



9th Parliamentary Election Observation Report Odhikar

Reporting Date: 31 December 2008

Executive Summary

One of the broader missions of Odhikar is election observing. Since its inception in 1994, Odhikar has established itself as a credible and reliable organisation in Bangladesh regarding the observation of elections, both national and local. Internationally it has earned a good reputation and established relationships with regional election and democracy campaign organisations. Odhikar does not limit its election observing activities only within observing the procedural aspects of elections, but it also watches the condition of the civil and political rights of the electorate.

Being a member of the Election Working Group (EWG), Odhikar observed 56 constituencies of 40 districts under 6 divisions during the 2008 national election¹. A single team consists of five mobile election observers, deployed in each of the 56 constituencies. Odhikar observers were responsible for identifying and gathering key information on irregularities, intimidation, violation of the election Code of Conduct and incidents of election-related violence within each constituency.

Background

Article 123 (3) of the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh states that "A general election of Members of Parliament shall be held within ninety days after Parliament is dissolved, whether by reason of the expiration of its term or otherwise than by reason of such expiration".

According to Bangladesh's electoral system, a caretaker government is obligated to hold the elections in due time, which must be held within ninety days of dissolving a parliament². However, the last government's tenure ended on 26 October 2006 and the Caretaker Government came to the power and prepared to hold an election on 22 January 2007. On 11 January 2007 the military took over power and established a military backed regime under the Chief Advisorship of a former World Bank official Fakhruddin Ahmed, who declared the state would hold elections in two years time. This gave rise to the question of the legitimacy of the regime and the Election Commission under the Constitution.

As per the self proclaimed electoral roadmap of the Election Commission, the Commission missed its own deadline of completion of some tasks. The Commission missed its June 2008 deadline for the registration of political parties; for delay in finalising reforms of the electoral law. In keeping with the electoral roadmap, all electoral reforms, including finalisation of the conditions for registration of political parties, were to have been completed by 22 February 2008. According to the roadmap, the field-level task of voters' registration was to be completed by 30 June 2008, but the Commission missed the deadline. The Commission undertook the task of delimiting the parliamentary constituencies amid protests from all the major political parties; it missed the June 2008 deadline for completing the delimitation through gazette notification. The election date had been finally decided as being 18 December 2008. However, it was rescheduled for 29 December 2008 when the election finally took place. Though it was decided earlier by the Election Commission that about 68,000 prison inmates would be able to vote, in spite of taking two years time, the Commission was not able to make proper arrangements for them to send their votes by postal ballot. Furthermore, more than five thousand election officials were also unable to cast their votes, as the Election Commission could not arrange postal ballots for them either.

¹ Which were held on 29 December 2008.

² Article 123 (3) of the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.

Selection of Constituencies

Odhikar selected the following constituencies to observe, based on various aspects such as fairness of election procedures and the violation of human rights. Odhikar observed the following constituencies on Election Day:

Name of the Division	Name of the Constituency
Dhaka	Dhaka-4, Dhaka-6, Dhaka-11, Gazipur-2, Munshigonj-1, Munshigonj-2, Munshigonj-3, Narayangonj-4, Narayangonj-5, Mymensingh-4, Tangail-1, Tangail-4, Netrokona-2, Kishorganj-6 and Rajbari-2
Chittagong	Chittagong-8, Chittagong-12, Cox's Bazar-1, Comilla-9, Brahmanbaria-3, Feni-2, Laxmipur-2, Noakhali-4, Rangamati and Bandarban.
Rajshahi	Panchagarh-1, Lalmonirhat-3, Thakurgaon-1, Kurigram-2, Dinajpur-1, Dinajpur-6, Gaibandha-2, Chapainawabganj-1, Naogaon-6, Rajshahi-1, Rajshahi-2, Sirajgonj-2, Sirajgonj-5 and Pabna-4.
Khulna	Khulna-2, Khulna-5, Jessore-3, Jessore-6, Satkhira-2, Jhenaidah-2, Jhenaidah-4 and Kushtia-4.
Barisal	Barisal-1, Barisal-3, Jhalokati-2, Pirojpur-1 and Pirojpur-2
Sylhet	Sylhet-1, Sylhet-2, Sunamgonj-5 and Moulavibazar-3

Two hundred and eighty local mobile observers, five observers for each constituency, were selected for election observation. This report summarises the findings of Odhikar's 280 mobile election observers, deployed in 56 constituencies under 40 districts. The key findings of the irregularities have been given below:

Key findings

- Irregularities and violations of the Election Code of Conduct have been recorded in 28 out of the 56 constituencies observed.
- False votes could easily have been cast, because the assistant presiding officers did not compare photographs on the list with the person claiming to be the voter. As a result, people impersonated and cast vote for others who came to the polling station to find their vote already cast. This has foiled the aim of preventing false votes. This can be attributed to lack of training and the negligence of the assistant presiding officers.
- Campaigning by BNP³ and Awami League supporters on the election day was observed in a number of electoral areas in Khulna-5, Kurigram-2, Kushtia-2, Chapainawabganj-1.
- Presiding Officers were found to be reluctant in maintaining order in some polling stations in Munshiganj-3. Security personnel were also found inactive in some polling stations, allowing influence to take place towards voters.
- Various candidates of different political parties provided rickshaw/van as transportation to carry voters to some polling centres of the observed constituencies. This was recorded in Jessore-3, Khulna-5, Mymensingh-4, Jhenaidah-1, Kushtia-4, in contravention to electoral laws.
- Presiding officer Md. Ikhtiar Uddin did not allow Odhikar observers to observe the polling booth in Shankarspur Govt. Primary School centre in Jessore-3.

³ BNP: Bangladesh Nationalist Party, led by Begum Khaleda Zia.

- Both the Grand Alliance and Four Party Alliances were largely involved in violating the electoral laws, in particular, the Code of Conduct on the election day.
- In Joinakuthi, Shohortoli of Potuakhali, there were rickshaws with posters of the ‘Boat’ symbol⁴ pasted on the back of rickshaws which were transporting voters from one centre to another. A woman named Farida Begum was arrested by Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) while she was campaigning for BNP in the Chor Chapli polling centre at Kolapara in Potuakhali-1.
- Some incidents of false voting were recorded in some polling centres in Jessore-3, Jessore-6, Naogaon-6, Khulna-2, Khulna-5, Brahminbaria-3, Munshiganj-2, Jhenaidah-1
- There were some incidents of negligence of election and security officials in two or three centers of the Munshiganj- 3 constituency. In this constituency, local BNP leaders attempted to influence voters. Two ward members of Bakultala Union Parishad Amanullah and Sayed, and local BNP leader Moshiur Rahman were seen inside the Bokultala High School centre.
- Polling agent Babul Rana of the BNP candidate was found influencing voters to vote for the symbol ‘sheaf of paddy’⁵ in Sahera Sobhan Govt. Primary School polling centre in Brahminbaria-3.
- Polling Booths in some polling centres were found inadequately enclosed in Panchashar Madrassa polling centre in Munshiganj-3 constituency. Voters could not vote in a number of polling centres in Munshiganj-3, Dhaka-4, Jessore-6, Khulna-5 and Brahminbaria-3 as their names were not appeared on the voter’s list.
- Four Party Alliance and Grand Alliance supporters were found present in a number of polling centres in Munshiganj-3, Kurigram-2, Khulna-5 influencing voters
- Polling booths in many polling centres in Khulna-5, Jessore-6 were not found to be properly protected.
- Apart from its monitoring areas, Odhikar had been informed that the UPDF⁶ candidate Ujjal Smrity Chakma in Khagrachhori constituency had not accepted the result of the votes. He complaint against the District Administration for favouring a specific party candidate to be elected, claiming some polling centres had closed before the official closing time.

Election Administration

The Election Commission allowed Odhikar to observe 56 constituencies, though it applied for observing 60 constituencies. In the name of a security background check by the Special Branch of police, Odhikar observers were unnecessarily harassed. It was observed that the Returning Officers were well-equipped for the elections and the electoral materials had been distributed properly to the presiding officers of respective electoral areas.

The Election Campaign

The purpose of an election campaign is to enlighten the voters about the programmes and policies of the political parties and candidates. An adequate opportunity was given to all political parties and candidates for conducting meetings, rallies, and processions during the campaign period⁷. The new Code of Conduct set out by the Election Commission imposes reasonable restrictions on election campaigns as to serve the

⁴ The ‘Boat’ is the electoral symbol of the Awami League.

⁵ The Sheaf of Paddy is the electoral symbol of the BNP

⁶ UPDF: United People’s Democratic Front, a Chittagong Hill Tracts based political organization.

⁷ The campaign period was from 14 December to 27 December 2008.

exact purpose of campaign. According to the Election Code of Conduct, campaigns can only begin three weeks before the polling. Political or election related programmes can not be organised without the prior permission of the concerned Returning Officers. However, campaign had to be suspended 48 hours before the polling started. No election campaigns or distribution of campaign materials were allowed during this timeline. However, election campaign materials of the Four Party and Grand Alliance were observed being distributed in some polling centres even on the election day.

Security Environment

The security environment was found to be stable. On election day, necessary security arrangements were made by the government and the Election Commission as to enable the citizens to exercise their right to franchise without any fear. Incidents of violence had not been recorded in any of the observed constituencies during election observation.

Election Observation

Despite the prevalence of election related violence during the campaign period in a number of constituencies, the voter turn out in 56 constituencies was full and festive. People had come out in full force to fulfil their duty as citizens and they had contributed the most in making the election free, fair and peaceful. The large turn out of young, first time voters and female voters proved again that the people of Bangladesh still believe in democracy.

Mobile Observers

On election day two hundred eighty local mobile observers visited nearly 560 polling centres, representing rural, urban and industrial areas across the country to observe the elections. On election day, mobile teams observed polling centers and reported their findings in the prescribed 'election day observation forms'. Some irregularities were found in various polling stations, as mentioned.

In general, the atmosphere in and around the 560 polling centres covered by Odhikar were festive and relatively peaceful. Initiatives of the government contributed to the safe and stable environment on the polling day. Combined efforts to uphold law and order by members of the civil service and the various security forces, including Police, RAB, Army, Bangladesh Rifles and the Village Defence Force, also encouraged voters to participate actively in the elections, although isolated cases involving the intimidation of voters and negligence of Presiding Officers were reported in some areas.

Constituency-wise Detailed Findings

Jessore-3

Voting was hampered as there were no similarity between national identity cards and voter serial numbers in Mahmudur Rahman High School polling centre. No other polling agents of the political parties were seen, other than from the BNP and Awami League.

Almost all the candidates provided rickshaw/van as transportation to carry voters in Ramnagar Govt. Primary School centre and Shankarspur Govt. Primary School centre.

Presiding Officer Md. Ikhtiar Uddin did not allow Odhikar observers to observe the polling booth in Shankarspur Govt. Primary School centre.

It was observed that there were insufficient polling booths for women voters in Ambottola polling centre. For this reason women voters had to wait for about four hours in a queue to cast their votes.

One Polling Officer, Rasel Rana of Sujolpur Govt. Primary School centre was arrested by police for voting in the Vekutia Girls School polling centre. He went another polling centre, which was far from his duty station.

Jessore-6

Two voters named Sanjoy Das (VSL⁸ # 163) and Anjoli Biswas (VSL # 105), residents of Keshabpur Pourashva could not cast their votes as their votes had already been cast. The presiding officer did not allow the stationary observers to observe polls in the Jessore-6 constituency.

Two polling booths out of six had no doors, windows, or roof in Sadia Ittedia Madrassa polling centre.

In Vallukshor polling centre, one Amena Begum (VSL # 897) could not vote as her vote had already been cast. Two voters named Sadia Khatun (NID⁹ # 4113885394492) and Nurul Islam (NID # 4113885834513) were unable to vote as they were not included in the voter list.

Khulna-5

Jamat-e-Islami provided transportation to carry voters to the Shiromoni High School polling centre. One BCL¹⁰ leader Robiul Islam was seen influencing voters in Alka High School while AL¹¹ leader Miju was providing Tk. 200 per rickshaw van for carrying voters to the same polling centre.

AL supporters were found campaigning inside the polling centre at Phultola Govt School. However, voting was hampered as a gathering took place among women voters in booth no.1, but the security personnel were silent on lookers. Polling agents were seen influencing voters in Dhopakhalai Govt. Primary School. It was learnt that local AL leader allegedly paid Tk. 200 per voter in this area.

Rahila Begum (NID # 4713040263889) could not vote as her vote had already been cast by someone else in the Khornia High School polling centre.

Khulna-2

One Monirul Islam (NID # 4798518256162) could not cast his vote as his vote had already been cast earlier in Talimul Millat Madrassa polling centre. Polling booths were found to be uncovered.

Brahminbaria-3

There was no polling agent except from the BNP in Norashangshar polling centre while no agent was seen other than from the AL in Mohanata Govt Primary school. One female voter in Anjumana School and Collage centre could not vote despite showing her national ID card as her name was printed on voter list.

Comilla-9

Many voters faced problems due to absence of voters slips in the polling centres at Comilla-9 constituency. It is notable that only one police constable was on duty in each polling station. There was no facility for handicapped voters.

Naogaon-6

Polling ended in a fair way in the 10 polling centres observed, except one incident of false voting in which a woman claimed that her vote had already been cast by someone else before she came to the polling centre.

Kurigram-2

At 11.45 pm in Kanthalbari GP School centre at Sadar Upazilla some activists of the Four Party Alliance tried to cast false votes and the supporters of the Grand Alliance protested. The law enforcement

⁸ VSL: Voters Serial Number.

⁹ NID: National Identity Card.

¹⁰ BCL: Bangladesh Chhatro League, a student wing of the Awami League.

¹¹ AL: Awami League, one of the largest political parties in Bangladesh.

members reached the spot and stopped a probable clash. Some supporters of the Grand Alliance shouted out slogans for the 'Plough' symbol¹² at around 1.30 pm when Kurigram District BNP President came to visit the centre in Horikesh GP School polling center. In response to that, Four Party Alliance supporters also started shouting. Both parties came face to face and were about to attack each other. An army mobile team came to the spot and took control of the situation.

Golam Rahman (81) of Narikelbari, Kajir Chok failed to cast his vote as his national ID number and the voter number did not match. Many voters from the centre Narikelbari GP, Kajipara VDP, Najimkhan High School, Rajarhat High School faced this kind of problem and thus failed to cast their votes.

At the Khawriar Chor Secondary High School polling centre in Chilmari, an activist of Islami Chhatra Shibir¹³, was beaten by a mob when he tried to campaign for his party. He was later handed over to the police. The incident took place at 11 am. Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Dhushmara Police station said that Aatur Rahman (20) a resident of Dewaner Khamar, Vurungamari upazilla and a 4th year student of the Management Department of Kurigram Government College was forcing people to vote for Jamat-e-Islami candidate Nur Alam Mukul while giving away his voting slip. That is why people handed him over to police after beating.

Gaibandha-2

In the Badiakhali School centre of the constituency, some polling agents of BNP suddenly started asking voters in the queue for vote for the BNP candidate, prompting the Awami League agents in the centre to urge voters to vote for AL. This led to a strong argument between the agents of the two parties and the supporters of both the parties waiting outside the centre joined in, creating panic among the other voters. However, the authorities soon had control the situation.

In the Jhaobari Primary School centre, there was reportedly a quarrel between two people. The police beat them and, without any incitement, continued indiscriminately beating other voters in the centre, leaving 3 voters seriously injured.

Panchagarh-1

Polling in the 10 centres of the constituency, which Odhikar observed, was reported to have been fair and peaceful except for two incidents in which supporters of the Four Party Alliance and Grand Alliance were reportedly seen chanting slogans for their party symbols.

Chapainawabganj-1

Polling was conducted in a relatively free and fair manner in Chapainawabganj-1. However, a few cases of irregularities were found. In the Kanshat Government Primary School, Krishnachandrapur Government Primary School, Chak Kirti High School and College and Bishwanathpur Mahbul High School centres, supporters of the Gono Forum candidate were seen with campaign posters on their backs and chests.

In the Narikalyan High School centre, supporters of the BNP candidate were reportedly seen arranging rickshaws for carrying voters to the polling centre.

In another incident, a man was allowed to vote despite the fact that his appearance did not correspond with the photo in the electoral roll, though his name and voter number corresponded with those in the roll.

Rajshahi-2

Polling was reported to have been held in a fair manner with one significant violation in one centre. In the PTI Keshabpur centre, supporters of both the Alliances were reportedly seen motivating people by showing their electoral symbols on the bags they were carrying.

¹² The plough symbol represents the Jatiyo Party (E), part of the 'Mohajote' or the Grand Alliance.

¹³ Student wing of the Jamaat-E-Islami Party.

Lalmonirhat-3

In two centres out of the 10 centres Odhikar observed, several voters found problems in finding their voter number in the voter roll. In the Kulahat High School centre and Tiktikirhat High School centre, several voters find their voter number missing in the voter roll. Some of those voters were, however, allowed to cast their vote though many of them left the polling centre without doing so.

In the Nutan Ruppur Government Primary School centre, several Awami League supporters interrupted women heading towards the polling centre. A young man called Tony, who protested this act were beaten by the Awami League supporters Shahjahan, Surya and Zia. They also beat and injured another BNP supporter, Chandan who came to Tony's aid.

Rangmati

The National ID card and voters list created confusion among voters in some polling centres observed. Voters thought that the ID card was mandatory for voting. However, it took a lot of time to resolve these complications. Women voters were mainly the sufferers of this problem.

Chittagong-8

In Muslim Girl High School centre, one incident of false voting was reported. A few voters who failed to vote commented that the scope of casting false vote may have arose as the people were getting the opportunity to vote on the basis of the serial number in the voter list in the absence of a National ID card.

Feni-2

Supporters and activists allegedly of the Grand Alliance were seen casting false votes in Feni Govt Pilot High School polling centre. Being informed of that news, the Army came to the spot. Hearing of the Army's presence, the false voters fled away. In this polling centre, a few supporters of the BNP were allegedly obstructed from casting their vote. Police was seen to be reluctant to do anything about it.

Munshiganj-1

Four Party Alliance candidate, Shah Moyazzem complained that some unidentified persons cast false vote for the Grand Alliance at Sir J. C. Bose Institution center under Sreenagar Thana at 10.25. Due to this, chaos erupted between the two Alliances and voting was suspended for 25 minutes. Then police took steps to control the situation.

There was no electricity at different booths at Kathalbari Government Primary School and Kamargaon Government Primary School center under Baghra and Bagyokul Union in Sreenagar Upazila.

Munshiganj-2

Lucky Aktar, daughter of Wasuddin and Monoyara Begum, holding NID # 5914413592628, complained that an unknown woman cast her vote in her stead at Louhajang Girls Pilot High School center under Louhajang Upazila.

Taslina Begum, spouse of Md. Miraj Bepary and daughter of Maria Begum, NID # 5919423398478, complained that an unknown woman cast her vote in her stead at Boloj Government Primary School center under Tongibari Upazila.

Munshiganj-3

Due to the fact that two booths were in the same room and there was only one opening for both, vote casting was hampered on Bhasanchor Mijikandi Government Primary School center under Adhara Union in Munshiganj Sadar Upazila when huge lines of pollsters took hours to diminish. The police and army took the situation under control and vote casting restarted at 11.30am.

A few women voters could not vote in Muktarpur Primary School centre at Munshiganj-3 constituency as their names did not appear in the voters list, despite having a National ID cards.

Dhaka-4

Voter slips were found with marks of different political parties at all centers of the Dhaka-4 constituency. There was no enough space to cast votes at center no.32 of Dhaka-4. Mismanagement reportedly took place during voting at center no.8. Polling officials were seen to have closed the booth and stop the polls at center no.70 to have lunch, which was in contravention to the Code of Conduct.

Dhaka-11

Grand Alliance activist Marium Begum was openly campaigning at center no. 37 of Dhaka-11 constituency.

Narayanganj-4

Most of the polling centers had inadequate space, which made over-crowding in constituency Narayanganj-4. International observers were seen in a number of centers while EWG¹⁴ stationary observers were not found in most of the polling stations in the Narayanganj-4 constituency.

Narayanganj-5

Activists of the Four Party Alliance were seen campaigning at Joy Gobinda High School center. There was insufficient light at Narayanganj Model Girls High School center and Morgan Girls High School center. A female voter was assaulted for allegedly casting a false vote at Kushiara Government Primary School center under Nabiganj in the Narayanganj-5 constituency.

Mymensingh-4

Polling agents of all candidates were not present and EWG observers were present only in six booths at center no.-1 of Mymensingh-4 constituency. Candidates paid to bring voters to the polling centre no.-2 of Mymensingh-4 constituency.

Gazipur-2

There was no toilet or water supply at Pagar Ulum Senior Madrasa center in the constituency Gazipur-2. There was no open space in the Pagar Ulum Senior Madrasa center in Gazipur-2 causing a problem for people standing in long queues.

Jhenaidah-1

Polling agents were absent for three candidates out of five in Garaganj Govt. Primary School polling centre of this constituency.

BNP and AL candidates provided rickshaw vans as transportation to carry voters to Bazukhali Govt. Primary School polling centre. In this centre there was no electricity.

The AL candidate provided rickshaw vans as transportation to carry voters to the Khas Raninagar Govt. Primary School polling centre. No EWG stationary observers were present in polling booth no. 3 and 4 in this polling centre.

A false vote had been cast in the name of Bolai Kumar Biswas, voter no. 504 in Kabirpur High School polling centre. Later on that false vote was treated as a disputed vote.

Nargis Akter, voter no. 250 was not allowed to cast her vote as it had already been cast by another person in Bosontopur Govt. School polling centre.

¹⁴ EWG: Election Working Group.

Kushtia-2

Polling started 15 minutes late in Kursha Govt. Primary School polling centre. Windows behind the polling booth was found to be open in Tithilia Madrasa polling centre.

Molla Mahmud Hassan, Upazila Nirbahi Officer of Mirpur, seized the fax machine from ABC Computers and Multimedia in Mirpur Bazar and took it to his office. Odhikar's observers were denied use of this fax when they requested it.

Kushtia-4

The supporters of all candidates were openly campaigning in Choroikul Govt. Primary School, Tebaria Sherkandi Govt. Primary School, Gosaidangi Govt. Primary School polling centres.

Transport facilities were provided to carry voters on behalf of all candidates to the Tebaria Sherkandi Govt. Primary School Paikpara Mirzapur Govt. Primary School, Joyonti Hazra Govt. Primary School, Batikamara Govt. Primary School polling centres.

No stationary observers were present in Tebaria Sherkandi Govt. Primary School, Paikpara Mirzapur Govt. Primary School polling centres.

Kumarkhali, Kushtia UNO Mr. Nuruzzaman ousted an observer named Sohel Rana of Jagorono Chokkro from Batikamara Govt. Primary School polling centre as he was talking with voters in the queue.

