



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

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.

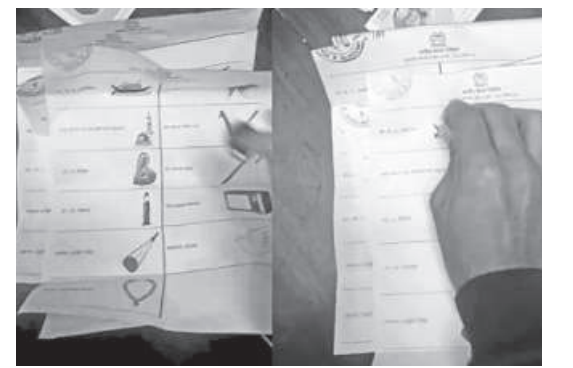
When another group of journalists arrived at the centre, the BCL members hurriedly left the centre, as said by eyewitnesses.

However, despite the incident, Presiding Officer Robul 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.



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 Saranai.

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.

How could The Daily Star get in here?

The final minutes of voting in Dhaka as seen by 2 journos

STAR REPORT

"Alert them, alert them!"

As two journalists from this newspaper entered a polling station inside Government Science College in Farmgate, to watch the final hour of voting, a voice cried out from behind them.

There were only a few minutes remaining before the voting ended. Members of police, Ansar, and Village Defence Party hurried past the two towards the polling booths on the second floor of the college building to alert the presiding officer of their arrival.

Soon after, Presiding Officer Muhammad Hasanuzzaman Hasan walked in and led the two of them to the rooms where the voting booths were located.

Inside, the journalists found no voters. Rather, a few young people hurriedly left, clearly in a rush to get away.

As of 2:00pm, Hasanuzzaman reported that 450 votes had been counted. There were 1,695 registered voters at the polling centre. The journalists then went into another polling centre at Dhaka Polytechnic Institute.

There were small groups of men and women outside, many of them wearing little cards with writing in support of the boat -- the electoral symbol of the Awami League -- around their necks. The institute's large campus appeared to be devoid of voters.

The two journalists parted ways to go through separate gates and enter the structure that housed the polling booths. Again, groups of young people were seen wandering through the verandas, stairs and rooms.

A man approached a member of the Ansar and asked if he could vote. The answer was negative. The time on the clock read 4:20pm, 20 minutes past the voting deadline.

One of the reporters found a room with people, mostly youths, gathered around a person who appeared to be a polling official scribbling on a paper.

When one of the men realised the journalist was taking pictures, he yelled, "Everyone out!". And all the young men turned around and left.

A number of people voiced their frustration as the journalists were leaving the property. "How could The Daily Star get in here? They have entered and we don't know anything," a middle-aged man yelled.

A group of angry youths abruptly surrounded the journalist at the gate, demanding that their photo be removed and claiming they had no right to take it.

When the discussion heated up, two middle-aged men stepped in and persuaded the assembly to allow them to leave.



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.



PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

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.

রাজডক পূর্বচল এবং গাজীপুরে পুট বিক্রয়

রাজডক পুট ১০ জন মাননিক কলেজ ছাত্রদের দ্বারা গঠিত। রাজডক পুট বিক্রয় প্রতিষ্ঠানের মাধ্যমে পুট বিক্রয় করা হয়। পুট বিক্রয় প্রতিষ্ঠানের মাধ্যমে পুট বিক্রয় করা হয়। পুট বিক্রয় প্রতিষ্ঠানের মাধ্যমে পুট বিক্রয় করা হয়।

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

Never seen polls

FROM PAGE 3

was seen looking for any personnel were passing time idly.

Also, polling agents of only AL candidates were seen at the centres.

Dendabor Kindergarten School and College, and Gurat Govt Primary School centres in Ashulia were the only two exceptions, with 40 percent and 28 percent voter turnout respectively till 12 pm.

A significant number of supporters of candidates with "boat" and "eagle" symbols were seen gathered outside these two centres wearing their badges.

At the other centers, including Al Nasir Laboratory School, Legend International School in Dhaka-2, and Islamia Kamil Madrasa, Savar Govt College, Gurat Govt Primary School, Jahangirnagar University School and College, Radio Colony Model School and College, Central Laboratory School and College, and Sunflower Model School in Dhaka-19, no voter queue was seen.

Election officials at the booths were seen gossiping among themselves, while

on duty Ansar and police

home," the voter said. The mystery was resolved when she got to know from her house help Rahila that Rahila's husband is a rickshaw-puller in the area and some local leaders gathered around 40 rickshaws with a promise to pay Tk 1,000 each for providing service to voters.