

# Vow to choose 'right persons'

## Tangail town dwellers unite as campaign starts

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Contestants for the mayoral and councillor posts have started door-to-door campaign ahead of the election in Tangail municipality while the town dwellers are concerned about electing the 'right persons' who would solve their problems and ensure basic civic facilities.

Unplanned construction of buildings, especially during the last few years, has turned the town into a concrete jungle while residents are suffering much due to poor drainage system, indiscriminate dumping of wastes and lack of necessary footpath along the main streets, said locals.

Established in 1887, the municipality now comprises 18 wards and the number of voters is 99,100.

"Dirty water remain stagnant at different places including my area due to lack of proper drainage system. The Victoria canal in the town has already died due to construction of markets on it. Dirty and stinking

water on the drains under the markets have become breeding grounds of mosquito, turning the area unhygienic," said Rafiqul Islam, a resident of ward No 18 (Biswas Betka area) of the municipality.

"So, we the voters are thinking about choosing the

right candidates who have commitment to solving the problem," he added.

Businessman Shahadat Hossain, a resident of ward No 16, said the town has turned into a concrete jungle due to unplanned and indiscriminate construction of numerous markets and

commercial and residential buildings.

"Surprising though, the main streets of the municipality are without any footpath. Consequently, traffic jam and associated problems cause sufferings to commuters and pedestrians. I will vote for the candi-

dates who will take steps considering the future of the municipality," he said.

"It is a matter of sorrow that huge wastes including polythene are dumped on the entrance of the town as the municipality authorities does not take any steps to dispose it properly," said service-holder Shahidul Islam of Ashekpur area of the municipality.

"Dozens of legal and illegal private clinics and hospitals dump their untreated and harmful wastes beside the main streets of the town, posing serious health hazards. We the residents want a planned town with all civic facilities," he said.

The mayoral candidates - incumbent Mayor of the municipality Jamilur Rahman Miron of Krishak Sramik Janata League, journalist Jafar Ahmed of BNP and Shahidur Rahman Mukti of Awami League have already pledged to the voters that they will make the municipality a clean and planned area with all civic facilities, if voted to the mayoral post.



PHOTO: STAR

This open waste dumping area beside the road at the entrance of Tangail municipality at Ashekpur bears testimony to the authorities' utter negligence to public health and decency of town.

# Mayoral candidates face the voters

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Natore

Mayoral candidates in Natore and Singra municipalities yesterday responded to voters' queries in 'face-to-face programmes' organised by Shushashoner Jonney Nagarik (Shujan), a citizens' rights organisation.

Mayoral candidates Shamin Al Razi Mohammad Shihanur Rahman and Golam Kabir, who attended the programme at Singra in Natore district, pledged to remain 100% corruption-free and stand by the people to meet all their demands.

Voters can play the major role to free the area from corruption, Dr Badiul Alam Mojumdar, said in his speech as chief guest of the

programme.

BNP-backed candidate Shamim Al Razi said if voters elect him, he will set up a diabetic hospital and an eye hospital and develop the roads of the town.

When asked about starting an auditorium and public library to prevent juvenile delinquency, Shamim said, "Although the matter is under upazila parishad, I will take necessary steps regarding it, if elected."

Advocate Golam Kabir, 'rebel candidate' of ruling Awami League, said if he is elected, all the development work would be focused on the opinion of the general people.

When asked about child marriage, Golam Kabir said he would take steps to

remove the tradition of child marriage from the municipality area.

Both the candidates promised to accept the people's verdict if they are defeated.

Another mayoral candidate, Awami League-backed Asaduzzaman Bachchu did not attend the programme.

Advocate Shakhawat Hossain, president of Natore unit of Shujan, presided over the meeting.

Shujan also organised similar programme in Natore municipality where mayoral candidates Kamrul Islam and Sajedul Islam answered several questions asked by the voters.

BNP backed candidate Emdadul Haq did not attend the programme.



## Chandpur: AL selects its seven mayor candidates

The ruling Awami League (AL) has finalised its mayor candidates for seven municipalities of the district, reports a correspondent.

The AL nominated candidates are incumbent Mayor Nasir Uddin Ahmed (Chandpur), Gazi Mainuddin (Hajiganj), Ahsan Habib (Kachua), Haji Mohammad Billal Hossain Sarker (Chengerchar), Incumbent Mayor Nurul Islam (Matlab), incumbent Mayor Mosharrif Hossain (Shahrasti) and Abdur Rahman Bablu (Faridganj).

Leaders and activists of Awami League upazila and municipal units have been asked to work for the nominated candidates. Besides, BNP is yet to finalise its mayor candidates for the municipalities.

Mominul Haq, president of BNP Chandpur district unit, said the central committee will announce the names of mayor candidates soon.

## Patuakhali: AL, BNP declare names of candidates

The district units of the ruling Awami League and opposition BNP have declared the names of their mayor candidates in the upcoming election to Patuakhali municipality scheduled for January 13, reports our correspondent.

