



Death anniv of Abul Mansur Ahmad today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the 47th death anniversary of Abul Mansur Ahmad, a renowned litterateur, journalist, and politician of the sub-continent. He passed away in 1979.

One of the greatest satirists of Bangla literature, he was also a pioneer of modern and progressive journalism. He worked for prominent newspapers such as Krishak, Nabajug, Sultan, and Mohammadi, and was editor of the Kolkata-based Daily Ittehad from 1946 to 1948.

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A father bids a temporary farewell to his family on a train at Dhaka's Kamalapur Railway Station, planning to travel later to reunite with them. Amid the rush of passengers heading home for Eid, this family, like many others, is returning in stages to ease the journey. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Eid exodus in full swing as seven-day holiday starts

Heavy rush at transport hubs; capital wears a quieter look

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A seven-day public holiday has begun across the country as people prepare to celebrate Eid-ul-Fitr, triggering a rush of travellers from major cities, particularly Dhaka, where terminals are witnessing increased passenger pressure.

Government offices, courts, and many private institutions are closed from March 17 to March 23. Subject to moon sighting, Eid-ul-Fitr is expected to be observed on March 20 or 21.

The holiday was extended after the government declared March 18 an additional public holiday, allowing uninterrupted leave for public employees.

The decision was approved at a cabinet meeting following public demand for a continuous break to facilitate Eid travel.

As Monday was the last working day before Eid, the movement of homebound travellers intensified from the evening, with large numbers leaving the capital by road, rail, and waterways.

Although there is no exact figure for how many city dwellers will leave the capital, acting commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) Mohammad Sarwar yesterday said that more than one crore people are expected to travel from Dhaka to different districts to celebrate Eid with their loved ones.

At major bus terminals, including Sayedabad, long distance buses continued to depart for destinations

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Last-minute Eid shopping frenzy in Dhaka



SHAHEEN MOLLAH

With Eid-ul-Fitr just around the corner, Dhaka's streets, footpaths, and markets have turned into bustling hubs as thousands of residents rush for last-minute shopping.

From clothing and footwear to gifts and festive accessories, vendors across the capital – including in areas such as Mirpur-10, Mirpur-1, Farmgate, New Market, Gausia, Chawk Bazar, and Karwan Bazar – are witnessing a surge in activity.

Shoppers were seen thronging the narrow lanes lined with colourful stalls, while street vendors, small shops, and makeshift stalls catered to their festive needs by offering everything from traditional panjabis and sarees to decorative items and toys.

Sheikh Shafiqul Islam, a customer at Mirpur-1, said, "I received my Eid bonus on Sunday, but could not shop on Monday. So

I came today to buy dresses for my family members."

He added that he spent modestly, buying only a pair of shoes for himself, as he did not want to exhaust his bonus due to concerns over the ongoing crisis in the Middle East.

Shaheen Ahmed, an employee at Mirpur Milk Vita, said that although he had completed some shopping days earlier, he returned to Mirpur-10 roundabout to buy a few remaining items.

"I purchased two pairs of jeans today for Tk 1,200 for me and my son," he said.

Ibrahim Khalil, who has been selling dresses for six years at Mirpur-10 roundabout, said the crowd was smaller compared to previous years.

"Customers from different economic levels, especially those from low-income groups, come to purchase dresses and shoes from footpath stalls. We are still hopeful for a bigger rush in the next two days before Eid," he said.

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Actor Shams Suman passes away at 50

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

National Award-winning actor Shams Suman died on last evening while undergoing treatment at a private hospital in the capital. He was 50.

He breathed his last around 6:30pm in Dhaka, confirmed his younger brother, Shobhon, to The Daily Star.

Ananya Ruma of channel-i also confirmed the news.

He had been undergoing treatment at a hospital in Dhanmondi.

Suman was serving as station chief at Radio Bhumi at the time of his death.

He first gained prominence through television dramas before expanding his career across stage and cinema. Known for his restrained, naturalistic performances, Suman belonged to a generation of actors who moved fluidly between mediums, helping shape Bangladesh's screen culture in the late 1990s and 2000s.

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Surge in measles overwhelms hospital

Patients forced onto floors



TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

The Infectious Diseases Hospital (IDH) in Dhaka is struggling to cope with a surge in measles cases, with infections rising since January.

The 100-bed hospital has recorded 255 patients suffering from the infectious disease so far this year, compared to 69 cases throughout last year.

As a result, many patients – mostly under one year old – were seen lying on makeshift beds placed on the floor at the hospital in Mohakhali.

Amid the pressure, authorities have decided to shift measles patients aged over two years to the DNCC Dedicated Covid-19 Hospital, they said.

Although hospital authorities had earlier informed higher officials about the surge, the issue drew attention on Monday night after an eight-month-old measles patient died.

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INFECTIOUS DISEASES HOSPITAL ICU services resume after a year following infant's death

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

After more than a year, the Infectious Diseases Hospital (IDH) in Dhaka's Mohakhali yesterday resumed operation of its Intensive Care Unit (ICU), following the death of an eight-month-old who could not access critical care.

The infant named Sayeed, from Savar, was admitted to the 100-bed facility on the morning of March 14 with measles and fever. His condition later worsened as he developed respiratory complications and was placed on oxygen support.

Doctors recommended ICU care as his health deteriorated.



However, the hospital's ICU services have remained suspended since June 2024, when the project under which the unit had been established and staffed expired.

The child's family subsequently tried to transfer him to several hospitals, but they declined, citing the risk of measles infection to other ICU patients, hospital sources said.

Doctors at IDH also attempted to manage ICU-level care but were unsuccessful. Sayeed died around 9:00pm on Monday (March 16).

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Security beefed up ahead of Eid

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law enforcement agencies have stepped up security across the country, especially at transport hubs and residential areas, to ensure safe and smooth Eid travels for millions of homebound passengers.

Police, Rab, and the Bangladesh Coast Guard have intensified patrols and surveillance ahead of the holidays.

Inspector General of Police Md Ali Hossain Fakir yesterday said all police units have been instructed to remain fully alert, warning that no wrongdoing will be tolerated.

"There will be no compromise over any untoward incident or injustice," he said after visiting the Gabtoli Bus Terminal in Dhaka.

He noted that criminals, including drug users and snatchers, often gather in terminal areas.

"Terminals attract all

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Khalilur, UNCTAD chief urge restraint in Middle East

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) Secretary-General Rebeca Grynspan yesterday joined Bangladesh Foreign Minister Dr Khalilur Rahman in calling for restraint in the Middle East and urging all sides to seek a diplomatic solution.

The call came during a meeting at the Permanent Mission of Bangladesh to the UN in New York, according to a foreign ministry statement.

The foreign minister is currently in the US as part of his campaign for the post of UN General Assembly president for the 2026-27 term.

During the meeting, Khalilur and Grynspan also discussed the global economic situation in light of the ongoing Middle East conflict.

The US-Israel war on Iran on February 28 and Iran's attacks on the US bases across the Gulf have sent a global shockwave, with the energy supplies disrupted via the Strait of Hormuz as well as the impacts on the millions of migrant workers, mostly from Asia.

The meeting in New York observed that the conflict presented major risks to the global economy.

"Disruptions in international trade and turmoil in the energy markets are already negatively affecting the developing countries, particularly the poorest among them, who are witnessing a reversal of years of progress," they said during the meeting, the foreign ministry said.

They urged all relevant parties to avoid further escalation and urgently seek diplomatic solution.

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With Eid-ul-Fitr just around the corner, customers throng shopping malls in the capital, making last-minute purchases for themselves or their loved ones. The photo was taken at Bashundhara City Shopping Mall in the Panthapath area yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED