

# EC satisfied with polls

## CEC rejects demand for fresh election

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Election Commissioner KM Nurul Huda yesterday claimed that they were successful in holding a free, fair, and credible election and that they were satisfied.

He said they would not hold a fresh election as demanded by the Oikyafront.

"Nothing happened to feel ashamed of during the election," he said, flanked by all four election commissioners, at the Nirbachon Bhaban during a post-polls briefing.

Allegations of vote rigging, election clashes, intimidation, and irregularities came from several constituencies across the country. Over two dozen people were killed in one of the deadliest election day Sunday. More than 200 were injured in clashes between the Awami League and BNP supporters in 24 districts.

Opposition candidates boycotted the polls in 43 constituencies. Forty-two of them were Jatiya Oikyafront runners.

The CEC, however, said a huge number of people took part in the polls amid festivity. The turnout was around 80 percent, he said.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4

# Mother of four

FROM PAGE 16

of the Subarnachar AL.

The woman said soon after midnight yesterday, some 10-12 men carrying sticks entered her home by cutting the surrounding fence. They tied her CNG-run auto-rickshaw driver husband and four children with ropes.

"They took me outside and raped me," she said, groaning in pain.

She also said the rapists threatened to kill her husband and children and torch their house if she told anyone about the rape.

The victim's husband, who was also injured, said the criminals left around 4:00pm after beating his wife unconscious and taking Tk 40,000, some gold ornaments and other valuables with them.

Soon after the alleged rapists left, the victim's husband and children cried for help. At this, the neighbours came and rescued them.

"At first, a village doctor was called. But as she [the victim] was still bleeding, she was taken to Noakhali General Hospital at noon," said one of the neighbours, wishing anonymity.

Shyamol Kumar Devnath, of the emergency department at the hospital, said they found evidence of rape. There were also injury marks on different parts of the body, he said.

The husband said the victim went to cast her vote at Char Jubilee-14 Government Primary School centre around 11:00am on Sunday. She took the ballot paper from the assistant presiding officer and went to a booth.

During that time, Ruhul, an Awami League man, allegedly insisted her to vote for the "boat". He allegedly tried to snatch the ballot paper as she said she would vote for the "sheaf of paddy". But the victim put the paper inside the box.

This made Ruhul furious and he threatened her, he said.

Talking to The Daily Star, the victim's brother-in-law said the woman had threatened him back.

Contacted, Elias Sharif, superintendent of police in Noakhali, confirmed the rape took place but claimed it was not related to voting.

"It is not true," he said when asked about the victim's allegation of being gang raped for voting for the BNP symbol.

The police official said they were trying to arrest the alleged rapists. Officer-in-charge Char Jabbar

Police Station Nizam Uddin said he asked the victim's family to come to the station. "Once they come, a case will be filed," he added.

# India foils Pak

FROM PAGE 16

The intruders were wearing combat uniforms like the regular Pakistani forces and were carrying supplies with Pakistani markings. Some of them also wore old pattern Indian Army uniforms as part of their deception strategy, the army said.

The intruders were well-equipped with improvised explosive devices and inflammable material.

"The Army's resolve to keep a strict vigil along the LoC and defeat all such nefarious designs of Pakistan will continue to remain firm and consistent," the Army said in a statement.

"We will ask Pakistan to take back the bodies of the likely Pakistani soldiers since Pakistan did provide full covering fire support to these intruders," it said.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina interacting with foreign polls observers and journalists at the Gono Bhaban yesterday, following the Awami League's thumping win in Sunday's national election.

PHOTO: PID

# BNP has only itself to blame

FROM PAGE 1

She said the first priority would be to continue the economic activities so that people might get a better life.

Many Awami League men were killed by the BNP-Jamaat men during the polls although the AL is the ruling party, the PM said. "They attacked our people, tried to snatch ballot papers and boxes in a bid to foil the election. Our law enforcement agencies and people were very alert to that. That's why they couldn't become successful in their attempts."

The AL chief also questioned BNP's intention to participate in the general election. "What will you try to do usually when you participate in an election? You'll try to project your candidates. But they did nothing. We're really very surprised that they sat relaxed and there was no activity."

Hasina mentioned that only a few BNP candidates were active in the field which surprised her party. "Because, we never saw a candidate sitting like this in an election...they only used their mobile phones to seek votes and that's all. There was no campaign beyond that. What did they want to do?"

She said it was likely that the BNP-led Jatiya Oikyafront participated in the election to show that it was not credible or they had something else in

their mind as "hatching conspiracies was in their character".

The Oikyafront was in a dilemma about choosing its prime ministerial candidate if they won the election, the PM said. "This is another thing for which people didn't vote for them."

Terming Sunday's election "very important" for the country, the premier said people had the chance to cast their votes. "I think it was a very peaceful election except for some incidents where some of our party workers were killed by the opposition. I'm really very sorry for that. But I always appreciate our law enforcement agencies and our people. They worked very hard to hold the election in a peaceful manner."

About the polls results, she said the verdict came as a good opportunity for the government to continue the country's development.

"People are getting the benefits of what we did in the last 10 years. They're also getting a better life. I'm very much hopeful that this will improve further in our next tenure."

Remembering the "BNP-Jamaat's terrorist activities", including arson attacks and burning people alive during and after the 2014 election, Hasina said people rejected them in the election for that.

Regarding some social menaces, the PM said she would not allow militant

activities, drug abuse, terrorism and corruption in the country. "These are the main enemies of a society. We declared zero tolerance to terrorism, drug abuse and corruption. We'll do our best to save our people from these."

Enquired by a BBC journalist about stuffing of a ballot box, she questioned whether he was sure which boxes those were. "That did not happen during this election; it was from a previous election. I think it was from a mayoral election when they were taking ballot boxes for counting ballots. That picture was published. I don't believe that kind of an incident happened this time."

She said had there been any such allegation, the Election Commission would have cancelled voting in that particular polling centre immediately.

The PM said her party never believed in politics of revenge.

She alleged that the BNP-Jamaat men had killed AL leaders and workers, raped girls, tortured women and demolished houses of her party supporters after the 2001 election. "They had also captured businesses of Awami League leaders, looted their houses and tortured people."

### ANOTHER WIN IN MONTH OF VICTORY

Hasina yesterday said the Grand Alliance's win in the national election

was another victory for the country's people in the month of victory (December).

She made the remarks when political leaders as well as senior officials of the civil and military administrations greeted her at her office, marking the AL's reelection.

The PM said this victory was not for her personal gains; rather it gave a bigger responsibility towards the country and its people.

She said the AL's reelection was a great opportunity to serve the country and materialise the dreams of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman through completing his unfinished tasks.

She extended her greetings to the people on the occasion of the New Year.

The political leaders and officials greeted the premier by presenting her bouquets. They include Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan, PM's advisers Toufique-e Elahi Chowdhury and Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury, her principal secretary, press secretary, cabinet secretary, public administration secretary, the chiefs of the three services, the inspector general of police and BGB and Rab DGs.

PM's younger sister Sheikh Rehana and daughter Saima Wazed Hossain were present.

# World leaders congratulate Sheikh Hasina

FROM PAGE 1

that the partnership between the two states would continue to flourish under her far-sighted leadership, said a press release of the Indian High Commission.

Modi also reiterated the priority that India attached to Bangladesh as a neighbour, a close partner for regional development, security and cooperation, and a central pillar in India's "neighbourhood first" policy.

"The victory of the Awami League in the polls is a reflection of stunning development that Bangladesh attained under your [Hasina] dynamic leadership," PM's Press Secretary Ihsanul Karim told BSS, quoting Modi as saying.

The Indian PM assured Hasina that his country would continue to support Bangladesh's development efforts like it did in the past, the press secretary added.

According to the Indian High

Commission's release, Hasina thanked Modi as he was the first leader to call following her election victory.

She also thanked India's cooperative role in the development pursuit of Bangladesh.

### CHINA GREETES PM

Chinese President Xi Jinping and PM Li Keqiang extended their heartfelt congratulations to Hasina on securing two-thirds majority in the election.

Ihsanul said Chinese Ambassador in Dhaka Zhang Zuo handed over their congratulatory messages to Hasina at the Gono Bhaban yesterday, reports UNB.