District AL formally declared the name of Dr Shafiqul Islam as its candidate for the post of mayor on Friday night while BNP announced the name of its district unit Joint Convener MA Rob as candidate for the post.

"We asked our local leaders and activists to seek vote for our party candidate Dr Shafiq," said Khan Mosharrif Hossain, general secretary of AL district unit.

Earlier, advocate Tariquzzaman Moni, vice-president of AL town unit, was nominated as party candidate. As per order of the AL central committee, Moni withdrew his candidature on December 22.

BNP district unit announced the names of its mayor and councillor candidates through a press release on Friday afternoon.

According to the press release signed by the district unit joint convener, the councillor candidates are Maksud Ahmed Bayezid Panna, Sahida Khanom Runu, Shamsunnahar Lily, Syed Salim Siddique, Anwar Hossain Sikder, Mostafizur Rahman, Akhtaruzzaman, SM Touhid, Abdur Razzak Molla, Abdul Awal Akan and Saiful Islam.

## Manikganj: Two AL men still in race at Singair

Two Awami League mayor candidates are still in election race in Singair municipality of Manikganj district. They are incumbent Mayor Mir Mohammad Shahjahan and MM Alamgir Hossain, reports our correspondent.

Awami League Manikganj district and upazila units are yet to announce the name of a single candidate for the post of mayor of the municipality. BNP nominated candidate for the post is advocate Khorsheed Alam Bhuyan Joy.

Forty-two councillor candidates and 11 women for the reserved seats are contesting the election. The candidates have already started door to door campaign to woo voters.

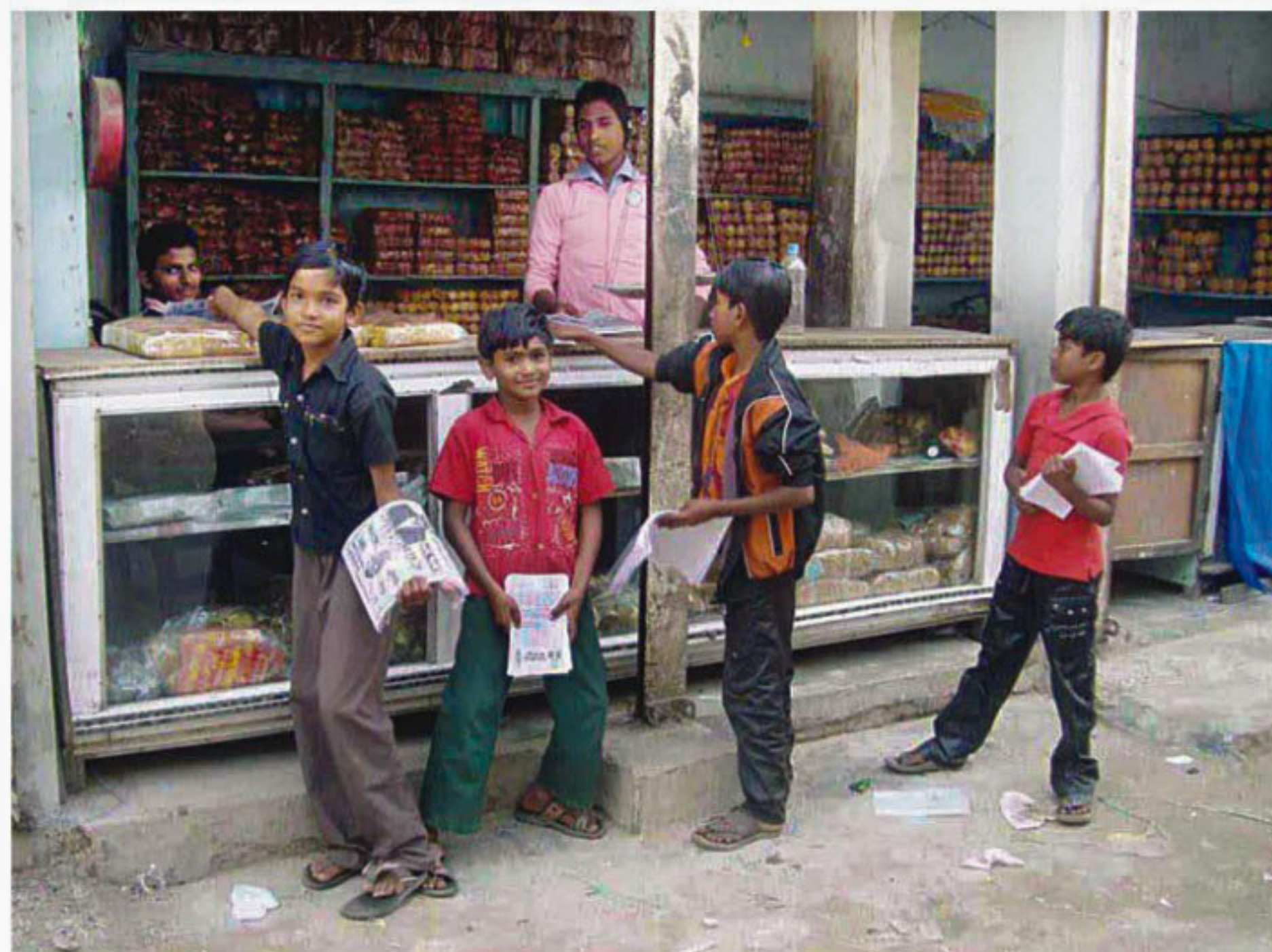


PHOTO: STAR

Children take part in the campaign for a candidate in the municipal election at Kalapara in Patuakhali district. They are employed for the task for money, defying ban on involving kids in such an act. The photo was taken from Sadar Road on Friday.

