

COMMITTED TO
People's Right to Know

REGD. No. DA 781 Vol. XI No. 20 DHAKA FRIDAY OCTOBER 5, 2001 MAGH 20, 1407 BS ZELKAD 7, 1421 HJRI 16 PAGES PLUS MAGAZINE PRICE: TK. 10.00

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AL grassroots for restraint

Party stalwarts face criticism at working committee meeting for 'misleading' Sheikh Hasina

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Grassroots level leaders of Awami League yesterday came up with differing views on reasons behind the party's polls debacle and an overwhelming majority of them strongly favoured showing restraint.

The party high command listened to them a day prior to launching of the party's agitation programmes rejecting the polls results.

AL starts its agitation programmes today through demonstrations in the city, protesting what it called "crude rigging" in the October 1 parliamentary polls.

A day after her decision to boycott the 8th Jatiya Sangsad and threat to go for "non-cooperation movement," AL President Sheikh Hasina listened to the grassroots level leaders at an extended meeting of the party's Central Working Committee (ALCWC) in the city.

Leaders representing the party's districts units assembled at the Institute of Engineers to express concern over the party's "tough stance", which, they feared, "might alienate" AL from the people and be in sharp contrast to the foreign observers' "appreciation" of the polls.

An overwhelming majority of the speakers recommended "showing restraint" and "reading peoples' pulse" before launching a movement. A few



High Commissioner of India M L Tripathi called on BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia at Hawa Bhaban in the city yesterday.

AL gets more votes, less seats

Alliance arithmetic causes debacle

ZAYADUL AHSAN

Contrary to common perception that the Awami League has lost popularity for its failure to curb terrorism, figures indicate it has actually improved on its performance in the last election in terms of percentage of votes secured.

However, it has lost the battle on a different arithmetic. The strategy of the BNP and its allies to glean the anti-Awami League votes clicked, bringing an overwhelming victory in the polls, according to unofficial results of 299 seats obtained from the Election Commission (EC) website.

Although it has bagged only 63 seats, the AL has secured 40.24 per cent of the vote cast, up three per cent from what it got in the 1996 parliamentary polls.

On the other hand, the four-party alliance together got 46.9 per cent votes and yet bagged 201 seats. The BNP's popularity however could not be measured accurately due to cross voting among alliance members.

According to available statistics, the BNP has topped the AL in 85 constituencies the latter earlier held mustering the alliance votes. In most of these, the BNP candidates finished second the last time around.

The AL has bagged 22,319,750 votes against the four-party alliance's 26,012,712. A total of 55,905,518 or 74.87 per cent of the enlisted voters turned out to exercise their adult franchise. Voter turnout in the 1996 elections was 74.96 per cent.

In the elections to the seventh Jatiya Sangsad, the Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh contested alone and got 8.61 per cent of the popular vote, while the Islami Oikya Jote (IOJ) managed 1.09 per cent. The pro-Nazir faction of the Jatiya Party may have bagged half a per cent popular vote in this election. Overall, the Jamaat, the IOJ and the JP (Nazir-Firoz) may have secured at least ten per cent of the alliance votes, leaving the BNP with a share of roughly 37 per cent.

BNP preparing list of cabinet members

REZAUL KARIM

BNP has initiated informal discussions within in search of non-controversial and honest persons to be inducted into the cabinet the BNP-led four-party alliance is to form.

Sources said BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia has asked her party colleagues to list some "honest, committed and educated" leaders for induction into her cabinet.

Top party leaders are now busy doing homework to make such a list as well as seeking opinions from different groups and eminent personalities of the society.

The leaders said the party chief is looking for persons who are above controversy and have no corruption and terrorism charges against their name. They added that she had also asked for fresh, young faces.

They said the BNP has been mandated to power to curb terrorism and corruption and so, persons having such blames on them stand little chance of making it to the cabinet.

Party insiders said the BNP high

Envoys of India, Pakistan, Nepal, Thailand call on Khaleda

UNB, Dhaka

Envoys of India, Pakistan, Nepal and Thailand in Dhaka yesterday made courtesy calls on BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia to hail her for a resounding election victory.

On behalf of Indian government, Indian High Commissioner ML Tripathi in a meeting at 7:30 pm at the Hawa Bhaban felicitated Khaleda Zia on her party-led alliance's landslide victory in the

AL to take part in repolling

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League would take part in the repolling at some centres where voting was suspended during the parliamentary elections.

AL President Sheikh Hasina declared this at an extended meeting of the party's central working committee in the city yesterday.

Repolling at 90 centres in 16 parliamentary seats, where voting was suspended, will take place on October 8.

Hasina, whose party has already rejected the October 1 poll results alleging "crude rigging," and demanded a fresh voting altogether, said, "As we believe in democracy, we'll take part in the repolling. By participating in the repolling we'll catch the vote thieves red-handed."

CEC rejects AL demands

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

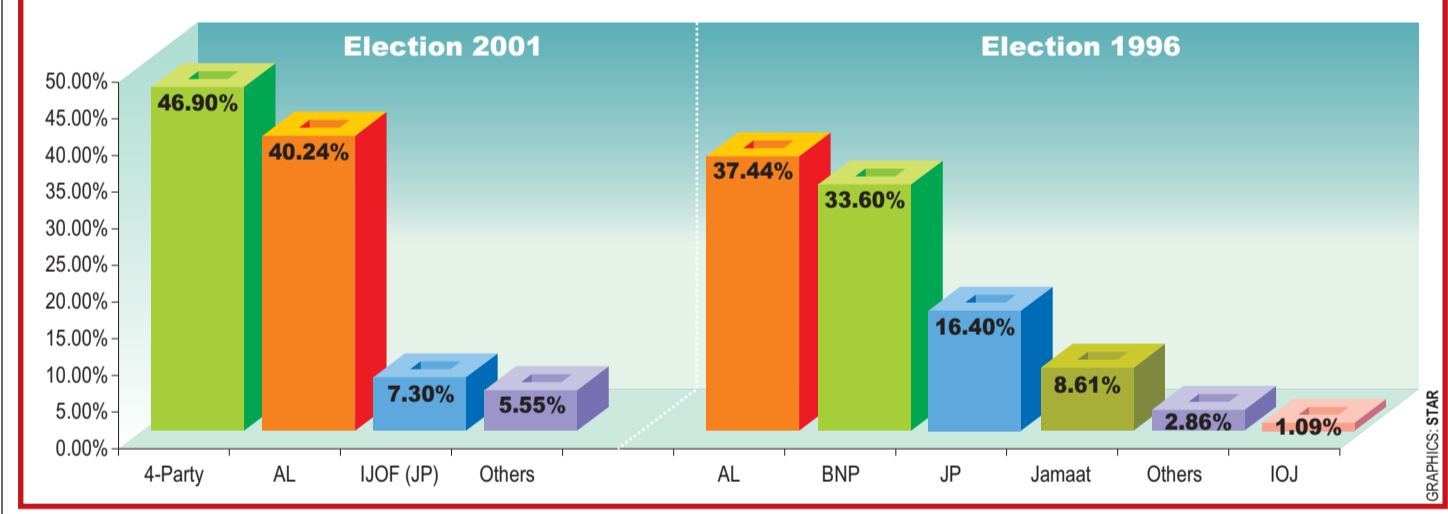
Chief Election Commissioner MA Syed has rejected outright the Awami League's demand for scrapping Monday's election result and re-polling in all the 300 parliamentary seats.

"Question does not arise to arrange re-election," the CEC told a group of journalists after a meeting with a five-member AL delegation at the CEC's office yesterday.

The AL yesterday formally demanded re-election to all the parliamentary seats during the meeting which was marked by heated exchange of words between the CEC and the AL delegation which claimed that Monday's election was marked by crude rigging.

According to meeting sources, the shouting between the CEC and the AL delegation ensued when a member of the delegation produced a result of Munshiganj-4 constituency.

Partywise percentage of votes in last two elections



Russian plane crashes after blast on board

76 killed on flight from Tel Aviv; navy missile of Ukraine or terror attack?

AFP, Kiev

A Russian airliner carrying 64 passengers and 12 crew on a flight from Israel to Siberia crashed into the Black Sea yesterday after an explosion that officials said could have been due to a terrorist attack.

All people on board were feared dead after the TU-154 jet travelling to the Siberian city of Novosibirsk crashed into the sea 190 kilometres south of the Russian city of Sochi, the emergency ministry said.

Israel quickly announced it was suspending all flights out of Tel Aviv airport, which has perhaps the highest level of security in the world.

Ukrainian navy official Igor Larichev told AFP that a Ukrainian missile fired during military exercises in Crimea accidentally shot down a Russian airliner that crashed into the Black Sea.

"The firing of missiles, with a range of 400 kilometres took place in the course of an anti-air attack exercise in the Feodocia in Crimea (southern Ukraine)," said a spokesman for the Black Sea fleet in Sebastopol.

Russian President Vladimir Putin earlier said he suspected a terrorist attack following reports of a midair explosion.

A US official in Washington had said earlier that the jetliner may have been accidentally shot down by the Ukrainian military during a training exercise. Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma sent

EU monitors term polls "extremely free, fair"

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The 72-member European Union polls monitoring team in its final report has said the election in the country was "extremely free and fair and there was no rigging".

They also hoped that different political parties would "respect the results" as a tribute to "people's aspirations".

The EU team dismissed the claim made by a major political party that the polls were marked by "crude" rigging.

Presenting its final report at a press conference in the city late Wednesday night, the team said it is "very satisfied" in the manner the elections were conducted. There were "no noticeable incidents of rigging," it said.

The team comprised representatives drawn from several European countries under the initiative of the 15-member European Union.

Team Leader Joaquim Miranda de Silva from Portugal addressed the press conference where some 10 Long Term Observers (LTOs) were present. All the LTOs replied to questions from reporters. They said that in their areas of observation, comprising several polling centres in more than one district, no instances of unfair polling were detected.

Most of the LTOs had arrived on August 27, more than a month ahead of the polls and made themselves familiar with local conditions. They were joined by several Short Term Observers (STOs) and the entire monitoring was coordinated by a core team.

The team leader said, "We see the results reflecting the will of the people and all parties should respect it."

The European Team operating under the EU Election Observation Mission in Bangladesh (EU-EOMB) observed that the elections were held "very peacefully and in a fair manner and there were no incidents of noticeable rigging".

Asked about criticisms suggesting some sort of rigging, Deputy Team Leader Paolo Salvia who had been in several locations on the election day said: "We had heard about such rumours even at times during election day, but those came from political parties and groups and we found those were pure political

People opt for change

Prof. Serajul Islam Chowdhury tells The Daily Star

Prof. Serajul Islam Chowdhury

Professor Serajul Islam Chowdhury with his profound insight into Bangladesh politics takes a look at the outcome of 2001 general election and raises a number of questions that are close to the heart of the people in Bangladesh who look forward to a change in both form and content of democracy in the country. Interview by Ekram Kabir follows:

The Daily Star (DS): How would you evaluate the election for the eighth parliament?

Dr. Serajul Islam Chowdhury (SIC): I would say that Election 2001 has been a good election due to reasons: a. voters' turn out was above 70 per cent, b. voters could go to the voting centres freely, c. it was a fair election, d. p a r t i c i p a

Who'll be next President?

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speculation is rife in political circles over who would be the next President of Bangladesh.

The five-year tenure of President Shahabuddin Ahmed expires on October 8 although he will continue in office until his successor enters office.

Sources at the Bangabhaban said the 71-year-old President wants to go on retirement after completion of his tenure.

The BNP poised to form a new government and also required to elect a new President following Justice Shahabuddin's retirement,

Suspension on ETV SC extends stay on HC order till Oct 16

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday extended till October 16 stay of a High Court order suspending terrestrial transmission by Ekushey Television (ETV).

The Supreme Court will hear the case on October 16, the day it reopens after vacation.

Earlier, the Supreme Court on September 27 had stayed the High Court order till October 4.

Chamber Judge of the Vacation Bench of Supreme Court Justice Mohammad Ruhul Amin extended the stay order.



Army Chief Lt. Gen. Harun-ar-Rashid, Navy Chief Rear Admiral Abu Taher, Air Force Chief Air Vice Marshal M Rafiqul Islam and IGP M Nurul Huda called on President Shahabuddin Ahmad at the Bangabhaban yesterday.

Chiefs of three services call on President

UNB, Dhaka

President Shahabuddin Ahmed has appreciated the works of the members of the armed forces, police, BDR, VDP and Ansar in maintaining peaceful atmosphere during Monday's election.

His appreciation came when Chief of Army Staff Lt General Harun-ar-Rashid, Chief of Naval Staff Rear Admiral Abu Taher, Chief of Air Staff Air Vice Marshal M Rafiqul Islam and IGP M Nurul Huda called on him at Bangabhaban yesterday.

Post-polls violence leaves 5 killed, 120 injured

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Post-election clashes involving activists of political parties left five people killed and nearly 120 injured in different parts of the country yesterday and on Wednesday night.

Of the five, one was killed in Feni, Natore and Kushtia each and two others were in Bagerhat.

In Bagerhat, post-election violence in Morelganj and Kochua upazilas left two persons killed yesterday, according to UNB.

The victims were identified as Mohammad Hemayet Uddin, 32, of village Khonir Khanda in Morelganj and Aziz Tarafder, 32, of Badhal Bazar area in Kochua.

Police said Hemayet was called out of his house by a group of terrorists at about 11 am and beaten to death.

Another group of terrorists called Aziz out of his house on Wednesday night and beat him to death.

Our Correspondent from Feni reports: An Awami League (AL) leader was killed and two others were abducted in the district yesterday.

Shariatullah, 50, a UP member and president of Bogadana union Awami League in Sonagazi thana was abducted from his house by a gang of armed terrorists at about 3 am.

The killers took Shariatullah to an unknown place and stabbed him to death.

Local people found his body near Durgapur KG School in the morning and informed police.