

Shaheen Anam

FROM PAGE 3
says a statement of the UK High Commission.

The UK has maintained a longstanding partnership with the Manusher Jonno Foundation for over two decades, working collaboratively to advance human rights and empower marginalised communities across the country.

Through this partnership, the UK government has supported over 460 grassroots organisations, enabling

Daylong traffic chaos

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transformative work that promotes dignity, inclusion, and justice for all.

In the statement, Sarah Cooke said, "I am delighted to present this award to Ms Shaheen Anam on behalf of His Majesty The King.

"Her tireless dedication and commitment to human rights, social justice and gender equality have made a lasting impact in Bangladesh, reflecting the shared values and enduring partnership between our two countries."

Classes begin

FROM PAGE 3
Bulbul said.

Earlier on August 3, Milestone School and College reopened on a limited scale after 12-day closure, aiming to support students' mental well-being in the wake of the plane crash that left the campus into mourning.

"The entire campus has been grieving since the July 21 plane crash. At this moment, our priority is the

psychological recovery of our students and bringing them back to regular life," Principal Mohammad Ziaul Alam had said after reopening the institution.

At least 34 persons, mostly students, were killed and more than 150 others injured after an Air Force jet crashed on the campus on July 21. Following the tragic crash, the authorities had announced the closure of the institution.

Vehicular movement came to a halt in the area, causing tailbacks on nearby roads. Police later intervened, and the students cleared the intersection after about 30 minutes.

Around 2:00pm, job seekers who passed the written test of the 18th Teacher Registration Examination demonstrated in front of the Non-Government Teachers' Registration and Certification Authority (NTRCA) office in Eskaton.

They demanded a re-evaluation of viva results and approval for candidates with valid certificates and

documents. "I went to Aziz Super Market in Shahbagh around 1:00pm and then returned to Labaid Hospital in Dhanmondi. From there, I came to Kalabagan," said Kader Ali, a trader.

"There was severe gridlock on most streets and alleys, which caused a much longer delay than usual," he added.

In the afternoon, traffic conditions worsened further as BNP held its scheduled "Victory Rally" to mark the first anniversary of the July uprising. The rally began at 3:00pm in front of the party's central office in Nayapaltan.

As a result, traffic congestion intensified in Nayapaltan, Bijoynagar, Shantinagar, and around the Purana Paltan intersection. Vehicular movement in these areas remained suspended for nearly two hours.

"I left for Gulistan around 3:30pm, but even after an hour, I couldn't reach Paltan intersection," said Rajib, a commuter. "So I started

walking. All vehicles were at a standstill."

Elsewhere in the capital, leaders and activists of the Jatiya Ganatantrik Party (JAGPA) blocked a road in Badda, demanding that ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina be sent back to Bangladesh from India. The protest was part of the party's previously announced programme to besiege the Indian High Commission.

The demonstration caused severe congestion in Badda, Badda Kitchen Market, Hossain Market, Merul Badda, and Rampura, leading to gridlocks and suffering for commuters.

On the Traffic Alert group on Facebook, social media users warned others about which roads to avoid and shared photos and videos of gridlocks from across the city.

As of 8:15pm, when this report was filed, severe congestion was still seen in both directions between Shahbagh and Farmgate, with vehicles moving at a snail's pace.

Dr Sarah Salway, senior director of Health Systems and Population Studies Division at icddr,b, said lead pollution is a major yet often overlooked public health issue in Bangladesh. Children living near polluting factories are among the worst affected.

KEY FINDINGS
Jesmin Sultana said the study, conducted between 2022 and 2024, surveyed 500 children aged two to four in Dhaka. Every child had lead in their blood, and 98 percent had levels above 35 micrograms per litre, which is considered a concerning level.

Children living within one kilometre of battery manufacturing, recycling, or other lead-related industries had 43 percent higher BLs than those living more than five kilometres away.

Those living within 1km to 2km had 24 percent

Political will and press unity key

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Their influence has gone underreported and underanalysed."

In Bangladesh, media outlets have not evolved as independent corporate entities solely pursuing journalistic interests. Most are embedded within larger business conglomerates with vested interests. As a result, the media often serves to protect broader financial or political goals."

He added, "Most people cannot name the owners of The New York Times, The Guardian, or Le Monde. But in Bangladesh, everyone knows who owns which newspaper, along with their political ambitions. That's a problem."

"As long as you identify newspaper owners by name and their business or political roles, true press freedom will remain elusive."

He said, "Many local journalists are handed an ID card and left to 'figure things out.' This is not how responsible journalism is sustained."

Turning to political divisions within journalist unions, he said, "Our unions are split along party lines. They function neither as genuine trade unions nor as

protectors of professional rights. This severely weakens their ability to advocate for journalists."

He questioned the integrity of journalists during key moments like the July uprising.

"When the then prime minister held meetings with journalists during the July protests, can we truly say those present were upholding journalistic principles -- or were they part of political campaign machinery?"

He urged, "Now is the time for collective soul-searching. An interim government is in place -- this is an opportunity to reflect, restructure, and renew our commitments."

"One full year has passed. Has any group -- owners, editors, unions -- come together to evaluate the media's role over the past 16 years? Why haven't we had that conversation?"

"We cannot sit around waiting for a commission, or an external actor, to come and save journalism. Institutions must be built from within, with a sense of ownership and urgency."

Matiur Rahman Chowdhury, editor of the Manabzamin, said, "To ensure true freedom of

Atlanta, US; Mahbub Morshed, chief editor and managing director of Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha; Mahmuda Habiba, member, BNP Media Cell and joint secretary general, Jatiyatabadi Krishak Dal; Kazi Jesin, freelance journalist; Manjurul Islam, executive editor, Bangladesh Pratidin; Zahid Newaz Khan, senior journalist; and Shihab Uddin Khan, lawyer, Supreme Court, also spoke at the event.

The session was moderated by the CGS President Zillur Rahman. They were asked to appear in person and provide a written explanation to Convenor Nahid Islam, and Member Secretary Akhtar Hossain, within the next 24 hours regarding the reasons and context of their decision.

Sources at the Cox's Bazar airport said the NCP delegation landed there around 11:30am on August 5 on a Biman Bangladesh Airlines flight from Dhaka.

They said the group then headed to the five-star Sea Pearl Beach Resort & Spa (previously the Royal Tulip) in Inani, about 20km from the airport.

Their sudden visit has triggered rumours in political circles that the NCP leaders were there to meet former US ambassador to Bangladesh Peter Haas.

Haas is currently serving as a strategic adviser to the US multinational company Excelerate Energy, which exports liquefied natural gas (LNG). He served as the US ambassador to Bangladesh from January 2022 to July 2024.

However, speaking to The Daily Star, Nasiruddin dismissed the rumours, saying they were visiting Cox's Bazar for vacation.

He termed the reports of a meeting with Haas "false and defamatory".

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