

'Love' for land knows no bounds

FROM PAGE 1
Khalique (Bagerhat-3) made a lot of money from fisheries, according to their 2013 wealth statements.

MAHBUBUR

Former state minister for water resource Mahbubur Rahman Talukder had only 20 acres of agricultural land prior to his becoming a lawmaker in 2008. But in five years, he has come to own 2,865 acres of agricultural land, an astounding 143 times rise.

His land ownership beats even the biggest housing projects, which had resorted to illegal means to grab land or had filled up rivers and water bodies. The size of his land even dwarfs the country's largest 2,500-acre Korean EPZ.

In the affidavit, he claimed that his 2,865 acres of agricultural land was worth only Tk 70.14 lakh while independent sources put the value around Tk 1,000 crore.

HASAN

Back in 2008, Forest and Environment Minister Hasan Mahmud had a total of 14.4 decimals of land in different places, including an eight-decimal plot of land in Purbachal in Dhaka.

In his wealth statement, he mentioned that he inherited 25 percent of 3.2 decimal of land (he did not mention where but it was likely to be in Chittagong). For the rest of the land, he did not specify anything beyond saying that that he had paid Tk 8.5 lakh as advance to buy a house.

But in the last five years, the minister got as "gifts or donations" a staggering 310 acres (31,032 decimal) of agricultural land and a building on 8.096 decimal of land. His 2013 wealth statement however did not mention the locations of the very unusual gifts he received.

But that was not all.

Hasan also owns 9.6 decimal of land in Chittagong's most expensive area, Khulshi, approximately 4.8 decimal at Balia, which Hasan inherited, and another 0.034 decimal in Khulshi worth Tk 14.60 lakh, and a duplex house worth Tk 47.83 lakh.

Hasan's wife Nurjan Fatema now owns a 4.8-decimal plot of land in Gazipur, where land prices are very high, 288 decimal of land in Rangunia, Chittagong, and two office spaces of 6,000 square feet on Sonargoan Road, Dhaka.

ASLAM

Aslamul Haq Aslam had just over six acres of land five years ago. Now he owns 145 acres, according to his wealth statement. Aslam did not mention that he owns a couple of power plants, which are on his own land.

Independent sources said he owned much more land than he had mentioned in his wealth statement.

Aslam told The Daily Star that he bought land outside the capital after selling off his prized pieces of land in Dhaka.

BAHADUR

Back in 2008, Bir Bahadur had 45 acres of arable land, which have now become 99 acres. Apart from those, he also got a 0.245-acre (24.5 decimal) plot in the last five years.

Independent sources said Bahadur, also organising secretary of AL, owns vast tracts of land in Bandarban Sadar upazila, Rajbila, Kuhalong and Tonkaboti unions and in Lala and Naikhangchhari upazilas.

HANIF

Hanif, joint general secretary of the Awami League, owns 70 acres of land bought in the last five years with about Tk 4.95 crore. At least 67 acres are located within 200 meters of the country's lone mangrove forest, the Sundarbans, in Mongla and three acres in Gazipur.

Hanif's wealth statement showed he earns Tk 3.27 crore a year from fish farms. Contacted, he said he has several fish farms in Khulna and Patuakhali from where he earns most of his annual income.

NAZRUL

AL lawmaker Nazrul Islam Babu had only 0.085 acres (8.5 decimal) of land back in 2008. Now he owns 7.08 acres (708 decimal) of land and a 3,238-square foot flat in the capital.

He claimed that the prices of the land and the flat were just over Tk 3.82 crore. He did not mention the locations of his pieces of land.

Sources claimed that Babu controls the sale and purchase of most pieces of land in his constituency (Araihaazar-Rupganj) where land is rather costly.

MANNAN

Former state minister for housing and public works Mannan Khan and his wife had non-agricultural land worth Tk 2.45 lakh in 2008. Now they have land worth around Tk 1.96

crore.

Mannan, who had no flats, houses or buildings in 2008, now owns two flats and a building worth Tk 3.64 crore.

Mannan in his statement said he earned Tk 1.45 crore and his wife Tk 1.73 crore from fish farms and remittances. The couple had no fish farms before the 2008 election but this time they have shown that they own 10 fish farms inherited from their parents.

The AL lawmaker was recently ousted from the post of AL's office secretary. He was known as a pro-leftist politician in the party for his involvement in left-wing student politics.

NANAK

Five years ago, former state minister for LGRD and Cooperatives Jahangir Kabir Nanak had only 0.10 acre (10 decimal) of agriculture land. But now he and his wife own 3.56 acres of land (1.94 acres non-agriculture and 1.62 acres arable land).

In addition, he has shown in his wealth statement that he owns a building in Dhaka worth Tk 1.30 crore. In 2008, Nanak's wife had only a 1,874 square foot flat but no building.

DEDICATED TO FISH FARMING

TAPOSH

Among the AL lawmakers, Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh and his wife own two of the costliest fish farms, worth Tk 13.94 crore. The couple had no fish farms or flats in 2008, according to his statements.

Taposh also owns a 10-katha plot of land worth about Tk 2.47 crore and a flat worth around Tk 1.04 crore. His wife owns two plots

in Dhanmondi worth Tk 1.66 crore.

Since 2008, Taposh has also had 50 percent ownership of two bighas and 10.50 kathas of agricultural land, and a commercial building in Motijheel, and 75 percent ownership of a 10 katha non-agriculture land.

NUR-E-ALAM

Nur-e-Alam Chowdhury and his wife earn Tk 12.77 crore from fisheries and stock business yearly, according to his wealth statement.

He mentioned in the statement that they had investments worth Tk 13.19 crore in shrimp farms and stock business. They had no income from shrimps or stocks in 2008.

ILIAS

Ilias Mollah showed in his wealth statement that he earned Tk 5 crore from fisheries annually. According to his 2008 wealth statement, he used to earn Tk 30 lakh annually. Mollah is the chairman of Majil Fisheries based in Mirpur Beribandh.

THE CANDIDATES

Three Awami League-nominated candidates, ABM Fazle Karim Chowdhury (Chittagong-6), Didarul Alam (Chittagong-4) and Talukder Abdul Khalique (Bagerhat-3) earn in total Tk 14 crore from fisheries annually.

In his wealth statement, Fazle Karim said he earned Tk 2.50 crore from fisheries in 2013. He had no income from the sector in 2008.

Didarul showed that he earned Tk 6.99 crore from fisheries. He has several ponds and fishing trawlers.

Talukder Abdul Khalique, former Khulna City Corporation mayor, mentioned that he

Sudden ban kicks up an uproar

FROM PAGE 1
in hurling petrol and homemade bombs.

A special notice, signed by BRTA Director (enforcement) Motiar Rahman, said the ban was imposed under section 88 of the Motorcycle Act, 1983, and it would remain effective until further notice.

When asked about the notice over the phone Tuesday evening, the BRTA director said, "The notice has already been published and there is nothing to say now..."

Asked why the ban against over three lakh bikers was in place when the people involved in the crimes concerned were so few, Communication Minister Obaidul Quader on Tuesday said he would yesterday ask the authorities not to enforce the ban.

Sources in the BRTA yesterday evening told The Daily Star that they had not received any instructions from the high-ups about withdrawing or relaxing the ban.

Mir Rezaul Alam, joint commissioner (Traffic) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, told

The Daily Star that the BRTA, an independent body, issued the order and they were only responsible for enforcing the ban.

However, policemen on the streets were seemingly not enforcing the ban.

The ban continues to trouble the law-abiding citizens but many bikers, even policemen, were ignoring it altogether or were oblivious to it.

At Farmgate around 7:00pm yesterday, two law enforcers were seen on a motorbike violating the ban. When approached by The Daily Star reporter, they went away in a hurry only saying that they were from the Special Branch of Police.

During the 18-party alliance's "March for Democracy" programme in December and yesterday, groups of motorcyclists from the ruling party were seen on city streets with one and sometimes two pillion passengers. On-duty policemen did not seem to care that they were violating the ban.

Jubo Dal leader shot dead

FROM PAGE 1

There were no reports of any casualty.

Meanwhile, two traders and a truck driver suffered burns as blockaders threw petrol bombs at a truck at Kaliakoir in Gazipur around 11:00pm, said police.

The injured were taken to the burn unit of Dhaka Medical College Hospital, said Omar Faruq, officer-in-charge of Kaliakoir Police Station.

In the capital, a woman was wounded as blockaders blasted crude bombs at Chankharpool last night.

Rehana Akhter Kajol, a housewife, was hit in the face by splinters of crude bombs while she was going to Kamrangirchar by a rickshaw around 9:15pm.

She was taken to the DMCH.

Opposition activists exploded crude bombs near the Matsya Bhaban, and in Paltan, Shahbagh and several other areas in the city last night.

In Chittagong, masked criminals attacked a campaign vehicle of a Workers Party candidate in the next parliamentary election while Jamaat-Shibir men threw a crude bomb at a microbus of private TV channel Somoy.

The start of the non-stop blockade coincided with the new year's day that ended on a rather sombre note amid tension arising from the present political situation.

Many businesses, offices and roadside shops were open and a large number of vehicles, including minibus, auto-rickshaws and private cars, plied the streets in the capital.

Most long-distance buses didn't leave from or for Dhaka, forcing many to look for alternative means of transport.

Train and launch operations, however, were almost normal all over the country.

In Chandpur, blockaders attacked a BGB motorcade carrying a magistrate, as it reached Mahamaya in Sadar upazila around 5:15pm, according to police and witnesses.

In retaliation, Border Guard Bangladesh personnel opened fire on the blockaders, leaving

Jubo Dal activist Faruk Patwary, 35, and several others injured.

Faruk was whisked off to Chandpur Sadar Hospital where doctors declared him dead.

The BGB personnel opened fire on the attackers in self-defence, Magistrate Aminur Rahman, who was with the BGB team, told The Daily Star.

Meanwhile, masked criminals attacked a campaign vehicle of Abu Hanif, a Workers Party candidate from Chittagong-9 constituency, around 6:45pm in the port city.

Around 15 masked men vandalised the mini-truck being used for election campaign in front of Samador Community Centre near Kajir Dewri. They also exploded four to five crude bombs to create panic in the area.

"They vandalised my campaign truck and beat up my activists, leaving three of them injured," said Hanif.

Mirza Sayem Mahmud, assistant commissioner of Chittagong Metropolitan Police, Kotwali Zone, said they detained three youths in connection with the incident.

Shibir activists might have been behind the attack, said the AC.

In a separate incident, the driver of a microbus of TV channel Somoy was injured as Jamaat-Shibir men hurled a crude bomb at the vehicle in Chittagong city.

Jamaat-Shibir activists attacked the microbus parked in front of the TV channel's office in Asker Dighir Par area around 6:00pm, said Kamal Dey, senior reporter of the TV station.

Driver Abdul Hakim suffered splinter injuries and was immediately taken to Chittagong Medical College Hospital.

In Jhenidah, a fire broke out at an election office of Prof Nabi Newaj, an Awami League candidate in the next parliamentary polls, near Kotchandpur bus stand in the afternoon.


The body of Faruk at Chandpur Sadar Hospital. He died after sustaining bullet injuries during a clash between BNP's youth front Jubo Dal and joint forces yesterday at Mahamaya of Chandpur.

PHOTO: BANGLA CHOKH

Local AL leaders blamed Jamaat-Shibir men for the incident.

However, opposition leaders claimed that none from the BNP-led 18-party alliance was involved in the incident.

Shahjahan Khan, officer-in-charge of Kotchandpur Police Station, said the fire might have been caused due to carelessness.

Law enforcers yesterday arrested 37 people in Sylhet, 10 opposition men in Jhenidah, 17 opposition activists in Chandpur, six in Satkhira and a BNP leader in Madaripur.

The home ministry said the BNP and Jamaat-Shibir activists carried out vandalism, arson attacks and subversive activities in several areas to create panic among people.

Law enforcers foiled opposition activists' attempts to create anarchy in several places, it said in a press release in the afternoon.

Our district corresponds reported that though Rangamati, Bandarban and Cox's Bazar see hundreds of tourists on the new year's day, all three tourist destinations looked almost deserted

Burn unit in tight spot

FROM PAGE 16

"They do not get any wages; they just make do with the tips they get from patients. Therefore, they have no accountability, and I cannot penalise them either if they do not perform their duties."

Even those who get wages are paid once in three months, he added.

The burn unit is intended for a hundred patients, but it is currently treating over 350. "With so many patients and so little space, it becomes difficult for me to keep the patients in isolation," Samanta observed.

The ICU needs at least fifty beds, whereas it currently has only ten, he said.

The unit had only one bed empty yesterday,

meaning that if the condition of two or more patients deteriorates, only one of them can be accommodated.

Many life-saving machines, some of which are needed for giving mechanical ventilation to critically injured patients, are missing in the ICU, where most of the deaths took place.

The proposed budget for the ICU was Tk 8 crore, but we were given only Tk 1.5 crore. There are at least 14 different types of much-needed equipment that we do not have," said ICU in-charge Shah Alam.

Although the ICU has four ventilators that can give life support to the patients, it lacks monitoring equipment to make them work effectively.

of the government by the AL is just a matter of time.

Hasina at a meeting of the AL's election steering committee held on December 19 discussed her plan to form the government. She suggested that the newly elected lawmakers take oath of office on January 25 and the new government starts its journey on January 27.

Insiders say a number of AL leaders are in favour of forming the government as soon as possible without waiting more than two weeks.

These restrictions would not be applicable on highways, the circular added.

EC DELEGATION TO MEET PRESIDENT