

EID-UL-AZHA IN DHAKA

What we eat, how we celebrate and what we are losing

RBR

Dhaka has two sides. New Dhaka is easy to spot with its branded cafés, high-rise malls, glass towers, food courts, and co-working spaces – a city that looks like it is racing forward. Pura Dhaka, by contrast, seems like a place that refused to move, with narrow lanes, old buildings, crowded markets, and lifestyle outsiders often misread.

The stereotype, familiar from cinema and drama, paints the people of Pura Dhaka as uneducated and content to live off inherited wealth. That image is outdated. Parents in Pura Dhaka today are deeply invested in their children's education and careers, business is respected alongside traditional jobs, and the community has changed dramatically.

Eid ul-Azha was not always celebrated with the scale and spectacle we see in Bangladesh today. As Professor Muntasir Mamun observed



of giving, a philosophy that continues to echo through the old city's courtyards and lanes.

The morning of Eid begins with prayer, and my father always insisted the sacrifice follow immediately. Women in Pura Dhaka attend prayers in mosques or open fields, and if you have never prayed in an open field, you have not fully felt the morning begin. After prayer, kitchens fill with korma and kosha mangsho, recipes carried by memory rather than books.

Our 150-year-old house courtyard becomes the centre of Eid. Packing, weighing, sealing, and labelling bags of meat – each marked with a name and weight – take up the space. Quantity varies by family size, but quality is identical: no special cuts for relatives, no poor cuts for the needy. Deliveries criss-cross the city, workers receive their share, relatives exchange cuts, and the cycle continues as it always has.

In New Dhaka, the ritual of sacrifice has become more practical than communal. Flatmates or colleagues often pool money to buy a cow, divide the portions among themselves, and let the sense of community end there. Families mark the day with rooftop barbecues or home-cooked meals – solutions that make sense for those whose roots lie in distant villages and who cannot easily transport or preserve large quantities of meat. Yet the circle of giving is smaller, and the spirit of collective responsibility is largely absent.

Pura Dhaka, however, still holds on to something vital. The food remains as rich and varied as ever – kofta in ten different styles, nihari simmered through the night, tili bhuna, boti kabab, and bakarkhani stuffed with shredded meat. More than dishes, they are reminders of a tradition where Eid is not confined to the household but belongs to the entire community.

My clearest memory goes back to 2004–05, when I was in Class 1. My cousin Xia Hawk – then carefree and funny – made even a trip

to the cattle market feel like an adventure. We spent twelve hours there, shoes ruined but spirits high, moving from row to row until we finally chose our cow and brought it home on a pickup truck through the lanes of Pura Dhaka.

At home, we decorated it with bells, kept it cool with a fan, and cared for it like family. My father checked on it at night, neighbours came to see, and many families even turned their interest into small cattle farming. Saying goodbye was never easy, but tradition was firm: on Eid morning, the first meat must come from your own sacrifice.

In Pura Dhaka, generosity extends far beyond the family. The elakabashi – shopkeepers, hawkers, and workers – are the first to receive their share, an expectation so ingrained it hardly needs to be spoken. After them come labourers, construction workers, and rickshaw pullers, many of whom remain in the city during Eid because they know the old neighbourhoods will give. This trust has been built over generations, woven into the rhythm of the community.

In New Dhaka, the scene is markedly different. Strangers gather under apartment gates without any system, crowds swell, arguments flare, and distribution quickly turns chaotic. Farms deliver cattle or sacrificial meat – sometimes the next day or even later – directly to the gates, stripping away the rituals of muddy shoes, long market days, and late-night polao shared with cousins and grandparents. Eid here often concludes virtually, celebrated on social media, detached from the communal spirit and traditions that once defined it.

Eid in old Dhaka is never private. The celebration belongs to the whole community. In New Dhaka, Eid ends when you close your door. In Pura Dhaka, it ends when the last labelled bag is delivered. Neighbourly participation is not optional – it is expected.



PHOTO: STAR

in Bangladesh-er Utsab (1994), the widespread, large-scale observance of the festival in this region is a relatively recent phenomenon, dating back only forty to fifty years.

Before the twentieth century, goats were the more common choice for sacrifice, which is why the festival is still affectionately called Bakri Eid in Pura Dhaka. Only after Partition did the practice of cow sacrifice gradually expand, shaping the festival into the form we now recognise.

Yet amid this evolution, the Mughal families of Pura Dhaka maintained their own distinctive tradition. Their celebrations were deliberate and community-driven, anchored not in grandeur or display but in generosity and collective responsibility. For them, Eid was less about spectacle and more about the spirit

Govt eyes \$51b reserves in FY27

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foreign currency reserves may gradually increase in the future,” said a budget projection report of the finance ministry.

However, risks remain.

If the ongoing Middle East crisis prolongs, the resulting energy security crisis could increase import costs, putting pressure on reserves, the report said.

The import growth target for fiscal 2026-27 has been set at 8.8 percent, export at 8 percent and remittance growth at 15 percent.

In the first nine months of the fiscal year, an average of 89,870 workers went abroad each month,

compared to 85,340 workers a year earlier.

