

**Metropolitan**

**FEMA releases 4th interim report on UP polls  
8 killed, 500 hurt in violence,  
gross irregularities alleged**

By Staff Correspondent

High voter-turnout continued in the Union Parishad (UP) elections except in Feni and some other places, where violence and voting irregularities were noticed by the Fair Election Monitoring Alliance (FEMA) observers last week. Eight persons were killed during the week and about 500 injured in poll-related violence. Polls were postponed in 69 polling stations. Election Commission sources admitted 28 deaths, 397 injuries and postponement of 341 polling stations due to election-related violence during December 1 to December 24, a FEMA observation said. In its fourth interim report FEMA yesterday said, "disciplinary action was taken by the EC against some officials on election duty. The irregularities observed so far apparently indicate that without the connivance of the election administration such incidents could not have occurred."

The report covering preliminary observations of FEMA poll monitors in 351 UPs under 40 thanas of 25 districts between December 19-26, polls were held at 962 UPs during the period. It also noted that only two out of 2859 female voters of Surat union under Jhenidah sadar thana did not exercise their franchise following an edict by a local 'Pir' called Dewan. "Continued violence and manipulation in several unions

prevailed but otherwise by and large the polls were generally peaceful in majority of the polling stations and enthusiastically participated," it noted.

The report further said: At the Baghulia Government Primary School polling station under Jhenidah sadar thana the Presiding Officer Sabed Ali was seen stamping the ballots in favour of chairman candidate Alauddin having the symbol "umbrella."

At the Barangail Government Primary School polling station under Mahadevpur Union of Manikganj one female Ansar named Anwara was seen inside the polling booth casting votes with seven ballot papers.

The Presiding Officer Faziruddin explained that she did it at the instruction of Magistrate Azaharul Islam who, when confronted by the FEMA mobile team led by its Chairperson, appeared nervous and said that he would look into the matter.

The ballot box of Debipur Government Primary School of Sharsadi union, Feni sadar was hijacked following clashes between supporters of two member candidates.

The ballot box was later recovered and polling was suspended for two hours. Similar incident occurred at the Maruarchar Primary School polling station in Baliganj union of Feni sadar thana.

The supporters of the chairman candidate (candle) of

Sharsadi union took control of the eight other polling stations and stuffed the ballot boxes. Voter turnout in these polling stations were very low.

At the Baliganj Union of Feni sadar the chairman candidate (pineapple) attacked the Madhuai polling station, hijacked the ballot box and beat up the Presiding Officer.

Polling was postponed in this polling station. Armed supporters of the "pineapple" symbol took control of the remaining seven polling stations of this union and stuffed ballot boxes.

Law enforcing agencies remained silent.

At the Lashkerhat Government Primary School polling station of Motibi union of Feni sadar most of the ballot papers were stamped beforehand in favour of chairman candidate with the symbol "umbrella."

In the same polling station at 1 pm the FEMA mobile team saw the on-duty police stamping ballot papers. In the remaining six polling stations of this union the armed supporters of chairman candidate with the "umbrella" symbol took over the polling stations, stamped and stuffed ballot boxes in favour of their candidate while the law enforcing agencies played a partisan role.

Physical arrangements for polling remained much to be desired in several places. At the Basail union K B M Bohumukhi High School, Tangail; Basutia union Islampur, Madrasaha, Daulatpur thana, Manikganj and No 16 Belkuchia Government Primary School, Patia thana, Rajshahi the polling stations were disorderly and mismanaged.

At some polling stations posters of candidates were seen and some were seen inside the booths also. The secret compartments in some polling stations did not provide secrecy and had insufficient light.

Polling stations were set up in pre-designated places with few exceptions as in the Nit-tanandapur union (Shapkhola) of Jhenidah. Polling officials and agents were present and some were seen stamping ballot papers for the female voters in violation of the law.

Election camps were set up by the candidates in many polling stations. There were instances of impersonated voting, though not on a large scale. At the Makrail polling station at Shainagar union of Lohagarah thana of Narail about 10 persons were arrested on charge of impersonated voting and two were fined.

These attempted bogus voting was in favour of chairman candidate Abdur Rahman having the "umbrella" symbol.

**Zillur says  
Rule Of Law to  
be ensured by  
holding trial of  
political killings**

The government will ensure rule of law and human rights by holding trial of all political killings, including the killers of Bangabandhu and four national leaders, reports UNB.

This was stated by LGRD Minister Zillur Rahman while addressing a seminar on the "Trial of Bangabandhu's killers and Protection of Human Rights" at the NSC auditorium today (Friday).

He said the government has undertaken an initiative to set up a permanent Human Rights Commission.

"Democracy and independence cannot be consolidated unless the politics of coup, killing and conspiracy is wiped out from society," he told the seminar.

The LGRD Minister said violation of human rights, state-terrorism and corruption started with the assassination of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 1975.

He urged all human rights organisations to build a civil society free from fanaticism, terrorism and corruption.

The seminar was also addressed, among others, by eminent lawyer Gazi Shamsur Rahman, Prof Kabir Chowdhury, journalist Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury, Prof Modasser Ali and Kazi Shahidul Alam.

**Newly elected UP  
chairmen from  
Sunamganj meet  
Samad Azad**

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad yesterday urged the newly elected Union Parishad chairmen to engaged themselves in nation building activities as the government considers the unions as the focal point of development, reports BSS.

"The present government has taken steps to strengthen the local government bodies with Union Parishad as the focal point of development," he told a group of newly elected UP chairmen from Sunamganj as they called on the minister at his residence in the city.

Azad said the government is pledge-bound to ensure the participation of rural people in development activities along with developing the standard of life as dreamt by father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Local Awami League leaders were present during the meeting.

**Seminar on  
preventing  
malnutrition  
tomorrow**

A seminar on the role of mass media in preventing malnutrition in Bangladesh will be held at a city hotel Sunday, reports UNB.

Health Minister Salahuddin Yusuf and State Minister for Information Prof Abu Sayeed will attend the seminar as chief and special guests, said a PID hand-out Thursday.



In observance of the World Human Rights Day '97, Jatiya Manabdhikar Sangbadik Sangstha (JAMASAS) held a seminar on 'Trial of self-confessed killers of Bangabandhu and protection of human rights' and distributed Human Rights Gold Medal '97. Shah Mohammad Sagir receiving Gold Medal from LGED and Cooperative Minister Zillur Rahman at National Sports Council auditorium yesterday.

**BPMMA discussion  
meeting Monday**

Bangladesh Private Medical Practitioners Association (BPMPA) will hold a discussion meeting at the auditorium of BIRDEM on Monday to mark the Victory Day, reports UNB.

Post and Telecommunications Minister Mohammad Nasim will attend the function as chief guest.

**Chehlum**

Chehlum of Syeda Mahmuda Chowdhury, wife of late journalist Syed Obaidullah Chowdhury (Dudu Bhai) will be held at her Pakulla village home of Mirzapur thana in Tangail district today, reports UNB.

All her relatives and well-wishers have been cordially invited to attend the chehlum, said a press release.

**Law Minister's appeal to  
ensure revenue collection**

Law Minister Abdul Matin Khasru yesterday urged the members of the Bangladesh Registration Services Association (BRSA) to ensure proper revenue collection in the land revenue sector for the greater interest of the people and the nation, reports BSS.

Addressing a gathering of the sub-registrars from all over the country organised by the BRSA, the minister said proper revenue collection in all sectors was a pre-requisite for the economic development of the country.

sent government would never compromise with the interest of the nation.

The meeting was informed that during the last financial year, a total of Taka 821 crore had been collected from the land registration sector which was Taka 51 crore more than that was collected during the previous year.

Praising the increase in revenue earning the minister said there was ample scope that revenue in the government exchequer could be further increased considerably from the sector.

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