PRESIDING OFFICER MANUAL
A GUIDE FOR POLLING DAY PROCEDURES

ELECTORAL TRAINING INSTITUTE
ELECTION COMMISSION SECRETARIAT

PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH
Acknowledgments

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On market days, the market is teeming with life. Copper, aluminum pots and brassware sit next to stalls with green and yellow vegetables and bright red tomatoes. Everywhere, silk and cotton textiles brighten the day in a rainbow of color.

Everyone is busy, even the children. The brilliantly colored saris of the women flutter with the occasional breeze like beautiful butterflies. The vendors raise their voices to haw their wares in a struggle to be heard above the din of the crowd.

On polling day, the polling station is teeming with life. Men and women from all walks of life come to cast their votes. Bangladeshi independence was hard won. The people who won the struggle for independence are dearly remembered and respected.

Bangladesh is a land of many people, many opportunities and many hardships. To triumph over massive flooding, famine, monsoons and annual calamities, Bangladeshis know they must work together to solve the many problems facing the country.

Bangladeshis are passionate about the right to vote. On polling day, people gather knowing that their strength is in their votes. Each vote is the voice of each person’s conscience heard above the crowd, yet part of the collective will of the nation. This guide book is dedicated to the people of Bangladesh and to their desire for a free, fair and impartial election.
ELECTION OFFICIAL PLEDGE
CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ELECTION OFFICIALS

As an appointed Presiding Officer, Assistant Presiding Officer or Polling Officer, you have been charged with a very important responsibility in the election process. Of all officials involved in the conduct of elections, you will have the most personal direct contact with the electors. They will look to you as they exercise their right to vote on polling day. The manner in which you carry out your duties will determine the degree to which electors will have confidence in the process.

Remember, from the time you are appointed and on polling day your primary duties are to faithfully serve all electors equally. Your personal views and political opinions must be put aside except as you secretly mark your own ballot paper and cast your own vote.

It is a sacred trust. Every action you take must be characterized by these important standard.

- Integrity
- Neutrality
- Transparency
- Accuracy

In order to encourage all election officials to aspire to the highest standards in carrying out their duties, all election officials are required to subscribe to a PLEDGE and a CODE OF CONDUCT designed to govern their actions and behavior.
Presiding and Assistant Presiding Officers are expected not only to affirm the Pledge and the Code of Conduct personally, they are also expected to ensure their subordinate workers affirm the Pledge and the Code and abide by the laws and rules governing elections.

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**ELECTION OFFICIAL PLEDGE**

During the term of my appointment as an election official

I __________________________ pledge to:

- Preserve and abide by the Constitution, laws and rules of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh.
- Perform my duties in a manner which ensures the integrity and fairness of the election.
- Act in a non-partisan manner making no attempt to persuade or influence any voter to vote for or against any candidate.
- Faithfully serve my fellow citizens and protect their right to vote.

To these principles I commit myself. On my honor.

---
CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ELECTION OFFICIALS

As an Election Official I will aspire to the highest ideals and ethical principles and hold myself accountable to the most honorable standards of personal conduct in fulfilling my duties in service to the electors assigned to the area for which I am responsible. To meet the obligations with which I am entrusted I will commit myself to the following.

☐ I will educate myself about my responsibilities by learning about the laws governing the elections, attending training sessions, and reading training materials and instructions given to me by the Election Commission and my Returning Officer.

☐ I will follow all election procedures as directed by the Election Commission.

☐ I will resist pressure from friends, officials, political competitors or others to violate the integrity and fairness of the election.

☐ I will protect the secrecy of each elector's vote.

☐ I will not engage in any act to influence the result of the election.

☐ I will summarize the votes cast in the area for which I am responsible and report the results accurately and promptly.

☐ I will not abuse the authority granted to me as an appointed election official, including the exercise of my authority over police; nor will I misuse funds or other commodities entrusted to me for the election.

☐ I will not show favoritism toward any elector or candidate, or intimidate any citizen.

☐ I will report irregularities in the election to the Election Commission honestly and promptly.

☐ I will be judicious in any exercise of my authority to adjourn the polls when conditions exist which jeopardize the integrity of the election or cause the results to be unreliable.

☐ I will be courteous and respectful of voters, observers, monitors, polling agents, election agents, candidates, police and other election officials.
## II.
ABOUT THIS ELECTION

### ELECTION OF MEMBERS TO THE PARLIAMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date of the Poll</th>
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<tr>
<th>Hours of Operation of the Polling Station</th>
<th>The polls will be open for voting between the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.</th>
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<tr>
<th>Purpose of the Election</th>
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<tr>
<td>Electors of each constituency will elect one representative to serve as their Member of Parliament for a term of 5 years.</td>
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<th>Constituencies Involved in the Election</th>
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<td>There are 300 elected members in Parliament. The Republic has been divided into 300 constituencies from each of which one candidate will be elected. In compliance with the requirement of law, each constituency has been defined to ensure a more or less equal number of people are represented. In addition, the boundaries of each constituency has been formed to maintain territorial contiguity. For this election, electors in all 300 constituencies will participate. Once the 300 elected members have been returned to Parliament, they will vote to fill an additional 30 seats in the Parliament which are set aside exclusively for women.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Who Is Eligible to be Included on the Electoral Roll?</td>
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<td>Who May Vote?</td>
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Responsibility for the conduct of elections in Bangladesh rests with an administrative hierarchy headed by the Election Commission. The Election Commission is vested with its authority under Article 118 of the Constitution. The Election Commission is supported by the Election Commission Secretariat and a full complement of subordinate Election Officers at district, constituency and polling station levels. It takes the full cooperation of officials at all levels to ensure a free, fair and impartial election in which the candidates, political parties and the voters will have confidence.
The Election Commission is responsible to ensure that the elections are carried out in compliance with the Constitution and the laws of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. The Commission is also authorized to regulate its own procedures. It will be very important for you to follow the instructions and regulations issued by the Commission very carefully.

As a Presiding Officer, your immediate supervisor will be the Returning Officer or Assistant Returning Officer responsible for the area in which your polling station is located. Acting under the direction of the Commission, the Returning Officer may also give in instructions that you are to follow. This hand book has been prepared by the Electoral Training Institute of the Election Commission Secretariat and has been designed to assist you. It covers many of the procedures required under the law, and encompasses many of the Commission's orders and instructions.

If you have any questions or need advice regarding your responsibilities or the procedures you are to carry out, contact your Returning Officer or Assistant Returning Officer.
As a Presiding Officer or Assistant Presiding Officer, there are a number of tasks you should do before polling day arrives.

1. GETTING READY

- Familiarize yourself with the laws related to the conduct of elections.
- Read directives and circulars issued by the Election Commission and your Returning Office.
- Attend all meetings and training sessions called by your Returning Officer.

*Part of the Code of Conduct Is to Attend Training*
Make contact with the polling officials who will serve at your polling station. As a group, study and discuss the instructions provided in this handbook.

Discuss which polling officials will be assigned which tasks. Make arrangements for polling officials to take meals and breaks in turn. Discuss how duties will be reassigned during those brief periods when one official must be away from his duty station. Your schedule should be designed to ensure that the polling booth remains open and accessible throughout the hour authorized for the poll.

Make sure you have the phone number and location where you will be able to reach your Assistant Returning Officer. Check with your Assistant Returning Officer to determine the individual's name and designation you should contact should you need guidance or advice on election day.

Write down their phone number and be prepared to take it with you on Polling Day.

2. INSPECTING YOUR POLLING STATION

Approximately one week before polling day, visit your polling station to inspect it. Meet with the officials in charge of the building to be used. Be respectful and courteous with those in charge, and thank them for their cooperation. Remember, that they will be inconvenienced. They need to feel that they, too, have an important role to play in preparing for a free and fair election.

Determine which rooms will be used to accommodate the number of separate voting booths which will be required on polling day.

Determine the best place for the Presiding Officer's work station. Select a place where Presiding Officer will maintain his work station making sure it will be easily accessible by Assistant Presiding Officers and Polling Officials throughout polling day.

For each polling booth make sure that there is sufficient space to handle the placement of adequate tables and chairs for officials, election agents and polling agents, a suitable space for providing secrecy areas in which voters can mark their ballot papers privately.
☐ Take note of the entrances and exits, and observe the location of the 100 yard and 400 yard exclusion boundaries outside your polling station where campaign activity is precluded on polling day.

☐ Make arrangements with officials responsible for the building to make sure the building is unlocked very early in the morning on polling day to give you sufficient time to organize the polling station. Ensure that the polling station will remain unlocked and usable throughout the day. The building is unlocked very early in the morning on polling day to give you sufficient time to organize the polling station. Ensure that the polling station will remain unlocked and usable throughout the day.

