TWO YEARS OF CCC MAYOR

A lot of promises, a lot of disappointment

Most election pledges remain unfulfilled

ARUN BIKASH DEY, *Ctg*

Most of the major pledges Chattogram City Corporation Mayor Rezaul Karim Chowdhury had made in his election manifesto have not been fulfilled even two years after he took office.

In 2021, Rezaul, an Awami League candidate, took charge and was supposed to fulfil 37 pledges.

He assured of addressing issues like waterlogging; traffic congestion; mosquito menace; evicting illegal occupants from canals, drains and footpaths; improving garbage management and health services; and ensuring adequate LED lights along city streets.

But no significant progress has been made in improving the situation, said locals.

Rezaul had said the canals and drains would be cleaned regularly and effective mosquito repellent would be used.

However, in the last two years, the city dwellers have not gotten relief from the mosquito menace. Residents from different areas said that the unclean canals and drains have become suitable places for mosquito breeding.

"Mosquitoes bite us throughout the year, as the city corporation workers do not clean Chawkbazar's Chaktai canal regularly," said Ripan Barua from Chawkbazar Phooltola area.

Rezaul had said the canals and drains would be cleaned regularly and effective mosquito repellent would be used. However, in the last two years, the city dwellers have not gotten relief from the mosquito menace. Residents from different areas said that the unclean canals and drains have become suitable places for mosquito breeding.

Amid all the complaints, Anti-Corruption Commission conducted a raid in the city on February 9 on allegations of irregularities in the purchase of mosquito repellent, confirmed ACC Chattogram assistant director Emran Hossain.

The allegations were primarily found to be true, said Emran.

Rezaul had also said he would keep holding tax at an acceptable level so that neither landlords nor tenants would be in hardship.

However, after being elected mayor, he followed his predecessor AJM Nasir Uddin by realising holding tax as per the house rent, not the area of the land, which has raised the total amount of tax.

In this regard, Chattogram Kordata Surakkha Parishad has been waging a movement to stop the initiative.

Contacted, Amir Uddin, general secretary of the parishad, said home-owners have to pay double tax -- on house rent and income -- in the new system.

Many also said the incumbent mayor has failed to fulfil any of his election pledges.

Once the city was clean, but now, it has become a city of dust and garbage, they said, adding that the door-to-

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

For quite some time now, the plants that were meant to beautify the foot-bridge near Willes Little Flower School in the capital's Kakrail have died and turned to dried twigs. Due to the indifference of authorities concerned, these plants have not been replaced for months, and now, serve the role of an eyesore. This photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

HATIMARA TEA GARDEN

Manager, 9 others sued for harming wildlife

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Sylhet*

The Forest Department has sued the manager of Hatimara Tea Garden and nine others for reportedly igniting a fire, killing wildlife and destroying habitat.

Md Abdullah Al Amin, range officer of Satchari Wildlife Range, filed the case with the Senior Judicial Magistrate of Forest Court in Habiganj on February 1. The court accepted the case on Sunday.

Rezaul Karim Chowdhury, divisional forest officer of Forest Department's Wildlife Management and Nature Conservation Division in Sylhet, confirmed the development.

In the case, Golam Mahiuddin Ahmed,

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

'For what crimes are we being punished?'

Telegu community living in fear of eviction from Dhalpur colony; rights organisations place 7-point demand

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

"We have no other demands. We just want to stay here permanently with our community and our culture," said Vikky Raaj, who is of Telegu origin and a resident of the 14 number Outfall colony in Jatrabari's Dhalpur.

During a press conference at Jatiya Press Club yesterday, Vikky, who could not hold his tears while talking in front of journalists, said this colony is their sole identity.

"Even our NIDs have been made with the colony's address," he said.

Eight rights organisations, along with the Telegu Community in Dhalpur currently living amidst the fear of eviction by Dhaka South City Corporation, organised the press conference.

The organisations are -- Bangladesh Hindu-Buddhist-Christian Oikya Parishad, Nijera Kori, Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB), Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (Blast), Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (Bela), Ain O Salish Kendra, Manobadhikar Shongskriti Foundation and Association for

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

'BCL TORTURE ON STUDENTS'

RU teacher holds hunger strike

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Rajshahi*

A Rajshahi University teacher observed a seven-hour hunger strike yesterday morning, protesting ongoing "torture of students by Chhatra League leaders and activists" across the country.

Prof Farid Uddin Khan of economics department started the strike around 10:00am in front Zoha Chattor on the campus.

Prof Farid Uddin said, "We saw a rise in such incidents across the country. BCL leaders have been repeatedly torturing students, ousting them from dormitories and extorting money from them. It is clearly a violation of human rights. It can't be accepted."

"As a teacher, I feel it is my moral responsibility

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

The leaked oil, which spilled from three wagons, eventually fell into a canal, which locals have been trying to retrieve and sell. This photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

Spilled oil spreads across 1.5-km area

Three canals get contaminated; officials investigating incident

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Ctg*

A huge quantity of oil that spilled from three wagons of a derailed train on Wednesday, has spread across areas covering 1.5 kilometres, threatening the local ecosystem.

The oil, which spilled at Chittagong Goods Port Yard (CGPY) in the port city's Halishahar area, has already spilled into three waterbodies -- CGPY, Gupta and Mahesh canals -- said Monir Hossain, an inspector of Department of Environment (DoE), who visited the spots yesterday.

These canals connect to each other and fall into Karnaphuli river.

"We collected water samples from the river to determine if the oil has also spilled into the river," he said.

The wagons, each carrying 15,000 litres of diesel for Bangladesh Railway, derailed and leaked huge quantities of the fuel, most of which spilled into a canal near the yard.

During a visit to the area yesterday, this correspondent found that the canal water had turned black.

Environmentalists warned that the incident will create a massive and prolonged impact on the ecology in the connected waterbodies.

Mohammad Kamal Hossain, former professor of the Institute of Forestry and Environmental Science at Chittagong University, told The Daily Star, "Oil contamination will destroy the food of aquatic animals... Many of these animals will die as the oil will deplete oxygen in the water."

"We will take legal action against those involved in environmental damage after investigation," said Mia Mahmudul Hoque, deputy director of DoE's Chattogram city office.

Meanwhile, locals continued scooping up spilled oil using

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

4.3 magnitude earthquake jolts Sylhet

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Sylhet*

A 4.3-magnitude quake took place 11 kilometres northeast of Chhatak in Sylhet at 9:56am yesterday.

The earthquake hit at a depth of 64.8km, according to the United States Geological Survey.

Farzana Sultana, assistant meteorologist of Bangladesh Meteorological Department, said, "The earthquake happened at 9:56am and registered at 4.3 on the Richter scale. The epicentre was India's Meghalaya region.

"It's impact in Sylhet was light, and it was not felt severely in the region."

SEWERAGE BLAST

Eight hurt as boundary wall collapses in Chattogram

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Ctg*

At least eight people suffered minor injuries after the boundary wall of a house collapsed following a sewerage line explosion in Chattogram city early yesterday.

The explosion took place from accumulated gas in the sewerage line at Bakulia Bolirhat around 3:00pm, said Md Bahar, Kalurghat fire station officer.

The injured received first aid, he said.