



"Political influence not only helps corruption spread but also make people indifferent to law. Ultimately, the rule of law is hampered. It is applicable for all sectors, including transport."

EMINENT JURIST DR KAMAL HOSSAIN

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Your Right to Know

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"Mosques and all places of prayer and contemplation should be safe havens, not sites of terror."

UN SECRETARY-GENERAL ANTONIO GUTERRES

PURBACHAL PROJECT

## CONCEPT lost on REVISIONS

*Open space made to shrink; layout plan changed for fifth time to accommodate 'influential people'; Rajuk moves to appeal against HC directive for no further change*

TAWFIQUE ALI

Rajuk is set to turn land originally earmarked for education and environment preservation into commercial and business plots in its 6,227-acre Purbachal New Town project in the city's outskirts.

Since it launched the scheme in 1995, between Kaliganj and Rupganj with the Shitalakkhya to the east and the Balu to the west, Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakha (Rajuk) has so far altered the layout plan five times.

According to documents produced before the High Court to get the fifth layout revision endorsed, Rajuk intends to reduce 269 acres dedicated to 157 educational institutions to 119 acres.

The 150 acres gained from the reduction will be used to create more plots -- residential, commercial, and for more institutional plots that include schools, colleges, universities, hospitals, clinics and clubs.

Rajuk insiders said that the existing institutional plots have been split to increase the number of plots and to allot them to more applicants.

"In this process, some indispensable standard characters and features of an institutional plot have been compromised, capacity was reduced and

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The images show how arable land and flood flow zones covering over 6,200 acres in Purbachal area on the outskirts of the capital have been turned into a housing project over the years.

