

TT PARA SWEEPER COLONY

# Where will we go now?

Seven families evicted, 25 may suffer similar fate

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Another 25 families are likely to be evicted from the South Kamapur Railway Colony for the Padma Bridge Rail Link Project.

On Sunday, seven families were evicted from the colony, commonly known as TT Para Sweeper Colony, without any prior notice for the project, informed Rajib Das, a local activist.

"We don't intend to resist development, but we do need proper rehabilitation measures," he added. "Where will we go now?"

According to the colony's residents, most of the families have been living here since 1835 when their ancestors were brought to Bangladesh from India by the British.

Since then, they have served as cleaners in Dhaka and other districts, primarily under the railway authorities.

About 42 years ago, these families that have been serving as cleaners for generations, relocated to TT Para Railway Harijan and Telugu Sweeper Colony from Phulbaria's old railway station.



Earlier in 2019, 112 families were evicted from the colony during the initial phase of the project. A list of the affected families was prepared by the authorities. They were promised rehabilitation, a promise still waiting to be fulfilled.

Another 55 Harijan houses were demolished while 35 others were partially destroyed in January this year.

According to Afzal Hossain, project director of the Padma Bridge Rail Link, many of the colony's residents were living there illegally.

"A building is under construction at Shahjahanpur Railway Colony for the ones who have been living in the colony legally. They will be rehabilitated

soon," he added.

Meanwhile, leaders of the Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Oikya Parishad expressed concerns following their recent visit to the colony.

Terming the eviction "illegal" and "inhumane", Manindra Kumar Nath, joint general secretary of the organisation, said, "They have been living here for over two centuries and deserve to be rehabilitated."



**KAZIBACHA ON DEATHBED...** Once flowing in full force over Khulna's Batiaghata upazila, this 150-metre wide river has now turned into a narrow stream. Locals say the river has lost its navigability following the construction of Rupsha Rail Bridge. As a result, boats ply over only a narrow part of the river while people mostly cross the waterbody on foot. This photo was taken near the Batiaghata bridge yesterday. PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

## Dengue claims two more lives

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least two more dengue patients died and 323 were hospitalised in the last 24 hours till yesterday morning.

The total number of deaths in dengue rose to 36 this year, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

With the new ones, the total number of dengue cases this year rose to 5,231, of whom 1,164 are from outside of Dhaka.

Some 1,158 dengue patients are still undergoing treatment while 4,037 were released from hospitals.

The total number of deaths in dengue was 281 last year while the total number of cases was 62,382.



# No soil extraction from farmland

Cabinet approves act; also okays land crime prevention act

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The cabinet yesterday gave final approval to the draft of Sand Quarry (Balumahal) and Soil Management (Amendment) Act, 2023 with the provision of banning the extraction of sand and soil from farmlands as well as the topsoil of other lands.

The topsoil of both private and commercial lands too cannot be extracted if there is any possibility of damage, said Cabinet Secretary Mahub Hossain yesterday.

Sand and soil cannot be extracted, if such extraction destroys navigability of river routes, as per the draft act.

Right now, there is no bar to extract soil and sand from farmlands. It has been incorporated in the revised act, he said while addressing a press briefing at the Secretariat after the cabinet meeting.

The cabinet meeting, headed by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, took place at her office in the capital.

"Now, only the hydrographic survey of BIWTA is considered in

**If a person grabs another's land through forgery, concealing land related information, grabbing lands forcibly and creating fake documents, the respective person will be handed down seven years imprisonment.**

defining sand quarries. But in the act it is said that the survey of the Water Development Board will also be taken into consideration if necessary in this connection," he said.

The act has also empowered the executive magistrates to seize the instruments and machines used for extraction.

The leasing activities will be completely online and the leaseholders will have to bear the compensation, if any road or establishment is damaged due to sand transport.

The cabinet also approved in principle the draft of the Land Crime Prevention and Remedy Act, 2023 to curb land-related forgeries and offenses.

If a person grabs another's land through forgery, concealing land related information, grabbing lands forcibly and creating fake documents, the respective person will be handed down seven years imprisonment, he said, adding that the minimum punishment is two years imprisonment.

Replying to a question, he said

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## Over 3.55 lakh posts in govt jobs vacant

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

There are over 3.55 lakh posts vacant in public administration, State Minister for Public Administration Farhad Hossain told parliament yesterday.

He said this in reply to a query of ruling Awami League MP Kazim Uddin Ahmed. The state minister said there are three lakh fifty-five thousand and 854 posts vacant in all the ministries/departments and field administration.

He said there are 14 lakh 9 thousand and 606 approved posts in public administration. At present recruitment process is going on to fill up the vacancies, he said.

Posts are usually left vacant due to regular retirement of employees, creation of new posts and court orders.

## Militants more active online

Experts tell workshop

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Anti-Terrorism Unit (ATU) Chief SM Ruhul Amin yesterday said there is no scope for complacency thinking that militancy is over.

"Militants are not sitting idle. They are very much active in recruiting new members and supporters using social media," said Amin, also the additional inspector general of police.

He made the comments while addressing a workshop titled "Role of Media in Preventing Extremism" as the key discussant yesterday.

Amin said they have arrested over 250 militants by conducting 150 operations so far.

The workshop was held at the multipurpose hall of the police staff college in the capital.

The ATU chief said, "The media has the opportunity to make the public aware of the danger of youth being inspired by militancy

**The media has the opportunity to make the public aware of the danger of youth being inspired by militancy without understanding the danger.**

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**At least 100 families have lost their homestead to erosion by the Brahmaputra in the last couple of weeks. Char Bhagabatipur in Kurigram is one of the most erosion hit areas where a school, mosque and community clinic have been devoured by the river. This photo was taken recently.**

PHOTO: STAR

## BRAHMAPUTRA EROSION

# Over 100 families left homeless

S DILIP ROY, LALMONIRHAT

Over a hundred families residing in three unions located by the Brahmaputra in Kurigram have lost their homestead to erosions in the past few weeks.

Of the affected, 60 families were located in Jatrapur, 35 families at Begumganj and 20 at Nayarhat.

According to district administration and Water Development Board sources, the rise in the water level has caused the river to erode in different spots within just a month, affecting three unions -- Jatrapur in the district's

Sadar, Nayarhat in Chilmari, and Begumganj in Chilmari -- gravely.

Besides, erosion risks are high in the Sadar's Holokhana and Mogholbasa unions; Ulipur's Buraburi, Bajra and Hatia; Chilmari's Raniganj, Ramna, Chilmari and Astomir Char; Roumari's Jadurchar, Shoulmari and Bandaber; Rajibpur upazila's Kodalkati and Mohonganj; and Bhurungamari upazila's Paikerchara and Baldia unions.

The river has devoured agricultural land, orchards and various establishments, compelling the affected ones to live on roads or relocate to their relatives' houses.

"The residents of Char Bhagabatipur are most vulnerable to river erosion in the region. We are placing sandbags to stop the banks from eroding," said Abdullah Al Mamun, executive engineer of WDB, Kurigram.

"I have lost my home and four bighas of arable land to the erosion. I am now living in inhumane conditions with my five family members," said Nur Islam, a 62-year-old farmer of the district town's Char Bhagabatipur area.

Another farmer Delwar Hossain, 67, of Begamganj village in Ulipur

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