

Divided America votes in election cliffhanger

Highest turnout in 40 years; Bush, Kerry keep fingers crossed for dicey outcome in 10 swing states

AGENCIES, Washington

After the longest and costliest campaign on record, President Bush and challenger John F. Kerry remained deadlocked nationally and in key battleground states yesterday, with both sides expressing confidence that late trends and their election

day get-out-the-vote operations will deliver a victory when the polls close Tuesday night.

As the two blitzed through their final rallies in Florida, Ohio, Iowa, Wisconsin and other states late into the night, a flurry of national polls completed over the weekend showed them in a statistical tie.

Neither candidate has been able to establish clear momentum.

Bush and Kerry had spent their final day on the campaign trail on Monday racing back and forth through a handful of crucial swing states in a last-ditch hunt for votes, as both men try to stitch together the 270 electoral votes needed to claim

victory.

A latest poll of 10 swing states found Kerry trailing Bush in Ohio by six percentage points and the candidates in a tie in Florida at 48 percent each. Kerry led in six states, all won by Gore in 2000. To claim the White House, he will have to win some

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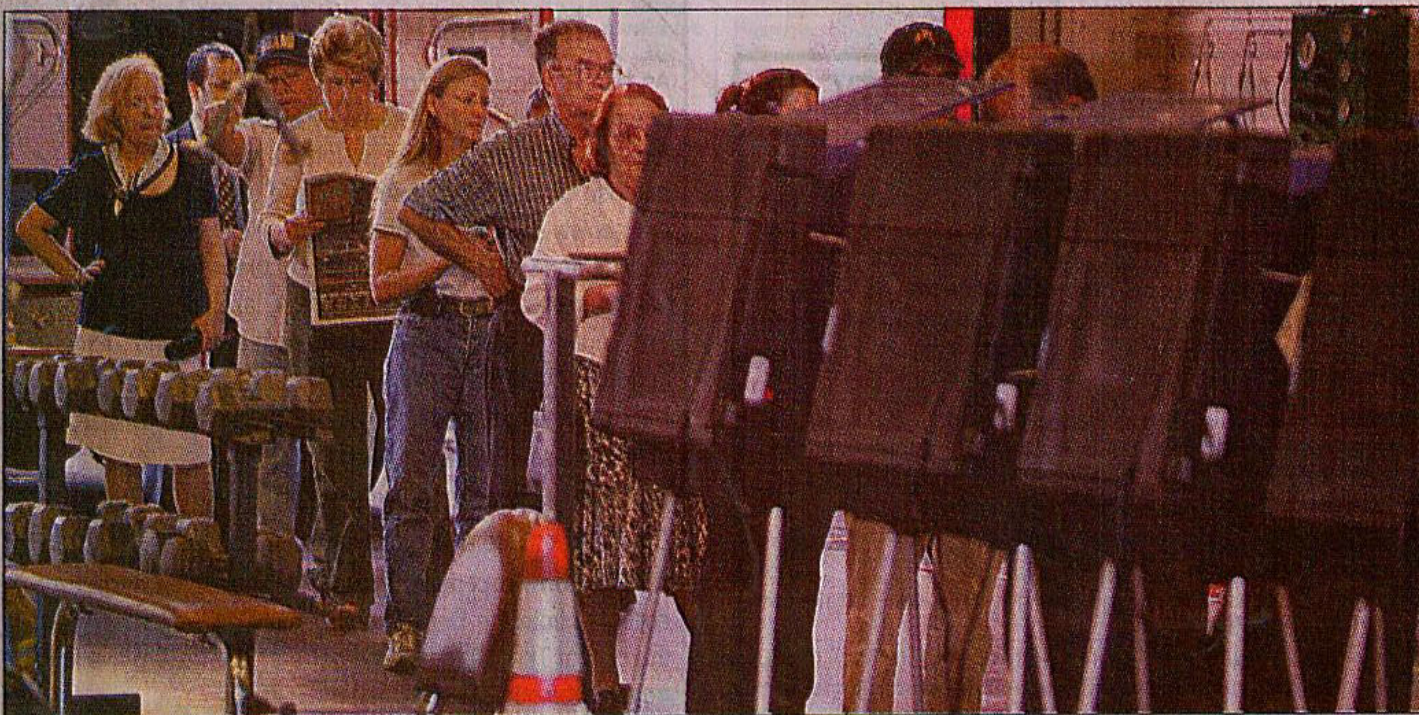