☐ Decide where the forms and the additional supply of ballot boxes and ballot papers will be kept during the day. Ensure the area can be secured at all times.

☐ Determine which room will be used for the counting of ballots at the end of the polling. The room should be large enough to provide adequate work space to accommodate the officials, materials, and ballot boxes from all polling booths, as well as the candidates, and their authorized election agents.

☐ Make arrangements to ensure the building is unlocked very early in the morning on polling day to give you sufficient time to organize the polling station. Ensure that the polling station will remain unlocked and usable throughout the day.

☐ Check to see if there is a phone that you will be able to use on election day to call in to your Returning Officer or Assistant Returning Officer. Arrange to have access to the room where the phone is, if it is a room that is usually locked. Make sure your Returning Officer and Assistant Returning Officer has the number of that phone in case they need to reach you on election day.

**Signs**

Before election day there are a number of notices and posters that should be posted inside and outside your polling station.

☐ Try to arrange to have appropriate signs posted outside the polling station identifying the Polling Station name and number so electors will be familiar with its location in advance of polling day.
Place the poster with candidate names and symbols on the outside of the polling station near the entrance so voters may easily view it. [Ch.III, 20(2)]

Also outside, post the notice indicating the areas assigned to your polling station.

In advance of polling day, determine the number of voters who will be served at each polling booth within your polling station. Prepare signs that will be used on polling day to show electors the portion of the electoral roll which will be assigned to each polling booth, as well as signs for designating male and female voting booths. It is also a good idea to create and use signs identifying entrances and exits.

3. PLANNING FOR SECURITY ON POLLING DAY

In the past, there have been numerous incidents of serious disturbances and unlawful activities at polling stations. When people seize ballot boxes, campaign within the exclusion zone, stuff ballot boxes with pre-marked ballots, or threaten and intimidate polling officials or voters, everyone loses. Your job is to ensure, as much as possible, that such instances do not occur at your polling station. Planning ahead for potential threats and thinking about how you might avoid them can help minimize their occurrence.

The District Election Officer, and your Returning Officer have made a special effort to meet with the Superintendent of Police and the Thana Police Officers in Charge to prepare them to play their special role in providing security at the Polling Stations.

The police officials assigned to your polling station are available to you to stop disturbances and maintain order. The police may remove any person who is being disruptive. You have the right to ask the police to arrest a person who is causing a disturbance.

You can assist in developing cooperative relationships with the officers who will be serving at your polling station.

Contact the police officials assigned to your polling station and make arrangements for them to accompany you when you bring your ballots and materials to the polling station on the day before the poll.
Ensure they have your name as Presiding Officer. Tell the police to contact you upon their arrival.

Explain your legal authority to have them remove or arrest anyone who disrupts the voting process. [Ch.III, 9(2), 25, 31(3)(4)]

If at all possible, meet with them to discuss how you would like such problems should be handled. For example, discuss the method by which you will let them know when you want them to intercede.

Discuss with the police a strategy for maintaining maximum security for the ballots. Ask for their suggestions as to

Discuss how many officers will be present and where you would like them to be posted.

Make sure they have your name as the Presiding Officer and ask them to contact you upon their arrival on polling day.

Based on instructions from the Election Commission be prepared to make arrangements with appropriate police officers for providing security for the pick up, delivery and transport of ballots, or for any necessary special arrangements which must be made for safe storage of your ballots before polling day. Determine how they can help protect these vital documents from falling into the hands of those interested in creating mischief.

**Advance Planning for Dealing with Disruptive Electors**

Ask your assistant returning officer for guidance as to how potentially threatening circumstances should be dealt with. Share the information with all the officials who will be serving at your polling station.

Remind each official that the authority to remove a person from the polling station may not be used to prevent someone from voting.
It is also important for you to meet among yourselves to discuss strategy for dealing with electors or others who may try to disturbance. For example, your officials should be reminded that a disruptive voter should be given a warning first. Every attempt should be made to allow the voter to cast his vote and should be encouraged to leave the polling station immediately after he has voted. If the person continues to be disruptive, then the police should be asked to escort the person outside the 400 yard limit to the polling station. The person still has the right to vote, and he may cast his ballot before being removed. Only with your permission, may the person return later.

**Marking the Exclusion Zone Around Your Polling Station**

No candidate signs or banners are allowed within 100 yards of the polling station. No political party camps, organized activities, demonstrations, or other congregations are allowed within 400 yards of the polling station. Arrange to have the exclusion zones clearly marked so people will know the limits of the campaign exclusion.

It is important that as an appointed election official you maintain your credibility as a neutral and unbiased official. Take every precaution to ensure that you are not perceived as interfering in the campaign. Therefore, avoid involving yourself in the removal of any campaign materials which remain posted during the restricted time. Instead, ask the police who will be providing security to your polling station to periodically patrol the zone to ensure that this aspect of the law is being observed.

**The Electoral Rolls for Your Polling Station**

At the time directed by the Returning Officer you will be provide a copy of the voter list for your polling station.

- During you discussion with the Assistant Returning Officer, determine how the voter list will be divided among the number of polling booths which will be utilized at your polling station.

- Review each part of the voter list and determine if the documents you have received are correct.

- Provide the Returning Officer with any additions, deletions
Review each part of the voter list and determine if the documents you have received are correct.

Provide the Returning Officer with any additions, deletions or corrections which you believe are necessary.

4. SUPPLIES AND COMMODITIES

The Ballot Papers

Approximately one or two days before the election, you will be called upon to pick up the ballots being assigned to your polling station.

Each ballot paper is serially numbered. The ballot papers will come in books with 100 ballot papers in each book. A record will be maintained by the Returning Officer of quantity and the range of the serial numbers of ballot papers assigned to your polling station.

Each ballot paper has two distinct sections, the counterfoil and the ballot itself.

The counterfoil is the section at the left of the ballot paper. It contains

- The name and number of the constituency;
- The serial number of the ballot paper to which it is attached;
The name of the electoral area;

A space to write the serial number of the elector to whom the ballot paper is issued; and,

A space for the signature or thumbprint of the voter.

The ballot paper itself provides an equal amount of space for each candidate running in the election. Candidates are listed in Bengali alphabetical order. In the space provided for each candidate, there is

The name of a candidate written in Bengali;

The symbol assigned to the candidate; and,

Sufficient space in which the elector can place the rubber stamp mark to indicate his choice.

Both sections of the ballot paper remain attached until the voter has signed or put a thumbprint on the counterfoil and the ballot paper is issued to the voter.

The voter uses a specially provided rubber stamp to make a mark for their candidate. The voter can select their choice by placing the rubber stamp mark in the area on the ballot with their candidate’s name and symbol.

**Receipt of Your Ballots**

You will be notified by your Assistant Returning Officer as to when and where you are to receive your ballot papers.

Arrange for the Presiding Officer and Assistant Presiding Officers to go together when receiving and transporting your ballots.

Check with your Assistant Returning Officer to confirm arrangements for police security to accompany you.

When you receive your ballots, look through them carefully to determine if there are sufficient quantities to serve the number of electors on your electoral roll.

Confirm that the ballots you receive include the proper range of serial numbers which your are supposed to be assigned. (If necessary count the ballots to be sure you are receiving all the ballots for which you will be held accountable.)
Sign the receipt form acknowledging that you have received the ballots for which you will be accountable. Keep all ballot papers and election materials safe and secure in your possession until polling day, taking any measures necessary to promote security. You must arrange to stay at the polling station with your ballots and materials on the night before polling day. If you believe you need additional help to safeguard the ballot papers during the night, contact the local police officials and request protection. They are assigned to assist you for the election.

The Ballot Boxes

You will also receive a sufficient number of ballot boxes to accommodate the number of election booths which will operate in our polling station.

Each ballot box will be identified by a serial number. The Presiding Officer will determine which number(s) will be assigned to each booth will maintain a record of each numbered ballot box assigned to you. As soon as you receive your ballot boxes, review their serial numbers to confirm that you have received the correct boxes. The Presiding Officer will forward a copy of the record of numbered ballot boxes to the Returning Officer with other materials at the end of the poll.

Official Stamp

Each polling station will receive a specially coded official stamp to use in authenticating ballots and other documents and materials as required. Make sure the code on your stamp matches the code identified on the log as being assigned to your polling station.

Election Supplies

As soon as possible, confirm that you have an adequate supply of all the materials you will need to conduct the election. Use the following INVENTORY CHECKLIST to help you determine if you have received the materials you will need.
5. INVENTORY CHECKLIST

☐ Ballot Papers -- serially numbered, in sufficient quantity to provide a ballot paper to every voter on your voter list.

TOTAL VOTERS ON THE VOTER LIST

TOTAL BALLOT PAPERS RECEIVED

# OF BOOKS ___ RANGE # _____ TO # _____

☐ Ballot Box(es)-- serially numbered, one large or two small boxes per polling booth

SERIAL #s


Electoral Roll -- one copy of the voter list for the polling station to be divided to accommodate the number of your polling booths

☐ Official Stamp with unique code for authenticating ballots - one for each polling booth

☐ Marking Rubber Stamps -- with which electors will mark their ballot papers, one per polling booth plus 1 extra for the station

☐ Stamp pad -- one per booth

☐ Brass Seal -- for sealing the ballot boxes and packets containing voted ballots and other polling station documents at the end of the counting of votes, one for each station

☐ Sealing wax -- 227 grams per polling station

☐ Hessian bag -- one per polling station for packing up polling station documents, ballots and other materials
☐ Training Manual -- one for each Presiding Officer and Assistant Presiding Officer

☐ Posters supplied by the Returning Officer identifying the names and symbols of the contesting candidates

☐ Candidate Packets and Principle Packet

☐ Indelible Ink -- one bottle for each polling booth

☐ Supply of all forms

☐ Writing Pens

☐ White Paper and Carbon Paper

☐ Knife

☐ Needle and Thread

☐ Candles and Matches

☐ Iron or Plastic Scale for detaching the Ballot Paper from the Counterfoil

**Forms**

☐ Station Ballot Paper Account -- 12 for the station

☐ Tendered Votes List -- 10 for each station

☐ Challenged Votes List -- 10 for each station

☐ Statement of the Count -- 15 for each station

**Packets**

☐ Valid Ballot Packet -- one for each candidate plus 2 extra

☐ Ballot Papers Excluded From the Count -- 2 for the station

☐ Principal Packet for Holding Valid Ballot Packets and Packet for Ballot Papers Excluded from the Count -- 2 for the station

☐ Unissued Ballot Papers Packet -- 2 for each station

☐ Spoilt Ballot Papers Packet -- one for each booth

☐ Tendered Ballot Papers Packet -- 10 for each station to be divided among the voting booths

☐ Principal Tendered Ballot Packet -- 10 for each station to hold all individual tendered ballot packets
- Principal Challenged Ballot Packet -- 10 for each station to hold all booth challenged ballot packets
- Marked Copies of Electoral Rolls -- 2 for each station
- Counterfoils of Used Ballots -- 2 for each station
- Tendered Votes Lists Packet -- 2 for each station
- Challenged Votes Lists Packet -- 2 for each station
- Statement of Count Packet -- one for each station
- Ballot Paper Account Packet -- one for each station
- Miscellaneous Papers Packet -- one for each station

Any other materials needed to efficiently conduct the election in your polling station

Make Sure You Have All the Supplies You Will Need
1. ELIGIBILITY AND CREDENTIALS
2. PURPOSE OF HAVING OBSERVERS AND WATCHERS
3. RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS OF CANDIDATES AND THEIR AGENTS AS OBSERVERS
4. RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS OF NEUTRAL WATCHERS OF THE POLLING
5. RESPONDING TO OBSERVER AND WATCHER CONCERNS

V.

PRESENCE OF OBSERVERS AND WATCHERS

In order to ensure transparency in the conduct of elections, the laws contain provisions which allow different types of observers and watchers to be present during the various polling day activities. There are two general types of observers:

Partisan Observers who participate on behalf of a candidate competing in the election. These partisan observers include:

- The Candidate
- An Election Agent appointed by the candidate to act on his behalf or to represent the candidate in activities related to the campaign, reporting of campaign expenditures, and as an observer of the polling and counting of votes
- Polling Agents appointed by the candidate to observe the activities at the polling stations and polling booths on polling day

Neutral Watchers who do not represent any candidate, but who have been given permission to watch activities on polling day by the Election Commission or Returning Officer. Neutral watchers serve as monitors of the process. They have an interest of assessing the accountability and fairness of the election. Neutral watchers could include:

- Journalists
- International observers
- Domestic watchers representing Bangladeshi non-governmental organizations
- Any other person who has been given permission by the Returning Officer.
1. ELIGIBILITY AND CREDENTIALS

The eligibility of observers and watchers is supported by documentation or credentials.

- **Polling Agents**: Each candidate may appoint up to two polling agents to be present and observe the polling at each station. However, if the station has more than one booth, the candidate is entitled to have up to five polling agents for the station. It is up to the candidate (or his election agent acting on the candidate’s behalf) to provide a written list of the appointed polling agents who will be present at the station to the Presiding Officer. The list is to be presented to the Presiding Officer in advance of polling day. If the candidate revokes the appointment of any polling agent and replaces that person with someone else, notice is to be given to the Presiding Officer in writing. [Article 22]

- **Election Agents**: The Election Agent of each candidate is entitled to visit the polling station and observe the poll. There is only one Election Agent for each candidate. The candidate must give written notice to the Returning Officer of the name, father’s name and address of the Election Agent. If the candidate revokes the appointment, or if the Election Agent dies, the candidate must notify the Returning Officer of information regarding the replacement. If the candidate does not appoint an Election Agent, the candidate is deemed to be his own Election Agent.

- **Neutral Watchers**: Journalists, foreign observers and watchers representing non-governmental monitoring organizations will more than likely have credentials provided them by their organizations. These watchers will usually be alone or in pairs. Check with your Presiding Officer about special information or instructions from the Election Commission or your Returning Officer about neutral watchers who might be present at your polling station or polling booth.
2. PURPOSE OF HAVING OBSERVERS AND WATCHERS

The presence of observers and watchers serves multiple purposes. Through their presence and observations, agents of the candidates and neutral watchers can:

- Provide openness and transparency for the public, candidates, and political parties and raise confidence in the process;
- Reassure a skeptical public about the importance of the electoral process and the relevance of each elector's participation;
- Deter those who would engage in intimidation tactics, improper activities or fraud;
- Reduce opportunities for frivolous or misguided allegations of impropriety.

Through their observations and reports, provide information on which election officials can assess the process and plan for future improvements.

3. RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS OF CANDIDATES AND THEIR AGENTS AS OBSERVERS

As observers representing the interests of a particular candidate, these authorized observers are entitled to:

- Observe all steps in the voting process, except the elector marking his ballot paper in the secrecy area;
- Be present to view the display and sealing of the empty ballot box before polling begins;
- Assist the Presiding Officer in directing electors to the proper polling booth;
- Have a copy of the voter list to mark off the names of voters as they present themselves to vote.
Voice a challenge about the true identity of an elector thereby causing a challenged vote in the polling booth;

Request to look at the official mark on the back of any elector’s ballot paper and object to any ballot paper without an official mark;

Ask questions, express objections to and request remedial action of the Assistant Presiding Officer or the Presiding Officer;

Remain in the polling station for the counting of the ballot papers after the polling has closed;

Appeal to a superior official if they have reason to believe that errors are occurring at the polling station which are not being corrected by the Assistant Presiding Officer or Presiding Officer.

These observers are NOT entitled to:

Influence or attempt to influence or threaten any elector to vote for or against any candidate or to reveal his vote;

Instruct, give orders, or countermand decisions of the polling officials;

Observe or reveal how any elector marked his ballot paper;

Handle ballot papers;

Disturb the work of authorized officials;

Enter a secrecy area with a voter or assist an incapacitated voter;

Incite disruption of the election, unlawfully remove or deposit ballot papers in the ballot box, or tamper with other election materials.

4. RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS OF NEUTRAL WATCHERS OF THE POLLING

Neutral watchers are allowed to be present for the displaying and sealing of the empty ballot box, and the processing of voters throughout the polling day.
However, under the law[Chapter III, Article 36(c)] they will be precluded from being present during the counting of votes, unless there is an amendment or you are so advised by the Election Commission or your Returning Officer. As they watch the activities of the polls, these persons may:

- Observe all the steps in the voting process, except the elector marking his ballot paper in the secrecy area;
- Write observations and take notes about positive aspects of the voting process as well as notes describing questionable or irregular practices;
- Address questions to the Presiding Officer or the Assistant Presiding Officer;
- Leave and re-enter, and move quietly about the polling station or booth to observe the procedures being followed by officials and electors, although they may not actively participate or interfere with any of their functions;
- Bring questionable activities to the attention of the Assistant Returning Officer, or Presiding Officer, or to superior election officials if irregular practices are left unresolved;
- Report their observations and publish their findings.

These persons may NOT:

- Disrupt or interfere with the voting process or exert influence on electors in any way;
- Instruct, give orders, or countermand decisions of the polling officials;
- Handle ballot papers;
- Observe or reveal how any voter marked his ballot paper or speak directly to voters to ascertain how they voted;
- Incite disruption of the election, unlawfully remove or deposit ballot papers in the ballot box, or tamper with other election materials.
5. RESPONDING TO OBSERVER AND WATCHER CONCERNS

Make sure that observers and watchers have a clear, unhampered view of all activities throughout the period for which they are entitled to be present.

☐ Treat observers and watchers courteously and answer their questions promptly and accurately.

☐ Make appropriate announcements when special circumstances arise, or to openly share information of interest to them.

Be responsive to complaints brought to your attention by an observer or watcher. Confer with the Presiding Officer or superior official, if necessary, and determine if the complaint is justified. Make any adjustments or corrections which may be appropriate

- If you believe the complaint is without basis, explain why to the observer.

- Be prepared to cite the law or Election Commission directive to justify your finding.

- If necessary, contact your Returning Officer for advice.

- In the event the observer or watcher is still not satisfied, refer him to the Returning Officer.

☐ Regarding more serious complaints or allegations, make notations about the issue and record the manner in which the problem was resolved. Include your notations in your materials as you wrap up your activities at the end of the day.

☐ Presiding Officers, Assistant Presiding Officers and Polling Officers should not impose special conditions or restrictions on observers and watchers as necessary to maintain order, or unless otherwise directed by the Election Commission or Returning Officer.
1. ARRANGING YOUR POLLING STATION

All officials who will be serving at the polling station on polling day should be assembled at least 2 hours before voting begins.

Your first task is to organize the polling station and arrange the furnishings in a way that best promotes:

- The efficient flow of voters through the required steps of the process
- Adequate transparency for agents and authorized watchers who will be present
- Security of ballots and election documents
- Accessibility to the Presiding Officer for oversight by the Presiding Officer.

**Arranging the Polling Booths**

Determine the placement of each voting booth that will be established. Place each polling booth in a separate room, or create partitions between the booths. Decide which separate rooms or spaces will be used men and for women. [Ch.III, 28(6)]

- Post the appropriate signs throughout the polling station to direct electors to the correct polling booth.
- Make sure the poster identifying the candidates and their symbols is posted in a prominent place so that all voters can review it as they wait to vote.
Post all other notices and posters as directed by the Election Commission.

For each booth, arrange the tables, chairs, and voting materials in a way that ensures efficient operation and smooth traffic for voters. [Ch.III, 9(2)]

Provide sufficient work space to accommodate the work that will be done by each official responsible for the different steps required in processing electors.

Place chairs in positions which will allow the candidates, their agents and other authorized watchers to see as voters are being processed.

Arrange the polling booths in a way that ensures privacy for the elector while voting. Create screened areas in which electors mark their ballot papers in secret. Use school black boards, curtains, or pitch bamboo poles to create secrecy areas. [Ch.III,28(6)]

Place one ballot box in each polling booth. Place the ballot box in a central location convenient to the electors and easily viewed by the Assistant Presiding Officer and polling officials, polling agents, and observers. [Ch.III, 28(3)]

**Advance Preparation of Forms and Packets**

In order to save some time at the end of the day when it is time to close out the polling station, steps can be taken to make forms and packets ready for later use.
For each booth as well as the polling station as a whole

☐ Collect and organize all the blank forms and packets you will need throughout the polling and during the count.

☐ Write the name and number of polling station and the date of the election on all forms and packets as needed.

☐ Prepare Tendered Ballot Papers packets. Write the name and serial number of each contesting candidate on the face of the packet. Create one Tendered Ballot Papers packet for each candidate appearing on the ballot paper.

☐ Record the serial numbers of the ballot papers issued to the polling station on the Ballot Paper Account Form.

The Presiding Officer's Work Station

Decide where the Presiding Officer will be working throughout polling day.

☐ Make sure The Presiding Officer's work station is centrally located in a place easily accessible to all the polling booths. The Presiding Officer must be available to answer questions or resolve problems which may arise throughout the day.

☐ Determine how forms and additional ballot boxes and ballot papers will be kept during the day. Ensure the area is secure at all times.

☐ The Presiding Officer should provide ballot papers to each Assistant Presiding Officer with the number of ballot papers to accommodate the number of electors included on their portion of the voter lists.

Arranging the Room Where Counting will Take Place

While voting will take place in separate polling booths, the counting of all ballots for the polling station as a whole will be done at the end of the polling in one room. Select the largest room possible. The space should be large enough to accommodate all the officials assigned to the polling station, candidates and their agents and security officers as appropriate.

☐ Try to arrange tables in a configuration which will allow the counting work space to be uncluttered. Officials should have enough room to do their work without being crowded.
A part of the room should be made available for the organized segregation of related materials from each polling booth.

Thought should be given to how space will be provided to candidates and their agents who will be watching as the counting of votes is completed. They should have a free and open view of the proceedings, but should not be able to touch the ballots or interfere with officials as they work.

A special work space should be set aside for the Presiding Officer who will be responsible for overseeing the entire process, and completing the appropriate documents for the reporting of the results.

Decide how the room may be secured to prevent unauthorized people from entering the counting area.

Decide where security officers should be posted.

2. ASSIGNMENT OF DUTIES

An Assistant Presiding Officer, and 2 Polling Officials are assigned to each polling booth within a polling station.

For each booth, determine which polling officials will be assigned to do which tasks.

Remind all polling officials working in your polling station about making arrangements for polling officials to take meals and breaks in
turn. Ensure that all polling booths always have an Assistant Presiding Officer and two polling officials on duty and remain open and accessible throughout the hours designated for the poll.

The processing of electors involves 3 steps: The verification of the voters' identity and inclusion on the electoral roll; inspecting the fingers of electors and applying the indelible ink; and, issuing the ballot. For each booth decide which official will be responsible for each step.

Step 1: Identification of the Elector and the Electoral Roll

Assign Polling Officer #1 to be responsible for:

- Determining the eligibility of the voter by examining the elector's ID Card
- Locating the elector's name on the electoral roll
- Making a tic mark on the electoral roll next to each elector's name

Step 2: Inspecting for Ink

Assign Polling Officer #2 to be responsible for:

- Examining the elector's fingers for traces of ink which would indicate that the elector has already voted
- Inking the thumb of the elector ensuring the ink is applied to the base of the nail and into the cuticle.
Step 3: Issuing the Ballot

The Assistant Presiding Officer is responsible for:

☐ Writing the elector's serial number from his ID Card on the counterfoil of the ballot

☐ Obtaining the elector's signature or thumbprint on the counterfoil of the ballot

☐ Stamping the back of the ballot paper with the official seal

☐ Separating the ballot paper from its counterfoil and issuing it to the elector

☐ Instructing each elector how to properly mark the ballot paper with the rubber stamp and directing the elector to the secrecy area

☐ Reminding the elector to fold the ballot paper before leaving the secrecy area to deposit it into the ballot box.

The Assistant Presiding Officer is there to address all circumstances requiring special handling including tendered votes, challenged votes, assistance by companion, spoilt ballot papers, or other problems. Refer to the sections in this manual for further information on tendered votes, challenged votes, and other special circumstances. [Ch.III, 9(2)]

The Assistant Presiding Officer should summon the Presiding Officer at any time to assist in resolving a problem.
It is the responsibility of all polling officials and the Assistant Presiding Officer to maintain a specific watch over the ballot box to ensure that all electors deposit their folded ballot papers and that the ballot box is not disturbed.

Before the first elector is allowed to vote at 8:00 a.m., there are a number of tasks that must be accomplished in each polling booth.

3. TASKS BEFORE THE FIRST ELECTOR VOTES

These tasks are to be completed in full view of all officers, candidates, candidate agents, and other persons authorized to be
present. It is therefore important to fulfill these requirements as the final step of your pre-polling responsibilities so that the authorized observers and watchers will have arrived.

**Display of the Ballot Boxes**

- Ensure that all ballot boxes are empty. Show the empty ballot boxes to everyone present. [Ch.III, 28(4)(a-b)]

- Close and seal the ballot box.

- Record the serial number of the ballot box seal in the space provided on the Recording of Ballot Boxes, Form XIA.

- Allow those present to sign in the space provided on Form XIA acknowledging the sealing of the ballot box if they choose to.

- Place the ballot box in a location where it is conveniently accessible to the electors and within sight at all times of the majority of persons working in or observing the polling station throughout the day. [Ch.III, 28(4)(c-d)]
Transparency Before the Candidates, Their Agents and Authorized Watchers

☐ Announce the number of voters included on the voter list for the polling booth.

☐ Announce the quantity and range of serial numbers of the ballot papers which have been assigned to the polling booth.

☐ Briefly explain the steps which will be used in processing each voter.

☐ Briefly review the rights and responsibilities of the observers and watchers.

☐ If any special instructions or announcement has been received from the Election Commission which should be shared with observers and watchers, announce it before voting begins.

☐ Announce the official opening of the booth for voting.
Your polling booths should be ready to begin the polling at least 1/2 hour before voting is to begin. At 8:00 a.m., announce the official opening of the polling booths and allow the first voter to vote.

- Periodically throughout the polling check the secrecy areas to make sure there is no campaign literature left behind by a voter.
- Periodically check the secrecy areas to make sure that no voters have left unused ballot papers behind.

Take necessary steps to ensure a smooth flow of traffic.

- Regulate the number of persons allowed inside each polling booth at a time.
- Create single-file lines or queues. The police officials assigned to your polling station may be able to assist in guiding voters to the proper queue. If necessary, use jute ropes to form lanes in which voters can stand.

1. **ROUTINE PROCESSING OF ELIGIBLE VOTERS**

Request each voter to enter the polling booth and approach the table.
A. Voter Presents His Voter Identification Card to Polling Officer #1.

B. Polling Officer #1 Finds the Voter's Name on the Voter List and Makes a Tic Mark by the Name.

C. Polling Officer #2 Inspects the Voter's Fingers and Applies Ink to the Base of the Voter's Thumbnail.

D. The Assistant Presiding Officer Has the Voter Place his Signature or Thumbprint on the Counterfoil.

E. The Assistant Presiding Officer Issues the ballot Paper After Writing the Voters ID # on the Counterfoil and Stamping the Back of the Ballot with the Official Mark.

F. The Voter Marks His Ballot Paper in the Secrecy Area Before Depositing It in the Ballot Box.
Stage 1: Identification of the Voter (Polling Officer #1)

☐ Have the voter present their Identification Card. Examine the ID Card and determine if it is valid.

☐ Locate voter's name on the Electoral Roll. [Ch. III, 31(1)]

☐ When the voter's name has been located, place a tic mark next to the voter's name as listed on the Electoral Roll to indicate that the voter has been identified, is qualified to vote and will be issued a ballot paper. [Ch. III, 31(2)(c)]

☐ Return ID Card to voter. Ask the voter to move down the queue and position himself in front of Polling Officer #2.

Stage 2: Examining and Inking (Polling Officer #2)

☐ Examine the voter's fingers for traces of indelible ink that would indicate the voter has already voted. The Polling Officer can deny the right to vote to any person who already bears ink or traces of ink on the fingers or who refuses to be marked with ink. [Ch. III, 31(3)]

☐ Mark the thumb of the voter with indelible ink making sure to apply the ink to the base of the nail and into the cuticle. (If it is not possible to mark the voter's thumb, apply ink to a finger instead.)

Stage 3: Issuing the Ballot (Assistant Presiding Officer)

When the voter advances to Stage 3, he will once again present his ID card.

Write the voter's ID Card serial number on the counterfoil of the ballot paper. [Ch. III, 31(2)(e)]

☐ Have the voter place their signature or thumbprint on the counterfoil. [Ch. III, 31(2)(f)]

☐ With a straight edge or ruler, separate the ballot paper from its counterfoil.

☐ Stamp the back of ballot paper with the official mark. [Ch. III, 31(2)(d)]

☐ Give the voter the ballot paper.

☐ Apply enough ink to the special marking stamp to ensure that the stamp will make a proper mark on the ballot paper.
☐ Give the marking stamp to the voter. [Rule 16(1)]

☐ Instruct the voter how to use the stamp and how to mark his choice on the ballot paper.

☐ Direct the voter to the secrecy area to mark the ballot paper in private.

☐ Remind the voter to fold the ballot paper before leaving the secrecy area and then to deposit the voted ballot paper into the ballot box. (Suggest that the voter fold the ballot vertically so that if the rubber stamp mark is wet, it won't inadvertently rub onto the space for a different candidate.)

☐ Remind the voter to return the rubber stamp to the Assistant Presiding Officer.

The voter should proceed to vote without delay. [Ch. III, 31(5)(aa)(6)]

Upon request, the voter must show to any Candidate, Candidate Agent(s), or Polling Agent that his ballot paper carries the official mark on the back. [Ch. III, 31(5)(a)]

The voter should immediately enter the secrecy area as directed. The voter should place the stamp mark in the space in which the name and symbol of candidate is located on the ballot paper. [Ch. III, 31(5)(b)]

☐ Allow only one person at time in the secrecy area to mark the ballot paper, unless the voter requires a companion for assistance.
Marking and Depositing the Ballot Paper in the Ballot Box

After marking the ballot paper according to the voter’s choice and folding it, the voter is to walk to ballot box and insert the ballot paper personally. [Ch. III, 31(5)(c)]

☐ The Assistant Presiding Officer has the primary responsibility for making sure that every voter deposits his ballot paper, and only one ballot paper, in the ballot box.

☐ If a Contesting Candidate, Polling Agent, Election Agent or polling official alleges that an voter has more than one ballot paper in his possession, summon the Assistant Presiding Officer and the Presiding Officer. Take such measures as necessary to satisfy yourself that the voter does not have additional ballot papers and to prevent the voter from depositing more than one ballot paper in the ballot box. [Ch.III, 31(4)]

An voter is blind, incapacitated or needs assistance in marking the ballot paper

A voter who needs assistance in marking the ballot paper is entitled to vote with the help of a companion. [Ch. III, 31(7)]
The companion must:

☐ Be not less than 21 years of age
☐ Not be a Contesting Candidate, Polling Agent, or Election Agent.

☐ Advise the companion of the responsibilities and obligations of assisting a voter. The Companion must:

☐ Mark the ballot only according to the voter's wishes.

☐ Not seek to influence the voter's choice of candidate.

☐ Not reveal to anyone how the voter voted and must preserve the voter's right to a secret ballot. To betray secrecy of the ballot is an illegal offence.

3. POSSIBLE EXCEPTIONS TO THE ROUTINE

Assistant Presiding Officers must be prepared to resolve problems and answer questions regarding special circumstances or exceptions to the routine processing of voters which are likely to occur throughout the polling day. For some exceptions to the routine, it is the Assistant Presiding Officer who must take some additional steps in the processing of the voter.

In a few instances you may not be able to allow a voter to vote, but you can explain the requirements of Bangladesh elections to voters. Here are examples of some special circumstances you will likely encounter on election day.

**Voter Does Not Have Valid Voter ID Card**

The voter must be turned away without voting.

**Voter Has ID Card But Name Cannot Be Found On Voter List**

If the Assistant Presiding Officer is satisfied that the ID card is valid, the voter's name may be added to a separate list. The voter is issued a ballot and is processed in the normal manner.

**Voter Brings Voter ID Cards Belonging to Family Members**

If a voter brings the ID Cards of family members and requests to vote on their behalf, refuse his request. Each voter must vote personally. Advise the voter that he may only vote for himself, and process him in the normal manner.
Spoilt Ballots [Ch.III, 34]

If an voter declares that he has mismarked, torn, or has otherwise caused the ballot paper to be invalid or unusable, summon the Assistant Presiding Officer who will assist in the process of issuing the voter a replacement ballot paper.

☐ Cancel the invalid or unusable ballot paper.

☐ Make a note on the counterfoil of the new ballot that the ballot will be issued that it is a replacement ballot and sign it.

☐ Sign the spoilt ballot paper which the voter has returned.

☐ Separate the new ballot from its notated and signed counterfoil and issue it to the voter instructing the voter how to properly mark his vote.

☐ Direct the voter to the secrecy area and allow him to vote in the normal manner.

☐ Retain the spoilt ballot paper and place it in the special packet for spoilt ballot papers.

The Identity of the Voter is CHALLENGED by a Candidate, Election Agent or Polling Agent

☐ If an voter presents a valid ID Card and a Contesting Candidate, Polling Agent, or Election Agent alleges that the voter has already voted, or that the voter is not the same as the person on the Electoral Roll, then you must inform the voter that his vote is being challenged.

☐ Summon the Assistant Presiding Officer to facilitate the process for a CHALLENGED BALLOT PAPER. [Ch. III, 33]

☐ If the Contesting Candidate, Polling Agent, or Election Agent undertakes to prove the allegation in a court of law, the challenger must deposits 5 Taka cash with the Presiding Officer or Assistant Presiding Officer. [Rule 20 (1)]

☐ Issue a receipt for 5 Taka to the challenger.

