

Tk 63 lakh bribe on land purchase, deeds in a year in Srimongal

Survey by TIB affiliate reveals

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Land purchasers in Srimongal gave over Tk 62.87 lakh as bribe to land settlement and revenue officials while buying lands in a year from July 2005 to June last year.

Besides, any body seeking mutation or copy of his land document had to pay officials Tk 2, 125 on an average as bribe.

Land settlement officials also realised Tk 1,459 from each household during the last land survey.

These were revealed in a survey conducted by the Srimongal unit of the Committee of Conscious Citizen's, a body affiliated with the Transparency International, Bangladesh (TIB).

Land settlement and revenue officials at different levels took the bribe, the survey said.

The report was disclosed at a citizen's meeting held at Srimongal office of the committee recently. Advocate Mizanur Rahman, a member of the committee and also convener of the survey committee, Prof Sayed Mujibur Rahman president of its local chapter and TIB programme organisers Karuna Kishore Chakraborty and MA Murshed were present at the citizens' meeting. A copy of the report was made available to this correspondent yesterday.

Fifty areas were randomly selected for the survey conducted during May-July last year.

A total of 155 families in 30 villages and 20 residential areas in Srimongal town were interviewed during the survey.

The survey said, 48 per cent of the people interviewed had pur-

chased land during the period. Of them, only 24 people said they gave bribe of Tk 5,00 each. The rest of the people interviewed paid higher amounts.

A total of 678 documents on land sale were handed over in 2005. All the land purchasers together gave Tk 62.87, 232 as bribe. Fifteen per cent of the purchasers had to buy stamps at higher rates, the survey said.

The report added that 93 per cent people surveyed gave a bribe of Tk 1,495 on an average during the recently concluded land survey.

It was detected during the survey that people had paid lower amounts as land development tax in exchange of bribe. Twenty per cent of them took the chance by giving Tk 500 bribe each.

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ACC notice on five corrupt suspects in Chandpur

Recipients include 3 BNP leaders

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chandpur

The district Anti Corruption Commission (ACC) has served notices on five persons in Chandpur to submit statements on their assets.

Recipients of the notices are Civil Surgeon Dr Abdul Mannan, former chairman of Chandpur municipality and joint secretary of district BNP Shafiqur Rahman Bhuiyan (now in Jail), district BNP vice-president advocate Awal Mia Patwary (now in jail), contractor Habibullah Patwary and Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) leader Mosharraf Hossain, a contractor. Whereabouts of Habibullah Patwary and Mosharraf Hossain are not known since takeover by the caretaker government, police and political sources said.

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Patwary, Shafiqur Rahman Bhuiyan were interrogated by ACC officials in the district jail on Thursday. They also interrogated Mannan Mal, former chairman of Kalyanpur Union Parishad in Sadar upazila in jail on the same day. He was arrested earlier on corruption charge.

ACC sources said a graft case against contractor Habibullah Patwary is likely to be filed next week.

It may be recalled here that BNP leaders Dulal Patwary, Habibullah Patwary, Shafiqur Rahman Bhuiyan, Mosharraf Hossain and 11 others including former state minister for education ANM Ehsanul Haque Milon were on the list of corrupt persons made public earlier.



A team of DFID Bangladesh, comprising Penny Davies, Michael Scott and Dr. Indrani Chakrabarti, recently holding a meeting with landless people and officials of Samata at Char Azari in Natore, where the NGO is implementing a Shoal Area Development project.

Unite to uphold spirit of Liberation War

Language movement veteran Abdul Motin inaugurates victory memorial in Manikganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

Language movement veteran Abdul Motin criticised the past BNP-Jamaat and Awami League governments for massive corruption by leaders during their tenure. Alongside, he praised the present caretaker government for taking bold steps against corruption.

He was speaking at a function marking inauguration of a newly built victory memorial at Golaidanga Kumerpar in Singair upazila in Manikganj district on Thursday. Freedom fighters killed at least 81 Pakistani occupation soldiers in a guerrilla fight on November 29, 1971 at Golaidanga Kumerpar. Some villagers were also killed in an encounter on the following day.

Abdul Motin urged the people to untie to uphold the spirit of Liberation War and to eradicate corruption from all levels in the society.

He also condemned the alleged distortion of history of the Language Movement and the Liberation War by anti-liberation forces. He also urged newsmen to portray the true history.

Renowned journalist and political analyst Abdul Gaffar Chowdhury also attended the function. He said the Liberation War is the greatest pride of the nation and its spirit must be upheld for progress of the nation.

Proshika President Quazi Faruk Ahammed urged the people to untie against evil forces who are trying to distort the history of Liberation War.

