



The quiet tenderness of EID IN A RESTLESS DHAKA

RBR

Now that the Eid holidays are over and everyday routines -- schools, offices, and the familiar rhythm -- have begun, we are almost reluctantly rescheduling our lazy holiday hours.

Eid in Dhaka is more than feasts and firm; it is intimate, textured, and rooted in the city's pulse. A little careless about urban hygiene, often falling victim to gluttony, yet we Dhakaites -- those who could not perform Hajj this year -- stay glued to our telly, repeating the chants of Hajj, the Talbiyah: "Here I am, O Allah, here I am..."

In a hypnotic trance, hoping our piety reaches Allah, I am humbled, tears rolling down my face. What I take from these rituals is how the core spiritual message of Qurbani



PHOTO: STAR



shapes our conscience. The story of Prophet Ibrahim's (AS) test of devotion is the essence of Eid-ul-Azha, lying beautifully in obedience to Allah.

I am grateful that every Qurbani Eid reminds me mercy in Islam is not optional -- it is commanded. Cleanliness is half of faith, and it relies on collective civic responsibility, because cleanliness is not merely municipal -- it is deeply Islamic. Sacrifice itself equates to submission. Our Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) taught that compassion is a duty for ordinary

mortals. Eid-ul-Azha is both a civic test and a spiritual reminder.

I do not want to dwell on the Uttara metro station cattle debacle or how the city reeled from the aftermath of Eid-ul-Azha -- the massive waste accumulation, putrid odours, blocked drains exposing mismanagement. Despite ambitious cleanup targets, we must remember that as residents of this beautiful city we too should have taken part in the municipal drive to restore urban hygiene.

My confession: I too was not part of

this drive. I did not help others, except for cleaning my garage and drains. I lacked the neighbourly courtesy to gather my neighbours and at least clean our lane. So, I am no messiah either -- just a perfect example of big talks and armchair journalism.

But in my defence, I can say that I went to Old Town in search of a special sweet with my friend. Yes, we are empty-nesters, bored, and we love reckless, random fun. The roads were free. Between bites of soft roshogollas or a slice of mango cheesecake, the summer afternoon whispered the joy of sharing.

I slipped into a tucked-away vegetarian restaurant in Old Dhaka for a cup of frothy milk tea and crisp luchi with aloo daam. It proves that fun doesn't need meat to feel fulfilled. Lovers glide into rickshaws at dusk, city lights flickering past as they head towards cafés. The evening hums with soft music and the laughter of friends. These are the tender gestures of Eid: a ride, a song, a shared plate, and the quiet promise that celebration lives in the small, sweet moments.

Amid religious bindings and social obligations, Eid in Dhaka is always a curated itinerary of tenderness.

Tk 300 SIM tax may be scrapped

MD ASADUZ ZAMAN and MAHMUDUL HASAN

The government is likely to scrap taxes on new SIM cards and SIM replacements entirely in the upcoming budget, a move aimed at making mobile services more affordable for low-income people who do not currently own a handset, according to finance ministry officials.

They say this would also allow telecom operators to redirect funds now used to subsidise SIM sales towards expanding their networks.

At present, a Tk 300 tax is imposed on both new SIM cards and SIM replacements.

Officials said the proposal is part of a broader government effort to reduce costs for consumers and remove barriers to digital inclusion, particularly for low-income households and rural communities that remain outside formal connectivity.

"We are working on it [SIM tax], which is currently under consideration," said a senior finance ministry official, adding that the decision would be finalised after the ministry approves the budget summary.

Finance Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury is expected to place the proposal before parliament on June 11.

The proposal to withdraw SIM tax gathered momentum after Prime Minister Tarique Rahman gave his in-principle approval on May 14 after a high-level meeting at the Secretariat.

According to National Board of Revenue (NBR) sources, the board received the proposal from the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) last month.

Shahed Alam, chief corporate and regulatory officer of Robi Axiata PLC, welcomed the proposal, saying the levy has become a major barrier to digital inclusion.

"A reduction in the SIM tax would eventually lower the cost of entry into mobile services and encourage wider adoption, especially among low-income and first-time users," he said.

"Reducing the SIM tax could help bring millions more people online, expanding access to education, healthcare, financial services, employment opportunities, and government services, while supporting the country's broader digital transformation agenda," Alam added.

The Association of Mobile Telecom Operators of Bangladesh (AMTOB) has long been lobbying for the withdrawal of the tax, sending multiple letters to both the BTRC and the NBR over the years.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 2

Islami Bank plunges into fresh chaos

FROM PAGE 1

Law enforcement agencies attacked a peaceful human chain, injuring more than 100 protesters injured, according to the Conscious Customers' Forum.

The unrest eventually spread into the bank itself, halting customer transactions on the first working day after the Eid holidays.

The protests thwarted the scheduled board meeting to formally introduce the new chairman, who was appointed on the eve of the weeklong Eid-ul-Azha holiday starting on May 25 and hours after M Zubaidur Rahman was asked to resign.

The police and Detective Branch (DB) officials were pressuring the acting managing director, Md Altaf Hossain, to hold the board meeting virtually so that the former MD's resignation could be accepted, according to protesters.

This correspondent observed two senior police officers inside Altaf's office. Altaf, however, denies any allegation of pressure exerted on him.

Later, the bank sought the BB's approval to hold the meeting virtually.

Five board members attended the virtual meeting, which was presided over by the new chairman.

At the meeting, the board decided to accept Omar Faruk's resignation and continue the operations under

Altaf's leadership, BB Spokesman Arief Hossain Khan told The Daily Star.

Around noon, Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) spokesperson Deputy Commissioner (Media) NM Nasiruddin told The Daily Star that police had repeatedly requested the demonstrators to clear the area, as it is a busy commercial zone and their presence could disrupt business activities.

The demonstrators behaved aggressively towards the police. As they refused to leave, police used water cannons and sound grenades to disperse them, he said.

Amid the protest, BB Spokesman Khan told journalists that no banking decision would be determined by street protests, stressing that the central bank would act strictly in accordance with the law and institutional interests, free from any form of pressure or emotion.

All decisions would be made through established legal and regulatory processes, he said.

Meanwhile, following yesterday's police action, the protesters also demanded the resignation of the central bank governor.

The resignation of Islami Bank's chairman and MD is an unlawful interference by the government, said

Nur Nabi Manik, president of the Islami Bank Affected Customers' Coordination Council.

Shareholders and customers immediately demanded the cancellation of Khurshid's appointment, he said, while calling the new Islami Bank chairman an associate of S Alam Group.

Manik also called for Omar Faruk's reinstatement as the MD.

However, BB ignored the customers' demands and continued efforts to facilitate the return of individuals linked to the S Alam Group to Islami Bank, he said.

The group has announced a human chain programme today in front of Islami Bank branches all over the country.

The central bank remains defiant. The BB spokesman stressed the governor's firm stance against political interference in the central bank and commercial banks.

Bank officials have been encouraged to report any political pressure directly to the governor, who has pledged to personally address such issues if necessary.

BB further warned against associating any bank with a particular political party, saying that such identification poses a serious threat to a bank's long-term sustainability.

Russian strikes kill one, injure two dozen in Ukraine

AFP, Kyiv

Russian drones killed one person and wounded two dozen others in cities across Ukraine, local authorities announced yesterday, as Kyiv and Moscow step up long-range strikes with peace talks stalling.

One person was killed in the southern Ukrainian city of Kherson and eight people were wounded in the northern town of Chernigiv, where power was cut to 10,000 people, authorities said.

Emergency services published images from Chernigiv showing teams of firefighters dousing a large blaze in the middle of the night following the attacks.

The Ukrainian air force said Russian forces had launched 265 combat drones in the barrage, and that its air defence units had downed 228 of the unmanned aerial vehicles.

Seven people were wounded in Russian strikes in the Black Sea port city of Odesa, four more in the central city of Kharkiv, one in the southern city of Zaporizhzhia and at least two more were hurt in Kherson.

Moscow launches attacks almost nightly on Ukraine, which has stepped up its retaliatory strikes in recent months, mainly targeting Russian energy infrastructure.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine launched in February 2022 has become the bloodiest conflict in Europe since World War II, killing hundreds of thousands of people and displacing millions.

BGB foils BSF push-in attempt

FROM PAGE 1

Meanwhile, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shama Obaed has said that Bangladesh would strongly resist any attempts by India to push in unverified Bangladeshi nationals.

"The BGB has firmly resisted three to four push-in attempts, and they will continue to do so whenever such attempts are made," she told reporters at the foreign ministry yesterday, reports our diplomatic correspondent.

The so-called irregular Bangladeshi migrants became an issue in the run-up to elections in West Bengal and Assam.

Indian media last week 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.

AFP on May 29 reported it was part of the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) election campaign to "detect, delete and deport" illegal migrants in Assam and West Bengal. The BJP won in both states.

Besides, the Indian Ministry of External Affairs recently wrote a diplomatic note alleging that it had not received an "actionable response" from Bangladesh regarding the repatriation of 2,868 suspected illegal Bangladeshi migrants since September 2020.

Speaking on the matter, foreign ministry officials said Bangladesh has repatriated many Bangladeshis over the years and that there are issues with the Indian side as well in terms of having consular access, legal procedures and mismatches of names in the list of alleged Bangladeshis.

Dhaka has already responded in detail in diplomatic letters -- one on May 12 and the other on May 27, they said.

Shama Obaed said push-ins go against the international laws as well as the India-Bangladesh treaty on border management.

"We will in no way accept push-ins of people."

She mentioned that Indian authorities, after the West Bengal election, told Bangladesh they would not carry out any more push-ins.

"We expect the Indian government to play a positive role, as it is speaking of a paradigm shift in the relationship. If not, we will discuss it at a political and diplomatic level and address them."

All these issues will be discussed at the director-level meeting between BGB and BSF scheduled to be held in New Delhi on June 8-11, according to the state minister.

Profit symbol now fighting for breath

FROM PAGE 1

At the end of 2025, Islami Bank's total loans stood at Tk 186,097 crore, while bad loans amounted to Tk 90,413 crore.

The bank's required provisioning stood at Tk 92,537 crore, against which the bank had provided only Tk 7,922 crore.

As a result, there remained a total provisioning shortfall of Tk 84,615 crore for investments and other assets.

The non-recognition of the shortfall in provisions had consequential impacts such as the overstatement of assets, net profit and equity, and understatement of liabilities.

However, Bangladesh Bank granted permission to the bank to finalise its financial statements

provided by the bank, multiple exposures, including those to S Alam Group, were found to have exceeded the regulatory thresholds significantly.

The outstanding loans of four companies under the S Alam Group stand at above Tk 40,500 crore, according to the bank's financial statements.

The worst of all, there is no sign of improvement in the bank's health so far.

Despite the central bank's policy support, the bank incurred a loss of Tk 288 crore in the first three months of 2026. A year earlier, it logged in a profit of Tk 29 crore.

Its lone positive indicator is deposits, which have kept the bank alive so far. In the last three months, its deposits rose by Tk 4,057 crore.

Whether Islami Bank can reclaim its former stature will depend largely on its ability to recover bad loans, restore capital adequacy, strengthen governance, and, above all, preserve the confidence of millions of depositors who remain its last and strongest line of defence.

for 2025 without incorporating the Tk 84,615 crore adjustment for provisioning due to the bank's insufficient profit.

The situation is so bad that its latest auditor commented that "the going concern assumption of the bank is dependent on the ongoing policy support of Bangladesh Bank", meaning the bank would collapse without the central bank's policy support.

To fulfil the Basel III requirement, the regulatory capital shortfall of the bank would have been Tk 93,960 crore considering its defaulted loans.

As per BB's order, the bank's total exposure to a single borrower or group is restricted to 25 percent of its capital.

However, based on information

Although depositors are still getting back their deposits from the bank, the gains of its general shareholders have taken a hit.

Once, the bank paid dividends of 25 to 35 percent, but these dropped to zero over the last two years, and there is no hope of receiving anything in the near future.

The contrast is stark. A bank that once symbolised stability, profitability and prudent banking now finds itself battling for survival.

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Tribunal frames charges

FROM PAGE 1

Standing in the dock, he shouted at lawyers: "I did not commit the rape; I only dismembered the body. Dollar committed the rape. I have sinned, so punish me for that sin."

He further claimed Dollar had promised Tk 2 lakh if he brought the girl to him, but police stopped him from speaking further. He also insisted his wife was innocent.

Ramisa's father, Abdul Hannan Mollah, told The Daily Star: "The accused has come up with the name Dollar to delay the trial. We want his highest punishment through the quickest trial."

The judge fixed today for the start of trial, with Ramisa's father scheduled to testify first.

On May 24, SI Ohiduzzaman submitted the charge sheet to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, accusing Sohel of rape, murder and destruction of evidence, and Swapna of destroying evidence and giving false information.

The case was later transferred to the Children Violence Suppression Tribunal.

Ramisa, a second grade student of Popular Model High School, was found beheaded on May 19 in the home of neighbours Sohel and Swapna.

Her father filed a case the next day against the couple and an unidentified person. Investigators said Sohel lured Ramisa into his room, raped her, then slit her throat and attempted to dismember the body.

Now DGHS opens probe into Ad-din

FROM PAGE 1

and therefore we should conduct our own investigation," Prof Zahid Raihan, DGHS additional director general (administration), told The Daily Star.

The newborns, aged between one and four days, died within hours of each other from 6:00am on Wednesday at the hospital in Dhaka's Moghbazar.

Two were brought dead to the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) from the post-operative delivery room, while four died under treatment at the NICU, according to hospital authorities.

The exact cause of death has not yet been confirmed. However, DGHS officials and family members alleged that lapses in management and ventilation in the post-operative room may have contributed to the deaths.

On the day of the incident, the health ministry formed a separate three-member probe committee led by Md Mohasin, a joint secretary. It was asked to submit its report within three days.

The committee later added four additional members, including a deputy attorney general, and rescheduled its report submission to June 3.

"We hope our committee will also submit its report on the same day. We do not want any aspect of the

incident to remain uncovered," Prof Zahid said.

Health Minister Sardar Md Sakhawat Husain said the attorney general and Deputy Attorney General Al Faisal Siddique were invited to the meeting to provide legal guidance.

"We briefed them on the steps taken and the investigation process. He [the attorney general] provided legal advice, and we will proceed accordingly," he said.

He said more details of the incident will be shared after receiving the report.

The attorney general said he explained the legal measures available to the government at the meeting.

"First, it is clearly a criminal issue, as six newborns have died. There are allegations of negligence by the hospital authorities. Liability of doctors, nurses and authorities will be determined through investigation," he said.

He added that a criminal case has already been filed by a victim's guardian. "The investigation will determine whether any criminal offence occurred. We also discussed whether the hospital complied with required government guidelines."

"As a state law officer, I will provide legal guidance to ensure accountability and prevent any legal loopholes," the attorney general added.