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DECENTRALISATION INITIATIVE

# Held back by lack of political will

Experts tell meeting

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government initiative to decentralise several public service deliveries by transferring them to local government bodies has not been properly implemented even though a law was enacted for this nine years ago, said development practitioners and governance campaigners yesterday.

As a result, rural people are being deprived of quality services, they said at a views exchange meeting at the capital's Cirdap.

Governance Advocacy Forum (GAF), a platform of NGOs, arranged the meeting.

Speakers said bureaucratic and political unwillingness were the major obstacles and urged ministries concerned to take prompt action.

Referring to Upazila Parishad (Amendment) Act 2011, Ziaul Karim, coordinator of governance programme at the Manusher Jonno Foundation, said activities and manpower of 17 government bodies were transferred to upazila parishad.

The bodies include directorates of health, family planning, agricultural extension, fisheries, livestock, disaster management, social welfare and primary education.

But in reality, the government "lacks the political will" to hand over the functions of these offices to upazila parishad, he said while presenting the outcome of a survey

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**HIGH HOPES FOR HIGH TIDE...** Goods-laden vessels are stuck at the confluence of Chaktai canal and the Karnaphuli river in Chattogram. Silt and accumulated waste has raised the bed and during low tide, the boats waste precious business hours stuck in mud, getting relief only when the tide comes in. This picture was taken from Chattogram's Marine Drive yesterday.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

## Modi a citizen by birth, lacks documents

ANANDARAZAR ONLINE

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi is a citizen by birth but lacks documents to back the claim, his office has said in reply to a query recently made under the Right to Information act.

On February 17, a person named Shubhangkar Sarker asked if the prime minister possessed citizenship documents.

A secretary at the Prime Minister's Office, said that Modi was Indian by birth according to clause 3 of the Citizenship Act, 1955, reports Indian Bengali-language daily Anandabazar.

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## Indians can't be split along religious lines

Amartya Sen says

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Voicing concern over the recent violence in north-east Delhi, Nobel laureate Amartya Sen said India is a secular country and people cannot be divided along religious lines.

"India is a centrally-ruled territory. We can't divide Hindus and Muslims. As an Indian citizen, I can't help but worry," reported our New Delhi correspondent quoting Sen.

Sen demanded an investigation to find out whether the Delhi Police was inefficient or there was

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FIRST YEAR OF BANGLADESH BANGABANDHU'S NATION-BUILDING CHALLENGES

## 'Bangladesh will always remain with Soviet people'



**Bangabandhu being warmly greeted by Soviet Communist Party General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev in Kremlin on March 2, 1972.**

MARCH 2, 1972

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

**MUJIB-BREZHNEV TALKS**

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the Soviet Communist Party General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev hold a discussion on the question of further developing and consolidating relations of friendship and cooperation between the two countries. The two leaders also discuss some international issues of mutual interest. Brezhnev greets the 'outstanding leader and the head of

SEE PAGE 11 COL 2

## VIOLENCE OVER CAA

# Death toll now 3 in Meghalaya

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

A 37-year-old man was killed by three unidentified people at his home in Meghalaya's East Khasi Hills district in the early hours yesterday, taking the toll from clashes over amended citizenship law and inner line permit issues in the Indian state to three, police said.

The situation was already tense following the death of two persons in separate attacks in Ichamati area in East Khasi Hills district on Friday and at state capital Shillong's lewduh market on Saturday.

After the clashes, curfew was imposed at noon in the two police station areas in Shillong while night curfew was imposed in the entire city.

The night curfew was lifted from many parts of the city yesterday, reported our New Delhi correspondent.

However, East Khasi Hills district authorities said the curfew was extended in areas under the jurisdiction of Lumdingjri and Sadar police stations, and Cantonment Beat House over fears that there might be a serious breakdown of law and order in those places.

Mobile internet and messaging services have been temporarily suspended in six districts of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills

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## CORONAVIRUS SLOWDOWN

# China sees dramatic drop in air pollution

MAIL ONLINE

Satellite images taken by US space agency Nasa have shown a dramatic decline in levels of air pollution over China, which is "partly" an outcome of the economic slowdown prompted by the coronavirus outbreak in the country, it said.

The Nasa maps showed that levels of nitrogen dioxide -- a noxious gas emitted by motor vehicles and industrial facilities -- are falling this year following a record decline in industrial activities in China as manufacturers stop work in a bid to contain coronavirus, report BBC and Daily Mail.

The reduction in nitrogen dioxide levels was first apparent in Wuhan city -- the epicentre of the virus outbreak -- but then spread across China, scientists at Nasa said.

Nasa compared the images from the first two months of 2020 with the same period last year.

The decline in China's air pollution levels

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## New Malaysia PM sworn in

### Mahathir vows to fight on

AFP, Kuala Lumpur

A staunch Muslim nationalist backed by a scandal-mired party was sworn in as Malaysia's premier yesterday after a reformist government's collapse, but ex-leader Mahathir Mohamad, 94, slammed the move as illegal.

The Southeast Asian nation was plunged into turmoil after Mahathir's "Pact of Hope" alliance, which stormed to a historic victory in 2018, collapsed amid bitter infighting.

Mahathir initially quit as

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**PRAYER TIMING MARCH 2**

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha

AZAN 5-15 12-45 4-30 6-05 7-30

JAMAAT 5-50 1-15 4-45 6-10 8-00

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



This picture taken in Savar of mango buds carries the promise of culinary delights as it will not be long before Bangladesh's favourite fruit floods the market and becomes the preeminent item at homes, restaurants and food stalls across the country.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

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