



Ruling Awami League's mayoral candidate Selina Hayat Ivy talks to her rival BNP's Shakhawat Hossain during a meeting with the Election Commission at Narayanganj Club yesterday. The elections to the Narayanganj City Corporation will be held on December 22. Story on page 5.

PHOTO: STAR

CHECKING BLACK MONEY Aspirants seek strict vigilance

A CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

Mayor and councillor aspirants yesterday demanded strengthening vigilance to check use of black money and muscle power in the December 22 Narayanganj City Corporation (NCC) elections.

Unsatisfied with the idea that additional law enforcers could be appointed to maintain law and order and ensure security to voters, some even proposed army deployment during a meeting with the Election Commission (EC) at Narayanganj Club.

Ruling Awami League's (AL) mayoral candidate Selina Hayat Ivy said law enforcers should remain alert so that no vested quarters could destabilise the situation. Mobile courts should be kept running till late night to foil any attempt to woo voters with money, she said.

That of BNP, Shakhawat Hossain, alleged that the returning officer was not taking action although he filed complaints repeatedly over miscreants barring his campaign.

Apprehending further harassment of his polling agents, he sought necessary measures from the EC.

Islami Andolan Bangladesh (IAB) candidate Masum Billah and Islami Oikkyo Jote candidate Ezharul Islam placed similar allegations of criminals intimidating their campaigners around city.

Popy Rani Sarker, a councillor aspirant of ward 5 (reserved), demanded cancellation of nominations of candidates whose supporters were found involved with vote trading.

Al Mamun, a councillor aspirant of ward 15, urged law enforcers and electoral administration to play a neutral role to hold the polls in a free and fair manner.

Chief Election Commissioner Kazi Rakiuddin Ahmad said a sufficient number of law enforcers would be deployed analysing the situation. "We have given directives to law enforcers to take all out action against miscreants, whoever they are," he said.

He said complaints would be investigated and action taken accordingly. Two other election commissioners, the returning officer, law enforcers and civil administration officials attended.

New Yahoo

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Verizon said, "we will review the impact of this new development before reaching any final conclusions."

A Yahoo spokesman told Reuters that the company has been in communication with Verizon during its investigation into the breach and that it is confident the incident will not affect the pending acquisition.

Yahoo required all of its customers to reset their passwords - a stronger measure than it took after the previous breach was discovered, when it only recommended a password reset.

Yahoo also said that it believes hackers responsible for the previous breach had also accessed the company's proprietary code to learn how to forge "cookies" that would allow hackers to access an account without a password.

Yahoo said in September it believed the breach of information on 500 million users was "state sponsored" but some analysts have questioned this theory.

"Yahoo badly screwed up," said Bruce Schneier, a cryptologist and one of the world's most respected security experts. "They weren't taking security seriously and that's now very clear. I would have trouble trusting Yahoo going forward."

Yahoo was tentative in its description of new problems, saying the incident was "likely" distinct from the one it reported in September.

NARAYANGANJ CITY POLLS

Names of polling agents kept secret in fear

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE and
MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA from N'ganj

The two main contenders in the Narayanganj city mayoral election are maintaining "strategic secrecy" over appointment of their polling agents.

While the ruling Awami League nominee Selina Hayat Ivy is apprehensive of intra-party sabotage, her arch-rival Shakhawat Hossain Khan of BNP fears that his agents might be intimidated or arrested if their names were disclosed ahead of the December 22 polls.

A candidate appoints a polling agent to monitor voting and counting of votes in a polling booth.

Ivy's camp reckons that her potential polling agents might be motivated by "certain quarters" within the AL as they have not taken her candidacy gracefully.

Campaigners for Shakhawat, on the other hand, have a feeling that his polling agents would be in trouble if their names were declared ahead of the polling day.

Nuruzzaman Talukdar, returning officer of Narayanganj city polls, said candidates were yet to submit their polling agents' names to the Election Commission which could be done in the morning of the polling day at the latest.

Although the pre-election atmosphere in the city has so far been conducive to a free and fair election, there is a sense of insecurity amongst the potential polling agents of Shakhawat whether they would be able to carry out their duties effectively, said sources in BNP.

"There is no legal binding on the candidates to appoint party men as polling agents. We are looking for dutiful and trustworthy people for polling agents," cultural personality Rafiur Rabbi told The Daily Star yesterday.

Rabbi, who is close to Ivy, said they

were picking polling agents secretly to make sure that no "godfather" can sabotage the election.

