

Thousands of Muslim devotees take part in a mass procession to observe Eid-e-Miladun Nabi, marking the anniversary of birth and death of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), in the capital on Friday. The procession was brought out from the Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh.



PHOTO: STAR

Ekushey Boi Mela getting ready

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With five days to go before the month-long Amar Ekushey Boi Mela starts on February 1, the Bangla Academy premises is getting ready to greet thousands of book lovers and visitors.

Around two hundred workers are passing busy time to complete decoration and arrangement for their book stalls, which were distributed through lottery on Friday.

Bangla Academy, the organiser of the country's largest book fair, dedicated this year's book fair to Humayun Ahmed, a popular novelist and filmmaker, who died on July 19 last year.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is expected to inaugurate the fair at 3:30pm on February 1, while Bangla Academy Chairman Prof Anisuzzaman will preside over the programme, Bangla Academy Deputy Director Murshid Uddin Ahmed told The Daily Star yesterday.

This year, the Book Fair Committee has taken a strict decision to confine the book fair to the academy premises, and therefore NGOs and cultural organisations did not get stalls.

"No stalls would be allowed on the street outside the premises," said Murshid. "We have taken the decision to facilitate genuine authors and publishers."

Murshid, however, said they

allowed stalls for some service and government organisations.

A total 407 units (space for stalls) have been distributed among 236 publishers, 30 units among 20 government organisations and 19 for eight service organisations, he said.

There will be a little magazine corner and a stall for the Bangladeshi writers living abroad.

A total of 630 units were distributed among 425 institutions last year.

The fair will keep open from 3:00pm to 9:00pm everyday. On holidays, it will be open between 11:00am and 9:00pm. The fair will open at 8:00am and continue till 9:00pm on February 21, International Mother Language Day.

ACID ATTACK ON ANKHI Monir on remand

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court on Friday sent Monir Uddin on a nine-day remand for throwing acid on an Eden college student.

On January 15, Monir confessed to throwing acid on Sharmin Akter Ankhi as she refused his marriage proposal at a marriage registrar's office in the capital's Chankharpool.

The victim's brother filed a case with Bangshal police accusing Monir and his friend Masum after the acid attack.

Monir was arrested from Kurkutichhari in Barkol upazila of Rangamati on Thursday.

Earlier on January 20, the High Court directed the government to arrest Monir and another accused Masum.

Quoting Monir, DB Deputy Commissioner Monirul Islam told journalists at DB office on Minto Road in the capital on Friday that he and Akhi got married two years back; but he divorced her six months ago.

Ankhi is now undergoing treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

No borrowing, no prescriptions

Hasina tells IEB convention

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday shared her pledge to make the country self-dependent through utilising its human and natural resources.

Hasina said a financially independent Bangladesh need not borrow money. "We don't want to borrow from others always. If we borrow, we have to listen to their prescriptions. We don't want this situation anymore," she told the inaugural ceremony of the four-day 54th Convention of the Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh (IEB) on IEB, Chittagong, premises.

The premier termed poverty the country's main enemy. Referring to the maritime victory against Myanmar, she urged engineers to play roles in properly using the huge marine resources for the country's sake.

Hasina stressed the need for alternative energy like solar power, innovation of cheap solar panels and finding ways to build low cost houses.

She also asked the engineers to effectively plan to build residential areas at upazila level with modern amenities at low cost and in small spaces.

Hasina mentioned that the government gave 10 bighas of land to IEB at Ramna in Dhaka, Tk 28 crore for constructing the IEB building in Dhaka, and 72 bighas of land for Engineering Staff College.

She also promised to extend all-out cooperation so that IEB could get permanent lease for its Chittagong centre from Bangladesh Railway.

IEB President Engr Nurul Huda presented a crest to the PM on the occasion.

The prime minister also met the people of Rangunia upazila yesterday, who longed to see Hasina, the daughter of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

She was greeted by a sea of people at Rangunia Pilot High School ground. The premier waved to the crowd to receive their compliments.

PM spending public money on pre-election rallies: Tariqul

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Coordinator Tariqul Islam yesterday accused Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina of spending public money to hold pre-election rallies during her visits to different districts.

He also demanded that the government bring a bill on the 16th amendment to the constitution, over the caretaker government system's restoration, in the upcoming parliament session.

"Otherwise, we will resist the government's plan to hold a one-sided election through mass demonstrations," vowed the BNP standing committee member.

Tariqul was addressing a rally organised by the BNP-led 18-party alliance's city unit before BNP's central office in the capital's Naya Paltan marking "democracy killing day".

The alliance marks January 25 as "democracy killing day", alleging that the then Bangabandhu regime introduced one-party Baksal rule on this day in 1975, banning all other political parties.

Meanwhile, at a discussion organised by Zia Nagorik Forum in Jatiya Press Club, BNP standing committee member Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain said only the restoration could resolve the present political deadlock.

"Confusion over holding free and fair parliamentary polls has created a political crisis. With the abolition of the caretaker government system, the next polls have become uncertain..."

"We do not want confrontations...we want a democratic process to continue in the country," he said.

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Vice Preident & Head
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