

## MEETING WITH EC

## AL for fair results, BNP alleges violation of electoral code

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League yesterday requested the Election Commission to declare the results of tomorrow's general elections fairly, while BNP alleged that many officials of the administration are violating the electoral code of conduct at different places of the country.

Chief Election Commissioner ATM Shamsul Huda, however, assured the delegations of both the major party alliances of looking into the matters.

Coming out after meeting with the EC, HT Imam, co-chairman of the AL election steering committee, said, "We saw in the 2001 election that results were going missing on way to the EC from the returning officers and later those were tampered."

They requested the EC so that such incident cannot recur this time, he added.

BNP Joint Secretary General and party spokesman Nazrul Islam Khan told reporters that they have complained to the EC that rivals of some four-party alliance candidates are issuing threats to make attempts on their life.

He also blamed their opponents of tarnishing images of four-party candidates by printing indecent posters and officials of the administration are giving different instructions after calling union parishad chairmen to their offices.

"We got no results despite we informed the returning officers and local administration of the matters as they are also working in favour of a particular party," Nazrul alleged.

Jamaat-e-Islami leader barrister Abdur Razzak as a delegation member said they have also drawn the EC's attention to a poster published in the Weekly 2000 on its December 26 issue which is violation of code of conduct. He alleged that private satellite channel ETV also telecast similar programme, while Sector Commanders' Forum is also continuing to violate the electoral code of conduct.

Solaiman Chowdhury who came in the limelight for his controversial role in the 2001 election when he was the deputy commissioner of Feni was also with the BNP delegation. He was later made establishment secretary after getting quick promotion from the post of a deputy secretary.

## Tight security to avoid post-election violence

Says EC Shakhawat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Election Commissioner Brig Gen (retd) M Shakhawat Hossain yesterday said the government has taken adequate security measures to keep any post-election violence at bay.

Shakhawat said this at the BBC Sanglap on 'Election and security' at Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in the city where Prof Muzaffer Ahmad and Mohammad Jahangir were present the panelists.

Shakhawat said army personnel, police, BDR and Ansar members will patrol different areas of the country to protect any kind of post-electoral violence.

Since the caretaker government holds the election, it is also its responsibility to tackle any kind of violence until an

elector government takes sits in the state power, he added.

He said if anybody tries to make any barriers to keep a person refrain from exercising his or her voting rights and if the victims complain it to the responsible polling officer, he will take punishable action against the interceptor.

He further also said that it is not mandatory to carry the national ID cards to the polling centres as he can exercise his voting rights with the voter number and identifying the pictures.

Moreover, a limited number of 'camps' on behalf of the political parties have been allowed to open in front of the gate of the polling centres where the voters can see their voter numbers and pictures, he added.

Shakhawat said, "We will take serious punitive actions

against the politicised persons of the administration if it is proved."

He reiterated that if any election observer is proved that he or she is not impartial, they will be blacklisted by the Election Commission (EC).

Prof Muzaffer complained that a number of deputy commissioners (DCs) did not follow the orders of the last caretaker government to tackle the post-election violence.

Although the EC has taken enough measures to tackle the rigging-in tomorrow's elections, he said still there is a little change of rigging as the administration is not fully impartial.

He said the current EC has been empowered a lot compared to the previous ones and they can take serious action against any kind of electoral violence.

## FOUR-PARTY CAMPAIGN ENDS

(Clockwise from right) Supporters and activists of the four-party alliance throng Paltan Maidan in the city yesterday to join its election rally. BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia waves from the dais. Policemen frisk a youth before he enters Paltan Maidan. Khaleda introduces four-party alliance candidates contesting the parliamentary elections from Dhaka city. An army man keeps his eyes open during the rally as part of beefed up security.

PHOTO: STAR



## Thousands flock to village homes to cast votes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

City dwellers flocked in their thousands to bus and launch terminals and railway stations in the capital yesterday to go to their village homes in order to cast their votes in tomorrow's parliamentary elections, as they were enrolled as voters in their respective home districts.

The people, put in festive mood by the elections, started leaving the capital on Thursday evening, taking the advantage of the weekend holidays.

But the journey for many was not risk-free, as they had to travel on roofs of the buses and trains due to a huge rush. On the other hand, most transport operators reduce the number of buses on different routes, fearing that the police could requisition buses for their election duty.

Faruq Ahmed of Dhaka Daudkandi Bus Owners Association said they have not been operating 26 buses, out of a total of 88 buses on this route, for the last three days.

The police have already requisitioned their 22 buses in two days, he added at Sayedabad Bus Terminal.

Faruq also said they were selling each ticket at Tk 50, up from Tk 40, due to shortage of buses and huge rush of home-bound people.

Tajrul Islam, a student of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology and a first time voter, was waiting for a Tangail-bound bus at Mahakhali Bus Terminal. "It is my duty to cast my vote in order to strengthen democracy," he said.

Haji Abdul Khaleque, the owner of a launch, said a large number of people have left the city since Thursday evening. At least 1.5 lakh people are likely to go to southern districts on the eve of the polls, he said at Sadarghat Launch Terminal.

A group of 30 labourers were seen waiting for a train at Kamalapur Railway Station. Muslim Mia, one of them, said they work in Narayanganj Police Lines area and were going to their homes at Islampur in Jamalpur as local leaders asked them to come and cast their votes, assuring them of paying their train fares.

## 6,561 die of cervical cancer a year

Pilot vaccination programme launched

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Every year some 12,931 cases of cervical cancer are diagnosed in the country while number of deaths due to the disease are 6,561, experts said at the launching ceremony of the 'Pilot programme for prevention of cervical cancer by HPV vaccination in Bangladesh' at a city hotel yesterday.

