

## HC rejects petition seeking cancellation of Tabith's candidacy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday cleared the way for BNP-nominated candidate Tabith Awal to continue contesting as mayoral candidate for Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) election, scheduled to be held on February 1.

The court summarily rejected a writ petition which sought cancellation of Tabith Awal's candidacy, claiming that Tabith concealed information in the affidavit he submitted to the Election Commission about his wealth in Singapore.

The HC order said there are only four days left before the DNCC election and that the EC has no scope to examine the authenticity of allegation brought in the petition before the election.

The HC also observed that any contesting candidate can raise dispute over Tabith Awal's concealing information about his wealth to the EC after the election is held, and its result is published.

The bench of Justice JBM Hassan and Justice Md Khairul Alam passed the order and made the observations after

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Although the electoral code of conduct for Dhaka city polls -- clauses 2 (7), 8 (5) and (6) -- clearly says no poster or banner can be printed in multicolour, and only photos of the candidate and their party chief can be on those, such rules continue to be violated in plain sight. This banner was spotted near the Jatiya Press Club yesterday.

## DNCC stagnant in absence of mayor

*Routine works ongoing but monitoring is lax, officials say*

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Activities at the Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) have slowed down in the last month, as it is operating without a mayor since Atiqul Islam resigned from the post on December 30 to contest the upcoming city polls.

Monitoring of mosquito control activities have taken a back seat, while eviction drives to free up encroached areas and footpaths have also been halted, according to officials. As per the Election Commission rules, if any mayor takes part in polls, they will have to tender their resignation to the authorities concerned from their current post.

In his absence -- according to the City Corporation Act 2009, the chief executive officer of DNCC is playing the role as the chief of the organisation.

All routine work -- like garbage management, road repairing, mosquito control activities, issuing certificates like for birth and death -- have been going on, said an official of DNCC.

Activities like eviction drives to make roads, footpaths and DNCC land free from encroachers have been stopped for the last month due to absence of a mayor, another official said, wishing not to be named.

Political influence is a very important factor while conducting eviction drive, said another DNCC official. He

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PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## Take steps to stop sand lifting near bridges

*Ministry directs Roads and Highways Department*

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

To preserve the durability of bridges, Road Transport and Bridges Ministry last week issued a set of directives to the Roads and Highways Department (RHD) to stop sand lifting near bridges.

The RHD was asked to take steps, if necessary, to evict balu mahals (an area from where sand is lifted) near bridges and illegal brick kilns that block the navigability of rivers, both of which affect the strength of bridges.

The ministry issued the directives amid growing news reports of sand lifting posing a threat to various important bridges.

The Daily Star published at least three reports in the last one month alone. The reports cited mindless sand extraction threatening five bridges on the Manu river in Moulvibazar and Titas and Meghna rivers in Brahmanbaria.

According to the Balu Mohal O Mati Babosthapon Aina (Sand Fields and Soil Management Act), 2010, sand lifting is not

allowed within 500 metres of any bridge.

However, the reports found evidence of sand extraction and stockpiled sand near bridge areas posing a threat to the structures.

Local influentials continue to extract sand by "managing" some unscrupulous local authorities with "monthly benefits", while some others lift sand at night to dodge authorities, our correspondents found.

### DIRECTIVES BY THE MINISTRY

The ministry letter said sand extraction and balu mahals damage bridges of the RHD. If the situation persists, affected bridges will keep incurring damage, which would reduce their durability due to the scouring of riverbed near the piers.

Another issue comes with filling river areas to keep bricks at "eit mahals" near bridges. Steps need to be taken to stop this, the letter said, for the sake of both navigability of rivers and durability of the bridges.

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## DHAKA TODAY

### MUSIC

Sodium Batir Gaan  
Venue: TSC, Dhaka University  
Time: 4:20pm

Venue: EMK Center  
Time: 4:30pm

### DISCUSSION

School Psychology for Quality Citizen  
Venue: Monobikash Foundation  
Time: 6:30pm

### EXPOSITION

Deshi Lifestyle Expo  
Venue: White Hall, Uttara  
Time: 11am

### FESTIVAL

13th International Children's Film Festival Bangladesh  
Venue: National Public Library, Shahbagh  
Time: 11am-7pm

### SYMPOSIUM

Youth Symposium on Right to Food and Nutrition  
Venue: Chhayana Cultural Center  
Time: 9am

### ART EXHIBITION

Trinayan  
Venue: Gallery Cosmos, New DOHS  
Time: 6pm

### TALK

College Affordability - Understanding Expenses with Need



## UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITE

## Bangladesh preparing 'tentative list' after 20 years

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Every year, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco) requires a country to make a "tentative list" of sites eligible to be Unesco World Heritage Site. However, Bangladesh has not done one in 20 years since 1999.

That is about to change, as the Department of Archaeology has taken an initiative to update its tentative list, the government agency announced in a seminar held at department premises yesterday.

To do this, it is asking citizens to send letters to the department nominating heritage sites or antiquities they deem worthy to be a heritage site by February 15.

The "tentative list" is an inventory of all the places a government deems to be of heritage value, to be submitted to Unesco each year.

In order for the Unesco World Heritage Committee to consider a country's nominated sites, they have to be included on the tentative list beforehand, said a statement circulated at the seminar.

Once a site is on the list for a year, a country can then nominate it to be considered as a World Heritage Site, speakers at the seminar said.

The sites currently on Bangladesh's tentative list are Halud Vihara, Jaggadala Vihara, Lalbagh Fort, Mahansthargarh and its surroundings, and the monuments at Lalmai-Mainamati. Currently, the archaeology department manages 509 sites and monuments.

Bangladesh currently hosts three World Heritage Sites, the Sundarbans, the Buddhist Vihara at Paharpur, and the mosque city of Bagerhat.

"Even after a site is on the 'tentative list' we have to prove to the World Heritage Committee that we are capable of maintaining the site. It is the responsibility of the state party to ensure that a site is well-maintained," said Dr Sharif Shams Imon, President, International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) Bangladesh.

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## FARMERS BANK GRAFT

## Rashedul Haque Chisty denied bail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday rejected two bail petitions of Rashedul Haque Chisty, son of Mahbubul Haque Chisty, former chairman of Farmers Bank audit committee, in two corruption cases filed on charges of misappropriating Tk 230 crore of the bank funds.

The HC bench of Justice Md Nazrul Islam Talukder and Justice KM Hafizul Alam passed the order considering the gravity of charges brought against Rashedul, Deputy Attorney General AKM Aminuddin Manik told The Daily Star.

He said Rashedul cannot walk out of jail following the HC order.

Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) filed the cases with Gulshan Police Station in April, 2018 against Rashedul, his father and others on charges of misappropriating and laundering Tk 230 crore, the DAG said.

Attorney General Mahbubey Alam and Additional Attorney General Murad Reza appeared for the government while Advocate Khurshid Alam Khan argued for ACC.

No lawyer appeared for Rashedul while hearing the petitions, recently filed by him.

## Project undertaken for 'redevelopment' of Old Dhaka: minister at JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rajuk has taken a project for urban re-development in a bid to resolve the existing civic problems in Old Dhaka, Housing and Public Works Minister SM Rezaul Karim told parliament yesterday.

In reply to a query from ruling Awami League lawmaker M Abdul Latif, the minister also informed the House that seven possible places have been identified primarily at Islambagh, Chawkbazar, Moulvibazar, Bangshal, Hajariabagh, Kamrangirchar and Lalbagh for urban re-development.

"Process to formulate terms of reference for conducting a study report in this regard is underway," he said in a scripted answer. The minister added that coordinating works with foreign organisations for technical and financial assistance is going on in this regard, as the concept of urban redevelopment is new in Bangladesh.

Rezaul Karim said the concept and implementation strategy of urban redevelopment is incorporated in the detailed area plan (2016-'35) of Rajuk.

In reply to a query from AL MP Mostaq Ahmed Robi, the minister said the National Housing Authority is working sincerely as part of ensuring housing for low-income people across the country.

While replying to a query from AL lawmaker Momtaz Begum, Karim said government is determined to resolve various problems of real estate sector as Rajuk, Chattogram Unnayan Kartripakkha, National Housing Authority, Rajshahi Unnayan Kartripakkha, Khulna Unnayan Kartripakkha and Cox's Bazar Unnayan Kartripakkha are working relentlessly in this regard.

He said as part of formulating a mega plan on planned real estate, Rajuk has sent the draft of 20-year-long (2016-2035) Dhaka Structural Plan for final approval of the ministry.



A MOTHER'S LOVE ... She may not have a roof over head and means for three meals a day, but this woman keeps a bottle of milk next to her as she holds her infant close to her heart, while also having the presence of mind to keep a hand on the alms she receives even as she sleeps. The photo was taken recently from Abdul Gani road, on the west side of the Secretariat.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

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