However, in February and March, overseas worker migration slowed somewhat. War-related situations may also pose challenges for remittance inflows.

The current encouraging remittance growth, improvements in the balance of payments, exchange rate stability, positive discussions with development partners, and continued budget support will boost reserves, said a finance ministry official on the condition of anonymity.

The latest discussions with the IMF are progressing positively.

The government and IMF have agreed to exit the old \$5.5 billion programme and adopt a new programme worth \$5.6 billion.

“This positive progress means that in the next fiscal year, Bangladesh could receive more than \$1 billion in budget support from the IMF. Additionally, the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, and other development partners may provide \$2.3 billion in budget support,” the official said.

Although this will increase interest payment expenses and future debt burdens, it will directly contribute to reserve growth, he added.

Border killings, irregular migrants to top the agenda

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Quoting Indian police, AFP on May 29 reported that hundreds of alleged Bangladeshis had gathered over the previous two days at Hakimpur in India's West Bengal, hoping to cross the border as authorities tightened enforcement under a new state government.

It was part of the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) election campaign to “detect, delete and deport” illegal migrants in Assam and West Bengal. BJP won in both states.

The Hindustan Times on May 29 reported that at least 386 undocumented immigrants held across West Bengal over the last week had been sent to 13 holding centres in eight bordering districts of the state.

In a diplomatic note to Bangladesh on April 8, India's Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said it had not received an “actionable response” from Bangladesh regarding the repatriation of 2,868 suspected illegal Bangladeshi migrants since

September 2020.

To discuss the issue, Bangladesh High Commissioner Riaz Hamidullah came to Dhaka on May 11.

On May 12, Dhaka also sent a diplomatic note to New Delhi, clarifying a number of issues raised by the MEA on the repatriation of alleged irregular Bangladeshis.

A foreign ministry official said that over the years many Bangladeshis had been repatriated after nationality verification.

“Besides, there are issues with the Indian side as well, including dilly-dallying in providing consular access to the jails, legal procedures, and mismatches in the list of alleged irregular migrants. So, blaming Bangladesh alone is not helpful,” he added.

Last year, there were numerous cases of push-ins of so-called irregular Bangladeshis. However, some of them were later identified as Indian and Myanmar nationals.

“We would definitely want India

to maintain due procedures in repatriation, if there are irregular Bangladeshis in India,” a BGB official told this correspondent yesterday.

Border killings also remain a matter of serious concern for Bangladesh.

“We will strongly raise the issue of border killings,” the BGB official said.

According to rights organisation Ain O Salish Kendra, at least six Bangladeshis have been killed or injured in BSF firing or torture along the border between January and May 9, 2026.

It says 594 Bangladeshis were killed by BSF between 2009 and 2023.

According to foreign ministry and BGB officials, the meeting will also discuss preventing the smuggling of drugs, arms, and ammunition; preventing unauthorised infrastructure construction along the border; preserving border rivers; and ensuring Bangladesh receives its fair share of water, among others.

Myanmar leader arrives in India to strengthen ties

AFP, New Delhi

Myanmar President Min Aung Hlaing arrived in neighbouring India yesterday, in his first trip abroad since becoming civilian leader, for talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The former military chief will also hold talks with business representatives during his five-day visit, according to both governments.

“A warm welcome,” India's foreign ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said in a statement, posting pictures on social media of Min Aung Hlaing walking down a red carpet in India's eastern Bihar state.

Min Aung Hlaing will start his trip with a visit to the Buddhist pilgrimage site of Bodhi Gaya – where believers say that the Buddha attained enlightenment.

“His visit reflects the strong spiritual, historical and people-to-people ties that bind our two countries and the depth of our ongoing cooperation,” Jaiswal said.

He will meet Prime Minister Modi and President Droupadi Murmu on Monday in New Delhi, India's foreign ministry said, before travelling to the financial hub Mumbai.

“Both leaders will discuss how to strengthen ties further,” Jaiswal told reporters in New Delhi on Friday.

“There is also an important business component of the visit as to how two countries can strengthen their economic ties as well.”

Bilateral trade was \$1.95 billion in 2025-2026, according to New Delhi.

Min Aung Hlaing was sworn in as Myanmar's president in April, continuing his rule from a civilian post five years after snatching power in a military coup.

His swearing-in ceremony was attended by representatives from the neighbouring nations of China, India and Thailand as well as 20 other countries, according to parliamentary officials.

US probes Vietnam's intellectual property practices

REUTERS

The Trump administration on Friday opened an unfair trade practices investigation into Vietnam's intellectual property protection policies and enforcement that may lead to new tariffs or other trade measures.

Vietnam was identified as a priority country by the U.S. Trade Representative's office on April 30 “due to its persistent failure to resolve long-standing concerns about IP protection and enforcement,” the USTR said.

Vietnam's government did not immediately comment. It has urged the U.S. to provide “an objective and balanced assessment of Vietnam's efforts and achievements” on IP protection.

During President Donald Trump's first term in office, USTR used a Section 301 investigation into China's IP-misappropriation and technology-transfer practices to impose sweeping tariffs of 25% on hundreds of billions of dollars' worth of annual Chinese imports.

Trade Representative Jamieson Greer said in a statement that while Vietnam has taken some steps in recent years to address IP concerns, infringement “continues to impair the competitive position of U.S. innovators and creators.”

“We need to see Vietnam resolve these long-standing concerns,

including on a range of IP enforcement issues, in a manner that is sustained and that deters future IP infringements,” Greer said.

Leif Schneider, head of international law firm Luther in Vietnam, said Vietnam “has made substantial progress in modernizing its regulatory IP framework” over the past decade.

“The difficulty, however, has always been less about legislation and more about implementation. Administrative enforcement remains uneven, penalties often lack deterrent effect, and online infringement continues to outpace regulatory capacity,” Schneider said.

Counterfeits were widely available this week in a large wholesale market in Hanoi, and streaming websites operated from Vietnam continued to offer pirated content despite a government crackdown launched early this month, Reuters reported.

Vietnamese authorities conducted a similar crackdown last year after the Trump administration unveiled tariffs of 46% on imports from Vietnam, which have since been reduced to 10%. Vietnam has been in negotiations with Washington, its largest export market, for a trade agreement for the past year.

USTR said in a Federal Register notice that it has opened a docket for public comments on the matter through July 2.

Stand beside the helpless

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ground in Khilgaon, the prime minister asked the city dwellers to come forward to make Dhaka city free from pollution and waste.

“...we who live in Dhaka, we who are citizens of Bangladesh, this is our country, this is our city. This must be understood,” he added.

“Of course, the city corporations will do their work. The cleaning workers of the city corporations are working; they are cleaning. But we all have a responsibility to reduce the amount of garbage we produce. Then the city will remain as clean as possible,” Tarique said.

Stressing the importance of keeping Dhaka clean, the premier said, “If this city is clean, the environment will be better for us, just as it will be easier for you to walk. Similarly, it will be easier for the cleaning workers to keep the city cleaner.”

“Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman showed us how we will build the country through works. We, as a political party, will try from our position; the government will try to increase the number of affluent people by adopting various plans and programmes, create employment, and try to solve this problem through various programmes,” he said.

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, BNP Standing Committee member Salahuddin Ahmed, Senior Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi, Joint Secretary General Habib-Un-Nabi Khan Sohel, Dhaka South city Convener Rafiqul Alam Majnu, Dhaka North Convener Aminul Haque, Dhaka South city corporation Administrator Abdus Salam, and Dhaka North City Corporation Administrator Md Safiqul Islam Khan were present, among others.

Mideast peace deal remains elusive

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mediated by Pakistan, were thrown into question this week by US strikes on the southern Iranian port of Bandar Abbas countered by retaliatory fire from Iran.

Nevertheless diplomacy continued including in a parallel process to stop fighting in Lebanon, which Iran has insisted is included in any formal end to the war and where Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced Israeli forces had advanced further even as military delegations from both nations met at the Pentagon in Washington.

Trump's priorities in any deal included Iran agreeing to never developing nuclear weapons and the re-opening of the blockaded Strait of Hormuz maritime route, he said in a social media post in which he also announced the Situation Room meeting.

“President Trump will only make a deal that is good for America and satisfies his red lines,” a White House official told AFP after the meeting.

“Iran can never possess a nuclear weapon,” the official added.

Iranian foreign ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei pushed back on Trump's conditions, telling state media that the Islamic republic “said goodbye to the language of ‘must’ 47 years ago.”

Exchanges of messages were continuing, he added, but “no final agreement has been reached yet.”

In a phone call with the Emir of Qatar, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said Iran was ready to

achieve a “dignified framework” to end the war, according to state news agency IRNA.

In his post, Trump said Tehran would remove mines from the Strait of Hormuz and end its closure of the waterway with “no tolls,” while the US would lift its parallel blockade of Iranian ports.

The two countries would also coordinate on removing and destroying Iran's enriched uranium, he said, adding that “no money will be exchanged, until further notice.”

Iran's Fars news agency, however, cited sources as saying Tehran was demanding “the immediate release of \$12 billion in frozen Iranian assets” before moving to the next phase of negotiations.

On the toll-free reopening of Hormuz, the sources said “no such clause appears in the text of the agreement,” while Trump's comment on destroying Iran's nuclear material “is fundamentally baseless.”

On the war's other main front in Lebanon, heavy fighting continued.

Netanyahu announced Friday that Israeli forces had advanced beyond a river that runs around 30 kilometres north of the Lebanon-Israel frontier.

Hezbollah also said its forces launched attacks on northern Israel as well as Israeli troops trying to advance near the medieval Beaufort fortress, also known as Qalaat al-Chakif, a site Israel's forces had used as a base during their two-decade occupation of southern Lebanon ending in 2000.

8 more die

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Since March 15, a total of 55,705 patients with measles-like symptoms have been admitted to hospitals. During the same period, 52,050 patients recovered and were discharged from hospitals, while many others, mostly children, are still undergoing treatment.

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 deaths may continue for several more days as many children are already hospitalised.