

Chief Adviser happy

Chief Adviser Muhammad Habibur Rahman visited the media centre at Hotel Sonargaon yesterday morning.

He talked to the foreign journalists who were using facilities at the media centre, opened on the occasion of the parliamentary elections.

"I've agreed to head the caretaker government, getting assurance from all political parties," the Chief Adviser told the New Delhi-based regional bureau chief of the weekly Time magazine, Dick Thompson.

Replying to a question on the general election being held across the country yesterday, he said, "I am happy. It's an excellent election. We're in festive mood."

The Chief Adviser also talked to the officials, who were manning the media centre, set up by the government's Press Information Department.

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NEWS BRIEFS

EU polls observers to meet press

The election observer team of the European Union (EU) will meet the press to share their observations regarding the election at Hotel Sonargaon at 4 pm tomorrow. Prior to the press conference the members of the EU team, led by Senator Cayetana De Zulueta, will meet the Heads of Mission of the European Union in Dhaka to share their experience before and during the election, said a press release, reports UNB.

5 more killed in Karachi gunbattle

KARACHI, June 12: At least five people were killed today in a gunbattle between police and suspected criminals including drug pushers in the Pakistani port city of Karachi, police said. They said four people wanted in several cases including drug trafficking were gunned down in the city's southern neighbourhood of Layri, reports AFP.

5 western diplomats meet Kashmiri leaders

SRINAGAR, India, June 12: Diplomats from five western nations met with separatist leaders and senior Indian officials in the troubled state of Kashmir today, officials said. The ambassadors of France, Italy, Ireland and Spain and the Netherlands, visited Kashmir while on a two-day "fact-finding" mission, amidst tight security, police said, reports AFP.

17 die in Australian copters' crash

SYDNEY, June 12: Two Australian army helicopters crashed tonight, killing 17 soldiers during anti-terrorist manoeuvres in the northern state of Queensland, an army official said. Ten or 11 soldiers were also injured from a total of 28 thought to be on board the two US Sikorsky black Hawk helicopters, reports Reuters.

AL wins 87 seats, BNP '75

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh consolidated its position as one of the world's largest democracies when an unprecedented enthusiasm and turnout of voters and generally peaceful polling yesterday marked the holding of the seventh parliamentary polls in its quarter-century history.

The nation's attention was now focussed on what would be the outcome of the polls as the results kept pouring in from the 25,957 polling centres across the country till the filing of this report 4:30 am today.

According to unofficial results received from the Election Commission, the Awami League bagged 87 seats while the Bangladesh Nationalist Party got 75 seats.

Jatiya Party was trailing behind with 18 seats while Jamaat-e-Islami secured only one seat.

BNP chief Begum Khaleda Zia won in four constituencies out of the five she contested from. Awami League president Sheikh Hasina was declared elected from all the three seats she contested. Till the

writing of this report the results of one of the five constituencies Begum Zia contested from were not announced.

Besides, the BNP was leading in 52 seats, AL in 48 seats and JP in 18 seats at 4:30 am.

Among the party stalwarts who lost the election are Barrister Abdus Salam Talukder, Secretary General of BNP, defeated in both the constituencies, he contested from, Matur Rahman Nizami and Maulana Abdus Sobhan of Jamaat-e-Islami, Amir Hussain Amu and Zohra Tajuddin of AL, Col (ret'd) Malek of JP and Shahjahan Siraj of BNP.

