



Despite Lalbagh Fort being a heritage site and laws prohibiting the plastering of banners or posters on its walls, *inset*, political parties continue to disregard these regulations. Previously pasted with Awami League posters, the walls are now covered with BNP ones.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

DU AFFILIATED 7 COLLEGES

Commuters suffer as students stage blockade

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

City dwellers had to endure immense suffering yesterday as students of seven colleges affiliated with Dhaka University blocked the Science Lab intersection for around five hours.

The students blocked the intersection, which is one of the busiest in the city, around 12:15pm, demanding the formation of a separate autonomous university for their institutions.

Due to the blockade, vehicular movement through the Science Lab intersection remained halted, forcing many commuters to walk to their destinations, said eyewitnesses.

Aayush, a student at a school in Dhanmondi-3, usually can get back to his home in Segunbagicha from school within 40 minutes via Science Lab, after his school ends around 1:30pm.

However, yesterday, due to a blockade and heavy traffic, he could not move past the Science Lab area.

Then he decided to go home in a different way. He somehow made his way through different roads to reach Farmgate Metro Station and took the metro rail to get home. The entire journey took him around two and a half hours in total.

Several other commuters shared a similar plight.

Witnesses said the students first gathered inside Dhaka College campus around 11:00am and later took to the street.

Nayim Hawlader, a student of Dhaka College and one of the organisers of the movement, said, "We demand a separate university as we have been suffering academically and experiencing severe session jam."

"Initially we wanted to get rid of the issues, but the DU authorities did not take any step to free us from the session jam. So, we started demanding the cancellation of affiliation with DU," he said.

Their demands also include immediately forming a commission to establish a university for the seven affiliated colleges, a draft proposal from the commission within 30 days, and assurance from Dhaka University that there will be no session jams until the new university is established.

Meanwhile, commuters may have to suffer again today as the students have threatened to continue their programme and block the intersection for eight hours, starting from around 9:00am.

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Include them in dev plans

Discussants at seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

People with disabilities should also be included in the overall development of the state, said speakers at a seminar yesterday.

Titled "Accessibility to judiciary system for people with disabilities", the seminar was organised by Women with Disabilities Development Foundation (WDDF) at The Daily Star Center in the capital.

Speakers said despite national and international laws, as well as policies to

Despite national and international laws, as well as policies to establish a discrimination-free society, none of these are being implemented to boost the inclusion of persons with disabilities.

establish a discrimination-free society, none of these are being implemented to boost the inclusion of persons with disabilities. They discussed the barriers persons with disabilities faced when trying to access the judiciary system.

The social welfare ministry, as well as other ministries, should take the responsibility to include people with disabilities in the overall development of the country, they recommended.

Neelima Akhter, executive director (additional secretary) of Dhaka Transport Coordination Authority, said, "We're working to introduce disability-friendly vehicles."

Ashrafun Nahar Misti, executive director of WDDF, presented an article from various researches there.

Prioritise disability issues in media

Speakers tell event

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

To ensure positive and year-round representation of disability issues, more sensitive policies need to be developed and implemented urgently within the media, said speakers at a discussion yesterday.

They stated that the focus on political and routine topics in media business structures often overshadows social issues.

This causes the coverage of disability issues to primarily be event driven and centred around specific days, rather than becoming a regular topic of discussion, they added.

While some media outlets have taken steps in this area, the speakers expressed that the disability issues still do not receive adequate attention in media.

These remarks were made during the discussion titled "Disability Equality in the Media," organised by SoMaSHTE, with the support of Unesco at a city hotel.

Noore Jannat Proma, communication and information sector lead at the Unesco Dhaka Office, stressed the importance of strongly including disability in media frameworks.

"Disability is often perceived negatively; despite some visible efforts, the desired level of sensitivity is still lacking in both the media and corporate sectors. Identifying existing gaps and taking action for progress is essential."

The speakers also pointed out that the absence of a robust information system complicates accurate reporting on these crucial topics.

To improve positive representations of disability issues in the media, they recommended increasing sensitivity, implementing effective policies, and building capacity to handle disability-related content with greater awareness.

Speakers also recommended creating disability-friendly infrastructure, providing necessary support for hiring people with disabilities in the media, producing content on disability topics, fostering sensitivity among policymakers in the media industry, and adopting technical measures to ensure that people with disabilities can access and engage with media content.

The discussion was moderated by Mir Masruzzaman, executive director of SoMaSHTE.

Partha Shankar Saha, assistant news editor at Prothom Alo; Kamrun Nahar, joint news editor at Views Bangladesh; Rita Bhowmik, senior reporter at Kalbela; Swapna Chakraborty, staff reporter at Janakantha; Atika Rahman, senior reporter at RTV; Tania Rahman, senior reporter at Ekattor TV; and Nilima Jahan, staff reporter at The Daily Star; were present among others.

Disability is often perceived negatively; despite some visible efforts, the desired level of sensitivity is still lacking in both the media and corporate sectors. Identifying existing gaps and taking action is essential.

NOORE JANNAT PROMA
Communication and information lead,
UNESCO Dhaka

US opposes religious discrimination in any process

Says Matthew Miller

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The US opposes any religious discrimination in any process in Bangladesh, said US State Department Spokesperson Matthew Miller.

He made the comment at a press briefing in Washington on Monday, when asked about reports suggesting that 252 sub-inspectors of Bangladesh police were dismissed from final recruitment, allegedly excluding all Hindu officers.

When asked if the State Department has any response regarding the religious discrimination in the Bangladesh law enforcement hiring process, Miller said, "So, I haven't seen that report, but obviously we believe that the -- well, let me say obviously we would oppose any religious discrimination in any process in Bangladesh or anywhere in the world."

"We believe that the people of Bangladesh should be able to exercise their fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of expression, the freedom of assembly," he said.

Asked how the State Department is working with Bangladesh authority

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

15TH AMENDMENT

HC allows BNP to place arguments

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday allowed BNP to place arguments before it on the rule that questioned the constitutionality of the 15th amendment that scrapped the non-partisan caretaker government system.

The HC bench of Justice Farah Mahbub and Justice Debashis Roy Chowdhury granted a petition filed by BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir.

Senior lawyer Advocate Zainul Abedin and Barrister Md Badruddoza Badal moved the petition.

The bench is scheduled to hold a hearing on the rule today that questioned the constitutionality of the 15th amendment of the constitution.

The 15th amendment bill was passed by the parliament on June 30, 2011, and signed into law on July 3 of the same year. It abolished the caretaker government system introduced by the 13th amendment in 1996.

The law also recognised Sheikh Mujibur Rahman as Father of the Nation and increased the number of reserved seats for women in parliament from 45 to 50.

Following the amendment, three general elections were held with Sheikh Hasina in the prime minister's office.

Earlier, the HC bench allowed Jamaat-e-Islami to place arguments before this court in connection with the case, the party's lawyer Mohammad Shishir Manir told The Daily Star.

Another HC bench led by Justice Naima Haider on August 19 this year issued the rule asking the respondents to show causes as to why the Constitution (15th amendment) Act, 2011 should

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Former agri minister arrested in Dhaka

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former agriculture minister Abdus Shahid was arrested in the capital's Uttara area yesterday.

A team of police arrested Shahid him from a house at Sector-10 of Uttara, Hafizur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Uttara West Police Station, told The Daily Star.

Shahid, former lawmaker from Moulvibazar-4 and also former chief whip of the Jatiya Sangsad, is accused in several cases filed with Uttara west and other police stations, said the OC.

In September this year, the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) decided to launch an inquiry against Shahid on charges of abusing power, engaging in various irregularities, and amassing wealth through corruption.

DRIVES IN MOHAMMADPUR

108 arrested in last 3 days

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As part of the ongoing special joint operations in the capital's Mohammadpur, the law enforcers arrested 29 more suspects for their alleged involvement in mugging, robbery, and extortion.

The Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) and the Police Headquarters (PHQ) in two separate media releases disclosed the updates yesterday.

With the arrest, the total number of arrests has now risen to 108 in the last three days.

The ISPR release said an army team raided the Geneva camp in Mohammadpur on Monday night and arrested seven people, including drug dealer Bunia Sohel.

Two pistols, 20 rounds of bullets, and locally made weapons were recovered from the spot.

Besides these seven, in separate drives, the police arrested 13 people, and the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested nine.

Hafizur Rahman, Inspector (investigation) of the Mohammadpur Police Station, told this correspondent that they have set up two temporary police outposts inside the Geneva Camp to maintain law and order.

There are 20 police members in each outpost, he said.

On Saturday, residents, including students, held a demonstration in front of Mohammadpur Police Station, demanding enhanced security. Locals also gave a 72-hour ultimatum to improve the law and order.

Later on Saturday evening, the joint forces arrested 45 people from Mohammadpur and adjoining areas.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7



Numerous vehicles lay abandoned across the Mansurabad Police Lines dumping field in the port city. These vehicles were seized due to invalid documentation or for their involvement in certain cases, but now they just take up space and decay in this open field without any proper process for their disposal. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN