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People's Right to Know

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## Grand victory for grand alliance

### People go for change in fair polls; voters turnout 70pc

STAR REPORT

The Awami League-led grand alliance has swept back to power after seven years out of office with a stunning landslide victory in an environment of free and fair elections that clearly showed the people's verdict for a change and has consigned the BNP-led four-party alliance to the political wilderness.

As of 3:30 in the morning, the grand alliance had clinched 175 seats compared to 23, down from 217 in 2001, won by its archrival BNP-led four-party alliance, more than enough to form the next government.

Jamaat-e-Islami, the BNP's key ally in the four-party alliance, has seen its once-proud seat tally plummet from 17 in 2001 to a humiliating two, in what appears to be a wholesale rejection of the party by the voters.

A 'rebel' candidate from Jamaat-e-Islami also won from Cox's Bazar-2.

The shocking results clearly indicate that the voters, especially the young and first-time voters, were hungry for change that the BNP-led four-party alliance was simply incapable of delivering.

The four-party alliance offered few new ideas to the voters and appeared to have learned nothing from its two years on the sidelines during which many of its senior leaders were incarcerated on corruption charges.

The defeat of the four-party alliance can be seen as the majesty of the public verdict against the unprecedented corruption and tyranny that marked its five-year rule.

While in power, the BNP-led alliance failed to address a series of vital issues, including soaring prices of essential commodities

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1



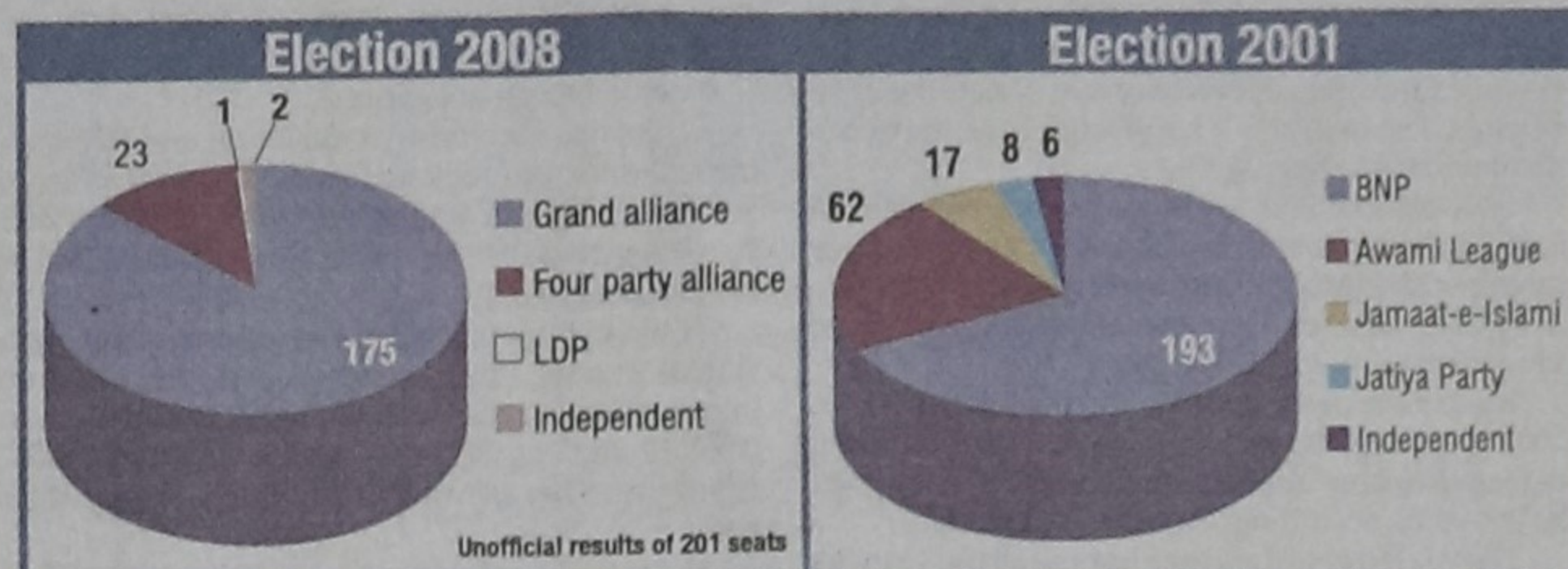
Hasina flashes V-sign after casting vote.

PHOTO STAR

### 9TH JS POLLS

RESULT 2008/RESULT 2001

14-PARTY	4-PARTY
175	23
TOTAL	TOTAL
153/62	21/201
AL	BNP
21/14	02/17
JP	JAMAAT
00/00	00/00
CPB	IOJ
01/00	01/00
JSD	BJP



### Hasina calls for calm

HASAN JAHID TUSHER

Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina last night urged her party men to stay calm and not to bring out any victory processions until the polls results are announced officially.

