

Small pest poses a big poll test

By Asiuzzaman

A tiny insect has become a major issue for the candidates contesting the upcoming Dhaka City Corporation polls.

The mosquito, which has only a two-week lifecycle, has become the centre of all issues being raised by the candidates and their party leaders.

The new candidates are accusing the immediate past mayor of the ruling party of failing to eradicate mosquitoes which are making the life of

some seven million citizens of Dhaka unbearable.

To counter the allegation, the ruling party's mayoral candidate has said effective measures were taken to check the mosquito menace during his two-and-a-half year tenure.

While the front runner candidates are accusing each other of failure to rid the capital of the menace, the officials of the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) said, it was impossible to make

Dhaka a mosquito-free city unless the capital was kept clean by the citizens themselves.

The DCC had taken up a hundred crore taka mosquito eradication programme every financial year during the last two years. More than one hundred people from both the DCC and the Mosquito Eradication Department used insecticide sprayers in the city to eradicate mosquitoes but the operations proved futile.

Considering the magnitude of the problem, the authorities even convened a high-level meeting in March last year with LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdus Salam Talukder in the chair.

The meeting decided to undertake an all-out programme to control mosquitoes with the help of other ministries.

After the meeting the DCC sent letters to all the ministries requesting them to keep the building premises, drains and other areas under their control clean to check the breeding of mosquitoes.

"But the response was very poor," one DCC official said on condition of anonymity. Moreover, several thousand service latrines silted drains and uncleane ditches are the breeding grounds of mosquitoes in the city, the official added.

"One sq-ft area of stagnant water around your house is enough for breeding mosquitoes," he said, adding: "We will never succeed unless the citizens cooperate with the DCC's efforts to eliminate mosquitoes."

The period from November to February is the high breeding season for mosquitoes.

The DCC used two types of insecticide — pyrifos as larvicide and sicofo as adulticide in its anti-mosquito drive.

Last year, the DCC used the comparatively less powerful Resigen-05 brand for adulticide which failed to kill mosquitoes.

The sicofo gave us good results when the drive began in the second week of November," the DCC official said.

The anti-mosquito drive was geared up during the Sixth SAF Games last December and it would continue at a normal pace until next March during which some 15,000 litres of adulticide and 6,000 litres of larvicide would be sprayed to make Dhaka a mosquito-free — at least temporarily — city.

The DCC official said.

The anti-mosquito drive was held at the Bangabandhu Avenue at three this afternoon.

Mirza Abbas of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), Col. (Retd) Abdul Malek of the Jatiya Party and ATM Azharul Islam of the Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh will hold their rallies at the Manik Mia Avenue, the National Stadium gate and Baitul Mukarram Mosque gate respectively on Thursday. Prime Minister and BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia will address the rally of the BNP candidate.

BNP leader alleged violation of the election rules by both the BNP and the Awami League.

Manzur said this while addressing three electoral meetings yesterday at the Mirpur, Mohakhali and Shantinagar areas.

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Awami League candidate Mohammad Hanif will hold his major public rally at Manik Mia Avenue on the following day.

Sheikh Hosina, Leader of the Opposition and Awami League chief, will address the rally.

A swirling column of mosquitoes glows in the twilight as dusk descends on the city yesterday.

— Star photo

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— Star photo

DCC polls diary

By Staff Correspondent

Supporters of different candidates in the Dhaka City Corporation polls are adding more and more new ideas to the art of campaigning everyday. With only four days left for the elections, the ideas are also getting wilder.

In the Mirpur residential areas yesterday morning, the residents became annoyed, as usual, at the noisy campaigning created by loud speaker voices from innumerable rickshaws.

From one side, one could hear "Vote for Fish" and from the other, "Vote for Bicycle." And someone from in between shouting in favour of the "Rooster".

Understandably, it was indeed hard for anyone to pay attention to any of the messages delivered from the flock of noisy rickshaws. All of a sudden, the people could hear the tone of "Milad Mahfil." It seemed as if a moving Milad Mahfil was roaming around the area. Having the distinct characteristics of the tune used in Milads, everyone rushed to their respective verandahs. It was only one of the other campaigners on a rickshaw, using his new trick!

Graffiti

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how the expenses for graffiti and camps can be estimated and they have been advised to consult the engineering department, the DCC's Chief Executive Officer Abdul Jabbar told The Daily Star last night. "We will seek specific guidelines for the task from the Chief Election Commissioner tomorrow (Tuesday)," he said.

On January 22 the EC issued letters to the Chief Executive Officer of the DCC and also to the Deputy Commissioner to submit to the commission by January 28 the accounts of expenses for wall-writings and erecting election camps so that the costs could be preserved in the candidates' personal files in the Election Commission. Such expenses would be deemed as campaign expenditure of the candidates.

