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4,391 acres of railway land grabbed

Since Oct last year, only 132 acres recovered, minister tells Sangsad

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A total of 4,391 acres of railway land has been grabbed so far by individuals and government, semi-government, autonomous, private, religious and educational organisations, a minister said in parliament yesterday.

Of the land, 3,378 acres have been grabbed by private organisations and individuals, Railway Minister Mujibul Haque said in reply to lawmakers' queries.

In a scripted reply, he also informed the House that another 922.34 acres have been occupied by government, semi government and autonomous organisations while more than 90.83 acres by religious and educational institutions.

The railway minister, however, did not mention the names of the grabbers.

Regarding the recovery of the grabbed land, he said the railway authorities recovered more than 132 acres of land between October 2015 and March this year.

Efforts are going on to recover the remaining land with the assistance of local representatives and local administrations, he added.

Replying to another query, Mujibul told MPs in parliament that more than twelve thousand posts, including 128 class-I and 7,430 class-III officials' remained vacant in the railway.



Locals pushing a human haulier from behind after it got stuck in a flash flood in Alirgaon union in Sylhet's Jointapur upazila yesterday. Bottom right, a CNG-run auto-rickshaw wade through water in the same area. The flash flood, triggered by heavy rain and the onrush of hill waters, has left thousands of people marooned in the district.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

Flash flood hits Sylhet

MINTU DESHWARA, *beck from Gowainghat, Sylhet*

Heavy rain and the onrush water from the hills triggered a flash flood in Gowainghat and Jointapur upazilas of Sylhet yesterday, marooning around 2,000 families in 30 villages.

Water flooded low-lying areas of the upazilas. The water also flowed into Sylhet Sadar and Kanaighat upazilas two or three days ago.

Nijpath, Fotepur, Dorbost and Chiknapur villages of Jointapur and Pachim Jaflong, Purbo Jaflong, Rustompur, Dhobari, Lengura and Toakul villages in Gowainghat upazila went under water as the rain continued, locals said.

Abdul Alim, 58, of Unanpur village in Gowainghat, said heavy rain in the last two days caused the flooding. "Water from the Gowain river started to enter our home since Saturday evening."

Another victim Joynul Miah, 65, of Jaflong tea garden in Gowainghat, said water from the hills began to flood the area since Saturday night, forcing the villagers to take shelter on road.

Joynal Abedin, Jointapur upazila chairman, said floodwater entered 13 villages in the upazila and around 1,200 families were affected.

On information, Water Development Board officials visited the areas.

Abdul Hakim Chowdhury, chairman of Gowainghat upazila, said road communications between the upazila headquarters and Pachim Jaflong, Purbo Jaflong, Rustompur, Dhobari and Lengura unions remained snapped.

Dykes at Nayeakhel, Bhattikhel, Thubang, Baladara and Shurkhel had already been damaged. As water level in the Gowain and

Rajshahi dist AL leader found dead

He accidentally shot himself, claim cops

RU CORRESPONDENT

A Rajshahi district Awami League leader was found dead yesterday.

Ziaul Haque Tuku was the treasurer of Rajshahi district unit AL and also an ex-administrator of Rajshahi Chamber of Commerce and Industries.

Police recovered his body from his chamber beside the city corporation building in the afternoon.

The police claimed that Tuku might have accidentally shot himself with his licensed revolver. But his family claims that it was a murder.

Asaduzzaman Asad, general secretary of district unit AL, said Tuku was chatting with one Nayan, Jasim, Rabiul and Tariqul in the office.

"Nayan, one of Tuku's

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

UP polls violence kills 2, injures 60

45 killed in 3 phases of voting so far

STAR REPORT

At least two people were killed and 60 others injured in violence over Union Parishad polls in the last two days.

Another man, who was wounded in a pre-poll violence last week in Tangail, died on Saturday.

With this death, over 45 people have been killed, including 21 on the three voting days of the UP elections. Several thousands were injured in election violence after the polls began.

Meanwhile, the Election Commission yesterday asked the presiding officers of 25 polling stations where voting was suspended for violence and irregularities during the third phase of polls on Saturday to file cases against the criminals.

The EC also ordered the authorities concerned to take departmental action against the two assistant presiding officers who helped criminals cast fake votes in a polling station in Comilla on Saturday.

The BNP yesterday sharply criticised Chief Election Commissioner Kazi Rakibuddin Ahmad's remark that the third phase of UP elections was "fairer" than the previous ones, saying the EC was making a mockery.

The party would stay in the remaining phases of the UP polls, BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Rizvi Ahmed said at a press conference at the party's Nayapalton central office.

Elections to 725 UPs were held on March 22 in the first phase, 639 UPs on March 31 in the second phase, and 614 UPs on April 23 in the third phase.

Polls to 743 UPs are slated for May 7 in the fourth phase and 733 UPs for May 28 in the fifth phase. Around 700 more UPs will go to the polls in the sixth phase in June this year.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

Paddy Tk 23, rice Tk 32

Govt announces procurement price

BSS, Dhaka

The government has decided to procure 7 lakh tonnes of rice and 6 lakh tonnes of paddy during the current Boro season.

Talking to journalists after a meeting of food planning and monitoring committee at the secretariat yesterday, Food Minister Quamrul Islam said the paddy would be procured at Tk 23 per kg as the production cost of it is Tk 20.70, and the rice would be procured at Tk 32 per kg as the production cost of it is Tk 29.

He said the paddy and the rice would be purchased from May 5 to August 31.

The minister told reporters that the government has increased the procurement target of paddy this year for the benefits of the farmers.

The government procured one lakh tonnes of paddy and 10 lakh tonnes of rice last year. The government has 10,74,431 tonnes of rice and paddy in its stock.

Chaired by Food Minister Quamrul Islam, the meeting was also attended by Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury, Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed and State Minister for Food Nuruzzaman Ahmed.

Norway uses F16 jet to save a life

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

A critically ill patient's life was saved after an F-16 fighter jet was used to rush specialised medical equipment halfway across Norway in less than half an hour.

The sick man was taken to a hospital in Bodø but it did not have an ECMO machine, which supports the heart and lungs, without which he would die.

Doctors knew the closest one available was at a hospital in Trondheim, 280 miles to the south. A 10-hour journey by car, they feared the man would die before it could arrive.

However, after a moment of inspiration, they decided to contact an air force base near Trondheim to ask if there was any hope of getting the equipment to Bodø in time to save the patient, whose precise condition was unclear.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3



'STEALING PIGEONS' Two boys tortured

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Two schoolboys were allegedly tortured by a Union Parishad member, his associate, and an uncle of one of the victims reportedly for stealing pigeons at Chhota Basha village in Agaijkhara upazila on Friday.

The victims are Sagar



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PRAYER TIMING

APRIL 25

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha

AZAN 4-20 12-45 4-45 6-29 8-00

JAMAAT 4-55 1-15 5-00 6-34 8-30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



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Participants nationwide are requested to send their selected outfits and accessories for the album.

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2. All submissions must be accompanied by name of designer, address, contact number, price and a short description of the product (either in English or Bangla).
3. Designs should be original and suitable for the weather conditions.
4. The attires and accessories sent for the album will be returned.
5. Entry fee per submission is Tk. 500 (minimum 6 entries for each participating house)

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For submission of products and advertisement, please contact
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