"She asks everyone to exercise utmost restraint," AL chief's Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad told

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

### High and mighty brought low

INAM AHMED and RAKIB HASNET SUMON

It was an election of heartbreak and humiliation for many bigwigs. An election that clearly brought home that big names do not matter, it is the deeds that count at the end of the day.

BNP's Saifur Rahman who had an easy-sailing track record from his Sylhet constituencies suddenly faced a stumbling block in the form of the grand alliance's AMA Muhith in Sylhet-1 and Syed Mohosin Ali in Moulavibazar-3. He meekly surrendered in both seats.

Saifur lost his lustre when he, despite being finance minister for more than a decade, whitened Tk 40 lakh in black money. His

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1



PHOTO STAR

Women stand in a long queue at Dhaka College polling centre yesterday. More than half the nation's voters are female.

## Irregularities in 220 centres

### Claims BNP; Khaleda hints at rigging

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP yesterday complained that there were irregularities, ballot rigging and forgery in 220 poll centres in 72 constituencies across the country during the just concluded ninth parliamentary election.

The party lodged the complaints with the Election Commission (EC) last night.

BNP Office Secretary Rizvi Ahmed spoke about their complaints at a press briefing at the BNP chairperson's Gulshan office hours after unofficial poll results showed that the BNP-led four-party alliance lost convincingly to its archrival Awami League.

Rizvi, who earlier in the day also held several press briefings on the elections, however declined to make any comment about the latest results.

Asked if the BNP and its alliance are rejecting the poll results on grounds of irregularities and rigging, he said, "We will give our reaction in this regard today."

He said party Chairperson Khaleda Zia also gave hints about election engineering and vote rigging during her campaigns, which have proved true.

He alleged that the presiding and assistant presiding officers in some places worked in favour of the Awami League-led grand alliance and they admitted such incidents.

Even the law enforcement agencies were biased towards the grand alliance, he said, adding that a few army and naval officers pressurised the local administration to ensure the victory of some candidates who are their relatives.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7



## No scope for rejecting results

### Says CEC

TAWFIQUE ALI and SAJJADUR RAHMAN

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) ATM Shamsul Huda has said there would be no scope for any quarter to reject the results of the ninth parliamentary election.

"The voting has been arranged in such a way that there will be no scope for rejecting the results," the CEC told reporters after casting his vote at the Gulshan Model School and College polling centre yesterday.

Huda along with his wife arrived at the polling centre at 10:00am and left at about 10:15am.

He said, "About 1,500 foreign and two lakh local observers are monitoring the whole election process. It will be impossible for anyone to reject the results."

The CEC said a 75 percent turnout of voters in the polls would be good enough.

Terming the election day 'a very happy one'



SEE PAGE 15 COL 8

## CA delighted over high turnout

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Adviser (CA) Fakhruddin Ahmed yesterday expressed the hope that the political parties would gracefully accept the results of the ninth parliamentary polls.

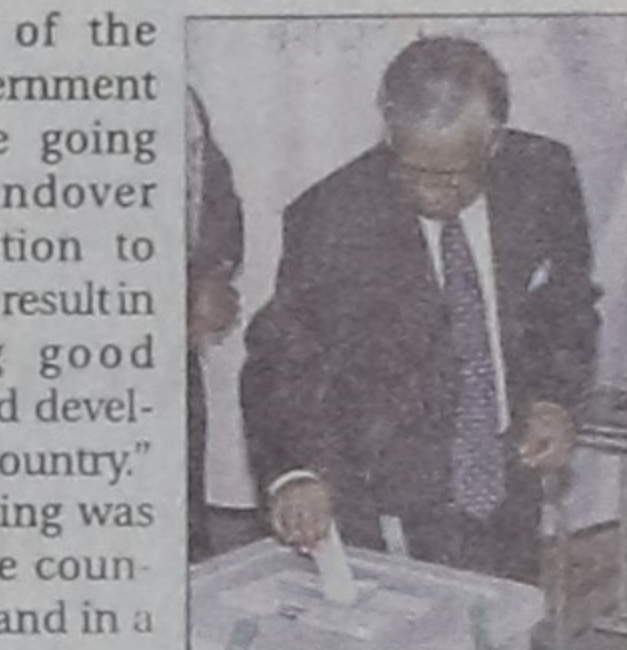
Talking to reporters after casting his vote at Gulshan Model School and College in the city at 10:15am yesterday, the CA said he was delighted to see the voter turnout in the polling centres.

The head of the caretaker government said, "We are going ahead to handover power. Transition to democracy will result in establishing good governance and development of the country."

He said voting was held across the country peacefully and in a festive mood.

Replying to a question, the CA said his government, soon after assuming office, had worked hard with firm determination to hold a free, fair and acceptable election to transfer power to an elected government

SEE PAGE 15 COL 8



## Jamaat in jeopardy

M ABUL KALAM AZAD

The anti-liberation forces have been defeated once again, this time through peoples' verdict. While it is a sweet revenge for Bangladeshis against the war criminals, the verdict will make stronger the demand for their trial.

In the historic ninth parliamentary elections held yesterday, Jamaat-e-Islami, collaborators of the Pakistani occupation forces in 1971, faced the worst election debacle

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

### Commentary

## You shall reap as you sow

### BNP is made to pay dearly for its five years of mal-governance

MAHFUZ ANAM

As we celebrate the majesty of public will and try to understand the stunning results of the national election 2008, the real question that needs to be asked is not why Awami League won so comprehensively, but why BNP got the thrashing that it did. Given our anti-incumbency history and the pattern so far fol

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

## Victory for sector commanders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A year-long nationwide campaign to try war criminals culminated in an overwhelming vote of confidence for the Sector Commanders' Forum yesterday, as their chief AK Khandakar and Rafiqul Islam swept to victory last night as part of the AL-led grand electoral alliance.

The forum ran a year-long nationwide campaign to try war criminals, rallying a massive anti-war criminal support in yesterday's polls, defeating

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

## First vote for new hope

JULFIKAR ALI MANIK

Enthusiastic first time voters representing almost one-fourth of around 81 millions on the electoral roll exercised their franchise with the hope of a positive attitude in members of next parliament.

Alif Layla, an MBA student of Dhaka University, was standing in a long queue at a Mohammadpur polling centre. She said she expects this election would bring some positive changes among the leaders and that's why she was keen to cast her vote.

"I hope our security would

be ensured and price of essentials sharply decrease," she expressed her hopes. "We'll return to democracy through

this election and I hope our politicians will correct their past mistakes."

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2



## Work together

### Moeen urges winners, losers

UNB, Dhaka

Army Chief General Moeen U Ahmed yesterday expected that the election winners and

SEE PAGE 15 COL 5

## Mismanagement mars voter list success

AHMED ALI, SAYEDA AKTER, M ABUL KALAM AZAD and SARWAR A CHOWDHURY

Thousands of voters in the capital could not vote yesterday despite repeated frantic attempts, due to an apparent mismanagement of the much ballyhooed successful voter list by the Election Commission (EC).

Voters who could not exercise their right to franchise despite having legitimate voter numbers printed on their national ID cards, returned home disappointed often with tearful eyes.

The fallout of the mismanagement even culminated in a temporary interment of a

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6



PHOTO STAR

A polling agent takes a nap at Dhanmondi Govt Girls High School polling centre yesterday as vote counting remained suspended there until 7:00pm because of chaos resulting from voters' being unable to cast vote. Inset, angry voters protesting mismanagement in the centre.

## Women voters defy hurdles

SOHEL PARVEZ and AMENA KHATUN

Her face flushed with triumph, an eight-month pregnant Shefali Begum Moina finally cast her vote at about 4:30 pm after struggling to keep standing in an overcrowded line for about three hours.

"Yes, I made it!" she exclaimed, coming out from a polling booth at Maniknagar Government Primary School, where over 5,800 women voters were supposed to vote to deliver their judgement for Dhaka-9 constituency.

Saber Hossain Chowdhury of the grand alliance and Shirin Sultana of the four-party alliance were the main contenders for the parliamentary seat.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

## Gaza-blitz on

### Death toll rises to 345; UN asks Israel to end hostilities

APP, AP, Gaza City

Israel bombed Gaza for a third day yesterday in an "all-out war" on Hamas, as tanks massed on the border and the Islamists fired deadly rockets in retaliation for the blitz that has killed at least 345 people.

Twelve Palestinians were killed on Monday and 30 more wounded in two fresh Israeli air raids in the Hamas-run Gaza Strip, medics and witnesses said.

At least 345 people have been killed and 1,550 wounded since the Israeli blitz was launched on Saturday, according to medics.

The raids were carried out in Beit Lahiya and Beit Hanun in the north of the battered territory, they said.

Anger over the mammoth bombing campaign spiralled in the Muslim world, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon again deplored the violence, and efforts to hold talks between Syria and Israel were suspended as a result of the bombardment.

"He strongly urges once again an immediate stop to all acts of violence," his spokeswoman said.

With Israeli tanks idling along the border of the battered

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

### HIGHLIGHTS

#### Minority seeks peaceful life

A woman of the Mandra community in Barisal fears a repeat of attacks on her family by the loser in the elections.

Page: 2

#### Poll observers rebuked

Rajshahi Divisional Commissioner Hafizur Rahman Bhuiyan has rebuked election observers of the Association for Community Development for their alleged bid to influence voters.

Page: 2

#### Fake vote

Raju Hossain, 29, son of late Abdul Jabbar of Gangni Poursava, finds that his vote in Meherpur-2 constituency has already been cast.

Page: 2