



DHAKA-14 Blank result sheet signed even before counting began!

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Supporters of an independent candidate from Dhaka-14 yesterday alleged that signatures of polling agents were taken on the result sheet before voting ended at a polling centre in Kalyanpur Girls School.

There were 10 polling centres at Kalyanpur Girls School and College.

As per electoral rules, the signatures of polling agents can be taken on the result sheet only after the completion of the counting of votes cast at the centre.

Supporters of Sabina Akhter Tuhin, an independent candidate, said they found the result sheet signed by polling agents and the presiding officer around 2:30pm.

They alleged that the vote could be rigged by taking signatures in advance on a blank result sheet.

The Awami League candidate for the seat is Jubo League General Secretary Mainul Hasan Khan (Nikhil).

Sabina, who went to the spot upon getting information, told



After waiting for an hour for a bus, this elderly person decided to walk back home with his chicken yesterday afternoon. Due to the national polls and ongoing hartal called by BNP in protest, very few buses plied the city streets. The photo was taken in Tikatuli area.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Mostly peaceful but not festive

Dhaka wears a deserted look on polls day

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Dhaka, usually a cacophony of honking horns, blaring rickshaw bells, and the incessant hum of human activity, wore an almost deserted look yesterday during the national polls.

During a visit to the capital's Kawran Bazar, Farmgate, Bijoy Sarani, Moghbazar, Tejaon Mohakhali, Banani, Segunbagicha, Kakrail, and Shahabagh areas around yesterday noon, this correspondent saw most of the streets were nearly empty devoid of any vehicles or people.

The usual election-day fervour was nowhere to be seen.

Even in front of the election campaign booths, there was no presence of voters except the ruling party-backed supporters and election agents, according to witnesses.

Children, freed from the constraints of traffic and crowds, were found playing cricket on the deserted streets in the

busiest Tejaon road, which connects Tejaon and Bijoy Sarani.

Some girls were also seen playing and skipping on the street, while many played football as there was hardly any traffic movement.

This correspondent saw one or two public buses after waiting for around 30 minutes in Shahbagh. They had less than a dozen passengers inside.

Same situation persisted at Mohakhali as hardly any long-distance bus left the city.

The city's busy streets were dominated by rickshaws, some CNG-run auto rickshaws, and a couple of private cars.

Presence of law enforcement agencies, including the armed forces, were visible. They were seen patrolling Dhaka roads to maintain order and ensure a peaceful election process.

And if anything, the polls in Dhaka were largely peaceful, if not festive or participatory. However, there are a few

examples of violence and irregularities.

Four persons including a child were injured after unidentified miscreants exploded two crude bombs near a voting centre in Dhaka's Hazaribagh this morning.

The injured are: Amir Hossain, 55, Maksuda Begum, 50, Badal Ahmed, 50, and his son Tanvir Ahmed, 8.

While shutters of shopping malls, markets, and shops on the main roads remained closed, some grocery stores in alleys stayed open.

Sumon Miah, a rickshaw-puller at Banglamotor, said he did not go back to his hometown, hoping to make some extra money during the election period. "I only got three trips from early morning till noon," he said.

This correspondent also spoke to Solaiman, a CNG-run autorickshaw driver, at Tejaon around noon. He said he had been waiting there for the last three hours but did not find a single passenger.



PHOTO: STAR

reporters, "I don't know for which candidate the presiding officer has done this."

Contacted, the presiding officer of the centre, Gopal Chandra Das, refused to comment on the matter.

However, when Halima Akter, sister of Sabina, went there, the presiding officer told her that he had taken the agents' signatures on the blank result sheet for convenience, and the agents willingly gave their signatures.

In a video of the incident that has been circulated on social media, the presiding officer was heard telling Halima Akhter, "Explain this to your sister."

The Daily Star has not been able to independently verify the authenticity of the video.

Dhaka Returning Officer Sabirul Islam Ripon could not be reached for comment.

GAZIPUR-2

EC app misleads voters to wrong centres

MUNTAKIM SAAD

Nurul Islam, a voter in Gazipur-2 constituency, came to Kalmeshwor Government Primary School to cast his vote around 10:45am yesterday, but he found out that it was not his designated centre.

"I have been to three centres but am yet to find mine," he said.

The Election Commission's "Smart Election Management" app and local agents' copy led him to the centre, but his serial number was not there, said Nurul.

Like Nurul, many voters in the constituency were struggling to cast their vote after the Election Commission app reportedly provided them with wrong information regarding their polling centres.

They went to Kalmeshwor Government Primary School (centres 89 and 90) but could not cast their votes.

"At least four out of every 10 voters are facing this issue," said Abul Khair, presiding officer of centre 90 at the school.

Ripon Kumar Roy, another presiding officer at the school, also admitted to the matter.

Voters with serial numbers 13,299 were designated to vote at centre 89, while serial numbers 3,300-6,585 were listed at centre 90, said the presiding officers.

But many with serial numbers over 6,585 were coming to these two centres due to information provided by the EC app, which took Tk 21 crore to develop.

Sajidul Islam, with serial number 9,099, said he went to three centres but could not find his serial or name. Another voter, Meheraj Uddin, faced the same problem.

In a span of 10 minutes, this correspondent found at least five voters whose centre was shown as Kalmeshwor Government Primary School in the EC app, but their serial number was not listed at the centre.

Meanwhile, a youth named Nahid came to Kazi Azimuddin College in the constituency after it was shown as his designated centre in the app.

But he could not find his centre there. Another three voters had a similar experience at Rani Bilashmoni Government Boys High School when this correspondent visited there around 1:00pm.

CHATTOGRAM-14

Three hurt as AL, independent clash

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Three persons were injured as supporters of Awami League and independent candidates for Chattogram-14 clashed over taking control of a polling centre in the district's Chandanaish upazila yesterday.

Witnesses said the clash ensued when supporters of AL candidate Nazrul Islam Chowdhury were trying to enter Jamirjuri Ahmadur Rahman School polling centre around 4:00pm and the supporters of independent candidate Abdul Jobbar Chowdhury resisted them.

Both the groups' activists started pelting brick chips at each other. The security guards closed the entry gate from inside and informed law enforcers.

Assistant Superintendent of Police Mahtab Hossain of Rab-7 said they brought the situation under control.

Free lunch

FROM PAGE 3
department provided money for our lunch," said Zahirul Islam, in charge of the polling station. Raihul Islam, cultural secretary of Adabor Thana AL, said, "In the spirit of the election festivities, we are serving lunch to everyone working at this polling station."

Besides, police members at Dhaka North City School and College, who were also having lunch provided by the AL candidate, declined to comment.

Show ink mark

FROM PAGE 3
live at the slum while the others shifted elsewhere, said Maulana Abdus Sobhan, president of Korail Slum Development Committee and vice-president of 19 ward Awami League.

"We are urging those 14,000 voters to exercise their civic rights. We are just urging them to visit the centres and vote for any candidate they prefer, regardless of what symbol they bear," he added.

AL men crowd

FROM PAGE 3
to 445 within some hours, as told by the presiding officer over a phone call in the early evening.

In both male and female centres, polling agents of only two candidates: Awami League and Jatiyo Party (Manju), were seen.

Meanwhile, at Silver Dale Preparatory and Girls High School in Wari, 40 out of 3,420 votes were cast till 10:30am, according to presiding officer Prokash Chandra Sarker. Later, he confirmed a total of 838 voters had voted by 4:00pm.

Two 'boat'

FROM PAGE 3
There were four polling centres at that institution, and Shibani was turned away from all four of them. Shibani claimed she cast her vote at the same location in the 2018 polls, and the app she used to find her polling centre, directed her there. However, the polling officials claimed her NID number did not match, and she couldn't vote.

DHAKA 7, 10

'We are Awami League'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

AL men thronging outside polling centres and at every step from a polling centre's gate to the entrance of polling booths -- was the scenario across different polling centres in Dhaka-7 and 10 constituencies yesterday.

Visiting six centres in Dhaka-7, no voter queue was seen outside, even though a total of 3,43,089 voters were slated to vote at 125 polling centres of the constituency.

At Azimpur Gov't Girls School and College, polling agents of "boat" were present at all seven booths, while polling agents of four other candidates were absent.

Only one polling agent of "Ektara" symbol was present at one booth.

A similar situation was found at Agrani School and College, Haji Selim University College, and Pogose Laboratory School.

Meanwhile, while entering New Model Degree College in Dhaka-10 around 3:00pm, this correspondent and a photojournalist were threatened by Awami League activists.

At that time, a woman wearing a "boat" badge said, "You can't enter the centre and the booths."

When the newspaper wanted to know her identity, she said, "We are Awami League."

Around 50 youths, most wearing a "boat" badge, were heard shouting at the centre's third floor. A couple of minutes later, they came out of the building and left, and the four law enforcers present at the scene remained unbothered the entire time.

When asked why these youths were at the centre, one of the law enforcers said, "We can't do anything. You better get out of here soon."

However, Md Hasan Mahub, presiding officer of the centre, claimed the environment was good there.

BCL men cast votes taking over DU centre

STAR REPORT

Leaders and activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) allegedly cast multiple votes for the "boat" symbol forcibly entering the Curzon Hall polling centre at Dhaka University yesterday.

This incident occurred around 3:15pm inside the centre, as shown in a video footage.

Eyewitnesses said a group of BCL men initially attempted to cast vote faking their identities. But at one point they started casting votes at a large scale.

They made journalists leave the scene and continued voting for the boat symbol.

When another group of journalists arrived at the centre, the BCL members hurriedly left the centre, as said by eyewitnesses.

However, despite the incident, Presiding Officer Robiul Islam declined to comment.

He said 453 votes had been cast out of a total of 2,479 registered voters at the centre under Dhaka-8 constituency.

DU BCL president Mazharul Kabir Shayan said, "We are not informed of such an incident. Citizens cast their votes peacefully."

In the Dhaka-8 constituency, Awami League's joint general secretary, AFM Bahauddin Nasim, is contesting the election with the boat symbol.



রাজডক পুঁচালিকা এবং গাজীপুরে পুঁচ বিক্রয়
রাজডক পুঁচ 10 জন কর্মকর্তার নেতৃত্বে গাজীপুরে নগর অঞ্চলের গাজীপুর পুঁচালিকা পরিচালনা পর্ষদে 20 নম্বর সেক্টরে 4 কয়ার একটি পুঁচ ও সেক্টর টাঙ্গা এবং পুঁচালিকা নগর পুরে প্রায় 25 নম্বর সেক্টরে বিভিন্ন লক্ষ্য অঞ্চলে পুঁচ বিক্রয় করা হবে। পুঁচালিকা নগর পুরে প্রায় 25 নম্বর সেক্টরে বিভিন্ন লক্ষ্য অঞ্চলে পুঁচ বিক্রয় করা হবে। পুঁচালিকা নগর পুরে প্রায় 25 নম্বর সেক্টরে বিভিন্ন লক্ষ্য অঞ্চলে পুঁচ বিক্রয় করা হবে।
বিক্রয় স্থান: গাজীপুর, পুঁচালিকা, পুঁচ বিক্রয়, গাজীপুর পুঁচালিকা পরিচালনা পর্ষদ।
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48th DEATH ANNIVERSARY OF MOHAMMAD SIRAJUDDIN
Today the 8th January is the 48th death anniversary of Late **Mohammad Sirajuddin** founder Chairman & Managing Director of **Modhumita Group, Sirco Soap & Chemical Industries, Kohinoor Jute Mills Ltd.** founder Director of **Standard Bank of Pakistan** also the founder of **Dhaka Chamber of Commerce & Industry.**
Though he is not in this world, he lives in our hearts, in our minds, in our memory. Entrepreneurs like him are rare who left behind foot prints for generations to follow.
All friends, relatives and well-wishers are requested to pray for the salvation of the departed soul.
All Members of Modhumita Family



Looking at her phone, a woman tries to find out her designated polling centre through the EC app. The photo was taken in Gazipur yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN