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SHUVADYA CANAL

# RHD frustrates revival effort

HELEMUL ALAM and TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

While the government plans to restore Shuvadya Canal in Keraniganj with a Tk 1,200 crore project, one of its own departments appeared to be a major obstacle.

The Roads and Highway Department (RHD) has built three large pillars in the middle of the canal for a bridge, which block the waterway.

The RHD is building the bridge just beside a narrow bridge at Kadamtali Khalpar area on the Dhaka-Mawa highway under the Dhaka-Padma Bridge-Bhangha Expressway Project. The department is upgrading the 54.23km highway to dual carriageway.

Two pillars of the existing bridge are on the banks of the canal, once considered a lifeline of Keraniganj on the outskirts of the capital.

During a recent visit, The Daily Star correspondents found that the contractor blocked the canal with a dam to construct the pillars. Other construction materials were also seen piled up beside the pillars.

State Minister for Power and Energy Nasrul Hamid, at a programme on December 19, blasted RHD officials for building the pillars in the canal.

Talking to The Daily Star over phone after the programme, Nasrul said, "We are going to re-excavate the canal and construct bank protection work under a project."

The water resources ministry has already taken up the project, now awaiting approval of the Executive Committee of National Economic Council (Ecneec), he said.

People will be able to use the canal as an alternative route to reach Dhaka from Bikrampur of Munshiganj quicker, once the project is completed.

But the pillars were built in the middle of the canal and

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Vehicles ply a bridge over part of Shuvadya Canal in Dhaka's Keraniganj. The waterbody has dried up at this place due to encroachment over the years. Recently, the Roads and Highway Department (RHD) has built three large pillars in the area to construct a new bridge, further blocking the water flow. The photo was taken a couple of days ago.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN



## On this day in 1971

DECEMBER 27  
RK Karanjia, an investigative journalist and the founder of Indian weekly tabloid Blitz, writes an article on the Liberation War in Bangladesh. In his article he says that Pakistan army should not be treated as war prisoners but as war criminals. According to the Geneva Convention, they could not get the honour. They were cold-blooded killers who bombed an orphanage with an aircraft and two attack helicopters in Dhaka to blame India in front of China and the US. Many children were killed in that incident, which was approved

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## 7 migrants die as boat sinks in a Turkey lake

*One Bangladeshi could be among them; 64 rescued*

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least seven people died after a boat carrying migrants capsized in Turkey's Lake Van yesterday and one of the dead is believed to be a Bangladeshi.

Bangladesh mission there was verifying if there were any Bangladeshi victims, among the dead and the 64 rescued alive.

An official at the Bangladesh embassy in Ankara said they had information that one Bangladeshi was among the dead and another one survived. A Turkish government agency told the embassy that there was a Bangladeshi among the deceased but did not provide details, the official told this newspaper over phone.

"We have asked [Turkish government agency] to provide us with details of the deceased," said the official, seeking anonymity.

The boat carrying migrants from Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan sank on Thursday around 3:00am local time, Reuters reported, quoting the governor's office in Bitlis province.

The boat sank as it approached

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## Four killed in Kashmir border shootings

*1 Indian, 2 Pakistani soldiers among them; Pak FM slams ceasefire violation*

AJAZEERA ONLINE

At least four people, including two Pakistani and an Indian soldier, have been killed in an exchange of fire between Indian and Pakistani troops in the disputed region of Kashmir, officials on both sides said.

The Pakistani soldiers were killed in the Dewa area of the mountainous region, Pakistan's military spokesman Major General Asif Ghafoor said yesterday. He claimed three Indian soldiers were killed in the exchange of fire.

However, Indian army spokesman Colonel Rajesh Kalia yesterday said one Indian officer and a civilian were killed in firing along the Line of Control (LoC) in the Rampur sector of Indian-administered Kashmir.

LoC is the de facto border that divides the disputed Kashmir region between the two countries.

Pakistan's Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi condemned the latest ceasefire violation and paid tributes to the two soldiers killed, accusing Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi of looking to disrupt peace in the region, The Associated Press news agency reported yesterday.