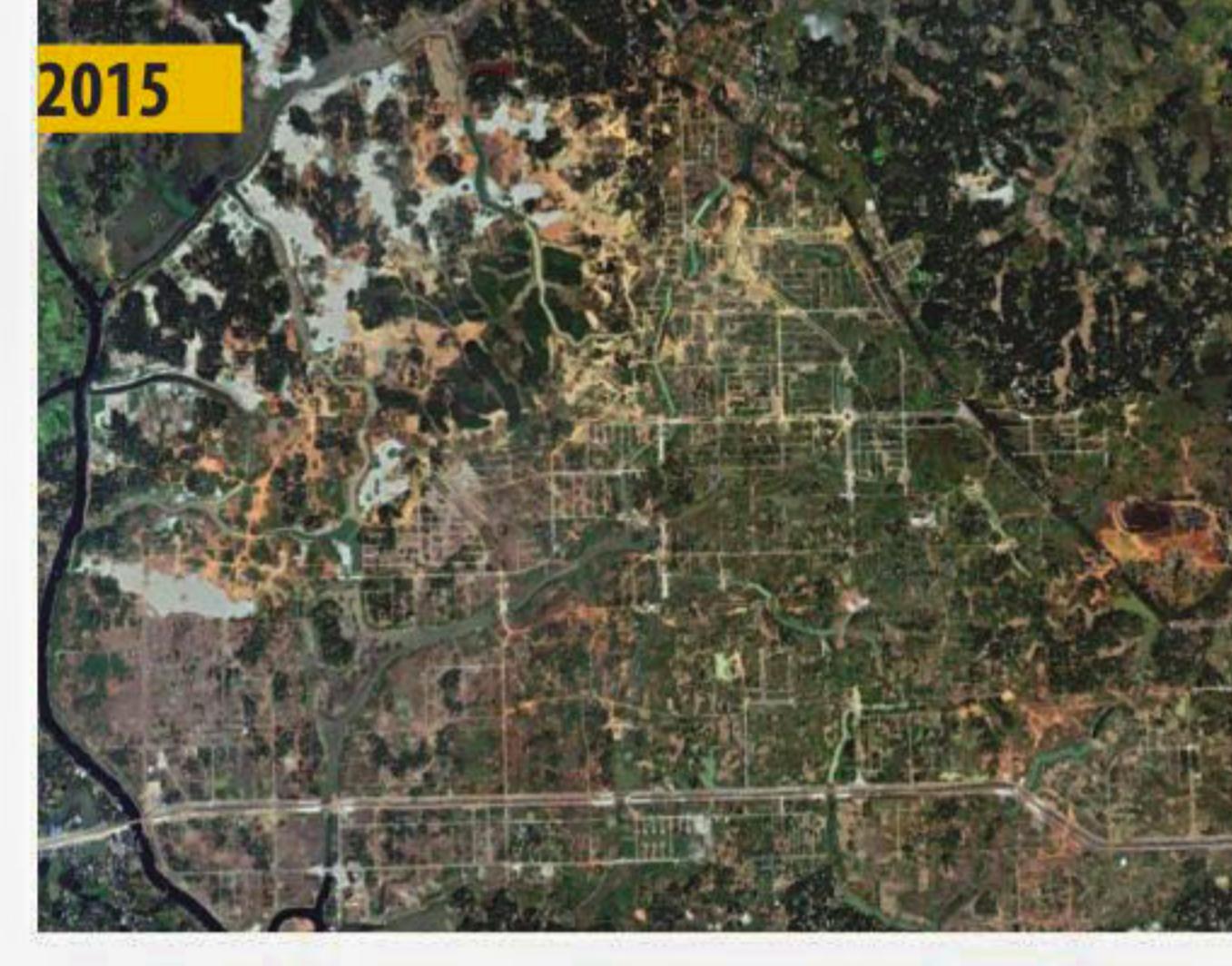
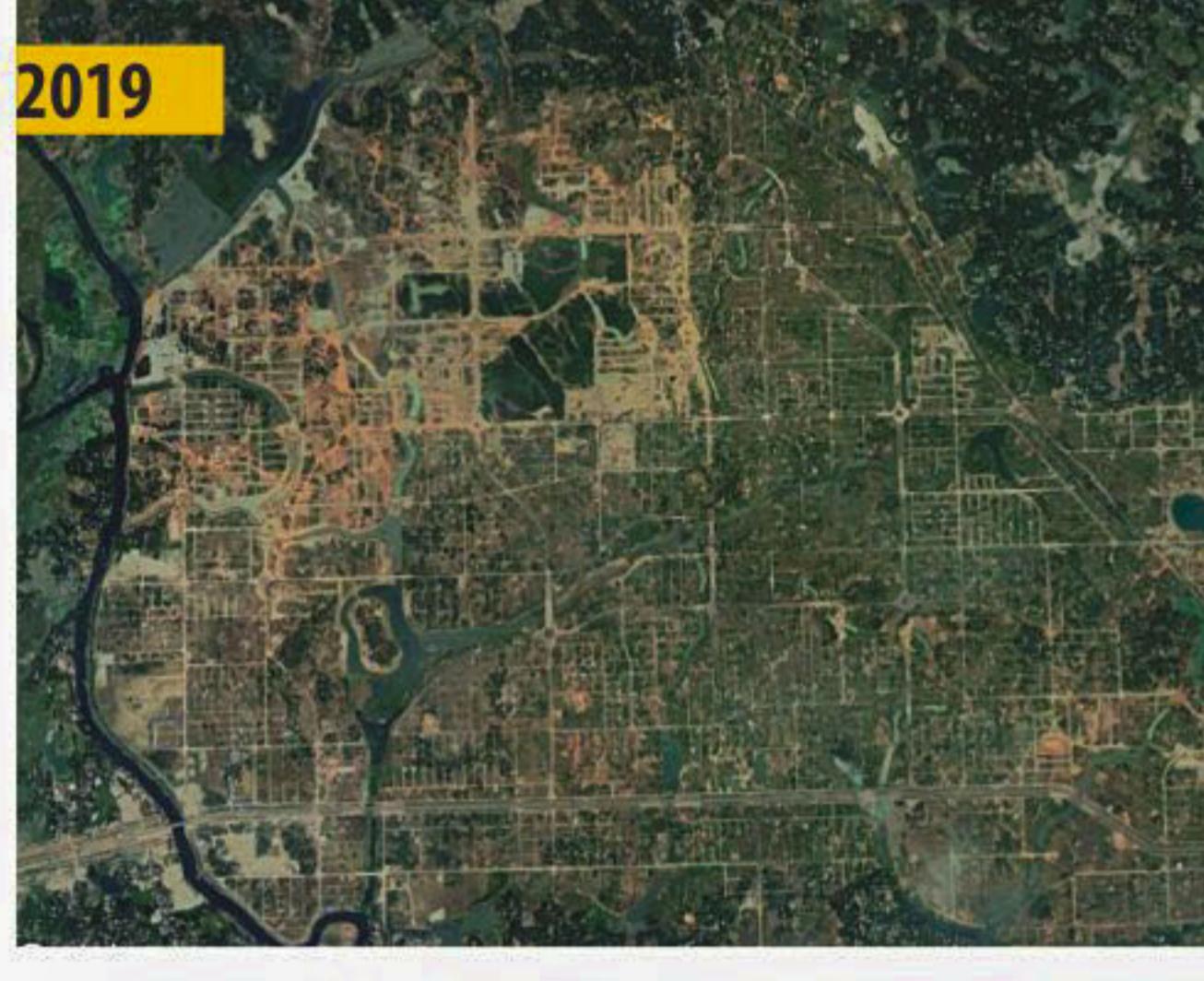


PHOTO:  
GOOGLE EARTH

## PURBACHAL NEW TOWN

Project approved in 2005

Original cost Tk 3,312 crore

Revised cost Tk 7,782 crore

Project cost increased by 135 percent

Current deadline expires in a year

59.5 percent done as of December 2018

Yet to obtain environmental clearance

Project to cause 11 lakh trees to be felled

25,016 residential plots in 30 sectors

1,033 commercial plots

3,565 other plots

First implementation period ended 2010

Second implementation period until 2020

"By way of a smart trick" Rajuk to turn playgrounds into plots

## Set up a road safety authority

Govt committee helmed by Shajahan Khan recommends in its draft report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A committee headed by former shipping minister Shajahan Khan has prepared a draft report on preventing road accidents and bringing discipline in the road transport sector.

The report contains a 111-point recommendation, including for formation of a road safety authority under the prime minister's supervision.

The authority would draw up plans in coordination with the agencies concerned, monitor the agencies' work as well as identify the accident-prone zones and come up with solutions.

The existing laws, guidelines and reports of other committees already cover many of the 111-point recommendations.

The committee also decided on three deadlines and pointed out the authorities for implementation of the recommendations.

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## Student pushed off bus, killed

Fellow students from Sylhet Agricultural University stage demo; driver arrested



Wasim Adnan

At one stage, the helper pushed Wasim off the bus, and the vehicle ran him over, leaving him critically injured, said Kamrul Islam, sub-inspector of Sherpur Highway Police in Moulvibazar.

The student was rushed to Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital where doctors declared him dead around 7:30pm, said Siplu Roy, a friend of the victim who was present during the incident.

The bus was later seized by police in Begumganj area of the district's Osmaninagar upazila but the driver and the helper managed to flee, the police official said.

Zedan Al Musa, additional deputy commissioner (media) of Sylhet Metropolitan PHOTO ON PAGE 2

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## Ducsu finally gets going

Holds first executive meet in 28 years amid protests

DU CORRESPONDENT

The Dhaka University Central Students' Union yesterday saw its first executive meeting in nearly three decades with different student organisations demanding repolling to the prestigious platform.

DU Vice-Chancellor Prof Akhtaruzzaman presided over the meeting where a proposal to give lifetime membership to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was discussed.

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SCAN THE QR CODE TO WATCH VIDEO



## Enter Raushan, exit GM Quader

Ershad keeps JP's musical chair game on

RASHIDUL HASAN

Internal division over leadership widens in Jatiya Party as its Chairman HM Ershad has nominated his wife Raushan Ershad for deputy leader of the opposition, removing his younger brother GM Quader from the post.

Ershad, known as an unpredictable character in the country's political arena for his flip-flops on key issues, made the decision public in a statement yesterday, less than 18 hours after he relieved Quader from the JP co-chairman's post.

In a statement issued around 11:00pm on Friday, the former military ruler said he relieved Quader from the party post for failing to discharge his duties and creating divisions in the party.

He, however, stated that the JP Parliamentary Party would decide whether Quader would continue as deputy



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A female fighter of the US-backed Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces flashes the victory gesture while celebrating near the Omar oil field in the eastern Syrian Deir Ezzor province yesterday, after announcing the total elimination of the Islamic State's last bastion in eastern Syria.

## IS 'caliphate' falls

US-allied Syria force takes last jihadist bastion; experts warn threats from the group remain

APP, Baghouz

Kurdish-led forces pronounced the death of the Islamic State group's nearly five-year-old "caliphate" yesterday after flushing out diehard jihadists from their very last bastion in eastern Syria.

Fighters of the US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces raised their yellow flag in Baghouz, the remote riverside village where diehard jihadists of a variety of nationalities made a desperate, dramatic last stand.

The SDF's victory capped a deadly six-month operation against the final remnants of the caliphate which once stretched across a vast swathe of Iraq and Syria, and held seven million people in its sway.

World leaders hailed the victory as a major landmark in the fight against IS and its ideology, but warned the group that spurred a spate of global terror attacks was far from defeated.

"Syrian Democratic Forces declare total elimination of so-called caliphate and 100 percent territorial defeat of ISIS," spokesman Mustafa Bali said in a statement, using another acronym for IS.

In Al-Omar, an oil field used as the main SDF staging base for the final phase of the assault, fighters in their best fatigues laid down their weapons and broke into song and dance.

They joined top Kurdish and Arab tribal officials, as well as a leading US envoy, for a ceremony unveiling a monument to their fallen comrades and celebrating the landmark victory.

The state proclaimed in mid-2014 by fugitive IS supremo Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi started collapsing in 2017 when parallel offensives in Iraq and Syria wrested back its main hubs Mosul and Raqa.

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