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## Proteas thump SL in Group D opener

AFP, New York  
South Africa beat Sri Lanka by a comfortable six-wicket margin in the teams' opening Group D match of the T20 World Cup in New York yesterday.

Proteas fast bowler Anrich Nortje took a remarkable four wickets for just seven runs as Sri Lanka were bowled out for just 77 — their lowest T20 total. But South Africa lost early wickets as they too struggled to time the ball before the big-hitting Heinrich Klaasen (19 not out) saw them to victory with 22 balls to spare. Quinton de Kock scored a team-high 20.

Nortje's figures, from his maximum four overs, were the best by a South African at a T20 World Cup, surpassing his own 4-10 against Bangladesh in Sydney two years ago.

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South Africa pacer Anrich Nortje (L) celebrates the dismissal of Sri Lanka's Kamindu Mendis in the first Group D match of ICC Men's T20 World Cup at Nassau County International Cricket Stadium in New York yesterday. Nortje's remarkable four-wicket haul helped the Proteas bundle out the 2014 champions for a lowly 77, paving the way for a six-wicket victory.

PHOTO: AFP

## Celesty posed as mastermind's wife to rent flat

### Court sends her to jail after confessional statement

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN and CHAITANYA CHANDRA HALDER

Celesty Rahman went to Kolkata and posed as the wife of Aktaruzzaman, alleged mastermind of MP Anwarul Azim Anar murder, to rent the flat where the lawmaker was killed.

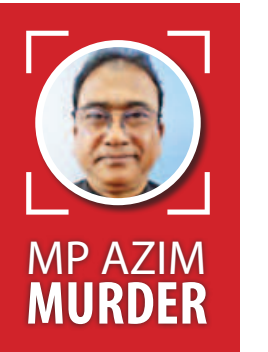
The two jointly prepared the lease document for the flat in Kolkata's New Town on April 25.

Celesty went to the flat on April 30 with Amanullah, the alleged hitman, and started staying there. She was given the responsibility to welcome the lawmaker on his arrival at the flat.

During the gruesome murder, she heard the sounds of Azim's body being dismembered, she said in her confessional statement made before a Dhaka court yesterday.

In her statement, Celesty disclosed details of the suspects and also gave a brief description of the

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## Anti-Ershad movement hero no more



Shafi Ahamed (1961-2024)

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former student leader and politician Shafi Ahamed passed away at a hospital in the capital yesterday evening after suffering cardiac arrest. He was 62. Ahamed was a key figure in the anti-autocracy movement, which eventually led to a mass uprising in 1990 that deposed military dictator Ershad.

His relative, Gazi Mozammel Hossain, also the education affairs secretary of Netrakona district unit Awami League, confirmed the news of his death.

"Shafi Ahamed was sleeping at his residence in the capital's Uttara this [Monday] afternoon. He suffered a heart attack in his sleep. He was rushed to a private hospital in Uttara,

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## Over 1m forced to flee Gaza city of Rafah

UNRWA says they live in 'unspeakable' conditions; 40 more Palestinians killed as Israel continues offensive

AGENCIES

Forced displacement has pushed over a million Palestinians away from the Gaza city of Rafah, the United Nations Palestinian refugee agency (UNRWA) said yesterday.

Thousands of families now shelter in damaged and destroyed facilities in the city of Khan Younis, where the agency is providing essential services despite "increasing challenges", UNRWA said, adding: "Conditions are unspeakable".

Since early May, Israel's military has been carrying out what it says is a limited operation in Rafah to root out Hamas fighters and dismantle infrastructure used by the Palestinian group that runs Gaza.

The Israeli military has told civilians to go to an "expanded humanitarian zone" some 20 km (12 miles) away.

Many Palestinians have complained they are vulnerable to Israeli attacks wherever they go, and have been moving up and down the Gaza Strip in the past few months.

Doubts were growing yesterday about a plan for a Gaza ceasefire and hostage release deal outlined by US President Joe Biden as heavy fighting raged for a third day since his White House address.

An Israeli government spokesperson quoted Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu as saying that US President Joe Biden, in advancing a plan to wind down the Gaza offensive, had published only some of the details.

"The war will be stopped for the purpose of returning hostages and then we will proceed with other discussions," spokesperson David Mencer quoted Netanyahu as saying, in what appeared a reiteration of Israel's refusal to call off the offensive against Hamas entirely before the group is destroyed.

But for now, the bombardments and combat showed no sign of easing in the Gaza offensive soon entering its ninth month that has devastated the Palestinian coastal territory of 2.4 million people, reports AFP.

Yesterday, the Israeli military said that over the past day its forces had struck "over 50 targets in the Gaza Strip". Gaza hospitals reported at least 19 people killed in overnight strikes.

Israel's offensive in the Gaza has killed at least 36,479 Palestinians and wounded 82,777 since October 7, the Palestinian enclave's health ministry said yesterday. Forty Palestinians have been killed and 150 wounded in the past 24 hours, the ministry said in a statement.

- » Doubts grow over Gaza truce plan
- » Egypt rejects Israeli presence at Rafah crossing
- » Death toll in enclave rises to 36,479

## Grameen Bank counsel sharpens barbs against Prof Yunus

### Yunus' lawyer bins 'false claims'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Grameen Bank's Chief Legal Adviser Masud Akhter yesterday said Nobel Laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus deceived 1.05 crore members of the bank and misappropriated their money, a claim Prof Yunus's lawyer vehemently denied.

"He is talking about curses. He has deceived 1.05 crore members of Grameen Bank. He has used and misappropriated their money for personal gains. Their curse has fallen upon him," he told reporters at a press briefing on the Supreme Court premises.

At a separate press briefing later in the day at the same place, Prof Yunus's lawyer Abdullah-Al-Mamun said there is no scope for embezzling Grameen Bank depositors' money under the rules of the Grameen Bank Ordinance, 1983, under which the bank was established.

The developments come after Grameen Bank went to the Anti-Corruption Commission, accusing



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## 642m voters cast ballots in election

### Says India EC, dismisses opposition concerns over ballot count

REUTERS, New Delhi

India's Election Commission (EC) said yesterday a record-breaking 642 million voters cast their ballots in the general election that concluded on June 1 and dismissed opposition concerns over how the votes would be counted.

The seven-phase vote — the world's largest — began on April 19 and was held in scorching summer heat in many parts of the country, with temperatures rising to nearly 50 degrees Celsius (122°F) in some north and northwestern regions.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is seeking a third consecutive term and his Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led alliance is projected to win a big majority, TV exit polls said on Saturday, ahead of the counting today.

"We have created a world record of 642 million proud Indian voters. This is a historic moment," Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar told reporters.

Although the 2024 turnout is higher than the 612 million voters who cast their ballots in 2019, it is about one percentage point lower than the 67.4 percent turnout five years back.

Turnout among 968 million registered voters was possibly lower in the initial phases because there was no single major issue to draw voters out in the heat, analysts said.

Kumar said the vote-counting process had been in place for decades and was "very robust".

"All work will be done transparently. If someone still tries to do something wrong, strict action will be taken," he said.

His comments on the vote-counting process came a day after the opposition INDIA alliance, led by Rahul Gandhi's Congress party, urged the commission to follow norms during counting.

The alliance of two dozen parties petitioned the EC to stick to its old system of completing counting postal votes before declaring

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## STATE SECRETS CASE

### Ex-Pak PM Imran Khan acquitted

REUTERS, Islamabad

A High Court in Pakistan yesterday acquitted jailed former prime minister Imran Khan from a conviction on charges of leaking state secrets, his lawyer and his party said, but Khan will remain in prison for now due to a conviction in another case.

Khan, 71, was sentenced to 10 years in prison by a lower court on charges of making public a classified cable sent to Islamabad by Pakistan's ambassador in Washington in 2022.

Shah Mehmood Qureshi, who was Khan's foreign minister during his tenure from 2018-2022, was also acquitted of the charges.

"Thank God, the sentence is overturned," a spokesman for legal affairs from Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party, Naeem Panjutha, said in a post on the X social media platform.

Despite the acquittal, Khan will remain in prison, having also been convicted in another case relating to his marriage to his third wife, Bushra Khan, contravening Islamic traditions.

Khan said on May 30 that February's national election was stolen from his party, describing it as the "biggest robbery of a public mandate".

Khan, speaking in the Supreme Court via video link from Adyala jail in the garrison city of Rawalpindi, said he was being held in solitary confinement.

His remarks were the first to be heard in open court since he was jailed in August.



A Palestinian man carries the body of a young relative, killed by an Israeli airstrike the previous night, during preparations for a funeral outside the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in Deir al-Balah in the central Gaza Strip yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

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## 'Drug dealer' shot dead in 'gunfight' with BGB

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

A suspected drug dealer was shot dead in a reported gunfight with members of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) in Ramu upazila, Cox's Bazar, early yesterday.

The incident took place in the Maricha area under Garjania union around 5:00am, said BGB Public Relations Officer Shariful Islam, in a statement.

The deceased was identified as Nezam Uddin, of the Khurushkul area under Cox's Bazar Sadar upazila. He walked out of jail six months ago after getting bail in a murder case, the release said.

According to the statement, around 150-200 drug smugglers, led by Nezam, opened fire at a BGB patrol team from Battalion II (Naikhongchhari) in Maricha.

When BGB troops returned fire in self-defence, the smugglers were forced to fall back and flee the scene.

Afterwards, at least 98 cartons of