



Illegal housing galore in Khulna

DIPANKAR ROY, Khulna

As many as 108 illegal housing projects have allegedly emerged in Khulna and adjacent areas – on arable land, water bodies and tidal floodplain – without any approval from Khulna Development Authority (KDA) and Department of Environment (DoE).

This correspondent visited different areas that are under KDA's master-plan and observed that several housing projects have been developed by filling canals linked to Rupsha, Bhairab, Kazibacha, Shalta, Mayur, Atharobaki and Atai rivers.

Meanwhile, low lands have been filled with sand and brick walls have been erected.

The projects have been developed in Batiaghata, Dumuria, Rupsha and Phultala areas. Each company has multiple ongoing projects, offering plots of different sizes and promising good infrastructure, utilities and security.

However, the promises stand in utter disregard to any safety regulations, as experts suggest that some areas are considered a tidal floodplain.

Mahfuzur Rahman Mukul, Khulna divisional coordinator of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (Bela), said over a hundred private housing projects have emerged in the city in the last 15-20 years.

"Most of these projects have occupied khas land, water bodies, cultivable land and tidal floodplains, which is illegal according to the environmental conservation law, 1995," he said.

However, DoE did not take any action against these projects.

Some housing companies are developing projects defying Land Development Rules 2004, which was amended in 2012 and 2015.

According to KDA, its master-plan expanded to 824 square kilometres and covers the northern border of Jashore's Noapara municipality, Katakhali of Bagerhat's Fakirhat upazila in the south, Rupsa in the east, and from Dumuria to Koiyabazar in the west. Any development within this area must have KDA's approval.

However, housing companies are selling plots and flats without KDA's permission. Projects by Bismillah Properties in Khulna's new jail area shows a lack of space between two plots, narrow roads, no playground or school compound, as the company cited in their signboards and leaflets.

The company has already sold 470 plots under its Mahanagar projects, which have no KDA approval.

"I don't need all papers to sell plots. No housing project can abide by KDA's law, if you consider Khulna's context," said Md Saiful Islam, owner of Bismillah Properties.

However, he claimed that he has applied for project registration.

Ujan Nibash, Tanisha Residential Projects, Arafat Housing Projects, Biswas Properties, Shikder Residential Projects and Golden City have no approval as well.

And clients do not even know of this.

Jakia Sultana Dola from Satkhira's Tala bought four

decimals of land from a housing project in 2020 but is yet to get a plan from KDA after repeated attempts.

"I am exhausted. I didn't know the project was illegal and lacked approval, as I only checked land documents," said Jakia.

Over 25,000 plot buyers like Jakia are now faced with multiple complications.

Prof Dilip Kumar Datta of Khulna University's environmental sciences department told this correspondent that unplanned housing in a tidal floodplain will damage its ecology.

"KDA cannot avoid responsibility when it comes to these illegal housing projects," said Prof Datta.

Tanvir Ahmed, KDA's planning officer, mentioned that according to the real estate development and management act 2010, a housing project requires registration and approval from KDA.

Moreover, each project is required to have a minimum of 10 acres of land with 40-60 feet-wide main roads and 25 feet-wide inner roads.

Residential projects should also have spaces for schools, colleges, playgrounds, community centres, markets, police stations and other civic facilities.

KDA planners have observed that 69 projects have completely disregarded these regulations.

"We already demolished structures of nine projects and issued notices for registration. Only 18 out of the 69 projects have applied for registration," said Tanvir.

"We will be taking action against these owners soon," he added.



Lacking approval from authorities concerned, illegal housing projects in Khulna stand on arable lands, water bodies and tidal floodplains. Each company has multiple ongoing projects and promises good infrastructure and security, all of which stand in utter disregard to any safety regulations.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

JAHANGIRNAGAR UNIV Over 12,000 students, 2 functional ambulances

SHEIKH TAJUL ISLAM TAJ

"A friend of mine needed immediate medical attention, for which we asked for an ambulance that would take us to Savar's Enam Medical College Hospital. When we contacted the medical centre, duty doctor Shyamol Kumar Shil told us they only have two functional ambulances -- one had a requisition by a teacher, another one was already at Enam Medical," said Mehedi Khan, a student of business administration.

