

Contempt of court petition against Prothom Alo journo

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A contempt of court petition was filed yesterday with the High Court (HC) against Mizanur Rahman, a senior journalist of the daily Prothom Alo, for publishing a news item titled 'Various events with the bail of Babar' on January 29.

Sources said barrister Rafique-ul Huq, principal counsel for Lutuzzaman Babar, filed the petition stating that the report has shown disregard and disrespect to the administration of justice by the High Court.

The HC bench of Justice Syed AB Mahmudul Huq and Justice Mayeenul Islam Chowdhury may hear the petition today.

Ophthalmological Society executives

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prof Ava Hossain and Dr Md Sharfuddin Ahmed have been elected president and general secretary of the executive committee of Ophthalmological Society of Bangladesh for the term 2009-10, says a press release.

Other office bearers are: vice-presidents -- Prof Deen Md Nurul Haque, Prof Md Abdul Halim Khan, Dr Shahidul Islam Faruk, Dr AKM Shahidur Rahman Tarafdar and Dr Moahmmad Rejanur Rahman; treasurer -- Dr Shawkat Ara Shakur; joint secretary generals -- Dr Md Anisur Rahman and Dr Md Abid Kamal; organising secretary -- Dr Inamur Rahman Chowdhury; science secretary -- Dr Ashraf Sayeed; publicity secretary -- Dr Md Dr Masum Habib; office secretary -- Dr Md Abdur Rakib; international affairs secretary -- Dr AKM Nazmus Sakib and technical secretary -- Dr AKM Waliullah.



Dhaka Bar Assoc executives

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Advocate Arfan Uddin Khan and Advocate Babu Pran Ballav Ghosh have been elected president and secretary general of the Dhaka Metropolitan Bar Association at its annual election in the city recently, says a press release.

Other office bearers are Vice Presidents Md Selim Mian and Ariz Ahmed, Joint Secretary General Md Zahedul Islam, Treasurer Shahid Hossain Dhali, Library Secretary Nurul Amin, Cultural Secretary Abul Kalam Azad and Accounts Secretary Mashur Rahman and Executive Members Md Manikur Rahman, ANM Abed Elias, Sobana Jasmine, Shah Rajas Ratan, Nazma Akter, A Mazid, Salma Akter and Md Safayet Hossain.

Babu Narayan Chandra was the chief election commissioner while Md Fazlul Karim, Golam Saber Chowdhury, Kazi Ahsan Ullah and Onur Jahan were assistant election commissioners.



