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THE WAY THEY SEE IT ALL

"The election was held in a festive mood, except for some insignificant incidents. There would be fouls if you play a game. What's important is whether the foul is major or minor."

ANNISUL HUQ
AL-BACKED MAYOR
CANDIDATE IN DNCC

"No one except ruling party men was inside the voting centres. They controlled the polling centres and decided who would enter."

TABITHA AWAL
BNP-BACKED MAYOR
CANDIDATE IN DNCC

"The election was fantastic, participatory, fair and festive. How more transparent can you expect an election to be?"

SAYEED KHOKON
AL-BACKED MAYOR
ASPIRANT IN DSCC

"Vote rigging took place in 99 percent of the polling centres. Ruling party men stuffed ballot boxes. Genuine voters didn't go to voting centres."

AFROZA ABBAS
WIFE OF BNP-BACKED MAYOR
CONTENDER MIRZA ABBAS IN DSCC

"I wanted a free, fair and neutral election. As an opposite situation has been created in the election, I am withdrawing my candidature. This is my last election. I am also quitting politics."

MANJUR ALAM
BNP-BACKED MAYOR
CANDIDATE IN CCC

"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."

AJM NASIR
AL-BACKED MAYOR
HOPEFUL IN CCC

"We found malpractices and manipulation in the voting process. It will not reflect people's real mandate and it will not be acceptable at all. The Awami League has usurped the citizens' right to vote."

ZONAYED SAKI
DNCC MAYOR CANDIDATE BACKED BY
GANASANGHATI ANDOLON

"The Election Commission has proved to be worthless. We demand it be dissolved immediately. It has done everything only to serve the ruling party's interests."

ABDULLAH AL KAFEE
DNCC MAYOR CANDIDATE
BACKED BY CPB-BSD

BCL men in thick of dirty things

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Chhatra League played a leading role in occupying many polling centres and rigging votes for Awami League-backed candidates in yesterday's city polls, according to findings by The Daily Star.

Some BCL insiders had earlier told this newspaper that they had plans to take control of polling centres.

The Daily Star reporters yesterday visited at least 325 of the 2,701 centres in Dhaka and Chittagong cities, and saw how the BCL established their dominance in and outside the polling centres.

As voting began in the morning, BCL men turned up at most of the centres and gradually took control of polling.

They moved at will inside the polling centres, and created such a situation in which voters would feel intimidated.

In the capital, BCL activists in small groups of five to eight took position at several points in front of Viharunnisa Noon School and College around 8:30am.

The BCL men entered the polling booths at the two Viharunnisa centres in Dhaka south. They were seen instructing the polling agents of

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Star's VISIT TO 325 CENTRES

Cops look on as AL activists fix vote

ROs still say no need to call in army

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In a number of polling centres The Daily Star monitored, policemen and other law enforcers stood by or did little as ruling party men were out to rig the polls to Dhaka and Chittagong city corporations yesterday.

The Daily Star witnessed how the police looked the other way during incidents of ballot stuffing, intimidation of voters, and attacks on journalists by the supporters of the Awami

League-backed candidates.

Deployed for election duty, the army was kept as a reserve force inside the cantonment and never called in during the election violence yesterday.

The two returning officers of the city corporations in Dhaka, with authority to call in the army, claimed that the situation did not require putting the striking force in action.

Voters at several of the 325 centres this paper monitored also alleged that cops were not around when they

needed them. The 80,000 lawmen in the three city corporations were hardly seen helping voters.

They were inactive when pro-AL student body Bangladesh Chhatra League men and supporters of other AL-backed candidates' gathered and staged showdowns at the gates of polling centres intimidating voters.

"I have cast my vote amid a huge showdown by local goons at the gate of

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MORE ON PAGE 2, 3, 5, 10, 11

Brave officer foils BCL bid to capture polling centre

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Ctg

"You can kill me but I can't comply with your illegal demand," was the response of a presiding officer of a polling centre in Chittagong City Corporation polls when ruling party men stormed the centre and demanded they be allowed to stuff the ballot boxes.

It was 3:20pm, 40 minutes before the voting was to end.

A group of Bangladesh Chhatra League, the pro-Awami League student body, activists entered the room of presiding officer AMM Mujibur Rahman of polling centre-341 at Bakalia Govt High School and asked for 20 minutes to do their "job".

One of them slammed his fist on the table of the officer, head of a polling centre, but the brave officer refused to comply.

"I have been maintaining a smooth voting until 3:20pm. Don't ask me to do anything which will damage my reputation," he told the Chhatra League men.

The Daily Star reporter was present at the centre since 8:00am and saw the whole thing up close.

"I can't do it ... both legally and morally," Mujibur told them during

SEE PAGE 16 COL 6

Finding no ambulance or hearse, a man (on the right) along with a relative carries his mother home on a rickshaw after she died at Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday. It was the Election Day and no motorised vehicles were allowed on the streets in the capital. Though ambulances were out of the purview of the ban, they were hard to come by. The photo was taken at 5:30pm.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Manjur quits race, politics

He pulls out of polls being frustrated with his party decision, says AL

DWAIPAYAN BARUA, Ctg

In a shocking move, BNP-backed Manjur Alam pulled out from the mayoral race a few hours after the polling started in Chittagong City Corporation yesterday, saying he was frustrated at the "massive vote-rigging" there.

But in a more dramatic turn of events, he announced retirement from politics for good, without citing any specific reason behind his decision.

"This politics does not suit me anymore," he said at an impromptu and brief but intriguing press conference at his election office in the city's Dewanhat at 11:15am.

"It's my sixth election and now I am quitting [the election race]. I am also retiring from politics," said Manjur, flanked by BNP Vice Chairman Abdullah Al Noman and Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury, president of the city unit BNP.

When journalists asked the immediate past CCC mayor why he was making such an extreme move, Manjur became emotional.

"I don't want to say anything about it. I want to make an end here. I am not involved with politics anymore. I am resigning from my political post now. I will not do politics

SEE PAGE 12 COL 1

Everything dictated

AL leader, his aides control polling process at a centre in Uttara

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A local Awami League leader yesterday took control of the Scholastica school polling centre in Uttara and supervised the polls activities there with the help of law enforcers.

Shahjahan Mondal, senior vice president of Airport Thana unit of AL, along with his party men entered the polling station around 10:50am and started dictating the polling officials.

During a visit to the polling centre, The Daily Star correspondent found several youths, wearing badges on their chest with the symbol "Table Clock" (polls-symbol for Annisul), gathering inside the polling centre and working under the leadership of Mondal.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

Scan the QR code to watch a video clip on the polling centre at Scholastica School in Uttara

Star LIVE

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PM warns it could hit 10,000; UN says 8m victim of disaster

AGENCIES

Hungry and desperate villagers rushed towards relief helicopters in remote areas of Nepal yesterday, begging to be airlifted to safety, four days after a monster earthquake killed more than 5,000 people, reported AFP.

The government has yet to assess the full scale of the damage wrought by Saturday's 7.8 magnitude quake, unable to reach many mountainous areas despite aid supplies and personnel pouring in from around the world.

Prime Minister Sushil Koirala told Reuters the death toll could reach 10,000, as information of damage from far-flung villages and towns has yet to come in.

That would surpass the 8,500 who died in a 1934 earthquake, the last disaster on this scale to hit the Himalayan nation.

SEE PAGE 16 COL 4

DEATH TOLL 5,000

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