

Patients suffer due to shortage of doctors, nurses during Eid holidays

Poet Abul Hussain's anniversary of death today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the third death anniversary of Poet Abul Hussain, a pioneer of modernism in Bengali poetry.

A well-known poet, Hussain wrote over 25 books. Born in Khulna in 1922, he died in 2014 at the age of 92, say a press release.

He received Ekushey Padak, Bangla Academy Award, and Padabi Award, among others, for his contribution to Bangla poetry.



SHAHEEN MOLLAH, HELEMLU ALAM and MATHEWS CHIRAN

It was around 11:00am on Eid was frantically looking for a doctor at the child medicine ward of Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) as the time for medication of his two-year-old son had been over some two hours back.

The anti-poison injection for Sohag, who took rat poison mistakenly, was supposed to be administered by a doctor. But the shortage of doctors at the hospital was so acute on the Eid day that no doctor could administer the medication on Sohag on time — by 9:00am.

"I was looking for the doctor desperately," said Sohag's father Saiful at the ward-208 of DMCH where his son was undergoing treatment.

Failing to find any doctor, he requested the on-duty nurse to give his son the injection. The nurse initially refused, saying it was a delicate medication and she could not do it.

"As it was nearly two hours later than the scheduled time, I took the risk and gave him the injection," said the nurse and the doctor arrived at the ward minutes after 11:00am. When asked, he told the Daily Star that there were only two doctors available for three child medicine wards on the Eid day.

Such shortage of doctors was causing serious problems in handling a huge number of patients, he added.

The nurse, who gave Sohag the injection, said, "Normally seven to eight doctors are on duty in a ward. But only two are now here during the morning shift at the wards 7, 8 and 10."

It is really difficult for the on-duty doctors to handle such a large number of patients due to the shortage of doctors and nurses during the Eid vacation, she said.

Not only DMCH, almost all of the capital's hospitals were facing the same situation.

These correspondents also visited the National Institute of Traumatology, Orthopaedic and Rehabilitation (NITOR) and Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital (SSMCH).

They found that patients were waiting in long lines, even in emergency cases. The on-duty doctors were struggling to handle the patients. Some of them had to work double shifts.



Two-year-old Sohag at Dhaka Medical College Hospital on Eid day after he took rat poison the day before. A doctor was supposed to administer an anti-poison injection on him by 9:00am on the day. But due to a shortage of doctors at the hospital during the holidays, a nurse gave him the injection at around 11:00am. The photo was taken around the same time.

PHOTO: HELEMLU ALAM

The doctors and nurses at the hospitals also said almost all of those on duty during the Eid vacation were non-Muslims.

"The doctors did not allow patients to be admitted during the Eid unless it was an emergency or a very serious case," said a nurse at the DMCH.

Subrata Kumar Roy, assistant professor at DMCH, said usually 30 to 40 doctors remain present at some particular wards, but during the Eid, only three doctors had to bear the workload.

On the other hand, over 2,150 nurses work on normal days, but during the Eid vacation only around 420 nurses were on duty at the DMCH.

Subrata said most of the patients coming to the hospital during the holidays were emergency patients that required emergency care. This caused immense pressure on the handful of doctors on duty, he added.

According to hospital officials around 15 to 20 percent of the total number of doctors and nurses were present in the hospitals during the Eid vacation, while

the pressure of patients increased by around 10 percent in the emergency departments.

Ria Moni, a nine-year-old girl who suffered knife injuries Tuesday, had to wait for around 16 hours for an operation due to a shortage of doctors at the operation theatre, and a scarcity of blood.

My daughter and I were operated 2:00am yesterday though she sustained injuries in her leg on Tuesday morning," said her father Kamal Hossain, rickshaw-van puller, who rushed to the hospital with his injured daughter around 2:00pm on Tuesday.

The Uttara resident said he also faced difficulties finding a bag of "O" negative blood for his daughter. "After searching for long, finally I was able to buy a bag of blood at Tk 5,000 at a blood bank in Mohakhali."

"It usually costs around Tk 2,000," alleged Kamal.

Officials at the Institute of Traumatology, Orthopaedic and

Rehabilitation (NITOR) said compared to previous Eid holidays, they saw more patients this time around.

The doctors at the hospital had to face huge challenges while providing services to the patients as less than 20 percent of the total doctors at the hospital were present during the holidays.

There are 320 nurses at the hospital, of which 51 (non-Muslims) were present during the Eid vacation, said the hospital sources.

Around 150 patients with serious injuries came to the emergency department of the hospital for treatment everyday during the three days of the Eid holidays. Normally, the number remains around 130-140," said a hospital official.

During the vacation, the doctors were serving patients for around 12 hours per day instead of an eight-hour shift," said a source at the emergency department.

Blood bank technologist Bidhan Chandra Chosh said he had to be on duty for 16 hours on Tuesday due to a shortage of manpower. SSMCH



Four people including a child and three adults squeeze onto a motorbike on Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue in the capital yesterday. Such unsafe practices on the streets are on the rise with unavailability of affordable transport and poor monitoring of traffic department of police.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Obituary

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

Freedom fighter Riaz Uddin Ahmed Pannu died of heart disease yesterday.

He was 62.

He left behind his wife and one daughter.

He served as the deputy commander of Manikganj municipal unit of the Bangladesh Muktejidhda Sangsad and general secretary of Sangkritik Biplobi Sangha (SABIS), a cultural organisation in the district town.

He was buried at Savata graveyard in Manikganj with state honour after his namaz-e-janaza on the government Dendra at the College ground after the Zohr prayers.

Eid-ul-Fitr celebrated

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"Eid builds ties of harmony, amity and unity among people of all classes and professions," said the president.

In her message, Prime Minister Hasina said, "Eid teaches us about peace, sympathy and brotherhood."

Different law enforcement agencies including police and Rapid Action Battalion took enhanced security measures across the country on the occasion to avert any untoward incident.

PEACEFUL EID CONGREGATION AT SHOLAKIA

The 190th Eid congregation at the historic ground at Sholakia took place at 10:00am with customary gunfire.

An estimated two lakh people from different parts of the country gathered there to take part in the largest Eid congregation of the country.

government this year took additional security measures around the Eidgah, reports our Kishoreganj correspondent.

Devotees were only allowed to bring in their Janamaz (prayer mat) at the ground and they were searched in four phases as part of heightened security.

Meanwhile, a large number of Muslims in four districts of Barisal division, Narayanganj and Lalmonirhat district celebrated Eid-ul-Fitr on Sunday in accordance with Saudi Arabia.

In Barisal division, over 50,000 people from 12,000 families — mainly followers of Kaderia, Jahangiria, Chistia Tarika, Pir of Elahabad Sufia Darbar Sharif and Pir Shahab of Mairiadia Darbar Sharif of Satkania — celebrated Eid on Sunday in accordance with Saudi Arabia, reports our Barisal correspondent.

At least 500 Muslim families in three villages of Kaliganj upazila in Lalmonirhat celebrated Eid on Sunday, reports our Lalmonirhat correspondent.

Also, over 200 followers of Hanafi sect celebrated Eid-ul-Fitr in Fatullah of Narayanganj on Sunday, reports our Narayanganj correspondent.

Ratha Yatra celebrated

BSS, Rajshahi

Members of Hindu community celebrated Ratha Yatra, one of their major festivals, with due religious fervour and solemnity in Rajshahi city.

Thousands of devotees gathered at selected places and joined the ritual of pulling chariots to celebrate the occasion on Sunday.

The Ratha Yatra programme was organised in Aluppara while the main event in the district was held in Khetur Gourangabari of Godaganj upazila.

The journey of Jagannath Dev was brought out from Rathburi to Aluppara intersection in the afternoon. Wearing traditional costumes, devotees paraded several city streets. They also played drums and other musical instruments during the procession. A fair was held near Seroli bus terminal.

Ershad claims

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old memories, said, "I was the army chief when Justice Sattar moved to hold election. We extended help so that he could assume power. But, within a year, he (Sattar) said many of his cabinet members were corrupt. He wanted to hand over the power to the army. We were not initially ready since running a country is not easy. But, finally I was bound to take over the power."

"I said I will return to barracks after holding the election. I kept my promise. Election was held in 1984. I could have returned to barracks if all parties had participated in that election. It is a matter of regret that nobody participated in that election. As a result, Jatiya Party was floated in 1986," he added.

Ershad also said there was no scope for him to hand over the power.

About the proposed budget, he said it was the "worst one" as it would make people's life "miserable".

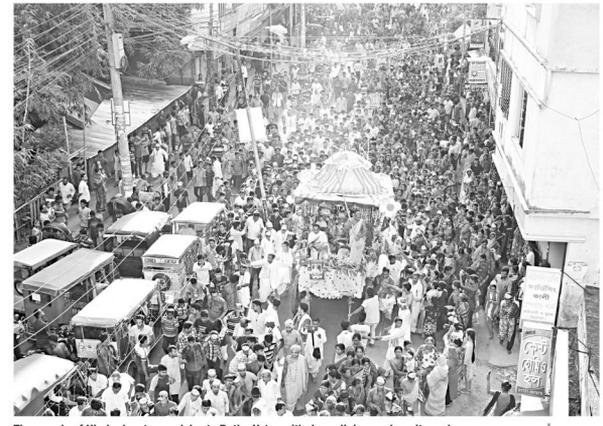
He also criticised the government for its failure to take the country's apex trade body Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI), and other trade bodies, rickshaw pullers, small traders in panic.

The people have rejected the budget, he claimed.

He also criticised the government for its failure to take action against those involved in the Bangladesh Bank heist, and scammed in different government-run banks. The JP boss demanded that the government reveal the names of the bank plunderers.

Ershad also said the share market has turned into a centre for plundering money. He proposed that VAT on medication and all kinds of agricultural equipment should be scrapped.

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Thousands of Hindu devotees celebrate Ratha Yatra with due religious solemnity and enthusiasm in Barisal city on Sunday.

PHOTO: STAR