



Salehuddin Ahmed passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Salehuddin Ahmed, former executive director of BRAC and former pro vice-chancellor of BRAC University, has passed away in the United States while undergoing treatment. He was 79.

He breathed his last at 11:00am yesterday (Bangladesh time).

He is survived by his wife, two daughters, and a host of well-wishers.

Salehuddin was also a former managing editor of The Daily Star.

In 1978, after completing his PhD in Ukraine, he returned to Bangladesh and began working as a research officer at the Planning Commission.

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People throng Chawkbazar to buy iftar items yesterday. Many travel from different parts of the city, and beyond, to sample the market's traditional offerings. The centuries-old Ramadan hub comes alive each afternoon with makeshift stalls selling kebabs, roasts and sweets, drawing both first-time visitors and regulars.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Chawkbazar: where tradition meets taste

HELEMUL ALAM

Rokshana Akhtar, a resident of Narayanganj, came to Chawkbazar with her son, Fuad Al-Fida, who recently passed his HSC examination, to enjoy the traditional iftar items at the historic market.

Although the market is far from their home, they decided to visit after hearing about it through friends and social media.

"My son had long desired to have iftar from here, so I came for the first time to fulfil his wish," said Rokshana. She reached the market at 1:00pm and planned to return home after purchasing all their desired items.

"I have already purchased Shahi Jalebi, quail roast, Suti Kebab, Boro Baper Polay Khay, goat leg roast, apples, and dates. I will return after buying a few more items," she added.

Asked whether they would visit again, she said if they find the food delicious, they plan to return later this year.

Like Rokshana, Md Rejuanul Islam, a resident of Central Road in Dhanmondi, visited the market for the first time yesterday.

"I have already purchased Suti Kebab, Boro Baper Polay Khay, goat leg pieces, and Shahi Jalebi. I will share these traditional items with my mother, wife, son, and daughters," said Islam.

The centuries-old Chawkbazar iftar market, the largest in the capital, attracts hundreds of visitors from across the country during Ramadan. The market comes alive with several hundred makeshift shops selling a wide array

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Dhaka to pursue 'Bangladesh first' policy

Says Shama Obaed about diplomacy

BSS, Dhaka

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shama Obaed Islam yesterday said Bangladesh, as a democratic state with a renewed mandate, would maintain communication and friendship with all countries while upholding dignity and mutual respect.

"For a long time, our backbone was not straight.

Now we have come with the people's mandate, and we will move forward with confidence," she said.

Briefing reporters at the foreign ministry, the state minister said the government's diplomacy would be guided by the principle of "Bangladesh first," placing national interests and citizens' welfare at the centre of all foreign engagements.

She said the newly formed government is committed to implementing the election manifesto through coordinated diplomatic efforts, with the foreign ministry playing a pivotal role.

On visa restrictions imposed by several

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487 killed in road crashes in January

Says Road Safety Foundation report



- 1,194 hurt in 559 road accidents in January
- 196 deaths in 208 motorcycle crashes
- 68 women, 57 children among the dead
- Dhaka division saw highest 143 crashes, 119 deaths
- 6 killed in 4 waterway accidents; 32 killed in 41 railway accidents

UNB, Dhaka

At least 487 people were killed and 1,194 injured in 559 road accidents across Bangladesh in January this year, according to a report released by the Road Safety Foundation.

Among the deceased were 68 women and 57 children, the report said.

Motorcycle accidents accounted for the highest number of deaths, with 196 people killed in 208 incidents. This represents 40.24 percent of total fatalities and 37.20 percent of all accidents.

Also, 132 pedestrians (27.10 percent of the deaths) and 67 drivers and helpers (13.75 percent) died. Passengers of three-wheelers such as easy bikes, CNG-run auto-rickshaws and auto-vans accounted for 77 deaths (15.81 percent).

Bus passengers died in 21 cases, while 28 deaths involved truck, covered van, pickup and tractor occupants. Nine people were killed in private car, microbus, ambulance and jeep crashes, 13 died while travelling in locally made human hauliers, and 11 cyclists were also killed.

During the same period, four accidents on waterways left six people dead and seven others injured, while 32 died and 17 were injured in 41 railway accidents.

The report was prepared based on information from nine national dailies, seven online news portals, electronic media reports and the foundation's own data.

The analysis showed that 27.90 percent of the crashes occurred on national highways, 37.03 percent on regional roads, 15.20 percent on rural roads, 18.42 percent on city streets, and the remaining accidents took place in other locations.

In terms of accident type, 37.38 percent were caused by loss of control, 24.15 percent by head-on collisions, 24.50 percent by vehicles hitting pedestrians and 12.88 percent by rear-end collisions.

Heavy vehicles, including trucks, covered vans and tankers, were involved in 28.58 percent of the crashes, followed by motorcycles at 24.51 percent, three-wheelers at 18.53 percent, and passenger buses at 12.20 percent.

Division-wise, Dhaka recorded the highest number of accidents and fatalities, with 143 crashes killing 119 people. Sylhet Division had the lowest toll, with 18 deaths from 24 accidents.

In the capital, 26 accidents killed 18 people and injured 41 others.

Based on media reports, the victims included 57 students, as well as policemen,

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There will be no more 'auto pass'

Says education minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Education Minister ANM Ehsanul Hoque Milon yesterday ruled out the possibility of cancelling examinations or granting "auto pass" in the face of mob pressure, saying such decisions were never desirable and will not be repeated.



"Cancelling examinations in the face of a mob and allowing auto-pass to students – these were never desirable."

"Many things happened in the past that should not have happened. Cancelling examinations in the face of a mob and allowing auto-pass to students – these were never desirable," Milon said at a press conference at the Secretariat on his second day in the office.

He said the government will move forward in line with its election manifesto to make the education system time appropriate.

Referring to teachers' participation in political programmes during office hours, Milon said, "You will teach in

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'Prepare 6-month action plan for health services'

Health minister directs ministry officials

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The newly appointed health minister and state minister have issued several directives to ministry officials, including preparing a six-month action plan to make health services more effective and people-oriented.

At a meeting yesterday, they asked officials to take steps to fill vacancies in field administration, where around one-third of posts remain vacant, meeting sources said.

They also directed officials to build a health



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'Tribunal to run uninterrupted'

Tajul says govt gave 'positive signal'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Proceedings at the International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) will continue at their normal pace despite the recent change in government, Chief Prosecutor Tajul Islam said yesterday, expressing confidence that the prosecution team would be allowed to carry on its work without interference.

Talking to journalists at the ICT premises, Tajul said the government had given a "positive signal" that the tribunal's activities would proceed uninterrupted, though no formal directive had yet been issued.

"Although we have not received any formal message, we have been informally told that the law will continue to take its own course. The

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43 MPs currently face murder charges

Shows Shujan analysis

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A total of 43 MPs elected in the 13th National Parliamentary Election are currently facing murder charges under Section 302, according to an analysis by Shushashoner Jonno Nagorik (Shujan).

Moreover, 42 members of parliament faced such cases previously, and 12 have both past and present cases.

Among major parties, BNP MPs have the highest share of current cases at 50.24 percent, followed by Jamaat-e-Islami at 47.07 percent.

Overall, 142 MPs currently face legal cases, while 185 faced cases in the past. Ninety-five have cases both in the past and at present.

Compared to the 12th election, legal involvement among winners has increased.

As per the analysis, the proportion of highly educated winners in this election is lower than in the 12th election.

Among the 297 elected MPs, eight hold PhD degrees.

A total of 138 have postgraduate degrees, while 93 are graduates. Twenty completed Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC), and 17 completed Secondary School Certificate (SSC).

Dilip Kumar Sarkar, chief coordinator of Shujan, presented the findings at a press conference titled "Analysis of the Affidavit Information of the Newly Elected Members of Parliament" at the Jatiya Press Club yesterday.

According to the analysis, the February 12 election and referendum were mostly peaceful, despite a few isolated incidents.

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AT A GLANCE

- 142 MPs currently face legal cases
- 8 of 297 hold PhD degrees
- 138 have postgraduate degrees; 93 are graduates
- 147 are loan borrowers
- 36 have loans over Tk 5cr



German football star and 2014 World Cup winner Mesut Ozil shakes hands with Rohingya youths before taking part in an exhibition match at a refugee camp in Cox's Bazar yesterday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Ozil visits Rohingya camps

Erdogan's son Bilal accompanies him

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

German football star and 2014 World Cup-winner Mesut Ozil, along with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's son Necmettin Bilal Erdogan, visited Rohingya refugee camps in Cox's Bazar on a one-day official tour yesterday.

They arrived at Cox's Bazar Airport around 10:45am on a special flight from Dhaka, accompanied by an 11-member delegation that included Abdullah Eren, president of the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA), Turkish Ambassador to Bangladesh Ramis Sen, and officials, business representatives and media personnel.

Cox's Bazar Deputy Commissioner Abdul Mannan and Superintendent of Police

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