

Land grabbing in the name of giving land to the landless

Victims allege, accused term it khas land

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Dinajpur

A few people including a freedom fighter at a press conference on Monday alleged that a group of ruling Awami League (AL)-backed people was grabbing their land in the name of rehabilitating the landless people at Sheikhpara village under Dinajpur Sadar upazila.

"On January 1 this year, Mirza Mizanur Rahman Nannu, a ward committee secretary of AL, Md Salam, locally known as Salam Driver, and Md Shahin constructed temporary structures on the land and grabbed 14.96 acres of land in the name of 'Bangabandhu Adarsha Gram Samobay Samity' at Sheikhpara village under Dinajpur Sadar upazila. Of it, 2.49 acres belong to me," freedom fighter Md Farhad Ahmed of Balubari village under Dinajpur municipality said at the press conference at Dinajpur Press Club.

"Dividing it into plots, they are now selling the land to locals," he said at the press conference, also attended by Md Majaharul Islam, Sekendar Ali, Ashrafuzzaman, Abdul Baten and Abdul Maleque, among the other affected landowners.

"As I informed Dinajpur Kotwali police of the matter, they called both the parties



PHOTO: STAR
THE EASIEST WAY: A signboard at the entrance to the land allegedly grabbed in the name of rehabilitating the landless at Sheikhpara village in Dinajpur Sadar reads 'Bangabandhu Bhumihin Adarsha Gram Samobay Samity'.

to the police station on January 12 to solve the matter but failed.

"On January 16, I filed a case with the Additional District Magistrate's Court and the court ordered the officer in charge of Dinajpur police station to appoint someone to supervise the land. But later police sided with the land grabbers," said the freedom fighter.

Farhad Ahmed and a few others owned the land around 28 years ago, he said.

When contacted, Abdul Kader Zilani, officer in charge (OC) of Dinajpur police station, said, "I acted as per the court's order that

asked police to maintain a status quo."

Farhad, who is also brother-in-law of Quamrul Huda Helal, organising secretary of Dinajpur district Awami League, met with Md Mostafizur Rahman, state minister of land, and Iqbalur Rahim, lawmaker of Dinajpur-3 constituency, and requested them to see the land grabbing issue.

"The state minister spoke with the superintendent of police regarding the matter, but lawmaker Iqbalur Rahim ignored the matter. Nannu is a strong supporter of Iqbalur Rahim," said

Farhad Ahmed.

Contacted, Iqbalur Rahim said he had directed the OC to take quick action to recover the land.

When contacted, Md Salam said, "The area was a khas land and we are distributing it among the landless people. Two hundred landless people have already got plots there."

Mirza Mizanur Rahman Nannu, general secretary of AL committee of Sheikhpara ward in Dinajpur Sadar upazila, also claimed that the land was a khas land.

"The lawmaker has no involvement with the matter," he added.



PHOTO: STAR
Farmers harvest mustard at a field at Ashekpur in Tangail Sadar upazila. Mustard has become a crop of choice for the growers in several districts in the last couple of years because of better prices.

Mustard growers happy over bumper yield, better price

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Mustard growers in Netrakona, Tangail and Madaripur districts eye a bumper production this year due to favourable weather conditions and timely steps taken by the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE).

Deputy Director of DAE Netrakona Kazi Nurul Islam said that his department had set a target to cultivate quality mustard on 3,380 hectares of land in ten upazilas of the district, reports our correspondent.

"We expect a bumper production as harvesting has begun", he said.

According to Abbas Uddin, Crop Production Specialist of DAE, favourable climate conditions, proper distribution of improved seeds, timely supply of fertilisers and other agro-inputs to the growers and technical assistance are the reasons behind the expectation.

Dilip Sen, a local agriculturist of Mukterpara area in the district town said, if the growers get the reasonable price of their produce this season, they will be encouraged to cultivate more mustard next year.

"Soil of this area is very suitable for mustard cultivation. So, farmers can harvest the crop within 90 days at minimum cost," he added.

Farmer Khokon Mia of Nurpur Boali village under Khaliyari upazila said that he cultivated mustard on two acres of land this year hoping to earn more profit.

Shahin Khan, another farmer of Moutol

village under Kalmakanda upazila said, "We did not get reasonable price of rice although we gave hard labour and spend a lot of money. So, this year we have cultivated mustard on our land to recoup loss."

Mustard production in Madaripur also may exceed the target this winter.

Md. Golam Mostafa, deputy director of the DAE, Madaripur told UNB that they were executing a plan to bring a total of 8,449 hectares of land under mustard farming in four upazilas of the district in the current season with a production target of 10,560 tonnes.

According to the district DAE office, mustard has been sown in 1,714 hectares with a production target of 2,142 tonnes in Kalkini, 1,125 hectares with a production target of 1,406 tonnes in Rajoir, 4,170 hectares with a production target of 5,212 tonnes in Shibchar and 1,440 hectares with a production target of 1,800 tonnes in Sadar upazila.

Sultan Mollah, 40, a farmer of Lakkhiganj village in Sadar upazila, said, "I have cultivated mustard on 120 decimals of land in the current season and expect a good harvest".

Eskander Matbar, 60, of Mostafapur village, and Nuru Kazi, 55, of Charnaguria village in the upazila, said they were also cultivating mustard in a massive way.

A farmer of Shibchar upazila said he cultivated mustard on a big area with the hope of good yield because of good weather and timely DAE assistance.

Mustard fields can be seen here and

there at different villages some with seeds and others with eye-catching colour.

Agricultural experts hope that the output is likely to exceed target as the weather was favourable for the crop.

In Tangail, harvesting of the cash crop is now going on in full swing.

The farmers in the district are also expecting a bumper yield and better prices, compared to last year's, reports our correspondent.

Mustard was cultivated on 33,605 hectares of land in 12 upazilas of the district this year, DAE sources said.

Farmer Badar Ali of Panch Charan village in Kalihati upazila said he got 12 maunds of mustard from his three bighas of land this year while he had harvested nine maunds from the same land last year.

Mohammad Azizullah, deputy director of DAE in Tangail, said the farmers got bumper yield of the item due to favourable weather condition and necessary support provided by the department.

Farmer Sabed Ali of Ashekpur village in Sadar upazila said he sold his mustard at Tk 1400 per maund while the price was Tk 1250 per maund last year.

Besides, cultivation of hybrid variety of mustard also increased the yield in Sadar upazila this year, farmers said.

Hybrid Bari-14 mustard was cultivated on 500 hectares in Tangail Sadar upazila last year. But the farmers cultivated it on 2,000 hectares this year due to proper motivation and help by DAE.

BSF picks up youth

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Kushtia

Members of Border Security Force (BSF) picked up a Bangladeshi youth from Sonapur frontier village in Mujibnagar upazila of Meherpur on Monday night.

The youth was identified as Selim Hossain, 28, son of Nazrul Islam of the village.

Selim's father Nazrul told newsmen that Selim went out of home on Monday noon and remained missing since then.

"Selim could not be traced until yesterday morning. Later, we came to know from BGB and our relatives in India that a team from Patharghata BSF camp in Nadia district of Pashchimbanga state entered Bangladesh through Sonapur border. They picked up Selim and dragged him into India at around 9:30pm on Monday," Nazrul said.

He said that they also learnt from a BGB source that BSF handed over Selim to Tehattor police station in Nadia.

Contacted, BGB Mujibnagar camp commander Amir Khasru said, they sent a letter to BSF asking them to attend a flag meeting on Tuesday morning to discuss the matter.

He said, at the meeting, the BSF men informed that Selim was now under the custody of Tehattor police.

8 get life for murder

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Nilphamari

A court here sentenced eight people to life term imprisonment yesterday for killing a man in 2007.

The court also fined each of them Tk 10,000, in default, to suffer six months more in jail.

The convicts are Jamrul Islam, Joinul Islam, Ashraf Ali, Zamiar Rahman, Abeda Begum, Monwara Begum, Zaheda Begum and Maleka Begum -- all hailing from Paschim Gurguri Dangapara village of Sadar upazila.

According to the prosecution story, the aforesaid people came in a group to fell a mango tree beside the house of victim Ketab Ali at noon on 2 June 2007.

Ketab Ali and his wife Zaheda Begum resisted them, claiming the ownership of the tree.

At this, they left the spot hurling abusive words and threatening to teach Ketab Ali a lesson.

After that, at around 4:00pm, the same group returned and attacked Ketab Ali and Zaheda Begum on their yard.

Seriously injured Ketab and Zaheda were taken to Nilphamari 100-bed hospital where Ketab Ali succumbed to his injuries on the same day.

Victim of acid attack dies

UNB, Sherpur

A young housewife, who was injured on Sunday in an acid attack allegedly by her husband at Bakulakanda village in Sribordi upazila, died the next day.

The deceased was identified as Shipon Begam, 35, wife of Tofazzal Hossain, 46, of the village.

Shipon's brother Aminul Islam said, Tofazzal married his sister 15 years ago and took an amount from their family as dowry.

But Tofazzal recently started torturing his wife, demanding more money from her family.

On Sunday evening, Tofazzal picked up a quarrel with her over the matter. Later at about 11pm he poured acid on Shipon when she was asleep in her room, leaving her seriously injured.

Hearing her shrill cry, in-laws took her to Dhaka for treatment but she succumbed to her injuries on the way on Monday noon.

AGITATION ON WITHOUT RESPITE



PHOTO: STAR
Demanding capital punishment to war criminals and ban on Jamaat-Shibir politics, people from all walks of life continued their movement across the country for the 15th day yesterday. Photos show 1) protesters shout slogans at Kachari Chatter (square) in Munshiganj town, 2) local youths hold a candlelight vigil in front of Madonna Garden Market at Gouripur in Daudkandi upazila of Comilla, 3) students of Chehelgazi School and College take out a procession in Dinajpur town, and 4) Projonma '71, holding torches and lighted candles, stages a protest rally at Chourongi Square in Magura town.

3 arrested on charge of answer script forgery

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Tangail

Police arrested three people, including a BCL leader, yesterday and on Monday night on charge of forging answer scripts of honours second year English (compulsory) examination under National University.

The arrestees are Monirul Saleh alias Rumon, finance secretary of Tangail district unit of BCL, Mohammad Abdullah, a third year student of political science department at Government Saadat College in Karata, Tangail, and Mokbul Hossain, a resident of Board Bazar area in Gazipur.

Acting on a tip-off, a team of the Detective Branch (DB) of Tangail police raided Sundarban Courier Service office at Club Road in the town on Monday night and arrested BCL leader Rumon, also a second year student of accounting department of the college, with three packets of forged answer scripts.

On his confession, the law enforcers raided a students'

mess at Shibnath Para in the town the same night and arrested Abdullah. They recovered 15 forged answer scripts of the examination held on February 16, 49 blank answer scripts, 18 OMR (optical mark reader) sheets, and 200 pieces of white paper from the room of Abdullah.

On the basis of Abdullah's statement, the DB team raided Board Bazar area in Gazipur district yesterday noon and arrested Mokbul Hossain from in front of National University.

The team was also raiding different areas in Gazipur to

arrest Mizanur Rahman Mizan, a sacked employee of National University, for his involvement in answer scripts forgery as of filing of this report at 6:00pm.

During preliminary interrogation, the arrestees confessed to forging answer scripts with the connivance of some dishonest officials and employees of National University, Humayun Kabir Akand, officer-in-charge of DB, told this correspondent.

A case was filed against the three with Tangail Model Police Station under the Public Examination Act-1980.

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