

Polls bubble bursts

BNP's early pullout makes AL win insignificant; irregularities widespread; AL rivals for councillor posts cause violence

CITY	CANDIDATE	VOTES
DHAKA SOUTH (808 centres out of 889)	SAYEED KHOKON	4,89,216
	MIRZA ABBAS	2,64,939
DHAKA NORTH (985 centres out of 1093)	ANNISUL HUQ	4,20,699
	TABITH AWAL	2,91,499
CHITTAGONG (All centres)	AJM NASIR UDDIN	4,75,361
	MANJUR ALAM	3,04,837

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An early boycott by the BNP knocked the air out of the city elections in Dhaka and Chittagong yesterday, pushing numerous voting irregularities into the background and making the results virtually irrelevant.

Polling agents of BNP-backed candidates were found absent in most centres and the party ultimately handed a walkover to the ruling Awami League contestants just hours into the voting.

Print and electronic media journalists were shut out from covering the polls process at various centres in Dhaka and Chittagong.

In many centres, AL's youth and student fronts took the leading role with help from police in controlling the voting process.

LAW ENFORCERS OR LAW BREAKERS?
Widespread irregularities, including vote

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Two men stamp the pink ballot papers for the councillor post reserved for women at Khilgaon Model College polling centre at 1:33pm yesterday.

No anomalies, no threat
CEC claims polls were fair, peaceful

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Election Commissioner Kazi Rakibuddin Ahmad yesterday claimed the city corporation elections in Dhaka and Chittagong were held in a fair, peaceful and festive manner.

He said that except for some stray incidents, the commission found no irregularities while visiting some polling centres in the capital. He thanked all for helping hold a "fair election".

"No agents or voters complained of any irregularities. None faced any threats on their way to polling centres," the CEC told a press conference at the Election

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MG!

"It's pleasant to see one can exercise his voting rights in a peaceful atmosphere, free from any interference and fear. The nation had struggled for a long time to establish peoples' voting

PRIME MINISTER **SHEIKH HASINA**
AFTER CASTING VOTES IN DCC POLLS

Voting not well at all Was BNP serious?

Rigging plan executed by AL, helped by police Party's intention, action shrouded in questions

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The announcement of polls boycott midway through voting, noticeable absence of polling agents and sloppiness since the time of picking candidates have raised questions whether the BNP was serious about the mayoral polls in Dhaka city.

The party announced its decision to pull out of the election around 12:20pm, about three and a half hours before the voting closed, claiming most of their polling agents were either barred from entering the poll centres or forced out. Some agents were also detained by law enforcers, it added.

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BCL foils Star's constant vigilance
Two reporters assaulted, driven out of DU centre

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two correspondents of The Daily Star were beaten up in the line of duty by activists of Chhatra League at a Dhaka University polling centre yesterday afternoon.

Porimol Palma and Mahbubur Rahman, who were assigned in the DU area to cover the Annex Building Polling Centre, were attacked and driven out around

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STAY OUT, media

AL men assault 10 journos, deny access to polling centres

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 10 journalists were assaulted by ruling party men during the city corporation elections yesterday.

Some reporters were robbed of their mobile phones, handbags and cash.

Polling officers, law enforcers and ruling party men allegedly prevented reporters, photographers and cameramen from entering polling centres, journalists and eyewitnesses said.

Two reporters of The Daily Star -- Porimol Palma and Mahbubur Rahman Khan -- were beaten by Bangladesh Chhatra League men when the journalists were covering a polling centre at the Science Annex Building of Dhaka University.

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Shamim Noor of the Jugantor after being assaulted in a Segunbagicha polling centre yesterday.



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