the border with Russia, overcoming previous concerns that authorising such strikes could drag Nato into a direct conflict with Russia.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said that US-made weapons "are already being used to attempt strikes on Russian territory". "This is quite eloquent evidence of the extent of US involvement in this conflict," he said. But, Nato head Jens Stoltenberg said: "Ukraine has the right for self-defence and we have the right to help Ukraine."

24 people dead in eastern India as temperatures soar

AGENCIES

At least 24 people died of suspected heatstroke in India's eastern states of Bihar and Odisha on Thursday, and the heatwave in the region is expected to continue until today, authorities said.

An Indian court has urged the government to declare a national emergency over the country's ongoing heatwave, saying that hundreds of people had died during weeks of extreme weather, reports AFP.

India has been experiencing a blisteringly hot summer and a part of capital Delhi recorded the country's highest ever temperature at 52.9 degrees Celsius this week, though that may be revised with the weather department checking the sensors of the weather station that registered the reading.

Decision

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its laws and regulations.

"After the examination, the committee will submit a report to the commission. A decision on the investigation will then be made based on the report," he said.

On Wednesday, SC lawyer Salah Uddin Reagan filed the petition with the anti-graft watchdog seeking probe into the alleged corruption by the former army chief.

In the petition, the lawyer said the US sanctions on corruption charges and subsequent reports in national newspapers have tarnished the image of Bangladesh and its army, both nationally and internationally.

On May 21, the US imposed sanctions on Aziz and his immediate family members for what it said was his involvement in significant corruption.

The lawyer said the actions of Aziz contributed to the undermining of Bangladesh's democratic institutions and the public's faith in public institutions and processes.

Aziz had been the chief of army staff from June 2018 to June 2021. Before that, he led Border Guard Bangladesh for four years from 2012.

EC summons

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Rangabali upazila on Thursday.

According to the electoral code of conduct of upazila polls, no MPs or ministers can take part in electioneering for any polls candidate.

The EC, in separate letters, also asked Saiduzzaman Mamun, Roushan Mridha and Ferdousi Parveen to appear before the commission to offer their explanation in this matter on the same day.

57 constituencies

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63.36 percent respectively.

Pollsters and political analysts differ on the possible outcome of the election, with lower voter turnout and urban voters' apathy seen as risks for BJP. The saffron party and its allies won 352 in the last election in 2019 with BJP alone winning 303 seats.

Cricket in uncharted territory

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Council (ICC) event to be held in part in the United States.

While the bulk of the tournament will be played out in the Caribbean, 16 group stage games in the 20-team tournament will be played on American soil, including the highlight of the group stage — a clash between India and Pakistan.

That match is due to be played at a 34,000-capacity temporary venue in Long Island, New York on June 9.

The rest of the tournament will be held in the West Indies, including the Super Eight stage,

the semifinals and the final, which will be played at Kensington Oval in Bridgetown, Barbados.

The ICC sees the tournament as a launch pad towards the sport's return to the Olympics for Los Angeles 2028, when the T20 format will be used.

Major League Cricket, a T20 tournament, was launched last year and also stands to benefit from any growth in interest in the big-hitting, spectacular shortest form.

The ICC also sees the T20 format as the perfect vehicle for growing the game and this year's edition will feature three

T20 World Cup debutants in the USA, Canada and Uganda.

Nepal, Papua New Guinea and Oman are among the other nations who are relatively new to the big stage and who will be looking to make their mark and grab some attention with an upset win.

With the teams drawn in four groups of five teams, with just the top two advancing, none of the smaller nations are expected to progress beyond the group stage and there is a danger the pool stage could mainly be a 'weeding out' process.

Unrest likely

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Inspector General involved in such criminal activities, and actions are being taken against them.

On the last day of his two-day visit to the Rohingya camps, the home minister yesterday held several meetings with different stakeholders of the Rohingya camp issues. He visited camp 19 in Ukhiya around 11:00am and held a meeting with members of Armed Police Battalion (APBn).

Inspector General of Police Chowdhury Abdullah Al Mamun, Additional IGP Anwar Hossain, APBn chief Salim Mohammad Jahangir, and Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner Mizanur Rahman accompanied the home minister during his visit to the camps.

After a law and order meeting on the Rohingya camps on Thursday night, the home minister

told reporters at Cox's Bazar Circuit House that no one from Myanmar will be allowed to enter Bangladesh.

He said the government aims to secure the country's border with Myanmar and ensure safety at the Rohingya camps by preventing terrorist activities.

Asaduzzaman directed police and the APBn to stop the violence in Rohingya camps.

Trump 'guilty on all 34 counts'

FROM PAGE 1

Trump, however, is not barred from continuing his battle to unseat President Joe Biden in November — even in the unlikely event he goes to prison.

But this guilty verdict still could sway November's presidential election. A poll from Bloomberg and Morning Consult earlier this year found that 53 percent of voters in key swing states would refuse to vote for the Republican if he were convicted.

Another poll, from Quinnipiac University this month, showed 6 percent of Trump voters would be less likely to vote for him — consequential in such a tight race.

In a press conference yesterday, Trump railed against his criminal conviction, calling his New York trial "very unfair", attacking the process as politicised and vowing to appeal.

"It was very unfair... You saw what happened to some of the witnesses that were on our side — they were literally crucified,"

Trump said in a rambling speech at Trump Tower in Manhattan in which he called his adversaries "sick" and "fascists."

He vowed to challenge his conviction on 34 counts of falsifying business records, declaring "We're going to be appealing this scam... on many different things."

Earlier, immediately after the conviction, Trump himself voiced defiance.

"I'm a very innocent man," Trump told reporters, vowing that the "real verdict" would come from voters on election day. He branded the trial "rigged" and a "disgrace."

Biden's campaign issued a statement saying the trial showed "no one is above the law." It added that "the threat Trump poses to our democracy has never been greater."

Judge Juan Merchan set sentencing for July 11 — four days before the Republican National Convention in Milwaukee, where Trump is due to receive the party's formal nomination.

The 12-member jury had deliberated for more than 11

hours over two days before the unanimous conclusion within a matter of minutes.

Merchan thanked the jurors for completing the "difficult and stressful task."

Their identities had been kept secret throughout proceedings, a rare practice more often seen in cases involving mafia or other violent defendants.

Trump also faces federal and state charges of conspiring to overturn the results of the 2020 election won by Biden, and for hoarding secret documents after leaving the White House.

However, those trials — on far weightier alleged crimes — are unlikely to get underway before the presidential election.

Trump was convicted of falsifying business records to reimburse his lawyer, Michael Cohen, for a \$130,000 payment to Daniels on the eve of the 2016 election, when her claim to have had sex with him could have proved fatal to his campaign against Hillary Clinton.

6.43 lakh

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While water levels in the Surma and Kushiyara rivers dropped yesterday, they flowed above the danger marks at three points.

With the rivers still flowing above the danger levels, parts of Sylhet city's Uposhor, Taltala, and other areas were freshly inundated yesterday.

The district administration has prepared 547 centres to provide shelter to those affected. A least 3,739 people were staying at the shelters yesterday, compared to 4,802 on Thursday night.

Sylhet Deputy Commissioner Sheikh Russel Hasan said, "The rain has largely subsided, and the overall flood situation is slowly improving, with many returning home from shelters. We have allocated sufficient relief goods for the affected people. We are monitoring the situation round the clock."

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