

BNP likely to finalise sub-committees for sixth council today

Suggests Justice Manik has been a lackey of ruling AL; Fakhrul says Manik's defiance against CJ is proof of state affairs being in disarray

PRABIR BARIUA CHOWDHURY

BNP is likely to finalise today at least 12 sub-committees including the body for reforming its charter for holding its sixth council at its standing committee meeting, presided by BNP chairperson Khaleda Zia, and also might extend the time of the council at least for seven days, said the insiders.

Meanwhile, BNP leader Rizvi Ahmed yesterday, at a press conference at party headquarters in the capital, criticised former Appellate Division judge AHM Shamsuddin Choudhury Manik for his recent remarks about the chief justice.

In the last meeting, the standing committee decided to hold the council in mid March, later finalised March 19 and applied for three places to hold the meeting.

A BNP leader, involved with the council, said acting secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir roughly categorised the sub-committees and will start working from tomorrow after getting an approval of the party chief.

War criminal Mir Quasem's appeal hearing starts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday started hearing an appeal of war criminal and Jamaat leader Mir Quasem Ali, challenging the death sentence for his crimes against humanity during the Liberation War in 1971.

A five-member bench of the Appellate Division headed by Chief Justice SK Sinha began the hearing with Quasem's lawyer SM Shahjahan reading out the charges.

The defence lawyer also read out statements of the prosecution witnesses during the four-hour hearing. The bench fixed today for further hearing.

The International Crimes Tribunal-2 on November 2, 2014 sentenced Quasem to death after finding him guilty on 10 charges for abducting, confining and torturing people during the Liberation War.

Around four weeks later, he filed an appeal with the SC, challenging the tribunal's verdict.

Quasem, a member of Jamaat's central executive council, in his appeal cited 181 reasons for his acquittal on all the charges.



This sculpture "Amar Ekushey", depicting a woman holding her beloved son gunned down during the 1952 Language Movement and another man demonstrating by her, on the Jahangirnagar University in Dhaka remains shabby for around five years. The JU authorities say they are trying to arrange fund to reconstruct the sculpture built in 1991. The photo was taken recently ahead of International Mother Language Day on February 21.

PHOTOS: STAR

Show love for your city on Valentine's Day

DSCC mayor urges residents requesting them to join Feb 14 cleaning campaign
 STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka South City Corporation Mayor Sayeed Khokon yesterday urged every dweller to join a cleaning campaign on February 14, Valentine's Day, to show love for their city.

Themed "Pranshokha Dhaka", beloved Dhaka, the programme, organised by DSCC in association with Channel-i and advertising firm Matra, will be held at Shahbagh.

"If everyone play their roles like a mayor, then it is possible to make the city clean and beautiful," said mayor at a meet the press in Channel-i.

A cultural programme, a poetry recitation, a drawing competition for children will be held on the occasion, he said.

Singers like Rezwana Choudhury Bannya and

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Children find reason to go to book fair

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladeshi comics are becoming popular day by day and emerging as a potential competitor of American and Indian comics among children and teenagers.

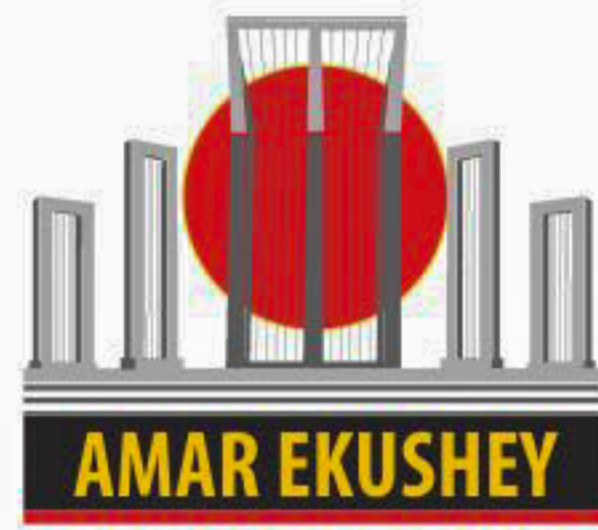
Children and youths yesterday at the Ekushey book fair swarmed around Panjeree Publications Ltd and Dhaka Comics to buy comics of their favourite characters.

Panjeree Publications has brought 30 different comic books. Of these, Basic Ali, Babu, Somo Mongol Abhijan, and Somo Kalpa Shikari written by cartoonist Sharier have become immensely popular among children.

Nayan, a third-grader, pleaded his mother to buy him a copy of Babu. Even though she was reluctant, she yielded to her son's persistence.

"I love to read Babu," said a jubilant Nayan.

Shimul and Jyonti, two university goers, brought three sequels of Basic Ali, another creation of Sharier, a hilarious comics based on various aspects



of daily life.

Dhaka Comics also set up a stall at the book fair. A group of young cartoonists and comic book artists initiated the organisation with an aim to publish comic books that can cater to Bangladeshi preferences and culture.

Their popular character is CK Jaki, a Bangladeshi member of a fictional international intelligence agency SBI, and Dhaka Comics to buy comics of their favourite characters.

Besides, Muhammad Zafar Iqbal's sci-fi graphic novel, Ruhan Ruhan has become popular among children.

Isha, a fifth-grader of GNB Mirpur School, visited along with other students. She bought the novel from Dhaka Comics.

"It [Ruhan Ruhan] looks good. That is why I have bought it," she told this correspondent.

Her classmates were also seen curiously turning over the pages of other comics.

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Sedition case filed against AL's Latif over doctoring Bangabandhu's photo

Another case filed under ICT act
 STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Two cases including one for sedition were filed against Awami League lawmaker MA Latif yesterday, over his alleged involvement in tampering with the photo of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

The court of Chittagong Metropolitan Magistrate, with which the cases were filed, took the cases into cognisance and ordered investigation, said lawyers of the complainants.

The other case was filed under Section 57 of the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Act, for spreading the manipulated photo.

Vice President of Chittagong city AL AKM Belayet Hossain lodged the sedition case against Latif, while former Jubo League leader Saifuddin Ahmed Rabi filed the other case, accusing Latif and three others -- designer Kabir Hossain of Haider Printers and Computers in the port city and its two staff Rajib Das and Md Amzad.

On the occasion of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's visit to Chittagong

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Space shrinking for free thinkers

Discussion on the occasion of National Professor Kabir Chowdhury's birthday told
 STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The space for practicing free thinking is shrinking in the country, while communalism and militancy are spreading alarmingly, eminent citizens observed at a discussion yesterday.

They urged people to raise their voice to eliminate the vices.

The whole South Asia is plagued with fundamentalism, communalism, and extreme religious fanaticism today, said Prof Ajay Roy, father of slain writer-blogger Avijit Roy.

"We are going through a critical time now," he told the discussion, "Militant fundamentalism in Bangladesh: Free-thinking is constrained", in the capital's Bilia auditorium.

Ekatturer Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Committee organised the discussion on the 94th birth anniversary of late National Professor Kabir Chowdhury.

Prof Ajay said militant groups were carrying out extremist activities by targeting and killing free-thinkers in different names.

They have already killed bloggers Ahmed Rajib Haider, Avijit Roy, Oyasiquir Rahman, Ananta Bijoy Das, Niladri Chattopadhyay, and publisher Faisal Arefin Dipon, he said.

"But the killers are still out of the police radar. This failure makes us more anxious."

Eminent journalist and cultural personality Kamal Lohani also expressed frustrations over the law enforcers' failure to protect the free-thinkers.

"They are talking about zero-tolerance against militants. But we saw Avijit and some other bloggers were killed brutally."

Kamal Lohani said Prof Kabir Chowdhury was truly secular in his thought and actions. The educationist used to guide free-thinkers to brave all obstacles, he added.



Students of South Breeze School on its premises in Dhaka during programmes marking the 25th founding anniversary of The Daily Star. Class IX students participated in an inter-school debate and the seventh- and eighth-graders took part in an essay competition.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Defend independence of JP lawmaker's PS harassed by cops judiciary unitedly

Dr Kamal urges lawyers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dr Kamal Hossain yesterday urged the lawyers to get united and remain honest and ethical in order to uphold the independence and dignity of the judiciary and rule of law in the society.

"I do not accept that the rule of law has been damaged...many lawyers still serve with honesty and sincerity," he said.

The eminent jurist said this while speaking at a discussion meeting on "independence of judiciary and existing situation" organised by Bangladesh Democratic Lawyers Association at the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) auditorium in Dhaka yesterday evening.

Kamal Hossain, a framer of the constitution, said as a lawyer he could serve many people from the Father of the Nation to the underprivileged.

He said the so-called lawyers, who move for ensuring bail for the accused, only for huge amount of money, needed to be identified.

"The constitution, rule of law and justice are the motivation for the liberation war and their dignity should be upheld," said Dr Kamal.

Former chief justice Mahmudul Amin Chowdhury, the chief guest at the meeting, said the present chief justice was leading the judiciary to the right direction and the lawyers should help him.

He said retired judges' writing their announced judgments was not illegal while commenting on the chief justice's comment. "Perhaps, the chief justice had said against writing judgments after retirement, so that important points of the cases were not missing and order was not changed if those were written long after retirement," he said, adding that the chief justice should formulate a rule whether a judge could write verdicts after retirement or not.