Although the AL high-ups already made sure that Ivy has the backing of local lawmaker Shamim Osman, her supporters was suspicious about what was up Shamim's sleeve.

"Our main contender is not Shakhawat, but the godfather of Narayanganj. We are careful because party men loyal to the godfather can work against us," Rabbi added.

He said Ivy in the 2011 city corporation polls did not appoint polling agents to all polling booths, but those of many ward councillor aspirants worked for her.

Some BNP leaders said they were forming polling centre-based committees with leaders of local Chhatra Dal, Jubo Dal and Sramik Dal units to keep watch over polling stations to ensure that election results were not rigged.

"During the last polls to Dhaka city corporations, we saw that polling agents were either arrested or threatened just before the polling day. We are careful this time after having learnt from that experience," said central BNP leader Abdus Salam, also the coordinator of Shakhawat's polling agents.

Returning Officer Nuruzzaman said some candidates informed them about not submitting the list of polling agents before the polling day.

"There is no legal binding on candidates to submit the polling agents' names earlier. We have asked the contenders to send the names to the presiding officer concerned at 6:00am on the polling day," he added.

Around five lakh voters are expected to exercise their franchise on Thursday to elect the new city mayor and councillors. A total of 1,304 polling booths will be set up in 174 polling stations in the city's 27 wards.

Rebels leaving Aleppo

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civil war.

President Bashar al-Assad congratulated Syrians on the "liberation" of Aleppo, as civilians and fighters evacuated the last rebel pocket of the city.

The city's "liberation" was "history in the making and worthy of more than the word 'congratulations'," he said in a video posted on the presidency's official social media accounts.

A revived agreement on a ceasefire and the evacuations was announced yesterday, after an initial plan for civilians and fighters to leave rebel-held parts of east Aleppo collapsed the previous day amid renewed clashes.

The evacuation began with a convoy of ambulances and buses crossing into a government-held district in southern Aleppo around 2:30 pm (1230 GMT).

A Syrian military source told AFP that 951 evacuees, including 108 wounded, were in the convoy. Most were civilians but about 200 rebel fighters were among them, the source said.

The convoy arrived just over an hour later in opposition territory west of the city, a doctor at the scene said.

"Vehicles carrying the wounded have arrived, and the wounded will be transferred to... nearby hospitals for treatment," said Ahmad al-Dbis, who heads a unit of doctors and other volunteers coordinating the evacuation of wounded people.

He spoke to AFP from the transit point near opposition-controlled Khan al-Aassal, about five kilometres

(three miles) west of Aleppo city.

With Aleppo out of rebel hands, the largest remaining rebel bastion is Idlib province, which is controlled by an alliance dominated by former al-Qaeda affiliate Fateh al-Sham Front.

Rebels also hold territory in southern Daraa province and the Ghouta region around Damascus, although the army has been advancing there.

The evacuees had spent hours earlier gathering earlier at a staging area in Aleppo's southern Al-Amiriyah district.

An AFP correspondent there saw people piling onto the green buses, filling seats and even sitting on the floor, with some worried that there would not be another chance to evacuate.

Many were in tears and some hesitated to board, afraid they would end up in the hands of regime forces.

On the dusty window of one of the buses someone had written "One day we will return".

Each bus carried a member of the Syrian Red Crescent dressed in the organisation's red uniform, riding at the front next to the driver.

Syrian state television reported that at least 4,000 rebels and their families would be evacuated under the plan.

It said preparations were underway for a second convoy to leave rebel-held territory.

A first evacuation expected to take place on Wednesday morning fell apart, with artillery exchanges and resumed air strikes rocking the city until the early hours of Thursday.

FACEBOOK POST Environmental activist picked up, released after 14 hours

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Abdul Karim Chowdhury Kim, general secretary of the Sylhet chapter of Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa), was picked up and kept at a local police station for over 14 hours yesterday.

Police said they took him from his house in Amberkhana area in the city to Sylhet Kotwali Police Station around 1:30am for interrogation on receiving complaint that he had made derogatory comments on Islam on Facebook.

He was released later around 4:00pm after police investigation found him completely innocent, said Nurul Huda Ashrafi, assistant commissioner of Sylhet Metropolitan Police.

Police said someone using a fake Facebook account in Kim's name or Photoshop circulated hate words against Islam on Facebook recently.

Kim said, "I am involved with many movements including that for environment. I am innocent. Someone tried to humiliate me."

Later in the evening, he filed a case with the Sylhet Airport Police Station under the ICT act against unknown people over the incident.

Contacted, Mosarrat Hossain, officer-in-charge of the station, said, they were trying to find out the culprit(s) and their intention.

Brutal!

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Araihazar upazila. He worked at BR Spinning Mills, police said.

Police on Wednesday night arrested Yamin's co-worker Rayhan, 18, who confessed before a judicial magistrate yesterday that he had "accidentally" pumped air through Yamin's rectum.

Shajahan filed a murder case with Sonargaon Police Station yesterday accusing Rayhan.

On July 24, 10-year-old Sagar Barman died after some workers allegedly pumped air into his body through his rectum at Zobeda Textile and Spinning Mills in Jatramura area of Rupganj upazila.

In August last year, 13-year-old Rakib was killed in a similar fashion for quitting his garage job in Khulna. Two of the killers were sentenced to death in November last year.

Quoting the case document, Manjur Kader, officer-in-charge of Sonargaon Police Station, said Yamin joined BR Spinning Mills in Moishtek area around six months ago.

Around 9:45pm Wednesday, Rayhan, also known as Hridoy, pushed a nozzle of an air pump into Yamin's rectum, said the OC.

Yamin was declared dead after he was taken to Dhaka Medical College around 11:30pm, said Abdul Alim, sub-inspector of the police station.

Rayhan, son of Nurul Haque of Mahmudpur in Sonargaon, gave confessional statement before Narayanganj Judicial Magistrate Mahmudul Islam under section 164 of Code of Criminal Procedure, said Hasimuddin, a sub-inspector at Narayanganj court.

In his statement, Rayhan said a nozzle of an air pump got inserted into Yamin's rectum "accidentally" when he was cleaning cotton wool from Yamin's body, said the SI. Yamin fell sick after that.

Khaleda

FROM PAGE 2

Liberal Democratic Party and Krishak Sramik Janata League on December 21 and Jatiya Samajtantrik Party on December 22.

He will also meet other registered political parties in phases to talk on the issue.

BNP insiders said they would focus on the party chairperson's proposal on formation of a strong and neutral EC.

The party will recommend five to six noted citizens including four retired judges for the search committee.

It is likely to bring up the formation of an election-time government as well, which will assist the EC in holding a fair election, if the president allows them to raise the issue.

Khaleda on November 18 placed a 13-point proposal for forming a new EC in consultation with representatives of all registered political parties or representatives of the parties who had representation in parliament in different periods.

The party on December 6 submitted the proposal to Bangabhaban for the president's consideration.

Reshuffle in admin

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday brought changes in the posts of additional, joint and senior assistant secretaries in the civil administration.

A total of 18 officials were given new roles in the reshuffle, according to separate gazette notifications of the public administration ministry.

Six additional secretaries were made acting secretaries or given equivalent posts in different ministries while two acting secretaries were promoted as secretaries.

Ahmad Kaikaus, chairman of Power Development Council, was appointed as acting secretary of Power Division, while Md Kaikobad Hossain, executive director of Traffic Coordination Board, was made acting food secretary.

Ishiaque Ahmed, chairman of Petrobangla, was made acting secretary of the forest and environment ministry, and Md Alamgir, director general of the Directorate of Primary Education, was appointed as acting secretary of the education ministry (technical and madrasa division).

Shavashis Bous, director general of WTO cell of the commerce ministry, was made acting secretary of the textiles and jute ministry.

Nazrul Islam, chairman of Bangladesh Road Transport Authority, was appointed as acting member of Planning Commission (equivalent to an acting secretary), and Anwarul

Islam Sikdar, chairman of sustainable and renewable energy development authority of Power Division, was appointed as chairman of Bangladesh Power Development Council (equivalent to an acting secretary).

Abu Hena Mohammad Rahmatul Munim, additional secretary of the home ministry, was appointed as chairman of Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (equivalent to an acting secretary).

Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation Chairman Mohammad Mahmud Reza Khan was promoted as secretary of the Ministry of Liberation War Affairs, and Prashanta Kumar Roy, acting secretary of the rural development and cooperatives ministry, was elevated to the rank of secretary of the same ministry.

On November 27, the government promoted 536 officials to the ranks of additional, joint and deputy secretaries from that of joint, deputy and senior assistant secretaries. Most of the officials have been working in their previous positions.

PROMOTION IN ARMED FORCES

Twenty-one honorary lieutenants were promoted to honorary captain and 41 master warrant officers were promoted to honorary lieutenants in the Bangladesh Army. Sixteen master chief petty officers of the Bangladesh Navy were promoted to the rank of honorary sub lieutenant. Their promotions would come into effect from today, said an ISPR release.