Photo journalist Naib Uddin

Ahmed, freedom fighters engineer Tobarak Hossain Ludu and Wazed Ali, Singair Upazila Nirbahi Officer Khawaja Abdul Hannan and principal of Golaidanga Muktiyoddha Sriti College AKM Samsul Islam also spoke on the occasion. The function was presided over by freedom fighter and former headmaster of Golaidanga Bohumukhy High School Mohorali.

They also visited the Shahid

Rafik Sriti Pathagar, established with the financial support of Proshika Manobik Unnoyon Kendra at Shahid Rafik's village home at Paril in Singair upazila in 2000.

BSF kills one in Daulatpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) gunned down a Bangladeshi farmer at Daulatpur frontier on Thursday.

The dead was identified as Fazlur Rahman, 36, son of Kiamat Ali of Zamalpur village.

According to sources in 32 Rifles Battalion, a BSF patrol team from Raninagar in Karimpur in Nadia district fired on Fazlu when he was working in his paddy filed close to Indian border pillar No 153/3. BSF took the body.

The victim's family informed Pragpur BOP (border observation post).

BDR protested the killing and asked for a flag meeting.

BSF handed over the body to BDR at the flag meeting held at Pragpur Thursday night.

Eleven Bangladeshis were killed by BSF on southwestern border in last three months since January 1, BDR sources said.

At least 18 incidents of firing between the two border guards took palace during the period.

Access to safe water slides in SW dists

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Speakers at a symposium here have deplored the alleged indifference of successive governments to the declining people's access to safe drinking water in the south

western region of the country. They said over 40 lakh people living in the coastal districts of Satkhira, Khulna and Bagerhat are facing acute scarcity of pure drinking water due to arsenic contamination of groundwater. Pollution of

river water due to dumping of industrial waste and intrusion of saline water due to unplanned shrimp cultivation have made the problem acute.

Availability of safe water is shrinking day by day as the ground

water level is falling, they said.

The symposium on 'Water Scarcity in Bangladesh: The ways out' was organised by the district administration with the help of DPHE (Department Public Health Engineering), UNICEF, WHO, WSP (water and sanitation program) and NGO Forum, Khulna. It was held at Satkhira Officers Club in observance of World Water Day on Thursday.

Chaired by additional deputy commissioner (ADC-Revenue) Mahmud Hasan, Satkhira deputy commissioner (DC) Mohammad Kefayetullah was the chief guest at the function.

Former minister Dr. Aftabuzzaman was the main speaker. Other discussants included Executive Engineer Abdul Hamid Mia of DPHE, executive engineers Zulkifkar Ali Hawladar and Mujibar Rahman of WDB, Anisur Rahim and Dipankar Mallik of Agrabati Sangstha, a local NGO.

The deputy commissioner called for creating awareness among people and strengthening local governments to take initiatives at local level to create alternative sources of safe water and reduce pollution.

He stressed coordinated efforts by the government and NGOs to ensure safe drinking water.

Dr. Zaman said the problem would be minimised if intrusion of saline water can be reduced and eater retention capacity of rivers and tanks increased.



Participants at a seminar on 'Water Scarcity in Bangladesh: The way out', held at Satkhira town Thursday.

Spurious liquor kills 5 in Kushtia, Satkhira

AL leader falls sick in Satkhira

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Four persons died after taking rectified spirit in Daulatpur upazila in Kushtia district and another person died after taking spurious phensidyl in Satkhira Wednesday night. An Awami League leader also fell sick in the Satkhira incident.

In Kushtia, Amirul Islam, 40, of Taragunia; Babul Hossain, 42, Sahazul Islam, 32 and Musha Ali, 36 of Hosnabad took rectified spirit bought from a homeopathy medicine shop at Hosnabad Bazar in Daulatpur upazila, police said.

They soon fell severe pain in stomach and abdomen and died at their houses Thursday morning, our correspondent reports.

The victims' families avoided informing police and took them to local upazila health complex.

Being informed by others, police came rushed to the spot and took the dead bodies in their custody.

The bodies were sent to Kushtia General Hospital for autopsy.

Police however, could not arrest the owner of the medicine shop from where the rectified spirit was bought. He is absconding, Daulatpur police said. A case was filed against him.

In October last year, two persons died after taking rectified spirit from the same shop, police said.

In Satkhira, day labourer Shukur Ali, 28, of North Katia area in the town died at the Sadar Hospital allegedly after taking spurious phensidyl, police said.

Local Awami League leader Abdul Mannan was admitted to Satkhira Sadar Hospital as he fell sick after taking the spurious phensidyl in the same area Wednesday evening. He was shifted to Khulna 250-bed Hospital as his condition deteriorated, hospital sources said.

On contact, Sadar thana Officer-in-Charge (OC) Safiqur Rahman confirmed the incident.



The Daily Star Staff Correspondent Iqbal Siddiquee receiving a prize from Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury, foreign affairs advisor to the caretaker government, for indoor games, held at Sylhet Press Club yesterday.

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