

Popular votes

FROM PAGE 1
A pre-poll survey conducted by The Daily Star and Nielsen showed that 37 percent of voters were likely to swing.

AL got over 1.21 crore more votes this time than it had in 2001, which is 1.14 crore votes more than what its archrival BNP got on Monday. The gap this time is bigger too.

This election also set a new record in voter turnout, as 87 percent of registered voters voted compared to 2001 election's 75.59 percent.

In contrast to AL's gain in the latest election, the number of votes cast for BNP on Monday remained almost static compared to the number in 2001, although this poll saw over 60 lakh new voters.

BNP had bagged 2,28,33,978 votes in 2001 fielding 252 candidates, while in the just concluded poll it got 2,30,86,460 votes nominating 259 contenders and winning 29 seats.

BNP got 32.74 percent of votes cast in the latest poll, a decrease from 40.97 percent it had got in 2001.

In 2001 the gap between the numbers of votes gained by BNP and AL was only 46.84 lakh, but the difference between the numbers of seats won by the two parties was 131.

In the latest poll, AL obtained 3,45,64,068 votes which is 49.02 percent of the total number of votes cast, nominating 263 candidates and winning 230 seats.

In 2001, the party nominated candidates in 300 constituencies and grabbed 2,23,65,516 votes, but managed to win only 62 seats.

The percentage of votes cast for AL climbed about 9 percentage point compared to the percentage of votes it got in 2001.

This rise led to AL's landslide victory, creating a new record of winning a two third majority by a single party since restoration of parliamentary democracy in 1991.

In 1996 election AL got 1,58,82,792 votes which was 37.44 percent of the total number of votes cast while BNP got 1,42,55,986 votes or 33.06 percent. In that poll, the total number of voters was 5,67,16,935.

According to political analysts, AL's electoral pledge for building a digital Bangladesh, bringing prices of essentials down within the people's purchasing capacity, generating employment for at least one member in a family, and its commitment to be tough against militancy attracted voters to the party in Monday's election.

In addition to those, BNP-led alliance's five years of miss rule, unbridled corruption, and unmitigated sufferings of the people under the regime mainly due to unbridled price hike of essentials and an acute crisis of power supply made the people to opt for promises of change.

There were enough scope for casting fake votes in previous elections and many fake votes were cast too. But that scope was not there in this election due to a voter list with photographs meaning in this election a voter entered a polling station to cast vote only after proving his or her identity beyond a doubt.

DIVISION WISE BREAKDOWN
AL got 49.39 lakh votes more in Monday's poll in Dhaka division than it had obtained in 2001. This rise awarded the party unprecedented victory in the division, wiping out

archrival BNP from its own stronghold altogether. In Monday's poll, AL obtained 1,27,63,077 votes and won 6 seats out of the 94 in the division while in 2001 it had got 78,23,420 votes and 30 seats out of 90 in the division back then.

In a defeating contrast, BNP obtained 72,18,438 votes and won 56 seats in the division in 2001 while obtaining 72,92,355 votes in Monday's election without managing to win any of the 94 seats.

In Rajshahi division AL got 73,27,431 votes and won 48 seats of the division in Monday's election compared to 53,85,405 votes and 9 seats in 2001.

BNP obtained 56,29,395 votes and won only 8 seats in the division in Monday's poll compared to 54,57,037 votes and 42 seats in 2001.

In Chittagong division, AL obtained 52,78,301 votes and won 34 seats in Monday's battle, compared to 34,71,606 votes and 4 seats in 2001.

In Monday's battle BNP got 49,90,188 votes winning only 17 seats in the division compared to its gain of 49,70,253 votes and 50 seats in 2001.

In Khulna division, AL obtained 49,95,584 votes winning 30 seats in the latest battle of ballots compared to its 2001 record of getting 31,62,612 votes and winning 6 seats.

BNP there obtained 26,51,007 votes and 2 seats in the latest battle compared to its record of getting 25,42,027 votes and 20 seats in 2001.

In Barisal division, AL in latest poll obtained 19,08,451 votes and 16 seats compared to 11,46,013 votes and 2 seats in 2001.

BNP on the other hand obtained 12,02,297 votes and 2 seats there this time compared to its 2001 record of 14,49,137 votes and 18 seats.

In the latest election BNP lost the entire Sylhet division obtaining 13,21,218 votes, compared to its 2001 gain of 11,97,086 votes and 9 seats.

AL there obtained 22,91,224 votes in Monday's battle and won 17 seats compared to 13,76,460 votes and 7 seats in 2001.

In Monday's poll, Jatiya Party, a component of AL-led grand electoral alliance, obtained 46,90,166 votes which is 6.65 percent of the total number of votes cast, while Jamaat-e-Islami, a key component of BNP-led four-party alliance, obtained 32,09,226 votes or 4.55 percent of the votes cast.