Concluding Remarks

1. Despite certain irregularities, violence and some cases of post-election incidents of death, it is difficult to raise any major allegations against the way the elections were conducted. The choice of the people of Bangladesh is loud and clear: military backed regime must go in order to make room for elected government. The depoliticisation process initiated by the so-called 'minus two' theory: eliminating two women leaders of the two major political parties and demeaning politics generally, has failed. Implicit and explicit denials of the role of political leaders as agents of political reform and change was not accepted by the people. People have participated massively in the polls, women and younger generations in particular, to vote for the leaders of their choice to power.
2. A massive turn out of voters was also a move to foil possible hidden designs, if any, that might have disrupted the right of the people to elect their own government. The design to govern Bangladesh by enacting Ordinances by the bizarre 'Caretaker' regime, which was not accountable to people, and their extension for nearly two years (that could hardly be explained by the existing constitutional provisions), was rejected the day State of Emergency was declared¹⁵. Massive polls to end such a regime must be read as a strong political statement against those who sponsored and supported such a regime uncritically. Blatantly blaming political parties and the political processes for all the malaise of governance, without taking account of the consequences of the neo-liberal economic policies of the past decades and the culture of corruption installed by the various development interventions, seemed to be the main task of the military-backed 'caretaker' regime.
3. The success of the people of Bangladesh to end the non-political regime and bringing the electoral processes at the center of politics is a sign of political sanity that has prevailed so far in all quarters of power and politics including the army and the bureaucracy. No matter how the result is going to transform the domestic class and power relations and the future course of politics, Bangladeshis have loudly made it known regionally and internationally that the propaganda against the 150 million people of this country, who are mostly Muslim, that Bangladesh has been turned into a haven of Islamic militants, has been proved wrong through this poll. The campaign that the country is on the brink of eroding into a 'failed state' has also been

¹⁵ State of Emergency was declared on 11 January 2007.

proved to be nonsense, given the fact that the economic viability of the country and the political awareness and motivation of the people in general are great. The election of 2008 will remain proof against assumptions and false prejudices.

NOTE:

Post-election Violence

Four persons were reported killed and about 200 people injured in post-election violence in different places across the country. Supporters of AL and BNP-Jamaat were found to be involved in such clashes. In many districts AL activists attacked the houses and shops of the Four Party Alliance supporters and vandalised their property. This section of the report reflects the incidents of post-election violence that took place between 29-31 December 2008.

In Pabna, a BNP activist was killed and his associate injured when Awami League supporters attacked them at village Dighi-Goalmari under Sadar Upazila on 30 December 2008. The deceased was identified as Shahabuddin Pramanik alias Saheb Ali (35). AL supporters attacked the house of Shahabuddin at about 7:00am and severely beat him and his associate Alauddin. Shahabuddin died on the spot. They also set the house on fire. Later that day, Alauddin died in hospital.

In another incident, unidentified persons severely beat BNP leader Abdul Hye, also Manikhat Union Parishad Chairman in Sujanagar, leaving him critically injured. He was admitted to a clinic.

In Chittagong, a Juba League activist, Rahim Badsha (25) was stabbed to death at Bhatiary under Sitakunda upazila at about 11:30pm on 29 December following an altercation over the polls. He was called on by Shibir activists from Moulabipara, who cut the tendon of his foot. BNP activists allegedly beat up four AL men Abul Hashem, Abul Kalam, Abdus Salam and Anik and also vandalised a house at Dakkhin Rajanagar in Rangunia Upazila.

In Savar, an AL activist was beaten to death by BNP activists on 31 December. The deceased was identified as Habibur Rahman Hobi, a residence of Yarpur Union.

Six AL supporters were injured as local BNP activists allegedly attacked them at Sheikhpura village under Terokhada upazila in Khulna. AL supporters also occupied a local BNP office.

In Bagerhat, AL men allegedly attacked the houses of BNP leader, Abul Kalam, and his relatives at Panchakaran of Morolganj upazila and looted valuables. Seven persons, including two women, were reportedly injured in the attack.

At least 25 leaders and activists of BNP and its front organisations were injured in attacks allegedly led by AL activists at Sharsha, Jhikargachha and Monirampur upazilas, in Jessore.

In Moulvibazar, at least 20 workers of Rajghat tea Garden were injured in an attack allegedly by the activists of the BNP-led Four Party Alliance following the announcement of the election results on the night of 29 December.

However, in many districts, clashes between AL and BNP supporters took place, leaving several people wounded. Incidents of attacks on houses and other personal property were also reported during this period. AL supporters were found to be more active in attacking BNP supporters and also vandalising local party offices in Bogra, Jessore. Apart from that, more than 80 people were injured in the districts mentioned herewith. Six people in Gazipur, three in Feni, five in Munshiganj, two in Jhalokati, three Nilphamari, 10 in Jhinaidah, 20 in Barisal, 15 in Sirajganj, 20 in Narayanganj, 10 in Bhila and 12 persons in Bagerhat were reportedly injured.