According to Jahangirnagar University's transportation office, there are currently five functional ambulances at the campus. However, when it comes to the students, only two are available for their emergencies.

On the other hand, two new ambulances are



lying unused at the transportation office.

Jahidul Islam Tuhin, a mathematics major, had to go through similar experiences with the ambulance service.

"I called for an ambulance and they told me they only had two, both of which were busy on duty," said Tuhin.

This correspondent visited the transportation office and saw two new ambulances lying non-operational, covered in layers of dust.

Asked, transportation in-charge Prof Ali Azam mentioned the university currently has five operational ambulances. "Two new ambulances have been purchased on February 16," he added.

JU chief medical officer Dr Shamsur Rahman told this correspondent that they have placed their demands regarding ambulances in several meetings. However, Prof Ali Azam said no one asked him for an ambulance. "I will book one as soon as someone asks."

Requesting anonymity, a top official at JU told this correspondent that often the authorities show the lack of available drivers for the mismanagement.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

PRAYER
TIMING
MAR 12



	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
Azan	5-05	12-45	4-30	6-12	7-30
Jamaat	5-40	1-15	4-45	6-15	8-00

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

“Most of these projects have occupied khas land, water bodies, cultivable land and tidal floodplains, which is illegal according to the environmental conservation law.”

MAHFUZUR RAHMAN MUKUL
Khulna divisional coordinator of Bela

An-Noor

THE LUMINOUS RESIDENCES

Spacious 4 Bedroom Apartments at Gulshan
High-end amenities including Swimming Pool, Gym, Sundek and Barbeque corner at Roof level, Rooftop Garden Children Play Area & Efficient Two Lifts.

Call 16687
01713331201
01713178006
01713018408

ASSET DEVELOPMENTS
Asset Developments & Holdings Ltd
91 Gulshan Avenue
www.asset.com.bd

Mughal era mosque set for preservation

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

An ancient mosque built in 1565 during the Mughal period at Saptibari Gilabari village in Aditmari upazila of Lalmonirhat is on its first steps to be conserved by the Department of Archeology.

The archeology department officials said the conversation work will begin as soon as permission is granted by the Ministry of Cultural Affairs.

Located on a seven decimal

land, the mosque is 42 feet long and 17 feet wide. It has three minars (towers) above the main gate in front of the mosque.

An ancient well resides in front of the mosque.

However, there's no signboard to tell the mosque's origins and locals know this mosque as "Puran Jame Masjid".

In quest of conservation, Naheed Sultana, regional director of the Department of Archeology

Located on a seven-decimal land, the mosque is 42 feet long and 17 feet wide. It has three minars (towers) above the main gate in front of the mosque.

in Rajshahi and Rangpur, visited the mosque yesterday. She toured the ancient mosque and exchanged views with the locals.

"Earlier, a team from the archeology department visited the mosque. We've prepared a report. We'll start preservation work as soon as a notification is issued by the ministry."

The locals also demanded that immediate action be taken to preserve the mosque and have the mosque declared as a heritage site.



SEARCHING FOR COMMERCIAL SPACE IN DHAKA?



MS CENTER
9, Mohakhali C/A
100% READY
3527 - 7230 Sq. Ft.

Situated at the commercial hub
Great road connectivity
3X spacious elevators
2X high capacity generators
Multi-level basement for car parking



ASIAN TOWER
52, Joar Shahara C/A, Nikunja 2
ALMOST READY
1386 - 3078 Sq. Ft.

Adjacent to the Airport Road
2X spacious elevators
Full capacity generator
Multi-level basement for car parking
To be handed over by Oct '22

Talk to our commercial space expert
+88 09 606 222 444

f /assurancedevelopments
www.assurance.com.bd

ASSURANCE DEVELOPMENTS