Meanwhile, the DCC yesterday asked the Zonal Officers to visit the election camps and ask the workers to remove those immediately.

Earlier, on Saturday and Sunday the DCC requested the candidates through loudspeakers to remove the camps and erase the graffiti and also published public notices in a section of the press in this regard last week.

Campaigning for the "Pineapple" could be fun. The candidate gives his campaigners yellow balloons, T-shirts and perhaps, who knows, can of pineapple juice, too.

At the Ramna Park Crossing yesterday evening, a candidate's procession with the pineapple as his election symbol was marching towards the Press Club in silence. Silent, because there were not many people around.

The jolly procession was headed by a fellow carrying a gigantic paper pineapple. He was followed by a bunch of street kids. The kids were wearing brand new yellow T-shirts with pineapples printed on them. But instead of being jolly, the kids were trembling in the chilly late January breeze. They could not wear anything heavier over their T-shirts because that would spoil the very purpose of the campaign.

A passer-by, seeing the shivering pineapple campaigners commented: "They must be feeling like chilled pineapple juice!"

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Published by Mediaworld Ltd. 52, Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000 and printed at City Publishing House Ltd, 90 Kakrakil, Dhaka-1000. Editorial, News & Commercial Offices: House No: 11, Road No: 3, Dhanmondi R/A, Dhaka-1205. PABX: 500092-4. Advertisement: 500091 (Direct). Fax No: 88-02-863035. GPO Box No: 3257. Cable: DAILYSTAR DHAKA.



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia shaking hands with a child during her DCC election campaign at Abhoy Das Lane in the city yesterday.

Repression in Kashmir has increased: Benazir

ISLAMABAD, Jan 24: Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto accused India Monday of increasing repression in Kashmir. The proposal has been rejected by New Delhi.

Bhutto said talks with India would be "fruitless" until there was an improvement in the Kashmir human-rights situation.

But she stopped short of ruling out a resumption of talks. She said India already had 600,000 troops in Kashmir and that it was sending two more divisions there in a bid to "crush" the Muslim uprising.

More than 8,000 people have been killed in the Indian-controlled southern two-thirds of Kashmir since a separatist campaign intensified in 1989, amid accusations by New Delhi that Pakistan was fueling the revolt.

Islamabad denies India's allegation that it is training and arming the militants in its only Muslim-majority state.

Enthusiastic people came out of their houses and formed a veritable human barricade to get a look at the charismatic leader.

It took one and a half hours to cross the residential areas of Sabujbagh, Bashabo and Madartek. The Prime Minister did not avail of any government facilities during the tour.

She addressed six public meetings yesterday, urging people to vote for the bicycle.

"Abbas has proved his honesty and capability as a mayor," the BNP chief reiterated at her first meeting in front of the Arambagh market.

She said the BNP enjoys mass support of the people which was proved in the last parliamentary elections.

"The BNP leaders have the courage to resign ahead of elections, and this is because of the popular support," the ruling party chief said.

She said the development of the city would continue uninterrupted if Mirza Abbas is elected mayor.

BNP leaders Tariqul Islam, Rafiqul Islam Miah, Mir Shakwak Ali, Barrister Jamiruddin Sircar, Jahanara Begum, Shamsun Nahar, Khwaja Ahsanullah, MP, Ziaul Huq Zia, Mirza Abbas, M Sanwar Hossain, Moazzem Hossain Alal and D M Hossain Monnu also addressed the rally.

Meanwhile, a number of central leaders continued campaigning in the city separately.

The Prime Minister was then taken to the VIP lounge where she exchanged informal views on a number of issues with the journalists of different newspapers and news agencies.

Partial strike

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ment's accord with the World Bank on the reformation of certain sectors, reopening of the closed industrial units, release of labour leaders and applying the Wage Commission Award to the employees of private sector industries.

As the opposition political parties did not support the strike, it could not affect normal life. The movement of vehicular traffic including the inter-city bus services was normal. The domestic and international flights of Biman Bangladesh Airlines, railway, launch and steamer services were also normal.

In the evening, the striking labourers brought out in the city a procession carrying sticks. The procession was led by their leaders Nur Hossain, Iqbal Majumder and Abul Hossain. The procession created a two-hour traffic jam in the Gulistan area.

Trade union sources claimed that four lakh workers and employees of the industrial belts refrained from duties in response to the strike call.

In a press release last night, the trade unionists also stated "the attack on the workers by hired goons of the government to foil their agitation."

The press release was signed by Abul Bashar, Lutfar Rahman, Shahidullah Chowdhury, Shah Alam, Anwar Begum and others.

Our Narayanganj correspondent reported normal operation at Adamjee, the country's largest jute mills.

The striking workers brought out processions in small groups and staged street meetings at Khalishpur chanting their demands.

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