

Big two parties face 'rebels' in most Sylhet divn towns

IQBAL SIDDIQUEE, Sylhet
Voters of 16 municipalities in four districts of Sylhet division will elect their representatives in the local body polls scheduled for January 18.

As many as 74 candidates are contesting for mayoral posts in the 16 municipalities.

In most cases, more than one candidate both from the Awami League led alliance and the BNP led alliance are contesting for the mayoral post.

In Sylhet district, election will be held in two municipalities.

In Zakiganj, contestants for the mayoral post are incumbent Mayor Iqbal Ahmed, also chief of a faction of local BNP, upazila AL President Anwar Hossain, municipality AL General Secretary MA Hafiz, municipality BNP chief Badrul Haque Badal and former UP Chairman Abdul Khaliq. Thirty-seven people are on the race for councillorship.

In Kanaighat municipality, upazila AL President Lutfur Rahman, BNP General Secretary Abdul Matin, Bhanulal Dass (AL), Abdul Malik (BNP), Md Oliullah (Jamaat), Suhel Amin (Jatiya Party-JP) and businessman Tajuddin are in the mayoral race.

Four municipalities in Sunamganj district will see election on January 18.

In Sunamganj municipality, AL leader Ayub Bakht Zaglu is contesting Saleha Begum of JP and Shergul Ahmed for the mayoralship while 68 others are in fight for councillor posts.

In Chhatak, sitting Mayor AL leader Abul Kalam Chowdhury, another AL leader former mayor MA Wahid Maznu Miah, Jahangir Alam and Saifur



MUNICIPAL ELECTION
Rahman Chowdhury are contesting for mayorship while there are 37 candidates for councillor posts. In Jagonnathpur, sitting Mayor AL leader Abdul Monaf is facing Akhtaruzzaman Akhtar of

74 to vie for mayor posts in 16 municipalities

BNP, Shah Nurul Karim, Lutfur Rahman, Anwar Miah, Shamim Ahmed and Abdul Hannan while 44 others are contesting for the councillor posts.

In Derai municipality, Azizur Rahman Bulbul of AL is to face Mainuddin

Majority polling centres 'risky'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

A staggering 107 of the 194 polling centres in four districts of Sylhet division have been listed as vulnerable to violence ahead of the January 18 elections in 16 municipalities under the division.

Two of the risky centres are in Sylhet, 53 in Sunamganj, 43 in Habiganj and 9 others in Moulvibazar district.

"We have prepared the district-wise lists of vulnerable centres considering previous records of violence and location of centres," said Mosharraf Hossain Bhuiyan, deputy inspector general of police (Sylhet Range).

One of the seven polling centres in Zakiganj municipality and another one of the nine centres in Kanaighat municipality under Sylhet district have been marked vulnerable.

In Sunamganj district, 53 of 64 centres

BNP leader Kamal Uddin Ahmed is facing AL leaders Shafi Alam Yunus and Md Shafiul Alam Shafi, BNP leader Md Matiur Rahman, and Enamul Islam.

Mayoral candidates in Srimongal municipality are sitting Mayor and former lawmaker Md Ahad Miah, former municipal chairman AL leader MA Rahim, former chairman BNP leader Mohsin Miah Modhu, advocate Bhubaneshwar Purkayostha, Abdul Momin Tafader, Khokan Singha and Nazrul Islam.

In Komolganj, seven persons including sitting Mayor BNP leader Hasin Afroze Chowdhury, municipality BNP President Abu Ibrahim Zamshed and upazila BNP General Secretary Iqbal Parvez Chowdhury Shahin, upazila AL Vice-president Aslam Iqbal Milon, municipality AL General Secretary Afsar Saleh, Syed Mohammad Ibrahim (Jamaat) and Md

have been identified as vulnerable. They include 18 in Sunamganj, 14 in Chhatak, all the 16 in Jagannathpur and five in Derai municipality.

In Habiganj district, 43 out of 55 polling centres are vulnerable -- 16 in Habiganj, four in Shayestaganj, seven in Madhabpur and 16 in Chunarughat and Nabiganj municipalities.

Nine other vulnerable centres are in five municipalities of Moulvibazar district.

The district police of Sylhet, Habiganj, Moulvibazar and Sunamganj have started special drives to arrest criminals, the official said, adding that the crackdown will be intensified two or three days ahead of the polls and continue until election results are announced.

Army personnel will also be deployed in municipalities to help maintain law and order, he said.

Muhibur Rahman (Al-Islah) are in the mayoral race.

In Baralekha, contestants are Rafiqul Islam (AL), Fokhrul Islam (BNP), Khijir Ahmed (Jamaat), Abdun Nur and Khalilur Rahman.

Election will be held in five municipalities of Habiganj district. Incumbent Mayor of Habiganj municipality GK Gous, also general secretary of district BNP is facing municipality AL President Md Sharif Ullah for the mayor post.

In Shayestaganj, mayoral candidates are sitting Mayor BNP leader Md Farid Ahmed Oli, upazila AL General Secretary Abdur Rashid Talukder Iqbal and former municipality chairman AL leader Md Abdur Razzaque Raja Miah.

Fifty-three people are contesting for councillor posts.

In Nabiganj municipality, sitting Mayor AL leader Tofazzal Islam Chowdhury is contesting with another AL leader Kripashindhu Roy Chowdhury and BNP leader Abdus Shahid Golap while 47 people are vying for councillor posts.

Mayoral candidates in Madhabpur municipality are incumbent Mayor and upazila AL President MM Muslim, BNP leaders Md Hamdu Miah and Habibur Rahman Manik, and AL leader Hirendra Lal Saha. There are 40 candidates for councillor posts.

In Chunarughat, mayoral candidates are present municipality administrator Md Ali, also general secretary of upazila BNP, upazila AL Secretary Md Abu Taher, Haji Abdus Salam Talukder (JP), Md Siraj Ali Mir (BNP) and AM Yahiya Talukder (AL) and SK Iftekharul Gani. Sixty-three people are contesting for councillorship posts.



LAST MINUTE CAMPAIGN: TV actor Litu Anam conducts a mass contact at Ashrampara in Thakurgaon town yesterday in favour of his elder brother Shafiul Enam Parvez, incumbent councillor in Ward No 8 and also a contestant for the post, ahead of tomorrow's municipality election.

RANGPUR DIVISION

Mayoral candidates allege violation of poll code

RAFIQUE SARKER, Rangpur

Mayoral candidates in different municipalities in Rangpur division have brought allegation of violation of electoral code of conduct.

In Sunderganj municipality, grand alliance candidate Abdul Mozd Mondol made a showdown with about 300 supporters on Thursday.

Nurunnabi Saju, immediate past mayor of the municipality formally lodged this complaint with the office of returning officer.

Eyewitnesses said, when the procession in favour of Mozd reached Hablu point, police intercepted the supporters and dispersed them.

Contacted, Abdul Mozd, however, denied the allegation of any showdown in favour of him in the town.

Returning officer of Sunderganj municipality election Shamsul Azam told this correspondent that he would take action against the candidate in this connection after investigation.

In Lalmonirhat municipality, a woman councillor candidate was fined Tk1,000 for violating electoral code of conduct on Saturday night.

According to the district election officer, a woman candidate with about 50 supporters was campaigning on Saturday night. Therefore, the returning officer fined her Tk1,000.

The election officer, however, refused to disclose the name of the councillor candidate.



Meanwhile, grand alliance mayor candidate in Lalmonirhat municipality Reazul Islam Rintu formally lodged a complaint with returning officer saying that former mayor Mosharraf Hossain Rana is giving cash and kinds among the voters at night to bag votes in favour of him.

Rintu also alleged that former deputy minister Asadul Habib Dulu is giving cash to voters in favour of BNP candidate Hafizar Rahman Babla.

Contacted, Rintu said he lodged the complaint against Rana and Babla but RO did not take any action against them till the date.

The returning officer of Lalmonirhat municipality election admitted that he received the complaint and said he engaged law enforcing agencies to investigate if Rana is really using cash and kinds to influence voters.

In Kurigram, president of Awami League (AL) in Kurigram municipality unit Abdul Jalil, also mayor candidate, alleged that mayor candidates- Kaziul Islam and Abu Bakar Siddique are bribing the voters.

Returning Officer of Kurigram municipality said he was not aware of any such allegation. He said, "We have requested Abdul Jalil to show a voter whom Kaziul and Abu Bakar Siddique were trying to influence by giving cash."



Posters of municipal candidates flutter at Rangamati giving the hill district town a festive look, right, a boat race in Kirtankhola river in Barisal yesterday marking the upcoming polls.



PHOTO: STAR

BNP, AL expel 'rebel' mayor candidates

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Ruling Awami League (AL) and Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) have expelled five 'rebel' mayor candidates in Rangpur division and Jhenidah.

BNP expelled three mayor candidates while AL one in Rangpur division for their candidature in violation of party decision, reports our Rangpur correspondent.

The expelled BNP leaders include organising secretary of BNP of Kurigram district unit Nurul Islam Nuru, BNP secretary of Patgram municipality unit in Lalmonirhat district Morshed Alam Shyamol and BNP president of Lalmonirhat municipality Mosarraf Hossain Rana.

Secretary of BNP Kurigram district unit Saifur Rahman said Nurul Islam did not follow the party instruction to withdraw his candidature and work for



MUNICIPAL ELECTION
BNP vice president of the district unit Abu Bakor.

In Lalmonirhat, mayor candidate Mosarraf Hossain Rana said he was expelled from the party before election as he did not comply with the request of former deputy minister and president of BNP of the district unit Asadul Habib Dulu.

