

AL-led 14-party meeting tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The ruling Awami League (AL)-led 14-party combine sits tomorrow to discuss the country's latest socio-economic and political matters.

The issues to dominate the agenda include formation of an Election Commission (EC) based on the search committee recommendations, the main opposition BNP's anti-government movements, and bid to topple the government, sources said.

"The present political situation will come to discussion at the meeting", AL Joint General Secretary Mahubul Alam Hanif told The Daily Star.

The meeting will be held at 11:00am at AL President and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's political office in Dhanmondi with coordinator of the 14-party Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury in the chair.

Role of Pathik Saha recalled

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a commemorative meeting yesterday recalled the visionary contribution of journalist Pathik Saha in journalism.

Journalist Pathik Saha Smriti Sangsad organised the event at Dhaka Reporters' Unity to mark his first death anniversary to be observed January 29.

They said Pathik Saha had written to establish a non-communal, democratic, and progressive Bangladesh.

Speaking as chief guest, Awami League Joint Secretary General Mahubul Alam Hanif said Pathik Saha wrote to focus the problems of society and directed people to follow the right way.

The AL leader urged the leaders of journalist community to set up a fund for Pathik Saha's family and made a promise to donate to that fund.

Politician Nuh-ul-Alam Lenin chaired in the programme while Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal presidium member Shirin Akhter, BFUJ general secretary Abdul Jalil Bhuyian, daily Sangbad news editor Kazi Rafique, and DRU secretary general Sajjad Alam Khan Topu also spoke.

Obituary

METRO DESK

A Hakim Miah, father of former vice-president of Dhaka Sub-Editors Council (DSEC) Jahangir Hakim, died of old age complications at his residence in Patuakhali yesterday morning. He was 85.

He left behind his five sons, one daughter and a host of relatives and well-wishers.

Hakim Miah will be buried at the family graveyard after a namaz-e-janaza at his residence in Kalaiya Bandar of Baufal Upazila at 10:00am today.

Former DSEC president Mukul Talukdar and newly elected DSEC President Md Al-Mamun and General Secretary Abul Kalam Azad expressed deep shock at the death of Hakim Miah, said a press release. They also conveyed sympathy to the bereaved family members.



Prof Abul Barakat speaks at a memorial lecture on the 7th death anniversary of former finance minister Shah AMS Kibria organised by Bangladesh Foundation for Development Research at National Museum in the city yesterday. On his left are Kazi Madina, Monayem Sarkar and Mostafa Faruk Mohammad.

PHOTO: STAR

DUBAI KILLINGS

Dhaka's move to save its 2 nationals failed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh's move to save the lives of two of its nationals, accused of killing three of their compatriots in the UAE, has failed as the families of the victims have refused to forgive them.

On May 2 last year, Harunur Rashid of Agrabad murdered two brothers -- Ayub, 28, and Tayab, 25, -- of Fatickchhari over personal enmity in Ras Al Khaima, while Shahabuddin of Fatickchhari killed Jamaluddin alias Yunus in Dubai on November 11, 2009.

"Today (Friday) was the last date for the families to show mercy to the accused, but they didn't," Zahirul Alam Majumder, assistant director of the District Manpower and Employment Office in Chittagong, told The

exchange for blood money, it could have spared them from execution, he added.

The probable execution of the two Bangladeshis comes only in four months of beheading of eight Bangladeshi workers in Saudi Arabia for killing an Egyptian. There were allegations that the Bangladesh authorities did not do enough to seek mercy from the victim's family.

Shahabuddin was awarded death sentence in 2010, but he appealed to a higher court, said Mohammad Mohsin, director (welfare) at Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training.

Sensing that the accused might be awarded capital punishment, Bangladesh mission in Dubai requested the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment to communicate with the families of the deceased and the accused to reach a compromise.

The ministry responded by asking the Chittagong deputy commissioner (DC) and local leaders for help in this regard.

Three days ago, the DC along with Fatickchaari upazila chairman tried to persuade Rokeya Begum, mother of the victim brothers, for mercy, but failed in their bid.

"Rokeya Begum is so shocked that she threatened to commit suicide if she is asked to forgive the accused," said Zahirul Alam.

Some local government representatives and relatives of the victims' families were also engaged to convince the victims' family and inform the decision by yesterday. But the initiative also failed, he mentioned.

"Rokeya Begum had only two sons, who lost their father in their childhood. Throughout her life, she struggled to bring them up," Nasiruddin, maternal uncle of the duo, told The Daily Star yesterday.

She is now too weak to survive without medicine, added Nasiruddin.

Zahirul said they tried their utmost to persuade the families of the dead, as it is a matter of Bangladesh's image in the UAE -- hosting around 15 lakh Bangladeshi workers.

The killings of Bangladeshis were brutal, but now the probable execution of two more will be no less tragic for their families, maintained the manpower department official.

Harunur and Shahabuddin have confessed to their crimes and are now in a Dubai jail. They might face execution as a Dubai court is scheduled to announce its verdict on Monday in separate murder cases. They are standing trial under Sharia law in the United Arab Emirates, where the death penalty is served for killing.

Daily Star yesterday.

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"As both the families have not changed their mind after repeated attempts, things will go as per the verdict," said Zahirul.

Had the families pardoned them even in

Govt to face 'Gonoadalat' if crossfire continues: CPB

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) yesterday threatened the government would face Gonoadalat (court of people) if it does not stop the incidents of crossfire and disappearance of people.

The government should also begin the trial of the accused in mass killings at different times in the country, otherwise they would be tried at the court to be established through mass movement, said CPB president Manjurul Ahsan Khan.

Khan was addressing the party's national rally organised in front of the Department of Fisheries in the city, participated by thousands of people from all walks of life.

At the programme, CPB general secretary Mujahidul Islam Selim challenged the government hands over power to the CPB and it would bring down prices of daily commodities within three months. The CPB would do so by introducing "mass-distribution system", he said.

He claimed that the two major political parties of the country do not practice politics rather than patronise extortionists and the corrupt.

"Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) should be renamed 'Lobbyist Party' and the Awami League 'Lobbyist League', as they are commercialising and criminalising politics", he said.

Manjurul Ahsan said the imperialists have been trying to loot the country's oil, gas, coal and mineral

resources for very long under the patronisation of the present and past governments. CPB's fight against imperialists' plot will be continued, he said.

The party made an 11-point demand including reduction of fertiliser and diesel's price, fair wage for garments' workers, solving the crises of gas, electricity, water and traffic jam, and speedy trial of war criminals.

CPB assistant general secretary Syed Abu Jafar Ahmed, presidium member Haider Akbar Khan Rono, and central committee's member Jasim Uddin Mondol, among others, also spoke.

The CPB also took out a procession to Central Shaheed Minar through Nilkhet and TSC of Dhaka University.



Communist Party of Bangladesh brings out a procession after the end of a rally before Matsya Bhaban in the city yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

'BID TO CHANGE POLITICAL TREND' Facebook group's mobilisation foiled

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police yesterday foiled a mobilisation attempt of 'Blue Band Call', a Facebook-based platform of youths launched by former lawmaker Mahi B Chowdhury, in the city's Dhanmondi area for not securing prior permission.

Seven youths were picked up by the law enforcers from Rabindra Sarobar around 12:00 noon and New Market area after the participants locked in a scuffle with police following arguments. The youth picked up from New Market area was released.

Mahi B Chowdhury, also joint secretary general of Bikalpadhara Bangladesh, told The Daily Star that their slogan is for political consensus or retirement (of political leaders).

They did not defy rules as they booked the venue around a month back for January 27 and 28 against Tk 45,000 and the Sarobar authorities informed police of the matter, he said.

The Blue Band Call wants change in the present political trend, which they say, is not correct, police said quoting the arrestees.

Asked about the detention, Md Muniruzzaman, officer-in-charge of Dhanmondi Police Station, said three of the arrestees are students of different college and private universities while the others are engaged in business. They are residents of different areas of the capital.

Police dispersed the gathering youths from different institutions as the group did not receive permission from the authorities or police for holding the programme, he said.

When police asked them to leave the venue, since they had not received permission, an altercation took place between them and the police. Subsequently, the participants locked in a scuffle with police and police picked them up to maintain law and order," the OC said.

Mahi was not present on the spot.

However, Mahi told The Daily Star that he along with over 100 members was staging a sit-in programme in Dhanmondi Police Station compound demanding release of their detained members. While filing this report at around 10:45pm, the sit-in programme was going on.



(From left) Dr Mohammad Jobayer Chisti, Tom Calder, Prof AK Azad Chowdhury, Dr Gowher Rizvi, Dr AKM Rafique Ahammed, Trimita Chakma, Taptun Nasreen, Farzana Chowdhury, Minhaz Chowdhury and Mostafizur Rahman at Australian Alumni Excellence Awards organised by Australian Trade Commission, Dhaka, Bangladesh in the city's Ruposhi Bangla Hotel yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

KIBRIA'S DEATH ANNIVERSARY

Fresh probe demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Speakers at a rally yesterday demanded fresh investigation into the assassination of former finance minister Shah AMS Kibria so that the masterminds can be identified and duly tried.

Kibria, also a former Awami League lawmaker from Habiganj, was assassinated in a grenade attack on a rally with party workers at Baidyer Bazar in his hometown Habiganj, Sylhet on January 27, 2005.

The rally marking Kibria's 7th death anniversary was held beside his memorial on Baidyer Bazar Government Primary School premises, the same spot where the attack took place.

Hundreds of locals took part in the rally and formed a human chain at the memorial, paying homage to the deceased. A doa mahfil was held and special prayers were also offered there.

Habiganj District Bar Association President Alamgir Bhuiyan Babul and District Sramik League President Arab Ali and General Secretary Farid Ahmed Raju spoke on the occasion.

In the morning, Kibria-Shah Manzur Huda Foundation, District Sramik League and Habiganj Sadar Upazila Administration placed wreaths at the base of the memorial.

The district Awami League organised a meeting at its office in the evening.