



MY DHAKA

Fridays feel like a celebration in Dhaka

ASHIF AHMED RUDRO

When you are an adult and have to work every day, you get excited at the very possibility of a day off. Friday brings that blissful feeling that most people wait eagerly for, and it feels much stronger in Dhaka.

Friday feeling before Friday

The impending Friday vibe starts brewing from the afternoon of Thursday. By the time the offices close and people step out of work, you can tell Friday is coming from the look of the traffic.

A large number of people go out of Dhaka for the weekend. And it is evident by the overwhelming traffic on Thursday afternoon. People go to their office with a carry-on bag or a small backpack that they eagerly eye the whole day before finally leaving Dhaka at the end of their shift. Thursday has this suppressed festive feeling that can be seen on people's faces.

Even if people do not go outside of Dhaka for the weekend, the wait for

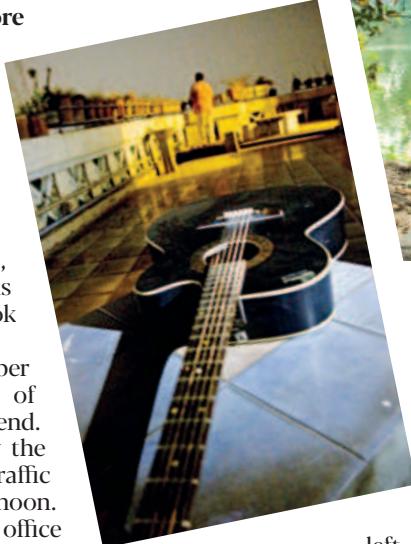


PHOTO: STAR

Friday is cherished fondly all the same. I have heard younger people discuss their morning motivations — "I count my days by how many days

left till Friday," one of them said, and it felt very real. Another said that the knowledge that 'Friday is tomorrow' is more relaxing than Friday itself.

The start of Friday
You can tell it's Friday by how slow the morning starts. Most shops do not open till 9:30 or 10 AM. Except the wet

market, which starts early but doesn't quite pick up that buzz till later. Even the tea stalls that open at dawn do not open early on Fridays. Everyone wants to get an extra hour of sleep on Friday mornings, something that is missed so dearly yet remains elusive the rest of the week.

By 10 AM, it starts feeling like Friday because of the overwhelming crowd at the markets. People have their chores saved up and Friday is the day to take care of them. The noise and excitement at the butcher's shop, along with the pushing and shoving at the fish stalls are trademark Friday traits.

Then comes the excited rush of

trying to finish your chores before the call for prayer at the mosque. The festive feeling of Friday is, in many ways, defined by the prayer.

Friday immersion

After the prayer, Friday becomes a little bit drowsy and recovers with a nap. By the time the sun begins to go down, Friday starts to put on its festive face. Street vendors begin setting up their lights and food carts, traffic begins to slow due to the increase in crowd, and the hangout places slowly start filling up.

People go to parks and other points of interests with their friends and family. Many go shopping. Many are happy sitting at the local tong with a cup of tea and their friends.

"I come here only on Fridays, all the way from Aftabnagar. The only purpose is to meet up with my friends and attend the weekly adda because otherwise it's tedious," said one Shihabur Rahman. "The rest of my friends reside around Mirpur, so I don't mind the little commute," he explained, stating how often he comes to Mirpur and sits by "Love Road" for their weekly hangouts.

These Friday activities are a little bit different for everyone. But the essence is more or less the same. It's either the saved-up chores, or hangouts, or just pamper themselves. Whatever it is, Fridays are festive all over the country, but in Dhaka, you can really feel the weekend vibe.

SUV falls from Ctg expressway, kills cyclist

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A man was killed yesterday after an SUV plunged off the Shaheed Wasim Akram Elevated Expressway and landed on him in Chattogram's Nimtala-Bishwa Road area.

The deceased was identified as Md Shafiq, an outsourced employee of the Chittagong Port Authority, according to Sub-inspector Asaduzzaman Rana of Bandar Police Station.

The accident occurred in front of Bandar Police Station around 4:30pm.



Assistant Commissioner (Port) Mahmudul Hasan of Chattogram Metropolitan Police said, "The SUV was heading towards Lalkhan Bazar carrying three men and a woman from Patenga. It fell off the elevated expressway at Nimtala point and landed on Shafiq, who was riding a bicycle at the time. He was declared dead after being taken to a nearby hospital."

He added that the spot where the vehicle went off the road has a bend and preliminary assumptions suggest the vehicle was being driven recklessly.

Locals and Fire Service personnel rescued the passengers, who were in critical condition, and took them to Chattogram Medical College Hospital, he said.

Ukraine receives 1,000 bodies from Russia

AFP, Kyiv

Ukraine said yesterday it had received from Russia the remains of 1,000 people that Moscow said were killed Ukrainian soldiers, in the latest repatriation between the two sides.

The exchange of prisoners of war and the remains of dead soldiers is one of the few remaining areas of cooperation between Kyiv and Moscow, which invaded Ukraine in February 2022.

Caretaker govt system revived

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Article 58B(1), inserted in 1996 and scrapped in 2011, states that once parliament is dissolved, whether at the end of its term or earlier, a non-party caretaker government shall assume charge.

Article 58C (2) requires the chief adviser and advisers of the caretaker government to be appointed within 15 days of that dissolution.

Reading out the judgment, Chief Justice Reafat Ahmed reiterated that the restored NPCG can "operate only prospectively".

Attorney General Md Asaduzzaman said the ruling's prospective effect means it will take hold after the dissolution of the next parliament. The full judgment may further elaborate on its role in supporting democracy, he added.

Lawyer Ruhul Quddus Kazal, who had moved review petitions on behalf of the BNP; Jamaat's review councillor Shishir Monir; and Sharif Bhuiyan, who represented Sushashoner Jonno Nagar (Sujan) Secretary Badul Alam Majumdar, also noted that the revived system will not apply to the upcoming 13th national election. Its use begins with the 14th parliamentary polls.

HISTORIC

"It feels like Eid," said senior lawyer Zainul Abedin, who had also represented the BNP. "Not only the BNP, but the whole nation is elated."

Shishir Monir hoped the ruling would usher in a democratic order "where free and fair elections will be the guiding principle".

Sharif Bhuiyan said the 2011 verdict had caused a "loss of public trust and reputation" for the Supreme Court, especially the Appellate Division. The new ruling, he added, completely rectifies that. "It is a truly historic day for Bangladesh."

Badul Alam Majumdar said the acceptance of the review petitions "opens the path toward free and fair elections". He urged all political actors to act responsibly so that "the way forward to fair elections will be

REVIEW

1999

SC lawyer, others file writ petition against the 13th amendment

2004

HC bench upholds the amendment, declaring it constitutional

2005

Petitioners appeal to the Appellate Division

2011

SC full bench (4:3) strikes down the 13th amendment

Aug, OCT 2024

BNP, Jamaat, 4 citizens file review petitions

Aug 27, 2025

SC allows BNP, four citizens to appeal

In 1996, the then BNP government formally embedded the system in the constitution, amid prolonged street agitation by the then opposition Awami League and its allies.

The arrangement gave a non-partisan administration 90 days to oversee general elections, with the immediate past chief justice the first choice as its chief adviser.

The Awami League government

abolished the system in 2011 through the 15th amendment, brushing aside objections by the opposition.

PATH TO REVIEW

The journey began in 1998 when SC lawyer M Salimullah (now deceased) and others filed a writ petition challenging the 13th amendment.

After hearings, the High Court in August 2004 upheld the amendment as valid, but allowed the petitioners to appeal directly to the Appellate Division.

They appealed in 2005, and on May 10, 2011, a seven-judge bench led by then Chief Justice ABM Khairul Haque struck down the amendment by majority view.

Weeks later, on June 30, 2011, parliament passed the 15th Amendment, abolishing the caretaker system entirely.

In the wake of the student-led uprising that toppled the Sheikh Hasina-led Awami League government on August 5, 2024, a series of review petitions challenging the 2011 ruling were filed.

The BNP, Jamaat-e-Islami, four citizens including Badul Alam Majumdar, freedom fighter Mofazzal Islam of Naogaon, and two rights organisations — the Centre for Law, Governance and Policy and the Human Rights Support Society — submitted the petitions.

The first was filed by the citizens on August 27 last year. BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir and Jamaat Secretary General Miah Golam Parwar followed with separate petitions on October 16 and 23.

Freedom fighter Mofazzal Islam also filed his own petition, arguing that the 2014, 2018, and 2024 elections proved that free and fair polls are impossible under partisan governments.

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Each of the ruling party and the main opposition would pick one candidate from the other's list, and both would jointly choose one from the second largest party's list.

At this stage, four of the panel's five votes would be enough to select a chief adviser from the shortlist.

How next caretaker govts will be formed

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The latest verdict, he added, opens the path to a free and fair electoral process.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

Lawyer Shishir Monir explained that under the 13th amendment, the most recently retired chief justice traditionally heads the caretaker government.

But the July charter, now awaiting a referendum, also contains provisions on the formation of the caretaker administration.

"If it is approved in the referendum and later adopted by the Constitutional Reform Council in the new parliament, the formation of the caretaker government could undergo fundamental changes," he said.

He noted that the option of appointing the immediate past chief justice as chief adviser would "remain an option, not the first", and would not create legal complications.

Under the July charter proposal, a five-member panel — the prime minister, the leader of the opposition, the Speaker, the deputy speaker (from the opposition), and a representative of the second largest opposition party — would select the chief adviser from a pool of nominees.

Parties represented in parliament, registered parties, and independents would each propose a name.

The panel would then review the list and choose one qualified citizen.

If this option fails, the ruling party and main opposition would each submit five names, while the second largest opposition party would submit two.

Each of the ruling party and the main opposition would pick one candidate from the other's list, and both would jointly choose one from the second largest party's list.

At this stage, four of the panel's five votes would be enough to select a chief adviser from the shortlist.

But over the years, the system became a flashpoint for political conflict.

In 1996, after sustained street protests led by the then opposition

SC secretariat, a step closer to reality

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the government's control."

Once this ordinance is fully implemented, the law ministry, and by extension, the government, will no longer have any control over lower court judges.

"But this ordinance is not becoming effective right away. The secretariat has to be established first and made functional. Once the secretariat is fully operational, the government — after consultations with the Supreme Court — will transfer the responsibilities of supervision, control, and discipline of subordinate court judges to the Supreme Court."

The law adviser did not specify exactly how long it might take for the ordinance to be enacted. "It will come into effect within a few months."

Once this ordinance is implemented, the financial independence of the judiciary will also be ensured. The chief justice will be able to approve project proposals worth up to Tk 50 crore. For proposals exceeding that

amount, approval must be obtained from ECNEC through the Planning Commission.

At the same time, all expenses of the judiciary will be charged to the Consolidated Fund, which is a protected state reserve used to cover the expenses of key officials and offices such as the president's office, the Election Commission, and the Comptroller and Auditor General.

In addition, no prior approval from the government will be required for reappropriating funds allocated for the judiciary.

Asked if deputing lower court judges to the law ministry or executive branch breaches judicial separation, the law adviser said various institutions need officers with judicial experience, and such judges do not perform judicial functions.

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Migrant Smuggling Prevention and Suppression Ordinance, 2025".

The "Telecommunications (Amendment) Ordinance, 2025" and the "Import Policy, 2025" were discussed at the meeting but did not receive approval.

The drafts of both documents have been sent back to the respective ministry for further review.

On the other hand, the draft "Land Use and Agricultural Land Protection Ordinance, 2025" received final approval.

The draft ordinance discourages the use of agricultural land — where two, three, or four crops are produced — for non-agricultural purposes.

It also puts emphasis on protecting land in environmentally sensitive areas such as water bodies, wetlands, hills, forests, the sea, and coastal regions.

In addition, converting agricultural land to non-agricultural use without approval has been defined as an offence under the draft.

Khalilur urges unity against threats

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cybersecurity, misinformation, and disinformation," Khalilur said, adding that in the same breath "and I look forward to CSC's actions in this regard".

He said, "... With growing digitalisation and technological developments, including artificial intelligence, the menace of cybercrime is affecting all our countries. Cybersecurity is thus a high priority in Bangladesh."

The national security adviser pledged Bangladesh's "readiness to work hand in hand to ensure a stable, secure, peaceful, and prosperous Indian Ocean Region and to confront our common challenges".

"We, therefore, continue to stand ready to find common grounds to address common issues based on mutual trust and openness."

Bangladesh, he said, has consistently condemned global terrorism and has



"zero-tolerance policy towards all forms of terrorism under any circumstance."

He noted Bangladesh's continued participation in CSC activities, reaffirming Dhaka's commitment to the principles of sovereignty, equality, territorial integrity, and non-interference enshrined in the CSC charter.

He underscored the Bangladesh's role in maritime safety and security, combating piracy, and organised maritime crimes, counterterrorism, and cybersecurity.

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