

CITY POLLS

# Don't arrest candidates without previous warrants: EC to police

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission yesterday instructed Dhaka Metropolitan Police not to arrest candidates -- or their supporters -- of Dhaka city corporation polls without previous warrant against them.

"I have talked to the DMP commissioner in this regard and specifically asked them not to arrest any candidate or their supporters if no arrest warrant was issued against them earlier," EC Senior Secretary Md Alamgir said yesterday.

"If a candidate and their supporters commit any offence or court gives any direction against them, the state can take action to protect the lives of people and their properties," Alamgir said while talking to reporters at his EC office.

The EC secretary spoke with the DMP commissioner in line with the Election Commission direction to do so.

BNP leaders on Monday in a meeting with Chief Election Commissioner KM Nurul Huda informed the CEC that police were arresting and harassing their candidates.

Till that day, a party-backed councillor candidate was arrested, while another was abducted and found in Munshiganj. The house of a party-backed female ward councillor candidate was also vandalised.

"We will give further direction to law enforcement agencies in a meeting scheduled to be held on January 22," Alamgir added.

Journalists will be allowed to enter voting centres, except secret room at voting booths, he said, adding that election officials can only bar journalists if they find any issue against them.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Hindu Bouddha Christian Oikya Parishad and Bangladesh Puja Uddipan Parishad in separate letters to the CEC demanded for changing the voting date of DNCC and DSCC elections -- slated for January 30 -- as Saraswati Puja will be observed the same day.

Oikya Parishad presidium members Kajal Debnath, Nim Chandra Bhowmik and Puja Uddipan Parishad president Milan Dutta and general secretary Nirmal Chatterjee handed over the letters to the commission senior secretary Alamgir.

"Saraswati Puja is traditionally celebrated at schools, colleges and universities across the country. It is unfortunate that the two Dhaka city polls will be held on that day," said the Oikya Parishad letter.

"Earlier, we urged the EC to reschedule Rangpur-3 by-polls, held on October 5, which was the second day of Durga Puja but the commission did not pay heed to

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## Two remanded over attack on Sarwar Ali

**Eminent citizens, organisations demand immediate action**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two arrestees -- in a case filed over Sunday's attack on Liberation War Museum Trustee Dr Sarwar Ali and his family members -- were sent to two-day remand by a court yesterday. Abdul Kalam, officer-in-charge (investigation) of Uttara Pashchim Police Station confirmed the matter to The Daily Star.

The arrestees are Hasan and Hafizul -- security guard of the building and a driver, he said.

During interrogation, Hasan told police that Nazmul, a driver who previously worked in the building, came to the house on the day with the backpack that was later recovered with weapons in it. He entered the building with the excuse of going to the toilet, according to investigators. Another man accompanied him.

Nazmul used to visit the building from time to time

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## 39 killed in train accidents last year: railways minister

**Number much lower than non-government data**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A total of 129 railway-related accidents killed 39 people and injured 155 across the country last year, Railways Minister Nurul Islam Sujan said yesterday.

Of them, 10 happened on level crossings, leaving 18 people dead; 21 others were killed in 119 accidents caused by signal violations and derailments, he added.

The minister was briefing reporters at Rail Bhaban on the occasion of the first anniversary of the incumbent government.

However, the figure presented by

the minister is significantly lower than that of non-government organisations.

According to Nirapad Sarak Chai, at least 198 people were killed and 347 injured in 162 railway-related accidents last year.

Shipping and Communication Reporters Forum (SCRF) said at least 421 people were killed and 366 injured in 393 railway-related accidents in 2019.

Three major train accidents occurred in 2019, the minister said.

On June 23, four people were killed and 64 injured in a rail accident in Kulaura upazila of Moulvibazar. He said two railway staffers were

suspended over the accident and further action against them is pending.

At least 17 people were killed and 54 injured in Brahmanbaria on November 12. The driver, his assistant and guard of Turna Express were suspended and further division action is pending, he added.

The third accident occurred in Ullapara upazila of Sirajganj, which damaged huge railway properties. Punitive action has been taken against three railway staff in this regard, the minister said.

"We are working to remove negligence of railway staff so that such

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## DHAKA TODAY

### REPORT LAUNCH

Child Rights Situation in Bangladesh  
Organiser: Bangladesh Shishu Adhikar Forum

Organiser: Centre for Governance Studies

Venue: BII, Eskaton Garden Road  
Time: 9:30am

### CHARITY CONCERT

Concert for Usnot  
Organiser: Bangladesh Student Council

Venue: TSC, University of Dhaka  
Time: 12pm

### RALLY

Protesting rape of DU student  
Organiser: Bangladesh Students' Union

Venue: Raju Memorial Sculpture  
Time: 3:30pm

### EXHIBITION

Unveiling The Truth by Kazi Habib Hasan  
Venue: Dwp Gallery  
Lalmatia  
Time: 3pm

