



PHOTOS: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

Third 'Nazrul Utsav' pays tribute to the legacy of Kazi Nazrul Islam

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Our National Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam imbued his works with themes of patriotism, humanity, secularism, and respect for women. Marking its third edition, *Nazrul Utsav* commenced on March 8, coinciding with International Women's Day, at Gulshan Society Lake Park in the capital city.

This two day festival, organised by Bangladesh Nazrul Sangeet Sangstha, Gulshan Society, and Indira Gandhi Cultural Centre, with Shanta Holdings as the title sponsor, aimed to honour Nazrul's legacy and propagate his ideals of humanism and secularism.

Khairul Anam Shakil, an Ekushey Padak-winning Nazrul Sangeet exponent and general secretary of Bangladesh Nazrul Sangeet Sangstha, delivered the opening speech, highlighting the meticulous efforts to archive Nazrul's original tracks over three years. A total of 375 songs have been archived, performed by seasoned veterans and emerging artists from both sides of the border, maintaining authenticity in lyrics and compositions.

"It was a challenging and time-consuming process to archive Nazrul's original tracks with authentic lyrics, yet we were determined to do it. Thus, over three years, we have successfully

archived 375 songs so far," he said.

Amidst the serene ambiance of the lake park and melodious tunes of the Cuckoo, attendees delved into lesser-known aspects of Nazrul's life. Mofidul Hoque, a renowned researcher, publisher, and essayist, shed light on Masuda Khatun, an influential figure in Nazrul's life, who wrote under the pseudonym Mrs M Rahman, reflecting the challenges faced by women in patriarchal societies. "Not many know about Masuda Khatun, however, she played an important role in the poet's life. She used to write in disguise as Mrs M Rahman, as a sufferer of this patriarchal society. Although she didn't write much, Nazrul was highly influenced by her work. She was a motherly figure to Nazrul and a big support for Nazrul and Pramila Devi's intercaste marriage."

Pranay Kumar Verma, the Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh, expressed appreciation for the event. Barrister Omar Sadat, secretary of Gulshan Society, highlighted the lack of music or dance schools in North Dhaka. He recalled, "Four years back, I was discussing this with Shakil bhai and Kalpana apa, and requested them to take initiatives for the matter."

He further noted, "I went to Cuba's Havana and witnessed sculptures of many extraordinary, heroic people including the likes of William Shakespeare and Mahatma Gandhi, amongst many others. I was hoping to find representations of important

personalities from my own country. I was surprised to see Kazi Nazrul Islam's sculpture there. Fidel Castro himself was a revolutionary, and so is our Kazi Nazrul Islam. I also learned when Castro was taken to the court, he gave a speech in Spanish, inspired by Nazrul's poem *Anandomoyee Agomone*."

The festival continued with solo performances, chorus, recitation, and dance performances enthralled the audience present there.

Hosted by Kaushik Sankar Das and Jonaki Jyoti, eminent artists such as Khairul Anam Shakil, Yasmin Mushtari, Nashid Kamal, and Ferdous Ara graced the stage alongside Indian artists including Sreeradha Banerjee, Payel Kar, Debarati Chakraborty, Manomay Bhattacharya, and Raghav Chatterjee.

In addition to live performances, 125 Nazrul songs were added to the previous 250 tracks with authentic lyrics and compositions, which are available for free on YouTube. These recordings, featuring artists from Bangladesh, West Bengal, North America, and Australia, aim to further propagate Nazrul's timeless music to a global audience.

The celebration of culture, heritage, and the enduring legacy of Kazi Nazrul Islam unites everyone in homage to the iconic poet and musician and concluded on March 9. It had over 50 artists from both sides of the border with six artists from West Bengal itself.

Messi, star of 'Anatomy of a Fall', to miss Oscars ceremony



Messi, the adored Border collie from the Oscar-nominated film *Anatomy of a Fall*, was absent from the red carpet at the Academy Awards ceremony, despite capturing Hollywood's attention at the nominees' luncheon.

The decision disappointed many fans of the canine actor, who gained acclaim for his performance alongside Sandra Hüller in Justine Triet's crime thriller. Messi's unexpected rise to fame during the 2024 Oscar campaign season astonished industry insiders, with him even overshadowing celebrated human actors at the annual luncheon.

