

Bangladesh's municipal election candidates start campaign

The Election Commission yesterday allocated electoral symbols to municipality mayor and ward councillor candidates, paving the way for launching campaign with symbols.

Soon after the allocation of symbols, contenders started visiting door-to-door with leaflets and other campaign materials to seek blessings from voters. Many aspirants used loudspeakers and hung posters in their localities.

Meanwhile, violating the electoral code of conduct, Awami League lawmaker from Pabna-5 Golam Faruk Khandaker along with AL mayor aspirant Rakib Hasan Tipu yesterday joined a programme in the town.

In Golapganj of Sylhet, a government official took part in the electioneering of AL mayor candidate Zakaria Ahmed.

In another development, the EC yesterday asked the police authorities to withdraw the OC of Uttar Matlab Police Station in Chandpur for allegedly working in favour of an AL mayor candidate, said EC sources.

The commission also formed an enquiry committee to probe the complaint of the BNP mayor aspirant in Chatkhil of Noakhali that he was forced by some ruling AL men to affix sign to a paper for withdrawing his candidature.

Mayor elections will be held in 228 municipalities on December 30 as six AL mayor hopefuls are going to be elected uncontested in Pirojpur Sadar, Tungipara of Gopalganj, Feni Sadar, Parshuram of Feni, Chatkhil of Noakhali and Madarganj of Jamalpur municipalities.

Voters in Parshuram municipality of Feni will be totally deprived of exercising their franchise as all the 10 councillors of the pourashava are also going to be elected unopposed.

Besides, 64 general and reserved women ward councillors are likely to be elected uncontested in different municipalities, including 44 in pourashavas of Feni.

According to EC statistics, 923 mayor, around 8,500 general and 2,533 women reserved councillor aspirants will take part in the polls.

LAWMAKER 'FLOUTS' LAW

In Pabna, AL lawmaker Golam Faruk Khandaker joined the opening ceremony of Rana Shopping Complex and Evening Touch Hotel on Press Club Road in the town. AL mayoral nominee Rakib Hasan Tipu was present.

As per the electoral code of conduct, ministers and lawmakers cannot go to an electoral area other than joining state functions, EC's Deputy Secretary Shamsul Alam told The Daily Star.

Faruk, however, claimed that it was not an electoral programme.

OFFICIAL IN CAMPAIGN

Several candidates complained that Borhan Ahmed of Kailashtilla Gas Field took part in the electioneering of AL mayor nominee Zakaria Ahmed.

Returning Officer Saidur Rahman said he would take action against the official if anybody lodged a complaint with his office.

'WITHDRAW OC'

The EC yesterday asked the police authorities to withdraw the officer-in-charge of Uttar Matlab Police Station in Chandpur.

The OC was allegedly working in favour of Rafiqul Alam George, AL mayor candidate in Changerchar Municipality under Uttar Matlab Upazila.

"We made the decision after we had found evidence to support the allegation," an election commissioner told this newspaper seeking anonymity.

The commission will also look into some similar allegations against the OCs of Kulaura Police Station in Moulvibazar and Habiganj Sadar Police Station in Habiganj.

CHATKHIL MUNICIPALITY

Mostafa Kamal, BNP's mayor candidate in Chatkhil Municipality of Noakhali, yesterday alleged that he was kidnapped and forced by some ruling AL men to affix sign to a paper for withdrawing his candidature.

In a letter to Chief Election Commissioner Kazi Rakibuddin Ahmad, he appealed the EC to allow him to take part in the polls.

BNP Joint Secretary General Mahbub Uddin Khokon submitted the application to the EC in favour of the party candidate. The EC later formed an enquiry committee to look into the matter.

BNP NOMINEE FINED

In Faridganj Municipality of Chandpur, the returning officer fined BNP mayor hopeful Harunur Rashid Tk 5,000 for conducting electioneering with a motorcade.

Meanwhile, the High Court yesterday directed the authorities concerned to allow Oliur Rahman to contest as a mayoral candidate in Moulvibazar Poursava polls on December 30.

The HC bench of Justice Naima Haider and Justice Mustafa Zaman Islam passed the order after hearing a writ petition filed by Oliur, a BNP candidate, challenging the returning officer's decision of canceling his nomination.

The court pronounced the order as it found no anomalies in his income tax documents.

[News Source](#)

Bappi Lahiri, Kumar Sanu get lifetime achievement awards from Bengal

Veteran music composer Bappi Lahiri and singer Kumar Sanu were on Monday presented lifetime achievement awards by the West Bengal government.

Lahiri thanked Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, who handed over the award at the inauguration of the annual Bangla Sangeet Mela.

Sanu could not be present, and was given the award in absentia.

The Bishesh Sangeet Samman was awarded to Dwijen Mukhyopadhyay, Ajoy Chakraborty and Sandhya Mukherjee.

Shantanu Moitra was honoured with Maha Sangeet Samman along with Mohammad Aziz, Kumar Bose and Shibaji Chattopadhyay.

Sriradha Bandyopadhyay, Dileep Kumar Bose, Fakir Alamgir, and Nachiketa were given Special Sangeet Samman.

Banerjee said that over 6,000 artistes will perform across 10 venues during the Bangla Sangeet Mela between December 15 and 21.

AAP, Congress playing dirty politics over slum dwellers: BJP

BJP's Delhi unit president Satish Upadhyay on Monday accused the Aam Aadmi Party and the Congress of doing "dirty politics" over the demolition of a slum in the city.

"They have no concern for the betterment of the lives of slum dwellers. All the concern being shown is a part of vote bank politics," Upadhyay told reporters here.

He said slum dwellers very well understood that both Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi were "just playing with their emotions".

"The tears being shed by Rahul Gandhi reflect political opportunism," the BJP leader said, adding that both parties should stop playing politics and work to provide a better life to slum dwellers.

More than 500 hutments were demolished by Indian Railways authorities in Shakur Basti in west Delhi on Saturday, leaving hundreds homeless in the winter chill. An infant allegedly died during the drive.

Upadhyay said over 2,000 shanties existed on the railway land in Shakur Basti, of which almost 1,600 were demolished during the Congress rule in 2011-12 without payment of any compensation.

He said over 7,000 flats meant for slum dwellers at Narela and around 40,000 flats with the Delhi government were lying vacant for the last five years.

"If Kejriwal is true to the cause of slum dwellers at Shakur Basti, he should allocate those flats to them," Upadhyay added.

Clashes in southeast Turkey kill seven, new curfews declared

Seven people were killed in clashes with security forces in Turkey's mainly Kurdish southeast, officials said on Monday, as authorities declared curfews across the restive region.

The clashes are the latest in months of violence following the collapse of a ceasefire between the government and the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) in July. Since then, Ankara has imposed

round-the-clock curfews in many areas.

Two people were killed as police clashed with crowds protesting against a security crackdown in the main southeastern city of Diyarbakir, a hospital official and witnesses said.

Further south, five Kurdish militants were killed in Mardin province's Dargecit district, another area under curfew, security officials said. It was not clear exactly when they were killed.

Armoured police vehicles roamed Diyarbakir's streets, firing water cannon and tear gas as hundreds gathered for a march called by the pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) to protest a two-week-long curfew in the city's district of Sur.

Teargas billowed in the city streets as armoured vehicles sped around and protesters lobbed stones at police. Shopkeepers shuttered their stores ahead of the protest, which the government said was banned. Few buses were operating, rubbish was not collected and most students did not go to school.

Youths with scarves masking their faces tried to block streets with piles of bricks and burning wood before police pursued them into side streets.

In Sirnak province, the governor imposed a curfew in two towns near the borders of both Syria and Iraq from Monday night, a day after teachers were seen streaming out of the area on the orders of education authorities.

Locals, anticipating that the teachers were being recalled ahead of a curfew, formed queues at bakeries and shops to buy food, witnesses said. Several thousand teachers are based in the towns.

The two towns of Cizre and Silopi were under tight security, with police armoured vehicles stationed at the entrances to both, witnesses said.

"A curfew is declared to neutralise separatist terror group members, remove explosives-laden barricades and ditches ... and secure public order," the Sirnak governor's office said in a statement. It said the curfew would begin at 11 p.m. (2100 GMT).

A curfew was also imposed on Monday in the town of Nusaybin on the Syrian border to restore order "in response to increasing terror incidents", state authorities in the town announced.

According to data compiled by the Human Rights Foundation of Turkey, 52 curfews have been imposed since mid-August across seven Turkish provinces in the region, affecting areas where some 1.3 million people live.

The Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) militant group launched its insurgency in 1984 and more than 40,000 people have been killed in the conflict. It is designated as a terrorist group by Turkey, the United States and European Union.

Awami League civil war: Rajoir the scene of destruction as Shamsuddin & Shahjahan groups clash

For the residents of Rajoir, Madarpur according to our local correspondent, this was an inevitability. Tensions had long since existed between prominent local Awami League Leaders, Advocate Shamsuddin Mia, and Shahjahan Khan. And locals feel MP Shahjahan Khan has made the first move, although others disagree and state that Shamsuddin Miah's public declaration started it all.

Nevertheless, it was supposed to be a normal working day, intermingled with Mr. Shamsuddin Miah's aggressive political campaign in a bid to be Rajoir's next elected official, on behalf of the Awami League of course. Unfortunately, it did not turn out to be the case as a public election campaign quickly took a turn for the worse as a group of armed men, laid siege to the whole scene. People dispersed in panic, shop owners quickly forced down their shutters, whilst the attending political leaders were left stunned. Led by the notorious Kali Khan, sponsored by none other than current Member of Parliament and Awami League Leader Shahjahan Khan flung themselves at Mr. Shamsuddin Miah and his entourage which includes advocates Advocates Kader Ali, Hasan Firoj, along with South Rajoir Awami League leader Mobin Hossain.

The group dismantled everything in sight. Indeed there are unsettling reports that they used petrol to set ablaze some surrounding houses. 4 people were confirmed to be critically injured, and the list includes Mr. Shamsuddin Mia, Advocates Kader Ali and Hasan Firoj. They were rushed to the nearest hospital and according to latest reports are in a vulnerable physical state.

Our local correspondent swiftly identified the source of the enmity between these two Awami juggernauts of Rajoir. Namely (as stated above) Mr. Shamsuddin Miah's public declaration of intent towards installing himself as the prime electoral candidate, did not go down well with Mr. Shahjahan Khan, with Mr. Khan hoping to reassert his own authority as an existing Member of Parliament, and eligibility as the ideal candidate in the upcoming general elections. It wasn't until today that ensuing political tension, as a result, boiled over to actual civil unrest, with Residents of Rajoir now left embattled and devastated by the very men they were going to root for in the upcoming elections. Strangely the locals blame the attending law enforcement agencies in allowing a tragedy like this to happen. They claim Kali Kahn and his hoodlums approached the on-site police first in their bid to provoke Mr. Shamsuddin Miah and his attendees, with Kali Khan even loudly declaring that,

"There is only one leader in Rajoir, and that is Shahjahan Khan, everyone else are Jamat-Shibir lap dogs".

The police of course flatly declined to comment on their potential role in the incident as suspected by the local of course. In fact, our local correspondent was not allowed inside the police station even with a spokesperson for the police stating that any outstanding investigations need to be concluded first and "an official complaint needs to be lodged in the first place in order to do that".

This of course tells us that no one has officially pressed any charges yet, so we urge our readers to stay tuned and watch this space for future information.

