

PADMA BRIDGE RAIL LINK PROJECT IS BEING BUILT WITH BSRM
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SIX COMMON RIVERS Dhaka, Delhi to share data

JRC likely to meet in the Indian capital tomorrow

PINAKI ROY

After 34 years, the Joint Rivers Commission of Bangladesh and India will tomorrow update data on six common rivers and discuss a framework on sharing the waters of those.

The six common rivers include the Muhuri, Monu, Dharla, Khowai, Gumti and Dudhkumar.

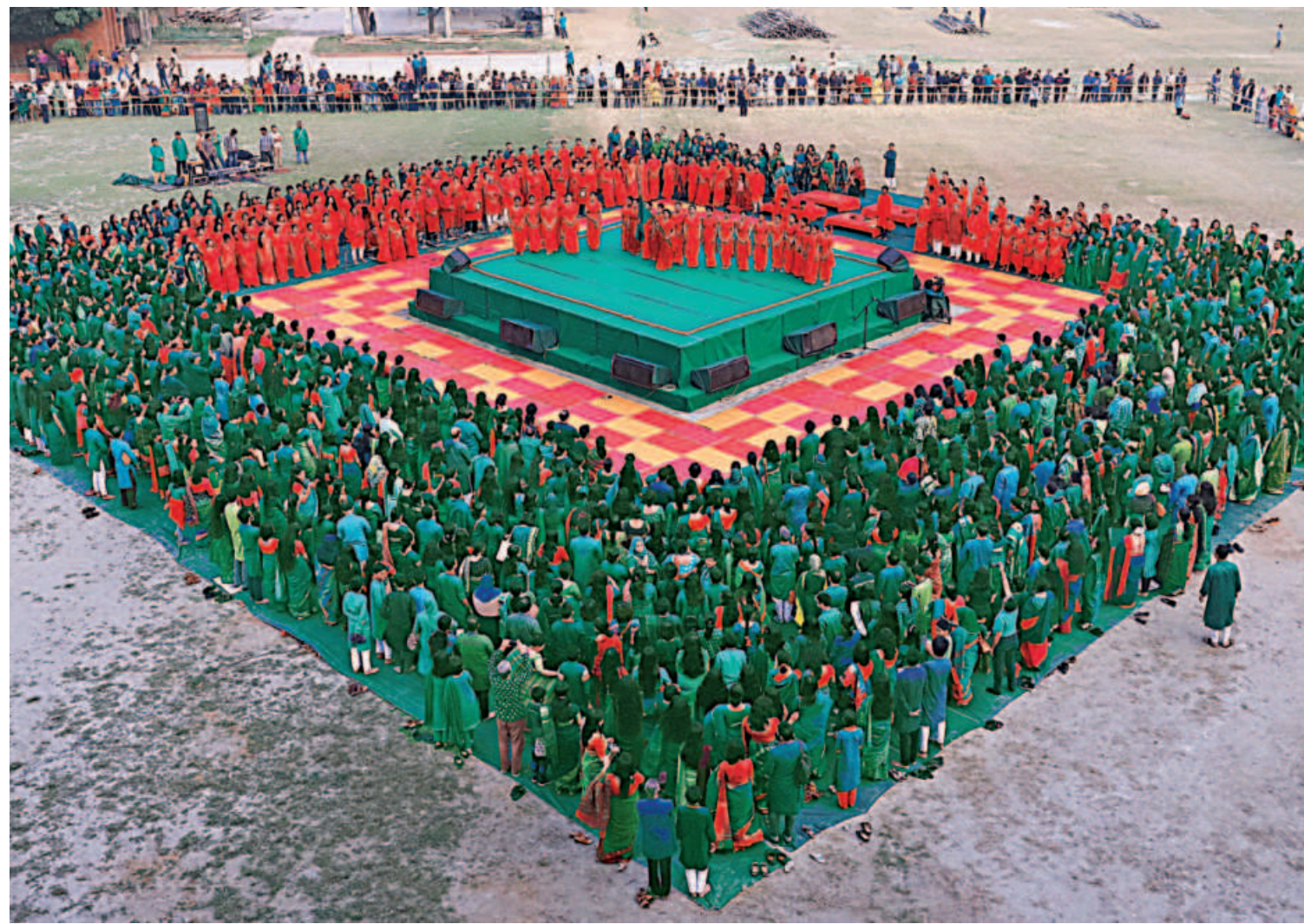
The two-day meeting of Joint Rivers Commission (JRC) is scheduled to be held in Delhi. The JRC delegation from Bangladesh, however, was still waiting for government order for this till filing of this report.

Earlier, water sharing agreements of two rivers -- the Teesta and Feni -- were finalised in 2011, but no agreement was signed.

"Not only the Teesta, we are also going to discuss treaties for sharing water of six other rivers. Our delegation will exchange updated data of those six joint rivers in the upcoming JRC meeting," said Kabir Bin Anwar, secretary for the Water Resources ministry. Every year in March, the Muhuri river in Parshuram, Feni becomes bone dry as the water flow goes down to only 75 cusecs (cubic feet per second), while in May the flow of Monu river in Sylhet goes down to 205 cusecs due to withdrawal of water from the upstream in India. This is ten times lower than what the rivers usually have.

Like these two rivers, Bangladesh and India have 54 common rivers. So far, however, the two countries have only one relevant treaty signed in 1996 which oversees the sharing of water of the Ganges river.

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Artists of Chhayanaut in green and red outfits performing at an event celebrating the Victory Day on Dhaka University's gymnasium premises yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN



On this day in 1971

DECEMBER 17
Temporary President Syed Nazrul Islam says, "This is the time to work as a post-war reconstructive government." He also says that the Bangladesh government had started preparing the new constitution and an election might be held by mid-1972.

A dozen experienced administrators, led by Ruhul Kuddus, one of the prime accused of the Agartala conspiracy proceedings, commence a civil administration in Dhaka.

Within 2:30pm, the western front of the Indo-Pakistan war is over. President

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4

Police 'obstruct' BNP processions in Narayanganj

10 party men injured as cops charge baton

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

At least 10 leaders and activists of the BNP were injured as police allegedly obstructed their Victory Day processions and charged baton on them in different areas of Narayanganj city yesterday.

Police also detained four activists of the party from different spots in Rail Gate-2 and Chashara areas, said city unit BNP Joint Secretary Monirul Islam Sajal.

Meanwhile, police claimed two of their officials were assaulted by BNP leaders and activists as the law enforcers tried to thwart their attempt of creating mayhem in the areas by blocking the roads.

In Chashara, police obstructed the party men when their procession reached the victory monument in the area, witnesses and BNP leaders alleged.

Ignoring police barriers, the BNP men placed floral wreaths on the monument to pay tribute to the country's martyred freedom fighters.

Later, police charged batons on them in Missionpara area while the leaders and activists were returning from the programme.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

ROHINGYA RELOCATION TO BHASHAN CHAR Govt plans facilities for UN, aid agencies

REJAUJ KARIM BYRON and PORIMOL PALMA

The government has planned to construct a four-storey building on Bhashan Char for the UN and aid agency representatives to ensure effective monitoring of humanitarian activities for one lakh Rohingya refugees to be relocated to the island from Cox's Bazar.

It also planned to increase the height of the flood-protection embankment around Bhashan Char housing project from the present nine feet to 19 feet.

These are part of the 43 new infrastructure components meant to improve the facilities on Bhashan Char under a revised project which will be placed at the Executive Committee on National Economic Council meeting today.

The housing project on the 40 square km Bhashan Char, an island in Noakhali around 37 miles from the coast of the Bay of Bengal, was initiated by the Prime Minister's Office after vast tracts of forests and hills in Cox's Bazar were damaged due to some one million Rohingyas being housed there. Besides, there were also risks of landslides in Cox's Bazar.

By October this year, the Bangladesh Navy, which is implementing the project, completed the construction of 120 cluster villages on the island. Disaster management ministry officials said the concrete houses built were constructed four feet above the ground. The entire housing site is protected by a flood embankment.

There are also 120 cyclone shelters, which will also be used as schools, medical centres and community centres. Disaster management ministry officials said there are large swathes of land that could be used for livestock farming and fisheries on Bhashan Char.

There will also be education facilities in Bhashan Char as well, along with eight speedboats which will be used for transit, government sources said.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2

CRACKDOWN ON PROTEST More than 300 people killed in Iran

Says Amnesty Int'l

AFP, London

At least 304 people were killed in Iran during a three-day crackdown against protests across the country in November, according to a new Amnesty International toll published yesterday.

