



THE just concluded municipality polls have once again demonstrated the power of the people to vote their local representatives to office. They have clearly sent out some important early messages to the two major parties, those that should help them shape future political strategy in the run-up to the next general election. The results are a relief for both the AL and BNP as both can point to the validity of their claims regarding the government's performance in the last two years. Mayors and councillors-elect of municipalities in seven divisions will be sworn into office for a period of five years. The municipal polls have once again demonstrated the truth that citizens take local government bodies' elections enthusiastically. Not even a cold wave can keep them at home. The ballots simply have to be cast. In line with Election Commission (EC) declared schedules, elections to 243 municipalities in 49 municipalities in Rajshahi and 23 in Rangpur divisions were held on January 12. Subsequently, polls in 30 municipalities in Khulna, 19 in Barisal and 63 in Dhaka division were held in a peaceful manner. The last day's violence and irregularities in polling in a number of municipalities in Chittagong and Sylhet divisions, however, overshadowed to some extent the charm of an otherwise free, fair and peaceful election.

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IT'S TIME FOR PEOPLE

