

Eid tomorrow if moon sighted today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Muslims in the country will celebrate their biggest religious festival Eid-ul-Fitr tomorrow if the crescent moon heralding the month of Shawal is sighted anywhere in Bangladesh today.

The new moon will end the month-long fasting by the devoted Muslims during the month of Ramadan. The Muslims will offer Eid prayers seeking divine blessings and eternal peace, progress and prosperity of the people.

The feast of Eid-ul-Fitr is seen as a celebration and reward for abstention during Ramadan, when devotees observe daylong fasting. Families traditionally gather to offer meals, as well as to give treats and gifts for children. They also pay visits to relatives and friends and

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Dialogue dead end may shift onus on president

SHAKHAWAT LITON and HASAN JAHID TUSHER

As the reform dialogue seems to be heading for a cul-de-sac, the Awami League (AL)-led opposition will turn to the president for appointment of a caretaker government head other than Justice KM Hasan, who has been at the centre of the current raging controversy.

But before taking that ultimate route, AL General Secretary Abdul

Jalil and his BNP counterpart Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan will sit again this morning for the sixth time to hammer out a solution to the deadlock.

A source in the AL last night told The Daily Star that the BNP may ask AL in today's dialogue to accept KM Hasan as the chief caretaker government and get some of its conditions, including changes in police and civil administration, fulfilled by Hasan administration. In that case, BNP will not object to the changes for the interim period.

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Meanwhile, the left parties aligned with AL sat yesterday with eminent jurist also Gano Forum President Dr Kamal Hossain to chart the next course of action in case the talks fail.

Dr Kamal told the meeting that if need be he will meet the president and ask him to pick a 'neutral' person as the chief adviser to the next caretaker government that is supposed to be in place from October 28, sources said.

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Hasan has no point of backing out

Family source says

UNB, Dhaka

With political atmosphere about to heat up over Justice KM Hasan's taking charge as the chief adviser to the next caretaker government, a close family source said yesterday there is now no point of backing out from his constitutional position.

"We all know about this debate; obviously, there is no point of backing out," the source told UNB on condition of anonymity when asked if the former chief justice would stay away from taking charge of the nonparty caretaker government.

There was an evident testimony to the assertion as police sources said adequate forces had already

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Keep vigil against creating vacuum in administration

PM asks top bureaucrats

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday in her last meeting with the top civil bureaucrats urged them to be alert against any bid to create administrative vacuum during transfer of power to a caretaker government.

She also requested the secretaries of all ministries to continue implementing the rest of the ongoing development projects undertaken by her government as well as to make sure that people can enjoy the fruits of development.

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The prime minister made the call at her regular opinion-exchange meeting with the secretaries at the Bangladesh Secretariat. This was the 10th such meeting in the last five years and happens to be the last in Khaleda's tenure which expires on October 27.

Khaleda asked the secretaries to work with sincerity, awareness, prudence, responsibility and farsightedness to fulfil responsibilities and commitments given to the people for improvement of their fortune.

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Confusion over govt holidays

No official declaration yet

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Serious confusion arises regarding the government holidays for Eid-ul-Fitr amid a rumour that the holidays will begin from today while the government official calendar mentioned October 24-26 as the scheduled dates.

According to sources, the establishment ministry had prepared a proposal declaring Eid holidays from today and sent it to the prime minister for her approval.

But the Cabinet Secretary Abu Solaiman Chowdhury while

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Mad rush for home

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The capital's railway stations, launch and bus terminals were crammed with home going city-dwellers last evening as most of them ended the last workday before the Eid holidays and headed out to celebrate the Eid-ul-Fitr with their beloved ones.

Sources at bus and launch terminals said although many vacationers started to set out for home last Thursday evening, most of them thronged to the outbound transport terminals of the city yesterday evening.

Thousands overcrowded different ticket counters in the city,

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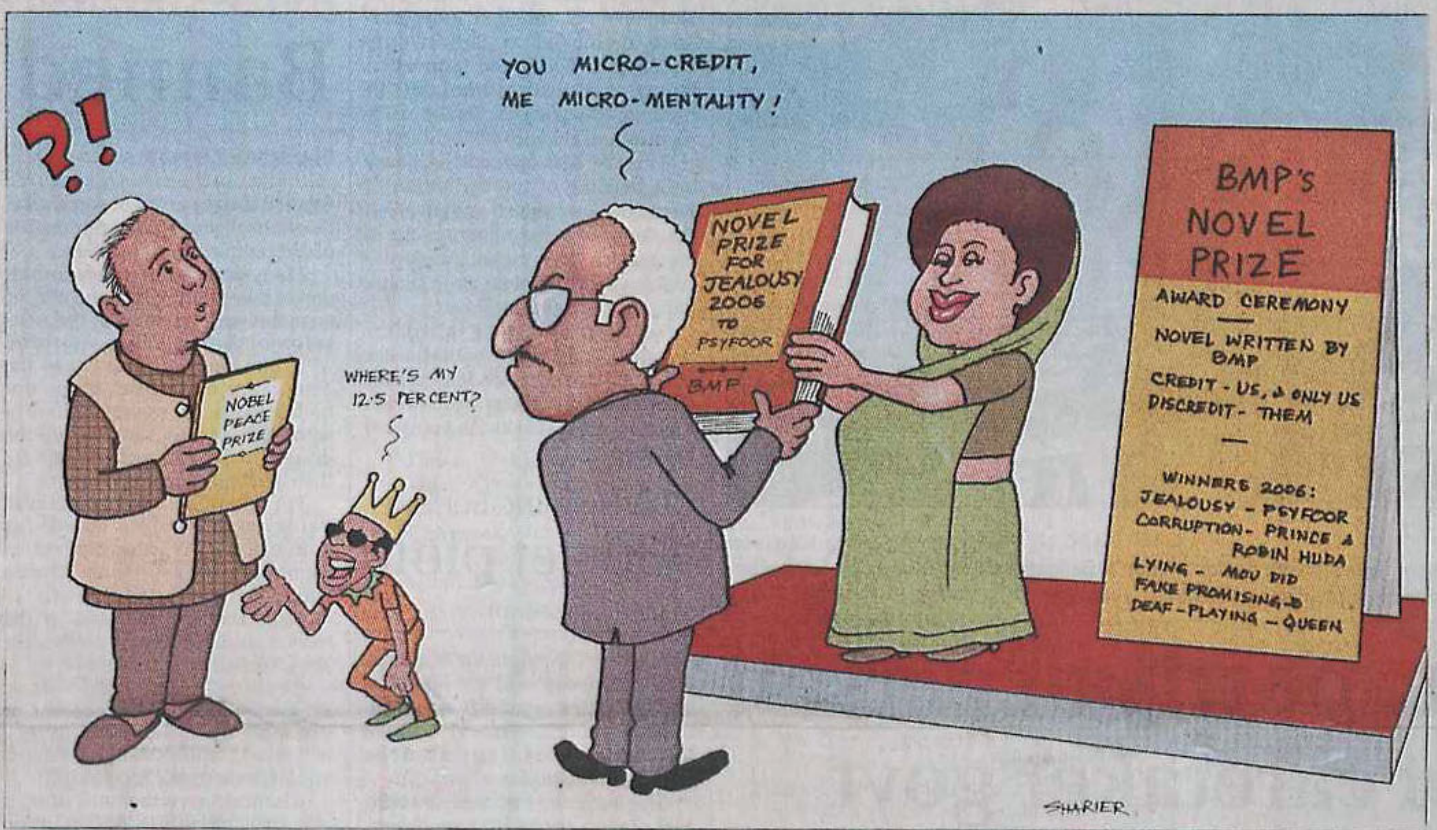
apparently more than available tickets. This pushed up ticket prices much higher than their reach.

Passengers in long queues were awaiting their tickets to home in front of Comilla-bound Tisha and Prince bus counters at Sayedabad bus terminal yesterday evening. They alleged that the tickets were being sold at Tk 100 instead of the regular price of Tk 80.

It was almost the same picture elsewhere -- at Gabtoli, Mohakhali and Gulistan bus terminals.

Ticket clerks, however, denied the allegation saying, "Tickets are being sold at fair prices. We used to

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Rejoinder, our reply

The Hosaf Group in a rejoinder against The Daily Star news headlined "Another Coal Zone leased to Hosaf" published on October 15 has claimed its deal is not unsolicited.

It said in October 2003, the government approved an exploration lease to the Consortium of Hosaf International, Shandong Ludi and Xinwen Mining Group for the feasibility study of Khalashpir coal deposit under clause 3.A of the mines and mineral rules, 1968

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Essentials turn costlier before Eid

SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Prices of essential food items including liquid milk, milk powder, atta, beef and rice shot up once again ahead of the Eid-ul-Fitr, putting an extra pressure on the middle and low income people.

One litre packet of liquid milk of Arong or Milk Vita is now selling at Tk 45-50 in the retail market. Only three days back, it sold at Tk 32-35 while the approved maximum

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retail price (MRP) is Tk 32.

Half-litre packet of milk of the brands has also become less available, leading to the rise of its price to Tk 25 or more while the MRP is Tk 17.

Instead of supplying packaged milk to retailers as per demands, distributors sell it on the black market at much higher prices, said a retailer at Razabazar.

"In my shop, per day demand of

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Ministers pack bags

Their last day in office today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the BNP-led four-party alliance government's last working day as the Eid-ul-Fitr vacation begins tomorrow.

Most ministers attended their secretariat offices yesterday to bid farewell to the officials and employees of their ministries besides finishing pending work.

The ministries were also busy discussing politics, fate of the ongoing dialogue between the two major political parties and other issues.

There was confusion over the dates of Eid holidays as a rumour

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Huda's 'discretionary' fund allocation before departure

RAKIB HASNET SUMAN

With a few days left of the BNP-led government's tenure, Communications Minister Nazmul Huda slashed funds for different legitimate sectors and allocated the money for his 'discretionary fund'.


Sources in the finance and communications ministries alleged that Huda siphoned Tk 30 crore to the 'discretionary fund' to achieve his own interest by changing the original schedule of fund

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allocation. He even began spending the money without approval from the finance ministry, sources said.

The communications minister allocated another Tk 48 crore fund for some 'improvised' sectors which are also not approved by the finance ministry. The sources said these sectors had been improvised to provide the communications minister with latitude in spending the money.

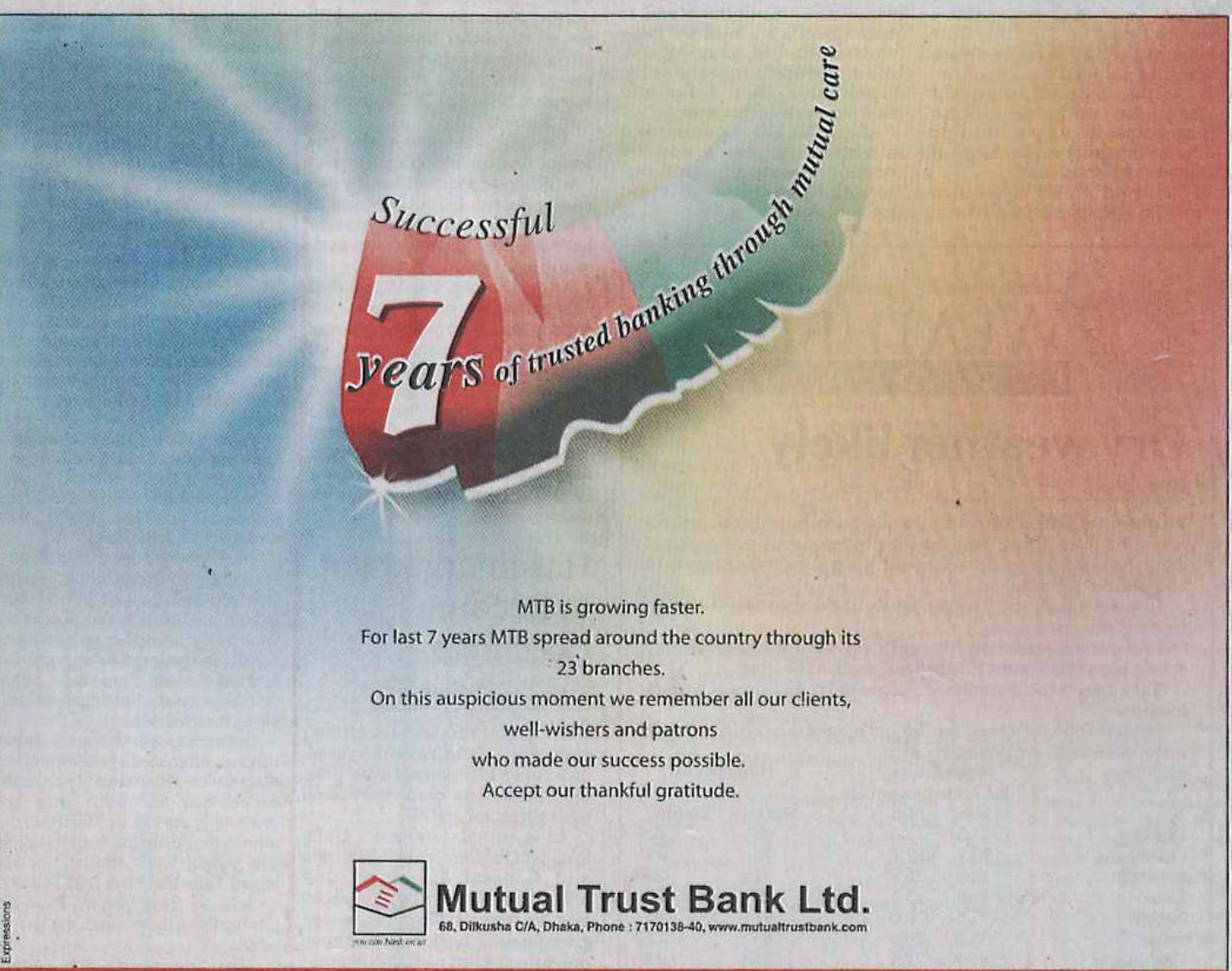
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Eid Mubarak & Happy Eid Greetings to all our patrons, valued customers and well wishers

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Eid Greetings

The Daily Star wishes its readers, patrons, advertisers and well-wishers a very happy Eid.

HOLIDAY

The offices of The Daily Star will remain closed on October 23, 24 and 25 on account of the Eid-ul-Fitr and there will be no issue of the newspaper on October 24, 25 and 26. However, if the Eid is celebrated on October 25, the following day (October 26) will also be a holiday and in that case there will be no issue of the paper on October 27.

There will be no issue of weekly Star Lifestyle and Rising Stars this week due to the Eid holidays.

Be in touch with news updates

The Daily Star online edition will be updated on breaking news during the Eid holidays starting today. Visit your favourite website to know the latest.

Butenis meets Hasan for hour

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

US Ambassador Patricia Butenis in a sudden move last night met former chief justice KM Hasan at his Dhanmondi residence.

The conversation continued almost for an hour but none made any comments about their talking points. Political observers believe that the envoy met Hasan to know his thinking about his assumption of the chief adviser's office amidst intense political tension.

Our heartiest greetings on the occasion of the Holy Eid-ul-fitr to our honorable clients, patrons and well-wishers.

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