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# Pollution threatens Kirtankhola



SUSHANTA GHOSH, Barishal

The Kirtankhola river that flows through Barishal faces the grim prospect of becoming heavily polluted, locals and experts fear.

Around 6 lakh people living on the west bank of the river are dumping their solid and liquid waste in drains and canals, which then run to the river, officials said.

Vessels plying the river also discharge their waste, polluting the river at a rapid rate.

The banks, especially near the river port and in Rasulpur area, are also littered with garbage.

In December 2018, the DoE examined water samples taken from 12 points in the river and found dissolved oxygen levels to be between 4.5 and 4.8 milligrams per litre, said the department's Assistant Biochemist Muntasir Rahman, adding that dissolved oxygen should be over 5 milligrams to be safe for aquatic life. Dissolved solid matter levels were found to be 2,100 milligrams/litre, which is also very high, he added.

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A girl walks on rubble of a five-storey building, illegally built on the Turag river, after a part of the structure was knocked down by Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority during an eviction drive in Tongi's Abdullahpur area yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

# 'Robber' killed in 'gunfight' with police

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A suspected robber was killed in a "gunfight" with police in the district's Hakimpur upazila early yesterday.

Kashidul Islam, 44, of Nashipur village of the upazila, stood accused in 11 robbery cases, said police.

On information that some robbers were preparing to rob a house in Kashidanga village in the upazila, a police team, led by Akhiul Islam, additional SP of (Hakimpur circle), went to the spot around 2:00am, said Abdur Razzak, officer-in-charge of Hakimpur Police Station.

Sensing their presence, the criminals opened fire. Police returned fire, triggering a "gun battle".

At one stage, Kashidul, leader of the robber gang, was shot dead. Others fled the spot, the OC said.

Two police personnel, including Sub-inspector Mahe Alam and constable Fazlul Haque of Hakimpur Police Station, were injured, the police official claimed.

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# RAPE OF JASHORE HOUSEWIFE PBI clears SI, 2 others from charges

UNB, Jashore

The Police Bureau of Investigation has pressed charges against a man over raping a housewife in the district's Sharsha upazila about five months ago and recommended acquittal of Sub-Inspector Khairul Alam and two others of the charges.

PBI Inspector Monayem Hossain on Thursday submitted the charge sheet in the rape case against Abdul Latif, an acquaintance of the victim.

According to the PBI, its investigation did not find any proof of the presence of SI Khairul and two other accused, Abdul Quader and Quamruzzaman Quamrul, on the spot during the incident.

On January 22, the PBI said its probe did not find any involvement of SI Khairul in the rape. It also said one of the three arrestees confessed to his crime before the court.

The victim knew the accused who gave the confessional statement, said Additional Superintendent of Police MKH Jahangir Hossain.

On September 2 last year, the woman, a mother of two, was allegedly

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## FIRST YEAR OF BANGLADESH

# Bangabandhu's nation-building challenges



Bangabandhu greeting the people who assembled at Dhaka Airport to welcome him on his return from Kolkata after a two-day visit (Feb 8, 1972).

FEBRUARY 8, 1972

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

### BANGABANDHU RETURNS FROM KOLKATA

Bangabandhu returns to Dhaka today morning after completing his two-day official visit to Kolkata. Bangabandhu on his arrival is given a hearty welcome by his cabinet colleagues, heads of diplomatic missions, MCAs, Awami League party and student leaders and a welcoming crowd.

**MUJIB-INDIRA JOINT STATEMENT**  
The Indian Armed Forces in Bangladesh are to be withdrawn by March 25, 1972 according to a joint statement by Prime Minister Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. The

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2



# Youth stabbed to death in Sylhet

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

A youth was stabbed to death during a scuffle between two groups in Tilagarh area of Sylhet city on Thursday night.

Abhishek Dey Dip, 21, was from Sadipur area in the city and a second-year student at Greenhill State College, said Abdul Quaiyum Chowdhury, officer-in-charge of Shahporan Police Station.

One of his rival, Saikat Roy, 23, was seriously injured during the incident, the OC said.

Quoting witnesses, police said the two groups had an altercation over the fund for organising Saraswati Puja in Gopaltala area on January 30.

Though the issue was settled by locals, Dip was not happy with the arrangement.

On Thursday night, the scuffle ensued when Dip, along with some of his friends, attacked Saikat and

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# Date palm plants grown from 2,000-yr-old seeds



CNN ONLINE

Scientists have grown six date palm plants from 2,000-year-old seeds found in ancient palaces and settlements in the Judean Desert in southern Israel.

The seeds are thought to be the oldest ever grown naturally and shed light on one of the world's earliest tree crops.

According to historical documents, the Kingdom of Judea was renowned for its large, sweet dates that could be stored and exported throughout the Roman Empire.

"They were incredibly sought after. They were given as a gift to the Roman Emperor on his birthday, and many ancient historians and geographers wrote about them," said Sarah Sallon, director of the Louis L Borick Natural Medicine Research Center, who led the study published Wednesday in the journal Science Advances.

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# NEW ARMS RACE Europe can't be 'spectators': Macron

AFP, Paris

French President Emmanuel Macron yesterday called for European nations to play a more direct role in halting a new nuclear arms race, saying they "cannot remain spectators" against a threat to the continent's collective security.

"In the absence of a legal framework, they could rapidly face a new race for conventional weapons, even nuclear weapons, on their own soil," Macron told military officers in a speech laying out France's

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## PRAYER TIMING FEBRUARY 8

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha  
AZAN 5:30 12:45 4:15 5:52 7:15  
JAMAAT 6:05 1:15 4:30 5:56 7:45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

# Girl raped on US embassy premises in New Delhi

CNN ONLINE

A man has been arrested for allegedly raping a 5-year-old girl in the grounds of the US Embassy in New Delhi, according to police.

The girl was playing outside the embassy's staff quarters on Saturday before she "was lured and raped by a neighbor," Eish Singhal, deputy commissioner of Delhi police, told CNN.

The girl, who is the daughter of a housekeeper employed by the embassy, later identified the 25-year-old male suspect, who has been arrested and charged with rape, police said.

"She was able to identify him point blank and there is no doubt over this," Singhal said, adding that the suspect remains in custody.

The incident has appalled embassy staff. In a statement to CNN, a spokesperson said the US embassy "was deeply

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A Palestinian protester waving a national flag climbs over Israel's controversial security barrier as others burn tyres during a demonstration against a US-brokered peace proposal, in the occupied West Bank village of Bilin near Ramallah yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

# ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS Delhi goes to polls today

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

An estimated 1.74 crore people of Delhi will be eligible to exercise their franchise when they elect a new 70-member assembly for the city-state today at the end of a high-octane and sharply-polarised campaign over protests against amended citizenship law.

In their final push as the curtains came down on electioneering Thursday evening, the three key parties in the battle -- ruling Aam Aadmi Party and its principal challengers Bharatiya Janata Party and Congress made last-ditch efforts to slug it out over issues ranging from CAA and livelihood issues.

In the previous assembly poll in 2015, AAP had made a clean sweep winning 67 of the 70 assembly seats in Delhi leaving just three for BJP. Congress drew a blank.

During the entire campaign, the three parties had deployed their top leaders for the Delhi assembly polls whose results are important more for their prestige than political heft. Voters of Delhi elect just seven lawmakers to the Lok Sabha and so do not have much of a role to decide which party will rule India.

The BJP began the campaign with a focus on the development work done by the Modi government for the national capital but later changed course and made Shaheen Bagh, the epicentre of anti-Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) protest near Jamia Millia University in Muslim-majority Okhla assembly constituency in southeast Delhi, its main poll plank.

The 24-hour sit-in protest lasting for more than a month led by a group of women and their children in the biting cold of Delhi has become the face of countrywide protests against CAA. The BJP has been branding all opposition to

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