

Report on Narayanganj City Corporation Election-2011



7 Circuit House Road

Ramna, Dhaka – 1000

Tel: 8802 9344 225-6, Fax: 8802 9330 405

E-mail: info@dwatch-bd.org, Web: www.dwatch-bd.org

Introduction

Democracywatch has been observing all national and local elections, by-elections and re-elections from its inception in 1996. In this connection the organization observed Narayanganj City Corporation Election-2011, which was held on 30 October 2011. The organization recruited about 15 observers on the Election Day monitor election situation of Narayanganj City Corporation Election supported by The Asia Foundation.

Objectives of Democracywatch election monitoring

The specific objective of Democracywatch election monitoring program is to ensure the fairness of the electoral process and to build public confidence in the elections.

The organization monitored the municipality election to achieve the following objectives

- To encourage large-scale participation of voters in the election by building confidence on the electoral process.
- To detect election fraud, manipulation and irregularities
- Deter irregularities, intimidation and undue influence in election.
- Ensure people's all-out participation, especially women and new voters in the electoral process.
- Ensure free, fair, meaningful, and participatory election.

Observer Training

Democracywatch took comprehensive 15 observer's training session at Dhaka. Sessions were conducted by Mostafa Sohel, Director of Democracywatch.

Following topic were discussed in this training sessions

- An introduction, which briefly describes the formation of the organization and its principal and goals.
- A concise historical perspective, which explains the significance of the election monitoring.
- An overview on the evolution of nonpartisan election monitoring efforts.
- A description of the responsibilities of various election officials.
- A code of conduct and guideline for observers
- A description of the activities undertaken by observers before and during the Election Day and the details involved in election manuals.
- Election data and information collection system of Democracywatch

In addition Democracywatch also briefed about the Election Working Group's plan and reporting system to the observers.

Election Day Monitoring

A total number of 15 trained observers from Democracywatch observed 36 polling stations out of a total of 163 in Narayanganj City Corporation election held was on 30 October, 2011.

Democracywatch observers reported that there were large numbers of voters present in all polling stations. Many female voters were seen with their children implying a safe environment. The voters maintained discipline despite having to wait for long hours. The polling officials and law enforcing agencies also played a positive role during the election.

DW Observer observe the election at NCC Election, Narayanganj

The absence of the agents:

No other than one Mayor candidate's agent was seen in most of the booths (booth 4,5,6) among 10 in Reboti Mohon Pilot High School and College-2. Same thing happened with the centers named Siddirganj South Govt. Primary School, Sanarpar Govt. Primary School, Sanarpar Rawshon Ara College, Sheikh Murtuja Ali High School and Nabiganj Govt. Primary School.

Weak Voter Management:

The Democracywatch observers have been detected weak voter management at many polling centers:

- There was scarcity of light at Siddirganj North Govt. Primary School and DND Primary School.
- No special arrangements for the olds, pregnant and disabled was noticed at any of the centers
- It has been seen to cook in big cooking pots in Siddirganj Reboti Mohon Pilot School and College's field
- There was disorder in the women voter line at the centers named Siddirganj Govt. Primary School, Darun Nesa Wman Madrassa and Ali Akbar Model High Schhol

Electronic Voting Machine (EVM):

The observers of Democracywatch got some complaints against the Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) in 11 centers of Ward 22 and 24.

- In most of the centers, the voters raised complain against the inadequate orientation on EVM.
- In the Labor Welfare Center the polling system became slow since most of the female voters did not know about the EVM. The polling officers were seen to demonstrate the voters about the EVM system inside the secret booth.
- A woman voter was seen to pursue the Assistant Presiding Officer to show her the system of EVM at Kodom Rasul Govt. Primary School.
- A EVM was not working in a booth of Kodom Rasul Govt. Primary School
- As there is no voter list of the Golam Asad Road (North) area in the Kodom Rasul Govt. Primary School, there was a mess in that center at about 9 am.
- In Kodom Rasul Govt. Primary School, two woman voters named Rina Akter and Shathi were about to going back without giving vote because of the fear of Electric shock by EVM. Later they were demonstrated and they voted.
- In Nabiganj Islamia Senior Madrassa the cloth used for covering the secret booths was almost transparent. There were such complaints against most of the EVM centers.

