

Issue circular to bar lawmakers from polls activities: EC Mahbub

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Election Commissioner Mahbub Talukdar yesterday urged the commission to issue a specific circular stating that lawmakers and ministers will not be able to take part in any election-related activities during the upcoming Dhaka city corporations' polls.

According to existing electoral code of conduct, MPs and ministers cannot take part in any election-related activities including electioneering in city corporation polls, Mahbub said in a letter to the chief election commissioner and other three commissioners.

"There is some confusion regarding electoral code of conduct. A specific circular is needed with directives on electoral code of conduct, so that no confusion exists. If this kind of confusion exists, questions can arise regarding the Dhaka city corporation elections."

"It is unfortunate that those who have passed the electoral code of conduct are now opposing it," Mahbub Talukdar said, regarding ruling Awami League's demand for allowing MPs and ministers to take part in election-related activities.

The comments come in the wake of growing tensions between the ruling party and Election Commission, over MPs participation in the campaigns of Dhaka city polls slated for January 30. It began after AL on January 3 formed two committees comprising several lawmakers



Posters of mayoral and councillor candidates have begun to sprawl across alleys and streets, with BNP and Awami League aspirants going toe to toe. However, in some areas, posters of BNP-backed candidates are being torn up by opponents, below, alleged Ashraf Ali Azam -- a councillor hopeful of DSCC Ward-26. The photos were taken from Azimpur and Lalbagh yesterday.



DNCC Campaign picks up momentum

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With campaigns for Dhaka city corporation elections going into full throttle, citizens are beginning to feel the heat as mayoral candidates' campaigns are parading the streets.

As BNP-nominated DNCC mayoral candidate Tabith Awal's campaign brought predicaments to commuters yesterday, Awami League-backed candidate Atiqul Islam's campaign was seen violating polls conduct.

While following Tabith's campaign, several hundred BNP activists were seen following the candidate in Tejkunipara and Karwan Bazar areas. Students and their guardians from schools and colleges in the vicinity were at times stuck behind the campaign crowd.

After offering prayers at Ziaur Rahman's grave in Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Tabith and his followers started their campaign from Tejkunipara at 11am and went through Tejturi Bazar, Karwan Bazar, Tejgaon, Begunuri and Niketan.

During the campaign, rickshaws and cars got stuck in front of the Holy Rosary Church in Tejkunipara. Besides, pedestrians could not move in front of Holy Cross School and College road for about 20 minutes.

Women and children expressed their annoyance over the crowded campaign, as

DSCC AL, BNP both confident of win

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mayoral candidates of both Awami League and BNP running for Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC), yesterday expressed confidence in getting people's mandate in the upcoming city polls.

Both of them passed a busy day yesterday seeking votes from city dwellers.

While campaigning in Maniknagar area, AL's Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh said he was getting "immense" support from people, as they liked his plans for the city.

"We hope people will vote for 'boat' [AL's electoral symbol] in the upcoming polls and give me the opportunity to build Dhaka as a beautiful and well-governed city," he said.

"If I am elected, my aim will be to bring all basic amenities to people's doorsteps within 90 days, and make DSCC a corruption-free institution," added Taposh.

He also assured to solve water-logging problems that city dwellers suffer from during rainy season.

Several AL leaders and councillor candidates in Maniknagar area were present there.

BNP candidate Ishraque Hossain, during his campaign in Tikatuli, assured voters of setting up public toilets across the city in proportion with population density within three months if he is elected.

He also said he was getting strong

ATTACK ON SARWAR ALI

Eminent citizens want 'credible investigation'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eminent citizens yesterday called for "credible investigation" into the attempted murder on Liberation War Museum Trustee Sarwar Ali, saying such an attack was carried out to shrink space for freethinking and progressive movements.

Investigators have to find out the persons involved in the incident and ensure their exemplary punishment, they said at a protest rally.

Pro-Liberation War platform Sammilita Samajik Andolon (SSA) arranged the rally in front of National Museum in the capital.

Two criminals attempted to kill Sarwar, also a physician and prominent cultural

activist, at his home in the city's Uttara on the night of January 5.

Sarwar escaped unhurt but his family members and two neighbours sustained minor injuries in the incident.

Sarwar said a militant group might have carried out the attack. He filed a case with Uttara Paschim Police Station over the incident.

Addressing the rally, National Professor Anisuzzaman said it is a failure of the country's democratic movement that those who practice and talk about freethinking and want to uphold the spirit of the Liberation War are not always safe in the country.

Eminent rights activist Sultana Kamal

DU human chain seeks polls deferment

DU CORRESPONDENT

A group of students and teachers of Dhaka University yesterday formed a human chain on the campus demanding deferment of the Dhaka north and south city corporation polls scheduled for January 30, as its coincides with Saraswati Puja celebrations across the country.

Under the banner of "Sacheton Shikkhak Shikharthibrinda", around 300 students organised the programme at the base of Raju Memorial Sculpture around 11:30am.

Speaking at the programme, DU Senate member Prof Asim Sarkar said, "Saraswati Puja has turned into a festival to people of all religions and castes. But it is unfortunate for us that the polling date has been fixed on the same day."

"We cannot change the date of Puja like Muslims cannot change the date of Eid. It has to be turned into a specific time [Panchami Tithi]. It is our right, so the election date must be changed. We want to cast our vote and perform our puja too," Chairperson of Sanskrit department Namita Mandal said.

PM joins Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week

UNB, Abu Dhabi

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday attended the opening ceremony of Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week 2020 (ADSW) and Zayed Sustainability Prize Ceremony in Abu Dhabi, UAE.

ADSW was formally opened at the ICC Hall of Abu Dhabi National Exhibition at 11am (local time).

On her arrival at the venue, the PM was received by Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

This year, Zayed Sustainability Prize was conferred upon 10 organisations and institutes of different countries under five categories.

At the function, Sheikh Al Nahyan and Sheikh Hasina along with seven other

heads of state and government handed over prizes to the winners.

Sheikh Hasina handed over the prize to the representative of Eutan Tarawa Ieta Junior Secondary School of Kiribati for winning under global high school category.

The other heads of state and government include Indonesian President Joko Widodo, Rwanda President Paul Kagame, Fiji Prime Minister Josia Voreqe Bainimarama, Serbia Prime Minister Ana Brnabic, Armenian President Armen Sarkissian and Sierra Leone President Julius Maada Bio.

ADSW is a global platform for accelerating the world's sustainable development endeavours. It brings together a unique fusion of policymakers, industry specialists, technology pioneers and the next generation of sustainability leaders.

Dr Yunus summoned by labour court

JNU CORRESPONDENT

A labour court in Dhaka has asked Nobel Laureate Prof Dr Muhammad Yunus and three other top officials of Grameen Communications to appear before it on February 6, in a case filed over violating labour laws.

Dhaka 3rd Labour Court Chairman Rahibul Islam yesterday issued the summons to each of the four separately in the case, said Miah Md Jamal Uddin, bench assistant of the court.

The three others accused are: Grameen Communications

Draft rules for Road Transport Act partially finalised

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A committee formed by Road Transport and Highway Division has partially finalised a draft of rules for Road Transport Act-2018, two months after the much-talked about law came into force.

The committee led by Abdul Malek, an additional secretary of RTHD, finalised four chapters out of 14 chapters of the law -- which are necessary to carry out day-to-day functions of the law, officials said.

Upon receiving the final draft, the division called an inter-ministerial meeting for January 19 to finalise it, they said.

Abdul Malek said they have requested their top authorities to appoint a consultant for finalising the rest of the rules, as some complicated issues like formation of a trust for giving compensation to road accident victims are there.

"We have finalised the draft rules which are required for day-to-day function of the law," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

Following an unprecedented student agitation, the parliament passed the Road Transport Act in September 2018 to bring discipline to the road transport sector.

But the government did not make the law functional, saying preparing rules for the act is a must for execution of some of its sections and it would be made effective after enactment of the rules.

Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) submitted the draft rules for the act in May last year and a 10-member committee, led by Abdul Malek, was formed to scrutinise the rules.

The committee, however, decided to make the rules afresh as the draft had many inconsistencies.

Meanwhile, the government on October 22 last year issued a gazette stating that the law would come into effect from November 1 -- without enacting the rule.

Transport owners and workers protested several sections of the law and its execution without the



ALL HOPE IS NOT LOST... Although Dhaka regularly ranks as one of the least livable cities in the world, it's not always gloom and doom in the concrete jungle. This photo of a big bunch of polka-dotted balloons being carried on a rickshaw was taken at Dhaka University campus.

ABRAR MURDER Case sent to new court

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The trial of Buet student Abrar Fahad's murder case was shifted to the Dhaka Metropolitan Session Judge's Court from the Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court yesterday.

Dhaka's Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Md Kaysarul Islam passed the order.

Morshed Amartya Islam, a fugitive accused in the case, surrendered before the court on Sunday, and the court sent him to jail.

On December 3, a Dhaka court ordered confiscation of property of the four fugitive accused in the case.

The other fugitives are: Morsheduzzaman Jishan, Mustafa Rafid and Ehtashamul Rabbi Tanim, students of Buet.

On January 5, the court asked police to publish ads in newspapers asking the four to appear before it. Police published the ads and submitted those to the court yesterday.

