

## LIFE AS IT IS

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## Bangladeshi Americans on US Election 2020

Americans voted with zeal and fervour; they voted in-person and by mail, setting a record voter turnout, even amid a pandemic that is ravaging their nation. Joe Biden bagged more than 75 million popular votes, the highest so far in American political history.

The 2020 US election saw so many firsts; America created history by electing its oldest president, and also its first female, Black and South Asian Vice President. Vice President-elect Kamala Harris represents a new face of the political power. On the 100th year of Women's Suffrage that is, American women gaining their constitutional right to vote, the country elected a woman as its next Vice President.



worker in Salt Lake City, Utah.

This election meant a lot for the first-generation immigrants. In this election, people of colour, especially women of colour, could see their representation in the White House through Vice President-elect Harris. Little girls, particularly brown and black, can now dream that they themselves could one day reach such great heights, or even higher.

For Ilaf Sattar, a resident of Edison, New Jersey and a managing assistant director at Kean University, the year 2020 marked her fourth time voting in a US presidential election. She said that she never felt this compelled to have her voice heard and her vote counted as she felt in 2020.

"In politics, there are always shades of grey, but this year, it was all black and white. It was Tolerance vs. Racism, Unity vs. Division, Empathy vs. Apathy, Human Rights vs. Privilege, and last but not least, Sanity vs. Insanity," she said.

Mozammel Khan, a resident of Queens, New York City, is an assistant manager at a 7-Eleven store. Asked what made him vote for his candidate, Khan said, "Biden

was perhaps not a perfect presidential candidate, but he is definitely going to be better than Trump. Biden's healthcare and economic plans will benefit the lower-middle class."

Khan said that there were other issues that concerned him, too. "Trump ignores climate change, he is willing to sacrifice the environment for his personal gain," he said. "I want to leave behind a healthy world for my children, grandchildren, and all the generations to come."

The interviewees all labelled the current US president as racist, sexist and xenophobic.

"I chose to vote for Biden in 2020 for a 'united' America. I voted for women's rights, for Black Americans, for other minority groups, for the LGBTQ community, and more importantly, to live in a country that does not thrive on greed and lies of a dictator," said Saddam Khan, a Pennsylvania resident, who works as a senior solution specialist at Deloitte.

The future of America rests with its children. When asked if they discussed the 2020 election and its historic importance

with their children, the interviewees said that they extensively discussed politics with their offspring.

"For the last four years, they saw and felt the degradation of mutual respect amongst their fellow Americans. This year, they were more attuned to what is happening politically, and I personally felt they had the right to know the whole story as it was unfolding," said Ilaf Sattar.

She said that her explanations to her fifth and third graders were never just statements, but presentations of facts with open-ended questions in the end, giving them the opportunity to decide right from wrong.

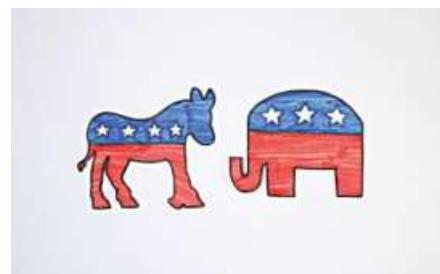
Mozammel Khan also said that he had extensive discussions on the 2020 election with his high school-going son. "My son updated me on many policies and plans of both candidates, covering important subjects, such as education and how to combat COVID-19."

### My experience

We voted by mail in 2020. The mail-in ballots arrived timely with clear instructions and postage-paid envelopes. Once we mailed our ballots, we could check online the status of our ballots and if they were accepted.

On the day President-elect Joe Biden delivered his victory speech in Wilmington, Delaware, my husband, daughter and I drove and then walked more than a mile to reach the venue with renewed faith in democracy. People from all walks of life, of every colour, race, religion, and ethnicity gathered to watch history being made. It was a surreal experience! My daughter made a Biden-Harris sign which we carried and two small US flags. It was "a moment in history" too significant to miss.

**Photo: Collected**



When it comes to political leanings, Bangladeshi Americans have historically favoured the Democratic Party. This year was no different — they voted enthusiastically for their favourite candidate.

We asked Bangladeshi Americans living in different parts of the country how they feel about this historic election. It seemed likely that women were particularly ecstatic about Kamala Harris becoming the next US Vice President.

"I am so proud of Kamala Harris, who is a prominent face of a generation of children of immigrants who are becoming influential political figures in their own right," said Afreen Islam, a child and family social

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