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CAREER UNRESOLVED

Figure out the dilemma through a 7-step solution

SEE NEXT STEP

'CITY OF MAGIC'

Fusion band Chirkut's second album Jadur Shahor hits the music scene

PAGE 9

WASHINGTON POST TO BE SOLD

The Amazon founder agrees to buy the US newspaper for \$250m

PAGE B2

Extortion takes toll on hawkers

Cops, ruling party men do it thru' middlemen

SHARIFUL ISLAM, M RAHMAN and PROTIK CHAKRABARTY

Some ruling Awami League affiliates and bad cops have been extorting huge sums from the capital's 2.6 lakh poor footpath hawkers through their paid "linemen".

But not until late last month could the hawkers gather the courage to lodge a formal complaint to the police. At a meeting with a city police boss, the aggrieved hawkers got a rare assurance that their case against the extortionists would be entertained.

A leader of hawkers' federation filed the case on July 29 with Paltan Police Station, thereby revealing the multimillion taka network of extortion on the sprawling foot

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Around **2.6** lakh hawkers

Total extortion a day: More than Tk **5** cr

Ahead of Eid, amount rises to Tk **7** cr

Extortion per shop Tk **50-500** a day

MONEY GOES TO

Police (40pc)

Local ruling party men (25pc)

Linemen, Sardar (35pc)

TOO RISKY

The train is full at 4:30pm at the airport station in the capital yesterday and so people are climbing on to its roof until they get enough space to stand there to travel home ahead of Eid-ul-Fitr. They are seemingly oblivious to the risk of a fatal accident as they look forward to spending the holidays with their loved ones.

PHOTO: COURTESY



Footpaths abuzz with Eid shoppers

ZYMA ISLAM

No matter what, Eid brings no less of excitement and happiness for the poor and destitute, even if it is just a one-good-day for them.

Often lost in glitzy show-offs, the spirit of the religious festival never dims even in the smallest of houses, and in the hearts of the least fortunate.

With Ramadan drawing to its end and the moon filling up, these less lucky people give the more solvent a chance to be generous and thankful. All they want is a hand to pull them up and say, "Life is not all unfair."

Sixty-seven-year-old beggar Hakim Abdul, who limps about New Market traffic signal, loves the Eid rush and mile-long tailbacks in front of shopping malls. While many feel exhausted in traffic congestion, he sees opportunity there.

"Eid means more money for us too. When cars stand still for a longer time, I get time to collect more alms," said Hakim, flashing a gap-toothed grin.

He hopes to save Tk 400 this Eid to surprise his wife with a new sari from Gausia market. If luck doesn't smile on him, he will try to manage it

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

Jamaat makes a farce over 48-hr hartal

More trouble for Eid holidaymakers as hartal deferred to Aug 13-14

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Jamaat-e-Islami yesterday deferred by a day the 48-hour hartal it called for August 12-13, leaving the Eid holidaymakers struggling again to reschedule their return trip.

The two-day shutdown will now start on August 13.

On August 1, the Jamaat called the hartal in protest against the High Court verdict cancelling its registration with the Election Commission.

The sudden call for hartal at the end of Ramadan threw into uncertainty millions of

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

Holidaymakers suffer

Traffic congestion on battered roads delays journey

STAR REPORT

The journey of Eid holidaymakers was disrupted yesterday on Dhaka-Aricha, Dhaka-Chittagong and Dhaka-Gazipur highways due to workers' agitation, poor road conditions and an accident.

However, the situation was better on other highways.

Highway Police and transport oper-

ators fear that there will be a real crisis from today, the last working day before Eid-ul-Fitr, when people in larger numbers will stream out of the capital.

Additional police have been deployed to ensure a smooth movement of vehicles.

Traffic was hampered on the Dhaka-Aricha highway as workers of at least four garment factories blocked a lane for around half-an-hour from 2:30pm

at Hemayetpur in Savar. Earlier in the day, vehicular movement was usual on the route.

On Dhaka-Chittagong highway, hundreds of passengers got stuck in a 35-kilometre tailback following a collision between two covered vans on the Meghna-Gumti bridge in Comilla around 2:00am.

The gridlock stretched from Gomta

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A few days ahead of Eid, low income people go on a shopping spree in the capital's Gulistan, where vendors and traders have set up makeshift stalls to sell garment items their prospective buyers can afford.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Tk 150cr loss, if not returned

Say owners of billboards grabbed for govt campaign

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Advertising firms have decided to lodge complaints with both North and South Dhaka city corporations after Eid-ul-Fitr over the grabbing of several hundred billboards by ruling party men in the capital.

"If we fail to get back the billboards within a year, we will suffer a loss of up to Tk 150 crore," said Md Rashed, general secretary of Bangladesh Outdoor Advertising Establishment Owners Association, which represents more than 150 advertising companies.

