

Manjur quits race

FROM PAGE 20
and I shall remain engaged in social activities," Manjur, also an adviser to BNP chief Khaleda Zia, said in a choked voice.

"Was there any political pressure on you?" asked a journalist.

He replied in the negative and said: "The situation compels me to do this."

On yesterday's election, he said he wanted a free, fair and neutral election but it wasn't happening.

"I don't want to take part in the election in such a chaotic situation ... and that's why I quit," Manjur said.

Just three minutes after beginning this speech, Manjur hastily left the venue with tearful eyes, refusing to take any more questions.

Before him, Noman and Khosru spoke to journalists announcing their decision to boycott the city polls, alleging "large-scale irregularities".

When the microphone was passed on to Manjur, he initially refused to speak, saying he didn't have anything to say.

From there, he went straight to his Kattoli residence. This paper tried to contact him several times but his cell phone was found switched off every time.

His elder son Nijamul Alam was then contacted. He said his father didn't want to meet anybody. He also refused to make any comment on his father's decision of retiring from politics.

A businessman and social worker, Manjur became a CCC ward councillor in 1994. He won three consecutive elections from his ward and won the trust of three-time former CCC mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury, so much so that the Awami League heavyweight entrusted Manjur with his charge nine times during the mayor's absence.

After Mohiuddin's arrest during the army-backed caretaker government regime in 2007, Manjur ran the city corporation as an acting mayor for two years. It was then the relationship between the two soured.

In 2010 CCC elections, Manjur, hitherto known as pro-AL, vied against Mohiuddin with the BNP chief's blessing and surprisingly defeated his political guru by a large margin.

BNP ITSELF TO BLAME?
With Manjur keeping mum, his associates and AL leaders, including his rival candidate, came up with their own versions of what could possibly have prompted him to retire from politics.

"Poor response from the BNP grassroots during the election campaigns and on the voting day, and the BNP high-command's sudden decision to boycott the election might have frustrated him and led him [Manjur] to say goodbye to politics," a close aide of Manjur told The Daily Star yesterday.

"One-third of the BNP-picked polling agents did not appear at the polling centres ... He [Manjur] was telling me a couple of days back that he was providing all financial supports required by the BNP leaders and activists but was getting a very poor response from them. He told me of his frustration even this morning," said the associate.

He did not want to be named, fearing repercussions from within the party.

"Manjur was not willing to boycott the polls so early into the voting as he had information that voters had just started coming to the polling centres. Rather, he wanted to wait till the noon before making any announcement," he added.

Similar observations were made by senior AL leaders as well.

"Manjur Alam boycotted the election out of anger and frustration from finding out no polling agents and party leaders at the voting centres. He even announced to quit politics," AL Joint General Secretary Mahabub-ul-Alam Hanif said at a press conference at the AL chief's Dhanmondi office yesterday.

At another press conference in Chittagong, AL Publicity Affairs Secretary Hasan Mahamud said Manjur was forced by the BNP to withdraw from the race and this made him retire from politics.

Refuting the allegations, BNP leader Abdullah Al Noman, also the chief campaign coordinator for Manjur, said: "All the party leaders and activists together worked hard for Manjur. The real fact is people could not go to the centres to cast vote and ruling party cadres brought in from outside the city stuffed ballot boxes with help from the administration."

"Manjur was frustrated at the open rigging in the polls. All the votes were cast by the criminals by 9:00am-10:00am at many centres. There was no use of waiting till the end," he argued.

As for Manjur's retirement decision, he said: "I too am thinking of retiring from politics as politics is going under the clutches of the goons."

Manjur's rival from the AL camp said his opponent had quit the mayoral race to avoid embarrassment.

"He [Manjur] resorted to an evil trick only to escape a defeat. He did not do anything in his seven years at the mayor's office. Everything he did was in his own interests," AL-favoured mayor contender AJM Nasir told reporters following Manjur's announcement of quitting the mayoral race.

Failing to contact Manjur on his phone for his comments, The Daily Star sent a correspondent to his residence. He waited in front of the house for two hours till 4:00pm, but was not let in.

The phones of both Manjur and his sons were found switched off till 10:00 last night.

US, UK

FROM PAGE 2
"Winning at any cost is no victory at all," she tweeted again.

Meanwhile, in a post-election statement, British High Commissioner to Bangladesh Robert Gibson expressed his disappointment "that the BNP felt it had to withdraw its endorsed candidates from the city corporation elections partway through voting" yesterday.

He hoped that the decision would not result in violence or disruption in Dhaka and Chittagong over the next few days. "All parties must ensure that their response to today's [yesterday's] events remains within the law," he said.

"It will be important that all allegations of irregularity are investigated swiftly and impartially."

"The responsibility remains with all parties, the Election Commission, and law enforcement agencies, to ensure that elections can take place in an ordered atmosphere to allow all voters the opportunity to exercise their democratic rights," he said in the statement.

Both the envoys visited polling centres in the capital yesterday.

Syria defence minister in Iran to discuss cooperation

AFP, Damascus

Syria's Defence Minister General Fahd al-Freij began a visit yesterday to key ally Iran to discuss cooperation between the two countries' armies, Syria's official news agency SANA said.

The trip to Tehran comes after a series of recent military losses for President Bashar al-Assad's regime, which is battling an uprising that began more than four years ago.

During the two-day visit, Freij and his Iranian counterpart will discuss "strengthening coordination and cooperation between the two allied militaries particularly in tackling terrorism and common challenges in the region."

The Syrian government labels all those seeking Assad's overthrow "terrorists".

The Syrian conflict began in March 2011 with anti-government protests but spiralled into a war after a regime crackdown.

More than 220,000 people have been killed and half the country's population displaced by the conflict.

Tehran has remained a staunch backer of Assad's government, offering military advisors and credit lines to bolster his regime.

Lebanon's Iranian-backed Hezbollah movement has also offered support to Assad's forces, sending fighters to help his troops on the battlefield.

But Assad denied in a recent interview that Iran had dispatched any troops to Syria.

"We invited Hezbollah, we didn't invite the Iranians. They're not here, they didn't send any troops," Assad told France 2 television last week.

"We have regular relations for more than three decades. We have commanders, officers coming and going between the two countries. This is the kind of cooperation that existed for a long time. This is different from fighting."

Voting free

FROM PAGE 2
chief coordinator of AL-backed mayoral hopeful Sayeed Khokon in DSCC, in another press meet in the capital said the BNP boycotted the elections after realising that "people were not with them."

"They [BNP] even failed to field polling agents. We didn't see any of their men outside the polling centres," he told newsmen at the AL central office on Bangabandhu Avenue.

Hasan Mahamud, AL's publicity affairs secretary, said the BNP was looking for an excuse to create anarchy in the country.

Addressing a press conference in Chittagong, he claimed that the BNP forced its Chittagong mayoral favourite Manjur Alam to quit the polls race that resulted in the announcement of his retirement from politics.



Supporters of mayor candidate Nasir Uddin assaulted a photojournalist and broke his camera at Agrabad Talebia Govt Primary School during yesterday's polling in Chittagong City Corporation elections.

PHOTO: STAR

Stay out, media

FROM PAGE 1
Porimol's mobile phone, identity card and personal bag were snatched. The attackers also slapped Mahbub in the face and asked him to leave.

Amitosh Paul, a senior reporter of the Samakal, a Bangla daily, was beaten at 12:30pm when he identified two fake agents of the ruling party-backed mayoral candidate, Anisul Huq, at the Uttara Girls' High School and College polling centre.

At the Bodhir School centre at Purana Paltan, some youths held Ashish Ur Rahman Shuvo, a special correspondent of the daily Prothom Alo, at knife point as he was entering the polling centre.

Mostaq Ahmed and Sujoy Mohajon, two senior reporters of the leading Bangla daily, were attacked by ruling party men at Narinda and Shahjahanpur polling centres. Their diaries, phones and cash were looted. However, Mohajon got back his phone with the help of some policemen.

Awami League men also attacked two journalists of Ekattor TV and one of Rtv in Chittagong, according to the private TV stations.

There were many cases of intimidation as well. Photos and videos taken by many journalists were deleted and they were asked to leave the polling centres.

Tuhin Shubhra Adhikary, a reporter of The Daily Star, found a

polling agent illegally stuffing ballot boxes in presence of an assistant presiding officer at a booth of Dhanmondi Government Girls High School at 12:40pm.

The reporter took some snaps of the act. When he was coming out of the booth, a man in plain clothes, identifying him as a policeman, asked him to delete the photos and go away.

Sohel Parvez, a senior reporter of this newspaper, was forced to delete pictures of vote-rigging by ruling party activists at the Kabi Nazrul Government College polling centre.

Anisur Rahman, a photographer of The Daily Star, witnessed many acts of intimidation. At 8:45am, when he was taking pictures of voters' thin presence at the Siddheswari Boys' High School polling centre, some youths popped up and shoved him, asking why he was taking pictures.

At the nearby Siddheswari Girls School, Anis saw a presiding officer standing outside a polling room while some youths were busy inside. When he tried to get closer to the room, some youths asked him to leave.

The camera of Palash Khan, a photojournalist of The Daily Star, was taken away by a policeman in plain clothes at a centre in Kafrul under Dhaka North City Corporation. The policeman deleted the pictures of an assault on journalists.

Another reporter of The Daily Star, Rafiul Islam, witnessed fake vote-

casting at a polling centre of Kamalapur Sher-e Bangla Railway High School at 11:00am. When he attempted to take videos of the incident, ruling party men warned him not to.

Shamim Noor, a photographer of the daily Jugantor, was harassed by some youths at a polling centre in Segunbagicha around 9:30am. The youths took away his camera, but when other journalists stepped in, they returned his camera after deleting the pictures of a polling agent being pushed out of the polling centre.

Indrajit Ghosh, a photojournalist of the New Age, was injured in a clash between the followers of an Awami League-backed councillor and its rebel candidate in front of Kabi Nazrul Government College polling centre. He was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Meanwhile, Dhaka Union of Journalists has expressed concern over the assaults on journalists. The DUJ in a statement demanded punishment for the attackers.

Prof Nazmul Ahsan Kalimullah, founder of JANIPOP, a national election observation council, said media activists and observers were barred from performing their election duties.

"The Election Commission was supportive but political activists did not welcome journalists and observers," he told The Daily Star.

Polls bubble bursts

FROM PAGE 1
rigging, were reported by the media. The Daily Star teams of 34 reporters witnessed ballot stuffing by ruling party men in the presence of election officials at 12 centres in Dhaka and five centres in Chittagong.

In many cases, police, Ansar and election officials barred journalists, including from this paper, from entering voting booths and even polling stations.

Law enforcers turned a blind eye to all these irregularities and intimidation of BNP-backed candidates, their workers and newsmen by the ruling party men.

Sporadic violence marred the festivity and dampened voters' enthusiasm despite heavy presence of law enforcers.

Most of the incidents of violence involved supporters of AL-backed ward councillor candidates and the party's rebels vying for the same post. The Daily Star reporters did not see any BNP men resorting to violence.

Official voter turnout was not available last night, but is expected to be low. In the first few hours of the polling, vote cast looked fairly high but it dipped significantly after BNP's announcement of boycott, according to our correspondents.

However, the vote counts released by the Returning Officers show a good flow of voters.

AN EASY WIN

The boycott gave the AL-backed candidates a free rein and they looked all set to secure an easy win.

If they finally pull off victory, it will be the first such success for the AL-backed candidates in city elections since 2010. In all the eight city polls held since 2010, the ruling party's mayor candidates suffered heavy defeats at the hands of their BNP-backed rivals.

In last year's January 5 national election, which too was boycotted by the BNP and many other political parties, voters were denied their voting rights.

People in the three cities hoped to exercise that right yesterday, but their hopes were dashed again.

Apart from the BNP, two mayor candidates jointly backed by the Communist Party of Bangladesh and Bangladesher Samajtantrik Dal and another supported by Gono Sanghati

Andolon also pulled out of the race in the two city corporations in Dhaka over allegations of irregularities.

Islami Andolon Bangladesh pulled out its mayor aspirants from all the three city corporations while Bangladesh Islamic Front mayor candidate withdrew from Chittagong polls.

THE RIGGING

Voting to the three city corporations began peacefully at 8:00am.

But showdowns by the ruling party men in and around the polling stations, high-handedness of police officials towards journalists covering the voting and the absence of polling agents of BNP-backed candidates in most polling centres started ringing an alarm bell before midday.

As the day progressed, reports of vote rigging began pouring in from different centres.

In some cases, election officials helped the ruling party men stuff ballot boxes and in other cases they played the role of silent spectators, as witnessed by The Daily Star teams.

THE BOYCOTT

Throughout the day, BNP's mayor candidates complained of "wide-spread vote rigging" and the battle of ballots virtually died down soon after BNP's announcement of boycott.

Moudud Ahmed, BNP standing committee member, announced the boycott at an emergency press conference at the party's Nayapaltan central office around 12:00noon, halfway through the voting.

"It wasn't an election. It can't be termed an election. We've rejected and boycotted the voter-less elections. It was a mockery of democracy," he said.

He was accompanied by Tabitha Awal, the party's mayor candidate for Dhaka north, and Afroza Abbas, wife of Mirza Abbas who was backed by the party for Dhaka south.

Boycotting the election, the candidates brought various allegations against the government and the EC.

BNP-backed candidate for Chittagong City Corporation M Manjur Alam announced his boycott around 11:00am. He also announced his retirement from politics, saying the current political situation was not favourable for him.

Dhaka North City Corporation

mayoral aspirant Zonayed Saki said he had "no confidence" in the voting process and that the polls result would not reflect people's verdict.

At a press conference in the capital, he came up with information of grabbing of 40 polling centres, fake votes, threats to the polling agents and intimidation.

Over a dozen councillor aspirants filed allegations with the EC that ruling party men forced their agents out of the centres.

Last night, Tabitha Awal wrote to the EC demanding a fresh election.

THE DENIAL

AL Joint General Secretary Mahbubul Alam Hanif outright dismissed the allegations of irregularities.

He said BNP's boycott was pre-planned.

"Having sensed a sure defeat, the BNP pulled out of the race. They staged this drama to create an issue for a fresh movement," Hanif told a press conference at the AL chief's Dhanmondi office.

In the evening, Chief Election Commissioner Kazi Rakibuddin Ahmed told journalists that he visited several polling centres and saw no irregularities anywhere.

He said he was happy with the polls and thanked all for helping him hold a "free and fair election".

VOTERS' VOICE

Outside the Maniknagar Government Primary School centre in the capital, Rina Begum was waiting restlessly for more than 30 minutes to cast her vote.

Having run out of patience, she finally sought help from journalists.

"Please tell the policemen to open the gate ... I came here to vote after a long time leaving my work," said Rina, a domestic help.

She, however, could not cast her vote as voting stopped at the centre around 12:00noon after incidents of ballot stuffing by a group of youths.

A resident of Paltan area, Md Iqbal came to cast his vote at a polling station in Paltan Community Centre around 12:30pm. At the gate, police told him to come later.

"You all come after lunch," he quoted a policeman as telling him and others.

Disappointed, he left the centre and did not go back.



DW & CE (Navy)
Lalasarai Nabik Colony
Mirpur-14, Dhaka-1206

Invitation for Tenders (Amendment)

Notice No. 605/BN/2/E-6/82

Dated: April 2015

Military Engineer Services

Reference:

A. This Dte Ltr No. 605/BN/2/E-6/2/60 Date: 15 March 2015

1. Advertisement for the following work published in different national dailies are hereby amended partially as under:

a. Name of the work:

15.	Brief description of works	Location	Price of tender document (Taka)	Tender security amount in the form of Pay Order/Bank Draft/Bank Guarantee in favour of DW & CE (Navy) Dhaka (Taka)	Completion time in months
a.	Construction of Service Quarter & Sentry Post including ancillary works for under construction Navy House Complex at Dhamalkot Area, Dhaka Cantt	Dhamalkot Area	2000/-	1,33,000.00	06 (six) months

a. For:

9.	Selling of tender will commence from	24 March 2015 (during office hours).
10.	Selling of tender will close on	06 April 2015 (during office hours).
11.	Last date and time of submission of tender	07 April 2015 at 1200 hours.
12.	Date and time of opening of tender	07 April 2015 at 1230 hours.

b. Read:

9.	Selling of tender will commence from	29 April 2015 (during office hours).
10.	Selling of tender will close on	10 May 2015 (during office hours).
11.	Last date and time of submission of tender	11 May 2015 at 1200 hours.
12.	Date and time of opening of tender	11 May 2015 at 1230 hours.

2. In all other respect advertisement referred above will remain unchanged.

ISPR/Navy/2015/569
27/04/15

GD-1559

SO-1
For DW & CE (Navy)
Dhaka Cantonment