Chief Justice SK Sinha, last month in a message had said, "Some judges make unusual delays in writing verdicts while

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MP demands exemplary punishment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Jatiya Party lawmaker yesterday in parliament stoutly protested harassment of his personal secretary by policemen while he (PS) was entering Bangladesh Secretariat in the capital.

Speaking on a point of order, Nurul Islam Omar, elected from Bogra-6, asked the government whether it was true that "Police is the king of the country" - a highly lambasted remark a policeman made recently while pestering another man employed at Dhaka South City Corporation.

Describing the police harassment, the lawmaker said he along with his PS went to the secretariat yesterday morning.

"Later, I sent my PS outside the secretariat to bring a document from my house, which I forgot to bring with me, but the on-duty police denied my PS access to the secretariat when he returned", Omar added.

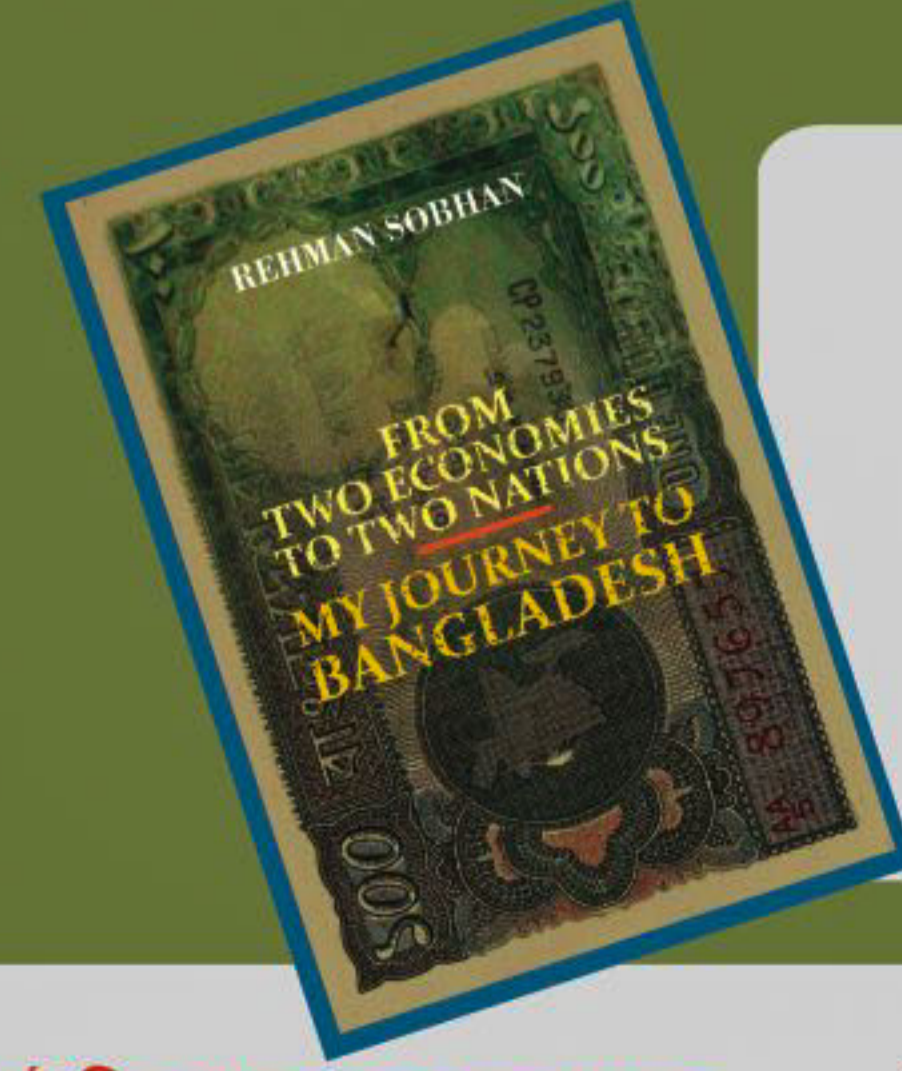
"Even police didn't let him go from the entrance of the secretariat. After a long time, a sub-inspector showed kindness and agreed to talk to me over my PS' phone," he added.

The lawmaker also lambasted security of this sort, questioning, "Is the country at war? Is martial law in effect in the country now?"

"It's not security. It's totally harassment by police. I demand exemplary punishment of the policemen involved," Omar added.

"Not only all Bangladeshis, but any serious foreign resident or student of Bangladesh today will find an essential understanding of its emergence as a nation in these pages."

-Jan Martin



FROM
 TWO ECONOMIES
 TO TWO NATIONS
 MY JOURNEY TO
 BANGLADESH

by
 REHMAN SOBHAN

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