



## EID JOURNEY HOME

# Hassle-free, so far

Streams out of capital swell late afternoon; worries over today's weather

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Fearing possible gridlock on highways, Rashidul Hasan had decided to travel to Khulna alone to be with his ailing father this Eid. He thought leaving his wife and children in the capital would be the right decision.

But when he learnt from the media that Eid journey has so far been of less hassle than expected, he changed his mind. Now, they all are going to Khulna.

"Luckily, I was able to buy four tickets online. We are leaving the capital tomorrow [today]," Rashidul, who works for a private organisation on Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, told The Daily Star last night.

Eid will be celebrated in Bangladesh either on Monday or Tuesday, depending on Shawwal moon sighting.

Like the previous two days, thousands of home-goers streamed out of the capital yesterday, without much trouble.

Congestion on the highways was not as bad as feared.

But the rush intensified in the afternoon, and it led to transport crisis in some places, including on the Dhaka-Aricha highway.

Cashing in on the situation, many transport operators began charging passengers extra, which aggravated their sufferings.

Meanwhile, the authorities suspended launch operations on the Shimulia-Banglabazar route from 7:00pm, fearing a possible nor'wester.

It led to additional pressures on ferries.

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## EDIBLE OIL CRUNCH

# Taking shine off Eid for many

SUKANTA HALDER and ABU TALHA

A banker in Naogaon did not find soybean oil in the local market. A woman in Natore was lucky to score a one-litre bottle for an unusually higher price. A private firm employee in Chattogram decided to make do with mustard oil after failing to find soybean oil in her neighborhood.

Just before Eid, people in different districts across the country are failing to buy soybean oil, thanks to what analysts say is an artificial crisis created by certain businesses out to make more money.

The fact that there is adequate stock of the edible oil in Bangladesh is making no impact in the market.

The situation worsened after export of palm oil was banned in Indonesia. About 53 percent of the cooking oil used in Bangladesh is palm oil and 80 percent of it comes from Indonesia.

The market manipulators sensed that the demand for soybean oil would rise further in the coming days and began to hoard whatever volume of cooking oil they had.

Many people in the country may not even be able to buy any edible oil before Eid.

"Shopkeepers say bottled soybean oil would be available in a couple of days. I am waiting," said Sheikh Russel, a banker of Mohadevpur, Naogaon.

Chameli Sarkar, a resident of the Natore town, went to Nichabazar yesterday. "At least 10 shopkeepers said there was no bottled soybean oil because there was no supply. Then I bought a litre of non-bottled oil for Tk 190."

Amir Hossain, a resident of Kazir Dewri area in Chattogram, who works for a private company, said he went to two kitchen markets, but failed to find soybean oil. "Then I went to a third market and settled for mustard oil."

The picture was similar in Bagerhat.

According to Trading Corporation of Bangladesh's data on market rates from April 28, the lowest price of soybean oil in Dhaka is Tk 184 per litre, which is Tk 29 more from a week ago. The price of palm oil has increased by Tk 20 reaching Tk 165 a litre.

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## TRIBUTE TO AMA MUHITH

# Epitome of optimism

ZAHIH HUSSAIN

Over the last 50 years of Bangladesh's existence, we have seen many finance ministers. AMA Muhith was among those few who this nation will remember for making the job appear joyful and free from the pains of balancing difficult trade-offs amid resource constraints.

Not that the trade-offs did not exist, or he was oblivious. But Muhith approached them with such calm and endurance that you felt as if the job was a piece of cake. His ability to handle stress with an ever-glowing smile was something very refreshing for me coming from an institution where hypertension is the expected model from the bosses.

I had the good fortune of meeting him many times with the World Bank delegations, most often at his office in the finance ministry during his second stint as the finance minister from 2009 to 2019. I met him in my official capacity as part of delegations including the president of the World Bank and others such as the chief economist and country directors. Never shy of being himself, he treated all with the same dignity, respect, and humour. Confidence was his signature.

Speaking his mind was something you could count on. One thing I was always sure of before going to meet him was that the delegation would not

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# Farewell to architect of our economy's golden era

REJAUL KARIM BYRON and ZINA TASREEN

When Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina defiantly announced in 2012 that the Padma bridge would be built after the



World Bank pulled out of the project, her gumption was not irrational. She had the assurance of her then 78-year-old finance minister, AMA Muhith -- the man with a Midas touch with the purse strings.

A decade later, that flagship bridge on the river Padma is almost ready to welcome the public, but the person who arranged the funding for its construction could not live to see the day. Muhith died yesterday from old-age complications.

This episode of gallantry and composure was characteristic of his ten-year tenure as the finance minister under the current Awami League government led by Hasina.

She dreamt of all the mega projects that would change the face of Bangladesh and he would quietly arrange the funds from home and beyond.

And it is during his dealings with development partners that he would come to his own, leveraging his wit, charm, power of persuasion and experience as a development professional to ensure easier and practicable terms and conditions.

This was best displayed in his negotiations with the International Monetary Fund for the \$976 million loan under Extended Credit Facility. Typically a stringent programme that many countries falter at -- including Bangladesh, previously -- Muhith ensured that it was possible to complete it without breaking much sweat.

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**EID MUBARAK**

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

## HOLIDAY NOTICE

The Daily Star

We will serve our readers only through our digital platform (www.thedailystar.net) during Eid holidays from May 1 to 3. Though there will be no newspaper in the next three days, you will be informed if you stay tuned to our dynamic web coverage in English and Bangla. If the Eid-ul-Fitr is celebrated on May 3, the holiday will be extended till May 4.

## GAS SUPPLY DISRUPTION

# Dhaka, southern dists to suffer

Begins at 10:00pm Tuesday

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Gas supply to different areas of Dhaka and Manikganj will be suspended for 48 hours from 10:00pm on May 3 while residents of some areas of the capital will experience low gas pressure, said Titas Gas Transmission and Distribution Company Ltd.

Besides, gas supplies will be disrupted in different districts during the period.

Amin Bazar, Hemayetpur, Savar EPZ, Ashulia, Manikganj, and Dhamrai are the areas where there will be no gas, said a press release from Titas Gas Transmission and Distribution Company Ltd.

The capital's Gabtoli, Mazar Road, Kalyanpur, Shyamoli, Mirpur, Mohammadpur, and Dhanmondi will have low gas pressure, it added.

Moreover, Faridpur, Gopalganj, Rajbari, Shariatpur, Madaripur, and the districts in Khulna and Barisal divisions will also face disruption in the service.

The disruptions will be caused by maintenance work on two high-pressure pipelines between Dhanua and Savar and from Bangabandhu bridge's eastern to western end, said another release by the Gas Transmission Company Ltd.

Power plants, factories, CNG filling stations, and household consumers will suffer due to the disruptions.

**ঐদ মোবারক**

খুশির স্বাদ ও খাঁটি ভালোবাসায়  
সবার ঐদ হোক আরো সার্থক

**রাঁধুনি**

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কিউআর কোড-টি স্ক্যান করুন

কিউআর কোড-টি স্ক্যান করুন

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