

Harijans vote every time amid empty promises

RABIUL HASAN, Chapainawabganj

Unlike other areas of the country, the enthusiasm for the upcoming municipal election has hardly touched the Harijan people in Chapainawabganj town.

Their 'value' increases only when polls approach. The candidates give them many promises but those are hardly met.

About 50 families belonging to the Harijan community live in the sweeper colony, locally known as Methorpara in Chapainawabganj town, and the number of voters there is about 100.

Thirty-two other families of Harijan community live in 'station area', Court Bagan and near Rajmohol Cinema Hall, and the candidates are trying to woo their votes by making various pledges.

"People of Harijan community clean the town but they themselves

live in dirty, unhygienic and dilapidated quarters. Around 25 years ago, former municipal chairman late Abdul Mannan Sentu constructed a tin-shed building in Methorpara and arranged dwelling of 15 Harijan families there. That time each family got one room with a veranda. Now at least 50 families live in the same area," said Dulal Kumar, president of Harijan Durga Puja Udjapon Parishad.

"Lack of proper housing facility is the main problem of the Harijan community which forces them to scatter around the town," he added.

Putul Rani, 70, said, "There are only two toilets for 220 people. Previous mayors of Chapainawabganj municipality have failed to ensure adequate civic amenities for the Harijan people."

"Want of pure drinking water, sewerage system, insufficient toilets and residential problems plague the Harijan community and yet no mayor has met our demands," said Pacha Jamadar, 80, of Harijan Palli.

"Many government offices including Chapainawabganj municipality are hiring people from other communities as sweepers. As a result unemployment in our community is increasing," said Tilok Jamadar, 80.

"Candidates of different political parties make many pledges to voters before the municipality election but they forget all after being elected," said Parul Rani.

"We continue to suffer but nobody pays any attention. Everybody forgets that we are human too," Punnu Jamadar, 65, said.

The Harijans are now waiting for the right person who can work for their overall welfare.



PHOTO: STAR

Residents of Parkakra and Nijkakra villages render voluntary service to build a 900-foot-long bamboo bridge over Kakra Beel, a water body in Nepalatali union of Gabtali upazila under Bogra district. Local social workers Md Zahedul Islam and Md Aminul Islam initiated the task to ease communication for thousands of people, especially school children in the area.



PHOTO: STAR

Harijans in Chapainawabganj town, traditionally doing the work of cleaners, are deprived of basic civic amenities although the town would have become unliveable without their service. Promises made to them by contestants before polls hardly see any implementation.

Headmaster punished for taking money for textbooks

60,000 new books seized from ruling party men

STAR NATIONAL DESK

A headmaster was punished for realising money for textbooks while a task force seized 60,000 new textbooks on Tuesday.

In Satkhira, headmaster of a primary school was suspended on Tuesday for allegedly realising money from the students for textbooks.

Local education office took the step against Bithi Sanyal, headmaster of Jhhowdanga Government Primary School in Sadar upazila, reports our correspondent.

A guardian of two students of the school alleged that his two sons read in the school and the headmaster on Saturday realised Tk. 30 from each of his sons and other students of the school while giving a way textbooks

meant for free distribution.

On getting the allegations, district primary education officer Panchanon Bala asked Sadar upazila primary education officer (TEO) Tapan Kumar Karmakar and ATEO Faruk Hossain to investigate the matter.

The two went to the school on January 3 and recorded the statements of guardians, local people and students. During probe they found that the headmaster realised money from the students while distributing books.

The headmaster admitted to the two officials that the school realised money from the students to bear carrying costs and other expenses, sources said.

Later district primary education

officer Panchanon Bala suspended her on Tuesday.

In Jessore, a task force headed by Sadar UNO Rezaul Karim and assisted by district primary education officer (DPEO) Arun Sen Gupta seized 60,000 new textbooks of class three from two separate places of the town Tuesday.

Samir Kundu and Abdul Mannan, two leaders of Jessore district unit of Swechhashebak League were arrested for keeping the books in their illegal possession, reports our staff correspondent in Khulna.

According to police, 18,000 books were seized from a house at Bejpara under Sadar police station while 42,000 books were found in another house in the same area.

SUJAN PROGRAMMES IN 2 DIST

More mayor aspirants face voters, pledge to work for them

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Sushashoner Jonney Nagarik (Sujan), an organisation working for ensuring good governance, has continued its countrywide programme to bridge the gap between mayoral candidates and voters about electoral commitments and their implementation.

In a 'face to face with people' programme organised by Sujan at Satkhira Shilpakala Academy auditorium, six mayoral candidates in Satkhira municipality yesterday pledged to remain hundred percent corruption-free and stand by the people to meet all their demands, reports our Satkhira correspondent.

Awami League-backed candidate Sheikh Ashraf Haque, also the incumbent mayor, said he will take measures to complete the incomplete development projects taken in his tenure, if elected.

His fight against corruption, narcotics drug peddlers, addicts and extortionists will continue, he said.

Former mayor and BNP-backed candidate MA Jalil said if voters elect him he will focus on the development of roads, drainage system and educational institutions.

Jatiya Party (JP-Ershad) backed candidate Sheikh Azhar Hossain said he will free the municipal area from corruption and take development projects in the town.

Three other candidates -- Sheikh Mohammad Akbar Hossain, Solaiman Sardar and Syed Ikhtiar Ali promised to keep themselves free from corruption and make the area free from extortion.

All the candidates also

promised to take steps to re-excavate Pransayerer canal flowing through the town.

Our Kurigram correspondent reports: Six mayor aspirants of Kurigram municipality in a 'face to face' programme on the premises of local Central Shahid Minar yesterday vowed to work for development of Kurigram municipality.

The district unit of Sujan, Supro (Sushashoner Jonney Procharabhijan) and corruption prevention committee of the Conscious Citizens Committee under TIB (Transparency International Bangladesh) jointly organised the function where about five hundred people including civil society members, teachers, NGO activists and journalists were present.

The audience demanded that the would be mayor remain free from corruption, solve communication problem and take steps for electrification, supply of pure drinking water, making new graveyards, freeing the municipality from drugs and women's empowerment.

The six aspirants -- Awami League (AL)-backed candidate Md Kaziul Islam (television symbol), 'rebel' candidate of AL Md Abdul Jalil (inkpot-pen symbol), BNP-backed candidate Md Abu Bakar Siddik (wall clock symbol), 'rebel' candidate of BNP Md Nur Islam Nuru (pineapple symbol), Jatiya Party-backed candidate Md Majidul Alam (lock symbol) and independent candidate Shakhawat Hossen Bipul (cup-plate symbol) promised to the people that they will fulfil people's hope through development of the municipality.

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ELECTION fever

Bhola: SC clears way for holding Char Fashion polls

The Supreme Court yesterday cleared the way for holding election to Char Fashion municipality in the district scheduled to be held on January 27.

Justice S K Sinha, chamber judge of the Appellate Division, yesterday stayed for six weeks a High Court order that halted the process for holding election to this municipality, reports a correspondent.

The judge passed the order following a petition filed by the Election Commission seeking stay on the HC order.

He also asked the EC to file a regular leave to appeal petition with the SC against the HC order within six weeks.

Additional Attorney General MK Rahman told this correspondent that now there is no legal bar to holding polls in the municipality on January 27 following the apex court order.

In response to a writ petition, the HC on December 15 last stayed the election process.

Joypurhat: Candidate fined for violating poll code

A mayor candidate in Kalai municipal election was fined by a mobile court for violating electoral code of conduct on Wednesday.

Accused Mamunur Rashid had to pay a fine of Tk 20,000, reports UNB.

Kalai UNO and upazila returning officer Abdur Rahim said as per electoral code of conduct more than five people at a time cannot take part in electioneering in favour of any candidate.

But a showdown with the participation of over 200 people in favour of the candidate was held on Wednesday morning.

While returning to his office after attending a training workshop on the upcoming election, Abdur Rahim witnessed the showdown at about 11:30am and took it into cognizance.

Instantly, a mobile court fined the candidate Tk 20,000, in default, to suffer 15 days in jail.

Mamunur Rashid is contesting the polls as a rebel candidate of ruling Awami League. The voting in the municipality will take place on January 12.