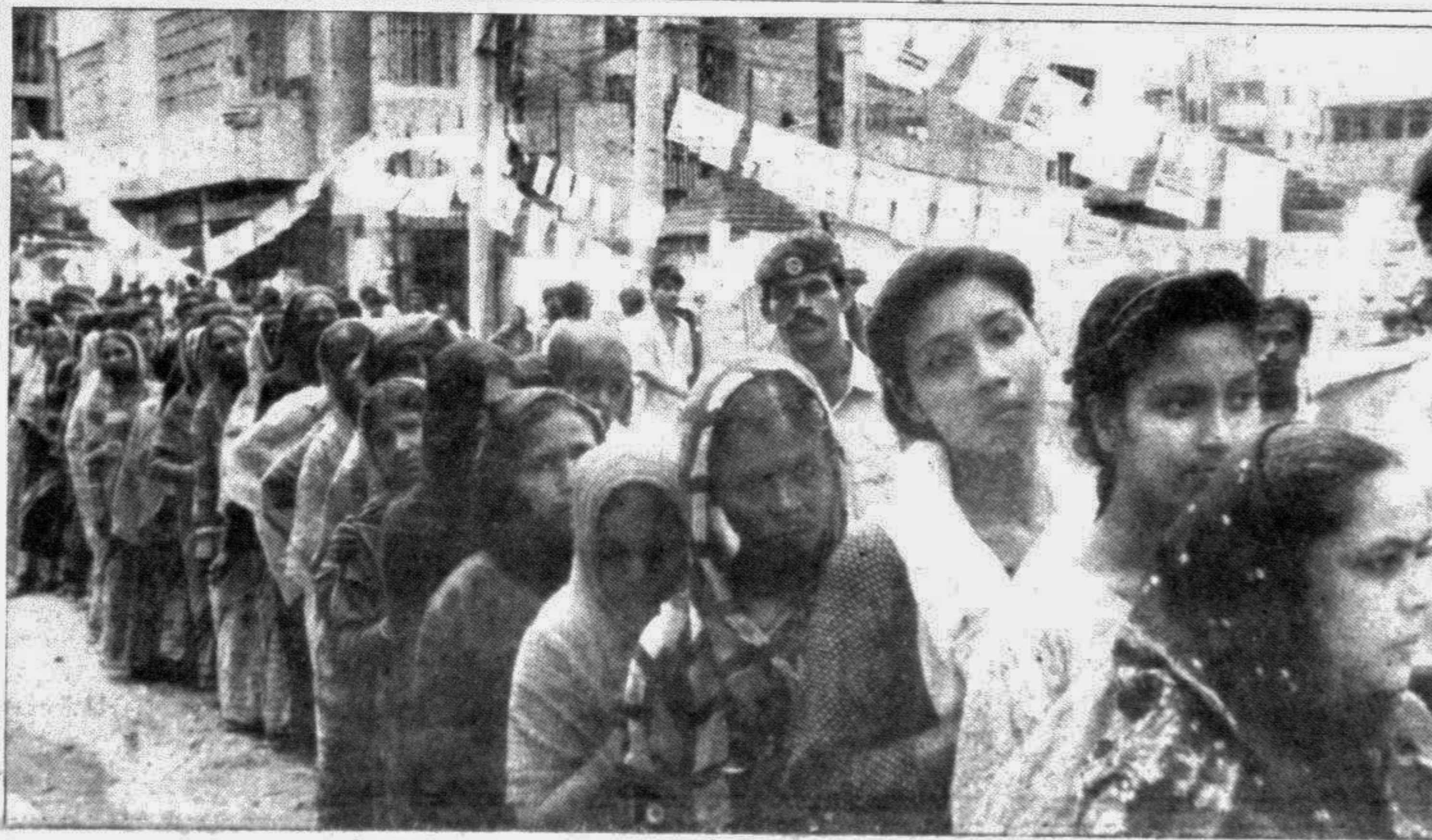
Although incidents of violence were less this time compared with those in the past elections, five persons were killed and around 150 injured during and after the polls. Among the five, four were killed in Chittagong and its surrounding districts and one in Moulvibazar under greater Sylhet district.

There were no specific reports of rigging or elec-

toral manipulation in Dhaka or from The Daily Star correspondents in the districts till the filing of this report at midnight last night. Several polls-related complaints were, however, received from candidates of rival political parties in various constituencies.

Responding to the Election Commission's (EC), 169 foreign observers representing 14 different groups are monitoring the polls. Among them, the Commonwealth Observers team led by Dr Mohd, Ghazali Shafie, in a statement after the polling was over, remarked: "We have been particularly impressed by the special constitutional and legal arrangements that were put in place to ensure a neutral administration and a credible election. We are aware of serious disturbances and some shortcomings, but these did not materially affect the voting process."

Polling however, was declared postponed in around 100 centres due to incidents of violence, according to reports reaching from six divisional See Page 12 Col 3



Female voters in a long queue at a polling centre at Postagola, Dhaka yesterday.

—Star photo

Rigging, malpractice in 99 seats: BNP

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) has alleged that yesterday's elections in 99 out of 300 Jatiya Sangsad constituencies were marked by rigging, malpractice, violence and intimidation.

Addressing a hurriedly-called press conference at the party's Kakrail office in the city at about 8 pm, a BNP spokesman said they were receiving more reports of rigging and other malpractice from different parts of the country and those would be supplied to the press later.

The spokesman, Goyeshwar Roy, accused the Awami League workers of stuffing ballot boxes, ousting the polling agents of BNP candidates from

the polling booths, casting false votes, occupying polling stations and unleashing terrorism at the voters out of the local administration. He also alleged that the administration and the polling officials were postponing voting illegally, intimidating and influencing the voters to vote for AL candidates.

Anwar Zahid and Mahbul Alam Tara, two other members of the BNP Election Coordination Committee, also spoke on the occasion in presence of the committee chief A M Zahiduddin Ahmed.

Nurul Huda, BNP nominee for Chandpur-2, who joined the press conference later, alleged that the AL contestant in his constituency Mozammel Hossain Chowdhury Maya with the help of the TNO and the OC of Matlab thana stuffed all ballot boxes of seven out of nine unions on Tuesday night while voting in two other unions was held yesterday. In those seven unions, he added, mock election was held yesterday while the voters were driven out from the polling stations.

He alleged that the AL candidate manipulated the results which was announced by the Presiding Officer showing his victory by 11 am and his supporters brought out a victory procession soon after.

Huda further alleged that Maya recently managed the postings of the TNO and the OC of his choice to win the election by rigging. "I complained with the Chief Election Commissioner about the matter recently but no action was taken."

The BNP nominee also accused the AL candidate of un-



Khaleda casts vote, shows 'V' sign

BNP chairperson and former prime minister Begum Khaleda Zia cast her vote at the Adamjee Cantonment College centre in the city yesterday, reports UNB.

After coming out of the polling booth, Begum Zia showed 'V' sign to waiting journalists from home and abroad. "BNP will win the election if the voting is free and fair. We will win Inshaallah," she said.

Begum Zia, who was accompanied by her daughter-in-law said the number of polling booths for women was inadequate. She said BNP had asked

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Commentary

Voters want a new AL-BNP relation

By Mahfuz Anam

By the time readers will be going through this piece we will be within hours of knowing who got how many seats in the next parliament, and who will, either alone or with an ally, form the next government. Normally that should be the most important question before us? But given the recent political history of Bangladesh,

the main question is NOT who, or what combination of political forces, will form the next government, but how will the political parties - the winners and the non-winners - behave with one another? Will they co-operate and sit inside the

parliament and give the nation a stable democracy? Or will they cry foul claim that the voting was rigged, point accusing fingers at one another and refuse to accept the verdict of the people, bringing us all back to square one?

Without waiting for the final results, we can safely say that it will be either the BNP or the AL that will get majority seats in the parliament with the other following close behind, and that it will be either Khaleda Zia or Sheikh Hasina who will form our next government. So the question that

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Around polling centres

Great enthusiasm 'I never saw such peaceful polls'

By Staff Correspondent

Amidst great enthusiasm voters in the eight constituencies in the city participated in the elections for the seventh Jatiya Sangsad yesterday. The turnout appeared quite high.

Most of the shops in the busy market places remained closed. Many of the city dwellers were seen chatting in groups on the roads and pavements near the polling stations.

There was thin movement of motorised vehicles because of the restriction imposed by the Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) on the movement of certain categories of transport.

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Star Report

Hasina, in her 70s, who was walking down the muddy village road with a bamboo stick in her hand as a walking aid, gave a pleasant smile when asked about the way polling was held yesterday.

"Never in my life I saw such a peaceful atmosphere at a voting centre," said Hasina of village Giaspur, Kapsasia, in Gazipur district, when approached by a Daily Star team of newsmen.

Voters enthusiasm was evident from elderly Hasina's taking the pain of walking all the way to and from the polling centre, about one km from her house, to cast her

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BNP captured centres to rig polls: AL

By Staff Correspondent

Awami League yesterday alleged that it has received reports of polls rigging and other malpractices by armed BNP men including their candidates in various constituencies of the country, reports BSS.

Speaking at the regular press briefing here last night at the party's Dhanmondi office, Co-chairman of the Awami League central Election Steering Committee S A M S Kibria, said that they were yet to receive the full picture of the extent of vote rigging by BNP and it was too early to make any comment on the overall election situation.

Referring to allegations received from across the country, Kibria said that in Jamalpur-4 Constituency BNP nominee and former minister as well as BNP Secretary General Barrister Abdus Salam Talukdar forced out the Awami League agents from Ahmedpur High School and Sattaria Reazuddin Talukdar college centres.

In connivance of the personnel on election duty in the centres, Talukdar stamped the ballot boxes at his own choice Kibria alleged and said, "We have lodged written complaints with the Election Commission and waiting to know what action the Commission has taken or would take."

"In Chandanai and Satkna Constituencies of Chittagong BNP candidate and former minister Col (ret'd) Oli Ahmed captured 27 centres by his armed cadres and resorted to massive rigging. He also obstructed the minority voters to turn up in the polling centres," Kibria further alleged and said that they had also reported the incident to the Election Commission.

In Sylhet-6 Constituency BNP men rigged votes in Moulvibazar, Nidhanpur and Golap-

ganj centres. In Hobiganj-1 Constituency massive vote rigging took place under the direct initiative of presiding officer Serajul Islam. In Faridpur-2 Constituency, BNP candidate K M Obaidur Rahman with the help of his armed partymen rigged the polls heavily in Naraganda.

Kibria referring to polls rigging by BNP men in a number of polling centres in the capital city.

He said that in Dhaka-9 Constituency BNP nominee and former minister Mir Shawkat Ali encouraged his party musclemen to threaten Awami League polling agents at the Cambridge School centre and rig polls there.

Kibria said that Mirza Khokan, younger brother of

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cially declared elected from Dhaka-13 (Dhanrai) seat. He secured 76,427 votes against 45,143 bagged by his nearest rival, Khan Mohammad Iqbal of AL.

Abdur Rouf Chowdhury of Awami League has been unofficially declared elected from Dinajpur-1 (Birganj-Khaharol) constituency, securing 60,644 votes. His nearest rival, Syed Ahmed Reza Hossain of BNP got 32,435 votes.

Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali of BNP has been unofficially declared elected from Khulna-2 (Sonadanga-Metro) constituency, securing 56,295 votes. His nearest rival, Manzurul Imam of Awami League got 54,731.

Barrister Jamiruddin Sirar of BNP has been unofficially declared elected from Panchagar-1 (Tetulia-Sadar-Atwari) constituency. He bagged 57,414 votes against 47,889 secured by his nearest rival, Nurul Islam of Awami League.

Another BNP candidate, Mozahar Nossain has been unofficially declared elected

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He said that the rest of the members of his delegation had been to Comilla and found the conduct of the polling there peaceful too.

Sakural said, "We were very much impressed by the interest shown by the people of Bangladesh particularly the women, who turned up in large numbers to vote."

He said in the capital, he saw some of the polling centres in Dhanmondi, Gulshan and Mirpur.

Election held in free, fair manner, says JP

Jatiya Party yesterday hailed the huge turnout of voters across the country "despite some incidents of irregularities reported from different areas," reports BSS.

"We congratulate the people for the huge turnout and appreciate the efforts of the Election Commission in holding the elections in a free, fair and neutral manner," JP election steering committee chairman Sayeed Tarek told reporters at a press briefing here.

He, however, alleged that the JP workers were subject to terrorism and violence resorted by both BNP and Awami League activists at several constituencies.

"But in almost all the cases, the conscious people as well as the law enforcing agencies were able to resist the terrorists and ensured uninterrupted polling," he said.

Tarek said the trend of poll results also "revealed since the evening indicate that the people have announced their verdict against the misuse and repression of BNP."

Tarek was critical of the authorities, and alleged that the party chairman was not allowed to cast his vote by post. "Although it was reported in different newspapers that Ershad would cast his vote by postal ballot, in fact the jail authorities, did not send the postal vote to the election commission," he said.

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CEC expresses satisfaction

By Staff Correspondent

Chief Election Commissioner Mohammad Abu Hena yesterday expressed his deep satisfaction over the holding of the election in a peaceful situation throughout the country.

"The election was totally free, fair and peaceful," the CEC said while talking to some journalists at his office at 4:30 pm.

Asked about the turnout of voters he said, "I will not be surprised if the voters' turnout crosses 70 per cent."

The election generated tremendous enthusiasm among the people and a festive mood was observed everywhere," the CEC said after visiting some polling centres in different parts of the country including Dhaka city. He flew to some polling centres in a helicopter.

"Everywhere I saw large number of people including women queuing for casting

Voting process impresses C's wealth team

There were serious disturbances and some shortcomings, but these did not materially affect the voting process in Bangladesh, said the Commonwealth Observer Group about the general election held yesterday, reports UNB.

In a statement last night, chairman of the group Dr Moh'd Ghazali Shafie said: "The calm and patience shown by voters in often overcrowded voting centers was a credit to their commitment and overall we believe that the election will provide a true reflection of the popular will."

It said, the voters themselves were "evidently highly motivated" as witnessed by the high turnout, particularly of women voters.

Dr Shafie further observed that the security forces on the whole played a positive role in support of the civil authorities.

The observer group, during their visit to various parts of the country, witnessed high turnout particularly of women voters and expressed their satisfaction on the "special constitutional and legal arrangements that were put in place to ensure a neutral administration and a credible election."

"The establishment of the Caretaker Government created an atmosphere - noticeable to us all - that gave a new respect to the political process," the statement said.

Election was peaceful, says Japanese team

The leader of a nine-member Japanese team of Election observers, Shin Sakurai MP, described polling in yesterday's parliamentary elections as peaceful.

Talking to BSS he said that he arrived in the city yesterday and went round some of the constituencies in the capital and found the polling "very peaceful."

He said that the rest of the members of his delegation had been to Comilla and found the conduct of the polling there peaceful too.

Sakurai said, "We were very much impressed by the interest shown by the people of Bangladesh particularly the women, who turned up in large numbers to vote."

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Hasina stands in long queue to cast vote

President of Bangladesh Awami League Sheikh Hasina cast her vote yesterday morning at Dhaka City College centre in the Dhanmondi residential area, reports BSS.

Amid rhythmic clickings of cameras and flash lights of a huge number of print and electronic mediemen, Sheikh Hasina dropped her ballot paper into the ballot box at a female booth of the centre.

On her arrival at the centre she was crowded by people, security personnel and enthusiastic voters. Cheerful and confident Hasina, attired in milky white dress, stood in the long queue of the female

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Sylhet

An AL activist was stabbed to death and at least 20 others were injured in violence in different constituencies of the district.

Manik Mia, 46, reportedly an AL activist was stabbed to death outside a polling centre at Mounshibazar in Rajnagar thana of Moulvibazar district during polling. He was rushed

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5 killed, 150 hurt in polls violence

By Staff Correspondent

At least five persons were killed and over 150 injured in incidents of violence in different parts of the country during yesterday's general election.

Of those killed, two including a woman were in Swaidip and one in Boalkhali in Chittagong district, one in Teknaf and one in Moulvibazar.

Polling was suspended in 108 centres due to violence and irregularities, according to reports from our correspondents. Official figures available till 12:30 last night however said polling was postponed in 100 centres. Those included 28 centres in Chittagong district and 45 in Comilla district. At least 70 people were in-

jured in clashes in Narayan-ganj, followed by 35 in Chittagong and surrounding districts, 20 in Sylhet, 10 in Chandpur, 9 in Sirajganj, 6 in Faridpur, and 5 each in Sherpur and Jhenidah, according to reports from our correspondents and news agencies.

Chittagong

A polling agent of Awami League Ismail Hossain Bahar was shot dead by a group of gunmen inside Musapur polling centre in Sandwip at around 9 am.

Another elderly woman, Renu Bala Dash, 55, wounded in the same incident, died on way to the Chittagong Medical

Our correspondent reports

College Hospital. Nasiruddin, 24, reportedly a BNP activist was shot dead during a clash at Mosjidbari centre in Kharandip under Boalkhali thana at about 3 pm. Six other persons were also bullet hit outside the polling centre during the clash.

Haji Badrul Mia, 70, died and five other persons were injured during a post-poll clash between AL and BNP activists at Shahpur Dwip in Teknaf thana at 7 pm.

In Chittagong city, two persons were bullet hit during a clash between activists of BNP and AL at Lalkhan Bazar, police said.

from Cox's Bazar: At least 10 people were injured when supporters of BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami clashed near Kurushuk Union Parishad centre. Voting at the centre was stopped for some time.

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