

Lat/Am

Montt leaves bitter legacy

Alvarado wins C. Rica elections

SAN JOSE, Costa Rica, April 2, (Agencies): Voters gave a resounding no to an evangelical pastor who rose to political prominence by campaigning against same-sex marriage, allowing Costa Rica's governing party to win an easy presidential victory.

While polls had indicated Sunday's runoff would be tight, it was not even close. **Carlos Alvarado**, a novelist and former Cabinet minister running for the ruling Citizen Action Party, won by a wide margin.



Alvarado

The Supreme Electoral Council said that with 95 percent of ballots counted late Sunday, Carlos Alvarado had 60.8 percent of the votes, and evangelical Fabricio Alvarado of the National Restoration party had 39.2 percent. The two men are not related.

Fabricio Alvarado had been viewed as political also-ran when he entered the presidential contest, though he enjoyed high name recognition for his evangelism and for working on one of Costa Rica's main TV newscasts. But he spoke out strongly against a call by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights for Costa Rica to allow same-sex marriage and he finished first in the election's first round in February.

Carlos Alvarado, who finished second to get the final spot in the runoff, spoke in favor of letting gays wed.

**Candidates slam Trump:** Mexico's top presidential candidates launched their campaigns Sunday vowing to take a harder line against Donald Trump, with the leftist front-runner saying his country is done being the US president's "pinata."

Just as candidates were putting the finishing touches on their opening campaign speeches for Mexico's July 1 elections, Trump gatecrashed the kick-off party via Twitter, accusing the country of doing "very little" to stop illegal migration and drugs, and renewing his threat to axe the North American Free Trade Agreement

(NAFTA). The veteran leftist leading in the polls, Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, and his conservative rival, Ricardo Anaya, both hit back at the Republican president, whose anti-Mexican diatribes and insistence that Mexico pay for his planned border wall have made him supremely unpopular here.

"Neither Mexico nor its people will be the pinata of any foreign government," Lopez Obrador told a cheering crowd in Ciudad Juarez, on the US border.

**6 Mexican police killed:** Seven people including at least six police were killed Sunday in a prison riot in eastern Mexico, authorities said, the latest outburst of deadly violence in the country's jails.

Police were trying to transport a group of "highly dangerous" prisoners from the La Toma prison in Veracruz state when inmates attacked the six officers, locked them in an enclosed space and set it on fire, the state government said.

"The inmates started a fire, causing six police officers to die of smoke inhalation," it said in a statement.

A seventh person who has yet to be identified was also killed, it said.

Fifteen police officers were hospitalized with injuries. Seven inmates were also wounded in the riot, two of them seriously.

**Montt leaves bitter legacy:** Former Guatemalan military dictator Efraim Rios Montt died at the age of 91 on Sunday, a bitterly divisive figure in the country's long civil war who escaped a 2013 genocide conviction only to face renewed charges last year.

At the time of his death, which his lawyer, Luis Rosales, announced, Rios Montt was again on trial for genocide for his role during one of the bloodiest phases of the Cold War-era conflict that lasted from 1960 until 1996.

"He died facing justice," tweeted Claudia Paz y Paz, a former Guatemalan attorney general who was instrumental in bringing charges against members of the military accused of committing atrocities during the civil war.

"Thank you to the survivors for their dignity and bravery. May it never happen again," Paz y Paz added.



View of the funeral of former Guatemalan dictator (1982-1983), retired General Jose Efraim Rios Montt, arriving at the cemetery, in Guatemala City on April 1, 2018 aged 91, sources close to his family said. One of his lawyers, Jaime Hernandez, told reporters that Rios Montt died of heart failure in his home. (AFP)

Guatemala between 1982 and 1983 and who was facing retrial on genocide charges, died on April 1, 2018 aged 91, sources close to his family said. One of his lawyers, Jaime Hernandez, told reporters that Rios Montt died of heart failure in his home. (AFP)

Africa

**18 killed in Boko Haram attack:** Boko Haram killed at least 18 people and wounded scores in coordinated attacks overnight on a military camp and villages around the flash-point Nigerian city of Maiduguri, which they also tried to infiltrate across a defensive trench, officials said Monday.

The brazen operation — which unfolded around the very city where Boko Haram was born — turned the spotlight on the authorities' struggle to quell the jihadists' nearly nine-year-old offensive.

Boko Haram fighters attacked a military base in the Cashew Plantation area at the entrance to the city with suicide bombers, mortars and guns, leading to a prolonged battle, a senior military officer in Maiduguri said.

"Eighteen Boko Haram terrorists on foot attacked the military base while seven suicide bombers targeted residents of nearby Bale Shuwar and Alikaranti villages at 8:50 pm (19:50 GMT)," said the officer who asked not to be identified because he was not authorised to speak about the incident. (AFP)

**Ethiopia's new PM vows reforms:** Ethiopia's new prime minister, **Abiy Ahmed**, promised on Monday to push through democratic reforms in an effort to end three years of unrest that first erupted in the province of Oromiya from where he hails.

The ruling coalition picked Abiy last week to replace Hailemariam Desalegn, who quit to clear the way for reforms in Ethiopia, Africa's second most populous nation and one of its

fastest growing economies. After taking the oath of office, the former army lieutenant general struck a conciliatory tone towards the opposition but did not mention the possibility of lifting a six-month emergency rule imposed in February after Hailemariam resigned. (RTRS)

**Bloc satisfied with S. Leone vote:** The West African bloc ECOWAS declared itself "satisfied" with Sierra Leone's run-off presidential vote, as vote counting continued Sunday, while noting intimidating levels of security at some polling stations.

The second round vote pitted challenger **Julius Maada Bio** of the opposition Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP), against the ruling All Peoples' Congress (APC) candidate Samura Kamara, a close ally of outgoing President Ernest Bai Koroma.

Bio came out narrowly ahead in the first round of voting last month, but the result of Saturday's run-off election is not expected before Monday or Tuesday, after all the votes from 11,000 polling stations are counted in the



Ahmed



Bio

poor West African nation. "We are on the view that the election took place in an environment that (was) peaceful, that the process was transparent and credible," Amos Sawyer, head of the monitoring group sent by the 15-nation ECOWAS, said Sunday.. (AFP)

**Cuba asked to recall envoy:** Zambian President Edgar Lungu on Sunday requested that Cuba recall its ambassador for allegedly expressing support for a new opposition party.

Cuban ambassador Nelson Pages Vilas reportedly attended the launch of the "Socialist Party" on Saturday in Lusaka and was accused of publicly saying that he supported the party.

"The president has directed that the Cuban ambassador be recalled for behaviour that is unbecoming of a diplomat," presidential spokesman Amos Chanda told reporters. (AFP)

**4 Ugandans killed in attack:** Heavily-armed Al-Shebab militants attacked an African Union military camp outside Mogadishu on Sunday, killing four Ugandan peacekeepers, their army said.

Local sources said a massive blast was heard in the Bulomarer district, around 150 kms (93 miles) south of Mogadishu, and fighting broke out after dozens of heavily armed Shebab militants stormed the base.

"The heavy blast struck the base before fighting broke out.

We are hearing the militants used a minibus loaded with explosives to make their way in before the heavily armed confrontation started at the camp," said local security official Ibrahim Abdilahi. (AFP)

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