VOTER TURNOUT
In The Daily Star's calculation, 7,05,14,919 out of a total of 8,10,58,698 registered voters cast their votes in 299 constituencies in the December 29, 2008 parliamentary election, a staggering 87 percent of voters, the highest record of votes cast in any parliamentary election in the history of Bangladesh.

Munshi jailed

FROM PAGE 1
35,000, in default of which he will have to serve another one and a half years more in jail.

Following the allegation brought against him by Devidwar thana office-in-charge (OC) Zahedul Islam, the electoral court pronounced the verdict after recording depositions of nine witnesses.

Munshi was arrested from Mohammadpur centre on December 29, the election day, for trespassing into different polling centres for "beating and threatening" rival party supporters. There were also some other charges against him.

After the arrest, the ex-BNP lawmaker was sent to BIRDEM Hospital as he fell sick and unconscious on way to Comilla. So, the trial was completed in his absence as per strict electoral rules framed by the interim regime.

Munshi, his wife and brother are accused in several cases including extortion, tax evasion and other criminal cases.

On October 9, 2007, a special court in Dhaka sentenced Munshi to 13 years imprisonment for acquiring wealth illegally and concealing information on wealth.

The court, however, acquitted Munshi's wife Mazeda Ahsan Munshi and their absconding sons barrister Rizviul Ahsan Munshi and Rizwanul Ahsan Munshi of all the charges against them as those were not proved.

Earlier on November 30 last year, Manjurul Ahsan Munshi was released on a High Court bail from the Dhaka Central Jail.

Win over abuse

FROM PAGE 1
Insiders say Jamaat top leaders are already receiving harsh reaction from the grassroots leaders.

Jamaat bagged only two seats in the ninth parliamentary election, whereas they got 17 seats in 2001 elections contesting with the same BNP-led alliance.

"This is definitely unexpected for us," Jamaat Assistant Secretary General Barrister Abdur Razzak told The Daily Star last night.

"Without full analysis of the results I can't say anything about the factors behind it," he said. He claimed that there were many flaws in the election but did not elaborate.

Razzak however said "We think it is always better to run the country by an elected government."

Jamaat top leaders held several meetings in the last two days to evaluate the election results.

Asked whether the campaigns against Jamaat for its anti-liberation role and alleged war crimes played a vital role, Razzak said, "I would not make any comment on that."

He even refused to comment on Awami League's election pledge that they would try the war criminals if voted to power.

Sheikh Hasina-led Awami League has won a landslide victory with more than two-thirds majority in parliament. Hasina yesterday in her first post-election reaction said the people have already tried them (war criminals) and her government must initiate the legal process.

It is historically known to all that many Jamaat leaders were actively involved with the genocide in the Liberation War.

"Of course the civil society campaigns about the 1971 genocide were an issue behind Jamaat's debacle. But Jamaat also could not make it clear to people whether they have any involvement in Islamist militancy or not," observed Prof Imtiaz.

"Jamaat also failed to differentiate themselves from the corruption charges against BNP, their alliance government's chief partner," Prof Imtiaz said.

Gazi Nazrul Islam, a defeated candidate of Jamaat in Sathkira-4, told The Daily Star: "Corruption charges against BNP might have a little impact on our results as we had a share of power."

But Nazrul who was elected in 2001 brushed aside war crime and militancy issues.

He also pinned the blame on high turnout and use of "black money" by the AL campaigners and on other irregularities.

"The turnout was unrealistic and I suspect something wrong was behind it," the defeated Jamaat candidate said.

Sultana Kamal has meanwhile said: "The Liberation War became a significant issue to a large number of voters of new generation. The young generation was looking for high self-esteem to come out of a suffocative situation."

"So, a huge number of first-time voters wanted to be a proud citizen of the country banking on the Liberation War issues," she said.

Gen Harun, chief coordinator of Sector Commanders Forum, which campaigned against war criminals in last two years besides other organisation, said: "A great number of first-time voters were not allowed to learn the true history of the Liberation War."

"So when the vigorous campaigns were launched against war criminals these new voters realised the real history and notorious role of Jamaat in the Liberation War. I believe this was devastating for Jamaat in this election."

Dr Reza lauded the rescue operation.

Target food prices

FROM PAGE 1
reporters in response to a query.

Hasina expressed her wish to share power, including cabinet positions, with the opposition. She offered the opposition posts of deputy speaker and chairmen of a few parliamentary standing committees.

She described the AL-led grand alliance's victory as the result of combined efforts of all.

