

## **Polls hound Punjab, once again**

After five years, once again Punjab is going through the state Assembly elections. These days, the election fever is at its peak and it will gain more momentum in the coming days. Looking back at the 2007 elections, this time not much has changed except the toothless Election Commission turning into a real poll watchdog. However, despite its meaningful efforts to ensure that the elections are fair, you are not sure how far it will be able to stop the money and muscle as the only winning strategy.

When this new issue of South Asia Post will be available on your computer screens, the final lists of the candidates will be out. In the past few days, during the process of filing nominations, the media was full of news items carrying the lists of the richest candidates and celebrating their wealth. But the question arises: whom do these opulent people represent? How these rich candidates became this rich?

We wonder if there is a list of the poorest of the poor candidates. Seriously, where are the representatives of more than 70 per cent people of Punjab? Where are the representatives of the farmers committing suicide, who became a poll issue in the last assembly elections? Where are the representatives of the landless labourers who are exiting from life in sheer hopelessness? Where are the representatives of the lakhs of unemployed youth in Punjab? Where are the representatives of women who are to be given 33 per cent reservation in the parliament? What about the ruling party in the country: how many women candidates have its women president got tickets for? The slogans like Raj Nahi Seva have not been able to serve much. The seva remained revolving around a small 'orbit'.

The beautiful manifestos with 'promises not to be kept' are out. But everybody knows that it is just another time that has returned after every five years. Another election has come, and it will pass by too. The women will remain in the same condition; the farmers will keep on committing suicides; the landless labourers will keep on living in hopelessness; there will be even long queues of the unemployed youth.

Another election of the largest democracy of the world is over with largest money, big muscles winning it, and the shameless patriarchy refusing to buzz.