☐ Warn the voter of consequences of impersonating another voter or voting twice.

☐ If the voter chooses to go ahead, add the voter's name to the "Challenged Votes List, Form XIII. [Rule 20(2)]
Allow the voter to vote in the same manner as any other voter, however, advise the voter to return the voted ballot paper to the Assistant Presiding Officer instead of depositing it into the ballot box.

Watch to see that the voter returns to the Assistant Presiding Officer with the folded ballot paper. Do not allow the Challenged Ballot Paper to be placed in ballot box.

Upon the voter's return to the Assistant Returning Officer, place the CHALLENGED BALLOT PAPER in the Challenged Ballot Packet with any other Challenged Ballots which have already been cast. There is only one packet for containing all challenged ballot papers voted at each polling booth.

**A Voter’s Name Has Already Been Marked in the Electoral Roll [Ch.III, 32]**

- If an voter presents a valid ID card but the voter’s name has already been marked in the Electoral Roll, the voter must vote a TENDERED BALLOT PAPER.
- Summon the Assistant Presiding Officer to facilitate the TENDERED BALLOT process.
- Inform the voter that someone has already voted under that name which as been so marked on the Electoral Roll.
- The voter can decide if they want to continue to seek the right to vote. If they want to vote, allow the voter to vote under a TENDERED BALLOT PAPER process and cast a ballot paper in the same manner as any other voter.
- Add the voter's name to the Tendered Votes List, Form XII. [Rule 19(1)]
- Advise the voter to return his voted and folded ballot paper to the Assistant Presiding Officer. Do not allow the voter to deposit the tendered ballot in the ballot box.
- Upon the voter's return to the Assistant Presiding Officer, write the voter's name and serial number on the back of the TENDERED BALLOT PAPER.
Determine for which candidate the voter marked his tendered ballot paper. A separate Tendered Ballot Paper Packet is maintained for each candidate appearing on the ballot. Select the corresponding Tendered Ballot Papers packet for that candidate, and place the Tendered Ballot paper in the packet.

Tendered Ballot Papers and Challenged Ballot Papers are Placed In the Special Packets Rather than In the Ballot Box.
Remember that All Voters Have a Right to Be Treated Equally and Fairly. They are Relying on You to Ensure a Free, Fair and Impartial Election.
The polls close at 4:00 p.m.

Approximately 15 minutes before the designated hour to close the polls, announce to all electors, inside and outside, that the polling booth will be closing soon.

☐ At 4:00 p.m., tell the police to acknowledge the last person standing in each queue, and not allow any other electors to join the queues.

☐ Announce to all electors waiting in queues that they will be allowed to vote.

1. CLOSING THE POLLS

At the designated closing hour and when the last elector has voted, take steps to close down each polling booth.

☐ Notify all polling officials, observers, and the police officers that the closing hour has arrived.

☐ As soon as possible, close the doors to the polling station.

☐ Each Assistant Presiding Officer should notify the Presiding Officer as soon as voting in his polling booth is finished.

☐ In each polling booth, the Assistant Presiding Officer seals the opening of each ballot box as soon as voting concludes. Sign the seal. Allow any Contesting Candidate, Polling Agent, or Election Agent who wishes to also sign the seal.
Announce to the observers and watchers who are present the location or room in which the counting will take place. Remind the candidate's agents to meet among themselves to determine which of their number will observe the counting.

2. **CLOSING THE BOOTH AND TRANSFERRING MATERIALS AND BALLOT BOXES TO THE COUNTING**

- Officials responsible for each booth must pack up all the stamps and stamp pads, ink phials, pens and other such supplies, and put them away.

- At each polling booth the electoral roll, documents and tendered and challenged ballot packets should be organized for delivery to the counting area designated for the polling station.

- Instruct the Assistant Presiding Officer (APO) to carry all ballot boxes, used counterfoils, unused ballot papers, ballot paper packets, and challenged and tendered votes lists to the designated count area.

- Allow candidate representatives to accompany the ballot boxes.

- Close down each polling booth room and return the room to order.

- When you are ready to deliver your materials, ask a police officer to be ready to accompany you. If it takes more than one trip to deliver all your materials, one official should stay with the remaining materials so that they are never left unattended. This is especially true with regard to unused ballots, ballot boxes and electoral rolls.

- Upon delivering your booth's materials to the counting area make sure they remain organized so that as they are needed you will be able retrieve them easily.
3. PERSONS WHO MAY REMAIN PRESENT FOR THE

The law restricts who may observe the counting of votes. They include Presiding Officer, Assistant Presiding Officer, Polling Officers, Contesting Candidates, Election Agents, and Polling Agents only may be present for the counting of the votes. [Chapter III, Article 36(3)] No other persons are allowed in the counting room while the votes are being counted. Because of the constraints of space each candidate will be encouraged to select only one of his agents to remain to observe the counting process.

The Presiding Officer should advise any elector, journalist, or any other person who may still be present that they will have to leave the premises.

☐ Notify the police officials that counting will begin soon.

☐ Ensure that each person remaining to observe the count is among the officials and agents authorized under the law.

☐ Instruct the police officers to remove all other persons.

☐ Assign police officers to stand guard outside the door to the counting area.

4. ARRANGING THE COUNTING CENTER

Arrange the tables and chairs in the counting area to create an efficient work space. Allow sufficient room for the Presiding Officer and other officials to perform their duties. Two or three tables or desks pushed together can create an adequate work area.

☐ Allow the candidates or their agents to stand or sit near the polling officials in order to freely observe all activities at the work area.

☐ Do not allow observers to sit at the work area or handle the ballot papers.
☐ Remember to make sure that there are no rubber marking stamps lying about, and that all unused ballots are safely secured so that there is no chance for misuse.

☐ Prepare a signs with the name or symbol of each candidate, as well as a sign that says "Invalid Ballot Papers". During the counting these signs will assist officials in identifying the proper stacks as they sort the ballot papers by candidate. The Invalid Ballot papers sign will be used for separating out ballots that will be excluded from the count.
As soon as last voter has voted in each booth and the Assistant Presiding Officers have delivered their materials to the counting area, the Presiding Officer may proceed with the counting of votes. [Chapter III, Article 36]

- The counting must take place immediately and must be completed at the polling station.
- The Presiding Officer is directly responsible for the counting process. He may assign the Assistant Presiding Officers and Polling Officers to assist him.
- In all tasks assigned by the Presiding Officer, Assistant Presiding Officers or Polling Officers should work in pairs to promote accuracy of the work.

1. **COUNTING THE BALLOT PAPERS IN THE BALLOT BOXES**

Before any votes are counted, the Presiding Officer and other officers he assigns to assist him, will count the number of ballot papers that have been deposited in the ballot boxes from all the polling booths.

- Assemble all the ballot boxes used in all polling booths throughout the poll.
- In the presence of the authorized officials, candidates and agents unseal each ballot box which has been used during the polling and empty their contents in the middle of the work area. Verify that all ballot papers have been removed from the boxes.
Unfold all the ballot papers and create stacks without regard to candidate choice. Instruct teams of Assistant Presiding Officers and Polling Officers to assist in this process.

Count the total number of ballot papers. Instruct the teams to write the number of ballot papers they have counted on a piece of paper. Check each other's totals as needed. Report the figure you've written to the Presiding Officer.

Add the total ballot papers counted by each team to determine the total number of ballot papers from all the ballot boxes used at the polling station for the poll.

The Presiding Officer writes the total number of ballot papers from all the used ballot boxes in the space provided in the Ballot Paper Account Form (Form XV., Line #2).

Announce the number of total ballot papers counted to all the observers and officials who are present.

2. **SORTING THE BALLOT PAPERS BY CANDIDATE CHOICE**

The Presiding Officer can assign Assistant Presiding Officers and Polling Officers to assist him in the sorting process. Again, officials assigned to each task should work in teams to promote accuracy.
Place the signs prepared for the candidates on the table in the same order in which the candidates and their symbols appear on the ballot. Leave enough room between the signs to allow space to stack the ballots as they are sorted for each candidate.

Create one extra space on the work table for the "Invalid Ballot Papers."

Assign a team to work at each place to maintain the stacks of ballots for that candidates. A separate team should be assigned to maintain the stack for the "Invalid Ballot Papers."

The Presiding Officer and any other Officers he assigns to assist in the sorting will take ballot papers from the commingled pile and determine the candidate for whom the vote is cast.

As each ballot paper is read, it is passed to the team designated to maintain the ballot papers for that candidate.

As the Presiding Officer and his designated assistants review each ballot paper, there are likely to find some which are improperly marked or for which it is impossible to determine the voter’s choice. These ballot papers should be added to the "Invalid Ballot Paper" pile.

Repeat this procedure until all the ballot papers from the middle of the work area have been sorted by candidate.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONDITION OR MANNER IN WHICH BALLOT PAPER IS MARKED</th>
<th>VALID</th>
<th>INVALID</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ballot Paper is not in authorized format, or is different than those printed at official printing house</td>
<td></td>
<td>EXCLUDE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballot Paper does not contain official stamp mark of polling booth</td>
<td></td>
<td>EXCLUDE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballot Paper has handwritten words or symbols written on it</td>
<td></td>
<td>EXCLUDE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballot Paper has chosen symbol or candidate marked with pencil or pen</td>
<td></td>
<td>EXCLUDE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballot Paper has another paper or object attached to it</td>
<td></td>
<td>EXCLUDE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballot Paper is clearly marked with rubber stamp, but is not folded</td>
<td>Count for Candidate Marked</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballot Paper contains no voter rubber stamp mark</td>
<td></td>
<td>EXCLUDE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rubber stamp mark crosses over line between two candidates marking both spaces equally</td>
<td></td>
<td>EXCLUDE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A single rubber stamp mark crosses over line between two candidates but over half of mark is in one candidate's space</td>
<td>Count for candidate with the largest share of the mark</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voter has made more than one rubber stamp mark, marking two or more candidate spaces</td>
<td></td>
<td>EXCLUDE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. INVALID BALLOT PAPERS

An "Invalid Ballot Paper" is to be excluded from the count. The ballot papers that must be excluded will be segregated from the others and passed to the team maintaining the "Invalid Ballot Papers" stack. As the Presiding Officer and his assistants review each ballot paper, they must reject any ballot which:

- Is not in the official format, or is not consistent with the official ballot papers printed at the authorized printing house
- Does not have the official mark
- Contains any written remark, name, words or symbol
- Is marked by means other than the rubber marking stamp provided for the purpose of marking the ballot paper
- Has any other paper or object attached to it
- Is marked in such a way as to make the intent of the voter unclear. [Ch.III, 36(4)(c)]

4. COUNTING THE VOTES

When the ballot papers have been read and sorted by candidate, the teams will count the ballot papers for each candidate. The stack of Invalid Ballot Papers will also be counted.

**Counting by 100's:**

Instruct the teams to count the ballot papers for each candidate in groups of 100.

- Place each batch of 100 ballot papers criss-crossed on top of the prior batch of 100.
- The teams should inspect each ballot as they count the groups of 100 to ensure that no errors have been made in determining the candidate for whom the vote was cast. If an error is discovered the ballot paper should be passed to the team counting the stack for the correct candidate.
- Invalid Ballot Papers should be counted in the same manner.
After all the ballot papers for a candidate have been stacked in criss-crossed batches of 100, count any remaining number of ballot papers which do not add up to 100.

Count the number of criss-crossed batches of 100 and add the remaining number of ballot papers to determine the total number of votes cast for each candidate.

Report the total votes for each candidate to the Presiding Officer.

Example:

There should be exactly 100 ballot papers in each batch. If for one candidate there are 6 criss-crossed batches of ballot papers and there are 18 remaining ballot papers the total number of votes to be reported for that candidate is 618.

Counting the Challenged Ballot Papers:

The Challenged Ballot Papers are to be included in the count, however, they are to remain segregated from other ballot papers. [Chapter III, Article 36(4)(b) and (12)(d)]

The Presiding Office will open the Challenged Ballot Paper Packets from all the booths.

Remove all the challenged ballot papers contained in the packets and mix them together before sorting them by candidate.

Determine the number of challenged ballots which have been cast for each candidate and determine which of the Challenged Ballots is invalid.

Keep the Invalid Challenged Ballot Papers separated from the Challenged Ballot Papers. Count them.

Add the Invalid Challenged Ballot Papers to the stack of regular Invalid Ballot Papers which was created during the sorting of ballots from the ballot boxes.

Add the numbers of Invalid Challenged Ballot Papers and regular Invalid Ballots Papers together. This total will be written on the Ballot Statement Account. (Line 4)
Recounting the Ballot Papers:

The Presiding Officer may recount the votes

☐ By his own motion, if he believes it to be necessary

☐ At the request of a contesting candidate or an election agent if the Presiding Officer determines that the request is not unreasonable.

5. STATEMENT OF THE COUNT

The number of votes received by each candidate are reported on the Statement of the Count. (FORM XIV)

☐ Write the names and serial number of each contesting candidate on the Statement of the Count. (Columns 1 and 2)

☐ The Presiding Officer shall write the numbers of votes counted for each candidate in the spaces provided on the Statement of the Count, (Column 3)

☐ After counting the number of "Challenged Ballot Papers" cast for each candidate, the Presiding Officer will also record the individual totals in the space provided on Statement of the Count Form. The number of Challenged Ballot Papers cast for each candidate are reported separately. (Column 4)

☐ For each candidate, the number of regular votes they received are added to the number of Challenged votes they received, and the resulting total is recorded in the space provided. (Column 5)

☐ The total votes received by all candidates written in Column 5 are added together. The sum represents the total number of votes cast for all candidates, including the counted challenged votes. That sum is written on the Statement of the Count. (Line i)

☐ Although the Invalid Challenged Ballot Papers remain separate from the regular Invalid Ballot Papers, their numbers are added together for the purposes of making the entry on the Statement of the Count. (Line ii)
FORM XIV
(See rule 23)
THE STATEMENT OF THE COUNT

Polling Station ..............................................................
Constituency .....................................................................

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Name of the contesting candidates</th>
<th>Number of votes polled by each contesting candidate</th>
<th>Number of challenged votes polled by each contesting candidate</th>
<th>Total votes polled by each contesting candidate</th>
<th>Cols. (3) + (4)</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(i) Total number of votes polled by the contesting candidates (including challenged votes).

(ii) Total number of doubtful votes excluded from the count (including the doubtful challenged votes).

(iii) Aggregate of (i) and (ii).

Place .................................................................
Signature of the Presiding Officer.

Date ..............................................................
☐ The final entry to be made on the Statement of the Count is sum total of votes counted for all candidates, plus the total of all challenged ballot papers. (Line iii)

☐ The Statement of the Count form is signed by the Presiding Officer.

☐ Any contesting candidate, election agent or polling agent who wishes to sign the Statement of the Count is entitled to do so. Any of these persons who wishes to, may also affix their seal on the form. [Chapter III, Article (36)(14)]

☐ The Presiding Officer provide a certified copy of the Statement of the Count form to any candidate, election agent or polling agent who request one.

☐ Place one copy of the Statement of the Count in the special blue packet addressed to the Election Commission. (Packet 16)

☐ The Presiding Officer should keep a copy of the Statement of the Count for his own record.

Packaging of the Counted Ballot Papers:

Prepare a separate Contesting Candidate Packet for each candidate. (Packet #1)

☐ Complete and sign the information required on the face of each packet.

☐ On the face of each Packet, write the number of ballot papers contained inside.

Packaging the Challenged Ballot Papers:

☐ All Challenged Ballot Papers that have been included in the count of votes cast for candidates are packaged together in the Challenged Ballot Paper Packet. (Packet #8)

☐ The Challenged Ballot Papers that have been found to be Invalid are packaged together with the regular Invalid Ballot Papers in Invalid Ballot Papers Packet. (Packet #2)
6. THE BALLOT PAPER ACCOUNT

The Presiding Officer is responsible for the completion of the Ballot Paper Account. (FORM XV) This form is used to show that the ballot papers issued to the polling station have been properly accounted for.

The Presiding Officer may assign Assistant Presiding Officers and Polling Officers to assist in this process. Officers participating in this function should work in pairs to improve accuracy.

A few Polling Officers should be assigned to bring documents and materials to the officers at the work area as they are needed to complete the Ballot Paper Accounting process. The materials and documents which will be needed have been held aside throughout the vote counting process. They were originally brought to the counting center from the polling booths at the close of the polls.

