



AL helps itself to fourth straight win

Turnout second lowest since restoration of democracy in 1991

	162		11
AL Independent	50	OTHERS	2

UNOFFICIAL RESULTS AS OF 3:00AM

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As predicted, Awami League has won a record fourth straight term in an election that saw the second lowest voter turnout since the restoration of democracy in 1991.

The turnout was 27.15 percent at 3:00pm, but after voting closed at 4:00pm, the Election Commission estimated the final tally could stand at around 40 percent, a 13 percentage points jump in an hour.

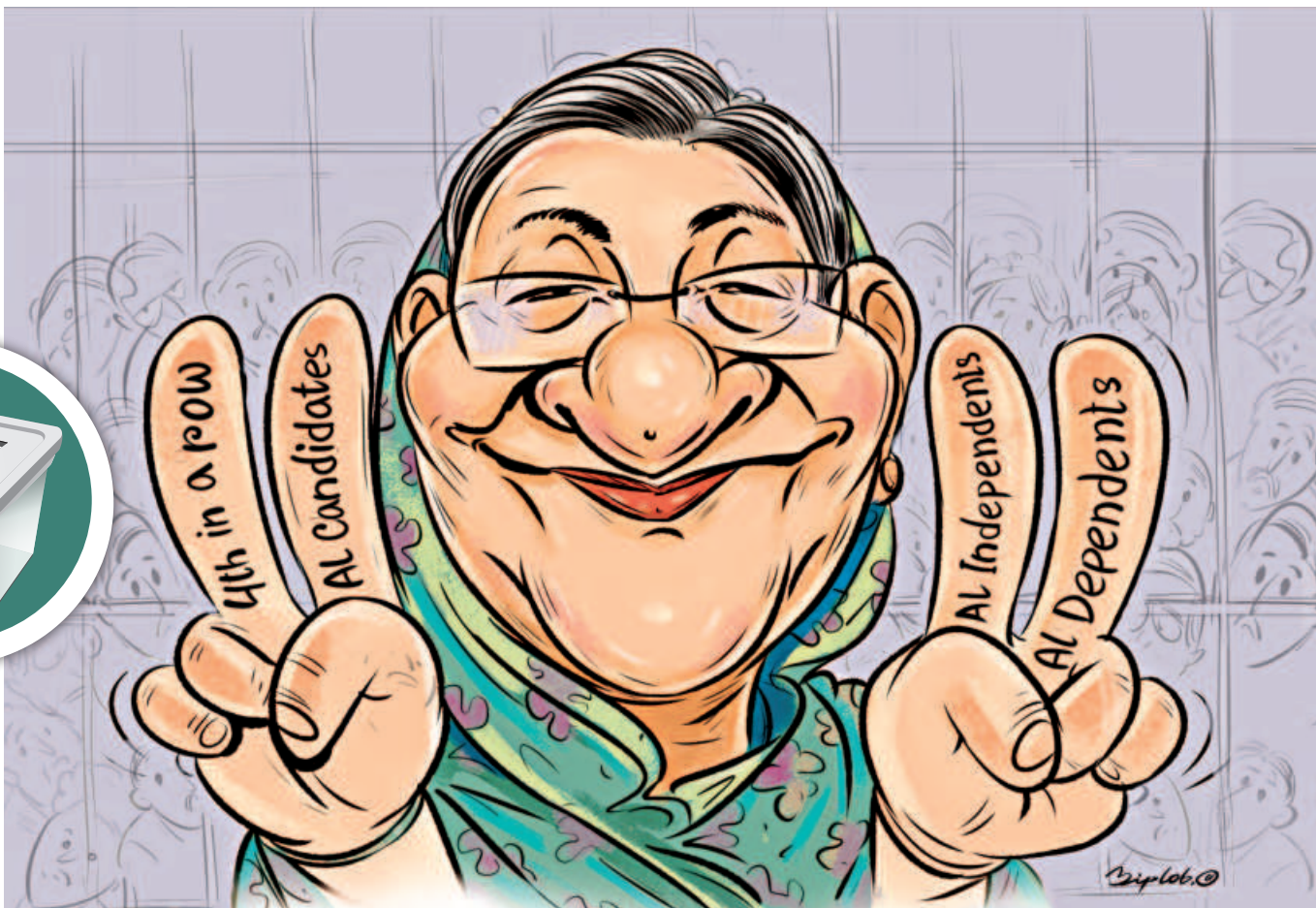
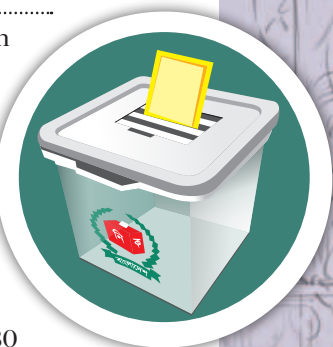
The 2018 election, dubbed as a "night-time election," saw more than 80 percent vote cast.

