



YESTERDAY'S TEMPERATURES

DHAKA H 33.2 L 22.0

CHITTAGONG H 31.6 L 24.0

SYLHET H 32.5 L 21.3

RAJSHAHI H 32.5 L 20.2

KHULNA H 33.2 L 22.7

BARISAL H 32.5 L 21.2

RANGPUR H 31.5 L 21.5

COX'S BAZAR H 32.0 L 23.6

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely to occur at one or two places over Khulna, Barisal, Dhaka, Rajshahi, Rangpur, Chittagong and Sylhet divisions 6:00pm today, said Met Office. The sun sets in the capital today at 6:26pm and rises tomorrow at 05:26am.

Swedish envoy caught in poll violence

Narrowly escapes unhurt

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Ambassador of Sweden in Bangladesh Johan Frisell and his officials and staff narrowly escaped violence that erupted at a polling centre in Old Dhaka yesterday.

Witnesses said the ambassador arrived at Kabi Nazrul Government College polling centre at 11:00am in the midst of a clash there between supporters of two rival councillor aspirants.

The Swedish envoy and his staff left the spot unhurt after about 45 minutes when law enforcers brought the situation under control.

Talking to The Daily Star, an aide of the ambassador said the on-duty officers took them to the first floor of the centre and closed the gate.

"The police ensured our safety. We witnessed the clash from the building. We were there for about 45 minutes," said the official.

Polling at the centre was suspended during the clash. Police lobbed two tear gas shells to disperse the unruly people.

Police also dispersed activists of pro-Awami League student organisation Bangladesh Chhatra League. The activists allegedly occupied the polling centre and stuffed votes in favour of AL-backed candidates.



Law enforcers chase two rival councillors' supporters who clashed at a polling centre coincidentally around the time Swedish Ambassador Johan Frisell visited the centre in Kabi Nazrul Government College in Old Dhaka yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

AL rebel also withdraws himself in Chittagong alleging rigging

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League leader Abdul Barez, who is vying for the councillor post in ward No. 40 in the Chittagong City Corporation elections yesterday, pulled out of the race mid-voting alleging rigging.

Barez was competing in the elections as an independent candidate after he failed to win his party's backing.

The AL's incumbent president of the ward withdrew from the polls at 2:00pm.

Barez's aide Mohammad Shahabuddin alleged that supporters of the ruling party-backed candidate Joydul Abedin took control of almost all centres in the ward, stuffing ballot boxes with papers in favour of their candidate.



A dumbfounded Md Hossain shows his National ID card yesterday after a polling agent of Awami League-backed mayor candidate AJM Nasir Uddin threatened him with a three-year jail sentence accusing him of trying to cast votes twice. He had just found out that his vote had already been stuffed into the ballot box at the Chittagong Board Primary School polling centre in the port city around 11:30am.

PHOTO: STAR

Go home or spend three years in jail

AL-backed Nasir's polling agent barks at Ctg voter whose vote had already been cast before he reached the polling centre

MINHAJ UDDIN, Ctg

He was understandably dejected after being informed that someone already has cast his vote. He didn't know who did it but a polling agent of Awami League-backed mayor candidate AJM Nasir Uddin threatened him that he will be sentenced for at least three years if he does not return home.

Md Hossain faced this bitter experience around 11:30am yesterday when he went to the booth no-4 at

Chittagong Board Primary School to cast his vote. Not only Hossain, about 50 other voters, including his brother and uncle, could not cast their votes facing the similar situation.

Hossain showed his voter identity card and his finger without black marks, which are put before casting any vote, before polling officers--Fazilatunnesa and Robiul Hasan--working in the booth but they told him that they could do nothing about it.

When Hossain asked the polling

officers how someone could cast his vote though the voter list contains photos of voters, the officials remained silent.

"My younger brother and uncle also have to return home without casting votes as someone has already cast their votes," Hossain told The Daily Star.

After getting the allegation from Hossain, The Daily Star correspondent and other journalists rushed to the booth but the ruling party polling agent had already fled.

Abbas' agents walk out of DU polling centre without any threat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Polling agents of BNP-backed Mirza Abbas deserted the poll centre of Dhaka University Annex Building at 11:05am yesterday, although nothing untoward happened that demanded such action.

Two correspondents of The Daily Star reached the centre well before the polls began at 8:00am and was present on the spot continuously.

But they did not witness any BNP aides getting threats from any ruling party activists or from the police present at the centre. They could not have received threats over the phone either as mobile phones were not allowed inside the centre.

However, they said that their colleagues who had been on duty at different centres across the city had been threatened.

How they came to know about this is an unanswered question.

Upon being asked, the election coordinator of Abbas said their agents had been forced out of the polling centres in Dhaka and Chittagong.

It's over

Says presiding officer at Maniknagar Govt Primary School at noon with more than a hundred voters waiting outside closed gate

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The presiding officer of Maniknagar Govt Primary School in Dhaka stopped voting before 12 noon after a minor incident.

When asked whether the vote had been postponed completely, the presiding officer answered in the negative.

However, he said no further voting would take place and results would be decided on the basis of votes that had already been cast.

Meanwhile, more than a hundred voters were standing outside the polling centre, waiting to cast their votes.

"I came twice to cast my vote, but they did not allow me to do so," said Runa Begum, a voter.

When voters requested the on-duty police officials to open the gate, an official said: "Go home. No voting will take place here."

AL nominates Wahab for May 30 Magura-1 by-poll

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The ruling Awami League has nominated Maj Gen (ret'd) ATM Abdul Wahab as a candidate for Magura-1 by-election scheduled to be held on May 30.

The nomination came at a meeting of the Awami League Parliamentary Board in the capital's Gono Bhaban, said a press release of AL yesterday.

According to the poll schedule, the last date for nomination paper submission is April 30. Scrutiny will be held on May 4 and the last date for withdrawal of candidature is May 12.

Magura-1 constituency fell vacant since its lawmaker MS Akbar died from a cardiac arrest on March 9.

Jica to help retrofit risky RMG factories for earthquakes

UNB, Dhaka

The Japanese government has taken an initiative to retrofit Bangladesh's vulnerable garment factory buildings to make those jolt-resistant and safe for workers.

Japanese experience and technology for making earthquake-resistant building can help Bangladesh avoid any tragic incident like Rana Plaza collapse, Senior Representative of Japan International Cooperation Agency (Jica) Hiroyuki Tomita told a seminar in the capital on Saturday.

The project, Capacity Development of Natural Disaster Resistant Techniques of Construction and Retrofitting for Public Buildings, is being implemented by Public Works Department with technical support from Jica. The Jica official also said Japanese experts have already started retrofitting two RMG factory buildings and the Jica will soon implement a large project to work on more vulnerable buildings.

Jica undertook a programme titled "RMG Sector Safe Environment Project" and created a fund of Tk 100 crore along with Bangladesh Bank for financing RMG owners to make their buildings safe, said Jica's Assistant Programme Officer Kaniz Fatema.



The swelling on the right eye of presiding officer Mazharul Islam at the North Kafrul High School polling centre in the presence of supporters of an Awami League councillor candidate of ward-16 and that of other contenders accused each other of vote rigging yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR



Voters huddle at the gate of Maniknagar Government Primary School in Dhaka but the presiding officer closed the voting entirely around 12:00noon after a minor incident and never let them in.

PHOTO: STAR

Joy's survey did predict win

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polls conducted by the media in Bangladesh are not very accurate. They simply have their own journalists ask people at random. That is not how polling is done. You have to ensure your questions are not biased, your sample is representative of the population and that you cover the geographic area evenly. I studied polling at Harvard and have taught our poll coordinators everything I learnt. We have refined our polling over the past 7 years to where I believe ours is quite accurate.

The Awami League backed Mayor candidates have a significant lead. In Dhaka South among 2280 respondents 49% said they will vote for pro AL candidate Sayeed Khokhon against 43% for his opponent Mirja Abbas. Among 2160 respondents of Dhaka North 51.9% preferred Anisul Haq over 33% for Tabith Awal. Force n' Focus Limited conducted the field survey and CRI and Shuchinta prepared the survey questionnaire and research methodology. A total of 2280 voters (South) and 2160 voters (North) were selected with almost equal number of male and female respondents varying in different

age groups (60% Youth).

When it comes to national politics, fifty seven percent (57%), an overwhelming majority, consented to rely on the Awami League for national development. This is a testament to all the development work we have done in the past six years in education, electricity, infrastructure and of course Digital Bangladesh. Without the Awami League Government none of this would have happened.

For Dhaka City, without the Awami League in power you would not have all the flyovers and elevated roadways that we built in our last term. We are now in the process of building the metro system, but that will not happen without an Awami League Mayor in charge of City Corporation. So I urge you all to go out and vote on election day. Vote for Anisul Haq in Dhaka North, Sayeed Khokhon in Dhaka South and A.Z.M. Nasir Uddin in Chittagong. Please get your friends and family to vote for them as well. Share this post as much as you can.

Our margin of error for both polls is 2.1% at a 95% confidence level."