On November 18, the court accepted charge-sheet

Chief justice suggests updating Evidence Act

Workshop on use of digital evidence launched

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Chief Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain yesterday suggested that the century-old Evidence Act of 1872 be updated by incorporating provisions of using digital evidence, as much of the communication and commercial activities are now performed on digital platforms.

He was addressing the inaugural ceremony of a four-day workshop titled "Dialogue on the Use of Digital Evidence in Court", jointly organised by the US and UK embassies in Dhaka at a city hotel.

The chief justice said the law of evidence plays a pivotal role in effective functioning of the judicial system, and victory or defeat in a case depends mostly on evidential acumen or lack of it.

The 1872 Evidence Act is a great piece of law, but it needs to be updated to meet the challenges of 21st century, when technology is changing rapidly and the government and private organisations are increasingly using digital technologies, he said. "If we are able to overcome the challenges to introduce digital evidence in our justice system to a great extent, it will help assist the judges and investigation officers," he said.

Participants from tribunals where digital evidence is currently permitted under certain circumstances -- including Anti-Terrorism Tribunals, the Cyber Crimes Tribunal, Speedy Trial Tribunals, and the planned human trafficking tribunal -- were present at the workshop, as well as representatives of the Ministry of Law, Justice, and Parliamentary Affairs.

US Ambassador Earl R Miller said there is widespread support in the Bangladeshi justice sector for using digital evidence, as it would significantly increase the credible evidence available to prosecutors and judges.

It will also help solve crimes more quickly, and reduce the backlog of cases, he said.

Supporting enhanced use of digital evidence in Bangladesh justice system, British High Commissioner to Bangladesh Robert Chatterton said proper use of digital evidence can play a major role in increasing efficiency and integrity of the administration of justice.

VANDALISM ON DREAMLINER

Biman moves to identify culprits

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Biman Bangladesh Airlines has moved to identify two passengers for taking apart two monitors of the in-flight Entertainment (IFE) system of two seats of a brand new Boeing 787-9 aircraft, which was recently added to the Bangladesh Airlines fleet.

The aircraft was on a flight to Dhaka via Sylhet from Manchester on January 7 when the incident happened, Tahera Khandaker -- deputy general manager of public relations at Biman -- told The Daily Star.

"The aircraft's engineering and other related departments are looking into the matter. Two monitors attached to seats -- 26A and 26B at economy class were forcibly pulled off," she said.

"We are trying to identify the passengers of the two seats and take legal action against them," added Tahera.

After landing of the aircraft at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport, cabin crew of the Dreamliner noticed the incident, and reported to the officials concerned.

The new Boeing 787-9 aircraft has a total of 198 seats including 30 in business class, 21 in premium economy class and 247 in economy class.

It could not be known why passengers of the two seats tore up the monitors of the IFE.

On January 5, Dreamliner Sonar Tori began its commercial journey on Dhaka-Manchester route.

The Daily Star
21st 'O' & 'A' Level
Awards Presentation Ceremony, 2018-2019

Announcement for 'O' & 'A' Level Private Candidates and Schools

Private Candidates
Private candidates who fulfill the criteria described below are requested to register their names at The Daily Star office for inclusion as awardees. The criteria to be fulfilled are as follows:

Criteria for 'O' Level
Minimum 6 (six) 'A' grades in two consecutive sittings from **May/June 2018 to May/June 2019** for Edexcel and **May/June 2018 to October/November 2019** for Cambridge.

Criteria for 'A' Level
Minimum 3 (three) 'A' grades in two consecutive sittings from **May/June 2018 to May/June 2019** for Edexcel and **May/June 2018 to October/November 2019** for Cambridge.

Eligible candidates are requested to contact The Daily Star, (64-65 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Level-5, Dhaka-1215), with their original results certificates and a photocopy and 2 (two) passport-size photographs in person by 20th January 2020, anytime between 11:00 am to 5:00 pm (Except Fridays and Saturdays). Please do contact +8801786111100, before coming to The Daily Star office.

Schools
Any school that has students meeting the above criteria but has not been contacted by The Daily Star (i.e. has not been informed of the first scheduled meeting through regular post, email or phone) is requested to contact The Daily Star (64-65, Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Level-5, Dhaka-1215), on the aforementioned dates and times or email at a.level.star@gmail.com by 31st January 2020, with:

- The name of the school, phone number and name of a responsible representative and a valid email address that is checked regularly.

The schools are also requested to promptly prepare a list of the candidates meeting the above criteria, the number of 'A'/'A*' grades achieved by each candidate, and photocopies of results certificates for each candidate.

No registration will be allowed or accepted after 5:00 pm of 31st January 2020.
NOTE: If you know of any private candidate(s) or school(s) that may be unaware of this, please pass on the above information to them so that we may include them in this ceremony.

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