

## **Calm Restored in Mahala; Voters Boycott Elections**

Al Masri al Youm

9/4/2008

By Ahmed Shalabi, Adel Durah and Ezzat Masoud

Ahmed Ali Mubarak (15), a secondary school boy, was shot dead with two bullets in the head, to become the first casualty of the April 6 and 7 incidents.

The coronary said the first bullet entered from under the mouth and went out from the skull, while the other bullet stayed behind the ear.

His father said: "Ahmed couldn't sleep from the sound of bullets and tear gas. He curiously opened the window to watch, but got shot. He screamed and we took him to the hospital, but he was already dead. Why should an innocent kid die like this?"

On another note, security was intensified in Mahala to receive Prime Minister Ahmed Nazif, who said that the government has approved a month's bonus for Mahala Textile Company workers and a 15-day bonus for all textile workers across the country.

He told the workers that President Mubarak sends his regards to the Mahala workers who have proved to the world that they are loyal.

Nazif added: "We are aware that prices are rising while wages are low. Egypt is targeted and there are many who want to destroy an industrial edifice like this one, but you did not allow them so. You did your part and we shall do ours."

Meanwhile, the effects of the confrontations in the streets are still evident. Shops are shattered and cleaners are still removing the torn publicity banners of the local election candidates. But security sources said calm has been relatively restored in the city.

The Mahala prosecution remanded 150 demonstrators for 15 days in custody and released 26 others, mostly students and minors.

As to the elections, they had the lowest turnout rate in history, ranging between 1% and 5% at the most. And although the National Democratic Party (NDP) won more than 45 thousand seats uncontested, security forces still prevented the media, human rights observers, opposition parties, independent candidates and even voters from entering the electoral committees.

Government employees in Qalyubia were forced to go cast their votes, while each vote was bought for LE 30 at the Copts School Committee.

Also turnout in Beni Suef was very low, while it did not exceed 5% in Menya