

200 staff recruited at RU in 3 days

Move to appoint 800, mostly BNP-Jamaat men

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Rajshahi University (RU) authorities have appointed some 200 third and fourth-class employees in the last three days largely on political considerations ignoring the budgetary provisions of the university. Sources said the authorities have planned to recruit a total of 800 staff within a short time and most of them are likely to be picked from BNP and Jamaat adherents. There are allegations of widespread bribing in the recruitment process, the sources added. Some 1500 job seekers, mostly political activists, are thronging the administrative building regularly, which is affecting the academic atmosphere greatly, senior RU teachers and officials alleged. Influential BNP and Jamaat leaders including former lawmakers and their supporter teachers and student leaders have been making brisk money amounting to several crores of taka in exchange of assuring varsity jobs, many candidates

alleged. Rajshahi city mayor Mizanur Rahman Minu, Motihar upazila BNP president Ansar Ali, secretary Mukhtar Hossain and BNP-Jamaat adherent ward commissioners Monwara Begum and Gias Uddin have lobbied for many candidates, several aspirants told The Daily Star. Many of the political candidates from Meherchandi, Budpara, Dharampur, Kajla, and Binodpur were chosen on condition that they would work for BNP-Jamaat in the upcoming election. Some influential RU teachers have also registered their nominations with the selection board members, sources said. "The instances of cashing in on the recruitment are alarming and the controversial appointments beyond budget will turn the institution into a white elephant soon, leading the government to stop grants," RU syndicate member Prof Abdus Sobhan said. The RU authorities flouted legal procedures and confirmed the job of 544 employees in 2004 that created long-lasting chaos in the university. Meanwhile, the University Grants Commission (UGC) recently threatened RU of stopping allocation of funds since the authority was increasing its budget deficit by 'unnecessarily' recruiting manpower. RU Treasurer Abdul Jabbar Khan in a letter to the vice chancellor (VC) told that already Tk 18 crore had been spent in first four months of the current fiscal year against the annual allocation of Tk 52.40 crore on salaries. "If this unnatural rate of escalating expenditure on salaries continues, the university will be dipped in financial adversity shortly making payment of the regular staffs uncertain," the letter reads. Contacted, RU Vice-Chancellor Prof Altaf Hossain and pro-VC Prof Mamnunul Keramat said that they were 'ill' and refused to talk. "We will seek extra funds from UGC for fresh recruitment and it will be granted...there should not be any problem," RU Registrar Abdus Salam said adding that the UGC is generally lenient.

15 injured in police action on farmers

UNB, Jamalpur

At least 15 farmers, agitating for fertiliser, were injured in police action at Dharmakura Bazaar in Islampur upazila of the district yesterday. Local sources said several hundred farmers turned violent as they failed to get fertiliser after standing in a long queue for hours in front of dealer's shop. Police clubbed the agitating farmers, leaving at least 15 farmers wounded. Of the injured, two were identified as Madhob Ali and Habibur Rahman. Scarcity of fertiliser was reported from different districts at the beginning of boro plantation.

Mill worker burned alive in Ctg fire

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A worker of AK Khan Jute Mill was burned alive in a fire at North Kattali in the port city early yesterday. The dead was identified as Mohammad Nesar, 35, son of Mohammad Musa of Chirkhali village under Anwara upazila.

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PHOTO: STAR

Bags of fertilisers are piled up at Gataboli in the capital when a scarcity of fertiliser prevails in some parts of the country.

BOAT PURCHASE CASE Ershad's surrender uncertain

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Uncertainty looms over surrender of Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad with the trial court today in connection with a Japanese boat purchase case. According to court sources, the hearing on a petition, filed on January 10 for withdrawal of a trial court order, will be held today. As per the trial court order, the time limit for Ershad's surrender also ends today. Advocate Sheikh Mohammad Serajul Islam submitted the petition saying Ershad had earlier been in custody because of the same case for more than three years. Mentioning a provision of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) the lawyer demanded withdrawal of a January 4 trial court order saying Ershad had earlier served

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PHOTO: STAR

An election camp, which a four-party candidate had built for the January 22 election, is being dismantled near the High Court yesterday.

Rice receives cautious Saudi backing for Iraq plan

AFP, Riyadh

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice was due to hold more talks with Arab leaders in Kuwait Tuesday in a bid to rally support for Washington's plan to quell violence in Iraq after winning cautious Saudi backing. "We agree with the objectives" of the US plan to bring peace to the war-torn country, Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud al-Faisal said at a joint press conference with Rice in Riyadh earlier Tuesday. But he was cautious about the means of reaching the objective. "We cannot comment on the means that will be applied ... We're hoping that these objectives will be implemented, but the means are not in our hands. They are in the

hands of the Iraqis," he said. Rice praised Saudi Arabia's role in "urging national reconciliation" in Iraq, and welcomed a greater Arab engagement in efforts to reunify the Iraqis. "If the Arab League is prepared to go forward with a reconciliation conference, that will also be very useful to the Iraqis," she said. "I do know that the possibility of reinforcing Iraq's place in the Arab world through an Arab initiative would be a very useful matter," she added. The secretary of state has turned her attention to Iraq and the Gulf after focusing on reviving the Israeli-Palestinian peace process in the first part of her regional tour that began at the weekend.