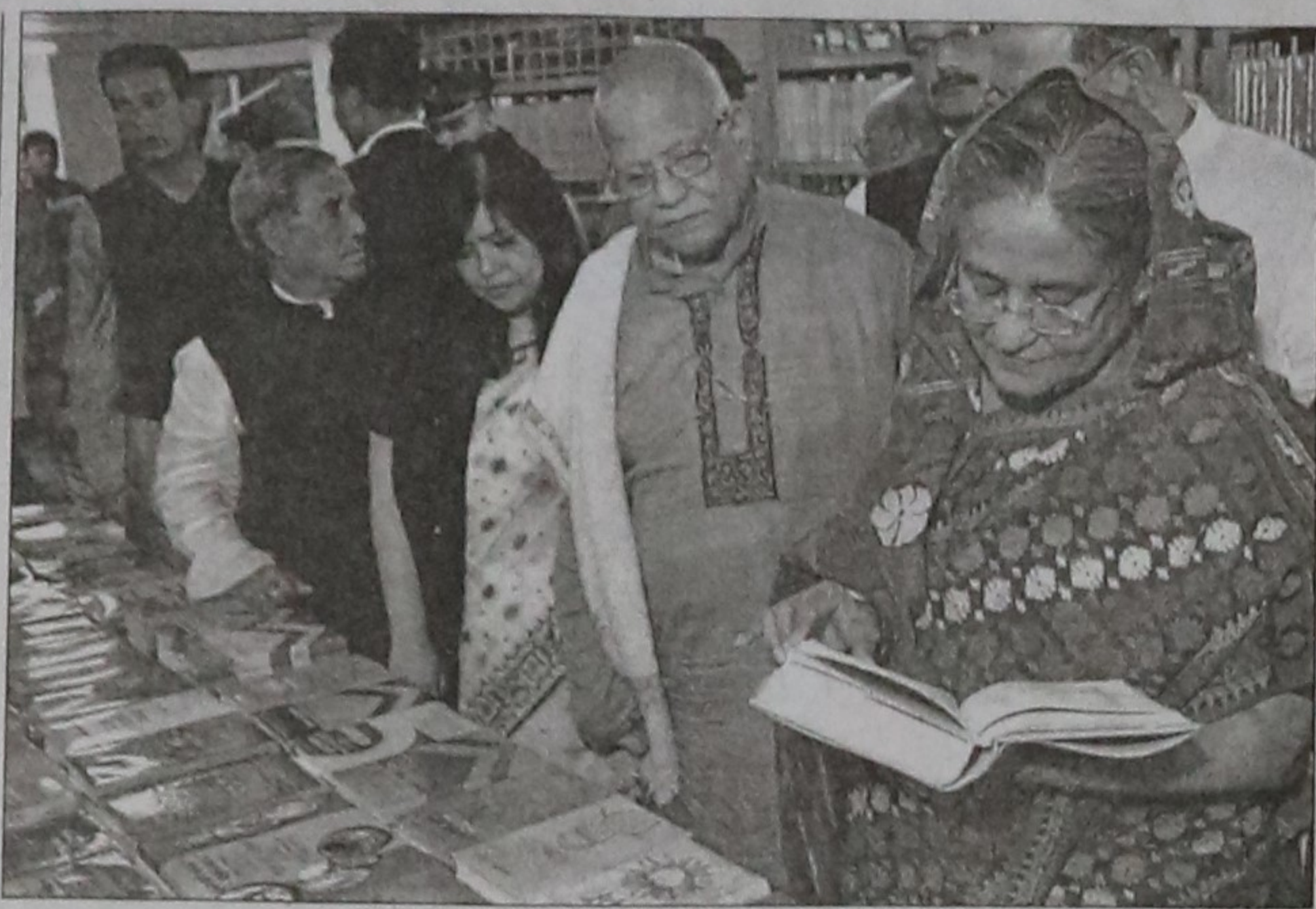
Sangbad Pathak Samity executives

METRO DESK

Aminul Haque and Nilfar Karim have been elected president and general secretary of Bangladesh Sangbad Pathak Samity for the years 2009-10 at its 12th Annual General Meeting in the city recently.

Other office bearers are Vice Presidents Ruxana Anwar and Dewan Saidul Hasan, Treasurer Salahud Din Ahmed, Organising Secretary Rehana Parwin, Cultural Secretary Shireen Sheila, Office Secretary Zinat Rehana Luna, International Secretary Mohammad Zahirul Alam, Assistant General Secretary Rana Ahmed and Members Munmun Rahman, Khaled Masood Ahmed Khan, Syed Enamul Huq, Mir Nasir Ahmed and M Obaidur Rahman.

All the members of the executive committee were elected unopposed, says a press release.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina flips through a book at a stall at Ekushey Book Fair at Bangla Academy in the city yesterday after inaugurating the fair while Finance Minister AMA Muhith and Information Minister Abul Kalam Azad look on.

Zeal marks first day of book fair

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The month-long Amar Ekushey Book Fair began on the Bangla Academy premises in the city yesterday amid much enthusiasm among readers, writers and publishers.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina formally inaugurated the fair, one of the most traditional events, that is very close to the heart of the countrymen.

This was the first visit of Hasina on the Dhaka University campus since she took over the charge of prime minister after the 9th parliamentary elections.

Unprecedented security measures were taken on the campus as well as on the academy premises centring the occasion.

The fair commemorating the supreme sacrifices of heroic Bangladeshis during the Language Movement on February 21, 1952 also serves as the meeting place of the country's eminent novel and short story writers, poets, literary critics, historians, columnists, journalists, readers and cultural activists.

Meanwhile, leaders and activists of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra

Dal (JCD), student front of BNP, wore black badges on the DU campus protesting the prime minister's presence at the fair venue.

JCD leaders said they cannot welcome Hasina at the fair as hundreds of their leaders and workers are still out of the campus and residential dormitories due to post-election attacks by Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) men.

They also alleged that BCL cadres beat up hundreds of JCD men since the general elections at different education institutions across the country.

BCL men, on the other hand, welcomed the prime minister by bringing out a procession on the campus and at residential dormitories.

The number of participating organisations at the fair has risen this year to 297 from last year's 236 with a total of 436 stalls, a significant rise from last year's 362.

The stalls were allotted on both sides of the thoroughfare in front of the academy for the first time. So, the main gate has been built on the road in front of the Atomic Energy

Commission.

The book fair remains open to the public every day from 3:00pm till 9:00pm and on weekends from 11:00am till 9:00pm.

Children's hours at this year's fair will be between 11:00am and 3:00pm on Feb 6, 7 and 27. Only adults accompanying children will be allowed to enter the fair venue during these hours.

Dr Abu Taher Haor Unnayan Board DG

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government recently appointed Dr Mohammed Abu Taher Khandaker (PEng) as the director general of Haor Unnayan Board, says a press release.

He has already taken the office.

Earlier, he worked as the chief engineer of Water Development Board and, as director general of River Research Institute.

Ensure jobs for youths as per electoral pledge

Youth Gono Forum leaders urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of the Youth Gono Forum yesterday urged the government to take immediate steps to ensure employment for youth as per electoral manifesto.

The leaders also urged to announce specific plan for

building Digital Bangladesh for the sake of public welfare, says a press release.

Leaders came up with the demand at the extended central committee meeting of the forum.

Gonoforum presidium member ASM Altaf Hossain, acting general secretary

Advocate Subrata Chowdhury, and law secretary Advocate Jagrul Haider spoke at the meeting.

Youth leaders Sagir Anwar, Shafiqul Islam Babul, Advocate Sheikh Aktarul Islam, Mostak Chowdhury and Shariful Islam Sajal also spoke at the meeting.

All 21 opposition demands rejected

FROM PAGE 1

the law will take its own course," Hamid said.

BNP lawmakers MK Anwar, Salauddin Quader Chowdhury, and Zafrul Islam Chowdhury among others submitted the notices.

Interestingly, the speaker came up with the same old arguments for scrapping the opposition's notices that his predecessors in the last parliament had used for rejecting the notices of the erstwhile opposition lawmakers of Awami League.

The speaker did not accept any of the notices as the treasury bench did not agree to have discussions on the subjects.

According to the rules of procedure, the speaker chalked out the businesses of the House in consultation with Leader of the House Sheikh Hasina who is also the prime minister.

With the rejection of the opposition lawmakers' notices, it is now almost certain that the inaugural session of the ninth parliament will not have any discussion on any important issue brought up by opposition lawmakers.

Meanwhile, yesterday's sitting of the House experienced almost a dull day due to opposition lawmakers' disinterest in only talking about problems of their constituencies during the question-answer session, while almost all treasury bench lawmakers demanded construction of roads and bridges in their constituencies, refraining from raising any question on any national issue.

LGRD Minister Syed Ashrafur Islam assured his ruling alliance colleagues of roads and bridges.

More interestingly, the House proceedings yesterday could not be resumed on schedule due to a quorum crisis, meaning not even 60 lawmakers were in the House on schedule, despite over 260 of them being of the treasury bench -- again evoking the spectre of the last parliament's experience.

The House finally resumed its business at least 15 minutes late at 4:45pm.

At the beginning of the sitting, only two cabinet ministers were seen in the front row of the treasury bench.

Neither the leader of the House nor the deputy leader was present at the beginning.

During the question-answer session, Speaker Abdul Hamid repeatedly asked the lawmakers to raise questions, instead of delivering statements. He also urged the lawmakers not to waste time with congratulatory speeches.

The prime minister entered the House after the maghrib prayer break, just to leave soon after.

Again around 9:10pm while the sitting was still on, the front row of the traditional treasury bench became empty, while the traditional opposition front row, which had recently been turned into a treasury bench too, was sporting only Rashed Khan Menon of the ruling alliance led by Awami League.

Menon was allocated the spot recently when the speaker reshuffled the seating arrangement in the House by pushing over some opposition lawmakers from the front row of the traditional opposition bench.

The session was adjourned around 9:20pm.



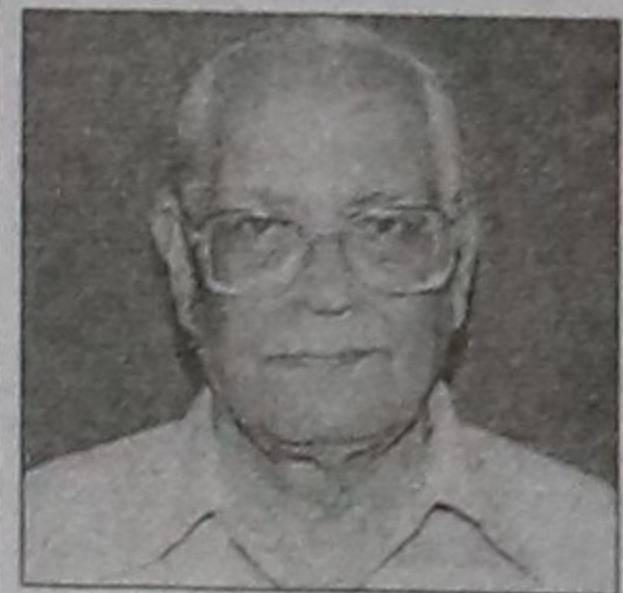
Death anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the third death anniversary of Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury, former prime minister and one of the organisers of the Liberation War, says a press release.

On the occasion, fataha will be offered and wreaths will be placed at his grave. Recitation from the Quran, milad mahfil and special prayers will also be held after Asr prayers at his residence in Chandpur.

Relatives and admirers are requested to pray for the peace of his departed soul.



Debesh Bhattacharya

METRO DESK

Today is the fifth death anniversary of eminent jurist and human rights leader Justice Debesh Bhattacharya, says a press release.

To mark the occasion, Justice Debesh Bhattacharya Foundation will distribute warm clothes and feed the destitute at Lengua in Tangail.

Justice Bhattacharya is widely remembered for his involvement in defending democratic and human rights.

Because of his involvement in political activism, Justice Bhattacharya, then an advocate at Mymensingh District Court, was put in jail by the Muslim League Government as a security prisoner during 1949-50.

He was a senior advocate of the Supreme Court of Pakistan when he was appointed as a judge of the newly established Bangladesh High Court in January, 1972.

He was elevated to the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh in June, 1975 and retired from the bench in December, 1977.

He proved himself to be an outstanding jurist and some of his verdicts were precedent setting judgments.

Justice Bhattacharya was involved in wide ranging social and civil society organisations.

He was a member of the Gono Adalat (People's Court) set up to put on trial the war criminals of 1971.

He established a number of educational institutions at his own village where he carried out many philanthropic activities.

He also published a number of monographs including an anthology of poems.

Quamrul Hassan

METRO DESK

The 21st death anniversary of an artist Quamrul Hassan will be observed today, says a press release.

On the occasion, Patua Quamrul Hassan Art School, the only school named after the artist, will place wreaths at his grave.

Dr Shafiqul Alam

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the 21st death anniversary of Dr Shafiqul Alam, former civil surgeon of Cox's Bazar, says a press release.

On the occasion, a milad mahfil will be held at his Kalabagan residence in the city after Esha prayer.

Sabana Bibi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the 4th death anniversary of Sabana Bibi, mother of Gazi MA Salam, organising secretary of Dhaka City South unit of Jatiya Jubo Sanghat, says a press release.

On the occasion, Qurankhwani, milad mahfil will be held at her Jatrabari residence in the city and at her village home in Comilla.

Relatives and admirers are requested to attend the programme and pray for salvation of the departed soul.



Winners of Mahatma Gandhi Peace Award 2009 pose for photograph with the guests at an award giving ceremony at LGED auditorium in the city yesterday. (Story on Page 5)

Transit used as political weapon

FROM PAGE 1

people," he said.

"I have not heard a single well-focused discussion in parliament on trade. Politicians perceive trade as work of businessmen and economists," he said at the inaugural session of a two-day regional seminar on "Mainstreaming International Trade into National Development" at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel.

South Asian Network on Economic Modelling (SANEM) and CUTS International organised the seminar to look into trade liberalisation issues from a South Asian perspective.

Centre for Policy Dialogue Chairman Prof Rehman Sobhan also spoke at the programme. Trade policy analysts and economists from Saarc countries also took part in the inaugural session.

Since the 90s trade liberalisation, countries have been coming out of their protectionism based on the argument that removal of barriers to free trade and closer integration of econo-

mies benefit all including the poor.

In line with other countries, such protectionism in Bangladesh has been weakened significantly since 1991-92.

On the transit issue, the commerce minister said it has not been discussed from an economic point of view rather from a political point of view and other issues like national security has been attached to it.

Other challenges, such as infrastructural problems, can be overcome if there is political will, he added. "Everything can be solved once the political will is there," he said.

Faruq, referring to the Awami League electoral manifesto, said international and regional trade would be important for fulfilling the promises.

Rehman Sobhan stressed on the importance of carving trade policies in such a manner that benefits all.

He said trade liberalisation has broadened opportunities like foreign investment but it has also become disadvanta-

geous to domestic industries as many of them were exposed to global competition at a premature stage.

He, however, said some sectors like the ready-made garments enjoy advantage in the liberalised trading environment.

Referring to some Bangladeshi products' duty-free access to foreign developed markets, Rehman said such access was availed for the poor people. "Trade liberalisation was done in the name of poverty alleviation. Are we in fact passing the benefits to the poor?" he said.

He said wages have remained between \$30 and \$40 a month giving the excuse of competition.

"Industry does not consist of owners only but workers too," Rehman said, adding, "Dealing the workers' issues is also the responsibility of the elected government."

SANEM Executive Director Selim Raihan and Research Director of CUTS International Siddhartha Mitra also spoke in the inaugural session.

BNP boycotts JS as seat row not resolved

FROM PAGE 1

Meanwhile, Speaker Abdul Hamid yesterday said he is trying to resolve the problem. He urged the opposition lawmakers to return to parliament and gave assurance that he would continue his efforts to end the crisis.

"If anyone volunteers, it will be easy to solve the problem," Hamid told reporters at his office yesterday evening, which means if any lawmaker, who now sits in the front row, agrees to sit in the second row, the seat will be offered to the opposition.

The speaker yesterday talked to the opposition chief whip over telephone and urged them to join the House. He gave assurance that if the matter is not settled in the first session, which ends February 26, something will certainly be done before the beginning of the second session.

After taking decision to continue the boycott at a meeting of the opposition lawmakers at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban, BNP law-

maker Salauddin Quader Chowdhury said, "We are waiting for the speaker's decision."

BNP lawmaker MK Anwar said the present seating arrangement for the front row on the left side of the speaker's podium might create an unusual situation in the House since opposition lawmakers and ministers are sitting together. "We may discuss the issue with the speaker if he wants," he said.

Anwar alleged that the ruling party is trying to establish a BAKSAL-like one-party rule in parliament. "We do not want to boycott the House. We want to join the House to play our role," he said.

Opposition Chief Whip Joyal Abedin Faruk said they will sit today again before resumption of the House proceedings to review the overall situation.

The opposition lawmakers of BNP, Jamaat-e-Islami and Bangladesh Jatiya Party joined the inaugural session of the

ninth parliament but walked out of the House before the president's address.

On the next sitting on Wednesday last week, they entered the House and staged a walk-out in protest at the changes in the seating plan earlier done by immediate past speaker Jamiruddin Sircar.

Sircar had allocated all 10 seats of the front row to the opposition lawmakers including lone Liberal Democratic Party lawmaker Oli Ahmed, which annoyed the treasury bench.

At the demand of the treasury bench, the new speaker changed the arrangement and gave the opposition four seats in the front row.

The treasury bench said considering its strength in the House the BNP-led opposition is entitled to get only three seats in the front row, but the speaker allocated five seats to it including one for Oli Ahmed.

The BNP-led opposition has 31 lawmakers in the House now.

DCC elections to miss ward update

FROM PAGE 16

cancelled the redemarcation through a circular on November 25, 2001.

The cancellation of the 1998 redemarcation was reportedly ordered in an effort to hold a hurried election to DCC for replacing erstwhile city mayor Mohammad Hanif, who was also the chief of Dhaka city unit Awami League, the archival of four-party alliance.

The cancellation pushed the erstwhile EC to hold the last DCC election under the 1993 ward delimitation, resulting in a hugely lopsided representation of voters in the city administration.

The local government and rural development (LGRD) ministry at the end of last month sent a letter to the current EC urging it to hold the DCC election again soon, as the poll has been due for the last year and a half. The five-year tenure of the DCC administration expired on May 14, 2007.

Although the LGRD ministry requested the commission to hold the DCC election, it however did not take any initiative to redemarcate the city wards.

According to the existing law, the LGRD ministry is now the authority to redemarcate city corpora-

tion wards, but it seems to have no plan for doing that in the capital ahead of the upcoming DCC election.

The current EC on January 14 also decided that the DCC election will be held under the current voter list prepared by the commission during the immediate past caretaker government just ahead of the recent national poll.

The sources said the commission also directed its secretariat to prepare a list of possible polling centres for the DCC election.

Now there are 1 to 20,000 voters in 15 DCC wards, 20,001 to 30,000 voters in 19 wards, 30,001 to 40,000 voters in 22 wards, 40,001 to 50,000 voters in 12 wards, 50,001 to 60,000 voters in nine wards, 60,001 to 70,000 voters in five wards, 70,001 to 80,000 voters in three wards, 80,001 to 90,000 voters in two wards, 90,001 to 1,00,000 voters in two wards, 1,00,001 to 1,10,000 voters in one DCC ward, the sources added.

A total of 90 councillors will be elected from the same number of wards having equal authority to run their activities, but some of them will represent much smaller numbers of voters of smaller areas than the others.

In the 1998 redemarcation, the number

of voters was around 50,000 in most of the wards with exceptions of just one or two in the old part of the city.

Fifteen union parishes under Tejgaon circle were also brought under DCC through the 1998 redemarcation, as the residents of those unions despite being very close to the city had been deprived of amenities provided by the city corporation.

But their dawning luck was soon drowned in despair through the 2001 cancellation of the 1998 redemarcation.

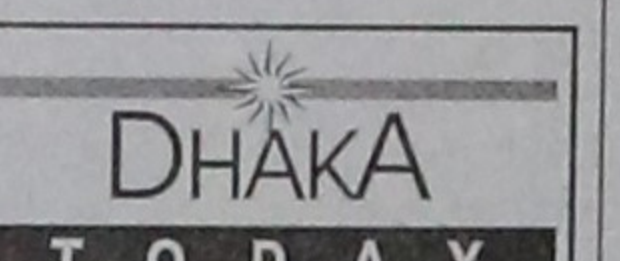
Qulxhwani

BSS, Dhaka

Qulxhwani of EA Chowdhury, former Inspector General of Police and chairman of Pubali Bank Limited, will be held at House No-2, Road No-96, Gulshan-2, after Maghrib prayers today.

Relatives, friends and admirers have been requested to attend the programme.

He passed away due to old-age complications at the United Hospital in the city on January 28.



Seminar

Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Society organises a seminar marking the World Wetlands Day 2009. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 3:30pm.

Workshop

Bangladesh Consortium on Tobacco Control (BCTC) and Welfare Association for Cancer Care jointly organise a workshop on strengthening tobacco control law regarding packaging. Venue: BCTC conference hall. Time: 11:00am.

Roundtable

Shujan organises a roundtable on responsibilities in establishing effective and strong local government. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 10:00am.

Agreement signing

Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industries and International Finance Corporation will sign an agreement. Venue: DCCI auditorium. Time: 11:30am.



Fog likely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain dry with partly cloudy sky over the country in next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Light to moderate fog may occur over the country during late night till morning, Met Office said.

Night temperature may fall slightly over the country.

Highest temperature 30.0 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Cox's Bazar and lowest 09.9 degrees Celsius at Rajshahi.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:46pm today and rises at 6:38am tomorrow.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	26.3	14.6	51	31
Chittagong	28.5	15.3	79	50
Rajshahi	26.2	09.9	71	56
Khulna	25.7	14.6	70	60
Barisal	27.1	13.5	79	68
Sylhet	26.5	15.0	99	64
Cox's Bazar	30.0	17.3	57	59