

WEATHER
FORECAST

YESTERDAY'S TEMPERATURES	DHAKA	CHITTAGONG	SYLHET	RAJSHAHI	KHULNA	BARISAL	RANGPUR	COX'S BAZAR
	H 27.5 L 16.8	H 27.7 L 17.4	H 28.1 L 16.6	H 25.8 L 12.8	H 25.8 L 14.0	H 25.5 L 14.2	H 26.8 L 15.0	H 28.2 L 18.3

Weather is likely to remain dry with temporary partly cloudy sky over the country still 6:00pm today, reports UNB. Night and day temperatures may remain nearly unchanged, Met Office said. The sun sets in the capital today at 5:17pm and rises tomorrow at 6:38am. Country's highest temperature 28.2 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday in Cox's Bazar and Sreemangal and lowest 11.2 in Jessore.



1. Selina Hayat Ivy casts her vote at the Shishubagh School polling centre around 9:30am yesterday. 2. Shakhawat Hossain Khan casts his at Adarsha School Narayanganj around 8:15am. 3. The day was festive with people coming down on the streets to get a taste of the ambience. 4. A long queue at a centre. 5. A woman around 90 casts her ballot with some assistance. 6. Supporters of candidates assist voters using computers in finding their respective numbers and booths. 7. Police were prompt in detaining and manhandling this man after giving chase to two processions, which are banned on voting day, of rival candidates. 8. Fire Service and Civil Defence were also seen patrolling an area. 9. BGB personnel stand guard in front of a centre. 10. The queue for women garnered much attention.

PHOTOS: AMRAN HOSSAIN, RASHED SHUMON, PALASH KHAN, PRABIR DAS

Peaceful atmosphere draws physically challenged voters

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A number of physically challenged people yesterday braved their disabilities and cast votes in the Narayanganj City Corporation (NCC) election, thanks to a peaceful atmosphere.

Families said they were encouraged to vote after knowing that the election was being held amid festivity.

Israt Islam Mishuk, 22, who has been suffering from a rare spinal cord condition for the last three years, cast her vote at MW High School in Siddhirganj. She came riding a wheelchair.

"Although I am unable to walk, I could not resist the temptation to cast my vote. That's why I dared come here ignoring my physical disability," she said.

"In the morning, I saw that the voting was going on peacefully. So I felt encouraged to vote. If the situation turned violent, I would not have come," said Mishuk, sharing the joy of voting for the first time in her life.

Wearing a smile and riding in the arms of his brother, Jumman Sheikh came to the city's Joy Gobinda School around 11:30am.

"My brother brought me here, and polling officials helped me cast my vote. I am happy. I voted around 10 years later," he told The Daily Star.

Delowar Hossain rode a wheelchair to Fulpur Government Primary School in Bandar area. Once a day labourer, he had an accident eight years ago and lost the ability to walk.

"My wife had asked me not to come. But the peaceful atmosphere encouraged me," said Delowar as he entered the polling station.

"I didn't vote in the last general election fearing an untoward situation, but I was very willing this time. I am very happy after casting my vote," he said.

Ehtesamul Haq, presiding officer at the Popular Dhonkunda High School polling centre, said a number of people with disabilities cast votes because the election was peaceful and festive.



PHOTOS: RASHED SHUMON, PRABIR DAS

Left, Defying physical limitations, 22-year-old Israt Islam Mishuk is compelled by the ambience to arrive at a centre to cast her vote. Right, Delowar Hossain, a physically challenged man, casts his vote in another polling station.

BNP says NCC elections apparently fair

No scope for unstable situation if parties, candidates want peaceful polls, says CEC

STAR REPORT

With the help of contesting candidates and voters the Narayanganj City Corporation (NCC) election was held fairly and peacefully, said Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Kazi Rakibuddin Ahmad.

"If political parties, candidates and their supporters want peaceful elections and don't violate electoral rules, there is no scope for an unstable situation to arise," he said while briefing reporters at the EC's media centre after the voting ended.

Sufficient law enforcers were deployed to maintain law and order situation. All necessary measures were taken to ensure that voters can go to polling stations without any fear. Besides, candidates and voters cooperated for fair polling, he said.

"We hope that candidates in all elections in the future will have the mentality to accept peoples' verdict," said the CEC.

Meanwhile, ruling Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader said an instance was set up in holding a free, fair and impartial election in Narayanganj.

"We were committed to holding the NCC polls in a fair and credible manner and we've kept our promise, every word of it," Quader said at a post-polls press conference at the party chief Sheikh Hasina's Dhanmondi office.

Quader said the Election Commission has proved its ability and impartiality through the election and thanked the EC and dwellers of the Narayanganj city for helping to hold the election in a fair manner.

Meanwhile, BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Rizvi Ahmed said the voting was apparently held in a fair manner and the party would accept peoples' verdict, if any incident of anomalies or manipulation does not take place before the announcement of result.

He said this while addressing a post-polls press conference at the party's Nayapaltan central office.

"Electoral irregularities can take place any moment. The Election Commission and the local administration will have to remain cautious about this," he said.

Fake followers create clashes between religions: PM

BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday urged the people of all faiths to maintain dignity of their respective religions, saying the fake followers create conflicts between religions.

"Those who pretend to practise religion create clashes between religions, but those who believe in religion truly and have confidence and trust in themselves never take unjust measures," she said.

The premier said the religion is undermined if anybody wants to use it terribly. "So, it's the responsibility of everybody to maintain dignity of his or her religion and take it to more dignified position," she said.

She was addressing a function arranged on the occasion of celebration of Christmas Day and civic reception to Cardinal Patrick

D'Rozario in the capital's Krishibid Institution Bangladesh.

Patrick D'Rozario, the highest ranking priest of the Roman Catholic Church in Bangladesh, has been appointed as a cardinal, the first ever from the country.

Religious Affairs Minister Motiur Rahman, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal and State Minister for Women and Children Meher Afroze Chumki also spoke.

Arch Bishop Shorod Francis Gomez presided over the function, while convener of the committee to celebrate Christmas Day and civic reception and President of Bangladesh Christian Association Nirmal Rozario delivered the welcome address.

"...we always want to maintain such environment so that the people...could practise their religions peacefully," the premier added.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and the country's first Cardinal Patrick D'Rozario cut a cake yesterday on the occasion of the celebration of Christmas Day and civic reception to the cardinal in the capital's Krishibid Institution Bangladesh. PHOTO: POUISH