"This victory is the result of your relentless hard work and sacrifice. But we have to show due respect to the faith and belief the people of Bangladesh have in us," Hasina said at the conference held at Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre.

Asking party men to stay calm and show tolerance, she urged all to work for the nation.

"I know our people faced unforgettable torture, injustice and repression. Many still bear the scars. Many lost their children, many lost parents and many became crippled."

"As winners, we will have to deal with everything with a sense of forgiveness instead of vengeance and take the country forward," she said. "We have to keep in mind that we earned the victory. It is not a victory of the Awami League or the grand alliance alone. It is a victory of the nation and democracy... We have to meet the expectations of the people."

Hasina described her party's victory as "a victory of good governance against misrule and corruption, peace against terrorism and criminal activities, and secularism against fundamentalism."

She urged all political parties to shun the past tradition of politics of vengeance and conflicts and work together for the betterment of the country.

"I will not weigh the opposition by its seats in parliament. I believe in parliamentary democracy opposition is part of the government. We will uphold the opposition's roles including positive criticism and suggestions to keep parliament active," Hasina said in her 15-minute briefing.

"We do not believe in politics of vengeance. We want to put an end to the politics of confrontation and present a new political culture to the nation," she said.

"Our real victory will come when we can ensure rule of law, human rights and good governance, build a digital Bangladesh and implement the spirit of the Liberation War," she added.

Proposing formation of joint task forces among the South Asian countries for combined action against terrorism, the former premier said she wants to establish Bangladesh as the most peaceful region in the world.

VOTE OF THANKS
Expressing deep gratitude to Almighty Allah and seeking blessings from all, Sheikh Hasina thanked and congratulated all those who took part in the elections, who won or lost irrespective of political affiliations, the first-time voters, officials and staffs of the administration, local and foreign election observers, members of the civil society and other professionals.

She also thanked those who did not vote for the AL for participating in the free and fair election.

The AL chief thanked members of the armed forces and law enforcement agencies for keeping law and order under control.

She thanked the caretaker government and the Election Commission for holding a free, fair and credible election and the international communities who assisted the Election Commission and the government in holding the election.

Hasina also expressed deep gratitude to the poor, women and the minority groups.

She welcomed all MPs-elect, many of whom attended the press conference.

Senior most AL Presidium member Zillur Rahman and AL's election conducting committee co-chairman HT Imam accompanied Hasina on the stage. AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil, Presidium members Abdur Razzak, Suranjit Sengupta and Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir, Workers Party President Rashed Khan Menon, AL leaders Saber Hossain Chowdhury, Abdus Shahid, Dipu Moni and Fazole Nur Jafar were present at the conference, among others. AL Publicity Secretary Asaduzzaman Nur conducted the programme.

QUESTION-ANSWER
Sheikh Hasina spent about half an hour to answer questions from local and international journalists.

Responding to a query about the trial of war criminals, she said people have already "tried" the war criminals and the anti-Liberation War forces through ballots, but her government would obviously take legal steps to try them.

Asked if there is possibility of misusing power after such a landslide victory, Hasina said, "Our party or our people will never misuse or abuse power. The Awami League was in power from 1996 to 2001 and that period was a golden period for Bangladesh in all aspects. So, we commit to the people that we want to make sure that they have a better life."

In reply to a query from an Indian journalist, Hasina gave assurance that her government will not allow any terrorist outfit to use Bangladesh's soil against any country including India.

Asked if she would play any role in reducing the existing tension between India and Pakistan, she said, the two neighbours should maintain good relations and that all countries in South Asia should make joint efforts to alleviate poverty and people's sufferings.

"I will take initiatives if necessary. Bangladesh is a small country. I will try my best to restore peace and friendly relations," she added.

Responding to another query by a Taiwanese journalist, Hasina demanded release of Myanmar's leader Aung San Suu Kyi and said her government would maintain a friendly relation with Myanmar and other neighbouring countries.

In response to a journalist from China, Hasina said her government would maintain friendly relations with the fastest-growing economic powerhouse of the world and sought Chinese investment in Bangladesh.

JS to decide

FROM PAGE 1
She however said any government should continue the work of the previous one.

Hasina said she had already discussed the matter with some constitution experts and a committee comprising legal and constitution experts is being formed to this end.

During one and a half hours meeting from 3:55pm, the overall situation of the country and transfer of power were discussed.

The Awami League chief and grand alliance leader said it was a courtesy call. "I came to thank the caretaker government for holding a free, fair and credible election," she told reporters.

Replying to a question about transfer of power, Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed said it will take place "smoothly, as soon as possible, after completion of some formalities".

Asked about the allegations brought by the chief of a party (BNP) over the just-held election, the chief adviser said it is the matter of the Election Commission.

Earlier on her arrival at the Chief Adviser's Office, Sheikh Hasina was received by Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed.

