

**Did you know?** The King Fahd Causeway is a causeway connecting Saudi Arabia and Bahrain. The four-lane road is 28 km (17 mi) long and approximately 23 m (75 ft) wide, and was built using 350,000 m<sup>3</sup> (3,800,000 sq ft) of concrete along with 47,000 metric tons of reinforced steel.

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## DCC polls by Dec

Says CEC  
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The long-awaited polls to Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) will be held by December this year, Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) ATM Shamsul Huda said yesterday.

"The commission will soon finalise the date for the election," CEC Huda told reporters after a meeting of the EC.

However, it might not be possible to hold the polls to union parishes and municipalities this year, he added.

"We want to hold the DCC polls this year," he asserted.

The CEC said the EC would hold the polls to union parishes and municipalities after the DCC election.

The EC earlier deferred polls to DCC in April this year as the government refused to have the elections on May 31.

"We have completed all preparations and the election can easily take place in December," a senior EC official said.

The polls will be held within the existing boundaries

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## JS committee plays safe

Recommends keeping Islam in constitution as state religion, adding clause for secularism too

SHAKHAWAT LITON

The parliamentary special committee for constitutional amendment yesterday decided not to recommend scrapping from the country's supreme charter the clause that declares Islam the state religion, and opted to suggest instead adding a clause that will ensure secularism as well.

The committee unanimously agreed to recommend adding clauses banning extra-constitutional takeover of state power and undermining of the constitution, with provisions for stern punishments for the offences, committee sources said.

The 15-member parliamentary body led by Deputy Leader of the House Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury also decided to invite constitutional experts to its next meeting on September 23 seeking their opinions on the issues.

Asked about keeping Islam as the state religion despite restoration of secularism in the constitution following cancellation of the fifth amendment, a member of the committee said they found a way to keep both.

"The article declaring Islam the state religion might be amended by inserting an explanation to ensure that people belonging to other religions may also enjoy equal right to practice their own religions," he said on condition of anonymity.

He said the special committee will seek opinions of constitutional experts on the matter to find a solution acceptable to all.

They will also not recommend changing the caretaker

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The footbridge at Tongi seems invisible to the pedestrians crossing busy dual carriageway scaling the central reservation.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## Beware of fake DB check-post!

11 held for mugging by setting up check posts on city streets

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police Saturday night and early yesterday arrested a gang of 11 persons, who used to set up police check posts on city streets and mug people.

A private car, one wireless set and a handcuff were also seized from them.

Police on Saturday received information that a gang in the guise of members of detective branch of police has set up a check post at Shewrapara bus stand to mug people, said Kazi Wazed Ali, officer-in-charge of Mirpur Police Station. Then the law enforcers raided the place at around 7:30pm and caught six of the gang members.

On information extracted from the six arrestees, the police caught their five accomplices from the capital and Narayanganj yesterday, the OC said.

The arrestees told police that they used to rob people setting up check posts at different places of the city, police said.

Kazi Wazed said the impersonators used the wireless set and

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## Iranian rights activist jailed

AP, Tehran

Iran sentenced a prominent rights activist and journalist to six years in prison on anti-government charges, Iranian media reported Saturday.

The semi-official ILNA news agency said Shiva Nazar Ahari, founder of the Committee of Human Rights Reporters in Tehran, was convicted of moharebeh, or "waging war

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## Driver gets 7yrs for recklessness

The 2007 accident killed a college student

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday sentenced a covered van driver to seven years of imprisonment, the highest punishment as specified in the law, for running over a female student of Dhaka City College in October 2007.

In a rare verdict, the court also fined the convict driver Nurul Islam Tk 20,000, in default of which he will have to suffer two years more in jail.

The punishment of the fugitive will be effective from the day of his arrest or surrender, the court said.

The driver remained absconding after he was freed on bail following his arrest on October 26 in 2007.

The victim, Farzana Hossain Silvi, a final year honours student of Marketing department was run over at Moghbazar in the capital when she along with one of her friends was travelling on a rickshaw.

After cross-examination of five prosecution witnesses, Metropolitan Magistrate Munshi Abdul Majid handed down the

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## Anti-polybag drive goes on

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Department of Environment (DoE) continues its drive in the capital against polythene bags, which are being traded and used despite a ban eight years ago.

Eighteen traders in Mohammadpur, Karwan Bazar, Gulshan and Banani have already been fined Tk 1,55,000 while six tonnes of polybags was seized in the drive that began on Saturday.

"We will visit every store, factory and storage to enforce the ban," said Sukumar Biswas, director of DoE, Dhaka division, who is leading a mobile court for the drive.

Executive Magistrate Selim Hossain is conducting the drive along with police and DoE officials.

Environment Minister Hasan Mahmud was present when the mobile court visited stores and markets in Karwan Bazar and Mohammadpur on Saturday—the first day of the drive. The team fined 10 shop owners Tk 95,000 for storing polybags, and seized five tonnes of bags.

Eight stores at Gulshan-1, Gulshan-2 and Banani areas were fined a total of Tk 60,000 yesterday.

"The drive has already started to show its results," said Sukumar adding, "we seized five tonnes of polythene bags on Saturday but only one tonne today yesterday."

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## Biman director terminated

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Biman authorities have terminated one of its directors and sent another official on forced retirement yesterday.

The board of directors of the national flag carrier terminated Md Aminul Haque, director for administration of the airline.

The airline authorities have also sent Syed Khwaza Jonayed, general manager the Cargo Department to retirement. Jonayed had previously

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Prayer Timing		
September 20		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-40	5-15
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-30	4-45
Maghrib	6-05	6-10
Esha	7-30	8-00

Source: Islamic Foundation



The tailback at Kakrail intersection shows that the traffic situation is returning to its horrible but normal state in the capital after the Eid vacation. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

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**OnlinePoll** ✓

Do you think placing conditions including withdrawal of the decision to cancel Koko's parole for BNP's joining the parliament session is justified?

Yes (45.2%)  
 No (53.9%)  
 No Comments (0.9%)

Total votes: 918

TODAY'S POLL

Do you think drawing allowances without attending any JS sessions shows opposition's disrespect to the people of the constituencies they represent?

Please cast your vote at [www.thedailystar.net](http://www.thedailystar.net)

## Flood situation improves further

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Flood situation further improved yesterday in 10 districts, worsened in two and remained unchanged in two districts. The districts where the situation worsened are Shariatpur and Madaripur while it remained unchanged in Sylhet and Moulavibazar.

The Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC) said yesterday rivers across the country will continue to fall today.

Floodwater receded further in Kurigram, Gaibandha, Bogra, Jamalpur, Sirajganj, Rajbari, Faridpur, Munshiganj and Manikganj districts.

A bulletin issued by the FFWC yesterday said water level was above the danger level at nine observation points out of the 73

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## Govt wants to tighten anthrax control

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government will formulate a National Steering Committee tomorrow to streamline its efforts for total control of anthrax infection before the Eid-ul-Azha.

Fisheries and Livestock Minister Abdul Latif Biswas informed newsmen at his office yesterday about the government's steps to fight

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