The turnout in the controversial February 1996 polls was 26.5 percent, the lowest in Bangladesh's history.

Unofficial results from the Election Commission as of 3:00am today show 162 AL picks and 50 AL independents have won the race.

At least three state ministers and 14 incumbent MPs lost heavy defeat at the hands of the rivals from their own party.

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No victory processions Hasina tells party leaders, activists

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina directed party leaders and activists not to bring out any victory processions after the declaration of election results.

AL's Deputy Office Secretary Sayem Khan informed journalists about the PM's directive yesterday.

The AL chief also instructed the party activists not to engage in any kind of violence or conflict.

Earlier in the day, Hasina called upon the citizens to exercise their right to vote, saying that a conducive environment has been created for the elections.

"A conducive environment has been established. Your vote is very valuable. We fought a lot for the right to vote, and I hope that all the people of the country will come to vote at the polling centres. Bangladesh will continue its democratic trend," she said after casting her vote at Dhaka City College polling centre.

She expressed gratitude to the people for being able to conduct the election today amid many "obstacles and hurdles".

In response to the foreign media's question on how acceptable the election will be while the BNP is boycotting it, she said that her responsibility is towards the country's people.

"Whether people accept this election or not is important to me. So, I don't care about their [foreign media] acceptance."

Independents see off over a dozen heavyweights

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE and ASHIK ABDULLAH APU

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina's strategy to make the election look competitive worked well, so much so that over a dozen heavyweights came tumbling down yesterday.

Despite repeated requests by party nominated candidates, top leaders of the AL-led 14 party alliance and even from the Jatiya Party, Hasina stuck to her position.

State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Mahub Ali was blown away by party independent and Jubo League leader Syed Sayedul Haque Suman by a margin of 1,51,000 votes in Habiganj-4 constituency.

Like Suman, two other party leaders running as independents pushed another state minister, Enamur Rahman, into the third position in Dhaka 19.

Enamur, the state minister for disaster management, was beaten by Saiful Islam, the AL general secretary of Ashulia, who ran as an independent. Former AL MP Towhid Jung Murad, who also ran as an independent, got the second highest votes.

Shwapan Bhattacharjee, state minister for rural development and co-operatives division, was defeated by so-called AL independent Yakub Ali in Jashore-5.

A decade ago, Shwapan entered the parliament as an independent MP by defeating the AL nominee Khan Tipu Sultan.

The much-talked about "AL independent" Mujibur Rahman Chowdhury Nixon handed Kazi Zafarullah, co-chairman of the AL election steering committee, a hat-trick defeat in Faridpur-4.

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Turnout galloped as day wore on

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In some constituencies, the voter turnout in the afternoon was supposedly four and a half times that of the morning but it could not go passed 40 percent.

Every two hours, the Election Commission updated voter turnout data for each constituency via an app.

The Daily Star logged voter turnout data from over 10,000 centres, or a little under a quarter of all the polling stations.

At the 10:00am mark, the average turnout was 9 percent. The turnout was actually 5 percent and less in as many as 35 constituencies, mainly in urban areas like Dhaka, and where mornings are cold like in Kurigram, Bogura, Pabna, and Sylhet.

By noon, that average had made a steep climb by two and half times to 22 percent.

Between noon and 2:00pm, the average turnout had made a tapered increase to 33 percent. It was at the end of this period that the Election Commission Secretary Mohammad Jahangir Alam came out and said that the polls had drawn 27.15 percent of voters.

At least 70 constituencies had turnouts which were considerably less than the figure revealed by the secretary.

The EC app that was supposed to deliver

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JP slumps to its worst showing

Wins 11 seats

RASHIDUL HASAN

The Jatiya Party suffered a debacle in yesterday's national polls as it won only 11 seats, sources at the party chairman's office said.

This is the party's worst polls results since the restoration of democracy in the country in 1991 following the fall of late president HM Ershad.

In the 1991 polls, the JP vied for 221 seats and won 35.

In the 1996 and 2001 polls, the party bagged 32 and 14 seats respectively. The JP participated in the 2008 polls under the Awami League-led grand alliance and won 27 seats.

In the lopsided polls in 2014, 34 JP candidates became victorious. In 2018, the party secured 22 seats running in the election under the AL-led grand alliance.

Yesterday's 11 winners are Hafiz Uddin Ahmed (Thakurgaon-3), GM Quader (Rangpur-3), AKM Mostafizur Rahman (Kurigram-1), Shariful Islam Jinnah (Bogura-2), Ashrafuzzaman (Satkhira-2), Ruhul Amin Hawlader (Patuakhali-1), Golam Kibria Tipu (Barishal-3), Mujiburul Haque Chunnun (Kishoreganj-3), AKM Salim Osman (Narayanganj-5), Masud Uddin Chowdhury (Feni-3), and Anisul Islam Mahmud (Chattogram-5), JP Joint Office Secretary Mahmud Alam told The Daily Star.

The JP fielded candidates in 265 constituencies this time. But around 230 party nominees had been largely inactive in campaigning, party insiders said.

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People shunned stage-managed election: BNP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Standing Committee Member Abdul Moyeen Khan yesterday claimed the party's call for boycotting the 12th parliamentary election was "successful".

"People have refrained from casting their votes," he said, adding that even the Awami League supporters did not exercise their franchise.

The senior BNP leader made the claims while talking to reporters at his Gulshan home.

The BNP is set to officially make its reaction regarding the national polls today. Besides, the party would also announce fresh programmes.

In his remarks, Moyeen congratulated the people for "responding to the BNP's call" and said, "Today, it has been proved that the people of Bangladesh do not compromise when democracy is at stake."

"The people have boycotted this election. I salute them on behalf of the BNP and all 62 political parties that boycotted the polls," he added.

Commenting on turnout, he said the world has seen what kind of election was held. The turnout was destined to be low even if the BNP had not enforced hartal yesterday, he observed.

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Polling officials find other ways to keep busy

HELEMUL ALAM and SUKANTA HALDER

It was 3:12pm and the voting was well underway at Model High School and College in Jatrabari's Dania area.

The centre was almost empty, with a scanty number of voters scattered here and there.

Suddenly, a single voice singing a famous Bengali song - "Tumi Je Amar Kobita" to be specific -- came from one of the booths on the third floor.

Out of curiosity, these correspondents, who were coincidentally on the veranda, approached the room and found none

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Two female poll clerks were engaged in chitchat while, right behind them, an Ansar man and police official were lounging at Savar's Radio Colony School and College polling centre due to a lack of voters yesterday. The photo was taken at 2:30pm, an hour and half before voting officially ended.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

One killed, 29 hurt in clashes, attacks

STAR REPORT

Clashes, attacks on rival camps and crude bomb blasts left one person killed, 50 others injured, marring the 12th national election yesterday.

Two policemen and four Ansar members were among the injured with law enforcers using firearms in different districts and the Election Commission suspending voting at several polling centres.

In Munshiganj, locals found the body of local Sramik League leader Zillur Rahman, 45, near the polling centre at Rikabibazar Primary School around 9:30am.

There was a stab wound on the back of his head. He was a supporter of Mrinal Kanti Das, the AL candidate in Munshiganj-3 constituency.

His daughter Moumita said Shahidul Islam Shahin, councillor of Ward-6, and his men killed her father.

Shahidul refuted the allegation, saying he had not left his home in the morning because he was sick.

Clashes were reported in Chattogram, Jamalpur, Patuakhali, Cumilla, Narsingdi, Noakhali, Chandpur, Brahmanbaria, and Narayanganj throughout the day.

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PHOTO: COLLECTED This man brandishing a gun during a clash near a polling centre in Ctg's Khulshi.

BUSINESS

NOTICE

The Daily Star is not carrying business pages today as public and private offices, including banks and stock market, were closed yesterday due to the national election.