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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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**COX'S BAZAR TRIP**  
NCP serves  
show-cause  
notices on  
five leaders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The National Citizen Party (NCP) yesterday served show-cause notices on five of its senior leaders for their "unannounced" visit to Cox's Bazar on the first anniversary of the July mass uprising.

The party issued five separate letters, signed by its joint member secretary Saleh Uddin Sifat, in this regard.

The five leaders are NCP Chief Coordinator Nasiruddin Patwary, Chief Organiser (North) Sarjis Alam, Chief Organiser (South) Hasnat Abdullah, Senior Joint Member Secretary Tasnim Jara, and her husband Khaled Saifullah, who is also a joint

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## Childhood laced with lead

Out of 500 surveyed toddlers in Dhaka, 98% have alarming blood lead levels, finds 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.

lead, and household exposures such as lead containing cosmetics, cookware, 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

behavioural issues, hearing and speech problems, lower IQ, decreased attention levels, and poor academic performance, 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



### 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**

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

"We must act with resolve to eliminate 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.

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## Classes begin at Milestone



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 other 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 receives honorary MBE from British envoy**

STAR ONLINE REPORT

British High Commissioner to Bangladesh Sarah Cooke formally presented the insignia of the Honorary Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (MBE) to Shaheen Anam, executive director of Manusher Jonno Foundation, at a ceremony at British High Commission in Dhaka today.

She was named an Honorary MBE by King Charles III in February 2025 in recognition of her outstanding contributions to social justice, inclusion, and gender equality in Bangladesh - values that are deeply shared by both the UK and Bangladesh,

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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

Political will and press unity key to media freedom

**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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## 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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