

Election Working Group



Union Parishad (UP) Elections 2011 [Phase 2] First Two Weeks Election Observation Summary Report May 31- June 15, 2011

UP Elections so far administered well but with disruption at some centers

The Election Working Group (EWG), a national coalition of 31 civil society member organizations is observing the Union Parishad (UP) Elections. This observation summary is based on reports received from the 3600 observers of EWG member organizations in 720 Unions in seven divisions of the country.

According to EWG observers the elections started off on time with enthusiasm and festive mood among the voters in spite of inclement weather at some places. Few irregularities were noticed by our observers at some centers such as, insufficient light in the booths, secrecy of booth not maintained, some centers did not have electricity connection which made it very difficult for the voters to see anything clearly, some attempts to influence the voters by providing refreshments etc.

The EWG Mobile Observer Teams, consisting of five members each, carried out day long observation of the polling process and vote counting procedures in the sample Unions observed. They particularly noted issues related to observers access, electoral administration, and security environment in and around the polling centers. Observers reported that elections started off on time with the necessary materials at most of the polling centers but in Monohorpur Kacharibari Government Primary School of Monohorpur Union in Jessore, polling started twenty minutes late.

Observers did not face difficulties in accessing centers to observe the polling process. However, the Presiding Officer of Poloshia Non-Government Primary School of Hadia Union in Tangail did not allow the observer to be present during vote count. Party polling agents were seen present in voting booths in large numbers. The electoral administration was seen to carry out their duties satisfactorily. Despite being well administered, there were still some particular issues which observers noted, that has been listed below:

- Privacy of voting booth was not seen to be satisfactory in Geramara Govt. Primary School and Jogania Purba Para Forkanir Madrassa of Jogania Union, and Krishnopur Doripara Ebtedayi Madrasa of Lochmanpur Union, in Sherpur.
- A Candidate was seen to enter women's voting booth in Geramara Govt. Primary School of Jogania Union in Sherpur.
- A false voter had been indentified in Insaf Market of Aganagor Union in Dhaka.
- In Krishnopur Doripara Ebtedayi Madrasa of Lochmanpur Union in Sherpur, indelible ink was not applied to a few voters.

Attempts to influence voters were mainly seen in the form of Election Day campaigning, arrangement of transport for voters and provision of snacks. Violation of Election day Campaigning continues to remain a problem, as supporters of different candidates in centers noted below, failed to adhere to the Electoral law which prohibits campaigning in and around the polling center on election day. The different forms of influence on voters are noted below:

- Election Day campaigning by candidate supporters was seen in Munsii Abdullah Dakhil Madrassah of Hossain Gaon Union in Thakurgaon, Khezura Government Primary School of Padmabila Union in Chuadanga, Insaf Market of Aganagor Union in Dhaka, Shialdi Government Primary School of Icchapura Union in Munshigonj and Niamotpur Government Primary School of Niamotpur Union in Jhenaidah.

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- Md. Mohiuddin, Chairman of Shirajdikhan Upazilla was seen to be campaigning for his wife Sanjida Akter Josna using the government vehicle in Malkhanagar High School and College of Malkhanagar Union in Munshigonj.
- Candidate supporters of Tubewell sign was seen to be campaigning on Election Day in Textile Vocational Institute in Malkhanagar Union in Munshigonj. They were also providing toys to the voter's children and arranging transport to influence voters.
- In Jogania Purba Para Forkanir Madrassa of Jogania Union in Sherpur, clash occurred between opposing candidate supporters over Election Day campaigning. Supporters also arranged transport for voters there.
- In Geramara Govt. Primary School of Jogania Union in Sherpur, transport was arranged for voters.
- Tea was provided to voters in the observed centers in Baghber Union of Sherpur.

Overall security measures taken by law enforcement agencies were perceived to be satisfactory. Voters in general reached the centers peacefully without threats or intimidation. However, there were some reports of conflict as mentioned below:

- Conflict occurred between candidate supporters in Bajitpur Govt. Primary School of Doarabazar Union, Pal Kapon Govt. Primary School and Paikpara Primary School of Banglabazar Union in Sunamgonj district, and Syed Habibul Haque High School of Boulai Union in Kishoregonj. However, these situations were brought under control by the police.

The EWG members will continue to observe elections in the remaining sample Unions, in 64 districts of the country until July 5, 2011, in order to complement the government's effort to ensure free and fair elections in the country.

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