

INDIAN STATE POLLS First phase of voting held in West Bengal Polls held in Kerala

AFP, Kolkata

Voting began yesterday in two of India's politically key opposition-held states, with tens of millions casting ballots in West Bengal and the southern Tamil Nadu.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party, the ruling party in the national parliament, is hoping to make inroads in the opposition strongholds.

In West Bengal, which has a population of over 100 million, polling opened in the first phase to elect members from 152 constituencies of the 294-seat legislative assembly.

The second phase, covering the remaining 142 seats, will be held on April 29.

Modi's BJP has waged an aggressive bid to dislodge West Bengal's Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, the firebrand leader of the All India Trinamool Congress (TMC), which has been in power in the state since 2011. Mamata's party won 213 of the 294 seats in the 2021 election.

In Tamil Nadu, which has a population of over 80 million, polling for the 234-member assembly is being conducted yesterday in a single phase, with the ruling Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam facing off against its long-time rival, the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam.

The BJP, a junior ally of AIADMK in Tamil Nadu, has struggled to make significant electoral gains in the southern state.

Results for both elections will be released on May 4.



Security brings the son of Iran's last shah, exiled Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi, into a car after he was splashed with red liquid by an activist after a press conference at the BPK building in Berlin, yesterday. Reza Pahlavi yesterday argued that any negotiations with the clerical leadership in Tehran amount to "appeasement" and voiced hope that renewed street protests will topple it. PHOTO: AFP

Hackers steal \$2.5m from Sri Lanka finance ministry

AFP, Colombo

Cyber criminals hacked into the Sri Lankan finance ministry's computer system and siphoned off \$2.5 million, the government said yesterday, the most amount of cash ever stolen by hackers from a state institution in the debt-saddled country.

The cyber attack is a major blow to Sri Lanka, which is recovering from a crippling economic crisis in 2022 after Colombo defaulted on its \$46 billion external debt.

The money was destined for debt repayment to Australia, a finance ministry official told reporters.

Four senior officers at the Public Debt Management Office (PDMO) were suspended after the breach, he said.

TARGETED KILLING OF JOURNALISTS Lebanon leaders accuse Israel of war crime

AFP, Beirut

Lebanon's president and prime minister yesterday accused Israel of a war crime, after an airstrike killed a Lebanese journalist in the country's south, where Israeli forces occupy several areas.

Rescuers and the reporter's employer on Wednesday confirmed the death of Amal Khalil, a 42-year-old journalist who worked for the Lebanese daily Al-Akbar.

The civil defence agency said she was killed in a strike on a house in the village of al-Tiril.

"Israel deliberately targets journalists in order to conceal the truth about its crimes against Lebanon," said President Joseph Aoun, in a statement denouncing "war crimes."

Prime Minister Nawaf Salam wrote on X that "targeting journalists and obstructing access for rescue teams constitutes a war crime," adding that his government would take the attack to international bodies.

A 10-day ceasefire has been in effect in Lebanon since Friday, pausing the war between Israel and the pro-Iranian Hezbollah that has left more than 2,400 dead in Lebanon.

Khalil and another journalist had taken refuge in a house in al-Tiri after an Israeli airstrike targeted a car in front of them, according to Lebanon's National News Agency (NNA).

It said the two occupants of the vehicle, the mayor of the nearby Israeli-occupied town of Bint Jbeil and a man

with him, were killed.

An Israeli strike then targeted the house where the two journalists had taken refuge.

The health ministry said the attack wounded journalist Zeinab Faraj -- who was taken to hospital -- and left Khalil trapped.

A Lebanese Red Cross official had told AFP they had "managed to rescue Zeinab Faraj" but had not reached Khalil and withdrew "because of a warning strike".

Lebanese authorities had to contact UN peacekeepers deployed in southern



Lebanon, and it took several hours before rescue workers could regain access to the area to recover the journalist's body from the rubble.

Khalil, known for her courage and respected by her colleagues, had covered various wars in the region.

On March 28, three journalists were killed in an Israeli airstrike in the south, and UN experts called for an international investigation.

Attack on Pak mining project kills 10; 8 injured

AFP, Quetta

A group of militants killed at least 10 people, including a Turkish national, at a copper and gold mining project in Pakistan's southwestern Balochistan province, officials said yesterday, with another Turk taken hostage.

About 40 militants on motorcycles and other vehicles stormed the mining project site of Pakistani company National Resources Private Limited in Chagai district on Wednesday.

"At least 10 people were killed in the incident, including a Turkish national, six workers, and three guards," a local administration official told AFP on condition of anonymity because he was not authorised to speak to the media.

No group claimed responsibility, but local ethnic separatist groups have intensified their attacks in the region in recent years, including on mining projects.

The Turk and three guards were killed when a fuel tanker at the mine exploded during the attack, the official said. "The militants also abducted one Turkish national during the attack," he said.

Balochistan is Pakistan's poorest province and largest by landmass. Baloch separatists accuse Pakistan's government of exploiting the province's natural gas and abundant mineral resources without benefiting the local population.

Climate issue scrubbed from G7 climate meeting!

AFP, Paris

Environment ministers from G7 nations yesterday launched a two-day meeting in Paris, with climate change kept off the agenda to avoid a row with the United States.