# Children being used illegally to woo votes

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Children are allegedly being used in election campaign in Kalapara municipality of Patuakhali district.

Four tender aged children were seen distributing leaflets for a candidate among the voters at Monoharpatti in the upazila town on Friday.

Asked how they were engaged in this work, Roni, 9, one of the four, said each of them were getting Tk 40 to 50 every day for the job.

They were distributing leaflets wooing votes for Nurul Haque Munshi, an independent candidate in Kalapara municipal polls. He is one of the three mayoral candidates in Kalapara municipality.

Munshi said, "They (children) may be getting involved spontaneously. I did not engage them in such activities".

Returning Officer Md Liakot Ali, also UNO of Kalapara upazila, said nobody

complained in this regard. He did not find such things happening during the drive conducted against violation of the code of conduct.

"Action will be taken, if anyone found employing children in such unlawful activities", the UNO said.

Meanwhile, different child rights groups had strongly lobbied for banning use of children in poll campaign during electoral reforms by the last caretaker government.



PHOTO: STAR

Clad in warm clothes and holding umbrella, people walk along the road near Thakurgaon Government Boys' High School yesterday as drizzle adds to the biting cold in the northern region.

# Cold spell paralyses life in northern districts

## Drizzle adds to sufferings of people

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

The first cold spell of this season has begun adding to the misery of the poor and disadvantaged people in the northern districts.

The bone-chilling cold wave coupled with drizzling from Thursday in the last 3/4 days disrupted normal life in Thakurgaon and Panchagarh districts.

As people are forced to stay indoors, business and official activities are hampered while students' attendance in schools and colleges became thin.

Low income group people, especially who earn on daily basis, are unable to manage work due to the bad weather.

The minimum temperature recorded in Thakurgaon was 12 degrees Celsius while it was eight degrees in Panchagarh district yesterday, local Met office sources said.

The sun remained invisible during the last three days. Fog and drizzling amid sweeping cold winds from the western and northwestern directions have added to the sufferings of the com-

mon people. Although different government and non-government organisations have started distribution of warm clothes, it is too inadequate for the poor in the two districts.

We wrote to the higher authorities for 30 thousand blankets and other warm clothes for distribution among the distressed. We have also requested the solvent people to help the poor. In the meantime, we received 25,000 blankets and the district administration has already distributed them in five upazilas," Thakurgaon deputy commissioner Muhammad Shahiduzzaman told this correspondent.

Agricultural activities are also being hampered as farmers cannot work in crop

fields due to the chilling cold, said Khairul Alam, deputy director of Thakurgaon Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE).

On the other hand potato farmers are worried due to severe cold as it may cause fungal and pest attack on potato plants, DAE sources said, adding it is also harmful for seed beds of IRRI-Boro paddy.

Increasing number of patients, especially children and elderly people, are crowding hospitals with cold-related diseases, said Dr Khairul Kabir, senior consultant of Thakurgaon Sadar Hospital.

Several people have died of cold-related diseases during the last few days in Thakurgaon district, family and hospital sources said.



PHOTO: STAR

Mayoral candidates Shamim Al Razi and Golam Kabir join hands at the 'face-to-face with voters' programme organised by Shushashoner Jonno Nagarik at Singra municipality in Natore district yesterday.

# Sundarbans pirates kill two fishermen

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Two fishermen were killed and 15 others injured in armed attack by pirates of the Sundarbans at about 3:00am on Saturday.

The incident took place at Haldikhali under Mongla upazila of Bagerhat district.

One of the dead was identified as Bhabotosh Saha, 32, of Laudob village under Dakope upazila of Khulna district, police said.

Sources said, a group of fishermen were going to Dublarchar from Rampal upazila of Bagerhat district for fishing in the Bay of Bengal.

The pirates belonging to Gama and Zulfikar gangs of the Sundarbans raided the engine trawler of the fishermen and demanded money from them.

The pirates sprayed bullets at fishermen failing to get the money. Bhabotosh Saha and another fishermen died on the spot.

While going away, the pirates took both the bodies with them, said Kamaluddin Ahmed, joint secretary of Dublarchar fishermen's association.

Two out of 15 fishermen injured in the armed attack have been admitted to Khulna Medical College and Hospital while 13 others are undergoing treatment at Mongla and Bagerhat hospitals.

Meanwhile, CGS Noakhali, a ship of Coastguards Mongla West Zone has rushed to the spot for carrying out combing operation to arrest the alleged pirates. The coastguards are being assisted by police and forest guards, sources said.

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