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DU ignores rule to recruit 3 teachers

Political consideration alleged

KAMRUL HASAN KHAN

Violating university rules, Dhaka University (DU) authorities are set to appoint three lecturers at Arabic department allegedly on political consideration. A five-member selection committee selected the three persons for the posts against two advertised posts while all of the three candidates obtained degrees simultaneously from the university and Madrasa Board, which is, according to the university ordinance, illegal. The selection committee headed by Pro-Vice Chancellor (Pro-VC) Prof AFM Yusuf Haider at a meeting on Sunday night selected the three persons for three lecturer posts from 30 candidates.

The three persons recommended for lecturer posts -- Noor-e Alam (MA in 2002), Rafiqul Islam (MA in 2003) and Tazul Islam (MA in 2002) -- obtained Fazil degrees from the Madrasa Board while doing their honours from the DU, sources at the department said. The same meeting of the selection committee also recommended for promotion of two lecturers of the department, Ruhul Amin and Mizanur Rahman, who had their degrees studying simultaneously at the university and under the Madrasa Board, sources said. Several teachers of the department expressed dissatisfaction at the move to give such illegal appointment. Subject expert of the selection

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JP asks CG to hold election after meeting demands soon

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiya Party (JP) yesterday urged the caretaker government to hold the election at the earliest possible time after realising their demands including preparing a correct voter list, overhauling the Election Commission, ensuring neutrality in the administration and introducing voter identity cards and transparent ballot box.

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Energy adviser for polls after nat'l ID card

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Power and Energy Adviser Tapan Chowdhury yesterday said the next general elections should take place after national ID cards are prepared even though it would take longer than for preparation of voter ID cards. "National ID cards are better than voter ID cards because these carry all the necessary information of an individual," he said while talking to reporters at his office.

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REPORT ON ERSHAD JP asks army to close down Prothom Alo

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiya Party (JP) Secretary General Ruhul Amin Hawlader yesterday asked the armed forces to close down Prothom Alo following publication of a report saying JP Chairman HM Ershad took money from Awami League for joining the grand alliance. "We thanked the armed forces for imposing the state of emergency...Now they should shut down

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Baghdad blasts leave 89 dead

UN says 34,000 Iraqis killed in 2006

AP, Baghdad, Iraq

Two minivans exploded near a Baghdad university as students were leaving after classes yesterday, killing at least 65 people in one of several attacks on predominantly Shia areas. The attack came on a day the United Nations said more than 34,000 Iraqi civilians died last year in sectarian violence. The deadly attacks in Baghdad -- twin explosions at the university, blasts at a marketplace for used motorcycles, and a drive-shooting -- left at least 89 people dead in the capital ahead of an imminent security operation by the Iraqi government and US forces. Meanwhile, the United Nations said yesterday that more than 34,000 Iraqi civilians were killed in sectarian violence last year, nearly three times the number reported dead by the Iraqi government. Raad Abbas, a 26-year-old who received shrapnel wounds in the attack at the motorcycle market, said he went to the market because the city had been quieter over the past two weeks. "Shortly after midday, I heard an explosion. Motorcycles were flying in the air, people were falling dead and wounded," he said from his hospital bed. The first bomb was attached to a motorcycle in the market. As the curious gathered to look at the aftermath, a suicide car bomber

drove into the crowd and blew up his vehicle. The attack appeared to target the mainly Shiite neighborhood near the market but also was near the Sheikh al-Gailani shrine, one of the holiest Sunni locations in the capital. In the second attack, two minivans exploded near Al-Mustansiriya university as the students were boarding the vehicles to go home. The Iraqi government on Monday hanged two of Saddam Hussein's henchmen in an execution that left many of the ousted leader's fellow Sunni Muslims seething after one of the accused, the ousted leader's half brother, was decapitated on the gallows. Baghdad is bracing for a security operation by the Iraqi government and U.S. forces aimed at quelling the rampant sectarian violence that has been on the rise since the Feb. 22 bombing of a Shiite mosque in Samarra. Cabinet ministers and legislators loyal to the radical Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr were instructed to end their six-week boycott of the political process, a parliamentarian in the political bloc said Tuesday, indicating that the decision was linked to the new security drive. "We might be subjected to an attack and we should try solve the problem politically. We should not

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Licensed arms, illegal bullets seized from Dipjol's house

His brother held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Joint forces of army and police raided the Mirpur house of BNP leader and film actor Monwar Hossain Dipjol and his brother Shahadat Hossain Monday night and seized six licensed firearms with 386 unauthorised bullets.

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President's PS Gani sent on deputation

UNB, Dhaka

President's Personal Secretary Nasimul Gani has been appointed director general of NIPORT on deputation. According to an official announcement last night, National Board of Revenue (NBR) Member ATM Sarwar Hossain was made OSD at the establishment ministry.

Prayer Timing		
January 17		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-30	6-05
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-15	4-30
Maghrib	5-40	5-44
Esha	7-00	7-30
Source: Islamic Foundation		



PHOTO: STAR

Garbage is dumped on Dhaka-Aricha highway near Aminbazar on the outskirts of Dhaka city occupying space on one side of the busy road.