The Chinese envoy highly appreciated Hasina's leadership for development of Bangladesh and hoped that her Vision-2021 would be materialised and the country would be turned into a middle income one by 2021 under her dynamic leadership.

Zuo also hoped that Bangladesh

would soon be able to bring down poverty rate to zero due to the far-sighted programmes taken by the Bangladesh prime minister. The envoy expressed hope that the strategic and mutual cooperation between the two countries would continue in the days to come.

He paid tribute to Bangabandhu, terming him a great leader of the world.

At the meeting, Hasina thanked the Chinese president and the PM for congratulating her and appreciated the continued support of Beijing for the development of Bangladesh. Describing China as a great friend of Bangladesh, Hasina expected more investment from the country during the next five years of her tenure.

Hasina's younger sister Sheikh Rehana, daughter Saima Wazed Putul, PM's Principal Secretary Md Nojibur Rahman, Military Secretary Mia Mohammad Zainul Abedin and PMO

Secretary Sajjadul Hassan were present.

### BHUTAN CONGRATULATES PM

Fourth King of Bhutan Jigme Singye Wangchuck yesterday congratulated Hasina and the Awami League in a message of felicitation, said a foreign ministry press release.

He acknowledged the contribution of Hasina in strengthening the close bonds of goodwill, cooperation and friendship between Bangladesh and Bhutan. He expressed his confidence that under the leadership of Hasina, Bangladesh would continue its development.

In another message, Bhutan's Prime Minister Lotay Tshering greeted Hasina on her party's landslide election victory.

Meanwhile, West Bengal and Tripura chief ministers -- Mamata Banerjee and Biplab Kumar Deb -- also congratulated Hasina and her party for obtaining majority, UNB adds.

# BNP MPs-elect won't take oath

FROM PAGE 1

The BNP took the decisions in principle at a meeting of its standing committee at the party chairperson's Gulshan office, a day after the polls saw it win five seats while its ally Gonoforum two.

Replying to a query whether the lawmakers-elect from the BNP will take oath, party's General Secretary Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir said, "We have rejected the polls results. We will also continue our legal battle and action programmes."

Fakhrul, who secured Bogura-6 constituency, said this election proved that a credible election is not possible under any partisan government.

"The government using state machinery conducted such a farcical election that I think it is the most stigmatised election in the country ever," he said at a press conference after the standing committee meeting.

He also alleged that most of the new voters were denied their right to vote

on Sunday.

In a press statement, Gonoforum chief Dr Kamal Hossain said all the opposition candidates, including those of Jatiya Oikyafront, will submit memorandum to the Election Commission on Thursday demanding fresh polls.

They will also announce their next course of programme on that day.

"Countrymen witnessed and perceived it well how a farcical drama was staged in the name of election on December 30," read the statement.

"Under the leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the Awami League and its loyal Election Commission have shown the world how to destroy the election system of an independent and sovereign country."

Dr Kamal said though the polls results show the ruling Awami League is the winner, actually 17 crore people of Bangladesh have lost. "Through it our much expected democracy has been buried."

### 'MOST BIASED PERSON'

Terming Chief Election Commissioner KM Nurul Huda the most biased person, Fakhrul said, "He [Huda] is a partisan person and his activities were questioned .... his view reflects the government's. He represents the government."

At a post-election press conference yesterday, CEC Huda ruled out the opposition demand for a fresh election scrapping Sunday's parliamentary polls.

Fakhrul came down heavily on the CEC also for his comment that what can he do if BNP's agents do not come to the polling centres.

"This government using the state machinery barred our polling agents from going to polling centres. In my constituency, there were 100 percent presence of our polling agents but they were driven out."

He said the party is now collecting all the evidence of vote rigging and then "we will move forward after talking with alliance partners".

Alleging that "election engineering" was planned days ahead of the polls, he said its implementation began on December 29, the day before the election.

"Many now question why we participated in the election even after arrest of and attacks on the opposition leaders and activists," Fakhrul said.

Explaining his party's position, he said, "We want to say clearly that we are a democratic political party and believe in transfer of power through peaceful election. We participated in the election to have democracy restored."

Alleging that ruling party activists launched attacks on the opposition men after the election, Fakhrul said, "After the election, houses of opposition leaders and activists were attacked and set on fire."

He claimed that since the announcement of election schedule, more than 21,000 opposition leaders and activists were arrested.

# Turnout 100pc!

FROM PAGE 1

Rahman bagged 2,072 while BNP candidate Golam Mohammed Siraj and the two remaining candidates got 108 and one vote each respectively.

A total of 128 votes were cancelled, according to the centre-wise result sheet.

Chikashi High School, however, was not the lone centre to achieve this feat.

Ganeshpur Government Primary School centre in Shibganj upazila of Bogura-2 constituency is another example where all 2,290 votes were cast.

Jatiya Party candidate Shariful Islam got 1,136 votes. His main contender Mahmudur Rahman Manna, a candidate of Jatiya Oikyafront secured only 905.

A total of 214 votes were cancelled. Shyampur Government Primary School in upazila of Bogura-1 also saw a hundred percent voter turnout. All 2,383 votes were cast and AL candidate Abdul Manna alone got 2,185 votes. BNP candidate Kazi Rafiqul Islam got 79 votes, shows centre-wise result sheet.

However, at the centre at Uttar Bhitabariya Government Primary School, a polling station in Pirojpur-2, a different sort of voter turnout story unfolded.

The centre stood out among all others as being the only one where all the voters cast for their votes for only one candidate -- AL nominee Anwar Hossain Manju.

In this centre, 1,155 voters cast their ballot for Manju, which left his main challenger BNP-led alliance candidate Muhammad Mustafizur Rahman Iran with no vote. The remaining three candidates also could not manage a single vote.

A total of 1,164 votes were cast in this polling centre at Uttar Bhitabariya area in Bhandaria upazila. Of the total, nine votes were rejected.

In Telikhali union of the upazila, there were eight polling centres where a total of 14,406 out of 15,765 voters cast their votes.

Interestingly, only one person voted for the BNP candidate.

In this constituency, Anwar Hossain Manju, now a minister, got 1,79,498 votes while Mustafizur Rahman Iran, chairman of the Labour Party, secured only 6,310 votes.

In the 2008 parliamentary polls, the AL candidate got over 1.28 lakh votes and his opponent BNP candidate obtained 59,428 votes.

A similar picture was also seen in Natore-3 constituency.

BNP candidate Daudar Mahmud did not get a single vote in eight polling stations. He got less than 10 votes in 22 out of 118 centres.

The results of Sunday's polls show that AL candidate Zunaid Ahmed Palak, also a state minister, bagged 2.30 lakh votes while Daudar got 8,841 votes.

In the 2008 polls, Palak got 1.27 lakh votes and BNP candidate Kazi Golam Morshed managed 78,043 votes.

In Rajshahi-4 constituency, BNP candidate Abu Hena, who twice became the lawmaker, got no vote in Sunday's polls in two centres in Bagmara upazila.

One of the centres is Jamgram Government Primary School which witnessed 94.58 percent of the votes cast.

Among the 1,816 valid votes, AL candidate Enamul Haque obtained 1,813 votes while Abu Hena did not get any vote. Two other candidates gathered the remaining three votes.

Hena did not secure any vote in Boilshingha School and College vote centre.

Of the 2,101 votes, AL candidate Enamul Haque got 2,080 votes.

Abu Hena got less than 10 votes at ten centres in the constituency.

When asked why BNP and its alliance got only few votes in some constituencies, Chief Election Commissioner KM Nurul Huda said it was a reflection of people exercising their franchise.

"They got as many votes as the people who voted for them," he said.

# Only 9 make

FROM PAGE 16

Alliance, secured 20 seats, the second highest number of seats won by a party.

The Workers Party of Bangladesh became victorious in three constituencies.

Dr Kamal Hossain-led Gono Forum, a key component of Jatiya Oikyafront, Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh, and Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal got two seats each.

Besides, Bangladesh Tarikat Federation and Jatiya Party (Monju) bagged one seat each. Independent candidates won in three out of total 299 constituencies.

Voting was suspended in Brahmanbaria-2 following violence.

Election to Gainbandha-3 is due on January 27 as the Election Commission postponed the polls schedule for the seat after BNP candidate TIM Fazley Rabbi died on December 20.