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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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Construction work for a bridge block the Shuvadya Canal in Dhaka's Keraniganj. The Roads and Highways Department was building the bridge blocking the waterway, but has decided to demolish the under-construction structure following objection from the local lawmaker.

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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Cold snap sweeps north

Lowest temperature 5.7 degrees Celsius in Tentulia; 3 die in fire lit to keep warm

STAR REPORT

People of lower-income group in the northern region have been immensely suffering for the last few days as a cold wave sweeping over the country.

The lowest temperature was recorded at 5.7 degrees Celsius in Tetulia upazila of Panchagarh yesterday, reported Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD).

According to the Met office, temperature across the country may fall further in the next 72 hours as light rain is expected in different regions.

“Light rain or drizzle is likely to occur at one or two places over Khulna, Barishal, Chattogram and Dhaka Divisions,” read a forecast of the BMD's central office which would remain valid until 9:00am today.

The forecast also read that mild to moderate cold wave was sweeping over Rangpur division and the regions of Mymensingh, Rajshahi, Nogaon and Sirajgonj and it might continue.

Our correspondents in different districts reported on public sufferings because of the weather.

The day labourers in Thakurgaon have remained unemployed, reported our correspondent in the district.

Bidesh Chandra Roy, a farmer of Kochubari village in Thakurgaon Sadar upazila, said, “We are staying at our homes because of the weather. We cannot work at croplands.”

Afajul Islam, a rickshaw puller in the upazila, said, “The number of passengers have reduced due to cold. On the other hand, I cannot even pull rickshaw as my body feels like it's frozen.”

Businesses in the district were also hampered as labourers were unwilling to work due to the cold, said Mehedi Hasan Khan Babla,

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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

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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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Mentally challenged girl raped

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

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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 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 Boailla Char area on Wednesday.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

Four killed in Kashmir skirmishes

One Indian, two Pakistani soldiers among them

ALJAZEERA 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 Kalra 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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