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WITH TODAY'S ISSUE



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Some 70 Khasi families in Moulvibazar may lose their ancestral land

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US scraps 9/11-era register for Muslims before Trump takes office

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CHAOS AT RU EXAM HALLS

AL, BCL men halt recruitment test

Want jobs for their men; 3,300 job applicants leave fearing violence

ANWAR ALI with ARAFAT RAHMAN

Ruling party men once again stopped a recruitment test at Rajshahi University yesterday, forcing job seekers out of the examination hall, say RU officials and witnesses.

Around 3,300 job seekers, many of them from faraway districts, went back home in fear of violence, as leaders and activists of the RU unit of Bangladesh Chhatra League and Rajshahi city unit of Awami League blocked all three university gates for around seven hours since 8:20am.

The university authorities were yet to make any move against the ruling party men, who threatened not to allow the authorities to hold any recruitment tests on the campus without their consent, several RU officials told The Daily Star.

Since April last year, the AL men have been putting pressure on the university authorities for providing jobs to the party men.

Only two days ago, local AL leaders foiled

a viva voce for recruiting class-IV employees at Rajshahi University School on the university campus.

Besides, Rajshahi city AL General Secretary Dablu Sarkar assaulted RU Vice Chancellor Prof Mizan Uddin at the latter's office on April 20 last year, demanding jobs for ruling party men.

"What steps can we take under such circumstances where senior ruling party leaders are involved," Prof Mizan told this newspaper yesterday.

He said they had informed the police of the matter, and additional policemen had been deployed on the campus since morning.

Contacted, AHM Khairuzzaman Liton, president of Rajshahi city AL, said they supported "the movement of locals, AL leaders and activists" who refused to accept the recruitment process under some "vague rules made with an ulterior motive".

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Leaders and activists of AL and BCL stage a sit-in at the main gate of Rajshahi University yesterday morning after driving out examinees of a staff recruitment test at RU.

PHOTO: ARAFAT RAHMAN

A befitting reply to BNP allegation

PM on N'ganj polls

BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the people of Narayanganj gave a befitting reply to the BNP's allegation that free, fair and neutral elections could not be held under the Awami League government.

"The BNP has been making an allegation that free, fair and neutral elections are not possible under the Awami League government. But the people of Narayanganj have given a befitting reply to the allegation by holding the Narayanganj City Corporation polls in a free and fair manner," she said.

The PM said this when Narayanganj mayor-elect Selina Hayat Ivy called on her at the Gono Bhaban in the evening.

"The Narayanganj elections were excellent and I congratulate and thank the people of Narayanganj as well as the Awami League

What led to Ivy's win

Voters considered her clean image, stance against crime, muscle power, criminalisation of politics; BNP's internal feud another reason



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina embraces Narayanganj mayor-elect Selina Hayat Ivy at the Gono Bhaban yesterday. Ivy went to meet the PM after she won the NCC polls as a ruling Awami League candidate.

PHOTO: PID

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE and MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

Clean image, personal charisma and her strong stance against criminalisation of politics in Narayanganj were the X factors for Selina Hayat Ivy's sweeping victory in Thursday's mayoral race.

Ivy, 50, built such an image by standing up to the "evil force" in Narayanganj and by undertaking various development projects as mayor over the past five years, said voters, political leaders and civil society members.

Her win for a second time running will mean

more development in the city and the space for criminal activities will shrink further, they noted.

BNP candidate Shakhawat Hossain Khan too has a clean image, but he is new in politics, never holding any public office before. Also, intra-party feud and a lack of coordination among party leaders cost the 47-year-old lawyer some votes.

IVY'S X FACTORS

A group of Narayanganj district AL leaders tried to eliminate Ivy from local politics after the grassroots

did not send her name to the party top brass as their

RELATED STORY ON PAGE 16

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Elected councillors are mostly clean

No cases against 17 out of 27 councillors of N'ganj city

PANKAG KARMAKAR

The people of Narayanganj city have mostly chosen candidates with clean image in the just-concluded elections as majority of the councillors-elect do not have criminal records.

Of the 27 councillors-elect of general wards, 17 are not currently accused in criminal cases, according to their affidavits submitted to the returning officer (RO) with nomination papers.

The victory of such candidates has given the mayor-elect Selina Hayat Ivy relatively a clean team to run the city corporation.

"It is a good sign that people have mostly rejected the candidates with criminal records. More candidates with clean image are elected, more the possibility of maintaining good governance by local government bodies increases," eminent local government expert Dr Tofail Ahmed told The Daily Star.

Ivy, who won a second term defeating BNP candidate Shakhawat Hossain by a wide margin, pledged to work for development of Narayanganj by taking all irrespective of political parties and ideologies on board.

She became the first mayor of Narayanganj through the maiden Narayanganj City Corporation (NCC) elections in 2011. That time, around one-third of councillors in her team had no criminal records.

In Thursday's election, 156 aspirants were vying for 27 councillor posts. Of them, 36 are accused in different criminal cases, including that for murder.

However, some councillors-elect have criminal records and people are concerned that they might misuse power to gain personal benefit.

For example, BNP activist Iqbal Hossain, who was accused in the sensational seven-murder case, has been elected councillor of general ward-2 by defeating Selina Islam Beauty, wife of slain ward councillor Nazrul Islam, a victim of the seven-murder in April, 2014.



TOP!

QUOTE

"We will never look to be dragged into an armed race and to spend resources that we can't afford...we just say that we are stronger than any aggressor."

RUSSIAN PRESIDENT VLADIMIR PUTIN AT HIS ANNUAL END-OF-YEAR PRESS CONFERENCE



Maltese troops survey a hijacked Libyan Afriqiyah Airways Airbus A320 on the runway at Malta

Airport yesterday.

Malta plane hijack ends peacefully

'Gaddafi loyalists' surrender after releasing passengers

AGENCIES

Hijackers forced an airliner to land in Malta yesterday then freed all their hostages unharmed and surrendered after declaring their loyalty to Libya's late leader Muammar Gaddafi.

Television pictures showed two men being led from the aircraft in handcuffs. The prime minister of the tiny Mediterranean island, Joseph Muscat, tweeted "hijackers surrendered, searched and taken into custody".

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HIJACKED LIBYAN PLANE DIVERTED TO MALTA



SOURCE: FLIGHTRADAR24 © AFP



Berlin attack suspect Amri killed in Italy

REUTERS, Milan

Italian police shot dead the man believed to be responsible for this week's Berlin Christmas market truck attack, killing him after he pulled a gun on them during a routine check in the early hours yesterday.

The suspect - 24-year-old Tunisian Anis Amri - travelled to Italy from France, triggering a spate of criticism from eurosceptics over Europe's open-border Schengen pact.

A police chief said his men had no idea they might be dealing with Amri when

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