\$10,000 spent on cafe attack: police

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Neo JMB had spent around \$10,000 to carry out the July 1 Gulshan café attack that left 22 people including two police officials dead, a top DMP official said yesterday.

"The total expenditure was not more than \$10,000. The price of five 9mm pistols seized in the café is around Tk 2 lakh and that of three Ak-22 assault rifles is Tk 3 lakh," said Monirul Islam, chief of Counter Terrorism unit of Dhaka Metropolitan Police.

Briefing reporters at the DMP media centre, he said the militant group had spent the rest of the money to buy 11 grenades and other explosives, pay house rent and buy the clothes they wore to pose for the photographs

circulated hours after the attack and for some other purposes.

The outfit received a portion of the money from abroad.

Police have documentary proof that the militant group received Tk 10 lakh and another Tk 18 lakh from abroad before the attack at the Holey Artisan Bakery in Gulshan, he said.

Tamim Ahmed Chowdhury was the main coordinator of the attack and he collected funds from various sources, police said.

The DMP official said the Neo JMB has no organisational capacity to carry out any major attack at present. The outfit is trying to recruit new operatives and collect arms and explosives, but they are not succeeding due to the alertness of law enforcement agencies.

They came and shouted

FROM PAGE 1

there was a human settlement here just a month back.

Most of the evicted Santals are now living in tents provided by the Red Cross in Joypur and Madarpur villages adjacent to the land.

Chumki took shelter in Joypur. The indigenous woman and others from her community in the two villages were shown the video by this correspondent.

Local journalists and other people, who were present during the drive, identified the person in the pink shirt as an official of the sugar factory, holding a managerial post.

Contacted, the factory official said, "I went there in the morning [on November 6]. But I don't remember being there at the time of arson."

Shown an image grabbed from the Al Jazeera video showing the man in pink, he said, "If you think it's me, I have nothing to say."

The man is not clearly recognisable in the footage.

The factory official also said, "Santal people illegally occupied our land and we wanted to get it back."

And the industries ministry wrote to the home ministry, asking for necessary steps to recover the land, he added.

The Daily Star has learnt from old documents that Santals owned most of the land before the government acquired it in the 50s.

Though the land was acquired for sugarcane farming to produce raw materials for the Rangpur Sugar Mills Ltd at Mohimaganj in Gobindaganj, a portion of it was leased out for cultivating different other crops, flouting an agreement of 1962.

During the eviction drive on November 6, three Santals were killed in an ensuing clash with sugar mills staff and police.

At least 25 people, including nine

Chinese national

FROM PAGE 2

police station to report his employer's disappearance and they later arrested his nephew Mukhtadir from near the warehouse.

Yesterday, at around 9:30am, the police went to the warehouse along with Chang's wife and found his body lying on the floor of a toilet on the ground floor, Illias said.

The corpse was preserved at Jessore Medical College after the completion of autopsy and a murder case was filed with Kotwali Police Station, he added.

cops, were injured in the incident.

About the policeman seen taking part in arson, local sources said he is an official from Gaibandha Sadar Police Station.

He got a transfer order recently, they added.

"The police official who set fire to that house was from Gaibandha Sadar Police Station. His superior officer was also present there," said one of the witnesses present during the incident.

The Daily Star could not verify the versions regarding the identities of the two persons seen taking part in arson in the footage.

Contacted, Subrata Kumar Sarker, officer-in-charge of Gobindaganj Police Station, said they were investigating the matter.

"Without investigation, I cannot make any comment about who set fire to the house. The face of the policeman is not recognisable in the video," he said.

Wishing anonymity, a police official said since nine cops were injured on the morning of November 6 during the clash with Santals, additional police personnel came from Gaibandha, Dinaipur, Bogra and Rangpur.

Witnesses said police were furious with the Santals. The indigenous people were driven out of home without being given a chance to take their belongings, they added.

Kalyan Kumar Chakrabarty, sub-inspector of Gobindaganj Police Station, filed a case on November 6, accusing 42 named Santals and 300 to 400 unnamed people.

In the case, he mentioned which police officials fired how many rounds. But nothing was said about any incident of arson.

Turkey 'silencing' independent media: HRW

AFP, Ankara

Human Rights Watch yesterday accused Turkey of "silencing" independent media in its bid to prevent scrutiny or criticism of its huge crackdown following the failed July coup.

In a report, the US-based rights watchdog said Turkey's "assault" on critical journalism had accelerated since the attempted overthrow of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan -- but said it began several years earlier and had steadily "sharpened" since 2014.