

## Two new apex court judges meet president

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Newly appointed Appellate Division judges, Justice AKM Asaduzzaman and Justice Farah Mahbub, paid a courtesy visit to President Mohammed Shahabuddin at Bangabhaban on Thursday evening.

During the meeting, the president congratulated them and urged them to uphold justice.

Following the Supreme Judicial Appointment Council's recommendation and in consultation with the chief justice, the president elevated the judges from the High Court Division to the Appellate Division on March 24.

They were sworn in by Chief Justice Syed Rezaat Ahmed on March 25, according to a Supreme Court press release.

## Man dies as train hits him in Narsingdi

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narsingdi

An unidentified man died after being hit by a freight train near Narsingdi Railway Station yesterday afternoon.

The incident occurred around 12:30pm in Baniarchal Battala area adjacent to the station, said Zahurul Islam, sub-inspector and in-charge of Narsingdi Railway Police Outpost.

Witnesses and police said the Chattogram-bound freight train hit the man, aged around 45-50, while crossing Narsingdi station, leaving him dead on the spot.

On information, police went to the spot and recovered the body. Efforts are underway to identify the deceased, SI Zahurul said.

## Fire guts 19 shops, 3 houses in Madaripur

UNB, Madaripur

At least 19 shops and three houses were gutted in a fire at a market in Madaripur Sadar upazila early yesterday.

Nur Mohammad, station officer of Madaripur fire service, said the fire originated from an electric short-circuit at a hardware shop in City Super Market in the early morning.

Being informed, six firefighting units from the district and nearby Shariatpur rushed to the spot and brought the fire under control after three hours of efforts, he said.

The fire-affected establishments include eight cosmetics shops, three hardware shops, three warehouses, one computer shop, other shops and three houses, the fire service official said.



PHOTO: MONIR UDDIN ANIK  
Stranded at Ilisha Ferry Ghat in the Bhola district, hundreds of passengers wait for hours to return to Dhaka and Chattogram. Due to a severe shortage of vessels, many are forced to risk their lives by boarding unsafe trawlers and speedboats across the Meghna river. The delay has caused immense suffering, with passengers waiting up to five hours for a ferry. The photos were taken yesterday.

# Eid fair that brings Thakurgaon together

MD QUAMRUL ISLAM  
RUBAIYAT, Thakurgaon

Every Eid, as the sun begins to set over Thakurgaon Government Boys' High School ground, a familiar rhythm takes hold — laughter, music, the creaking sound of Ferris wheels, and the murmur of people catching up with old friends.

What began with just a couple of "nagordola" and a few hawkers more than two decades ago has, over the years, evolved into an annual Eid tradition known simply as the Thakurgaon Eid Mela.

What makes this event particularly unique is its spontaneous nature. For nearly 25 years, the fair has taken place without any formal organiser. Yet, each year, it draws thousands — locals and visitors alike.

"It's hard to meet friends and relatives individually when we visit our hometown," said Mostafizur Rahman Sajal, 50, a banker who now lives outside the district. "But at the mela,

we get to see everyone in one place."

The fair unofficially kicks off on the afternoon of Eid day and continues for seven to ten days, depending on the crowd.

This year has been no exception. The grounds have once again come alive with

at her parental home, shared a similar sentiment. "This mela brings back memories from my youth. It's not just about fun — it's about reconnecting."

The fair offers something for everyone: rides for children, including multiple nagordola, and stalls selling handicrafts,

decade. "I make a good profit here every year," he said.

For some, it has become a seasonal livelihood. Nazmul Mia from Dinajpur's Palashbari village brings his ferris wheel to the mela annually and calls it one of his most reliable sources of income.

The transformation of the event is something that long-time locals have observed with pride. "Back then, there were only a few vendors and rides," recalled Majed Jahangir, a former teacher of Thakurgaon Government College who lives near the fairground. "Now it's a gathering point for people from every corner of the district."

Even the school authorities have welcomed the fair. "There aren't many recreational options around," said Md Motaharul Alam, acting headteacher of Thakurgaon Government Boys' High School. "So, we open our grounds to local traders and entertainment providers during the Eid holidays."



people from all walks of life — children, adolescents, parents, and elderly residents, all mingling amid a colourful blend of lights, sounds, and activity.

Dr Afsana Haque Chowdhury, 55, who came from Dhaka to celebrate Eid

pottery, and traditional toys. Traders from nearby districts, such as Panchagarh and Dinajpur, make it a point to join the event each year.

Nagen Paul, a pottery trader from Sakoa village in Boda upazila, has been coming to the mela for more than a

## Beach

FROM PAGE 5

"Illegal structures like these not only destroy the natural beauty of Kuakata, but also endanger tourists," he added.

Contacted, Md Sajidul Islam asserted his claim over the land.

"This land belongs to me. A large portion of it lies within the sea. We've discussed this with the authorities before, and we will do so again. Also, the construction is not risky — it's being done based on an engineer's advice," he said.

However, Yamin Sadek, administrator of Kuakata Municipality and also the assistant commissioner (land) of the upazila, dismissed the ownership claim.

"The beach is solely government property. No individual can claim ownership there," he said.

"There is already a court order restricting construction at the market. Once offices reopen after the Eid holidays, we will review all relevant documents and take necessary legal actions accordingly," he added.

## Rokia Afzal Rahman

FROM PAGE 3

Rokia was a pioneering entrepreneur who dedicated her life to advancing women's financial independence.

As the founding president of the Bangladesh Federation of Women Entrepreneurs and a key figure in establishing Women in Small Enterprises (WISE), her efforts opened the doors for countless women in business.

She also served as chairperson of Midas Financing Limited, which supported small-scale businesses in bypassing middlemen and reaching consumers directly.

Her influence extended well beyond the business world.