PHOTO: AFP

Voters stream to a City of Miami fire department polling station to cast their ballots during yesterday's US presidential election in Miami, Florida.

Nation mourns 4 slain nat'l leaders today

AL enforces 8-hr hartal to protest 'acquittal of masterminds'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The nation pays homage to the country's four national leaders and Liberation War heroes on their 29th death anniversary today, with main opposition Awami League enforcing an eight-hour countrywide shutdown in protest at the acquittal of alleged masterminds of the grisly assassinations.

A group of army men gunned down Syed Nazrul Islam, acting president of Bangladesh government in exile, Tajuddin Ahmed, prime minister, M. Mansur Ali, finance minister, and AHM Qamaruzzaman, home, relief and rehabilitation minister, in Dhaka

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Jubo League man, 3 outlaws killed in 'crossfire'

Rab, police action in Narayanganj, Jhenidah, Kushtia

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Jubo League activist and three members of outlawed parties were killed yesterday in 'crossfire' during three separate operations by the police and Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) in Narayanganj, Jhenidah and Kushtia.

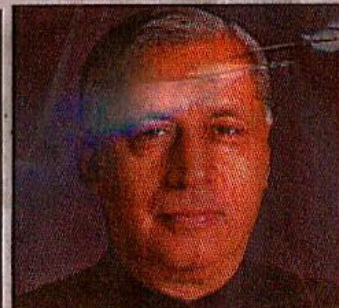
In Narayanganj, Jubo League activist Shafiqul Islam, 27, was killed in an encounter between the Rab-3 team and an armed gang at Siddhirganj on the bank of river Shitalakshya in the early hours

yesterday, Rab sources said.

The victim's family members however alleged it was a 'cold-blooded' murder. They also accused the Rab of taking bribe for his release before the killing, an allegation that Rab denied.

Two members of outlawed Biplobi Communist Party (BCP-Haq)-Abdul Mazid, 45, and Rajkumar, 48 -died in a gunfight between the police and the outlawed at Madhabpur in Jhenidah in the early hours yesterday, says our

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Pak PM flies in today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Pakistani Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz flies in today on a two-day visit as the chairman of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc), a post that Prime Minister Khaleda Zia would take over during the 13th Saarc Summit in Dhaka in January.

Returning from New Delhi

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Polls either under caretaker govt or BNP-led coalition

PM tells Awami League

BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday said the opposition Awami League (AL) is trying to create an issue over the caretaker government system after all its efforts to launch a movement against the government have failed.

If the AL does not want the con-

stitutional caretaker government system, it has the only option to go to polls under the elected BNP-led alliance government, she said.

Khaleda, also chairperson of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), was exchanging views with grassroots level leaders of her party from seven districts of Rajshahi division

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RESULT TAMPERING CU moves to act against examinees

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The results scandal of a High Court additional judge and 110 lawyers has prompted the Chittagong University (CU) authorities to go for action against 2,400 examinees who were found involved in tampering with mark-sheets and results in a 1996 investigation.

"A probe body detected the irregularities in LLB, BA, subsidiary and BA honours examination results during 1983-1994 period," CU

Controller of Examinations Mofakharul Islam Khan told The Daily Star yesterday.

"Action against the accused could not be taken as the authorities could not find addresses of the candidates," he said. "Now we have taken steps to collect mailing addresses of the 2,400 candidates to take action against them as per rule."

Khan said the probe body found 11 types of irregularities and placed

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