India and Pakistan have fought two of their three full-scale wars over the mountainous territory of Kashmir, which both claim in full but administer separate portions of, divided by the LoC.

Since 2003, a ceasefire has been in place along the LoC, but violations by both sides are frequent, particularly at times of high tension between the nuclear-armed neighbours.

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## Intellectually challenged girl raped in Jashore

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

A 15-year-old mentally challenged girl was allegedly raped by her neighbour at her home in Jashore's Keshabpur upazila on Wednesday night.

Victim's aunt alleged that Syed, 26, went to their home around midnight that night and raped her niece when she was alone.

Yesterday, the aunt filed a case with Keshabpur Police Station, accusing Syed.

Abu Syed, officer-in-charge of the police station, said they were trying to arrest the accused who went into hiding.

A cousin of the victim filed a complaint with Upazila Nirbahi Officer Nusrat Jahan in this regard. The UNO directed the police to take legal action against the accused.

The OC said the victim was in safe custody and they would send her to Jashore General Hospital today for medical examination.

## Honest German returns bag with 16,000 euros



AFP, Frankfurt Am Main

A 63-year-old man in Germany had a very Merry Christmas indeed after an honest finder returned the backpack he had forgotten under a tree -- filled with presents and 16,000 euros (\$17,700) in cash.

The 51-year-old finder alerted police after stumbling upon the bag near the centre of the western city of Krefeld shortly before midnight on Christmas Eve.

Officers were able to quickly identify the owner and reunite him with the backpack and its precious contents.

The man who found the bag "refused a finder's fee, because it was Christmas," Krefeld police wrote on Facebook.

"There really are people who do good deeds over Christmas," they added.

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## CAA, NRC Protests in India after RSS rally

AFP, New Delhi

Indians took to the streets again yesterday in yet more protests against a citizenship law, a day after pro-government Hindu hardliners staged a show of force complete with horses, drums and batons.

Two weeks of at times violent demonstrations have killed at least 27 people as anti-government protesters have vented their anger nationwide in the biggest challenge to Prime Minister Narendra Modi

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### PRAYER TIMING DECEMBER 27

Fazr Juma Asr Maghrib Esha  
AZAN 5:30 12:30 4:00 5:27 7:00  
JAMAAT 6:05 1:15 4:15 5:30 7:30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



## A WINTER TREAT

As winter tightens its grip on the country, gulls swarm near the bank of the Karnaphuli river from the Bay looking for food. The stunning white bird in flight is a feast for the eyes of bird-lovers. The photo was taken in Chattogram's Boaiilla Char area on Wednesday.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

### CHRISTMAS DAY TYPHOON

## At least 16 killed in Philippines

AFP, Manila

A typhoon that swept across remote villages and popular tourist areas of the central Philippines on Christmas day claimed at least 16 lives, authorities said yesterday.

Typhoon Phanfone, with gusts reaching 200 kilometres (125 miles) an hour, tore roofs off houses and toppled electric posts as it ripped through the central Philippines on Wednesday.

Videos from the typhoon's path showed fallen trees and strong winds pummeling flimsy houses. Local disaster officials cut felled trees to clear blocked roads.

At least 16 people were killed in villages and towns in the Visayas, the central third of the Philippines, according to disaster agency officials.

Phanfone also hit Boracay, Coron and other holiday destinations that are famed for their white-sand beaches and popular with foreign tourists.

Mobile phone and internet access on Boracay was cut during the storm and the networks remained down on Thursday, making assessment of the damage there difficult.

"Still, communication lines are down. Electricity is still down," Jonathan Pablito, police chief of Malay town in Alkan province, which is on an island neighbouring Boracay, told AFP.

Pablito said ferry services between Boracay and Aklan -- the main way to travel to and from the holiday island -- were still not operating on Thursday, even though the storm had passed.

"We have no news from coast guard if ships were allowed to sail. Since the 24th... all those going to the island and coming from the island weren't able to cross."

The airport at Kalibo town in Aklan, which services Boracay, was badly damaged, according to a Korean tourist

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