Illegal Influence:

The candidates used vehicles to carry the voters in most of the polling centers observed by Democracywatch. Rickshaws pasted with the posters of different symbols were observed in front of Sonakanda Boys' Govt. Primary School and Beparipara Gov. Primary School.

Weak Voting Management:

Democracywatch viewed weak voting management in almost all the polling centers it observed. 3 voters had to go back without vote because of the dissimilarity between the names of the voters and the voter list. Some people could not vote because of the same problem at Modonganj Model Govt. Primary School (New part). Beside it, Amena Khatun (serial number 0093) went back without giving vote.

Election Materials:

There were adequate materials in the observed 36 polling centers.

The Law and Order Situation:

The law and order situation of all the observed polling centers was satisfactory. In every center there was plenty of Police, Battalion Anser and DVP. In addition, there were lots of Police, RAB and Magistrates were seen to perform duties in a mobile basis.

Counting Process

At the end of the polls, the counting process began which was open and transparent in all Municipalities. The Presiding and Assistant Presiding Officers, polling officers in the presence of different party agents completed the counting. In some polling stations Democracywatch observers were permitted to observe the counting process along with the Presiding officials.

Recommendations to Bangladesh Election Commission

Although the election was generally free and fair but a few more steps would make it perfect

- Democracywatch believes that Election Commission and local administration should maintain close coordination in conducting an election.
- If the numbers of women's booths are increased in each center, the voting process would be easier, as women take longer time to cast vote.
- Election Commission should arrange long term training for the presiding officers and polling officers.
- Special booths for disabled and aged should be set up in the centers preferably on the ground floor.
- More information to the voters to be given at the centers.
- Polling stations should be located closer to the voters.
- Election Commission and Election monitoring organizations should arrange Civic Voter Education Campaign at National level to let people know about the role and responsibilities of voters.
- District Election Office and Upazila Election office should arrange candidate consultation meeting on election activities and role of candidate's behavior.
- Given the importance of the political party agents' roles in the polling stations and lack of skill and understanding, it is strongly suggested that they must be well trained on their role and activities on Election Day.

**Democracywatch Fact Sheet
Narayangonj City Corporation Election 2011**

Date of Election	30 October 2011
Last date of submission of nomination paper	2 October 2011
Scrutiny date of Nomination paper	4-5 October 2011
Last date of withdrawal	12 October 2011
Start Election Campaign	12 October 2011
Number of Total ward	27
Mobile Court	27
Number of Reserve seat for Women	9
Total voters	4,03,706
Total Male Voter	2,03,096
Total Female Voter	2,00,610
Total Polling Center	163
Total Polling booth	1217
Returning officer	1
Asst. Returning officer	8
Presiding officer	163
Asst. Presiding officer	1217
Polling officer	2434
Total Election officer	3814
Total Mayor Candidate	6
Total Male Councilor	278
Total Female Councilor	56
Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) Information	
CC Camera will be used at	25 Centers
EVM (Electronic voting machine)	9 Ward (7, 8,9,16,17,18,22, 23 and 24)
EVM Centre	58
EVM Booth	450
EVM Voter	1,48029
Law enforcement agencies	Police, Ansar, VDP, RAB and Army

SL	Name of the Mayor Candidate	Symbol	Vote
1	Dr. Salina Hayat Ivy	Ink pen	178,048
2	Mr. Shamim Osman	Wall Clock	78'705
3	Advocate Taimur Alam Khandokar	Pineapple	7'616
4	Atikur Rahman Munshi	Gorur-Gari	6'612
5	Mr. Sharif Mohammad	Hash (Duck)	1'493
6	Mr. Atikul Islam	Tala	1'855