Messi's rise to stardom started at Cannes, where *Anatomy of a Fall* won the Palme d'Or. His performance also earned him the unofficial title of Palm Dog, solidifying his status as a rising star in entertainment.



Stage plays are now available on OTT

Channel i and its OTT platform iScreen are now broadcasting stage plays on their streaming platforms, marking a new journey for the network. The head of the theatre project is Shahidul Alam.

Audiences will be able to enjoy renowned stage plays such as Prachyanat's *Circus Circus*, Aranyak's *Mayur Singhasan*, *Kohe Facebook*, *Jibon Songketer Jyoti Songhita*, and Ethika's *Neta Je Rate Nihoto Holen* on the platform. A new stage play will premiere every week.

Channel i's Additional Executive Director Amrul Islam announced the project during a press meet on Saturday.

COUNTRYWIDE



Carpeting of this newly renovated road in Lalmonirhat's Aditmari upazila is getting damaged even before completion of the road work. PHOTO: STAR

ROAD DAMAGED

even before work finished

Locals blame use of sub-standard materials

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Carpeting of a two and half kilometre-long newly renovated road in Aditmari upazila is getting damaged at different points even before completion of its renovation work.

Local people, however, blamed use of low-quality construction materials for such work.

Earlier, Lalmonirhat Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) floated a tender to renovate the two and half kilometre-long road, stretching from Sakoya to Debirpat village under Saptiari union.

Contractor Shahadat Hussain Babu got the Tk 1.14 crore work order.

The work that started about a week ago is scheduled to be completed by today (Monday).

But the carpeting of the newly-renovated road got damaged in at least 20 spots before completion of the renovation work, locals alleged.

Locals said carpeting of the road worn out at many places due to use of sub-standard materials like bitumen and stones.

The entire road might get damage

within the next three to four months as the contractor used sub-standard brick chips instead of standard quality before conducting the carpeting work, they alleged.

Villagers said they have complained to the engineer concern in this regard on several occasions, but to no avail.

Contacted, Shahadat Hussain Babu said the road renovation work is going on as per the schedule and in presence of the LGED engineer.

Criminals might have sabotaged the road at dead of night, he alleged.

Lalmonirhat LGED Sub Assistant Engineer Pervez Rubel, also in charge of the road repair work, denied the allegation of using substandard and less quantity of bitumen for carpeting the road.

Local people might have damaged the carpeting in different places at dead of night, he alleged.

He claimed that there was no irregularity in the road renovation work.

Lalmonirhat LGED Executive Engineer Akteruzzaman Hasan said he was not aware of the matter.

He will investigate the matter and take necessary action in this regard, the engineer said.

Metro to run

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To Motijheel would operate every 10 minutes from 7:10am to 7:30am, every eight minutes from 7:31am to 11:36am, every 12 minutes from 11:37am to 2:00pm, and every eight minutes from 2:01pm to 8:00pm.

Trains from Motijheel to Uttara North will be available every 10 minutes from 7:30am to 8:00am, every eight minutes from 8:01am to 12:08pm, every 12 minutes from 12:09pm to 2:40pm, and every eight minutes from 2:41pm to 8:40pm.

Metro rail services will be closed on Eid day.

MAN Siddique said during Ramadan people will be allowed to carry 250ml

bottles before and after iftar time. He said no food would be allowed on the trains. He urged people to use the trashcans for disposing of the water bottles.

The iftar schedule will be on screens inside the trains and stations.

He said around 2.90 lakh passengers use the metro rail daily, with each train carrying 1,632 passengers on average.

He said they earn Tk 1.50 crore a day but they need to earn Tk 3 crore a day to break even.

He said around 52 percent passengers now use MRT/Rapid pass. They have so far sold 3.9 lakh MRT pass and are selling around 3,000 passes every day.

21 hurt in post-polls

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defeated member candidate.

Police said member aspirant Harun Mollah won Saturday's polls and his opponent Noab Miah lost.

Over the polls results, their supporters clashed at Purbo Bottoli Khamarpara around 11:30am.

