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BNP bags Khulna, Rajshahi mayorships

AL stuns BNP in Dhaka, Ctg

Star Report

The main opposition Awami League was poised to score significant political victories in the country's two major cities as the first-ever direct city corporation polls, held simultaneously in Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna and Rajshahi, were held generally peacefully yesterday.

In a stunning reversal of fortunes for the ruling party, Mohammad Hanif, the AL's mayoral candidate in the capital, was leading his nearest rival former mayor Mirza Abbas of the BNP by a comfortable margin, according to preliminary reports received from the Election Commission (EC) early Monday morning. Similarly, the AL's ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury was well ahead of his BNP

rival — another ex-mayor — in the country's second city Chittagong.

In Khulna and Rajshahi, however, the BNP nominees — Shaikh Tayebur Rahman and Mizanur Rahman Minu respectively — had been declared winners, according to unofficial results released by the EC last night.

According to the unofficial results released by the EC, the AL's mayoral candidate bagged 3,00,811 votes against the BNP's 2,42,621 in the ballots of 504 out of 737 polling centres counted in Dhaka. Hanif was leading in 361 of the centres while Abbas was ahead in 143 centres.

Hanif was steadily increasing

his lead, which was over 58,000 votes, at the time of going to press.

In Chittagong, the Awami League mayor candidate had won 1,44,768 votes against 1,15,036 for the BNP in counting at 248 of the total 334 polling centres.

In Khulna, in unofficial results from all 208 centres, the BNP's Shaikh Tayebur Rahman bagged 77,487 votes. AL's Mahbul Alam Hiron got 63,654 votes, the Jatiya Party's S M A Rab received 41,250 and the Jamaat's Md Golam Parwar garnered 24,703 votes.

Unofficial results of all 88 centres of Rajshahi gave the BNP's mayor nominee Mizanur Rahman Minu 58,532 votes

while his nearest rival Abdul Matin Khan of the AL bagged 23,001 votes.

Details of the ward commissioner posts in Dhaka, Chittagong and Rajshahi were not immediately available.

However, the final unofficial results of the commissioner polls in Khulna were announced by the EC office in Khulna. Out of 31 posts, the BNP had bagged nine, the JP got seven, the AL five, the Jamaat two while independent candidates secured eight posts.

At least one person was killed and another 200 injured in election related violence accompanied with gunfire, bomb blasts and forcible occupation

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City polls results at a glance

Dhaka: Unofficial results of 504 out of 737 centres announced by EC last night	
Mohammad Hanif (AL)	3,00,811
Mirza Abbas (BNP)	2,42,621
Col (Rtd) Malek (JP)	7,767 *
ATM Azharul Islam (Jamaat)	5,781 *
Chittagong: Results of 248 out of 334 centres	
ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury (AL)	1,44,768
Mir Mohammad Nasiruddin (BNP)	1,15,036
Mahmudul Islam Chowdhury (JP)	8,905 *
Afsaruddin Chowdhury (Jamaat)	9,718 *
Khulna: Results of all 208 centres	
Shaikh Tayebur Rahman (BNP)	77,487
Mahbul Alam Hiron (AL)	63,654
S M A Rab (JP)	41,250
Md Golam Parwar (Jamaat)	24,703
Rajshahi: Results of all 88 centres	
Mizanur Rahman Minu (BNP)	58,532
Abdul Matin Khan (AL)	23,001
Md Siddiqur Rahman (Jamaat)	17,692
Md Siddiqur Rahman (Ind)	10,501

Asterix indicate results of 100 centres for Dhaka and 116 centres for Chittagong, as supplied by the EC.



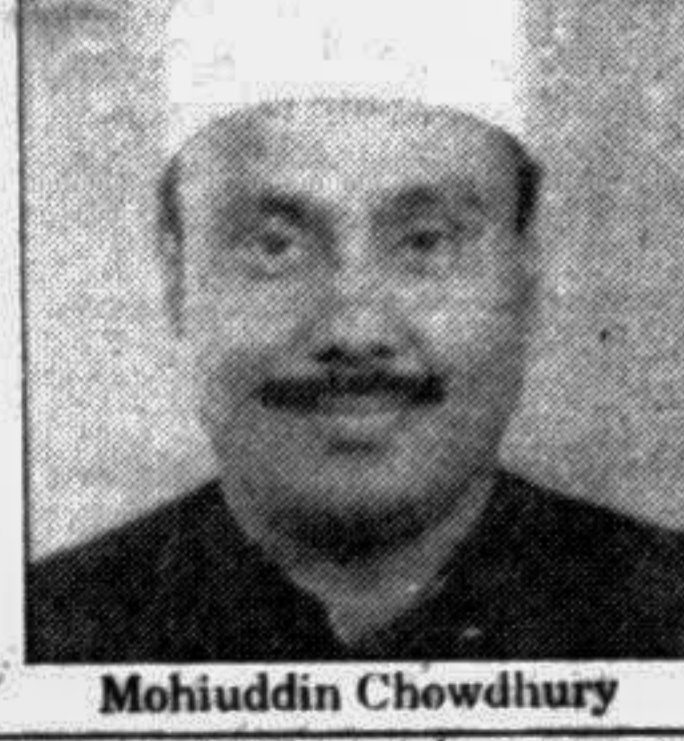
The Awami League's man of the moment Mohammad Hanif flashes the victory sign. — Star photo



Mizanur Rahman Minu



Shaikh Tayebur Rahman



Mohiuddin Chowdhury

Salam blames AL, JP for rigging, violence

BNP Secretary General Barrister Abdus Salam Talukder, who is also Minister for LGRD and Cooperatives, in a statement last night blamed the Awami League and the Jatiya Party hoodlums for rigging and resorting to violence in a number of polling centres, as a result of which thousands of BNP supporters and common voters could not cast their votes, reports BSS.

Barrister Talukder said the Awami League and the Jatiya Party had created grounds for terrorism and rigging well ahead of the polling and such acts finally led to the postponement of polls in a number of centres in Dhaka city, the statement added.

The BNP Secretary General urged the people to remain alert about such heinous acts of the Awami League and the defeated autocratic forces and unitedly foil their designs to disrupt the democratic process.

Citing instances of violence, the BNP Secretary General said his party ward commissioner candidate Amirul Millat, along with several other BNP supporters, were forcibly driven away from the Jatrabari Primary School centre under Ward No 87.

He further alleged that a good number of BNP workers were injured in different centres in Dhaka city during the

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Awami League chief and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina casting her vote at the City College centre in Dhanmondi yesterday. — Star photo

Polling in 21 city centres postponed

By Staff Correspondent

Polling was postponed at 21 centres of the Dhaka City Corporation elections due to violence, according to the Election Commission.

Besides, the commission withheld the results of two other centres at the Dhaka University — the University Laboratory School and the Science Annex Building.

The centres, where the balloting was postponed, were at — Aminunnessa Hafizia Islamia Madrasah, Meradia (centre number 216 of Ward 26), Meradia Government Primary School (centres 217 and 218 of Ward 26), Jamia Arabia Mohammadi Madrasah (centre 387 of Ward 45), Hajera High

See Page 12 Col 8

Pollwatch body alleges number of irregularities

By Staff Correspondent

The non-government National Steering Committee for Observing the City Corporation Elections (NSCOOCE), 1994, yesterday blamed the Election Commission (EC) and the administration for failing to enforce the election rules for which, the committee said, many untoward incidents took place in different polling centres in the four cities of the country.

At a post-election press conference held at the National Press Club in the city at about 8 pm, the committee disclosed its observations, saying that in Dhaka alone 62 different complaints were lodged with 53 centres.

Till 6 pm yesterday, the control room of the committee received reports of 128 injuries to people in the city. Voting in 11 centres was postponed, seven centres were occupied by different parties, and clashes took

See Page 12 Col 8

Polls in Khulna held peacefully

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Jan 30: The Khulna City Corporation election ended peacefully without any major incidents of violence.

Long queues of voters both male and female were seen in every polling centres well before seven in the morning. Some of the female voters were seen in a number of centres squatting on the ground being tired of standing for a long time due to slow casting of votes.

This correspondent visited at least fifty polling centres out of 208 in the city and found a peaceful atmosphere during casting of the votes.

According to unofficial reports at least 60 per cent vote was cast in this election.

A minor incident of violence occurred in Ward 31 of the city which was soon brought under control within half an hour.

About 2:15 pm at the Haji Malek Madrasah centre, about

See Page 12 Col 7

NEWS BRIEFS

Drizzles in city

By Staff Correspondent

Off-season rains in the capital Sunday brought back the chill of the mid January, pushing mercury down by several degrees. Thick cloud cooled the city as winds began to blow in the afternoon. Drizzles accompanied by gusty winds started at 10.30 pm. The late-night commuters had difficulties as the vehicles deserted the streets. Suffering of the squatters and the pavement-dwellers soared as they had to start looking for dry refuge to pass the night.

Aminul Haque leaves for US

State Minister for Establishment Barrister Md Aminul Haque left Dhaka for the United States Saturday night to attend the 'National Prayer Breakfast' programme to be held at Washington, an official handout said yesterday. He is joining the 4-day programme to be started from February 1 at the invitation of congressional committee for the 'National Prayer Breakfast', reports BSS.

Truck kills one in Manikganj

MANIKGANJ, Jan 30: A truck knocked four rickshaws and turned turtle, killing one van puller and injuring three others at Pukuria on the Dhaka-Aricha highway this morning. The dead was identified as Hazrat Ali, 28, of Baradia village in Shiblalaya thana, reports UNB.

Hurd visits US today

LONDON, Jan 30: Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd arrives in the United States tomorrow on a visit flagged as a bid to defuse tensions between Paris and Washington over Bosnia and to discuss the possible springtime withdrawal of UN troops from the republic. Hurd is scheduled to begin his official visit with a meeting in New York with United Nations Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, reports AFP.

One killed, 200 injured in violence

By Staff Correspondent

At least one person was killed and 200 others were injured in sporadic violence during the city corporation polls in Dhaka and Chittagong, police and hospital sources said.

Mizan, 20, a student of the T&T Board School, in Dhaka was stabbed to death by some unidentified opponents during a post-polls violence at the T&T Colony in Shahjahanpur.

According to hospital sources, another critically injured person, Dulal, has died at the National Hospital after being shot by bullet at Jurain. However, the confirmation of the death was not available from hospital sources.

Some 150 people were injured in Dhaka when armed rival groups clashed with each other in their attempt to control the polling centres in Lalbagh, Kotwali, Demra, Sutrapur, Sabujbag and Mohammadpur.

The police opened fire to

disperse the rival groups who used fire arms, bombs and lethal weapons during the clashes. Police arrested 39 people on charges of false voting.

The Election Commission had to postpone polling in 21 centres as the situation went beyond control.

According to hospital sources, some 55 injured persons were admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital while 70 others received first aid. A number of injured persons were admitted to the Mitford Hospital, the National Hospital and the Pangu Hospital.

Violence flared up in two centres of Meradia Primary School at around 9.45 am when armed hoodlums stormed the election booths. They ransacked the booths and snatched the ballot boxes and papers forcing the postponement of the polls. A female

See Page 12 Col 1

Ballot papers, boxes looted in Mohammadpur

By Staff Correspondent

Voting in two polling centres in Mohammadpur was postponed following the seizure of ballot boxes and ballot papers by unruly supporters of a political party.

Two youngmen, Ishaq and Anwar, were arrested from another polling centre of the area on a charge of casting fake votes.

According to witnesses, violence erupted at the Borabo Government Primary School centre at about 1:15 pm after a dispute between the supporters of two major political parties over the casting of a fake vote by a student of a nearby madrasah. The student was beaten up and driven away by the supporters of one of the political parties.

Immediately after the incident, another group of youths equipped with arms stormed the centre, seized the ballot papers and started casting votes in favour of their candidates.

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Jamaat demands repolling in 25 centres

By Staff Correspondent

The Jamaat-e-Islami secretary general Mattiur Rahman Nizami has demanded repolling in 25 centres in Dhaka alleging terrorism by the activists of the BNP and the Awami League.

