



Shishu Park in Shahbagh used to be the go-to destination for families during the Eid holidays. However, the park has been closed since January 2019, depriving children. According to officials, the renovation work is scheduled to complete in December 2026.

Another Eid without SHISHU PARK



DIPAN NANDY

On Monday noon, Arohi Hasnat stood with a forlorn look in front of Dhaka Shishu Park, accompanied by her mother, Sharmin Hasnat. Sharmin was trying to reassure her seven-year-old daughter that the park would reopen soon. However, the promise made by the mother to her daughter will not be fulfilled anytime soon. The park is set to reopen in two more years. Renovation work, which resumed in May last year, is scheduled for completion in December 2026, after which the park will be open to the public. Project Director and Supervising Engineer of Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC), Anisur Rahman, told The Daily Star, “Our project duration extends until December 2026. We are working towards completing the development of

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Brace for heatwave on Eid holiday

UNB, Dhaka

The Bangladesh Meteorological Department has forecast that the severe to moderate heatwave sweeping over Dhaka and several other districts will persist until Eid-ul-Fitr. According to a BMD bulletin issued yesterday, the heatwave conditions are expected to remain unchanged for the next five days. “A severe heatwave is affecting Jashore and Sirajganj, while a mild to moderate heatwave is sweeping over Dhaka, Barishal, and parts of Rajshahi, Khulna, Moulvibazar, Brahmanbaria, and Rangamati. This may continue in the coming days,” the bulletin added. The weather is expected to remain dry, with a partly cloudy sky across the country. Daytime temperatures are likely to remain unchanged, while night temperatures may drop slightly. Country’s highest temperature was recorded in Jashore at 41 degrees Celsius on Friday.

A special Eid for Khaleda

BNP chief to celebrate festivities with family after nearly 8 years

UNB, Dhaka

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia is set to celebrate Eid with her family in London for the first time in nearly eight years. Khaleda, who travelled to London on January 7 for medical treatment, will spend Eid with her eldest son Tarique Rahman, his wife Dr Zubaida Rahman, their daughter Zaima Rahman, as well as her late son Arafat Rahman Koko’s wife Shamila Rahman and granddaughters Zafia and Zahia Rahman. Speaking to UNB from London, her personal physician AZM Zahid Hossain said Khaleda is mentally strong and in stable health as she prepares for the occasion. She has been receiving treatment at home under the supervision of Professors Patrick Kennedy and Jennifer Cross from The London Clinic since her discharge on January 25. Zahid said a medical team is continuously monitoring her condition. Khaleda, 79, has long suffered from liver cirrhosis, kidney and heart issues, diabetes, and arthritis. This will be her first Eid with her entire family since her imprisonment in 2018. She last celebrated Eid in London in 2017, during a three-month stay at Tarique Rahman’s residence. Asked about the possibility of Khaleda returning to Bangladesh, Dr Zahid said she could return any time after Eid, depending on the advice of her medical team. “The final decision rests on the approval of her medical team. I hope she’ll return home very soon with the medical board’s decision, as her condition is now stable,” he said. Eid-ul-Fitr will be celebrated in the UK either on Sunday or Monday, depending on the sighting of the moon.



Ration for Secretariat staff recommended Other depts decry discrimination

BAHARAM KHAN

The Ministry of Food has recommended ration facilities for Secretariat employees, triggering dissatisfaction among the government staff in other offices and agencies. The ministry sent a letter, signed by Senior Assistant Secretary Abdullah Al Mamun, to the finance secretary on March 25, with the proposal from the Bangladesh Secretariat Officers and Employees Coordinated Council for approval. The letter stated, “The proposal from the Bangladesh Secretariat Officers and Employees Coordinated Council regarding the provision of ration facilities for officials and employees working in the Secretariat has been recommended for favourable consideration and is being forwarded with directives.” It also mentioned that the food adviser had approved the move. Secretariat employees have long demanded ration benefits similar to those provided to institutions such as the Anti-

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

667 patrol teams, 71 checkpoints

DMP tightens security for Eid; home adviser says no security threat in Dhaka

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) has intensified security measures to ensure a safe and festive Eid-ul-Fitr celebration and will launch a special operation after Eid to prevent post-holiday crime and ensure the safe return of city dwellers. Speaking at a press briefing at the DMP Media Centre yesterday, Additional Police Commissioner (Detective Branch) Rezaul Karim Mallick said 667 patrol teams have been deployed in two shifts across 50 police station areas daily. Seventy-one police checkpoints have been set up at key strategic locations in the capital, while auxiliary forces have been deployed to support law enforcement activities. Mallick said the Detective Branch (DB) has been actively ensuring public safety throughout Ramadan and will maintain its vigilance during Eid. Security has been heightened at shopping malls, railway stations, bus terminals and launch terminals to facilitate a smooth and secure Eid journey. DB teams are working alongside uniformed police to prevent criminal activities. A special post-Eid operation will be conducted to ensure the safe return of city dwellers, targeting pickpockets, thieves and extortionists. DB teams

will be stationed at strategic points across Dhaka to prevent post-holiday crime. He advised people to contact the DMP control room or the national emergency helpline 999 for assistance. **‘NO SECURITY THREAT’** There is no security threat in Dhaka during Eid-ul-Fitr, Home Adviser Jahangir Alam Chowdhury said yesterday. **There is no threat of sabotage in Dhaka. If such a situation arises, it will be dealt with collectively. If the people remain vigilant, no one will be able to carry out any acts of sabotage.** **Jahangir Alam Chowdhury** Home Adviser Speaking to reporters after inspecting Gabtoli Bus Terminal, a key entry and exit point of the capital, he dismissed concerns over any conspiracies regarding security issues. “There is no threat of sabotage in Dhaka. If such a situation arises, it will be dealt with collectively. If the people remain vigilant, no one will be able to carry out any acts of sabotage,” he said.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

All set to hold Eid congregation at National Eidgah

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

All necessary preparations have been completed for the main congregation of Eid-ul-Fitr at the National Eidgah ground, according to Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC). Speaking at a press briefing at the National Eidgah yesterday morning, DSCC Administrator Shahjahan Mia informed that arrangements have been made for around 35,000 worshippers, including the president, chief adviser, diplomats, and people from various walks of life, to offer their prayers in a well-managed environment. The main congregation of Eid-ul-Fitr will be held at the National Eidgah at 8:30am, he said, adding that “In case of rain or adverse weather conditions, the Eid congregation will be shifted to Baitul Mukarram National Mosque at 9:00am.” The administrator urged the residents of Dhaka to attend the main congregation. “We have completed all arrangements to ensure that worshippers can perform their Eid prayers comfortably and safely,” he added. **No metro rail on Eid day** **STAFF CORRESPONDENT** Metro rail service will be suspended only on the day of Eid-ul-Fitr, Dhaka Mass Transit Company Ltd (DMTCL) announced yesterday. However, the service will operate as usual on other days. DMTCL made the announcement through a post on its official Facebook page at 5:30pm. Eid is likely to be celebrated on either March 31 or April 1, depending on the sighting of the moon.

Case filings increase, so does backlog

Over 4.5m cases pending in courts, experts blame judge shortage

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

To this day, several high-profile criminal cases, like the BDR mutiny, Narayanganj seven-murder, and the killings of Bishwajit Das and Awami League lawmaker Ahsan Ullah Master, remain pending with the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court. Appeals against High Court verdicts in these cases have been awaiting hearings for seven to eight years. Additionally, 74 election petitions challenging the December 30, 2018, parliamentary election results – alleging widespread irregularities – have yet to be disposed of by the High Court. The backlog of cases continues to grow due to lengthy legal procedures, a shortage of judges, and overburdened courts. Lawyers’ lack of proactive efforts to expedite hearings and disposals further exacerbates the problem, according to



- RECOMMENDATIONS**
- Increase number of judges
 - Appoint more support staff
 - Reduce court vacations
 - Form special benches
 - Expedite police probes
 - Accelerate e-judiciary project

Supreme Court sources and legal experts. Supreme Court reports show that from October to December last year, the number of pending cases across all courts, including the Appellate and High Court Divisions, increased by 73,093. By December 31, the total number of pending cases stood at 45,16,603, including 31,606 in the Appellate Division, 5,89,651 in the High Court, and 38,95,832 in lower courts. This marks an increase from September 30, when the figures were 28,901, 5,77,280, and 38,37,329, respectively. The total backlog was 44,43,510 at that time, according to the SC reports. From October to December, a total of 2,74,749 cases were disposed of across all courts, while 3,84,074 cases were filed. The Appellate Division received 2,705 new cases and disposed of 486. The High

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Army personnel on guard near the Dhaka airport yesterday. With the Eid holiday around the corner, security has been heightened in the country.