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## Daylong traffic chaos paralyses the capital

Commuters suffer as protests, rallies plague Dhaka



Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue around 9:00pm yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Several parts of Dhaka experienced severe traffic congestion yesterday due to protests, road blockades, and political programmes, causing immense suffering for commuters throughout the day.

The gridlock disrupted the movement of office-goers, students, and even ambulances, bringing parts of the capital to a standstill.

Speaking to The Daily Star, DMP Additional Police Commissioner (Traffic) Md Sarwar Hossain said the congestion was caused by a combination of factors, including political programmes, student protests, and road blockades.

He said BNP supporters had started gathering in the Paltan area from different parts of the city, resulting in significant traffic congestion around Shantinagar, Paltan, and Shahbagh.

Earlier in the day, a group held a

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## DSCC unveils Tk 3,841cr budget

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) yesterday unveiled its budget for the 2025-26 fiscal year, with a total outlay of Tk 3,841.38 crore.

DSCC Administrator Md Shahjahan Mia, presenting the budget at the Nagar Bhavan auditorium, called for stakeholders' support to ensure its successful implementation.

The budget, which was approved earlier in the 7th meeting of the DSCC Governing Committee, sets a revenue income target of Tk 1,320.43 crore. The corporation has estimated operating expenditures at Tk 635.33 crore. A significant portion of the budget is allocated for development, with Tk 876.64 crore from DSCC's

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STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Milestone School and College in Uttara resumed its academic activities for the students of class nine to twelve yesterday following the July 21 deadly air force jet crash.

The regular classes began since morning, followed by group counselling and mental wellbeing sessions over the past two days, said Shah Bulbul, public

relations officer of the institution.

"We are communicating with the guardians of the junior classes alongside providing counselling. We hope that academic activities of the others classes will also resume soon," he said.

Apart from academic activities, psychosocial counselling will continue for the next two to three months to help students cope with the trauma,

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Shaheen Anam, executive director of Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF), receives Honorary MBE from British High Commissioner Sarah Cooke at a ceremony at the British High Commission in Dhaka yesterday. PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## Childhood laced with lead

98% of Dhaka children aged 2-4 have alarming lead levels in blood, finds icddr,b-Stanford study

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Around 98 percent of 500 surveyed children aged between two and four in the capital were found to have concerning levels of lead in their blood, posing serious health risks, according to a joint study by icddr,b and Stanford University released yesterday.

The study found that children in Dhaka south have higher blood lead

and paint.

Jesmin Sultana, assistant scientist at icddr,b, presented the findings at a discussion titled "Fighting Lead Poisoning in Bangladesh -- Progress Made, Challenges Ahead" held at icddr,b.

There is no safe level of lead in the blood. However, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) considers BLLs above 35 micrograms

according to the CDC.

Speaking at the programme, Tahmeed Ahmed, executive director of icddr,b, said, "Lead poisoning is silently robbing our children of their future potential."

It hinders brain development and causes nutritional deficiencies, ultimately setting back the future of Bangladesh itself, he said.

"We must act with resolve to eliminate



levels (BLLs) than those in the north, as the southern part of the city hosts more lead-polluting industries.

Proximity to industrial sites is the main driver of elevated BLLs. Other sources include indoor second-hand smoke, high levels of dust containing lead, and household exposures such as lead-containing cosmetics, cookware,

per litre to be concerning, especially for young children.

Lead exposure can seriously harm a child's health, causing damage to the brain and nervous system, slowed growth and development, learning and behavioural issues, hearing and speech problems, lower IQ, decreased attention levels, and poor academic performance,

all sources of lead emissions so that every child can grow up healthy and intelligent, and play an active role in national development," he added.

Prof Steve Luby of Stanford University emphasised that lead exposure severely impairs brain development and causes cognitive deficits and IQ loss that can affect future generations.

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### HEALTH HAZARD

**Lead exposure harms brain and nervous system, causes lower IQ and developmental issues**

**Children near industrial zones at highest risk**

**No safe level of lead in blood, says CDC**

**Lead exposure during pregnancy can affect unborn children**

Media freedom hinges on political will, press unity

Speakers call for reform, reflection and responsibility at CGS dialogue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ensuring media freedom in Bangladesh demands more than government initiative -- it requires active responsibility from media owners, editors, journalists' unions, and all segments of society, said National Consensus Commission Vice President Prof Ali Riaz yesterday.

Reflecting on the past year, he said despite political unrest and violence, Bangladesh avoided a large scale political collapse.

"This is an achievement that deserves recognition, especially for the political parties that acted with restraint. Though more could have been done, we must acknowledge that the worst was avoided."

He made these remarks during a dialogue titled "Media Freedom: Exploring Grievances and Self-Regulations," organised by the Centre for Governance Studies (CGS) at the CIRDAP auditorium in the capital.

Riaz warned of emerging "social forces" beyond traditional players that are exerting growing influence over the media.

"These forces are not always visible, but they significantly shape the democratic landscape.

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## Classes begin at Milestone



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

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relations officer of the institution.

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Apart from academic activities, psychosocial counselling will continue for the next two to three months to help students cope with the trauma,

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### Announcement

Qatar Airways in Bangladesh is pleased to announce that we are in the process of appointing a General Sales Agent (GSA) for Airline Passenger Services, in accordance with government regulations.

Interested parties are invited to submit their applications and relevant company documents via their company email to:

qragsaproject@bd.qatarairways.com

The deadline for application submission is: 12:00 p.m. on 15 August 2025.

Shortlisted candidates will be contacted with further details regarding the next steps in the selection process.

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