

# Erosion strikes 19 villages in Goalanda

1,250 houses devoured

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

The Padma has devoured most of the areas of 19 villages in Rajbari's Goalanda in the last two months.

Locals said Daulatdia, Dabogram and Chhota Bhakla unions are affected by Padma erosion every year.

But the erosion that began from the last week of July eroded away some 1,250 houses, around 1,500 bighas of croplands, a mosque, a mazar, and about 2,000 trees of eight villages under Dabogram union, seven villages under Chhota Bhakla union and four villages under Daulatdia union, said chairman of these unions while talking to this correspondent.

Some 2,000 more houses in the three unions are under threat of being devoured by the river, they said, adding that the affected families are living under the open sky.

Jashim Sheikh, 75, an inhabitant of Malotpara village under Dabogram union, said, "At least 60 houses of our village have gone into the Padma within 15 days. Now we are living under the open sky."

Alom Gazi, 35, of the same village, said they had no work for a month as all their croplands were washed away by the river.

Munnab Bepari, 35, of that village, blamed unplanned river dredging for

the erosion.

Anwara Begum, 45, of Dollapara village under Daulatdia union, said, "Our house, along with six bighas of land, has gone into the Padma."

Another villager Amina Khatun, 60, said they were living in a relative's house, and they had no money or land to build a new house.

Nurul Islam Mondal, chairman of Daulatdia Union Parishad, said, "I have told the people, who lost their houses, to build their houses in Nurul Islampara village as his family owns a huge portion of land of the village. We distributed 20kg of rice to each of the 1,000 affected people today [yesterday]."

Contacted, Shikder Mohammad Mohighmen Aktar, agriculture officer at the Department of Agricultural Extension in Goalanda, said they primarily estimated that around 100 to 150 hectares of agricultural land were damaged. When water would recede, they could ascertain the figure of the affected croplands.

SM Nurunobi, sub-divisional engineer at Water Development Board in Rajbari, said they had visited the affected areas and informed their higher authorities. They would also come up with a plan on how to protect the areas from erosion after surveying the spot.



Trucks and buses wait in long queues to get on ferries on Paturia-Daulatdia route after ferry services on Shimulia-Kathalbari route were suspended due to strong currents in the Padma. Inset, an officer at a police box handing out tokens to drivers so the vehicles can maintain a serial. The photos were taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## Global community expects Hasina to win next election

Foreign secy says

UNB, New York

Heads of state and different international agencies hoped that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina would form the government again winning the next general election for the continuity of development and democracy.

They expressed their hope when they separately met Hasina at the bilateral meeting room of the UN headquarters on Wednesday, said Foreign Secretary Shahidul Haque while briefing reporters after the meetings.

"Considering the regional stability, her [Hasina's] role in Rohingya issue and regional economic development, they all in general expressed the hope that there'll be her [her government] continuity and she'll be there in the leadership of Bangladesh again," Shahidul said.

"In the discussions, we've clearly seen a global reading that the prime minister will form the government after the [next national] election," the foreign secretary added.

The PM on Wednesday had separate meetings with Estonian President Kersti Kaljulaid, UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi, Unicef Executive Director Henrietta Fore, UN Secretary

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## UZ chairman stands accused in rape case

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

A case has been filed against Sunamganj's Bishwambarpur upazila Chairman Harun Ur Rashid over allegedly raping a woman in his office.

Aged about 32, the woman from the same upazila filed the case with Bishwambarpur Police Station on Wednesday, hours after being "violated", said Mahbubur Rahman, officer-in-charge of the police station.

The woman, mother of four, was admitted to One Stop Crisis Centre at Sunamganj Sadar Hospital yesterday, said the OC.

However, the accused, a local BNP leader, denied the allegation saying he was framed by his political rivals.

Quoting the case statement, Mahbubur said the chairman called in the woman to his office at the upazila complex around 2:30pm giving an assurance that a sewing machine would be allotted to her. At one stage, he "raped" the woman.

Hearing her scream, some people present at the upazila complex gathered in front of the chairman's office. Harun, however, managed to leave the place, the OC added.

Talking to The Daily Star, the upazila chairman, also a former president of upazila BNP, said the allegation was utterly false.

"I was out of my office on Wednesday afternoon to attend arbitration in a remote village. Some of

## Jamaat a bar to 'greater national unity'

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In response, Jamaat leader Abdul Halim said they wanted the unity to happen at any cost and that the BNP could make any decision to make that happen.

"If we are an obstacle, keep us aside from the unity process. But we want unity at any cost," a source quoted the Jamaat leader as telling the meeting.

At the meeting, alliance members requested BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir to complete the unity process at the soonest.

But Fakhrul did not make any comment at the meeting participated by members from all the alliance partners, according to two sources who spoke on condition of anonymity.

The BNP-led four-party alliance was formed in 1999 where Jamaat was a key partner. Jamaat is with the BNP since then. Jamaat was also in the 2001-2006 government led by the BNP. In 2012, the four-party alliance was expanded to a 20-party alliance.

At a programme at Mahanagar Natyamancha on Saturday, Gonoforman President Dr Kamal Hossain and BDB President Badruddoza Chowdhury announced that they would work together to have the greater unity with other political parties.

Several top leaders of the BNP and its allies (other than Jamaat) also shared the stage along with representatives of some small parties and civil society members.

But in a joint meeting of Juktajfront and Jatiya Okiya Prokriya (national unity process) of Dr Kamal on Tuesday,

the BDB made its position clear that there cannot be any direct or indirect alliance with any anti-liberation party or individual.

Led by the BDB, Juktajfront is a four-party alliance, which was formed late last year. Other members of this alliance are Bangladesh Krishak Sramik Janata League, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) of ASM Abdur Rob and Nagorik Oikya of Mahmudur Rahman Manna, who quit the Awami League in 2009 as its organising secretary.

Talking to The Daily Star, BDB Joint Secretary General Mahi B Chowdhury, who is Badruddoza Chowdhury's son, said they wanted to join force with BNP, but for that to happen the party had to leave the Jamaat.

Community Party of Bangladesh (CPB) President Mujahidul Islam Selim gave a similar view.

However, Dr Kamal, who quit the AL in the 1980s and formed Gonoforman in 1992, and the other partners in the Juktajfront said they had no problem to be in the unity process with the BNP.

"We are now trying to forge a greater unity and Jamaat will not be a barrier to the unity process. The important issue now is the greater unity among the people and also the political parties. This is why we are focusing on it," Dr Kamal, also convenor of Jatiya Okiya Prokriya, told The Daily Star.

Manna, convenor of Nagorik Oikya, echoed this view. "Jamaat is not a big deal at all for our unity process."

Asked, BNP leaders said Jamaat was not a registered political party. So Jamaat does not exist as a party and therefore it cannot contest elections under its banner. As a result, Jamaat is not an issue here.

The 20-party combine is a separate alliance and that the greater unity process, whose objectives are totally different, should be seen as such, they added.

"Our focus is to forge a greater unity and we are working to achieve that goal," Fakhrul told The Daily Star earlier in the day.

Referring to the demands of other political parties for polls under a non-partisan interim government, Fakhrul said the left leaning political alliance and some other parties have been calling for a greater unity to restore democracy in the country.

"Even civil society members and other social organisations raised the same demands. So we are trying to form a greater unity with all the political parties and in this case Jamaat is not an issue," Fakhrul added.

BNP leaders said they were keeping distance from Jamaat for the moment to make the greater unity a reality.

The party has been criticised at home and abroad for its relations with the Jamaat.

Asked, a Jamaat leader said, "We also want greater unity. We are in the 20-party alliance and we want to keep it intact. If the BNP wants to forge a separate alliance with other parties, they can do it and we welcome it."

Against this backdrop, the BNP is

expected to hold a rally in the capital tomorrow. Other leaders in the unity process said they would set their next course of action, including formation of a liaison committee for the unity process, after BNP's programme.

Keeping this in mind, the BNP has decided to hold the programme under its own banner, and not under the banner of the 20-party alliance.

At the rally, the party will place a seven-point demand for the government to meet before the election.

Dr Kamal floated his Jatiya Okiya Prokriya on August 2016, about a year after the formation of Juktajfront.

Earlier in July this year, eight left leaning political parties formed an alliance styled "Left Democratic Alliance".

They all demand polls under a non-partisan government, dissolution of parliament before the election schedule is announced and deployment of army during the election, among other things.

Initially, the Awami League, and also party chief and prime minister Sheikh Hasina welcomed the unity process.

However, the ruling party started to come down hard on the leaders of the unity process in recent weeks after they shared stage with the BNP and spoke of forging a "greater national unity" against the AL.

## UN votes

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Thirty-five of the council's 47 members voted in favour of the resolution while only three -- China, the Philippines and Burundi -- voted against.

The remainder either abstained or refrained from casting a vote.

The text was presented after a damning report was released to the council earlier this month, outlining in meticulous and searing detail atrocities against the Rohingya, who fled a violent military campaign that started in August last year.

The 444-page report by a UN fact-finding mission concluded there was enough evidence to merit investigation and prosecution of Myanmar's army chief and five other top military commanders for crimes against humanity and genocide against the Rohingya.

Troops, sometimes aided by ethnic Rakhine mobs, committed murder, rape, arson and torture, using unfathomable levels of violence and with a total disregard for human life, investigators concluded.

More than 700,000 of the stateless Muslim minority took refuge in Bangladesh, where they remain -- fearful of returning to mainly Buddhist Myanmar despite a repatriation deal between the two countries.

The military has denied nearly all wrongdoing, justifying its crackdown as a legitimate means of rooting out Rohingya militants.

The UN and rights groups meanwhile say the operations were vastly disproportionate and a troop build-up in the area occurred before insurgents attacked police posts in August 2017.

Further pressuring Myanmar, the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague independently ruled that it had jurisdiction to open a preliminary investigation, even though the country has not signed the treaty underpinning the court.

Yesterday's text took note of the ICC ruling, and requested "the mechanism to cooperate closely with any of its future investigations pertaining to human rights in Myanmar."

The resolution also said the mandate of the UN fact-finding mission should be extended until the new mechanism is operational.

Yesterday's decision marks the first time the Human Rights Council has itself opted to create such a mechanism.

A similar panel was created in late 2016 to build cases for the prosecution of war crimes in Syria, but it was set up following a vote in the General Assembly in New York.

## Macron eyes to be leader of free world

CNN ONLINE

It must have been toe-curling. The leader of the nation that painted much of the globe an imperial red promising tax breaks for big business to compensate for leaving the world's largest trading bloc.

American businessmen listening to British Prime Minister Theresa May might have been forgiven for embarrassing coughs while she made undeliverable promises like a second-hand car salesman on the fringes of the United Nations General Assembly in New York this week.

## Police want 'polls treat'

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The ministry formed a seven-member committee headed by an additional secretary on July 12 to assess the proposal and find out ways and means to meet the demand. The committee is yet to submit its report.

Talking to this newspaper on Wednesday, Senior Assistant Secretary of the home ministry Kamrul Ahsan Talukder, also a member of the committee, said, "A decision will come soon after the Public Security Division secretary returns from a foreign trip."

According to the proposal, the police headquarters wants that 11 additional IGs be promoted to grade-I, 42 additional IGs to grade-II, 46 deputy inspectors general (DIGs) to grade-III, 83 additional DIGs to grade-IV and 313 SPs to grade-V.

"The proportionate shortage of posts in higher positions [of police] compared to other cadres is a big obstacle to ensuring enthusiasm for work, morale, dignity, discipline and dynamism in the force," the proposal mentioned.

In August, four additional IGs were promoted to grade-I on supernumerary

basis.

Now the IG is a grade-I official holding the rank of a senior secretary while the public security division secretary at the home ministry holds the rank of a secretary. Many of the admin officials are unhappy about it,

according to sources in the administration.

Eleven officials of 1984 and 1985 BCS batches have been in the police for over 30 years, but they are yet to be promoted to grade-I.

Besides, 42 DIGs, who joined the

police after passing the 1991, 1989 and 1985 BCS examinations, have spent 27-30 years in the service, but they are yet to be promoted to grade-II, mentions the proposal.

This correspondent talked to a number of police officials who have been waiting for promotions for long. They said if their demand is not met before the upcoming polls, their promotions would be delayed further.

"Around 14 years have gone by since I joined the police. But I am still serving as an additional SP. In the past, it took seven to 10 years for an official to get promoted to the post of SP," said an official of the 24th BCS batch seeking anonymity.

He also said 91 of the 205 officials, who joined the police with him as ASP in 2005, are yet to get promotion.

Another official said, "It [promotion] has become an issue of prestige for me as I have been serving as an additional SP for a long time."

"If I get promoted to the rank of SP on supernumerary basis, at least I will be able to introduce myself as an SP," added the official.

SOURCE: POLICE HQ PROPOSAL TO HOME MINISTRY

POST / GRADE

ADMIN POLICE

POSTS APPROVED EXISTING IN-SITU POSTS EXISTING POSTS POSTS DEMANDED

Secy / addl IG (Grade-1) 67 75 6 (4 supernumerary) 11

Addl secy/ addl IG (Grade-2) 90 473 13 42

Jt secy/ DIG (Grade-3) 288 459 62 46

Addl