She held numerous leadership roles, including chairperson of Mediaworld Limited, the parent company of The Daily Star, and president of the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

She also chaired the board of directors of the Asian University for Women Support Foundation,

served as an adviser to the 2001 caretaker government, and was a board member of various esteemed organisations, including the Central Bank of Bangladesh.

She played an instrumental role in advocating for free media and access to education.

Rokia's life was defined not only by her professional achievements but also by her elegance, warmth, and strength of character. She was a mentor and role model to many, known for her dignified demeanor and ability to inspire confidence in those around her.

From her beginnings as the first woman bank manager in Bangladesh to becoming a successful businesswoman and adviser to a caretaker government, Rokia's journey was marked by perseverance and unwavering dedication to her ideals. Despite challenges — including threats from extortionists and resistance as a woman in a male-dominated field — she never wavered from her path.

Rokia's memory lives on through the countless lives she touched and the enduring impact of her work. On this solemn anniversary, her friends, family, and admirers reflect on her contributions to society and remember her as a beacon of hope and progress.

## Freedom

FROM PAGE 3

people placed a garland of shoes around his neck and ordered him to leave the area by nightfall — a video of which later went viral on social media. Around 10 to 12 local Jamaat men, led by Abul Hashem Majumder, were involved in the public humiliation.

Following the incident, he took refuge at his son's residence in Feni district.

Since the fall of the Sheikh Hasina-led Awami League government on August 5, Kanu's home has been attacked three times — on August 16, September 20, and most recently on April 4.

OC Hilal Uddin added, "The individuals accused in the humiliation case have remained absconding. They don't stay at home but returned during the Eid holidays, carried out the attack, and went into hiding again."

Kanu had filed a case over the public humiliation, naming several local Jamaat Shibir activists. Subsequently, two local Jamaat members, including Abul Hashem Majumder, were expelled from the party.

## Railway land up

FROM PAGE 5

Moksedul Momin, was built on a key point installation (KPI) area of the railway workshop, right in front of its gate.

The then cultural affairs minister, Asaduzzaman Noor, inaugurated the institution. Sources said Momin was one of his close aides.

Momin, who is currently in hiding for political reasons, could not be contacted for comment. However, after the probe report was submitted, he held a press conference denying all allegations.

Regarding the academy, he claimed that workers' and employees' organisations at the workshop jointly built it, as he was a workers' leader.

During the BNP-led government (2001-2006), the then Saidpur municipality mayor and lawmaker late Amzad Hossain Sarker reportedly facilitated land grabbing by supporting the construction of high-rise buildings on railway land.

According to railway and local sources, in 1985, railway authorities handed over 25.75 acres of land in Saidpur town to the local municipality under an agreement allowing the municipality to regulate markets and collect revenue, with a portion to be shared with the railway.

However, sources alleged that the municipality misinterpreted the agreement, treating the land as its own and allowing rampant encroachment since the early 2000s.

They further stated that as the 25.75 acres were not demarcated, the municipality has since occupied nearly double the allocated area while ignoring railway estate department notices to clarify the boundary.

The probe report said the land grabbing occurred in violation of a court stay order.

It recommended departmental action against the divisional superintendent of Saidpur railway workshop, estate department officials, some members of the railway police, and railway security personnel for failing to protect railway property.

It also called for criminal cases against land grabbers and the appointment of skilled lawyers to handle court proceedings. However, none of the recommendations have been implemented.

Mazharul Anwar Shamim, secretary of Sujon (Sushasoner Jonno Nagorik) in Saidpur, said, "The railway in Saidpur is on the verge of ruin. Implementing the probe body's 24 recommendations is the only way to save it."

Contacted, Railway Ministry Secretary Md Fahimul Islam said, "We are sincere about recovering railway land and working to obtain magistracy powers for immediate action against encroachers."

He said notices had already been issued for the removal of illegal structures.



## BAROMASIA CANAL Mobile court snaps water pumps' lines, dismantles dams

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A mobile court yesterday disconnected the electricity supply to four pump machines used for illegal water extraction from the Baromasia canal in Fatikchhari upazila of Chattogram.

The court, led by Mozammel Hoque Chowdhury, upazila nirbahi officer of Fatikchhari, also destroyed the diversion dams built on the canal by the Halda Valley Tea Estate, which had altered the canal's course.

"During the drive, we found that the tea garden authorities had built dams at four points, changing the canal's course, and were using powerful pumps to extract water from the canal. We have destroyed the dams and cut the electricity connection to the pumps," said UNO Mozammel Hoque.

The drive was carried out with support from the Bangladesh Water Development Board, the Department of Agricultural Extension, and the police.

Sohag Talukder, sub-divisional engineer of BWDB, said all hindrances have been evicted from the canal.

"The UNO instructed us to take legal action if the tea estate authorities rebuild the dams or continue to extract water illegally," he added.

The Baromasia canal is a key source of irrigation water for over 3,000 local farmers. The activities of the Halda Valley Tea Estate nearly caused it to dry up by blocking the canal's flow completely, leaving farmers without access to irrigation water, especially during the dry season.

The canal, directly connected to the Halda river, channels freshwater from the hills and supports Bangladesh's only natural breeding ground for major carps.

It plays an important role in maintaining a healthy freshwater ecosystem and providing carp fries to fish farmers nationwide.

In 1980, BWDB built a water retention structure on the canal to irrigate more than 3,000 acres of land in two unions during the boro season.

Fazlul Karim, president of the Baromasia Canal Irrigation Project, said, "The water flow in the canal has resumed after the administration's action against the tea estate."



**রাজশাহী বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়**  
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**PRAYER  
TIMING**  
APRIL 5

Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
4:40	12:45	4:45	6:21	7:45

JAMAAT 5-15 1-15 5-00 6-24 8-15  
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION