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Voting fair, except for stray incidents
Says Election Working Group
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The overall voting process across the country was satisfactory except some isolated incidents of irregularities and fake voting till noon on the polling day, according to the preliminary observation of Election Working Group (EWG).

The "Quick Impression" survey of EWG, a coalition of 32 local polls observers, also found the polling centres across the country secure for casting vote peacefully and without any fear.

"Though overall elections were satisfactory, we identified campaign violations (illegal polls campaign on election day) in some districts, including Lakshmipur, Moulvibazar, and other places

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Amu, Inu first time lawmaker
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two seasoned political figures--Awami League (AL) Presidium member Amir Hossain Amu and Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) chief Hasanul Haq Inu--yesterday won in a general election for the first time.

The prominent political personalities won yesterday as the nation gave a clear victory to the AL-led grand alliance.

Amu, a former technocrat food minister in the last AL administration, was one of the first to be declared a winner in yesterday's AL landslide victory. He comprehensively defeated his rival BNP candidate Israt Sultana Elen Bhutto in Jhalakathi-2. Amu bagged 1,04,444 votes against his

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Ctg minority voters brave intimidation

3 houses torched in West Barua Para

MD HASAN, DWAIPAYAN BARUA and NUR UDDIN ALAMGIR from Ctg

Minority voters in different areas in Chittagong received threats from workers of the four-party alliance despite huge preparations and safety measures for a free and fair election.

Islami Chhatra Shibir activists and workers of Salauddin Quader Chowdhury allegedly issued the threats in remote poll centres.

However, the minority voters braved the situation and cast votes even after facing the goons on their ways to poll centres.

But a significant number of voters, especially the indigenous people and Biharis (non-Bangalees) could not vote as they were not on the new voter roll.

Around 300 such voters did not find their names on the electoral roll in Ambagan under Chittagong-9 constitu-

ency and could not vote.

The first incident of obstruction was reported in Chawk Bazar in the city, a place where majority voters are Hindus.

On information from the grand alliance supporters, police clubbed and shooed away a band of Shibir activists as the gang was barring female voters from going to poll centres at around 9:00am.

Ten to 15 Shibir thugs were trying to persuade the voters not to vote at Katalganj Govt Primary School in Chittagong-8 saying that wouldn't do them any good.

In another incident, criminals set fire to three houses in West Barua Para in Fatikchhari (Chittagong-2 constituency) at around 2:00am.

A temple near the houses was narrowly saved but the houses owned by Pulin Bihari Barua, Nil Komol Barua and

Jibon Barua were reduced to ashes.

West Nanupur Anandadham Bihar Principal Bimol Jyoti Bhikkhu said they don't know who did this or what their motive was.

Locals suspect the arson attack was committed to scare the minority voters so that they don't go to vote.

Around 200 voters of Bank Colony in Chittagong Export Processing Zone under Chittagong-10 constituency didn't get their voter number and had to return home without casting votes.

Shahazadi, a 65-year-old Bihari voter of School Camp polling centre, alleged she could not cast her vote for not finding her voter serial number. She expressed her sorrow as after 38 years she got back her voting right.

"I am deeply shocked," she said, adding, "I became a voter again at the age of 65 but could not enjoy my right I don't know why."



Criminals set ablaze yesterday a section of Nanupur Barua Para and three houses belonging to members of minority group of Fatikchhari in Chittagong. Locals alleged that the houses were torched to intimidate them into not voting in the polls. PHOTO: STAR

VOTE PURCHASE
Nizami's ex-PS caught red-handed

15 BNP, JP men also arrested in 3 dists

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least eight workers of Jamaat-e-Islami including a former personal secretary of its Ameer Motiur Rahman Nizami were arrested in Pabna while 15 workers of BNP and Jatiya Party were held in three other districts for distributing money among voters yesterday.

Our correspondent in Pabna reports that locals caught Nizami's former personal secretary Shafiqul Islam Ratan and other party men red-handed distributing money among voters in Haria village of Santhia upazila early yesterday.

The other arrested Jamaat men were identified as Ratan's brothers Mahfuzur Rahman, Mizanur Rahman and Anwar Hossain, and Sakhawat Hossain, Hannan Sardar, Mahafuzur Rahman and Mehedi Hasan.

They were later handed over to police with Tk 3,800.

Nizami has contested the ninth parliamentary election held yesterday from Pabna-1 constituency.

His rival in the seat Awami League's advocate Shamsul Haque Tuku alleged that Jamaat men were trying to purchase votes of the villagers using black money.

Officer-in-Charge of Santhia Police Station Moniruzzaman, however, said the arrestees are from both the AL and Jamaat and that the police were investigating the allegations.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

Biharis embark on new era

JULFIKAR ALI MANIK

It was a watershed day yesterday for the Biharis in Bangladesh as for the first time since independence they cast votes in a general election here.

Stranded and stripped of franchise since 1971, they swore allegiance to the country only recently and became voters.

And here it is. The new beginning they had long been longing for.

They know one election is not going to change their ghetto life overnight. However, it does not take the edge off the sheer excitement they feel as voters and above all citizens of this country.

The turnout of the Urdu speaking voters in Mohammadpur and Mirpur, the areas where they are mainly concentrated in, was noticeable.

Roving about the areas, this correspondent saw hundreds of Biharis queuing in front of Shaheed Abu Taleb High School. Their body language said it all. They beamed with joy as they inched towards the ballot booth.

Seventy-year-old Abdul Sattar, who voted twice before Bangladesh's birth in 1971, was among those lining up.

He said, "It's amazing to have at last a national identity. It feels even greater especially when I know my end is near. That I'd ever be able to say 'this is my country' before I die was way beyond my expectation."

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One killed in poll violence
STAR REPORT

One person was killed and over 50 others were injured in election-related violence across the country during yesterday's ninth parliamentary elections.

Several people were arrested yesterday and the day before in connection with electoral code of conduct violation, criminal acts and trying to cast fake votes. At least 22 bombs were also recovered.

Our Noakhali correspondent reports: One person was killed and 15 others, including a woman and a policeman, were injured during several clashes between grand alliance and four-party alliance supporters in five constituencies of the district.

Witnesses said criminals stabbed Mafizur Rahman, 48, to death at Mamarkhal as he was returning home around

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Death denies his vote

PINAKI ROY, from Khulna

The queue was long at the Lobonchora primary school centre in Khulna. Jalal Talukder, 80, who was standing in the queue, decided to take breakfast in a roadside shop before going back to the center. He had come all the way from Dhaka from his son's house to vote for his candidate.

All on a sudden, he felt pain in his chest while eating paratha and died after a while.

"My grandfather was a diehard supporter of Awami League. But he could not vote

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

Prayer Timing

December 30

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-30	6-05
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-00	4-15
Maghrib	6-27	5-30
Esha	7-00	7-30

Source: Islamic Foundation

বিশ্বের মানচিত্রে বাংলাদেশকে নতুন করে জানান দিতে এলো এশিয়ার বৃহত্তম শপিং মল

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