



The Daily Star

SECOND EDITION



REGD. No. DA 781 | Vol. XXX No. 20 | MAGH 19, 1426 BS | **Your Right to Know** | JAMADIUS SANI 7, 1441 HIJRI | 16 PAGES PRICE: Tk 12.00

DHAKA NORTH CITY CORPORATION

ATIQUUL ISLAM wins

VOTES CAST FOR

4,47,211	2,64,161

DHAKA SOUTH CITY CORPORATION

SHEIKH FAZLE NOOR TAPOSH wins

VOTES CAST FOR

4,24,595	2,36,512

Voters keep off

Low turnout, show of strength by AL men, poor presence of BNP polling agents mark Dhaka city polls; Taposh wins south, Atiqul north; BNP rejects polls, calls hartal for today

STAR REPORT

The polling atmosphere was eerily festive. Almost too peaceful to be true.

Election posters flooded every nook and cranny of the capital. Supporters of the candidates, mostly from the Awami League, were seen outside the polling centres. Law enforcers patrolled the streets while peace prevailed.

Yet, an astonishingly poor number of voters turned up at the centres in the high-voltage Dhaka city polls, dampening the spirit common in elections in the country.

Almost all the polling agents at the centres were for the mayoral and councillor candidates chosen by the AL.

The Daily Star correspondents could hardly spot polling agents or supporters of the BNP candidates at the centres. It was as if an invisible force made them disappear on the election day.

Unofficial results show that both the AL mayor candidates won the city polls by a big margin.

Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh, AL mayor candidate for Dhaka South City Corporation, bagged 424,595 votes, while his rival Ishraque Hossain of the BNP got

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The polling centre at Mohammadpur Government High School remains nearly devoid of voters from the morning until afternoon. But around 2:00pm, officials said over 1,500 votes had been cast.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

EVM EXPERIENCE
Not smooth sailing at all
Fingerprint mismatch, lack of privacy, helping hand vex many voters

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

For most, it was the first EVM experience and for many, the experience was not pleasant.

While promoting the EVM (electronic voting machine) use in the Dhaka city polls, the Election Commission said it would be convenient, less time-consuming, and free from manipulation.

The EC had used the machines on limited scale in previous polls but yesterday's one was the first major all-EVM election.

Witness accounts and

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UNWANTED HELP -- PAGE 3

AS WE SAW

These are the snapshots of the election day based on what journalists of The Daily Star witnessed in two Dhaka city corporation areas. It is, however, not the whole picture

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Yesterday's Dhaka city polls may appear to many a re-run of the national election held on December 30, 2018, because of some aspects.

Stepping out of their homes in the morning, voters saw only campaign posters and supporters of the ruling party candidates.

At the voting centres, finding trace of polling agents of BNP candidates was a real challenge. As if an invisible force swept away opposition leaders and activists from the field of voting.

Voters' queues remained static at times at some centres. At some others, individuals were seen "helping" voters use the electronic voting machines (EVMs).

These were the features of the election day The Daily Star found visiting 207 out of 2,468 polling centres in Dhaka city.

FESTIVITY OUTSIDE, CENTRES ALMOST EMPTY

The Daily Star visited 207 polling centres in Dhaka south and north city corporation areas, but found help desks set up by BNP men at only three places -- Mohammadpur, Khilgaon and New Market.

Voters were provided with their serial numbers at those desks.

At the desk in Mohammadpur, BNP men were barred from distributing slips among voters.

"We are not being allowed to hand the slips to our supporters as they

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Ghosts around machines?

SYED ASHEAQUIL HAQUE

Unlike any polls in the past, eligible city dwellers yesterday were free to exercise their right to vote through machine, for the first time, at all centres across Dhaka.

February 1, 2020 should have gone down in the history of this democracy-craving nation as a very special day, the day when about 55 lakh voters were supposed to elect their mayors for two city corporations. This digitisation could have laid to rest all the ghosts in the electoral system. The long culture of ballot-stuffing, fake-voting or wrong-counting would have come to an end, for good. And the Election Commission would have become the toast of Bangladesh.

So, how did the day go for real?

Machine proved to be vulnerable, digital ghosts emerged and the EC ended up as the biggest loser.

The wintry morning set a perfect stage for fair polls. The climate was also very

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3 journos beaten up
Many others obstructed from discharging duties



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In the absence of rival party activists, journalists covering the Dhaka city election at various polling centres yesterday were apparently a thorn on the side of ruling party candidates and their supporters.

They were attacked, confined and intimidated at some centres while many of them were obstructed from discharging their

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Chief Election Commissioner KM Nurul Huda looking a little puzzled after the EVM kept failing to recognise his fingerprint at IES School and College in Uttara. He eventually used his national ID number to cast his vote. Inset, another man faces the same predicament at Banani Bidyaniketan School.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN, PRABIR DAS



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