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PHOTO: STAR



Vehicular movement increased in the capital on the first day of the sixth spell of the 48-hour blockade. Awami League's office on Bangabandhu Avenue (left) was relatively quiet yesterday as the sale of nomination forms ended on Tuesday. Meanwhile, BNP's Nayapaltan office remained locked with police personnel on guard.



Those who were worried as to who will participate [in the elections] and who won't... There's nothing to worry... flowers have started to bloom... More flowers will bloom. Hundreds of flowers will bloom before the nomination submission deadline.

OBайдل قادر  
Awami League General Secretary



The prime minister has deployed her agencies in the field to form a party. Many leaders are being intimidated to join the AL's King's Party. An abnormal situation has been created in a very planned way for a one-sided poll.

RUHUL KABIR RIZVI  
BNP Senior Joint Secretary

## FIRST DAY OF 48-HOUR BLOCKADE Dhaka sees more traffic

Bus torched in capital, fire breaks out in train at Sylhet station

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Traffic movement increased across the capital yesterday, on the first day of the sixth spell of the 48-hour blockade called by BNP and its allies to protest the schedule for the 12th parliamentary elections.

There were more public transports on the streets yesterday. However, only a handful of inter-district buses left the capital.

Besides, sporadic traffic congestion was seen in some major points, including Banglomotor, Farmgate, Bijoy Sarani, Mohakhali, Shahbagh, Elephant Road, Science Lab, Jigatola, Dhanmondi, Moghbazar, Satrasta, Banani, Uttara Jashimuddin, and Abdullaahpur.

"It took me about 40 minutes to commute from Mohakhali to Shahbagh, which is much longer than the previous blockade days," said Kader Hossain, a CNG-run auto rickshaw driver.

Kader had to wait for about 10 minutes at the Bijoy Sarani intersection, and another eight minutes at the Karwan Bazar intersection during his commute.

### ARSON ATTACKS

Meanwhile, arsonists torched a passenger bus in the Asad Gate area around 2:20pm yesterday. Following the incident, police arrested one Mamun from the spot.

"Mamun was arrested while trying to flee the spot," said Jahangir Alam, additional deputy commissioner (traffic) of Tejgaon zone.

Police also arrested Shamim Mahmud, joint convener of Dhaka South City unit of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal, from Muzga on Tuesday for allegedly leading the violence in Palta and attack on Rajarbagh police hospital during BNP's October 28 rally, Mahid Uddin, additional commissioner (crime and office) of DMP, told reporters at DMP media centre yesterday.

Shamim had planned the moves on October 26 and video footage proved his direct involvement in the October 28 incidents, he added.

Following the directive of a central BNP leader, Shamim collected a bag from one Maruf from Dania footbridge the day before the rally to hand it over to one Riyad run auto rickshaw driver.

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## Bacteria becoming more resistant to antibiotics Says national AMR surveillance report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Multi-drug resistance in bacteria has increased by 14 percent over the last seven years, and most of them are getting even more resistant to certain antibiotics, said a national AMR (antimicrobial resistance) surveillance report.

The group of MDR bacteria is getting bigger due to the increasing resistance, causing serious public health concerns, it added.

MDR refers to a bacterium that becomes resistant to at least one drug from three or more groups of antibiotics.

As per the report, MDR resistance, which was at 71 percent in 2017, had risen to 82 percent by June this year. Over time, most bacteria are developing increasing resistance to antibiotics, particularly the frequently used ones.

Prof Zakir Hossain Habib, chief scientific officer of IEDCR and member secretary of AMR Surveillance Sectoral Working Group

(Human Health), presented the findings of the National AMR Surveillance 2023 during a programme yesterday at IEDCR, marking World AMR Awareness Week.

While the report notes a significant difference in bacteria resistance between outpatient departments and indoors, the microorganisms isolated from ICUs show the least effectiveness.

A *Cinetobacter*, *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*, *K. pneumoniae*, and *Staph aureus* are among the bacteria that are highly antibiotic-resistant.

The report blamed repeated and excessive use of medicine for this situation.

Ceftriaxone and Cefixime are listed as most frequently used antibiotics that are experiencing a decrease in effectiveness, and bacterial resistance against both of them is on the rise, said the report.

Md Jahangir Alam, secretary of health services division at the health ministry, said, "Doctors need to be more aware

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**OBайдل قادر**  
Awami League General Secretary

**RUHUL KABIR RIZVI**  
BNP Senior Joint Secretary



## MRT police still not a separate unit

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Despite the prime minister's directive to form a dedicated police unit to ensure metro rail's security, the Metro Rail (MRT) Police has gained approval to operate only as a wing of Police Headquarters.

On October 31, 2019, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina issued the directive, and posts for MRT police were created in May this year, but it was sanctioned as a wing of PHQ instead.

"We are the sole operational unit to ensure the security of metro rail, functioning as a PHQ wing," Jehadul Kabir, deputy inspector general of MRT police wing, told The Daily Star yesterday.

PHQ sent a proposal to the home ministry to create a separate police unit for metro rail, demanding a manpower of 1,039 officials, and the ministry approved 809 people.

Then the proposal got approved

as a "separate police unit" from the public administration and finance ministries with a manpower of 357 people.

Ultimately, the proposal got final approval from the secretary committee as a police wing with a manpower of 231 members, according to sources.

DIG Jehadul said, "We got to know that we got approval as a wing of PHQ, although it was supposed to be an operational unit."

"We wanted to investigate and prosecute criminal offences taking place in metro rail areas, but now it's not possible since we are working as a wing," he said.

Besides, the manpower is inadequate. The proposal was approved with a manpower of only three members per station, he said.

"But in reality, we are facing difficulties to tackle the pressure of huge numbers of

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Initially set to function as an independent unit, MRT police, struggling amid manpower crisis, currently serves as a wing under Police Headquarters. The photo was taken recently.

## Cops want CCTV, scanners for metro stations

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

In a bid to enhance security measures for the metro rail, the Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) police wing has proposed the installation of luggage scanners at all stations.

A letter outlining the proposal was submitted to the Dhaka Mass Transit Company Limited (DMTCL) last month.

Besides, MRT police also requested to install CCTV cameras outside the stations to ensure full-proof security during the ongoing blockade and strike. Currently, CCTVs are only inside stations.

The matter of installing scanners and CCTV was also discussed during a safety review meeting on Tuesday.

Jehadul Kabir, deputy inspector general (DIG) of MRT police wing, confirmed the developments to The Daily Star yesterday.

He emphasised the increasing number of individuals opting for metro rail travel, many of whom carry

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