

## World News Roundup

## Subcontinent

**PMLN wins majority:** Pakistan's ruling party has won a majority of seats in local elections, according to unofficial results released on Sunday, dashing opposition hopes of making gains in Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's Punjab power base.

Millions of Pakistanis voted on Saturday in local government polls seen as a referendum on Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PMLN) party midway through its term heading a national coalition government in Islamabad.

The opposition, led by international cricket star turned politician Imran Khan, was hoping to build up nation-wide support to challenge Sharif at the next general election.

According to unofficial results based on media tallies, the PMLN led with 1001 out of 2,696 seats in the vote. Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) party only won 231 seats while independent candidates won 854 seats. (RTRS)



Sharif

**Pak anti-Taleban hero dies:** A Pakistani nationalist hero who defied the Taleban in Swat Valley and survived more than 10 assassination attempts by the insurgents has died peacefully of liver disease at the age of 89, his family said Monday.

Prominent Pashtun leader Afzal Khan Lala was feted nationwide after his stand in Swat, where he vowed he would stay despite multiple attacks on his home by the Taleban and a bloody military offensive that displaced millions.

He was buried late Sunday in the scenic valley after he passed away in a military hospital in the garrison city of Rawalpindi, his nephew told AFP.

In 2007 the valley — previously a popular international tourist destination, which lies in the shadow of the Hindu Kush in the northwestern province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa — fell under the control of the Pakistani Taleban.

Radical cleric Maulana Fazlullah mounted a violent campaign in which his followers beheaded opponents, burnt schools and fought to enforce Islamic sharia law. (AFP)

**Publishers burn books:** Angry publishers burnt books and closed their businesses in Bangladesh Monday, in the third day of protests over the latest gruesome attacks on secular writers and publishers by suspected hardline Islamists.

Hundreds of people, including bookshop owners, took to the streets of Dhaka to protest perceived government inaction over a string of attacks including the machete murder on Saturday of a publisher of secular books.

"This is not an isolated incident. They first started killing authors, then the bloggers and now they've targeted the publishers," Mustafa Selim, head of the Bangladesh Creative Publishers Society, told reporters.

Rallies were also held in other cities and towns to demand more protection for publishers, bloggers and writers, some of whom have fled the country or gone into hiding, rally organisers said in a statement.

Fears of Islamist violence have been rising in mainly moderate Muslim-majority Bangladesh after four atheist bloggers were murdered this year, also by machete-wielding attackers. (AFP)

**Police kill Indian protester:**

Nepali police shot and killed an Indian citizen at a border checkpoint on Monday as they tried to clear protesters whose blockade has strangled Nepal's fuel supplies and badly damaged relations between the neighbours.

Nepal has faced an acute fuel crisis for more than a month since protesters in the lowland south, angered that a new constitution fails to reflect their interests, prevented supply trucks from entering from India.

Many in Nepal see India's hand in the protests although it denies any role. With the landlocked Himalayan nation of 28 million recovering from its worst earthquake on record, the government has turned to China for extra fuel. Officials said some Chinese oil was due to arrive in Kathmandu late on Monday.

Hundreds of stick-wielding protesters battled with police near the border crossing, known as the "friendship bridge", in Birgunj district, television pictures showed. (RTRS)

**Sri Lanka deports teen:** Sri Lanka on Monday deported a Maldivian teenager wanted in an investigation into an explosion on a boat carrying Maldives President Abdulla Yameen, government and high commission officials said.

The deportation comes after the US Federal Bureau of Investigation said it had found no conclusive evidence that the Sept 28 explosion was caused by a bomb.

Yameen, 56, was unhurt in the blast as his presidential boat approached the capital Male while he was returning from Saudi Arabia after the Hajj pilgrimage, but his wife and two aides were injured.

Sri Lanka's immigration officials deported an 18-year old Maldivian national, but declined to give details.

"On the request from the Maldivian High Commission, an (immigration) investigation team arrested the Maldivian and sent him back in a flight today after cancelling his visa," Lakshan Zoysa, a spokesman for the immigration office, told Reuters. (RTRS)



In this handout photograph released by the Indian Defence Ministry on Nov 1, a BrahMos supersonic cruise missile is test-fired from newly commissioned indigenous guided missile destroyer, the INS Kochi. Conducted off India's west coast, the missile hit a target in the form of a decommissioned naval ship, marking a major step in the operationalisation of the Navy's latest guided-missile stealth destroyer. (AFP)

## Asia

**Military warns dissident:** Thai soldiers warned the daughter of an assassinated dissident commander on Monday not to do anything to disturb the country after she staged a symbolic protest in support of ousted former prime minister Yingluck Shinawatra.

The army seized power in a coup in 2014, toppling Yingluck's government in another convulsion in a decade of confrontation between the establishment and Yingluck's brother, former telecoms tycoon and ousted populist premier Thaksin Shinawatra.

The military government has banned gatherings and put controls on the media while Thaksin remains abroad to avoid a graft conviction he says was politically motivated and Yingluck faces her own corruption charges that she too denies.

Khattiyah Sawasdiapol, daughter of a prominent pro-Thaksin military commander, posted a picture of herself on Sunday wearing a red shirt, the colour Thaksin and his supporters adopted to set themselves apart from the yellow of their royalist, pro-military establishment rivals.

She also posted comments critical of junta leader Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha, prompting the warning.

"They wanted to meet me over comments I posted and told me not to do anything to disturb the country," Khattiyah told Reuters.

"I said I am a politician and if I see something wrong I need to speak."

Junta spokesman Colonel Winthai Suvarree declined to comment.

A sniper shot dead Khattiyah's father, Major-General Khattiyah Sawasdiapol, on a Bangkok street while he was overseeing a protest by Thaksin's supporters against the then pro-establishment government in May, 2010. No one has been charged with his killing. (RTRS)

**'Jailing politically motivated':**

Imprisoned Malaysian opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim was prosecuted for political reasons and should be released, a UN body concluded after reviewing the case widely seen as politically motivated. The government rejected the findings and called for the legal process to be respected.

Anwar began serving a five-year jail sentence in February after the country's top court ruled that he sodomized a former male aide in 2008. His case has been seen as intended to eliminate any threats to the ruling coalition, whose popularity has eroded in the last two elections.

The UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention found Anwar was denied a fair trial and his jailing was politically motivated. It called for his immediate release, according to a letter from the group seen Monday. Its full report is not yet available.

Anwar's daughter, Nurul Izzah Anwar, said she hopes the government will abide by the group's conclusion.

"I am deeply grateful that the United Nations has called for Anwar's release," said Nurul Izzah, a lawmaker. "Its strong stance in solidarity with my father sends a clear and unequivocal message to Prime Minister Najib Razak, and ensures that the sharp decline in human rights under his administration will not go unnoticed."

The government reiterated that Anwar's trial was "a criminal, not a political case" as it was brought against him by a private individual. It also said the final verdict was reached by the courts after an exhaustive and comprehensive legal process over many years. (AP)

**Ban hits out at 'speech':** UN



Bangladesh freedom fighters who fought in the 1971 war of independence with Pakistan take part in a protest, calling for the death penalty for those convicted of war crimes outside the Supreme Court in Dhaka on Nov 2. Bangladesh's highest court on Nov 2 rejected a plea by a death-row opposition politician that it summon several high-profile witnesses to testify including a former Pakistani premier. The Supreme Court decision has dealt a 'big blow' to the hopes of Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury to avoid execution he faces for committing atrocities during Bangladesh's 1971 war of independence against Pakistan. (AFP)



Bernardo



Joel

**Reporter shot dead**

A Philippine radio reporter has been shot dead, police and colleagues said Monday, in the latest attack in a country known for dozens of unsolved killings of journalists.

Jose Bernardo, 44, was shot repeatedly by one of two suspects aboard a motorcycle outside a Manila restaurant late Saturday and died later in hospital, police said.

He had told his family he was meeting an unnamed person, according to authorities.

No suspects have been arrested in the attack, which also wounded a restaurant worker, and authorities said they were checking whether it was linked to Bernardo's work as a reporter.

"We denounce this killing regardless of the motive. It shows that there is still a culture of impunity at work," the Philippines' National Press Club president Joel Sy Egco told AFP.

Bernardo was a reporter and broadcaster for Manila's DWBL radio station, as well as a reporter for DWIZ, another station in the capital, Egco added. Staff at both stations did not have any immediate comment on the attack.

"It's possible the attack was work-related or due to a personal quarrel," chief inspector Rodolfo Marcelo told DZMM radio. (AFP)

Secretary General Ban Ki-moon hit out Monday at "extreme elements" in Myanmar who are sowing hate speech and bigotry towards religious minorities, days before the country votes in landmark elections.

## India

**Modi hits back at critics**

## PM faces tight election

NEW DELHI, Nov 2, (Agencies): Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, battling to win power in the big heartland state of Bihar and push his stalled economic reforms, hit back at his critics on Monday for trying to paint a picture of intolerance in the country.

Rivals say the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party is whipping up religious tensions to win the election in Bihar, the country's third most populous state and critical to Modi's plans to improve his party's strength in the upper house of parliament.

Modi's administration has faced a rising tide of criticism for failing to rein in hardline Hindu groups that are campaigning for issues such as cow worship in a multi-faith country.

But Modi, addressing a political rally in Purnea, sidestepped the criticism and accused his long-time foe, the Congress party, of playing partisan politics. Re-opening a sensitive chapter in recent history, Modi said that hundreds of Sikhs were massacred in Delhi by supporters of the Congress soon after the assassination of prime minister Indira Gandhi by her Sikh bodyguards in November 1984.

"Should the Congress be giving lessons in tolerance?" he said to thunderous applause from supporters wearing saffron headbands. "Sikh families in Delhi are still grieving. Have you tried to wipe their tears?"

Modi himself has faced allegations that he looked the other way or was complicit in attacks on Muslims in

Gujarat state that he governed after a mob set a train carrying Hindu pilgrims on fire. He has denied the charges and a Supreme Court ordered investigation absolved him of any wrongdoing.

Hindus make up around 80 percent of India's 1.2 billion population, followed by Muslims, Sikhs and Christians.

Since the BJP swept to power, Hindu groups have stepped up a campaign against intermarriage with Muslims as "love jihad", begun rewriting school textbooks to reflect a nationalist view and are demanding a ban on cow slaughter. Last month a Muslim man was beaten to death by a mob for eating beef and another was murdered for espousing atheism, stoking fears for India's tradition of tolerance.

"There is extreme intolerance," Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan told India Today television channel, the latest artist to speak up after a string of writers returned awards given by the government in protest against attacks on religious minorities.

Central Bank governor Raghuram Rajan also called for greater tolerance.

Modi didn't respond to those comments, but promised voters that he would lift Bihar out of poverty. Control of Bihar, which lies next to most populous Uttar Pradesh, is key to Modi's ambition to secure a majority in the upper house of parliament.

**Also:**

**NEW DELHI:** New Delhi has failed to

collect a new "pollution toll" from trucks entering the city, officials said Monday, just one day after the levy was introduced to improve air quality in the choked city.

India's top court last month approved a four-month trial plan to charge light commercial vehicles an extra 700 rupees (\$11) and 1,300 rupees for large trucks entering Delhi, blamed for much of the filthy air in the world's most polluted city.

But private contractors collecting existing tolls for the city refused to enforce the Supreme Court's directive from Nov 1, citing a lack of clear instructions from Delhi authorities

**NEW DELHI:** An Indian court is expected Tuesday to sentence an Uber driver for raping a female passenger in New Delhi, a case that sparked fresh fears in a city hit by sexual violence.

**Shiv Kumar Yadav** could face life in jail for the rape and abduction of his 25-year-old passenger as she returned home from dinner with friends last December. A Delhi court convicted Yadav of four charges last month but sentencing was delayed because of a shortage of police in the Indian capital, where a summit of African leaders was being held at the time.

"The final argument on quantum (of punishment) and sentencing will happen in the second half of tomorrow," public prosecutor **Atul Shrivastava** told AFP on Monday.

Myanmar heads to the polls next Sunday in what observers are hoping will be the fairest election for decades as the nation slowly shakes off almost a half-century of brutal military rule.

But the vote is taking place against a

rising tide of anti-Muslim sentiment, spear-headed by a small but increasingly influential movement of hardline Buddhist nationalist monks.

In a statement put out by his office, Ban Ki-moon said he had "deep concern"

about "the continuous resort to hate speech, the incitement of communal animosities and the abuse of religion for political purposes resorted to by extreme elements among the majority community in Myanmar". (AFP)

**China seeks to up Iran air force 'cooperation'**

BEIJING, Nov 2, (RTRS): China wants to step up cooperation with Iran's air force, the head of the Chinese air force told his Iranian counterpart on Monday, the latest in a series of high-level military contacts.

Ma Xiaotian told Hassan Shah Safi that relations between the two air forces had developed smoothly.

"(We) hope that cooperation can go up another level," Ma said, according to a statement issued by China's Defence Ministry, which did not elaborate.

A senior Chinese admiral visited Tehran last month and last year, for the first time ever, two Chinese warships docked at Iran's Bandar Abbas port to take part in a joint naval exercise in the Gulf and an Iranian admiral was given tours of a Chinese submarine and warships.



A woman, accompanied by her young family members, writes the name of a loved one on a cross at a mass graveyard for victims of typhoon Haiyan during All-Saints' Day in Tacloban City, Leyte province, central Philippines on Nov 1. Millions of people in the Philippines made their annual pilgrimages to family gravesites on Nov 1 in a tradition that combines fervent Catholic faith with the country's penchant for festivity. (AFP)