Addressing a post-election press conference at the Jamaat's city office yesterday evening, Nizami said his party lodged specific complaints with the Election Commission in this connection.

The Jamaat leader viewed that the elections in the capital did not reflect public opinion as 'the activists of BNP and AL cast false votes, terrorised the polling centres and ousted the polling agents of his party.'

According to Nizami, violence during yesterday's elections surpassed that of 1986 and 1988 polls.

Replying to a question, he said the polls violence had strengthened the demand for holding elections under a caretaker government.

Violence, rigging cut poll margin: Hasina

By Special Correspondent

Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina accused the ruling party of trying to snatch people's verdict through armed violence in the polls of the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) held yesterday.

"The BNP has exposed its anti-people and anti-democratic character during this election which is similar to that of the past autocratic regime," said Hasina while addressing a crowded press conference at her Minto Road official residence last night.

Sheikh Hasina, who is also the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament, claimed that her party's mayoral candidate Mohammad Hanif had already earned the overwhelming mandate of the people and he along with the AL nominees for the posts of commissioners were sure to win landslide victories.

"But the gap of votes has been narrowed due to the ruling party's rigging and violence,"

baid Hasina alleging that Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia is making the same mistakes like Ershad.

The AL chief said that the poll rigging and violence by BNP occurred at about 140 centres in the city. She narrated some

See Page 12 Col 7

Deadline for US quota expires today

Garments exports stuck in Ctg

Star Report

Shipment of a few hundred crore taka worth of garments for export is facing uncertainty due to bureaucratic bottlenecks created by the Chittagong Port Authority and Customs as the annual quota for the United States expires today, according to the Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) yesterday.

"Yesterday (Saturday) neither any goods were shipped out of Chittagong, nor any consignment could be cleared off, and the explanation given by the port authority is unacceptable and amounts to dilly-dallying," charged the BGMEA in a statement.

The Chittagong Port Authority said that heavy fog prevented normal operations and loading and unloading of readymade garments consignments. It added that normal work at the port also remained suspended until 2pm yesterday because of the city corporation polls.

"But the port was unable to function even after 2 pm," reported the BGMEA. "Hundreds of trucks loaded with garments consignment got stranded both inside and outside the port, and if the goods are not unloaded in time no truck will be able to get into the port area on time."

The exporters are facing a serious threat of losing export order," the press release added.

It urged the government to take immediate necessary action to resolve the standstill at the port. "Otherwise, the nation will face a disaster of unimaginable proportion in the country's export sector," the BGMEA cautioned.

The BGMEA has already briefed both the Commerce and Finance ministries and despite verbal orders having been sent to the port and customs authorities to immediately clear the consignments, little progress has been made.

Garments industry sources pointed out that failure to fulfil the US quota would mean a lower quota allocation for the next year. They alleged that the bottlenecks at the port might be linked to an attempted

See Page 12 Col 4

CCC polls held peacefully barring stray incidents

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Jan 30: There were some incidents of violence in Ghatforhadbeg, Bakalia, Pathantoli, Boxirhat, Anar Club, Patharghata, Chandgao and West Madarbari polling centres today. Blasts of handbombs and cocktails were reported.

About 20 persons were injured in these clashes, witnesses and party sources said. According to the Chittagong Medical College Hospital, three persons were admitted at noon today with bomb injuries. The victims were identified as Arun Das, Enayet and Nurul Hoque. Others including an Awami League leader, Afsar Uddin Khan were admitted to

private clinics.

According to police, about 40 persons were picked up from different centres during election hours. Awami League office sources informed that there were untoward incidents in at least 150 election centres and they blamed the BNP activists for the trouble.

But BNP leader M A Sabur denied the allegations and accused the AL activists of creating troubles in some centres.

When contacted, the Deputy Election Commissioner Sonaj Uddin here said, he had not heard of any trouble in any election centre till the end of the polling at 3 pm.

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ANNOUNCEMENT

Today's issue of The Daily Star contains a 16-page anniversary supplement plus the regular 12-page issue.

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