Asadul Habib Dulu said Rana is no more in the party now. It was district and municipality units' unanimous decision that Hafizar Rahman Babla would be the candidate in Lalmonirhat municipality election, he said.

In Thakurgaon, AL expelled general secretary of Jubo League of Ranishankoil upazila Alamgir Sarker as he is contesting election instead of backing grand alliance candidate Jatiya Party leader Md. Toha violating party decision.

BNP expelled a mayor candidate in Jhenidah as she is campaigning in her electoral area under Kaliganj municipality violating party decision, reports our correspondent.

Kaliganj BNP president and municipal mayor Mahubur Rahman announced her expulsion at a meeting of BNP activists and leaders on Thursday.

BNP president Mahubur Rahman said, Ashrafuzzaman Lal was nominated by the party. Despite several warning Shahanaz Parveen is carrying on election campaign as mayor candidate compelling the party to expel her.

Shahanaz Parveen said she will continue the election campaign as she is the appropriate candidate and her grandfather is the founder of BNP in Kaliganj upazila.

The municipal mayor has nominated a person with criminal charges, she said.

FACE-TO-FACE WITH VOTERS

Meherpur, Satkhira mayor aspirants make pledges

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Mayoral candidates in Meherpur and Satkhira have vowed to reduce holding tax, build hospitals, roads, shishu parks and houses for the poor in their respective municipalities, if elected.

They also promised to fight against corruption, drug, stalking and extortion, ensure supply of safe drinking water, preserve communal harmony and beautify the municipality.

Five mayoral candidates in Meherpur municipality made their electoral pledges and responded to voters' queries in a 'face-to-face with people' programme organised by Sushashoner Jonno Nagarik (Sujan) at Saheed Dr Shamsuzzoha Park Sunday afternoon, reports our Kushtia correspondent.

The candidates are Motasim Billah Motu, Advocate Yaurul Islam, Jahangir Biswas, Abdur Rahman and Moslem Ali. They all promised to fulfil the election pledges, if voted to power. Sujan Meherpur district unit president Robiul Islam Baga presided over the programme.

work for the well-being of the townspeople, if elected.

They made their commitments while responding to voters' queries in a 'face to face with people programme' at Poursava auditorium with yesterday.

Satkhira Sachetan Nagarik Committee, a unit of Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB), organised the programme with AKM Shahidullah in the chair.

Mayoral candidates Sheikh Ashrafal Haque (AL), MA Jalil (BNP), Sheikh Azhar Hossain (JP-Ershad), Sheikh Mohammad Akbar Hossain, Solaiman Sardar and Syed Ikhtiar Ali attended the programme.

They all pledged to take up development projects, strengthen local government administration to check crimes and play active role to stop stalking and repression on women, if voted to power.

The mayoral candidates also vowed to keep themselves free from corruption, accept the people's verdict in the election and work together for the development of the municipality.

Advocate Abul Kalam Azad, convener of the local unit of Sachetan Nagarik Committee, chaired the programme. He urged the voters to judiciously exercise their right to vote.

ELECTION fever

Khulna: BNP demands army in Chalna, Paikgachha

BNP Khulna district unit yesterday demanded deployment of army in Chalna and Paikgachha for holding free, fair and peaceful elections to the municipalities scheduled for January 13, reports our staff correspondent.

Prof Majidul Islam, president of the unit, made the demand at a press conference at the party office here in the morning.

"We want army deployment at Chalna and Paikgachha municipalities for four days from January 12 to contain pre-poll and post-poll violence," the BNP leader said. He also appealed to the civil and police administration to play neutral role in the election.

Prof Majidul alleged that lawmakers, upazila chairmen and local leaders of the ruling party are violating code of conduct in presence of judicial magistrates and law enforcers while campaigning in favour of their candidates in the two municipalities.

Besides, bribing of voters and damaging of posters of BNP candidates by the ruling party men, free movement of outlaws and the role being played by police in dealing with such unwanted polls-related situation have already put a fair election to the two municipalities on a big question mark, he said.

He further alleged that the ruling party musclemen have threatened to evict about 300 families from their makeshift houses erected on land owned by Wapda at Chalna if they do not vote for the AL-nominated candidates.

BNP has fielded single candidate to vie for the post of mayor both in Paikgachha and Chalna municipalities while the candidates nominated by grand alliance are facing rebel candidates in the race.

Rajbari: HC restores candidacy of Razaul Hasan of BNP

The High Court on Sunday restored the candidacy of a mayoral candidate of Goalunda municipality, reports UNB.

The court passed the order following a writ petition filed by BNP candidate Razaul Hasan Idris. He filed the writ challenging rejection of his nomination paper by the returning officer during scrutiny on December 30 on charge of being a loan defaulter.

The HC sent an order to the deputy commissioner of Rajbari, district election officer and assistant returning officer to include Idris as a mayoral candidate.