On information, police pacified the feuding groups. Additional law enforcers have been deployed in the area to avoid any further untoward incidents, said Safayet Hossain Palash, OC of Raipura Police Station.

In another incident, two police personnel were hurt in an attack by the supporters of defeated chairman candidate in by-polls to Sanmania Union Parishad in Kapasia upazila of Gazipur.

The injured are constables Bipra Das and Mahmudul Hasan of Detective Branch. They were undergoing treatment at Gazipur Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmad Medical College Hospital.

Police said that after announcement of results of Saturday's polls, the followers of defeated chairman candidate Abdul

Haque attacked police near Charsanmania High School centre around 7:00pm, injuring the two cops.

Contacted, Abdul Haque claimed that some agitating people got locked in a clash with police.

OC Abu Bakar Miah of Kapasia Police Station said a case was filed accusing 10 named and some unnamed people in connection with the attack.

In another development, a case was filed yesterday over a clash that left a man dead and another bullet injured in Narayanganj's Sonargaon.

The clash took place between the men of two members candidates centring the Pirojpur Union Parishad by-election on Saturday evening.

The deceased is Hridoy Bhuiyan, 24, of Dudhgata village.

His brother lodged the case against 21 people, including a member-elect, and 150 unnamed people, said Md Kamruzzaman, OC of Sonargaon Police Station.

[Our correspondents in Patuakhali, Narsingdi, Gazipur, and Narayanganj contributed to this report.]

Bhutto's urgent appeal to Mujib

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sent the following assessment to the US Embassy in Pakistan and the State Department on March 11, 1971:

"In our view, the political crisis has moved well beyond the LFO and National Assembly discussion of a Six Point Constitution. The election result itself doomed this possibility by, first of all, affording the Awami League the unexpected majority by which to ram through a constitution of its making and, secondly, by cutting Bhutto out of any role greater than Chief Minister of Punjab or leader of the opposition in the National Assembly. What is needed now is a solution which will give something to Bhutto, something to Mujib, something to Yahya and the Army, still preserve at least a vestige of the unity of Pakistan, and hopefully buy time for a cooling of passion."

The EXDIS telegram by Blood suggested 'Confederation' as a possible arrangement under which Bhutto could become Prime Minister of



The news report on Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's telegram to Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on the front page of a Bangla daily on March 11, 1971.

West Pakistan, Mujib the Prime Minister of Bangladesh (Blood wrote that East Pakistan had become a term for geographers) and Yahya the President of the Confederation of Pakistan.

He further suggested that the Pakistan Armed Forces could, as before, draw sustenance from both wings and be stationed in both wings.

The State Department replied that the endorsement of a political

solution could readily be construed by Yahya as support for East Pakistan's separation.

They further commented that Yahya's visit to Dhaka provided the best opportunity to salvage the union of the two wings of Pakistan.

The State Department chose to maintain its posture of non-involvement. [Archer K Blood, The Cruel Birth of Bangladesh, UPL, 2006, pp. 186-87]

No Gaza truce in sight

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A source with knowledge of the truce talks told AFP that "there will be a diplomatic push especially in the next 10 days" with a view to securing a deal within the first half of Ramadan as negotiations between all parties continued.

United States President Joe Biden reiterated on Saturday that Israel has "a right to continue to pursue Hamas", but also stressed his growing impatience with Israel's right-wing Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. With the death toll

ever-increasing, Biden told broadcaster MSNBC that Netanyahu "must pay more attention to the innocent lives being lost as a consequence of the actions taken".

At this stage, said Biden, Netanyahu's approach to the war was "hurting Israel more than helping Israel". Biden also signalled he would be willing to speak directly to the Israeli people through an address to the Knesset legislature.

World Health Organization chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said the United Nations

agency had delivered some medical supplies and fuel to two hospitals in northern Gaza on Saturday.

The Gaza's health ministry said at least 23 children have died from malnutrition and dehydration.

With Ramadan approaching there was no letup in fighting and bombardment in Gaza, with 85 killed in 24 hours, according to the health ministry.

The Israeli military said its troops had killed 13 in air strikes and with tank and sniper fire in central Gaza over the past day.