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# Fear, threats trigger Adivasi displacement

ANWAR ALI, Rajshahi

Over 150 indigenous families in different villages of the district's Godagari upazila have migrated to India following persecution by Bangalee settlers and communal attacks during political turmoil in the last two years.

Many more are prepared to go amid the ongoing flare-up of violence. Indigenous people had been the majority in at least a dozen villages since the British era. But things changed as hundreds of shoal (char) people, mostly victims of river erosion in Chapainawabganj, started settling in the villages a few years back.

Threats from these settlers made the already-vulnerable Adivasi communities feel more insecure. Then there were BNP-Jamaat-led attacks on minorities in 2013 and early last year, especially after the war crimes verdict against Delwar Hossain Sayedee and the January 5 polls.

Selling out land and properties, the indigenous families in the Godagari villages have left ancestral homes secretly at night for different places in India, particularly Murshidabad, Burdwan and Malda by crossing the border via brokers.

"This is not a country for us to live in," said a frustrated Proshanto Murari of Shialipara village. His father Anonto Murari already went to India seven months ago and he is likely to leave anytime along with his brother and two sisters.

Fourteen Munda families out of 22 in Shialipara village, six out of eight in Notun Shialipara village and nine out of 32 in Bottoli have left while the rest are bidding for their time.

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For generations, this land at Rajshahi's Chatrapukur village has been a graveyard for indigenous people. But not anymore. Some local Muslims have set their eyes on it, erecting makeshift toilets and cow barns on it. They even kept haystacks right on two graves.

PHOTO: ANWAR ALI

# Save people from blockade violence

*Civil society platform questions justification of such political programmes, asks govt, parties to ensure people's constitutional rights*

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Members of civil society platform Rukhe Darao Bangladesh yesterday questioned the justification of the countrywide blockade imposed by the BNP-led 20-party alliance that has so far claimed the lives of at least 26 people.

Prof Emeritus Anisuzzaman, chairman of the platform, said that the blockade was

trampling the constitutional rights of people.

"We want to ask all political parties and the government to give our constitutional rights back. No public movement can be achieved by crippling the country's economy or torturing the people," said Anisuzzaman at a human chain programme in the capital's Shahbagh.

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# Stop violence, use of force

*TIB worried at ongoing unrest*

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Transparency International Bangladesh yesterday expressed deep concern over the ongoing inhuman and cruel manifestation of violence and use of force in an unhealthy competition for power at the cost of people's basic rights and prospect of democracy and good governance.

"By indulging in an unhealthy competition and show of force in the name of democracy, the two largest parties are crushing the basic rights of the people, particularly children, women and the youth. People are being deprived of the whole range of fundamental rights starting from right to life to right of normal death," said Iftekharuzzaman, executive

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DHAKA-N'GANJ RAIL TRACKS

# Ecnec okays Tk 378cr dual-gauge project

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Ecnec yesterday approved a project to lay a dual-gauge track on the Dhaka-Narayanganj route to increase railway's passenger carrying capacity fourfold.

Once the track is laid, Bangladesh Railway will be able to transport 93,000 passengers on the route every day against its current capacity of 23,000 commuters, said a planning ministry statement.

Chaired by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, a meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecnec) gave the

nod to the Tk 378 crore project. Of the amount, Japan will provide the railway with Tk 249 crore as grant.

Under the project, a dual-gauge track will be laid parallel to the existing meter-gauge track. Seventy-six trains would run on the route every day after completion of the project in June 2017. At present, 32 trains ply the route.

Planning Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal said the new track would save valuable time wasted in traffic jam on the Dhaka-Narayanganj road.

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A train was scheduled to leave the Kamalapur Rail Station for Jamalpur at 3:00pm yesterday. But when this photo was taken at 3:33pm, the train did not even arrive at the station. So the wait of the passengers continues.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

# Winter chill bites poor

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A moderate cold wave continued to shiver people in different parts of the country yesterday, disrupting normal life.

Many people, especially the poor, were struggling to secure their daily bread as they could not come out of their houses due to the inclement weather.

An official at Bangladesh Meteorological Department said the cold spell is likely to continue today in Dhaka, Rajshahi and Rangpur divisions and some other districts. However, the mercury may rise slightly in Dhaka tomorrow.

The country's lowest temperature yesterday was recorded at 6.7 degrees Celsius in Sagarpara of Rajshahi. The lowest temperature recorded in the capital was 13.4 degrees Celsius.

Some areas in Rajshahi and Rangpur divisions have been experiencing a mild to moderate cold wave, said the Met official.

The temperature ranging between eight and 10 degrees Celsius is considered a mild cold wave, while the temperature between six and eight degrees Celsius is considered moderate. Anything below the range is a severe cold wave, he mentioned.

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# Jamal Uddin reinstated as Biman chairman

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has reinstated Air Marshal (ret) Jamal Uddin Ahmed as the chairman of the board of directors of Biman Bangladesh Airlines, ending the speculation that a new chief might fill the post.

The speculation gained ground following the arrests of three top Biman officials and two others in connection

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PRAYER TIMING January 21		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fazr	5-30	6-05
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-15	4-30
Maghrib	5-43	5-47
Esha	7-15	7-45

Source: Islamic Foundation

**The Daily Star**

**Integral Energy Limited**

**ONLINE POLL**

Do you think BNP's decision to continue the nonstop countrywide blockade is justified?

Yes (52%)

No (48%)

TOTAL VOTES: 506

**TODAY'S POLL**

Who would you blame for the online violence?

Government

BNP-led 20-party alliance

PLEASE CAST YOUR VOTE AT [www.thedailystar.net](http://www.thedailystar.net)

AIRASIA PLANE CRASH

# Investigation focuses on human error

AFP, Jakarta

An AirAsia plane that crashed into the Java Sea last month with 162 people on board climbed at a faster than normal speed and then stalled, the Indonesian transport minister said yesterday.

Flight QZ8501 went down on December 28 in stormy weather, during what was supposed to be a short trip from the Indonesian city of Surabaya to Singapore.

Indonesia's meteorological agency has said bad weather may have caused the crash, and investigators are analysing the data

from the jet's black boxes before releasing a preliminary report.

Just moments before the plane disappeared off the radar, the pilot had asked to climb to avoid the storm. He was not immediately granted permission due to heavy air traffic.

"In the final minutes, the plane climbed at a speed which was beyond normal," Transport Minister Ignasius Jonan told reporters, citing radar data.

"The plane suddenly went up at a speed above the normal limit that it was able to climb to. Then it stalled."

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# Can ants solve traffic jams?

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

If we all drove more like ants walk, there would be far fewer traffic jams, according to one scientist.

Studying why ants don't get in their own versions of bad traffic could help us learn lessons to keep cars flowing, Apoorva Nagar and the Indian

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