so controversial that it had to be litigated in the Supreme Court of Bangladesh and updated several times, but was still rejected by neutral observers. It goes without saying that the manipulation of the electoral roll is an important means of influencing election results.

Official influence is also blatantly used in resolving election disputes. For example, none of the election petitions filed after the 2001 elections were resolved within the terms of the Parliament. Both the EC and the judiciary were influenced by the government for this purpose.

Another source of influencing electoral outcomes is the delimitation of constituencies. Fortunately or unfortunately, parliamentary constituencies have never been delimited in Bangladesh. Official influence is also exerted in Bangladesh in the appointment of returning officers, assistant returning officers, presiding officers and polling officers etc.

Yet another popular means of influencing election results is through promises made by political parties, especially by the ruling party. In Bangladesh, ruling parties normally go through what is called the "politics of laying foundation Stones" at the end of their term of office. This is inte nded to cater to specific groups and constituencies for gaining their support during elections.

Bangladesh has a system of an unelected non-party caretaker government (CTG), with the responsibility of aiding the EC for holding free and fair elections, which, interestingly, amounts to using an undemocratic system to save democracy. In any event, the neutrality of the CTG is an essential pre-condition for fair elections as it can conceivably influence election results by manipulating the deployment of government officials and security personnel. The neutrality of the CTG which assumed office after the expiry of the 8th Parliament was seriously questioned. The partisan president, who was nominated by the 4-party alliance, became the chief adviser and made controversial appointments to his council of advisers as well as to the Election Commission. The partisan stance of the CTG became so controversial that it could not be sustained, and it was, indeed, replaced on January 11, 2007 by a new interim government. In recent years, a naked case of official influence took place in the implementation of an historic court judgment on disclosures. In May 2005, the High Court Division of the