The office of France's ecology minister Monique Barbut had said the Group of Seven would focus on "less contentious issues" to appease its largest and most powerful member, drawing criticism from activists.

Barbut said the G7 "must remain a forum for convergence" and France as host was prioritising unity at a time when environmental protection was slipping down the global agenda.

"I hope we can send a strong message of unity and ambition", Barbut said at the opening of the meeting.

Italy, Canada, Japan, Germany and the United Kingdom sent their environment ministers to Paris, but Washington dispatched Usha-Maria Turner, an assistant administrator at the US Environmental Protection Agency.

Ocean conservation, funding for biodiversity, and the transformation of dry areas into desert are on the agenda, among other broad environmental themes.

President Donald Trump's administration has withdrawn the United States from global agreements on climate change and weakened environmental protections since he returned to office in 2025.



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Corrigendum Notice-2

Ref. No. 28.19.0000.701.40.11.26/589 Date: 23-04-2026

Subject: Invitation for the Enlistment (IFE) as a Potential LNG Supplier for Supplying LNG on Spot Basis.

This is to notify all concerned that the following amendment has been made for Ref. No. 28.19.0000.701.40.11.26/589 dated 19-03-2026 regarding the Invitation for the Enlistment (IFE) as a potential LNG supplier to supply LNG on Spot basis:

| Description | Amendment Particulars |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Application Closing Date, Time | The application closing date has been extended to 30 April 2026 at 12.30pm (BST) instead of 23 April 2026 at 12.30pm. |

All other terms and conditions of the original notice/documents shall remain unchanged. This corrigendum shall be treated as an integral part of the original IFE documents.

This notice is available on websites: <https://rp&cl.org.bd/>; <https://petrobangla.org.bd/>; <https://emrd.gov.bd/> and <https://bppa.gov.bd/>.

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GD-904

বাংলাদেশ বিদ্যুৎ উন্নয়ন বোর্ড
Bangladesh Power Development Board
Directorate of Purchase
Biddu Bhaban (12th Floor)
1, Abdul Goni Road, Dhaka-1000
Email: dir.Purchase@bpdb.gov.bd

e-Tender Notice

The following e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of:

| Sl No. | Tender ID No. | Package No. | Reference No. | Description of goods/works | Tender document last selling date and time | Closing date and time | Opening date and time |
|--------|---------------|----------------|---|--|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 | 1555392 | GRF-1 Fy-25/26 | 27.11.0000.304.26.137.26 Date: 22/04/2026 | Supply of 110 V3.5 (6) A 3-Phse, 4-wire Programmable Energy Meter. | 17-Jun 2026 17.00 | 18-Jun 2026 14.00 | 18-Jun 2026 14.00 |

This is online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted.

To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required.

The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank branches.

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

For more details please contract to the PE's Support Desk (01768595879).

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Md. Shahedul Azim
ID No. 1-01460
Director
Directorate of Purchase
BPDB, Dhaka

GD-907

UK, France agree 3-year deal to stop illegal crossings

AFP, Paris

Britain and France have agreed a new three-year deal to stop undocumented migrants making the risky journey across the Channel in small boats, the two sides announced.

Under the deal, France pledged to increase law enforcement on the coast by more than half to fight irregular migration to Britain -- reaching 1,400 officers by 2029.

Britain will meanwhile provide up to 766 million euros in funding -- though nearly a quarter of that will be conditional.

The cross-Channel neighbours have wrangled for months over renewing the Sandhurst treaty, which sets out the UK's financial contribution to French efforts to stop migrants attempting the perilous sea crossing to Britain. The UK has accused France of doing too little to prevent would-be asylum seekers from setting off from French shores.

ARMY INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC INSTITUTE (AIII) JOLSHIRI, DHAKA

Admissions open for July 2026-June 2027 Session...

| Class | Age |
|---------|-----|
| PG | 3+ |
| Nursery | 4+ |
| KG | 5+ |
| Class I | 6+ |

Forms Available at:

- www.aiii.edu.bd
- All Office at ASCB, Banani, Dhaka Cantonment
- (Near Army Stadium)

Admission Process:

- Apply Online or Manually
- Shortlisted Students will be called for interview
- Discussion with parents
- Final Selection for Admission

Application Begins on 01 May 2026 and Deadline to Apply is 15 June 2026

Our Vision: To be a reputed Islamic Institute that raises generations of knowledge-based Muslims.

Our Mission: Shaping students into righteous leaders through Islamic guidance and continued academic excellence for success Here and in Hereafter.

Our Objectives:

- Develop students' moral and spiritual character.
- Provide a strong foundation in the Quran, Sunnah and Islamic practices.
- Nurture globally competitive leaders through academic excellence and modern science and technology
- Cultivate a supportive and spiritually uplifting Environment.
- Engage families and community in the pursuit of Islamic Values.

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- ✓ Separate Wings for Boys and Girls
- ✓ Separate Prayer Facilities for Boys and Girls
- ✓ Modern Classroom
- ✓ Outdoor and Indoor Playing facilities
- ✓ Library and Labs
- ✓ Research and Development Wing
- ✓ Food shop and Stationary Stores
- ✓ Transportation Facilities
- ✓ Parents' Waiting Shed

আই এস পি আর/সেনা/৩৬৯

GD-906