

BNP favourites take lead

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4,605 councillor candidates contended.
The few untoward incidents include snatching of 76 ballot papers from a polling booth in Pabna, and snatching of 57 ballot papers in Kurigram. In most cases due intervention by law enforcing agencies and mobile courts prevented flare-ups.
"There is not a single incident of closure of polling station. The polling was very peaceful," said Election Commissioner Brig Gen (ret) Sakhawat Hossain as he expressed satisfaction over a good start of the municipality polls.
During a media briefing he mentioned that voter turnout was around 60 to 65 percent.

The main opposition BNP, which had been expressing concern over possible degeneration of free and fair polling atmosphere, also termed yesterday's polls as largely peaceful.
In a media briefing in the afternoon, BNP Standing Committee Member Nazrul Islam Khan however feared possible manipulation by ruling AL during vote counting through its influence in the government.
Yesterday's elections can be taken as a success of the Election Commission's tough position against poll violence, and violation of electoral rules.
The EC sent a strong message when on January 2 it cancelled Jhenidah and Ramgarh municipality polls following violence there.

Yesterday's elections also stood in stark contrast to the last municipal polls held in May 2004 amid allegations of poll rigging, violence, and casting of fake votes.
Yesterday, after the polling hours were over, law enforcement agencies stood guard at key points of the municipalities to maintain post-poll law and order. They dispersed curious people and campaigners who gathered around the polling centres.
Though the army was deployed in 15 municipalities out of a total 49 in Rajshahi division, elections in Rangpur division were held peacefully without any such deployment.
Our correspondents covering the polls reported that turnout of women voters was more than men's.
Presiding officer Gonesh Chandra Barmon in Rangpur told our Rangpur correspondent, "In fact male voters started queuing up at quarter past nine in the morning while female voters had begun thronging the polling centres at least half an hour earlier."

MUNICIPAL POLL RESULTS 2011 RAJSHAHI DIVISION

MUNICIPALITY	MAYOR-ELECT	AFFILIATION
Rajshahi Dist		
Kakonhat	Abdul Mazid	AL
Arani	Mizanur Rahman Minu	AL
Charghat	Nargis Khatun	AL's rebel
Durgapur	Tofazzel Hossain	AL
Taherpur	Abul Kalam Azad	AL's rebel
Bhabaniganj	Abdur Razzak	BNP
Kasherhat	Alauddin Alo	BNP
Katakali	Mazidur Rahman	Jamat
Mundumala	Golam Rabbani	AL
Tanore	AHN Rahman Firoz Sarkar	BNP
Godagari	Aminul Islam	Jamaat
Natore Dist		
Singra	Shamim Al Razi	BNP
Boraiogram	Ishaq Ali	BNP
Gurudaspur	Shahnewaz Molla	AL
Gopalpur	Monjurul Islam Bimol	BNP's rebel
Naldanga	Abbas Ali Nannu	BNP
Natore	Emdadul Haq Al Mamun	BNP
Naogaon Dist		
Naogaon	Nazmul Haque Sony	BNP
Nazirpur	Anwar Hossain	BNP
Chapainawabganj Dist		
Nachol	Abdul Malek Chowdhury	Independent
Shibganj	Shamim Kabir Helim	BNP
Rohonpur	Golam Mostofa	AL's rebel
Chapainawabganj	Mawalana Abdul Matin	BNP
Bogra Dist		
Dhunat	AGM Badsha	AL
Gabtolli	Morshed Milton	BNP
Sherpur	Swadhin Kundu	BNP
Kahalu	Helaluddin Kobiraj	AL
Shantahar	Tofazzel Hossain Bhutto	BNP
Shibganj	Motiur Rahman Matin	BNP
Nandigram	Shushanto Kumar Mondol	BNP
Bogra Sadar	Mahbubur Rahman	BNP
Sariakandi	Tipu Sultan	BNP
Joypurhat Dist		
Akkelpur	Alamgir Chy Badshah	BNP
Panchbibi	Habibur Habib	AL's rebel
Kalai	Toufiqul Islam Belal	AL
Joypurhat	Abdul Aziz Molla	Independent
Pabna Dist		
Santhia	Mirajul Islam Miraj	AL
Faridpur	Kamruzzaman Majed	AL
Sujanagar	Tofazzel Hossain Tofa	AL's rebel
Chatmohor	H Islam Hira	BNP
Bhangura	Abdur Rahman	AL's rebel
Pabna	Kamrul Hasan Mintu	BNP's rebel
Iswardi	Mukhlesur Rahman Bablu	BNP
Sirajganj Dist		
Ullapara	Bellal Hossain	BNP
Shahjadpur	Nazrul Islam	BNP
Kazipur	Abdus Salam	BNP
Raiganj	Mosharrar Hossain	Jamaat
Sirajganj	Mokaddes Ali	BNP
Belkuchi	Mafiz Uddin Khan	AL

MUNICIPAL POLL RESULTS 2011 RANGPUR DIVISION

MUNICIPALITY	MAYOR-ELECT	AFFILIATION
Rangpur Dist		
Badarganj	Uttam Kumar Saha	AL
Haragachh	Sadakat Hossain Jhantu	Independent
Nilphamari Dist		
Nilphamari	Dewan Kamal Ahmed	AL
Jaldhaka	Anwarul Kabir Chowdhury	BNP
Saidpur	Amjad Hossain Sarkar	BNP
Kurigram Dist		
Ulipur	Abdul Hamid Sarkar	AL
Nageshwari	Abdur Rahman	JP
Kurigram	Nur Islam Nuru	BNP's rebel
Lalmonirhat Dist		
Lalmonirhat	Riazul Islam Rintu	AL
Patgram	Shamsher Ali	Independent
Gaibandha Dist		
Sundarganj	Nurunnabi Pramanik Shaju	Jamaat
Gobindaganj	Ataur Rahman	AL
Gaibandha	Samsul Alam	Independent
Dinajpur Dist		
Bochaganj	Abdul Sabur Master	AL
Birampur	Azadul Islam Azad	BNP
Phulbari	Manik Sarkar	Independent
Hakimpur	Shakhawat Hossain Shilpi	BNP
Birganj	Moulana Hanif	Jamaat
Dinajpur	Jahangir Alam	BNP
Thakurgaon Dist		
Thakurgaon	ASM Main Uddin	AL
Pirganj	Raziur Rahman Raju	BNP
Ranishankail	Mukhlesur Rahman	BNP
Panchagarh Dist		
Panchagarh	Touhidul Islam	BNP

Country reels

FROM PAGE 1
delayed yesterday for lack of visibility at the fog-covered Shahjalal International Airport, airport information centre said. But there was no disruption reported in international flights.
Ferry services between Mawa and Kewrakandi, and Paturia and Daulatdia routes were also disrupted with some ferries stranded mid-river for hours with hundreds of passengers and vehicles.
The temperature yesterday plunged below 5 degrees Celsius in many places including Jessore and Iswardi, said an official of Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD).
The lowest temperature was recorded at 4.5 degrees Celsius in Jessore, the lowest in the last three years in the country. The highest temperature, 23.4 degrees Celsius, was recorded at Cox's Bazar.
In capital Dhaka, the lowest was 8.5, said the official, adding, "The cold wave will continue tomorrow [today] and is likely to ease on Friday."

He attributed the current spell of cold to rising jet stream in the upper atmosphere, shortage of sunlight and heavy fog.
Those, who could afford, restored to warm clothes to ward off the bone-chilling cold while the poor and homeless were mostly exposed to the chills.
"I have only one warm cloth which is already tattered. But it is impossible to sleep at night, as I have no blanket or Khantha. I have to stay up whole night and find out warm places," said Kamal, a teenage street boy at Karwan Bazar.
According to the BMD weather forecast, a severe cold wave swept over the country's northern region including Jessore, Kushtia, Rajshahi, Pabna, Rangpur, Tangail and Dinajpur, while its effect became mild and moderate at Khulna, Barisal, Patuakhali, Khepupara, Bogra, Dhaka, Mymensingh, Faridpur, Madaripur, Sitakunda, Chandpur, Feni and Srimangal.
Our Tangail correspondent reports: Two senior citizens died in the bitter cold in the district yesterday. The victims were identified as Nilmoni Sheel, 70, of Aloa in Tangail and Rokeya Begum, 60, of Basail in Basail upazila.
Deputy Commissioner of Tangail M Bazlul Karim Chowdhury said they have only 3,500 blankets from the disaster management ministry to fight the situation.

Our Kurigram correspondent reports: The cold wave started queuing up at quarter past nine in the morning while female voters had begun thronging the polling centres at least half an hour earlier."
STRAY INCIDENTS
A man in Nilphamari was sentenced to one-year and another man in Thakurgaon was sentenced to six-month imprisonment, for campaigning on polling day.
Law enforcers arrested 14 people from Dhunat and Sariakandi municipalities in Bogra, and one in Pabna for violating electoral code of conduct.
Our correspondent in Pabna reported that a group of men stormed into Chawk Chaitiyani Primary School polling centre at 3:00pm and took away 76 ballot papers of councillor candidates.
Police arrested a polling agent of an AL backed candidate from Maniknagar polling centre for pressuring voters to cast their votes for his candidate.
In Kurigram, the authorities detained two election officials of a polling centre for "negligence in duty" after some young men snatched 57 ballot papers. The arrested officials were sent to Keraniganj jail later.
An activists of AL backed student organisation Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) beat up a brother of an AL backed candidate following a row there.
Police dispersed a BCL procession in front of Kurigram Government College in support of AL backed candidates, reported our Kurigram correspondent.
Our Dinajpur correspondent reported that mobile courts fined three people for distributing money among voters in Birganj upazila. A mobile court also seized some motorbikes and a microbus for use of those in violating electoral rules.
Some people were injured when police charged batons at a polling centre in Phulbari.
In Rajshahi, Rapid Action Battalion members arrested one person from Chowpukuria Primary School centre in Durgapur upazila on charge of threatening voters of dire consequences if they did not cast votes for an AL backed mayoral candidate.
A summary court released him after fining Tk 1,000, reported our Rajshahi correspondent.
People laid seize to AL lawmaker Enamul Haque in Rajshahi around noon as he was campaigning for an AL backed candidate at Zamgram in Bagmara. BNP backed mayoral candidate SM Akbar Ali complained of an assault on him by his opposition, while presiding officer of Dharampur polling centre complained that his assistant got threats from a candidate.
A few allegations of fake vote casting were also reported in Rajshahi.
Our Rangpur correspondent reported that a mobile court fined AL backed mayoral candidate Shahadat Hossain Sabuj Tk 500 for not using the authorisation sticker on his car while visiting polling centres in Sundarganj of Gaibandha.

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"Show respect to people's mandate by giving up confrontational politics. Let us strengthen democracy, give importance to country's developments and discuss all fundamental issues openly in the Jatiya Sangsad," AL General Secretary Syed Ashrafur Islam urged Khaleda.
He was speaking at a press conference at AL President Sheikh Hasina's office in Dhanmondi organised to give official reply to Khaleda's statement on Sunday where she accused Hasina of establishing "one-person rule" and "reign of terror" in the country.
Ashraf, also LGRD and cooperatives minister, said her [Khaleda's] statement was to mislead the people, create a law and order situation in the country through conspiracy, save crisis-prone BNP; her two corrupt sons Tarique Rahman and Arafat Rahman Koko and the war criminals.
The prime minister's address to the nation on completion of two years in power inspired the people, said the AL leader, adding that the opposition leader tried to hide the misrule and corruption of the previous BNP-Jamaat coalition government through false and insolent statements.
He said there is room for debate in the parliament and the opposition leader could have taken the oppor-

Our Kishoreganj correspondent reports: A unidentified man aged around 70 died in the severe cold at Batrish area of the town.
Mir Musharrar Hossain, officer-in-charge of Kishoreganj Police Station, quoting locals said the body was found near a cinema around 11:00am.
Our Dinajpur correspondent reports: At least 75 children with cold-related diseases were admitted to the children ward of Dinajpur Medical College Hospital in the last 48 hours.
The polls to municipalities hindered distribution of warm clothes among the destitute in the district as well.
Our Manikganj correspondent reports: Ferry and launch services on Paturia-Daulatdia route remained suspended for seven and a half hours from 2:00am early yesterday due to dense fog. This created almost 4km-long tailbacks on both sides of the river.
Our Munshiganj correspondent reports: Ferry service between Mawa and Kewrakandi remained suspended for around 10 hours from midnight due to heavy fog.
Over 300 goods-laden trucks and passenger vehicles remained stranded on both sides of the river.
Our Barisal correspondent reports: Heavy fog disrupted road and waterway communication in the southern region for six to nine hours and the severe cold spell that started two days ago continued.
Our Khulna correspondent reports: The cold wave claimed three lives at Dakop and Batiaghata upazilas of the district Tuesday.

Muzammel
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of Grameen Bank, a spokesperson of the bank said yesterday.
He worked for Grameen Bank as a general manager and director for research, training, planning and special programmes between 1982 and 2003, said Jannat-E-Quanine, a general manager of the bank.
A former research scholar at Oxford University, Muzammel also worked with the Development Bank of France, Central Bank of Sri Lanka and Central Bank of Nepal as advisor on micro-credit and small enterprise development.
He is now managing director of Enterprise Development Company Ltd, a private sector financial organisation.

Our Kishoreganj correspondent reports: Rumours about Alam's involvement in market manipulation ran rife after he instructed a subordinate SEC officer to issue two directives last month without the SEC chairman's consent. The regulator sought an explanation from him and he apologised.
Market analysts believe those two directives made the stock market unstable and eventually drove it deep into a crisis.
The crisis prompted the prime minister to instruct the central bank and the SEC to intervene in the market to restore confidence among investors, who lost their nerve and capital to a free fall in share prices.
Dhaka Stock Exchange suffered the biggest fall on Monday in its 55-year history prompting the regulator to stop trading after only 50 minutes of transaction.
Following the prime minister's instructions, the central bank and the SEC took several measures that included reversal or relaxation of some decisions to boost the market.
The measures helped the stock market rebound with a record jump of 1,012 points or 15 percent on Tuesday.
Alam has been stripped of the charge of important departments including the Surveillance, Supervision and Regulation of Markets and Issuer Companies, and Administration and Finance that are considered the most sensitive departments in the SEC.
He could not be reached for comments despite several attempts.

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Mansur resigns

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resignation of SEC members.
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SC invites
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Bhuiyan, deputy registrar of the SC, who signed the invitation letter.
An SC official said if the TIB officials cannot attend the talks for some reasons today, and fix another date, the SC authorities will consider it.
He said the members of the committee formed recently to evaluate the survey report will hold talks with the TIB officials for better understanding of the report.
The TIB officials were humbly requested to attend the tea party, he added.
Chief Justice ABM Khairul Haque on December 30 last year formed the committee of five senior High Court judges -- Justice MA Wahhab Miah, Justice Nazmun Ara Sultana, Justice Md Imman Ali, Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain and Justice Sheikh Rezwana Ali.

Dhaka
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The prime minister disclosed this when a delegation of the Teachers and Employees Welfare Trust of Private Educational Institutions met her at the Prime Minister's Office.
Hasina emphasised creating proper environment for the children's education.
Press Secretary to the Prime Minister Abul Kalam Azad briefed reporters after the meeting.

Menon worried

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a planned way, lawmaker Menon in a written statement demanded exemplary punishment of the persons involved in such killing.
Rab abducted him from his house on Tuesday night and later killed him, he claimed adding, they even didn't think of cooking up a 'tale of shootout' about this incident.
"Biplob was not accused in any case and he did not get involved in any criminal activities."
Although the government vowed to stop extrajudicial killings, it seemed that the law enforcement agencies are not obeying the government's order, observed Menon, chairman of parliamentary standing committee on education ministry.
People wonder about government's stand on extra-judicial killings as they continue to happen, he added.
This incident proved that law enforcement agencies are following a killing list prepared by former BNP-Jamaat alliance government, stated Menon.

Threats, outlaws

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campaign was over at 12:00am on Tuesday in Khulna division, ruling party-backed candidates were seen violating the electoral code of conduct in different manners.
Allegations are rife that ruling Awami League-backed and rich mayoral candidates are distributing money among the poor and distressed people to buy their votes.
There are also allegations that influential mayoral candidates backed by both ruling and opposition parties are hiring musclemen to threaten their rivals.
Excitement and a fearful environment have generated a lot of heat in the cold wave-hit southern urban areas.
The Daily Star correspondents observed these while talking to locals and candidates of different upazilas including Harinakundu, Kaliganj, Kotchandpur in Jhenidah and Bagharpara and Monirampur upazila in Jessore.
Talking to The Daily Star, Abdur Razzak, upazila nirbahi officer (UNO) of Harinakundu and also the returning officer, admitted that ruling party-backed candidates and their aides are issuing threats and harassing the opposition and influential independent candidates.
He added local goons and criminals have also sided with the ruling party-backed candidates.
"We are sending members of law-enforcement agencies to arrest the criminals and goons. But they somehow manage to flee the scene sensing presence of the law enforcers," Razzak told The Daily Star.
"Considering the magnitude of the battle of ballots, tight security measures have been taken to maintain law and order," he said.
Of the five upazilas in Jhenidah, army was deployed in two where opposition-backed candidates are comparatively not getting threats from rivals.
But in the other three upazilas, the opposition-backed candidates alleged they are not even allowed to contact freely with their

supporters and aides.
"I was assaulted twice in the last two days. Many of my supporters and activists suffered injuries," said Jinnatul Haq Khan, a BNP-backed mayoral candidate of Harinakundu.
He went on saying, "I have so far lodged 150 to 200 general diaries with the police. But the officer-in-charge of the respective police station did not pay heed to any of my complaints."
His activists were rather beaten up several times, he added.
Islamic Andolan Bangladesh-backed candidate Mohiuddin Biswas also echoed the same allegations.
"They [ruling AL-backed mayoral candidates] are spending huge amount of money to buy votes which is a total violation of electoral code of conduct," Biswas told The Daily Star.
Akbar Ali, a rebel candidate from AL, alleged local lawmaker Shaiful Islam has violated the electoral codes.
"The AL-backed mayoral candidate and his supporters and local goons are giving threats to us," he said.
"We are afraid about violence as already three Juba League men were killed in Jhenidah on December 30," said a local requesting anonymity.
Interestingly, none of the mayoral candidates backed by the ruling party has any complaints. All of them said everything is going on smoothly.
"We see no problems in our municipality. There are no criminals in the locality," said Shahinur Rahman Rintu, an AL-backed mayoral candidate of Harinakundu.
Mostafizur Rahman Bizu, another AL-backed mayor aspirant, also expressed the same view.
Rabiul Hossain Robi, a mayoral candidate of Noapara municipality, said everything depends on how the administration acts during voting.
Meanwhile, 40 army personnel have been deployed at Kaliganj municipality and another 60 at Shailkupa upazila.

It's a review

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make some suggestions to resolve the shortcomings of the organisations within the stipulated time, in three months.
"I will contact my colleagues of the committee tomorrow [Thursday] for holding a meeting soon," he added.
The Review Committee on Grameen Bank has been entrusted with several tasks including examination of the rationale behind the rate of interest in the microcredit organisation charges from the borrowers.
The five-member committee formed on Tuesday is headed by Prof Manowar Uddin Ahmed of economics department at Dhaka University.
Members of the committee are Deputy Governor Bangladesh Bank Nazrul Huda, former deputy comptroller and auditor general Syeda Rokeya Deen, former banker RM Devnath and Supreme Court lawyer Mohsin Rashid.
To assist the review body, Bangladesh Bank has been asked to conduct a special audit on Grameen Bank, said a government circular issued yesterday.
The terms of reference (TOR) of the committee as contained in the circular include submission of a report after investigating the Norwegian authorities' version on the news aired by Norwegian Television regarding transfer of funds from Grameen Bank to Grameen Kalyan.
The committee will also prepare a list of all organisations of the Grameen family, and

look into Grameen Bank's involvement with those organisations such as Packages Corporation, the TOR said.
It will examine in detail the bank's financial or executive chief's personal involvement with these organisations to know the actual situation. If any irregularity is found, it will recommend what to do in this regard.
Moreover, the review body will prepare a report on the rate of interest, the method of fixing it and rules and ways of realising interest on the loans from and savings with Grameen Bank.
And it will carry out a comparative analysis of the rate of interest and other charges realised by the micro-credit organisations who got licence from the Micro-credit Regulatory Authority. If any irregularity or exceptional situation is found in case of Grameen Bank, it will make recommendations for removing those.
The TOR said the committee has to make an overall report with recommendations on the control, management, transparency and accountability of Grameen Bank in the light of the Micro-credit Regulatory Authority Act, 2006.
The circular said the review committee might take opinions and hear witnesses from different quarters including members of the civil society involved in micro-credit activities.
It provided the background of formation of the committee, and mentioned that the microcredit programme of Grameen Bank has become known worldwide, and the bank and its managing director won Nobel Prize in 2006.
The circular also said since the establishment of Grameen Bank, its activities were not evaluated. Reports about the bank appeared in the media recently. Against this backdrop, the government formed the committee to know the overall management and other aspects of the bank.