The rights group had earlier estimated 208 deaths, including two youths aged 15 and 17.

Iran has dismissed such figures as "utter lies".

Amnesty said it collected "harrowing testimony" suggesting that after authorities "massacred" protesters, they orchestrated a "wide-scale clampdown" to cover up the deaths.

"Iran's authorities are carrying out a vicious crackdown following the outbreak of nationwide protests on 15 November," the London-based rights

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Scientists create self-cleaning plastic wrap



CNN ONLINE

Researchers have developed a self-cleaning plastic wrap that repels bacteria -- and could be used to prevent the transfer of antibiotic resistant superbugs, and other forms of dangerous bacteria.

A team of scientists from Canada's McMaster University used a combination of nano-scale surface engineering and chemistry to develop a plastic surface -- a treated form of transparent wrap -- which repels all kinds of bacteria.

The coating, inspired by water-resistant lotus leaves, is textured with microscopic "wrinkles" that block out external molecules and are chemically treated, meaning that water, blood or bacteria bounce away when they come into contact with the surface.

The plastic covering can be shrink wrapped onto surfaces that are considered common breeding grounds for bacteria like MRSA -- such as door handles, railings and IV stands.

"We developed the wrap to address the major

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2

TEEN RAPE CASE Ex-BJP MLA convicted by Delhi court

AFP, New Delhi

A former ruling party lawmaker was convicted yesterday of raping a teenager in a high-profile case that underscored India's rampant sexual violence and the impunity enjoyed by the elite.

Kuldeep Singh Sengar, a powerful four-time state legislator for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), was found guilty of raping the then 17-year-old at his home in Uttar Pradesh in 2017, lawyers said.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2



PRAYER TIMING DECEMBER 17
Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 5-05 12-45 3-45 5-21 7-00
JAMAAT 5-50 1-15 4-00 5-24 7-30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

2 held over rape of a schoolgirl

OUR CORRESPONDENT

Police yesterday arrested two youths in a case filed over raping a ninth-grader in Jashore's Chougachha upazila on Sunday.

Sagar Ahmed, 18, and Sajib Hossain 19, were held from their village homes in the same upazila, said Rifat Khan, officer-in-charge of Chougachha Police Station.

According to the case statement, the victim had been in a relationship with Sagar for the last few years.

On Sunday morning, Sagar asked the girl to meet him at a farm in Jagdishpur village.

As the girl reached there around 9:00am, they spent some time together, and around noon, Sagar asked the girl to get into a private car parked nearby.

Sagar's friend Sajib was there in the car along with the driver, police said, however, they were yet to identify the driver.

Sagar raped the girl inside the car while Sajib videoed the incident, says the case statement.

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Policemen baton-charge a Swetchhasebak Dal activist after obstructing a procession of the pro-BNP organisation on Bangabandhu Road in Narayanganj yesterday morning. The law enforcers also picked up several activists following a scuffle with cops.

PHOTO: SANAD SAHA

Xi supports HK leader in 'most difficult time'

CPJ says press freedom in the city under an accelerating squeeze

REUTERS, Hong Kong

Chinese President Xi Jinping offered his support for Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam yesterday, praising her courage in governing the Chinese-ruled financial hub in these "most difficult" times after months of often violent anti-government protests.

His comments came after Hong Kong police fired tear gas in late night street clashes with anti-government protesters as the former British colony's worst political crisis in decades shows no sign of resolution.

"The situation in Hong Kong in 2019 was the most complex and difficult since its return to the motherland," Xi told local media in brief comments before a closed-door meeting with Lam in Beijing.

"The central government fully recognizes the courage and assumption of responsibility you have displayed in these exceptional times in Hong Kong."

Hong Kong returned to Chinese rule in 1997 with the promise of wide-ranging autonomy under a "one country, two systems" formula, including a free press and independent judiciary, which the protesters say is being eroded by Communist Party rulers in Beijing. China denies the charge.

Hong Kong media have speculated that Lam's talks with Xi could yield fresh directives on the crisis, including a possible cabinet reshuffle. Xi did not go into specifics, but reiterated his support for Lam despite some previous

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