

Let's make it a biriyani day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With almost all businesses in Dhaka closed yesterday for the city corporation elections and a public holiday, hundreds of biriyani restaurants, small to big, in Old Dhaka recorded brisk sales.

Some people, who did not want to miss the aroma of the freshly cooked dish, took the opportunity to eat out at these restaurants.

On the other hand, many others bought hundreds of parcels to supply those to the supporters and agents of the candidates for lunch, as they had been toiling since the morning, stealthily convincing voters in a last minute effort and helping voters find their respective centres.

Such tiresome work deserves a tasty meal and people were seen buying biriyani in large quantities from Royal Restaurant at Lalbagh.



Free rickshaw rides for voters of Khokon

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League-backed Dhaka South City Corporation mayoral candidate Sayeed Khokon and a number of councillors allegedly hired rickshaw-pullers to give voters a free ride to the voting centres, in a gross violation of the code of conduct.

Each rickshaw-puller was allegedly given Tk 1,000 to haul people during voting hours, said rickshaw-pullers.

The designated rickshaw-pullers put placards of Khokon around their necks, while some posted posters of Matiur Rahman Jamal, an AL-backed councillor candidate, on the backs of their rickshaws.

Sarwar, a rickshaw-puller, told The Daily Star that he had been hired for 10 hours -- from 7:00am to 5:00pm -- just to take voters to the Azimpur Orphanage polling centre under ward 26 and back to their homes. He received Tk 1,000 for the service.

Yousuf, another rickshaw-puller, wearing a placard of Khokon, said the fare for the whole day was not fixed in advance but he hoped to receive Tk 1,000 as his peers were getting that amount.

The incident was commonplace in Azimpur, Lalbagh and Hazaribagh areas.

Joy's survey did predict win

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sajeeb Wazed Joy, ICT adviser to the prime minister, uploaded a post on his official Facebook account at 8:29pm on Monday where he shared a pre-poll survey result.

The entire text is given below.

"First, the earthquake in Nepal has been a terrible tragedy. My sympathies to all the people of Nepal. Our Awami League Government is ready to assist in any way."

Today I would like to share our polling data with you for the Dhaka City Corporation elections. Most

SEE PAGE 5 COL 6



Brothers Jalilur Rashid Khan, Mahmoodur Rashid Khan and Hamidur Rashid Khan arrived to vote at the polling centre in Siddheshwari Girls High School of the capital around 11:30am yesterday only to be barred by Ansar members who told them that all votes had already been cast. PHOTO: STAR

A bit too late

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

It was the mobile operator's good intention to provide services to its customers. But it was a bit late.

State-run Teletalk sent out SMSs to its customers, informing them on how to gather information on their respective polling centres. Many customers received the SMS at 5:24pm yesterday, nearly an hour and a half after voting ended.

Other mobile operators had sent out the message the day before the city elections. The Election Commission had even published a notice on its website in advance on how to find one's polling centre.



Elections bring boon for Dhaka rickshaw-pullers

MD MIZANUR RAHMAN HIMADRI

"Are you out of your mind?" a female staff of Bangladesh Betar snapped when a rickshaw-puller claimed Tk 80 for a ride from Asad Gate to Shishu Mela in the capital yesterday. Usually, it costs her no more than Tk 30.

Most city dwellers had reacted this way since a 24-hour ban on all types of vehicle except for rickshaws and rickshaw-vans was imposed at 12:00 midnight yesterday due to the city corporation polls.

Travelling around the city, this corre-

spondent saw many rickshaw-pullers charging passengers as much as Tk 100 for a ride between Khamarbari and Kazipara, while on a normal day they would spare only half the amount for the trip.

Amir Hamza, a garment trader, who had to give Tk 70, instead of Tk 30, for a ride from Begunbari to Farmgate, said this malpractice should be stopped immediately.

The residents of Mirpur, Uttara, Rampura, Dhanmondi, Gulshan and Baridhara had similar experiences.

Abbas' agents ousted: Afroza

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Afroza Abbas, wife of BNP-backed mayoral candidate Mirza Abbas for Dhaka South City Corporation, was unable to cast her vote as she had to rush to different polling stations after receiving complaints of many polling agents of Abbas being "ousted" from the centres, party insiders said.

"I have decided not to cast my ballot, as many voters complained that they were not allowed to cast their votes. So, I decided not to cast my vote as well," said Afroza, speaking to reporters during her visit to different polling stations.

She alleged that she could not find a single polling agent with Abbas' election symbol 'mug' during her visit to about 50 polling stations.

She confronted some agents masquerading as Abbas' agents, but in reality, they were ruling party men, she said.

Afroza also alleged that at least nine of their agents were arrested at different polling stations.

26 outsiders held from DU dorm on eve of polls

DU CORRESPONDENT

Law enforcers arrested 26 outsiders in Shaheed Sergeant Jahurul Haque Hall of Dhaka University early yesterday.

On information from DU Proctor AM Amzad, Shahbagh police and Rab personnel raided the dormitory around 12:30am and made the arrests. Many of them managed to flee.

Amzad told The Daily Star that he heard that they all were activists of Moinuddin Babu, councillor candidate of ward no-21 of Dhaka South City Corporation.

Moshiur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Ramna Police Station, said the arrestees were in the custody.

Rigging leaves Ctg voters flabbergasted

HASAN JAHI TUSHER, from Chittagong

Chittagong city's voters will remember the day they were dumbfounded experiencing firsthand vote rigging all around, something they have only heard of since the Chittagong City Corporation elections began in 1994.

The past four bore a festive atmosphere with the leading Awami League (AL) and BNP backed candidates battling it out to entice the city's residents in their favour.

But the way ballot boxes were stuffed in favour of the ruling party backed mayor candidate yesterday prompted many to even compare it to the way the "one-sided" January 5 national elections was held.

A majority of the ruling AL men found nothing wrong.

"Had the government said the city polls would be similar to that of the

January 5 parliamentary elections, then we would not have taken part in it," said Abul Kalam Azad, an independent mayoral aspirant.

"We have not yet seen such a city corporation election in Chittagong," he added.

Mohammad Rafiq, a voter in TNT Colony Govt Primary School in Agrabad under ward 24, said he voted in the last three city polls but never saw such irregularities.

"I along with other people came to vote in Barik Meah High School, but I could not vote. Outsiders gave votes randomly," said Mohammad Yusuf, a cable operator of Gosaidanga in the port area.

His colleague Abdus Samad, a voter of ward 36, said, "There was competition too between Mohiuddin Chowdhury and Manjur Alam in the last election. But there was a festive election atmosphere then. But we

never saw election rigging in such a carefree manner in the past."

Abdul Karim, an elderly voter of ward 23, said he had to go back home. Someone else had cast his vote. "Why this kind of elections had to be held we cannot imagine," he said angrily.

Tanmoy Bhowmik who came to vote in Chittagong Teacher's Training College under ward 17 with much enthusiasm said, "I did not get any election mood, it seems to be a one-sided election like the one of January 5."

Mohammad Alam, a betel leaf seller at Cheragi Hill Intersection area under ward 21, said he never saw an election concluding by 11:00am.

Even several BCL leaders expressed their frustration. Some said had the AL backed former mayor Mohiuddin Chowdhury, Chittagong would not have had to witness such an election.

Every Bite is a Pleasure

www.quasemfood.com www.facebook.com/sunchipsbd

Quasem Food Products Ltd.
Call: 019-Sunchips Email: feedback@quasemgroup.com

THE JOY OF FLYING WITH REGENT AIRWAYS DURING EID HOLIDAYS

From Dhaka	
Singapore	BDT 27,777
Bangkok	BDT 17,444
Kolkata	BDT 8,188
Kuala Lumpur	BDT 20,811
From Chittagong	
Bangkok	BDT 19,777
Kolkata	BDT 10,611

Round trip fares, inclusive of all taxes. No hidden charge. Sales open from 1st May to 31st May. Flying validity from 10th June to 10th August. Limited seats available.

REGENT airways
every little thing counts

flyregent
www.flyregent.com
Hotline: +88 02 55669911