The experts also informed that everyday 18 women die of cervical cancer and 70 percent of cases of cervical cancer are associated with Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) 16 or 18.

Vaccination against key HPV strains offers an opportunity for primary prevention, they added.

Obstetrics and Gynaecology department of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) organised the programme sponsored by Grameenphone Ltd.

Health and Family Welfare Adviser Dr AMM Shawkat Ali was present at the programme as the chief guest while Health Secretary AMM Nasiruddin,

DGHS Director General M Abul Faiz, BSMMU Vice Chancellor Prof Nazrul Islam and Grameenphone Corporate and Regulatory Affairs Director Khalid Hasan were present as special guests.

Prof Emeritus ABMF Karim of Vrije University, Amsterdam and chairman of the Oncology Club chaired the programme.

The pilot vaccination programme has been taken to prevent the incidence of cervical cancer among economically disadvantaged young women.

Ten young women were vaccinated with the HPV vaccine at the end of the inaugural ceremony. Further 50 will be vaccinated today at the department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology of BSMMU, speakers said.

"A cancer control strategy has been prepared and a taskforce is formed in this regard. The terms and conditions of the taskforce has already been sent to district level," Prof Abul Faiz informed at the programme.

## Mahmudur trains 100 BNP, Jamaat workers on fake ballot papers : AL

UNB, Dhaka

Awami League at a press conference yesterday said Amar Desh Publications Chairman Mahmudur Rahman in connivance with a deputy secretary of BG Press have trained up some 100 people on making fake ballot papers to use those in Monday's elections.

AL further alleged that members of some banned militant outfits, including JMB, Harkatul Jihad and Hijab Tahrir, are now campaigning for the BNP-Jamaat candidates.

"We've come to know that Mahmudur Rahman and a deputy secretary of BG Press who also acted as the personal secretary to Jamaat Secretary Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mujahid and two former IGP's have trained up some 100 workers of BNP-Jamaat on making fake ballot papers and techniques of vote rigging," AL Election Steering Committee co-chairman HT Imam said.

## Requisition

FROM PAGE 16

Mohammad Abdul Hannan, managing director of Shikor Paribohan Service Ltd which plies the Mirpur-Jatrabari route, said his company provides a bus on a daily basis for police, complying with such a deal.

Hannan alleged that the DMP was meant to pay Tk 1,000 a day for the requisition of a bus or minibus, which often remained unpaid. On the other hand, the daily income from each bus stands around Tk 3,000, he said.

The DMP took away two buses of his company without any notice for requisition, he pointed out, fearing a repeat of such an incident.

Tapan Rahman, general manager of Choice Transport that plies the same route echoed Hannan and said: "In addition, police do not provide lunch or tiffin to the drivers and helpers of the vehicles requisitioned."

"Staffs often don't ask for lunch or tiffin in fear of harassment, such as arrest or filing case against the company concerned," he said, adding that transport staffs often show unwillingness to go for any police trip.

Rahman said for this reason most of the private bus and minibus owners reduced the number of city services yesterday and it would do so further today.

Asked, AKM Hafiz Akhtar, DMP deputy commissioner (transport), denied any such irregularity as the owners alleged. He said the DMP has to take buses and minibuses without any notice for requisition in the face of any urgent situation.

"In an urgent situation we take vehicles from the road and then talk to owners. It is not forced requisition," he said.

Hafiz also denied the accusation of not paying the transport companies properly.

"In a poor country like ours we often suffer from fund constraints, but we do not hesitate to pay them on availability of funds," the DMP official said, admitting that the amount to compensate the vehicle owners is inadequate and suggesting an increase in funds.

"We already have sent a proposal to the Ministry of Home to raise the compensation package and meal charge meant for the vehicle owners and staff," he added.



FILE PHOTO

AN ALLIANCE OF CONVENIENCE: BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia yesterday came down hard on the grand alliance and branded its election partner Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad as a "grand thief". At a Paltan rally in Dhaka, the former prime minister said: "They (Awami League) have formed a grand alliance with a grand thief (Ershad) who had served out jail terms for corruption." This file picture shows Khaleda and Ershad along with other alliance leaders waving to people at a rally ahead of the 2001 election. Khaleda formed an electoral alliance with the former military ruler years after he came out of jail during Sheikh Hasina's 1996-2001 regime.



## Salim re-elected Dhaka Club president

METRO DESK

Sadat Hossain Salim, managing director of Rupayan Housing Estate Ltd, was re-elected president of Dhaka Club Limited unopposed yesterday for 2008-09, says a press release.

Executive committee members are Nurul Islam Khan (Akas Khan), Syed Sheikhul Arefeen, Jahangir Shah Badsha, Ashrafuzzaman Khan (Puton), Shahjahan Chowdhury, Ruhul Amin Babul, Zahid Hassan, Mohd Iftakharuddin (Naushad), Noab Talukder and Siraj Uddin Haider.

The annual general meeting preceded the election.



## Light to moderate fog likely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain dry with partly cloudy sky over the country in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Light to moderate fog may occur over the country during midnight until morning.

Night temperature may fall slightly over the country, Met Office said.

Highest temperature 26.0 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Cox's Bazar and lowest 11.3 degrees Celsius at Srimongal.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:20pm today and rises at 6:40am tomorrow.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	24.3	15.0	83	76
Chittagong	24.0	16.5	95	59
Rajshahi	24.2	14.1	89	90
Khulna	23.5	13.3	89	79
Barisal	24.5	12.4	92	90
Sylhet	25.6	14.8	100	67
Cox's Bazar	26.0	15.8	77	67



PHOTO: STAR

A large number of home-bound people wait in queues to buy tickets at Kamalapur Railway Station in the city yesterday as they want to cast their votes in their home districts.