

Is he a prompt tax payer? Spot the right councillor

By RAJASHEKARA S.

Bangalore, Oct. 15: The city-based non-governmental organisation, Public Affairs Centre, along with 25 residents welfare associations in 18 wards, has chalked out a scheme to ensure that only candidates with a "good track record," are elected in the forthcoming Bangalore City Corporation polls.

Speaking about the "Choose the Right Councillor" programme, Ms Poornima of the PAC told *The Asian Age*, "The local residents associations will collect basic information about the candidates and dis-

seminate the information to the voters through pamphlets and the local cable network. Apart from this, interactive meetings involving candidates and voters will be organised to ensure a better interface between the two.

The information about the candidates collected by the residents association will include - whether the aspiring candidate is paying taxes promptly, what properties they own in BCC limits, promises made in the manifestos, contribution of the sitting corporators if they are seeking re-election, public service track record of the first-time aspirants, how much the candidates are

willing to spend for campaigning in the elections and the sources of income from which they will be spending money, besides enquiring about the criminal background of the candidates.

All information regarding those who stay in the fray after the last day of withdrawing nominations will be made public. "The local residents groups will also organise public debates among candidates. This whole process will help the voters to judge for themselves as to whom to elect and also establish much needed transparency in electing their representatives" Ms Poornima said.

The PAC has already sent memorandums to the Congress, Bharatiya Janata Party, Janata Dal (United), Janata Dal (Secular) and the Communist Party of India requesting them to field candidates having a clean image and proven track record. Besides, this, PAC has also sent as many as 150 representations on similar lines to each of these parties through various local residential welfare associations in the city.

Chief minister S.M. Krishna has mailed back PAC, saying that his party would consider the "good" suggestions given by the organisation, while selecting the candi

■ Turn to Page 10

THE ASIAN AGE

16 OCTOBER 2001

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■ Continued from Page 9

dates for the BCC polls to be held on November 11.

This is not the first time that PAC is organising such a public awareness programme to ensure that the right candidates were given party tickets. Ms Poornima said: "We had conducted a similar exercise during the last BCC polls five years ago covering eight wards. The programme was also carried out in eight cities and towns in the state during the recently held urban local body elections.

The wards which have been selected for CRC programme are, Malleshwaram, Mahalakshmiapuram, Srinivasanagar, Ganesh Mandira, Hombe Gowda Nagar, Shantinagar, Domlur, Jeevan Bheema Nagar, Hoysala Nagar, Pulikeshi Nagar, Jayamahala, Hebbal and Sanjaya Nagar. The wards that are likely to be covered are Maruti Seva Nagar, Lingarajapuram and Banaswadi. A few more associations from other wards have also expressed their willingness to participate in the CRC programme, Ms Poornima added.

Besides this, the PAC is also organising a "Voters' Motivation and Education Programme," to attract more and more people to exercise their franchise. The PAC is planning a publicity campaign to create awareness among voters and stress the importance of casting their votes.