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4,000 ACRE RAIL LAND Locked in litigation

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Bangladesh Railway (BR) is in a legal predicament as it struggles to recover around 4,000 acres of land grabbed by private citizens and public entities alike.

Currently, it is tangled up in over 2,000 cases -- 1,184 under the east zone and 892 under the west zone of BR, according to railway documents.

Some of the cases were filed by BR against illegal occupants, although most of them were filed against the railways by individuals and different public and private organisations.

According to the railways ministry's 2021-22 annual report, BR owns 61,860 acres of land -- 24, 441 acres in east zone and 37, 419 acres in west zone.

Of the total land, 3,842 acres -- equivalent to over 15 square kilometres -- are under illegal occupation, according to the report published early this year.

Of its total land, the BR uses 31,569 acres for railway operations and leased out 14,473 acres to different individuals and entities. Another 11, 976 acres remain unused.

Many influential people have long been occupying railway lands, often in association with some unscrupulous railway staffers.

After the formation of a separate railways ministry in 2011, rail ministers almost on a regular basis informed parliament about the scale of the encroachment and vowed to recover the lost land.

Indeed, it carried out several drives through its four divisional estate offices to evict the grabbers and demolish the illegal structures. But the grabbers returned within a few days in most cases due to lax monitoring.

However, sources said BR sometimes carries out eviction drives upon pressure from the high-ups, which is actually "an eyewash".

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PHOTO: RAJIB RATHAN

Twenty-two wind turbines are being installed in Cox's Bazar with some of them already making test supplies to the national grid since May 26. The wind farm is expected to formally start operation before November end and generate 60MW a day.

Teesta bursts its banks again

Around one lakh people
marooned in the North

STAR REPORT

Due to relentless monsoon rains and onrushing water from upstream India, the Teesta's water has crossed the danger level for the third time this season, leaving around one lakh people stranded in Rangpur, Nilphamari and Lalmonirhat.

Meanwhile, the water levels of Jamuna and Dharla have also been increasing in the northern region.

However, officials of the Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC) believe the floods will not last long.

PHOTO ON PAGE 2

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DEATH OF PASSENGER 'Plane denied priority landing'

HSIA made delays despite
medical emergency, pilots say

RASHIDUL HASAN

A passenger who fell ill on board a Biman flight died in the early hours yesterday after his treatment was delayed due to Dhaka airport's air traffic control putting the plane's landing on hold, according to the cockpit crew.

About an hour before landing at the Hazrat

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US sharing info with The Gambia for ICJ case

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The US has shared information on atrocities against the Rohingya with The Gambia that filed a genocide case against Myanmar at the International Court of Justice.

US Under Secretary of State Uzra Zeya said this at an event in Washington DC on the occasion of Rohingya Genocide Remembrance Day on Friday.

"Our work is not just humanitarian, we also must move towards accountability," she said.

She said the US also provides support to the UN's Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar to strengthen its ability to conduct open-source investigations and to protect witnesses and victims.

Zeya said not a single Rohingya returned to Myanmar. She also mentioned there

ATROCITIES AGAINST ROHINGYAS

was no guarantee of citizenship, safety and conducive environment in Rakhine, six years after the influx of around 750,000 Rohingyas who fled a brutal military campaign in Myanmar and took shelter in Bangladesh.

The US determined in March 2022 that members of Myanmar military committed genocide and crimes against humanity against the Rohingyas. It also imposed various sanctions against Myanmar military. The latest one was on Wednesday when the US imposed sanctions on any foreign individual or entity operating in the jet fuel sector of Myanmar's economy and designated two individuals and three entities.

"We will continue to use our sanctions authorities to deprive the military regime of the resources that enable it to oppress its people and urge others to take similar accountability measures," Zeya said.

She said the US coordinates with

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