

Mismatch between ID card, voter serial numbers turns away many

STAR REPORT

A large number of voters could not cast their votes in several cities and districts as their names were not found on voter lists.

Confusion was created as their national identity card numbers and voter serial numbers did not match.

Many others returned home without casting vote as they failed to ascertain in which polling centre they should go.

Our Staff Reporter from Chittagong reports: Many voters in EPZ area yesterday said they did not get their serial numbers in voter lists. Many others returned home disappointed as they could not know which polling centre to go to cast vote.

"I cast my vote but name of my wife Ambia Begum is yet to be found. Agents of the candidates did not help us to find

out the polling centre," said Mohammad Zakir, a resident of Chittagong EPZ area.

Nazrul Islam, presiding officer of TCB Bhaban polling centre in Chittagong-10 constituency, admitted that they did not find names of a large number of voters in the voter lists though they showed their national identity cards.

Many voters alleged that the number of polling booths was inadequate. For this, queues of both male and female voters were very long.

Our Bogra Correspondent reports: A good number of voters could not cast votes at Seujari Government Primary School centre in Bogra town as their names were not on voter lists.

Presiding Officer at the centre Abdullah Al Amin admitted that a number of voters including elderly Khandaker Emdadul Haque could not cast their votes as

their names were not on the voter list.

Shaheda Begum, a resident of Ujgram village under Gabtoli upazila also made similar allegation. She said she could not cast her vote as her name was not on the voter list.

He said total number of voters in the centre was 2476 and about 1200 votes were cast by 11.15 am.

First time voter in the area Shaheb Ali came to Shahid Zia High School centre but he could not vote as somebody else cast it earlier. Presiding Officer at the centre Bazlur Rahman admitted this. The total number of voters in the centre is 2497 and 1700 votes were cast before 2 pm.

These centres are under Bogra-7 where BNP chairperson Khaleda Zia is contesting. On a visit to Jaleswarita Pre-Cadet School in the town and some other centers, it was found that voters stood in long

queue much before the voting started.

Rahima (20) of Kanath village under Sadar upazila is a first time voter. She came to Koichor Primary School centre to cast her vote. She said, "The experience of casting the first vote in my life is unique and she would remember the feeling throughout her life."

Government officials say more than 50 per cent of votes were cast by 2 pm in most of the centres.

Our Moulvibazar Correspondent adds: Over 100 voters in Chunbhar Primary School in Kazipur area in Moulvibazar could not cast their votes as they did not find their names in voter list.

Our Correspondent from C'awabganj reports: Rabiul Islam went to cast his vote at Upa Rajarampur Government Primary School polling centre in the town. He entered the

booth at 10 am but he found that some one else had already cast his vote.

As he asked, presiding officer Majdul Islam took Tk 100 from him as fees for objection and took his objection letter. He was then allowed to cast vote.

Suma, (voter no.311) a disabled voter in Pathan Para polling centre in the town claimed that the presiding officer cast her vote in favour of sheaf of paddy.

As Suma became angry and when the news spread, the presiding officer cancelled the ballot and issued her a new ballot paper. Presiding officer Sajedul Karim Siddique later admitted that it was a mistake.

At Nawabganj High School centre, Tanzila Banu, a resident of Sadar hospital road did not find her name in the voter list and she could not cast her vote.



AGE FAILS TO STOP HER: An octogenarian woman waits for her turn in a queue to cast vote at a polling centre in Narayanganj yesterday.

Tofail, Amu, Mahbub win as grand alliance takes lead

No sign of intimidation in Barisal division.

EMRAN HOSSAIN AND RAFIQUIL ISLAM, from Barisal

Awami League-led grand alliance candidate Mahbub Rahman, Amir Hossain Amu and Tofail Ahmed were announced unofficially elected in Patuakhali-4, Jhalakathi-2 and Bhola-2 constituencies respectively.

Sixteen other grand alliance candidates out of total 21 in Barisal division were leading, according to the unofficial result announced by returning officers last night.

BNP was however leading in two constituencies in Bhola-1 and Barisal-5, the grand alliance candidate were leading in Barisal constituencies with narrow margins.

Tofail Ahmed won in Bhola-2 by bagging 1,35,092 votes against his nearest rival Ashkur Rahman with 76,743 votes.

Amir Hossain Amu got 1,01,246 vote against his nearest rival Ishrat Sultana Elan Bhutto, who bagged 73,851 votes.

Our Patuakhali Correspondent reports: In Patuakhali-4 Mahbubur

Rahman bagged 91,022 votes against his nearest rival ABM Mosharrif Hossain of BNP-led four-party alliance. He got 59,158 votes.

The AL-led grand alliances leading in the constituencies are Barisal-1, Barisal-2, Barisal-3, Barisal-4, Barisal-6, Patuakhali-1, Patuakhali-2, Patuakhali-3, Barguna-1, Barguna-2, Bhola-3, Bhola-4, Jhalakathi-1, Pirojpur-1, Pirojpur-2 and Pirojpur-3.

BNP candidates leading in the constituencies till filing of the report are Barisal-5 and Bhola-1.

In 2001 parliamentary election, BNP-led four party alliance won in 19 constituencies out of 23.

The number of constituencies declined following delimitation this time.

Meanwhile, four-party alliance candidate in Barisal-5 Mojibur Rahman Sarwar at a press conference last night at the returning officer's office complained of 'election engineering', blaming returning officers office of wasting time in announcing results.

There was no sign of intimidation in the division.

"I feel very good", said housewife Malati Das after casting vote at WB Union institution centre in Uzirpur under Barisal-2 constituency.

It was the second after 1996 that Malati Das cast her vote. Since 1996, she did not dare to go to polling centre due to intimidation, she alleged.

Voter intimidation was widespread in Barisal region, particularly in Hindu populated areas, in 2001 election.

Such festive mood among voters was seen in different polling centres under Barisal-1, Barisal-2, Barisal-6, Barisal-5 and Barisal-3, except for very few incidents due to errors between the list supplied to polling centres for voting and the list supplied to the candidates from the election commission.

The ninth parliamentary election in Barisal division ended in an unprecedented peaceful atmosphere and festive mood with about 80 per cent voter turnout in almost all the constituencies including those in minority community areas.

There were very few incidents of fake voting and stray incidents of minor violence in some centers in Barisal-5, Bhola-3, and Bhola-4.

Divisional Commissioner Mesbah Ul Alam and DIG of police Khan Sayeed Hasan said polling was held in a peaceful atmosphere without report of any untoward incident.

Vote cast was however slow during first hours in remote polling centres like Padri Shibpur in Bakerganj under Barisal-6 constituency.

"Some names on the ID card did not match the names on lists supplied to polling centres," said Rehana Parvin, a polling agent of Ruhul Amin Howlader, contesting from Barisal-6. Only 10 votes were cast in the first one hour, he said.

In Lalmohon, Bhola municipality mayor Enayet Kabir and councilor Milon Panchayet were held by police as they tried to influence voters in a polling centre.

The mayor was released later but the councilor was held till writing of the report.

EU observers say voting fair, peaceful in Chandpur

ALAM PALASH, Chandpur

Voting was peaceful in five constituencies in the district barring an attack on the car of four-party alliance candidate in Chadnpur-1 (Kachua and Narayanpur union of Matlab South upazila) ANM Ehsanul Haque Milon.

A group of youths hurled brickbats on his car when Milon went to Narayanpur Bazar at around 10.30 am. Front window of the car was damaged.

When contacted Milon however claimed that it was an attempt to kill him. He held Awami League activists responsible for the incident.

The former state minister said he was taking preparation to file a case with Matlab South police station.

During visit to different polling centres voters were seen spontaneously coming to polling centres and standing in long queues. Presence of women voters was higher.

Law enforcing agency sources said no untoward incident was reported from anywhere in Chandpur. Rapid Action battalion (Rab) and army personnel were on patrol in Chandpur town areas.

At Chandpur Hasan Ali Government High School at 9 am, this correspondent saw 50 to 60 votes cast their votes at every booth. At 9.30 am at Matpith Government Girls High School, some women said they faced problems in finding which booth to go to cast vote. At 10 am at Baburhat School and College Centre, 900 out of 3,000 votes were cast in a peaceful atmosphere.

In Chandpur-3 (Sadar and Haimchar), the candidates of the grand alliances hired rickshaws to bring voters to polling centres. A number of rickshaw pullers told this correspondent that they were hired for the day for Tk 300 to Tk 500, the same scene was seen in at least six centres.

EU observers Two European Union observers who visited the five constituencies told this correspondent at noon in front of deputy commissioner's office that the election was fair and peaceful.

The delegation comprised Danish citizen Vabeke Klingard and Italian citizen Umberlo Bonetti.

Poll boycott to protest shifting of polling centre

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidaha

Most of the voters at Fulbari village under Baluhar union in Kotchandpur upazila of Jhenidaha-3 constituency have boycotted election protesting shifting of centre from their village to nearby village of Marutia. Fulbari centre was an old centre but the authorities concerned shifted the centre to Marutia without informing it to villagers, said elderly people.

Out of total 1,773 voters in the centre, 1,273 are of Fulbari and 500 voters are of Marutia, they said.

"My ancestors traditionally used to cast vote in the polling centre but it was shifted from our village whimsically," said Mohsin Ali, 52, at Fulbari village.

Polls held peacefully in Tangail under new PO

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Peaceful election was held at Falda Ramsundar High School centre in Tangail-2 (Gopalpur-Bhuapur) constituency under supervision of the newly-appointed presiding officer (PO) Sheikh Mohammad Shamsul Haque.

Earlier, police arrested previous presiding officer Shafiqul Alam Sunday night when he along with seven assistant presiding officers were stamping illegally behind ballot papers the official seal of Election Commission (EC).

Later, the EC authorities stand released them and appointed anew the presiding officer and assistant presiding officers.

In other centres in the district, election was held in a peaceful manner.

Voters cast their votes joyfully in all 879 polling centres under eight constituencies, said Tangail Returning Officer and Deputy Commissioner Makchudur Rahman Patwari. We received no report of any untoward incident from any centre, he said. Vote counting is also progressing satisfactorily, he added.

None was arrested in the district in connection with any untoward incident, said Tangail Superintendent of Police Abdul Mannan.

On average, 80 percent votes were cast in the district, EC sources said. Percentage of female voters were satisfactory, they said.



An army person warns through a loudspeaker after outsiders throw brickbats at Atiar Government Primary School polling centre in Dhurung union in Fatikchhari upazila in Chittagong yesterday.

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'Voting sheaf of paddy is key to heaven'

Female Jamaat activists engaged by Santu in Barisal-2 tell voters

EMRAN HOSSAIN, from Barisal

In violation of election code of conduct, female Jamaat-e-Islami female activists campaigning in favor of outlaw godfather Sardar Sharfuddin Ahmed Santu whispered to female voters that voting 'sheaf of paddy' will ensure their heaven.

"Sheaf of paddy is the key to heaven. Cast vote for sheaf of paddy, you will go to heaven," said Khaleda Khanam, after casting vote in Banaripara Union Institution in Uzirpur in the constituency in Barisal-2 constituency.

"If required, we will buy a vote for Tk 10,000," a woman among a group of five female campaigners was heard whispering to female voters in a queue.

Since December 20, Santu engaged 200 female Jamaat-e-Islami activists in

the area to influence voters to vote for BNP-led four-party alliance.

Female workers of Santu also evolved a new method. They made female voters promise to vote for BNP by touching the holy Quran.

They were engaged after the death of outlaw leader Abu Jafar Molla in a crossfire on Sunday.

After Jafar's death, Barisal Police Superintendent Fawfique Mahbub

Chowdhury said, "Some candidates were using outlaws to influence election. After his death, people got relieved."

Santu himself told The Daily Star after Jafar's death, "It would be a minus point for me in election."

Police caught Santu and three other outlaws with firearms while they were distributing money among voters in Banaripara Friday night.

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