



An Ansar woman, who is supposed to guard the Teesta Girls' High School in Lalmonirhat town during upazila polls, shoos away goats. Only nine out of 3,982 voters cast their votes until 11:00am yesterday when the picture was taken.

PHOTO: S DILIP ROY

## AL men fight it out among

FROM PAGE 1

Even in such a situation, a number of voters could not cast their ballots and they alleged that their votes had already been cast.

Election Commission Secretary Helal Uddin Ahmed claimed that yesterday's election ended peacefully.

At a press briefing in Nirbachan Bhaban, the EC Secretary said voting was suspended at 28 polling centres and voting would be held there later.

"So far, we came to know that the presence of voters was satisfactory. We are yet to know the voter turnout.

"Voters' presence would be high if the elections were competitive. Many political parties did not participate in this election."

He said two presiding officers and an assistant presiding officer in Sirajganj and Lalmonirhat were arrested on allegation of irregularities. Besides, more than 10 people were tried by mobile courts for various irregularities, Helal added.

Our correspondents from different districts visited 70 polling centres in 12 upazilas all daylong and found a thin presence of voters after the voting began at 8:00am.

In Sirajganj, voting at three upazilas witnessed irregularities, ballot box stuffing and casting of fake votes. Voting at three polling stations of Sadar and Shahazadpur upazilas were suspended due to irregularities.

Law enforcers detained a presiding

officer, two assistant presiding officers and two other people from different polling stations of Sirajganj Sadar upazila for assisting in casting fake votes.

An executive magistrate fined four people, including a union parishad member, for attempting to cast fake votes in Kazipur upazila.

In Joypurhat, a mobile court jailed three people for seven to 10 days and fined two of them each Tk 20,000 for casting fake votes in Kalai upazila. Elections were also held in Khetlal and Akkelpur upazilas.

In Kurigram, voting at 13 polling centres in Sadar, Nageswari, Ulipur, Chilmari and Roumari upazilas was suspended because of snatching of ballot papers and stuffing of ballot boxes.

In Rajshahi, polling in eight upazilas experienced some scattered incidents of irregularities and violence.

Two assistant presiding officers and a polling officer were detained for their failure to resist some outsiders, who captured the Al Jamiatus Salafia Alim Madrasa centre in Godagari upazila around 1:00pm and stuffed ballot boxes. Voting was suspended there.

Besides, four people were injured in a clash between the supporters of the AL candidate and party rebel candidate in Tanore upazila.

In Sunamganj, our Sylhet correspondent visited three upazilas out of 10 and witnessed a thin presence of

voters. Voting at seven polling centres in the three upazilas was suspended over clash, allegations of ballot snatching and vote rigging.

In Natore, voting was marked by irregularities and casting of fake votes.

Talking to our district correspondent at Beelkatho Government Primary School centre under Gurudashpur upazila around 1:00pm, Shahidul Islam, 30, alleged that he failed to cast vote as his vote was cast earlier.

This correspondent also noticed that some 20 to 25 people were stuffing ballot boxes at Fazilatunnesa Mujib Degree College centre under Baraigram upazila around 4:10pm.

A mobile court jailed a polling agent of AL candidate for six months and fined him Tk 2,000 for casting fake votes at Gurudashpur upazila.

In Jamalpur, elections in three upazilas -- Islampur, Bakshiganj and Dewanganj -- were held in a peaceful atmosphere.

In other upazilas of Jamalpur -- Madarganj, Melandah and Sarishabari -- all the chairmen and vice-chairmen candidates were elected uncontested. In Sadar upazila, the chairman was elected uncontested and voters only cast their ballots for the vice-chairman post.

Our correspondents in Sirajganj, Joypurhat, Thakurgaon, Kurigram, Rajshahi and Jamalpur also contributed to this report.

## Unfairly treated for ethnicities

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admission in some government primary schools. It also found that Dalit students were not taught their own religious studies and compelled to sit for classes and tests with the students of other mainstream religions.

Moreover, they are not taught in their mother tongues, which poses risks for the existence of their mother languages, said Juel Miah.

The concept of "untouchability" is practised in educational institutions. There are examples where teachers did not even take initiatives to ensure inclusive environment in schools.

"The information about stipends allocated for indigenous and Dalit students are not properly circulated. Moreover, there are examples of anomalies that take place during the enlistment and distribution of the stipends," Juel said.

### HEALTHCARE

The study also found that immunisation camps were not set up in the localities of indigenous and Dalit people. Even doctors and nurses were found uninterested to provide services to Dalit patients only because of their identities, TIB said.

A Dalit woman, while sharing her experience with the TIB about a community clinic, said, "The chairman's daughter was given medicine in front of me. When I approached, the attendant yelled at me and forced me to get out of the clinic."

The study also claimed that the government initiatives for these people were not well circulated. For example, the government is running special healthcare programmes for indigenous people in 15 districts, but the information has not been disseminated properly.

In some cases, the indigenous people have to bribe Tk100 to Tk200 for emergency medical care and Tk500 to Tk3000 for obtaining the maternity care card, the study said.

### SOCIAL SAFETY NET

The study said a large portion of poor indigenous and Dalits eligible for different social safety net schemes are found to be left out of the coverage.

"It is notable that the selection process of beneficiaries is not very transparent and it hardly involves the indigenous people and Dalits," Juel said.

Juel cited an example to substantiate his claim. An indigenous child was

### BURDEN OF UNAUTHORISED MONEY FOR SERVICES

TYPES OF SERVICE	TAKA
Maternity care card	500-3,000
Child delivery	100-9,000
Old-age allowance	500-5,000
Disability allowance	1,000-5,000
Trade license	3,000-6,000
Salish	1,000-80,000
Land registration	4,000-40,000

suffering from Thalassemia. When the mother went to seek help for her child, the social welfare officer told her, "Do you think that the government should pay the money for your child's blood?"

### LAND SERVICES

The indigenous and Dalits are not given allocation of the government-owned khas lands due to their identity.

In some cases, local elites register the lands -- owned by indigenous people -- in their names by influencing government institutions.

In some areas, the forest department took a number of development initiatives that evicted the native inhabitants.

### CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS

Indigenous and Dalits are often restrained from voting during an election, especially during the local government elections.

Besides, the local government representatives often show biasness towards the mainstream population during a Shalish (arbitration) and as a result, the indigenous and Dalits have less faith in such a judicial process.

The study also found that roads are not made or repaired in the indigenous and Dalit localities.

### GOOD INITIATIVES, LACK IMPLEMENTATION

The study says at least Tk30 crore was allocated from Prime Minister's Office fund in the fiscal year 2017-18 for the vocational training and education of indigenous people. Besides, the Department of Social Services took up a programme of Tk27 crore for Dalits' education and elderly schemes. The Seventh Five Year Plan also recognised their exclusion from the mainstream population.

Iftekharuzzaman said these were

some good initiatives, but they were not being implemented properly at the field level.

The study also pointed that despite severe marginalisation of the indigenous and Dalits, the provision of reserving five percent seats for them in accessing the first and second class government jobs was abolished through a circular in 2018.

"If some formative initiatives, including affirmative action, are not taken, marginalisation will be inevitable," said Iftekharuzzaman.

"Thus, the main aspiration of SDG principle 'Leave No One Behind' will remain a far cry," he said.

The corruption watchdog has demanded constitutional recognition of separate ethnic identities and their languages.

It also urged the government to ratify the UN conventions related to the rights of indigenous people.

## 6 men caught

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Hearing them scream, villagers rushed to the spot and detained the six men and later handed them over to police, the witnesses added.

Sub Inspector Abdur Latif of Benapole Port Police Station said the girls went to Benapole's Putkhali village to visit their relatives.

The detained men were later shown arrested after police filed a case in this connection around 8:00pm, he added.

The girls will be sent to hospital for medical tests today.

Both the girls and the alleged rapists were in police custody last night.

## Govt picks

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Nahar, Abdul Khalek (posthumous) and Professor Mohammad Khaled (posthumous) in independence and Liberation War, Brigadier General Dr Nurunnahar Fatema Begum in Medical Science, Dr Kazi Khaliquzzaman Ahmed in social service, Murtaza Bashir in culture, Hasan Azizul Haque in literature, Professor Dr Hasina Khan in research and training and Bangladesh Institute of Nuclear Agriculture (BINA) in science and technology.

## In defiance

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country.

Government officials, including High Court judges, secretaries and many other officials throughout the East Pakistan, started to quit their jobs.

The military personnel faced obstacles in getting daily necessities as agitated people put up barriers. In Sylhet, one convoy supplying rations was intercepted by locals.

On the premises of Bindubashini High School in Tangail, National Awami Party leader Maulana Bhashani at a mass rally announced his support for the freedom fighters.

He said Sheikh Mujibur Rahman is the leader of seven crore people and asked the people to follow his instructions. He added that to achieve the goal, all must unite and fight.

Awami League General Secretary Tajuddin Ahmed thanked the people of Bangladesh for rallying behind the party and making the civil disobedience movement launched by Bangabandhu a success.

That night, the army released its 114th military order saying if any civilian, willingly or unwillingly, harmed government property or created obstacles on the path of the military personnel, they will be punished as per law.

Meanwhile, Pakistan International Airlines cancelled most of its international services, and all available aircraft were used to bring "Government Passengers" to Dhaka. These "Government Passengers" were troops in civilian clothes.

In Rawalpindi, the military establishment was being dominated by an influential quarter of blood-thirsty officers.

Top army officials were clearly of the opinion that the Bangalees' movement had to be crushed and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman severely dealt with.

Yahya explicitly warned that force would be used against any move for separation.

But the Bangalees already knew that. And they were prepared.

[Sources: Liberation War Museum website; The Daily Star report]

## Make it transparent

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"The government should make it clear about the plan to use domestic coal reserve. The environmental concerns of coal-based power plants, particularly Rampal Power Plant would be politically costlier."

M Tamim, pro-VC of Brac University, said Bangladesh had been struggling in the areas of primary energy supply. "We have not been able to come up with the proper solutions to supply an affordable and sustainable primary energy."

As per current planning of the government, 90 percent energy would be import-based by the next decade and the cost of energy import would be huge.

"As a country where we are growing, can we afford this kind of huge import bill?"

"So, the country must take a decision on its own coal and must go forward and explore the domestic coal because it would give us a lot of energy independence and freedom."

The former energy adviser said the maritime boundary dispute was resolved in 2014, but the country has not been able to carry out a survey in the Bay of Bengal yet.

"Onshore, BAPEX's experiment has completely failed and it was not able to find any major gas. Major exploration initiatives should be taken onshore and offshore."

There should be a gradual shift in energy tariff, setting mechanism from administered tariff to market-based tariff, said Khondaker Golam Moazzem, research director of the CPD, who presented the study.

Hamid said he would like to switch to the market-led approach, but not right now.

Moazzem said the governance in the power and energy sector institutions needs to be strengthened further. "For this, irregularities and corruption in different corporations and associated companies need to be controlled and more transparency is expected in case of signing contracts at local and international level both at government-to-government and government-to-business levels."

## No deal

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taking part in the thanksgiving motion on the president's speech.

Speaking in parliament on February 14, two senior lawmakers -- Workers Party President Rashed Khan Menon and Jatiya Party MP Fakhru Imam -- demanded a statement from the foreign minister whether the signing of a "defence pact" between Bangladesh and Saudi Arabia was contradictory to the constitution.

The foreign minister, however, yesterday said signing of the MoU has in no way violated the constitution.

"Bangladesh and Saudi Arabia have signed no agreement over troops deployment. Rather, an MoU has been inked on defence affairs. It didn't violate article 25 of the constitution...." he told parliament.

The main theme of this MoU is to contribute to enhancing international stability through mutual cooperation.

According to the MoU, the defence forces of the two countries will cooperate with each other in military training, exercise, education, medical treatment, research and defence industry, exchange military information, intelligence, military visit and skill, and participation in socio-cultural activities, he said.

Following a request from Saudi Arabia, Bangladesh has promised to cooperate in case there is a threat on the holy mosques in Makkah and Medina, he added.

Prof M Shamsul Alam, dean of the engineering faculty at Daffodil International University, said a hearing to raise gas tariff is beginning from today breaching the laws.

"The state minister for energy is saying that the price of gas has to be increased. But we are saying that it can't be increased breaching laws."

He also said there is conflict of interest in the electricity business. If lawmakers produce power or engage in import, the laws will not come of any use for the ordinary people.

CPD Distinguished Fellow Prof Mustafizur Rahman moderated the dialogue.

Fahmida Khatun, executive director of the CPD, said the power sector experienced impressive growth in the past few years. However, further actions are needed to eliminate the demand-supply gap.

## Khaleda refuses

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Square Hospital and Labaid Hospital, he added.

Whether Khaleda's treatment will be at the BSMMU or her preferred United Hospital was a debated issue between the government and the BNP last year.

Though the BNP chief initially refused to take treatment at the BSMMU, she finally agreed and was shifted there on October 6 last year.

Doctors of the hospital then said, "Her main illness is pain in joints due to rheumatoid arthritis. She has uncontrolled diabetes and arthritis."

This time, the issue of Khaleda's shifting to the BSMMU came on March 5 when a six-member BNP delegation, led by its Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir, met Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan and talked about Khaleda's illness and her proper treatment.

The minister said the BNP chief would soon be taken to the BSMMU for checkups and tests.

Khaleda has been in jail since February 8 last year when a special court awarded her five years in prison in the Zia Orphanage Trust graft case.

The High Court later extended her jail term to 10 years in the case. She was also convicted in the Zia Charitable Trust graft case and handed a seven-year term.

## Kiwis edgy

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Wagner yet again who undid the Bangladesh batsmen with his short-ball ploy as the left-arm seamer ended up picking four wickets, including that of Tamim after the left-hander top-scored with 74.

Bangladesh, however, came back well with the ball riding on the two fast bowlers Ebadot Hossain and Abu Jayed. Jayed removed both in-form Kiwi openers Tom Latham (4) and Jeet Raval (3) early to leave New Zealand struggling on eight for two.

It was then Ross Taylor and Kane Williamson who held the ship together as New Zealand were 38 for two before rain forced an end to the day's play at 5:00pm.

According to Liton Das -- the second-highest scorer with 33 -- it would be important for the Tigers to pick a few early wickets on the fourth day to put the home side under pressure.

"I think the first hour will be crucial tomorrow [Monday] and it will be good if we can pick a few early wickets and also check the runs. I think if this game gets a result it will be based on runs, so we need to keep our focus and look to concede fewer runs, then I think it can be our day," said Liton.

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This is to notify for all concerned that the following tender have been Published through e-GP Portal.

Sl. No.	Tender ID	Package No.	Name of Work	Publishing Date & Time	Last selling Date & Time	Closing Date & Time
1	291755	Vehicles	Purchase of 2 Cars and Microbus	10 March, 2019 9:00	25 March, 2019 12:00	28 March, 2019 16:00

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