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JP backs Ivy for N'ganj mayor

Campaign ends tonight

STAR REPORT

Jatiya Party yesterday extended its support to Awami League nominee Selina Hayat Ivy for mayor of Narayanganj City Corporation.

The party made the announcement at a press conference at the district AL's office.

"The Awami League did not field any candidate in the by-election in Narayanganj-5 constituency [in June 2014] showing respect to our party. In return, we have not nominated any mayoral candidate in this election and we

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Shakhawat Hossain Khan, BNP's mayor candidate in Narayanganj City Corporation polls, waves to the crowd during an election campaign in Siddhirganj of the city. *Right*, Awami League's mayor candidate Selina Hayat Ivy is in the midst of a cheering crowd in the city's Khanpur area. The photos were taken yesterday.



PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Man dies in police custody

Family alleges he died of torture

STAR REPORT

A 30-year-old man died hours after police arrested him at his house in Jamalpur's Melandaha upazila Sunday afternoon.

Family members of the deceased, Soheli Rana, alleged that he died of police torture and that they saw injury marks on the neck of the body.

"Sohel was not diagnosed with anything and I cannot think of any reason why a healthy person would die in such a short time if not tortured," claimed Zakir Hossain, Soheli's younger brother.

Sohel did not have to visit a doctor in about a year, he said, adding that his brother was a fish farmer.

Contacted, Mazharul Karim, officer-in-charge of Melandaha Police Station, said Soheli was in good health when arrested at his house and he might have died of a "stroke".

A resident of Paharipatol village, Soheli was held with drugs in his possession around 5:00pm, and around 7:30pm, he suddenly started throwing up and complained of chest pains, the OC said.

Police first took him to Melandaha Health Complex and then to Jamalpur General Hospital where doctors

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INITIAL LEVEL LITERACY FOR ALL

Progress slow, 44 more years needed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The country needs 44 more years to have an initial level of literacy skills for all citizens and 78 years to attain the advanced level if progress in literacy continues at current pace, says a report of Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE).

The report says Bangladesh has made progress in various levels of literacy but at a slow pace, which is 0.7 percent annually.

The progress rate was relatively better in reading and writing skills but very poor in numeracy and application of the 3R's, it mentions.

The report titled "Education Watch 2016: Literacy, Skills, Lifelong Learning, SDG 4 in Bangladesh: Where are We" was made public at an event at the LGRD-RDEC auditorium in the capital's Agargaon.

The report says population in each level of literacy has increased due to increase in overall population. In 2002, there were 45.8 million non-literate, 8.6 million semi-literate, 19.5 million literate at initial level and 18.9 million literate at advanced level population in the country.

By 2016, the figures increased to 50.9 million, 12.8 million, 33 million and 33.9 million respectively. In the last 14 years, 28.5 million literate people joined the population at the rate of more than two million per year.

Presenting the report, Samir Ranjan Nath, principal researcher of Education Watch Study 2016, said 3,510 households from 270 neighbourhoods in nine strata were covered through a household survey.

Of the 15,265 individuals lived in the households, 11,280 aged 11 and above were surveyed. "Literacy" was measured through an assessment test developed originally for Education Watch 2002 study, says the report.

Of the surveyed people, 80 percent use cellphones and two-thirds watch programmes on television.

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57 journalists killed in 2016 worldwide

Says Reporters Without Borders

AFP, Paris

At least 57 journalists have been killed around the world in 2016 while doing their job, Reporters Without Borders said yesterday.

The press freedom group said 19 were killed in Syria alone, followed by 10 in Afghanistan, nine in Mexico and five in Iraq.

Almost all of those killed were locally-based journalists.

Although it was fewer than the 67 killed in 2015, the group put the decrease down to "the fact that many journalists have fled countries that became too dangerous, especially Syria, Iraq, Libya, Yemen, Afghanistan and Burundi".

It said the withdrawal of reporters from these conflict-ridden countries had created "news and

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Remove gender specific titles

Oxford University tells colleges



MAIL ONLINE

Oxford University has told colleges and academic departments to remove gender-specific titles such as Mr and Mrs from their websites and leaflets.

The guidance, contained in a document from the Equality and Diversity Unit, suggests only academic terms like Dr and Prof should be retained.

It advised that while the process of removing gender-specific titles is underway, people should be given the option of appearing without any prefix.

It comes after reports that a leaflet from Oxford's students' union told people to use gender neutral pronouns like 'ze' instead of 'he' or 'she' to avoid causing offence.

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IMF chief found guilty over tycoon payment

AFP, Paris

A French court yesterday found IMF head Christine Lagarde guilty of negligence over a massive state payout to a tycoon when she was French finance minister but spared her a fine or prison sentence.

The Court of Justice of the Republic found against

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SIBL
Social Islami Bank Limited
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PRAYER TIMING DECEMBER 20
Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 5-25 12-45 3-45 5-28 7-00
JAMAAT 6-00 1-15 4-00 5-27 7-30
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Bangladeshi wins migrant worker poetry competition

THE STRAITS TIMES, Singapore

Every day, as Bangladeshi supervisor Bikas Nath scrambles in and out of vessel holds at the shipyard where he works, all he sees around him is sweat and grime.

But in his mind's eye, the 22-year-old glimpses the vistas of his homeland: dust storms, bright mustard flowers, the heady scent of jackfruit in the air.

Late at night in his dormitory, he stays up trying to put his memories and misery down on paper. "My life, my youth are held hostage," he writes in Bangla. "And yet I long to love."

His words found voice at last on Sunday, when his poem Keno Probashi? (Why Migrant?) won the first prize at the Migrant Worker Poetry Competition.

The annual contest began in 2014 as a showcase of the literary talents of 28 Bangladeshi and Indian migrant workers. It later expanded to include other groups such as maids.

Due to an increasing audience, it was moved from a room in the National Library to the National Gallery Singapore auditorium, which was filled with close to 200 people on Sunday.

The contest is organised by a group of volunteers.

Local advocacy groups, such as the Humanitarian Organization for Migration Economics, Transient Workers Count Too and Aidha, help to publicise it to workers.

Bikas' \$500 award, as well as the \$300 and \$200 prizes for second and third

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Children seeking admission to class-II and class-V wait to be picked by their parents on the other side of a bamboo fence put up by Tejgaon Government Girls' High School yesterday. *Bottom left*, worries written all over her face, a girl looks for her parents, and *bottom right*, children coming out of the school after the exam.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON



Updated drug policy okayed by cabinet

HASAN JAHIID TUSHER

The cabinet yesterday approved the draft of revised and integrated drug policy, first of its kind in Bangladesh, to make sure pharmaceutical products meet international standards and substandard, fake and adulterated drugs are checked.

As it got the go-ahead, drug manufacturers have hailed the policy that will also regulate marketing, pricing and selling of essential drugs in the local market.

The National Drug Policy 2016 will replace the existing one framed in 2005, Cabinet Secretary M Shafiqul Alam told reporters after the cabinet approved its draft at a meeting at the secretariat with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair.

It has an extended list of essential drugs -- from 205 to 285 -- and provides for restrictions on sales of over-the-counter medicines, said Prof ABM Faroque, convenor of the 12-member sub-committee that prepared the draft.

According to the policy, no one can buy drugs without prescriptions from physicians, except 39 allopathic, 23 ayurvedic and 48 unani medicines. This is very important as indiscriminate use of medicines, especially antibiotics, is harmful for public health.

"This is the first time a drug policy has brought allopathic, ayurvedic, unani and homeopathic medicines under one umbrella," said Faroque, professor of pharmaceutical technology at Dhaka University.

Such integrated drug policy is the first of its kind in Southeast and South Asia, he added.

Pharmaceutical manufacturers said the updated policy was a longstanding demand from their side. They want its immediate implementation for further growth of the pharmaceutical sector, which is, according

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