### RALLY

Protesting rape of DU student  
Organiser: Bangladesh Students' Union

Venue: Raju Memorial Sculpture  
Time: 3:30pm

### LECTURE

Flow Generation by Economist

Nicolo Andreula



It's been a little colder in Dhaka over the past couple of nights, making the lives of people living on streets more difficult. This woman was sleeping under a footbridge at Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue on Monday, trying her best to stay warm.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

### CORRUPTION CASES

## Former AL lawmaker Awal, wife get anticipatory bail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday granted eight weeks' anticipatory bail to former Awami League lawmaker of Pirojpur, AKMA Awal, and his wife Laila Parvin in three separate corruption cases filed for misappropriating khas (government) land.

The HC, however, ordered Awal and his wife to surrender before the trial court concerned in eight weeks in connection with the cases.

The bench of Justice Obaidul Hassan and Justice AKM Zahurul Huq came up with the orders following three separate petitions filed by the accused seeking anticipatory bail.

They also appeared before the HC bench during the hearing yesterday.

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) filed the cases with its integrated district office in Barishal against Awal for misappropriating khas land.

According to one case statement, the former lawmaker took lease of a khas land using fake documents and constructed a three-storey building on it. The building was rented out to Pirojpur Rural Electricity Cooperative at the rate of Tk 17,250 per month from October 1, 2017, for about three years.

Awal's wife Laila Parvin was also made accused in the case.

In the second case, Awal was accused of illegally grabbing a government land near Swarupkathi upazila bungalow and building another bungalow there. He also constructed Awal Foundation and Library on it.

According to the statement of the third case, Awal grabbed a 44 decimal pond known as "Rajar Pukur" in Pirojpur town and erected a boundary wall to keep it in his possession.

Advocate Awasafur Rahman appeared for the accused while Advocate

## Bail of rape accused officer rejected

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday rejected bail of Abdur Rakib Khan Bappi, sub-inspector (SI) of Mirpur Police Station, in connection with a case filed against him for raping a woman.

Metropolitan Magistrate Abu Sufan Md Noman passed the order after the officer's lawyer moved a bail petition.

During yesterday's hearing, the complainant was present at the court and opposed the bail petition, saying that the SI raped her.

The defence claimed that the SI and the complainant had an affair.

On Friday, another Dhaka court sent Bappi to jail after he was produced before it, with a forwarding report where the investigation officer appealed to keep him in jail until the investigation is completed.

The court, however, set yesterday for hearing the bail petition submitted by Bappi's lawyer.

On Thursday, a woman filed a case with Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Police Station, alleging that Bappi raped her by making false promises of marriage, said police.

SI Bappi, hailing from Kishoreganj's Tarail, was arrested from the capital's Agargaon area the same day.

## PHOTO OF THE DAY



No barrier high enough when it comes to petting cute puppies, as proven by this child who extends his arm through a metal grille to make a new friend. This photo was taken yesterday from Dhaka University's TSC area.

### SEXUAL HARASSMENT

## HC to deliver order on foreign ministry official's termination

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court will deliver its order today on a petition filed by a former foreign ministry official challenging the legality of her termination from government service. She was sacked soon after the HC sought a probe report from the ministry's sexual harassment prevention committee over the accusation she made against three ministry officials.

The HC bench of Justice M Enayetur Rahim and Justice Md Mostafizur Rahman set the date yesterday after holding a hearing on the petition.

The foreign ministry on January 5 sacked the woman, who was working at the ministry's research wing.

The ministry in a statement said the female official has been sacked as allegation of her misbehaviour was proven in its probe.

Earlier in the day, the same bench

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## Car, SUV, microbus to get fitness clearance for 2yrs

**Renewal can be done at any BRTA office**

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

From now on, Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) will issue fitness clearance to cars, SUVs and microbuses for two years, instead of one -- much to the relief of owners.

Road Transport and Highway Division issued a circular in this regard on Sunday and BRTA is now updating their software to start providing the services within a few days, officials said.

"The decision has been taken to reduce hassles of vehicle owners while getting fitness clearance," Lokman Hossain Mollah, director (engineering) of BRTA, told The Daily Star yesterday.

However, other vehicles will have to go through the annual fitness checkup, he added.

Lokman said owners of all types of vehicles can now renew fitness certificates from any BRTA office across the country. Earlier, a vehicle owner had to get clearance from the office the vehicle was registered with, he said.

Lokman said they started the facility from last month.

Vehicle owners have to face hassles as they have to wait for a long time at BRTA offices to have their vehicles tested. Shortage of inspectors and vehicle inspection centres puts huge pressure on BRTA staff members, which often causes mismanagement.

Taking benefit of this situation, brokers become active in and around BRTA offices and they in many cases create problems resulting in further harassment of vehicle owners.

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