

The Daily Star

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People's Right to Know

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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 for three days from today (Dec 5 to 7) on the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr. Therefore, there will be no issue of the newspaper on Dec 6, 7 & 8.

However, if Eid is celebrated on Saturday (Dec 7), the following day, Sunday (Dec 8) will also be considered as holiday. In that case, the newspaper will not be published on Monday (Dec 9).

ANNOUNCEMENT

Today's edition of The Daily Star, including Rising Star and Star Weekend Magazine, is priced at Tk 13. Regular issue: Tk 7, Rising Star: Tk 3 and Star Weekend Magazine: Tk 3.

Sehri, Iftar timing

Ramadan	Dec	Sehri	Iftar
29	5		5-14
30	6	5-03	5-14

	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Dec 5		5-11 pm
Dec 6	6-28 am	

Prayer Timings

Dec 5		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-03	5-13
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	3-45	4-00
Maghrib	5-14	5-24
Esha	7-30	7-45

Source: Islamic Foundation

Partial troops pullout by end of January

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government plans partial withdrawal of the armed forces from 'peaceful and rural areas' by the end of next month, said highly placed sources.

The withdrawal will begin before the union parishad elections get underway on January 25. However, the Operation Clean Heart will continue as long as required. There will be no relaxation in the joint drive or troops pullout from 'crime-prone' areas, especially in Dhaka, Chittagong, Cox's Bazar and some other cities and towns.

Troops withdrawn gradually from apparently peaceful areas would be first stationed at thana headquarters. If the situation improves, they would be stationed at district headquarters for further observation of the situation, the sources said.

The drive began on October 17 to nab criminals and recover illegal arms as law and order had deteriorated

across the country. Deployment of troops in the drive has brought positive results as criminal activities have reduced greatly, sources pointed out.

However, different quarters criticised the death of more than 30 people during the drive.

Troops have so far arrested around 8,000 people (listed, non-listed and suspected criminals), recovered about 1,400 firearms and 28,000 rounds of ammunition. But most of the top criminals have fled the country before and after the drive began.

Meanwhile, the recent decision to defer the UP polls date followed demand from the MPs to hold the election after withdrawal of army because grassroots level leaders and activists of different parties are now hiding to avert arrest during the on going drive.

A number of sitting UP chairmen and probable candidates have already been arrested.

BNP sources said a good number of MPs had met

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Homebound passengers queue up for tickets to Bogra for hours on end at the Mohakhali Bus Stand in the city yesterday on the eve of the Eid-ul-Fitr, as tickets have been sold out.

PHOTO: STAR

Pro-Taliban in ruling ranks, says Hasina

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina once again asked the government to come up with an example of her 'seditious statement', if any, during her recent visits to Thailand and India.

The opposition leader also accused the ruling alliance of having the pro-Taliban forces in its fold.

"The government has to specify which of my activities or statements went against the country. It has to prove which of my words or sentences seemed seditious," asserted Hasina at a press conference at the Jatiya Press Club yesterday.

Speaking against the misdeeds of a government does not mean speaking against the state, she said. "The ruling alliance has to



understand the difference between anti-government and anti-state."

Hasina's renewed challenge and statements in self-defence came yesterday hard on the heels of an

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Khaleda invites Hasina to reception on Eid day

BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia has greeted Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina on the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr and invited her to a reception on the Eid-day at the Prime Minister's Bhaban.

She sent the Eid greetings and invitation cards to the opposition leader yesterday.

The Prime Minister's Assistant Private Secretary M A Matin handed over the two cards to Sheikh Hasina's Private Secretary Nazrul Islam Khan at "Sudha Bhaban".

Khaleda has also invited Deputy Leader of the Opposition Advocate Abdul Hamid to the reception.

An invitation card and an Eid card from the Prime Minister were handed over to his Personal Officer at MP Hostel by the PM's APS.

The Prime Minister returned home yesterday from Saudi Arabia

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Eid tomorrow if moon sighted today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Eid-ul-Fitr will be celebrated throughout the country tomorrow, if the Shawal moon is sighted today; if not, on Saturday.

State Minister for Religious Affairs Mosharrif Hossain Shahjahan will chair a meeting of the national moon sighting committee at the Islamic Foundation auditorium this afternoon.

Meanwhile, the government has chalked out an elaborate programme to observe the Eid with due religious fervour and festivity.

A three-day public holiday begins today and could be extended till Saturday should the Eid be held on Friday.

Key government and semi-government installations in the capital and as elsewhere in the country will be illuminated while

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Two foreign journalists 'had malafide intention'

Foreign minister tells European envoys

BSS, Dhaka

Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan yesterday said Bangladesh considers the whole incident enacted by two foreign journalists who concealed their real identity and the subsequent developments "totally unnecessary".

Informally briefing European

envoys at the foreign ministry, he said Bangladesh dealt with the whole thing in a transparent manner.

The foreign minister said complete press freedom prevails in Bangladesh and press reports bear testimony to that.

The fact that 170 journalists visited Bangladesh in recent times

testified that there were no restrictions on their visiting the country, he said.

"Why then," he asked, "Zaiba Naz Malik and Leo Poldo Bruno Sorrentino came to Bangladesh hiding their identity as (not being) journalists?"

"Unless they had some malafide

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