---

FORM XV
(See rule 24)

BALLOT PAPER ACCOUNT
Election to Parliament of Bangladesh.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>From</th>
<th>Constituency.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Polling station________________________________________

1. Ballot papers received for use at the polling station from

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serial No.</th>
<th>to</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Total number of ballot papers taken out of the ballot box or boxes and counted________________________________________

3. Total number of tendered ballot papers________________________________________

4. Total number of challenged ballot papers________________________________________

5. Total number of ballot papers spoiled and cancelled________________________________________

6. Total number of ballot papers under item numbers (7), (3), (4) and (5)________________________________________

7. Number of unissued ballot papers from serial number

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. Total number of item numbers (6) and (7)________________________________________

[should be equal to the total of item No. (1)]

Place________________________________________

Signature of the Presiding Officer.________________________________________

Date________________________________________
As each task in the Ballot Accounting Process is completed, the specific materials related to the task should be packaged immediately. They should be set aside so that they will not be in the way. By keeping them well organized, wrap-up procedures will be more efficient at the end of the evening.

☐ Write the name and number of the Constituency on the Ballot Paper Account Form.

☐ Write the name and number of the Polling Station in the space provided.

**Number of Ballot Papers Issued to the Polling Station:**

From his records, the Presiding Officer knows the total number of ballot papers entrusted to him for the poll.

☐ Write the beginning serial number and the last serial number in the range of ballot papers issued to the Polling Station. (Line 1)

☐ Write the total quantity of ballot papers issued to the Polling Station in the space provided.

☐ The total number of ballot papers taken from the ballot boxes should already have been entered. (Line 2)

**Tendered Ballot Papers:**

From each booth there will be a Tendered Ballot Paper Packet for each candidate.

☐ Sort the Tendered Ballot Paper Packets by candidate.

☐ Open all booth packets for a single candidate. Create a single stack for all the Tendered Ballot Papers marked for the same candidate.

☐ Keep the Tendered Ballot Papers for each candidate segregated from those marked for another candidate. Count the stacks in sequence to come up with one cumulative total of all Tendered Ballot Papers cast at the Polling Station for all candidates.

☐ Write the total number of Tendered Ballot Papers on the Ballot Paper Account. (Line 3)
Packaging the Tendered Ballot Papers:

☑ Return the Tendered Ballot Papers cast for each candidate into a Tendered Ballot Paper Packet on which is written the name of the candidate and the contents.

☑ Place all the separate Tendered Ballot Paper Packets identified for each of the candidates into the Principle Tendered Ballot Paper Packet for the Polling Station. (Packet #6)

Challenged Ballot Papers:

Write the total number of Challenged Ballot Papers cast at the Polling Station, including the Invalid Challenged Ballot Papers, in the space provided on the Ballot Statement Account. (Line 4) This entry should be the same as the number written on the Statement of the Count. (FORM XIV, Line ii)

Spoilt and Cancelled Ballot Papers:

From each booth there will be a Spoilt Ballot Paper Packet.

☑ Open the packets from all the booths and commingle the Spoilt Ballot Papers.

☑ Count the total number of Spoilt Ballot Papers for the Polling Station.

☑ Write the number of Spoilt Ballot Papers on the Ballot Account Form. (Line 5)

Packaging the Spoilt Ballot Papers:

Place all the Spoilt Ballot Papers for the Polling Station in the Spoilt Ballot Packet writing the contents on the face of the Packet. (Packet #5)

Unissued Ballot Papers:

Place all the unused and partially used books of ballot papers left over from all the booths on the work table. For each booth there will more than likely be books of ballot papers from which no ballots have been issued, as well as partial books from which some ballot papers have been used.
- Write down the beginning serial number and the last serial number for each unused book of ballots from which no ballot papers were issued. Next to each, write the quantity of ballot papers each book contains.

- For each partially used book of ballot papers write down the serial number from next available ballot paper left in the book. Then write down the serial number of the last ballot paper in the book. Count the number of ballots remaining in the book and write the number down.

- On a blank piece of paper, make a list identifying the ranges of serial numbers related to each book containing unused ballot papers. Next to the range of serial numbers written for each book, write the quantity of ballot papers they represent. Add these quantities together to get a total number of unissued ballot papers remaining. Write the total number in the space provided on the Ballot Paper Account Form (Line 7)

- Copy the list of serial number ranges on the Ballot Paper Account (Line 7)

**Packaging Unissued Ballots:**

- Package the unused ballot papers in Unissued Ballot Papers Packet. (Packet #4)

- It may be necessary to use more than one packet. Be sure to identify the contents on the face of each packet used.

**Completing the Ballot Statement Account:**

Two calculations must be made to complete the Ballot Statement Account.

- Add Together:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Calculation</th>
<th>Note</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Ballot Papers Taken From the Ballot Boxes (Line 2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ Total Number of Tendered Ballot Papers (Line 3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ Total Number of Challenged Ballot Papers (Line 4)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ Total Number of Spoilt Ballot Papers (Line 5)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write the sum on the Ballot Statement Account (Line 6)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Then Add:

The sum writing on Line 6  
+ Total number of Unissued Ballot Papers (Line 7)  

= Write this sum on the Ballot Paper Account (Line 8)  

The sum on Line 8 of the Ballot Account Statement should equal the total number of Ballot Papers entrusted to the Presiding Officer for the Poll. (Line 1)  

The Presiding Officer must provide a certified copy of the Ballot Paper Account form to any candidate, election agent or polling agent who requests one.  

The Presiding Officer should keep a copy of the Ballot Paper Account for his own record.

7. PRINCIPLE PACKETS AND DELIVER TO THE RETURNING OFFICER

Assemble all the packets and forms that you have processed throughout the counting.

The Presiding Officer must be sure that each packet and form is properly signed.

Ensure that all packets and forms have been completed with correct information.

Make sure that each Packet is sealed securely.

Allow any contesting candidate, candidate agent, or polling agent to also sign and affix a seal to any packet or form if they should so choose.

Review the packets you have already prepared. If you have organized you materials and ballot papers correctly you will have each of the packets identified on the following checklist.
Packets are Provided for Organization of Ballot Papers and Documents.

CHECKLIST OF PACKETS FOR TRANSFERRING BALLOT PAPERS AND MATERIALS TO THE RETURNING OFFICER

In some instances you will find that more than one packet is needed to hold the materials for which they are designed. In these instances, make sure that the face of each packet is filled out completely and signed by the Presiding Officer.

- **Packet #1**: Valid Ballot Packets - separate packets containing the ballot papers counted for each candidate
- **Packet #2**: Ballot Papers Excluded From the Count - containing Invalid Ballot Papers, including the Invalid Challenged Ballot Papers
- **Packet #3**: Principal Packet - for holding Valid Ballot Packets (Packet #1) and Packet for Ballot Papers Excluded from the Count (Packet 2)
- **Packet #4**: Unissued Ballot Papers Packet - containing all ballot papers remaining unused
- **Packet #5**: Spoilt Ballot Papers Packet - containing all spoilt ballots
- **Packet #6**: Tendered Ballot Papers Packet - separate packets containing the tendered ballot papers cast for each candidate
 PACKET CHECKLIST Continued

☐ Packet #7: Principal Tendered Ballot Packet - containing all the Tendered Ballot Papers Packets prepared for the individual candidates

☐ Packet #8: Principal Challenged Ballot Packet - Containing all the challenged ballot papers for the station

☐ Packet #9: Marked Copies of Electoral Rolls - containing the voters lists used in all booths

☐ Packet #10: Counterfoils of Used Ballots - containing the counterfoils for the used ballots from all booths

☐ Packet #11: Tendered Votes Lists Packet - containing the Tendered Voters Lists from all booths

☐ Packet #12: Challenged Votes Lists Packet - containing the Challenged Votes Lists from all booths

☐ Packet #13: Statement of Count Packet - containing the Statement of the Count for the Station (FORM XIV)

☐ Packet #14: Ballot Paper Account Packet - containing the Ballot Paper Account for the Station (FORM XV)

☐ Packet 15: Miscellaneous Papers Packet - containing any other forms or documents as required by the Station

☐ Packet 16: Special Packet - containing a copy of the Statement of the Count to be mailed directly to the Election Commission

Place the Principle Packet and all other Packets 1 through 15 in the hessian bag provided to your Polling Station. Seal the hessian bag securely.

KEEP THE SPECIAL PACKET (Packet 16) SEPARATE. DO NOT INCLUDE IT IN THE HESSIAN BAG.
Transferring the Packaged Materials to the Returning Officer:

As soon as the proceedings have been concluded, it is the responsibility of the Presiding Officer to send all the Packets from the Polling Station to the Returning Officer.

☐ Make sure that at least 2 Polling Officials accompany you as you transfer the materials to the Returning Officer.

☐ Confirm arrangements for security officers to accompany you.

KEEP THE SPECIAL PACKET (Packet # 16) SEPARATE. DO NOT INCLUDE IT IN THE HESSIAN BAG. MAIL THE SPECIAL PACKET DIRECTLY TO THE ELECTION COMMISSION IMMEDIATELY.