



Long tailbacks formed at the Manik Mia Avenue intersection in the capital yesterday, leaving commuters stranded in traffic for hours. The severe congestion was caused by students blocking the Farmgate intersection to demand safer roads and a ban on battery-run auto-rickshaws.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## Don't include 'controversial officials' in next polls

BNP urges EC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP yesterday urged the Election Commission not to involve controversial or questionable government officials in the process of the upcoming 13th national elections.

The party leaders said the commission has assured them that it remains cautious about the issue, following a meeting with Chief Election Commissioner AMM Nasir Uddin at the EC headquarters in Agargaon.

Speaking to reporters after the meeting, BNP Standing Committee Member Abdul Moyeen Khansaid the administration has been moulded over the past 15 years to act loyally towards one political party. As a result, it is widely known that voters were victims of mockery in the past three elections.

The commission must establish a transparent system that can restore public confidence. Moyeen said it is unrealistic to exclude all officials who served in the past from the upcoming election process.

"Rather, those who may have acted unjustly under pressure or fear in the past should now be encouraged to discharge their duties properly in a democratic

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# Trapped in charity, deprived of rights

How the country's system treats persons with disabilities as a welfare issue, denying them inclusion, equal opportunities

NILIMA JAHAN

Persons with disabilities in Bangladesh continue to face exclusion from education, health, training, and rehabilitation services — despite constitutional

the Sustainable Development Goals.

Under the government's Allocation of Business framework, responsibility for disability affairs lies solely with the Ministry of Social Welfare. Other key ministries

a charity issue rather than a rights issue, leaving millions without essential services.

Although the UNCRPD requires all ministries to ensure inclusion in education, employment, health, sports, accessibility, and gender

in 2008, is essential to end this segregation. Until then, persons with disabilities will continue to be treated as charity recipients rather than citizens entitled to rights.

The problem is most visible in education. Despite having



guarantees, the 2013 Disability Rights Act, ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) in 2007, and commitments to

Education, Health, Youth and Sports, and Women and Children Affairs — remain largely disengaged.

Experts say this outdated structure treats disability as

equality, disability agenda remains confined to one ministry.

Experts argue that reforming the Allocation of Business, as recommended

two education ministries — Education and Primary and Mass Education — schooling for children with disabilities is still handled by social welfare,

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## 'They shot at me while I hung from building ledge'

July uprising victim testifies before tribunal as trial begins against 5 ex-cops over Rampura killings

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A young man who was shot multiple times during the July uprising in Dhaka's Rampura testified before the International Crimes Tribunal-1 yesterday, describing how police opened fire on him as he tried to save himself while hanging from the ledge of a building.

With the deposition of Amir Hossain, 18, as the first prosecution witness, the trial of the crimes against humanity case began against five former police officers, including former Dhaka Metropolitan Police Commissioner Habibur Rahman, over the killing of two people and the shooting of two others in Rampura last year.

The other accused are then DMP's (Khilgaon zone) Additional Deputy Commissioner Rashedul Islam; then Rampura Police Station Officer-in-Charge Mashiur Rahman; then Sub-Inspector of the police station Tarikul Islam Bhuiyan; and then Rampura police outpost Assistant Sub-Inspector Chanchal Chandra Sarkar. Only Chanchal is in custody, while the remaining four are on the run.

The witness, who at the time worked at a food

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## How long will it take to complete the probe?

HC rebukes taskforce over Sagar-Runi murder case delay

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday blasted the government-formed taskforce for again failing to submit its full-fledged probe report in connection with the murders of journalists Sagar Sarwar and Meherun Runi.

"Thirteen years have passed since two people (Sagar and Runi) were murdered. Who killed them? Nothing could be known. Even the investigation into this case has not been completed yet. People all over the country are looking at this case. How many more years will it take to complete the investigation?" the HC bench of Justice Fatema Najib and Justice Fatema Anwar told the state counsel and the taskforce representative.

The bench asked Azizul Haque, investigation officer of the case, "Tell us what percentage of the investigation of the Sagar Runi murder case has been completed."



Azizul, also a high official of the Police Bureau of Investigation, said six months' time was needed to complete the investigation.

At one stage of the hearing, Advocate Mohammad Shishir Monir, lawyer for the complainant in the murder case, told the court that he felt ashamed as the investigation had not been completed for such a long time.

Monir opposed the taskforce's petition seeking six months' time and prayed to the HC bench to grant three months to submit the report.

The HC granted six months' time for the last time to the taskforce to complete the investigation and submit its report.

On April 22, the HC had granted the taskforce an additional six months to complete the investigation and submit its report.

## TYPHOID CAMPAIGN 1.7cr children vaccinated so far

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As part of the ongoing typhoid vaccination campaign across Bangladesh, at least 1.7 crore children have been vaccinated as of Wednesday.

The campaign is progressing well, although some individuals have been spreading rumours about the vaccination on social media, said health officials at a meeting yesterday.

Authorities are working to identify and counter these false claims, they said.

Launched on October 12, the nationwide campaign aims to vaccinate 4.9 crore children aged between nine months and 15 years. It will continue on all working days till November 13, covering a total of 18 working days.

The Expanded Programme on Immunisation (EPI) organised a progress review meeting at CIRDP, with support from the Shastho Shurokha Foundation and Unicef.

EPI Deputy Director Shahriar Sajjad said 1.7 crore children — 34 percent of the target — have been vaccinated so far. Around 2.7 crore children have registered online to date, he added.



While the campaign's performance has been strong in Dhaka, Chattogram, and Rajshahi divisions, Khulna and Barishal lag slightly behind, said Sajjad.

Coverage remains lower in urban areas, especially city corporations, he said, adding that measures have been taken to improve coverage there.

Citing a report, Firdausi Qadri, emeritus scientist at icddr, said around 1,310 people in Bangladesh are infected with typhoid every day, and 22 of them die — 15 of whom are children. The Typhoid Conjugate Vaccine (TCV) is 85 percent effective, meaning about 12 child deaths could be prevented each day if all children were vaccinated.

Prof Sayedur Rahman, special assistant to the chief adviser for the health ministry, said the vaccine is safe, effective, and globally approved. "We urge all parents to have their children vaccinated," he said.

DGHS Director General Prof Abu Jafar said some people are spreading rumours about the vaccination campaign. "We have been trying to identify and counter them." Fewer than 500 cases of adverse effects have been reported, an insignificant number compared to the total vaccinated, he added.



Families stay in a waiting room at Bangladesh Shishu Hospital. Most of them are from low-income families outside Dhaka and have come to this specialised hospital to seek treatment for their children. They were told to wait three to four hours before being provided with a bed due to the patient rush at the facility. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON