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Chief returning officer regrets 'untoward incidents'

Asks aggrieved students to file case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Returning Officer of Dhaka University Central Students' Union (Ducusu) SM Mahfuzur Rahman expressed regret over any untoward incidents during yesterday's election.

He suggested to the aggrieved students to file cases over "attacks on candidates" or "vote rigging". "You [students] have the right to file case and you can do it," he said.

Mahfuzur came up with the remark after meeting representatives of the

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Students hold marked ballots as Dhaka University Proctor Golam Rabbani talks to journalists inside Bangladesh-Kuwait Maitree Hall during yesterday's Ducusu polls. Top right, other students protest with similar ballots, alleging polls irregularities at the dormitory. Bottom right, a long queue of voters at Bijoy Ekattar Hall. PHOTO: PALASH KHAN



Girl students first to raise the alarm

PORIMOL PALMA, ASHIK ABDULLAH APU and MUNTAKIM SAAD

What could have been a day of boundless festivity was spoiled by allegations of foul play, and it was the female students at the country's premier university who first rang the alarm bell.

In two dormitories -- Bangladesh-Kuwait Maitree Hall and Ruqayyah Hall -- they exposed hidden stashes of ballots, both marked and unmarked, setting an example of how to thwart a planned vote rigging.

It was around 7:30am. Nahar Pramanik, an independent VP candidate for Maitree Hall Sangsad polls and some other independent

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Quota leader shocks BCL

Takes top Ducusu post; BCL wins most hall unions amid allegations of irregularities; all major panels except BCL's boycott polls; VC impressed with voting; leftists, independents call for class boycott

WASIM BIN HABIB, MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR and RASHIDUL HASAN

A quota reform leader won the vice president post of Dhaka University Central Students' Union while BCL leaders bagged the posts of general secretary and

assistant general secretary.

The results announced by DU Vice Chancellor Md Akhtaruzzaman around 3:20am today show quota reformist Nurul Haq Nur secured 11,062 votes.

BCL's GS candidate Golam Rabbani got 10,484 and AGS candidate Saddam

Hossain around 15,000 votes.

The panel backed by the pro-Awami League student organisation swept the hall unions in the election that ended in intimidation and irregularities with 59.5 percent voter turnout.

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SCAN THE QR CODE TO WATCH VIDEO



"I praise the students for their attitude towards democracy and co-existence."

MD AKHTARUZAMAN
VC OF
DHAKA UNIVERSITY



"I regret the incidents that you [students] have identified as untoward."

SM MAHFUZUR RAHMAN
CHIEF RETURNING OFFICER
OF DUCSU POLLS

Slow lines mark 6-hr voting

SAYYED MOHMUD ULLAH

Right before voting for the election to the Dhaka University Central Students' Union (Ducusu), the authorities of Dhaka University's Bijoy Ekattar Hall around 8:00am opened empty ballot boxes in front of the candidates.

Half an hour later, mostly first and second year residential students queued up and began casting their votes.

The line grew longer, especially after the non-residential students arrived. Hall sources said the turnout was usual in the first hour.

Shipon Mia, a first year student of the linguistics dept, said he was satisfied with the authorities' initiative regarding voting in the election.

"I cast my vote 10 minutes after I joined the queue around 9:40am."

Two hours later, around 10:00am, the first signs of discontent began to surface.

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AS WE SAW

These are the snapshots of Ducusu election based on what journalists of The Daily Star witnessed in different polling centres. However, this is not the whole picture.

STAR REPORT

It seemed some puzzles from the 11th parliamentary polls resurfaced yesterday to haunt Dhaka University students, who turned up in huge numbers to vote in the Ducusu polls.

In the morning, voters' mood was as festive as it was at the start of the national election over two months back. This time, there was one stark difference.

Rivals of pro-Awami League Chhatra League leaders were present everywhere

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Election tainted by anomalies

React ex-Ducusu leaders

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

Referring to yesterday's Ducusu polls, the former leaders of the students' body said the "vote rigging" had never been so outrageous in the previous elections held after the country's independence.

They also termed the election as "unprecedented" as it was held in a "peaceful manner", but most of the candidates boycotted the election at the eleventh hour, bringing allegation of "vote rigging" and creating "systematic hindrances" for the general students to cast their ballots.

In all the Ducusu elections held between 1972 and 1990, the opposition panels swept away the ruling party's panel as "the students have always been realistic, with a tendency to vote against the incumbency."

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- Fariah Hassan
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