MY DHAKA

People who stay back in DHAKA ON EID

SABRIN ZAWAD RITU

PHOTO: STAR

Every festival in Dhaka feels vibrant and full of life. The city embraces every celebration with warmth and enthusiasm. But Eid is different. It is a festival that calls people to be with their families, friends, and loved ones.

Most people who are not originally from Dhaka usually leave the city during Eid to return to their hometowns or wherever their families live.

But there are also people who spend their first meal alone in a room on Eid, or maybe wish the families Eid Mubarak on video calls. Sometimes, reality makes it hard to celebrate Eid with loved ones.

When millions leave the capital, thousands remain behind.

"There's no one left in my village except that half-broken house. So, for the last few years, I haven't gone back home for Eid. I stay here, help around the neighbourhoods and earn some extra income," expressed Mobarok Hossain, a security guard from Farmgate.

There are actually so many people like Mobarok who have no one to celebrate the Eid with. So, they choose to stay back in the city. But is loneliness the only reason? For many, job security becomes more important than spending Eid with family.

"This is too much. But I have nothing to do. I cannot just quit my job and go home for Eid," stated Md Jamil Ahmed, a working professional, with sorrow. "People should get at least two days of leave during Eid. It's hard to spend Eid away from family."

Sometimes earning a living becomes the reason not to return home, sometimes it's the opposite -- insufficient income forces people to spend Eid alone in this city.

Nasima Akter, a house help from Mirpur, said, "It's so expensive to travel home and come back. Where would I get that much money?" She thinks that it's better to save the travel expenses and send that to the family for Eid instead.

Across the city, thousands share similar experiences every Eid.

Some people have to be in the city no matter what. Security forces, traffic police, doctors, bus drivers, rickshaw pullers -- they cannot just go home even though it's Eid.

Md Shahjahan Ali, a traffic police officer near Panthapath, remarked, "Last Eid, my daughter called me and asked when I would come." He paused and added, "It's probably the hardest part of staying back."

A rickshaw puller was sharing almost the same story. Md Miraj has two daughters and a wife in his hometown. He couldn't buy an Eid dress for his little girls, so he's not going back to his family on Eid out of shame.

Some students also spend Eid in their dormitories. Rejaul Haque, a university student, shared, "Exams are scheduled right after the Eid holidays, so I can't go home this time. I do feel a little low, but some of my friends and seniors will also be staying here. They always manage to make Eid feel warm and wholesome together."

He said that this'd be his second Eid away from home.

Stories like these reveal a side of Eid that rarely appears in glossy family photographs or social media posts. Behind the crowded journeys home are people quietly spending Eid in nearly empty flats, dorms rooms, and workplaces across Dhaka.

Their celebrations may be smaller, but they carry a different kind of meaning.

As evening falls on Eid day, the city slowly grows silent again. The streets are clear. The rush fades away. And in that unusual quiet, those who stay behind continue building their own version of Eid -- one shaped not by grand gatherings, but by resilience, duty and small acts of kindness.

Nine more killed in road accidents in three districts

Five die in Gopalganj alone

STAR REPORT

Nine people were killed and four others injured in road accidents in three districts in the last two days, according to reports from our correspondents.

In Gopalganj, five people were killed in a head-on collision between a passenger bus and a motorcycle in Gopalganj yesterday afternoon.

The identities of the deceased could not be confirmed immediately. At least 25 passengers were also injured in the incident, said Gopalganj Superintendent of Police Md Habibullah.

The accident took place around 12:00pm on the Dhaka-Khulna highway in Bedgram.

Quoting witnesses, police said a Dola Paribahan bus travelling from Dhaka to Pirojpur collided head-on with a speeding motorcycle coming from the opposite direction when it reached the area.

Following the collision, the bus lost control and overturned on the highway, while the motorcycle was mangled.

Four people, including the two motorcycle riders, died on the spot. The injured were taken to Gopalganj Medical College Hospital and Gopalganj General Hospital, where a 12-year-old child later died while undergoing treatment.

In Patuakhali, two motorcyclists were killed in a collision between a motorcycle and an auto-rickshaw in Patuakhali's Galachipa upazila yesterday morning. Two passengers of the auto-rickshaw were also injured in the accident.

The crash occurred around 10:30am in front of Grameen Bank on Government College Road, police said.

The deceased were identified as Tamim Howlader, 20, and Imran Hossain, 35.

In Faridpur, two motorcyclists were killed and two pillion riders injured in a head-on collision between two bikes in Bhanga upazila on Wednesday night.

The victims are Saiful Molla, 25, of Gangadardi area in Bhanga upazila, and Al Imran Sharif, 28, of Rupatali Housing area in Barishal Sadar upazila, said Bhanga Highway Police Station OC Md Helal Uddin.

Quoting locals, the OC said the crash took place around 10:30pm on the Dhaka-Barishal highway in Chumurdi area.

The injured were taken to Bhanga Upazila Health Complex.

UN warns of record heat through 2030

AFP *Geneva*

Global average temperatures are likely to continue at or near record levels this year and for the next four years afterwards, the United Nations warned yesterday.

The 11 hottest individual years ever recorded all happened from 2015 onwards and the UN's weather and climate agency said the trend was set to continue, with a new hottest-ever year "likely" before 2031.

There is a 75 percent chance that the 2026-2030 five-year mean temperature will surpass the key threshold of 1.5C above the 1850-1900 pre-industrial average, the World Meteorological Organization said.

Govt gunning for 6.5pc growth next year

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fiscal and monetary expansion will create demand.

"So how will inflation fall?"

Therefore, to meet the 7.5 percent target for the next fiscal year, productivity must increase significantly while maintaining the current policy stance.

"The current fiscal year's inflation target of 7 percent is impossible to achieve. As of April, inflation was above 9 percent. How will it fall below 8 percent by June?"

Electricity price adjustments will add about 1 percentage point to inflation directly and indirectly in the next fiscal year.

"However, this does not mean the adjustment is wrong -- prices had to be raised. Directionally, inflation is expected to rise compared to the current fiscal year. If it falls by chance, that would be different."

Inflation can only be brought down by maintaining a tight monetary policy stance -- that is, by not lowering policy rates -- and by fiscal consolidation, following a revenue-based expenditure policy, Hussain added.

On inflation control measures, the finance ministry said that due to Middle East instability, the current policy interest rate will be maintained until June.

However, from July, rates will gradually be reduced to encourage investment while controlling inflation.

Government spending will prioritise social and economic sector projects. During the cost-of-living crisis, targeted subsidies will be provided, along with ensuring a low-cost goods supply.

The Family and Farmers' card programmes will be expanded, market monitoring and price control strengthened, and import duties on essential goods reduced.

These measures will bring inflation down to less than 8 percent for the first time in four years in fiscal 2026-27 and 6.5 percent in the following year.

The finance ministry maintains that moderate growth is achievable even this fiscal year due to the government's business- and investment-friendly policies and regulatory measures led by its aim to build a trillion-dollar economy by 2034.

The government expects to surpass the \$600 billion-mark in its third year. The current size of the economy is less than \$500 billion.

Economic liberalisation, improvements in the ease of doing business, establishing discipline and good governance in the financial sector, increased food grain production, industrial growth, higher remittances and expanded import-export activities will power growth.

"It is expected that investor interest will increase under an elected government," the finance ministry official said.

No Eid for children with measles

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The country recorded five more deaths from measles-related complications in the 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday, taking the total death toll to 565.

Of them, 88 were confirmed measles deaths, while 477 people died with measles-like symptoms, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

A total of 54,182 patients have been admitted to hospitals with measles or measles-like symptoms since March 15, including 719 in the last 24 hours.

Of them, 50,926 have left hospitals, including 1,023 in the last 24 hours, meaning more than 3,200 patients -- mostly children -- were still undergoing treatment at hospitals yesterday.

Seven-month-old Rayan, from Shibchar upazila of Madaripur, is one of them. He was admitted to the DNCC hospital on Saturday with measles and several other complications.

However, he had been suffering from various ailments for around a month and spent over 20 days at three different hospitals before being brought to the DNCC hospital, Lipi Akhter said.

Lipi, along with her sister, took him to the hospitals, as Rayan's father is an expatriate living in Bahrain.

"Rayan's is doing better now, and the doctors recommended discharging him today [Thursday]. Worried he might get sick again when we left, we stayed on for an extra day. We will go home tomorrow [Friday]," she said.

"If my child fully recovers, that will bring me the real joy of Eid," she added.

Eighteen-month-old Sara Moni was admitted to the hospital on Tuesday with measles and several other complications. Earlier, she had been taken to Bangladesh Shishu Hospital and Institute, where doctors advised her family to continue treatment at home.

However, as her condition deteriorated, she was taken to the DNCC hospital on Tuesday, her mother Mansura Begum said.

"We had planned to go to our village home in Nazirpur of Pirojpur for Eid, but that was not possible because of my younger daughter's illness," she said.

"My elder daughter, who is eight years old, cried in the morning because we could not go home."

Rayan and Sara Moni are among the 67 measles patients -- all children -- receiving treatment on the first floor of the hospital.

More than 300 patients were undergoing treatment at the hospital, with 29 new patients admitted between yesterday morning and 5:30pm, according to hospital staff.

With the country passing through an unprecedented measles outbreak in recent memory, the hospital has treated over 6,000 measles patients so far and recorded 38 deaths from measles and measles-like symptoms, an official of the hospital said.

Health officials and experts said the infection rate is declining as more than 1.84 crore children have already been brought under vaccination coverage. However, they warned that the number of deaths may continue for several more days as many children have already been hospitalised.

Govt committee begins probe

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Several victim families had accused the hospital authorities of mismanagement that led to the deaths.

The health ministry on Wednesday formed a three-member probe committee led by Mohsin and asked them to submit a report within three days.

Health Ministry and DGHS sources said the committee brought a senior paediatrician from Bangladesh Shishu Hospital and Institute and several engineers from the Public Works Department to Ad-Din Hospital yesterday.

The investigation has faced obstacles, as neither post-mortem examinations nor inquest reports were conducted before the children's bodies were handed over to their families, officials said.

Health officials and hospital authorities on Wednesday said there were six newborns and their mothers in the post-operative room. There were five other mothers in the room whose babies had already been admitted to the NICU.

Speaking to reporters at the hospital on that day, Prof Zahid said one of the guardians in the post-operative room complained around 2:00am that the babies were feeling cold.

"Following the complaint, the air conditioning system in the room was reportedly shut down for around an hour.... The condition of one of the newborns deteriorated around 4:00am, and the child was shifted to the NICU. About half an hour later, the baby was returned to the post-operative room after showing signs of improvement."

He added that around 6:00am, a nurse found one of the babies motionless. "The child was then taken to the NICU. Then, as the condition of the other newborns worsened, all of them were shifted there."

The six infants died within one to two hours, Prof Zahid had said.

Cattle oversupply

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failed to attract buyers.

According to the Department of Livestock Services, the country had 1.23 crore sacrificial animals against an estimated demand of 1.01 crore, including around 57 lakh cattle and buffaloes and 66 lakh goats and sheep.

Traders said significantly more cattle had arrived this year compared to previous years. As buyers realised the markets were flooded with cattle, many delayed purchases until late at night and pressured traders into accepting lower prices.

According to traders, offers that initially stood at Tk 80,000 or Tk 90,000 later dropped to Tk 50,000 or even Tk 40,000.

"People cried throughout the night," one trader said. "It became impossible even to take the cattle back home."

Habibur claimed around 50 cattle had already been sacrificed near the Kachukhet market by butchers and small buyers taking advantage of falling prices.

Among them was Mohammad Aslam, who bought several large cows after suffering heavy losses in the cattle trade. He said he lost around Tk 1.70 lakh after selling seven cows below expected prices.

Realising many unsold cattle were being returned, he bought five more cows early in the morning for around Tk 1.20 lakh each. By afternoon, he had sacrificed all five cattle and was selling beef at Tk 800 per kg.

He said the total production cost was around Tk 700 per kg, allowing him to earn nearly Tk 100 profit per kg and potentially recover around Tk 2 lakh in losses.

A trader from Keraniganj said he had bought a cow two months ago for Tk 1.15 lakh and spent additional money on feed and maintenance.

He hoped to sell it for at least Tk 1.40 lakh to make a modest profit. However, the highest offer he received was Tk 1.35 lakh before prices collapsed further overnight.

Similar conditions were reported at Gabtoli and other major cattle markets in Dhaka, where thousands of cattle were either sold at low prices or taken back overnight.

Meanwhile, the collapse in cattle prices created opportunities for lower-income groups.

At Kachukhet market, a group of 43 pickup drivers and helpers jointly bought two cattle for Tk 1.95 lakh.

The group sacrificed the cattle themselves near the market after failing to find butchers quickly enough. The meat was later divided among the participants, with each person receiving around seven kg.

Group member Mohammad Yusuf said the meat cost them around Tk 710 per kg, much lower than prevailing market prices.

"We usually cannot afford to perform Qurbani," he said. "This year, because cattle became so cheap, we were able to buy cows together and perform Qurbani ourselves."

Iran, US reach tentative deal

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defensive and intended to maintain the ceasefire," a US official, who requested anonymity to speak candidly about military operations, told Reuters earlier.

The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps said it had targeted the US base responsible for an early-morning attack near Bandar Abbas airport and that any repeat would lead to a "more decisive response", Tasnim news agency reported.

Kuwait condemned the attack and demanded that Iran immediately halt what it called a serious escalation.

The violence, the second flare-up this week, coincided with the Muslim holiday of Eid al-Azha celebrated across the region, where multiple countries have been caught up in the conflict triggered by US and Israeli attacks on Iran on February 28.

Mediator Pakistan said its foreign minister, Ishaq Dar, would meet US Secretary of State Marco Rubio in Washington on Friday, although the significance of his visit was unclear.

In Lebanon, which Iran says must be part of any overall peace deal, Israel said it had begun striking infrastructure of Iran-backed Hezbollah militants in the southern city of Tyre and had carried out a strike in the capital Beirut.