

Live results

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Results of the eighth parliamentary election will be available through different electronic media from 7:00pm today.

The state-run Bangladesh Television (BTV) and private TV channels - Ekushey Television (ETV), ATN and Channel i - will broadcast the election results.

The state-owned Bangladesh Betar and private Radio Metrowave will also air the results.

All media organisations have set up their control rooms in two blocks of the Election Commission (EC) for this purpose.

For the first time in the country, the information technology (IT) will be applied in disseminating the election results.

EC's website: www.bd-ec.org apart, Bangladeshinfo.com will

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Hasina unhappy at role of admin

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina alleged that the administration was trying to get some candidates of the four-party alliance elected in today's polls.

Briefing newsmen at her Dhanmandi residence last night, barely 14 hours before the polling, Hasina gave an overview of alleged intimidation of and attacks on her party supporters, the minorities and female voters across the country.

She expressed extreme dissatisfaction at the role of the administration in containing violence against the AL 'vote banks' in different constituencies across the country.

"Unlike previous occasions, there is no festive mood or enthusiasm about the polls this time. Rather, a panicky mood dampened the festivity," said Hasina.

The immediate-past prime minister said confidently, "I'm very much hopeful of our victory in the election. My party is now in the winning position. All opposition to Awami League testifies to its strong position."

Through the press, Hasina asked all her party candidates and their polling agents to keep a round-the-clock watch on each polling centre and get a copy of the final result sheet so that none can tamper with the results.

"I've information about media coup. Dark designs are on to rig the polls,"

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People want peace, not terrorism: Khaleda

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia yesterday said people want peace and progress, not terrorism.

Exchanging pleasantries with journalists at Jatiya Press Club in the afternoon, she said people of Bangladesh are very peace-loving, moderate and democratic-minded and do not tolerate terrorism.

Local and foreign journalists asked her a number of questions related to election, a smiling Khaleda said she would not violate the election code of conduct. She also reminded the journalists of the 48-hour ban on campaign beginning at Saturday midnight.

"Ban on election campaign came in force at midnight yesterday (Saturday). I come here to meet journalists on the day before election every time. Today, I came here purely to exchange pleasantries," she added.

The BNP chief said she was really moved by the love of people as they waited for hours together to see and listen to her during the month-long cross-country electioneering.

"Even the men and women waited for me throughout the night. The endless love of the people has overwhelmed me. I am grateful to the people. I worked for them and will continue to do so as long as I live," she added.

"I have also witnessed much enthusiasm among the people (about the election)...I hope the turnout will be much higher this time if peaceful atmosphere prevails during the voting."

The former prime minister said, "I could not stop myself because their

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The beleaguered lake... Gulshan-Banani-Baridhara Lake would be filled up at two different points to construct roads to connect Banani with Gulshan.

EU observer team calls on Khaleda

UNB, Dhaka

A three-member delegation of European Union election observer team, led by its leader Joaquim Miranda De Silva, called on BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia at her Hawa Bhaban office yesterday evening.

Two other members of the delegation were EU Ambassador in Dhaka Antonio de Souza Menezes and Paulo De Silva.

Briefing newsmen after the meeting, BNP leader MM Rezaul Karim said the delegation members during their one-hour meeting with Khaleda Zia apprised her of their mission.

They told Khaleda Zia that EU polling observer mission has two teams: a long-term team and a short-term team. The long-term team arrived here a month back and they are now staying in 14 vulnerable constituencies of the country to monitor pre-election and post-election situation.

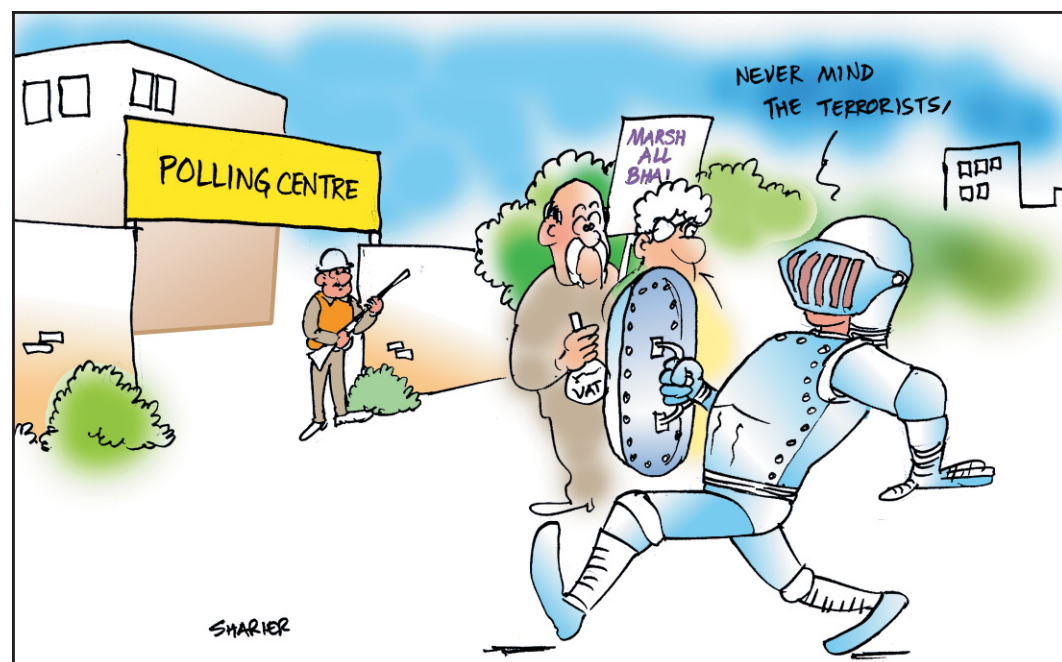
They said observers of the short-term team will join the existing members and prepare an objective report on election and voter turnout, including that of female and minority voters, and law and order situation on the polling day.

Shab-e-Meraj on night of Oct 15

UNB, Dhaka

Holy Shab-e-Meraj will be observed on the night of October 15.

On the occasion, optional holiday has been announced on October 16, said an official handout.



Feni town wears a deserted look

ROVING CORRESPONDENT, from Feni

Amid fears of violence, a stone-still Feni wants to participate in the 8th parliamentary election today.

Usually crowded and extremely noisy, the Feni town looked deserted yesterday.

Most of the shops remained closed and people have chosen to stay indoors.

Rumors that Joynal Hazari obtained an interim bail from a court have raised apprehension among the people, who hardly came out on streets yesterday.

Vehicles of army, BDR and police were seen at every corner in the town. In villages around Feni, armed forces personnel were patrolling on bicycles and motorcycles.

With former MP from Feni-2 (Feni town) Joynal Hazari absconding and absent from local politics, the local administration and people fear that "several" polling centres could become targets of terrorist attack.

The district administration has classified all the 273 polling centres in the three constituencies in the district as "extremely dangerous".

A total of 700 members of the armed forces, 400 BDR personnel, 400 policemen and 2,730 Ansar and VDP personnel have been deployed throughout the district.

Despite such unprecedented security measures, reports of violence between political rivals were reaching the district town.

In Chonna under Feni-3, about six kilometers from Feni town,

Awami League supporters beat BNP activists yesterday. Army personnel and top officials of the district administration rushed from Feni to bring the situation under control there.

Shorshadi Union Parishad Chairman Abul Hashem and his brother Abul Kashem, both leaders of Hazari's class committee were nabbed yesterday. Security personnel said Hashem and Kashem possessed a AK-47 rifle but they failed to recover it.

Security personnel have raided different places at Dagonbhuiyan to flush out "absconding terrorists".

Local people said armed cadres of both BNP and Awami League are now threatening each other of "dire consequences" if they come to polling centres.

First day of hartal passes off peacefully in Khagrachhari

UNB, Khagrachhari

The first day of a 48-hour hartal called by Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS) in the district passed off peacefully yesterday.

Long-route vehicles stayed off the roads during the shutdown enforced by the PCJSS demanding amendment to the voter list ensuring the rights of permanent residents of the hill districts.

However, government offices, courts and educational institutions remained open during hartal.

Meanwhile, officials said all preparations have been completed for holding today's national election in the district in a peaceful manner.

One beaten to death by army personnel

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Comilla

One person was beaten to death by army personnel in Muradnagar (Comilla-3 constituency) in the early hours of yesterday.

The victim was identified as Golan Mulla.

Sources said army personnel deployed in the area stopped Mulla out of suspicion and beat him mercilessly leaving him critically injured.

Later, he was taken to Muradnagar Health Complex where the attending doctors declared him dead.

Construction of two more link roads DCC approves work order to fill up Gulshan-Banani lake at 2 points

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) has approved a 'work order' to fill up Banani-Gulshan lake at two points and construct two more roads connecting Banani with Gulshan.

Mayor Mohammad Hanif, who has a house in the area, approved the work order involving TK eight crore in late July without consulting Rajuk, custodian of the area.

DCC sources said the work is a part of the World Bank aided Tk 1,100 crore Dhaka Urban Transport Project (DUTP).

The work, which also includes construction of a seven-km long

walkway, should have been started in August but due to 'unknown reasons' it is yet to start, an official of DUTP said.

The two roads would connect Road-11 of Banani with Road-41 of Gulshan and Road-18 of Banani with Road-59 of Gulshan and would be mainly used by non-motorised vehicles to ease traffic on the main roads nearby.

Local people said earth filling of the lake might start anytime now.

More than 200 residents of Banani and Gulshan areas have submitted an application to the Chief Adviser of caretaker government urging him to stop the DCC project and protect the lake.

"The project is not only defiance of a court order passed on February 14, 2000, but also a conspiracy to destroy environment of the area with such a lake," they said in the application.

Rajuk Chairman M Azizul Haque, when contacted, told The Daily Star his office does not know anything about the project. A bridge might be built there but Rajuk has not yet taken up any such scheme.

Another top Rajuk official said the entire stretch of Gulshan-Banani-Baridhara lake is now under a government development project. The

lake would be developed under the scheme and consultants are already conducting a survey.

"There is no question of building any bridge or filling up the lake for construction of roads. It is impossible, we do not know anything about it," he said.

Taher's house, market demolished

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Laxmipur

The Laxmipur district administration yesterday demolished a newly built two-storey house and a portion of a market of Abu Taher, chairman of local pourashava and general secretary of district Awami League.

The administration alleged that Taher had built the house and market illegally on government land. The demolition process could not be completed due to lack of manpower but it would be completed soon, said a district official.

Taher is in jail as one of the main accused in the murder case of BNP leader advocate Nurul Islam.

Diplomats happy over polls preparation

UNB, Dhaka

Diplomats of different countries met Chief Advisor Latifur Rahman yesterday and hoped that today's election would be free, fair, impartial and peaceful.

They expressed satisfaction over the government's preparations for holding polls and underscored the importance of acceptance of the verdict of the people by all parties.

A group of Nordic envoys comprising Ambassadors of Denmark and Norway and Charge d' Affaires of Sweden called on the CA and congratulated him and advisors of the caretaker government for their performance in preparing for the 8th parliamentary election.

They expressed the hope that

the steps taken by the caretaker government would ensure a free, fair, peaceful and neutral election.

The envoys said the efforts to caretaker government had been well registered by all development partners. Keen interest of development partners in the democratic process and the election reflected their sense of solidarity and support for Bangladesh, they added.

They also appreciated the caretaker government in ensuring freedom of media. They said they are highly impressed by your excellent work in this area, which represents significant improvement over the situation of 1991 and 1996 in e v e r y

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US rejects Taliban's conditional offer for talks on Laden's fate

AP, Islamabad

The Taliban acknowledged yesterday they have Osama bin Laden under their control at a secret location and said they were willing to negotiate with the United States if Washington provides evidence he was involved in the Sept 11 terrorist attacks.

"He's in Afghanistan," the Taliban ambassador to Pakistan, Abdul Salam Zaeef, told reporters. "He is under our control, wherever he is, he's in a secret place but that doesn't mean that he is out of the control of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan. He's in a place which cannot be located by anyone."

Zaeef spoke in the Pashto language, and his English interpreter added the phrase "only security people know where he is."

In Washington, the White House quickly rejected the Taliban's conditional offer to negotiate the fate of Laden.

"The president has said we're not negotiating," White House chief of staff Andrew Card said on Fox News Sunday. "We've told the Taliban government what they should be doing. They've got to turn not only Osama bin Laden over but all of the operatives of the al-Qaida organisation. They've got to stop being a haven where terrorists can train."

Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld said on NBC's Meet the Press that he questions anything the Taliban rulers of Afghanistan say.

Meanwhile the trial of eight detained foreign aid workers accused of preaching Christianity in Afghanistan reopened yesterday amid preparations for a possible war and the resumption of UN food shipments to the drought-and poverty-stricken country.

Two Pakistani attorneys have arrived in Kabul to defend the detainees two Americans, two Australians

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