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## SAGAR-RUNI MURDER

## Probe submission deadline extended for 104th time

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday extended till November 16 the deadline for submitting the probe report of a case filed over the murders of journalist couple Sagar Sarowar and Meherun Rumi in February 2012.

This is the 104th extension of the submission deadline.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Md Shafiuddin passed the order after Rab Additional Superintendent of Police Khondoker Md Shafiqul Alam, the case's investigation officer, failed to submit the report, court sources said.

On September 11, the same court asked Rab to submit the probe report by yesterday.

Earlier, two separate courts expressed dissatisfaction over the probe and the investigators' failure to unearth the motive behind the murders and arrest the culprits.

Sagar, news editor at private TV channel Maasranga, and his wife Rumi, senior reporter at ATN Bangla, were killed in the early hours of February 11, 2012, in their rented flat in the capital's West Razabazar.

Their only son Mahir Sarowar Megh, then 5, was home at the time.

Nousher Ali Roman, Rumi's brother, filed a case with Sher-e-Bangla Police Station the following day.



People get on a train's locomotive while travelling on the Narayanganj-Dhaka route, ignoring risks. What's more alarming, a person is standing on the railway coupler while another on the roof. The photo was taken in the capital's Jurain area yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## US deputy asst secy due today

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

US Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs Afreen Akhter



Afreen Akhter is scheduled to arrive in Dhaka on a three-day visit today.

Her visit will feature prominently the national elections and Rohingya crisis, according to diplomatic sources.

She may hold meetings with Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen and Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen and then visit the Rohingya camp during her visit on October 16-18.

Afreen Akhter, former national security and foreign affairs adviser to US Senator Chris Van Hollen, visited Bangladesh in November last year and May this year.

The visit takes place as part of a series of meetings between the officials of Bangladesh and US both in Dhaka and Washington.

## Prof Maksud Kamal new VC of DU

DU CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka University Pro-vice Chancellor (Academic) Prof ASM Maksud Kamal has been appointed as vice-chancellor "for the time being".

President Md Shahabuddin, also the DU chancellor, gave him the appointment, according to a circular of the education ministry.

The circular stated that Prof Kamal has been appointed DU VC as the tenure of Prof Md Akhtaruzzaman will expire on November 3.

As the outgoing VC did not call a senate session, which was supposed to elect a three-member panel for VC, the chancellor appointed Prof Kamal "for the time being" following the 1973-order of Dhaka University.

Asked why he did not call the senate session, Prof Akhtaruzzaman said the situation was not favourable for calling the session.

The new VC can call the senate session and follow the other procedures, he said.

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## DHAKA-GAZIPUR BUS CORRIDOR

## BRT-3 not this year

Authorities point to delay in construction work, bus procurement

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

The wait for a dedicated bus corridor between Dhaka and Gazipur is getting longer as the authority would not be able to start a special bus service there this year, even 13 years after the project was taken.

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader in June announced that the 20.5km Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Line-3 would be operational in September or October this year.

But authorities are now saying they will not be able to launch the service this year due to delay in construction works and procurement of buses.

"It's not possible to say exactly when it [BRT] would be operational. It won't happen by December for sure," Shafiqul Islam, managing director of Dhaka BRT Company Ltd (DBRTCL), told The Daily Star yesterday.

Taken in November 2012, the project, formally known as Greater Dhaka Sustainable Urban Transport Project, was originally planned to be complete by December 2016 at a cost of Tk 2,037.9 crore.

The BRT Line-3 from Dhaka airport to Gazipur was actually an extension of the original plan, which was to build the BRT from the airport to Jhilmil project in Keraniganj to reduce traffic congestion in the capital.



Another plan to extend the line to Mohakhali was dropped due to what officials said was the bad experience during the BRT implementation.

The construction works have caused huge congestion, especially during the rainy season, leaving thousands of road users suffering for years. Even the road minister termed the project "golar kata" [a running sore].

The delay was caused by issues related to land acquisition, relocation of utility services, design changes, contractors running out of money, and the pandemic. Moreover, physical work was suspended twice.

As a result, the total project cost is now estimated to be Tk 4,268.3 crore and the deadline is December 2024. The project witnessed 84.09 percent progress as of September. Shafiqul Islam said although

they thought they would be able to start operation by October, it would not be possible.

He said the contractors have failed to meet their commitment like previous occasions.

Replying to a question, he said almost all construction works -- except the works at Gazipur intersection and a flyover in Bhogra area -- will be completed by December this year.

He said tendering process for procuring 137 buses was almost done but they have to reevaluate it following the Dhaka BRT Company board decision, which is causing delay.

He also said they have already reached a consensus with Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation to appoint it as operator until hiring an actual operator.

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## 'CEC's stance raises concern over fair polls'

Says TIB

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Concerns are growing regarding the upcoming polls being acceptable, inclusive, and participatory due to the chief election commissioner's self-contradictory statements, said Transparency International Bangladesh in a media release yesterday.

The Bangladesh chapter of the Berlin-based anti-corruption watchdog criticised the CEC's "biased stance" in ensuring free, fair, and inclusive elections with the participation of all political parties.

On October 14, CEC Kazi Habibul Awal said a fair election is possible even without the participation of all parties. But two days ago, he said the election could be incomplete without the main opposition party BNP's participation.

Iftekaruzzaman, executive director of TIB, expressed disappointment in the release regarding the CEC's statements citing their suspicious and misleading nature.

CEC's remarks -- if the people come to vote and if voters turn out, then it is a significant success for the

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## Do not harass anyone politically

Says EC Alamgir

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

No one should be "politically harassed" after the announcement of schedule for 12th parliamentary polls, said Election Commissioner Md Alamgir yesterday.

If an arrest is indeed needed due to an offence, it should only be made based on court order, he said while talking to reporters at his EC office.

If there is no allegation of criminal offence or cases filed against anyone before announcement of the schedule but they still get arrested after it, the Election Commission will analyse the matter, he said. If needed, the EC will send suggestion to the government in this regard, he added.

Next parliamentary polls is likely to take place in early January and the EC is planning to announce the election schedule in early November.

Answering to queries, Alamgir said army was deployed during the national elections in the past and this time will not be an exception. He said the commission is yet to make any final decision about when the army will be deployed.

## BCS edu cadres withdraw strike

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Officers of the BCS education cadre yesterday withdrew their scheduled two-day strike after receiving assurance from Education Minister Dipu Moni that she would try to fulfil their demands.

As a result, classes and exams will be held in all government colleges on October 17 and 19.

The officers had been on strike demanding elimination of the inter-cadre discriminations and promotion for all qualified officers.

The decision was confirmed in a press release.



Lutfunnahar Piki being presented the "Stellar Women" award in the writing category at an event on Saturday. Imran Kadir, head of sales & marketing at The Daily Star; FR Khan, managing director of bti; and Nalaka Hettiarachchi, the CEO of bti, were present on the occasion.

PHOTO: STAR

## Honouring a stellar woman bti, Star award Lutfunnahar Piki in 'writing' category

STAR REPORT


To recognise the special contributions of emerging, young and promising women from different walks of life, bti and The Daily Star honoured author Lutfunnahar Piki at an event on Saturday.

The event -- Stellar Women Awards -- was held at bti Celebration Point, Gulshan-2 in Dhaka.

This initiative will award 12 women in 12 categories.

Previously, promising women from "Development", "Technology",

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### IMPORTANT NOTICE

Due to our data center migration, all our banking and transaction services will remain temporarily suspended as per the below schedule:

FROM	TO
24 <sup>th</sup> October 2023, 2.00 am	28 <sup>th</sup> October 2023, 5.00 pm

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