



## North Bardda to be turned into amusement part/ resort; it's not even Goolshan, ministry says

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Bardda, or North Bardda to be more specific, which has always pretended to be Goolshan, will soon be turned into an amusement park/ resort, the Ministry of Money announced yesterday.

The move means thousands of Bardda residents will be evicted and will not be offered any rehabilitation in line with the government's

policy of "We don't really give a damn".

While some have hailed the decision as there is "nothing to do in Dhoka apart from going to restaurants", those affected have started bringing out mass processions against the resort owners.

The protests, however, have been given negligible coverage in mainstream media because a) The owners are backed by the most powerful mechanism in the country and b)

Bardda has been pretending to be Goolshan for too long and that needs to stop.

Regardless of those facts, the move has caught some flak as these people are not slum dwellers or people who look different than most regular Bangladeshis. "My family has been living here for generation. The Bardda bazar, which is being turned into a swimming pool, has been our only means of food and even livelihood in some cases," Kawser Ahmed,

a resident of North Bardda, said.

Contacted, a ministry official said, "Bardda is not Goolshan. It needs to stop pretending that it is. We have a zero-tolerance policy for pretenders. Furthermore, this is what development looks like. Deforestation, mistreatment of natives and mass evictions."

The official also said every family evicted will be given Tk 5000 and a new parcel of land sometime in the near future. When told Tk

5000 seemed too less, the official explained that Bardda people are used to surviving on such measly amounts.

"They go and mill outside five-star hotels. Outside. They don't even eat there. So, they should be happy that a five-star is coming so close to them. Now they can save whatever money they spent on down-market modes of transport," Minister of Money Jafar Iqbal said.

## Our healthcare is the best, says minister before boarding flight for treatment abroad

WEALTHCARE CORRESPONDENT

*The Chapasthan International Airport (CIA) attracted a gaggle of reporters yesterday when rumours started doing the rounds that the Roads, Transport and Underground Minister Omaigo Bader was leaving for Canada. While any person of note leaving the country attracts media to the CIA gates, Bader leaving the country yesterday was of special significance as he was going abroad for a dental procedure, that too weeks after proclaiming the country's healthcare as the "best in the world".*

"It is the best in the world, do you think I was just saying that as a soundbite?" shot back Omaigo Bader when an all-too-smart reporter asked why the minister was leaving the best healthcare behind to get a whiter smile.

"All you people do is ask gotcha questions, and you think you are very clever when doing so," fumed Bader. "You don't know what us rulers have to consider."

Less than a month ago Bader, with Health Minister Mahid Zalek by his side, said in no uncertain terms that Chapasthanis do not need medical visas to other countries because the country has the best healthcare system in the world.

"Why else do you think we have Covid-22 under such tight control?" he said in the press conference, and Zalek nodded vigorously. "Hospital admissions are down, the infection rate is down, deaths are down..."

A reporter argued that maybe admissions are down because people are afraid of infection risks at hospitals. The reporter was later, after a month of being AWOL, admitted to a hospital.



At the airport, another reporter – undeterred by Bader's earlier rebuke – brought up those very words, to which the minister lowered his mask and sneezed into

the insolent reporter's face.

"Do you think we became the best by accident? You ask why I am going abroad; I ask what the country would do if I didn't."

"Umm... nothing?"

"Nothing is what you do anyway. But us, we sacrifice ourselves for the masses. We have the best healthcare system in the world because when we, the ruling class, become infected, we take the infections out of the country. Whether it's the flu, chicken pox, mad cow disease, restless leg syndrome, we take it out so that you, beloved countrymen, may be safe."

"Just yesterday another minister went abroad to be seen by a chiropractor, but you didn't know that he was also suffering from irritable bowel syndrome," bellowed Bader.

But why a dentist's appointment, another reporter asked, voice quivering with apprehension.

"Ah, there's another aspect. If we, the rulers, went to local dentists, do you think they would have time for you. It's often overlooked, but we need top-notch dental care for photoshoots during tough times."

"The tragedy of our lives is we will never be appreciated for the sacrifices we make," he said, before sidestepping an elderly couple seeking help to go abroad, and disappearing into the airport.