Co-chairman of the AL Election Conducting Committee HT Imam was also present.

HASINA MEETS PRESIDENT
The new cabinet will take oath within the first week of January, Hasina told journalists after meeting President Iajuddin Ahmed at Bangabhaban.

"We will take oath after getting invitation from the president and hope it will be within the first week of January," she said.

When asked about the new cabinet, the grand alliance leader said they had already thought about it and the announcement would come at an appropriate time.

Iajuddin informed Hasina that the swearing-in of the cabinet would be arranged 'within the shortest possible time' as per their desire after the publication of gazette notification, the president's press secretary, Abdul Awal Howlader, told UNB.

The president congratulated Hasina on her election victory saying that her party's "responsibility towards the entire nation has increased a lot as her party received huge mandate from the people."

Hasina told him that the people exercised their voting right in a festive mood in the general election as they were eagerly waiting for it.

"We need to continue this trend and work for changing the country's political culture," she said.

The AL president said they would work keeping in mind that the entire nation has shown huge confidence in them.

Double blow

FROM PAGE 16
the polls. Of them, 1259 failed to save their security deposits.

Fifty-five political parties contested the 2001 elections but the number decreased to 38 in the just concluded parliamentary polls because of the EC's strict registration rules for contesting national election.

Over 100 parties applied to the EC for registration from September to October. Of them, 39 parties got registered with the commission as the rest failed to meet the registration criteria.

Fifteen registered political parties fielded candidates, numbering between one and eight, in the polls.

Among the small political parties, only Islami Andolan Bangladesh nominated candidates in 166 seats but almost all candidates of the party failed to save their security deposit.

Of the candidates of major political parties, AL's Ataur Rahman Shamim in Moulvibazar-2 constituency lost his security deposit. AL backed the Jatiya Party nominee, who won the seat.

BNP candidates in Shariatpur-1, Faridpur-4 and Moulvibazar-2 and in all three constituencies in Gopalganj forfeited their deposits.

Jamaat nominee Moniruzzaman Montu in Nilphamari-2 and Islami Oikya Jote candidate in Madaripur-1 forfeited their security deposits.

Nine Jatiya Party candidates including Rawshan Ershad in Mymensingh-4 also lost security deposits.

Bikalpadhara leaders AQM Badrudhoda Chowdhury, a candidate in Dhaka-6 and Maj (ret'd) Abdul Mannan in Dhaka-11 also forfeited their security deposits.

BNP candidate for Dhaka-16 barrister Rafiqul Islam Chowdhury Mia alleged that AL activists captured the ward-92 BNP office.

Quoting Bholal MP-elect Andavil Rahman Partha, Rizvi said AL activists set fire to BNP activists' houses there and also in Comilla, Munshiganj, Narayanganj and Manikganj.

The BNP also demanded release of its leader Manjurul Ahsan Munshi.

Post-polls violence

FROM PAGE 16
Meanwhile, the officer-in-charge (OC) of Kuliarchar Police Station in Kishoreganj has been suspended for his negligence of duty as well as for his failure to control the post-polls law and order situation.

Assistant Inspector General (AIG-Media) Nazrul Islam told The Daily Star that the OC did not take proper measures to prevent the attack by the criminals. "It's a message to all police officials so that they do not neglect their duties," he said.

Khulna Correspondent adds: The lone elected BNP lawmaker from Khulna-2, Nazrul Islam Manju, yesterday urged AL leaders to stop attack on the supporters of four-party alliance in his constituency.

Addressing a press conference, Manju alleged that at least 10 supporters of BNP and Jamaat were injured in separate attacks by AL activists in the city since the announcement of Monday's poll results.

A correspondent from Kishoreganj reports: At least 20 to 30 AL activists attacked the houses of local BNP men in Kuliarchar and Katiadi upazilas Tuesday midnight and yesterday morning, leaving 12 injured.

The AL activists, led by Abul Mansur Rubel who is the younger brother of Kuliarchar upazila unit AL president Abul Hossain Liton, attacked the house of Nityalal Das, BNP president of ward no-3, at Daspara under Kuliarchar pourasava at about 5am.

The attackers ransacked the house of Nityalal and hacked him, leaving him critically injured. The group also beat up his mother, sister and wife as they tried to save Nityalal. The BNP leader was first taken to Zahurul Islam Medical College Hospital where he was shifted to Dhaka.

In another incident, six BNP men were injured by AL workers at Parbacharparatala village in Katiadi upazila Tuesday midnight.

Our Correspondent from Patuakhali reports: Over 20 BNP activists were injured when AL activists attacked them in Mirzaganj and Galachipa upazilas in the district. The AL cadres also ransacked several

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