As part of an aggressive campaign, the ruling Awami League has flooded the city with billboards highlighting the achievements of the government. It grabbed the billboards

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

Admission now a big concern

Many who have passed HSC exams will not get admission to their desired institutions

WASIM BIN HABIB

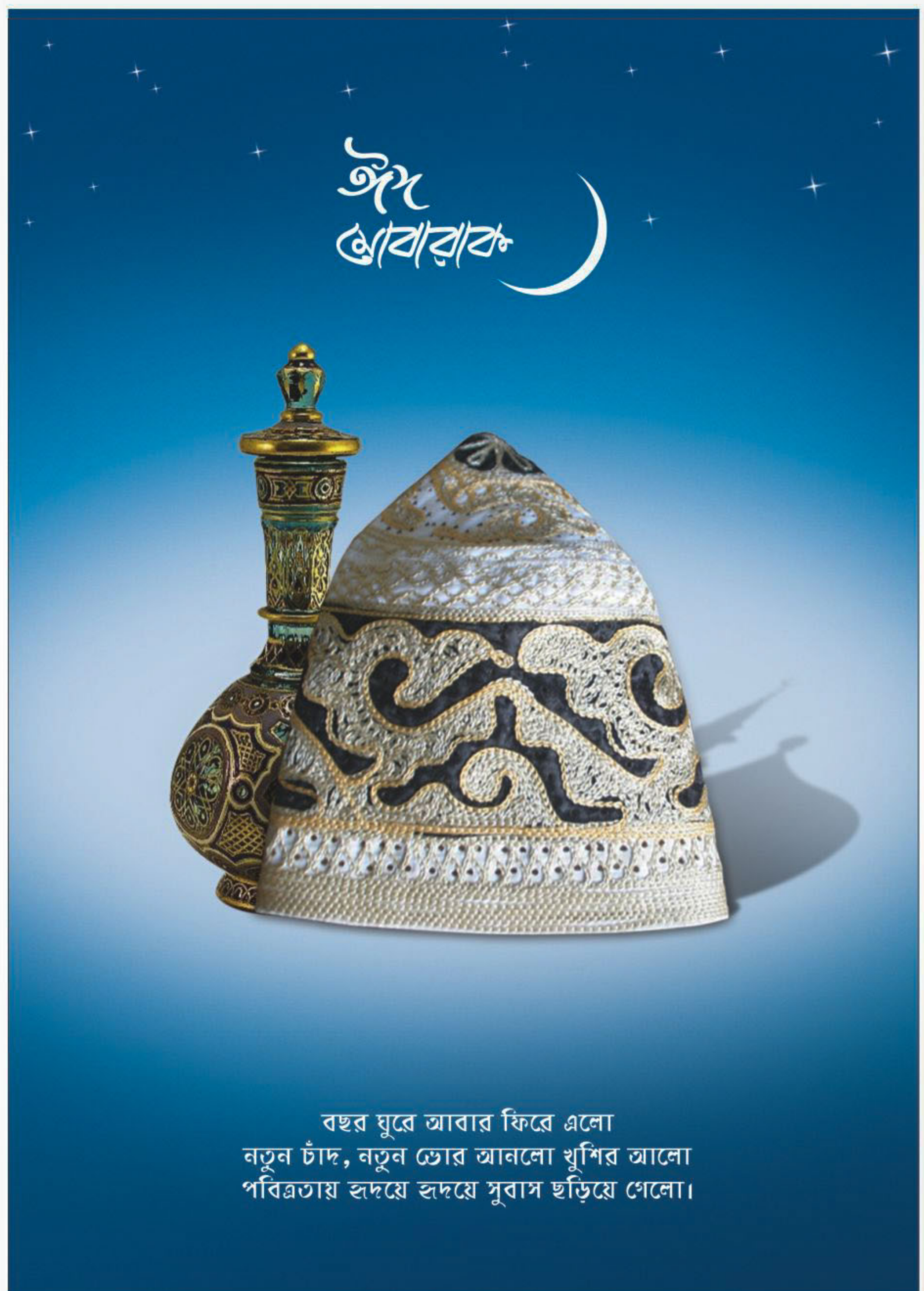
A large number of successful HSC examinees will be denied admission to their desired institutions of higher studies, as the students who have passed vastly outnumber the seats available.

Though the number of GPA-5 scorers dropped this year, landing a seat at a reputable public university remains a big concern.

Most of the colleges affiliated with the National University, especially those in the rural areas, do not get enough students because of poor quality education and outdated curriculums.

The education ministry painted a picture of tough competition ahead,

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বছর ঘুরে আবার ফিরে এলো
নতুন চাঁদ, নতুন ভোর আনলো খুশির আলো
পবিত্রতায় হৃদয়ে হৃদয়ে সুবাস ছড়িয়ে গেলো।

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