



Dirt and debris of all kinds fill the banks of Gulshan Lake -- plastic, paper, fallen branches, leaves and styrofoam -- creating an ugly landscape in one of the affluent neighbourhoods in the capital. The photo was taken yesterday from Gulshan North Avenue.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Don't nominate 'corrupt' lawmakers

Local AL leaders urge party chief ahead of national polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With the 11th parliamentary election a few months away, local Awami League leaders are bringing corruption allegations against some existing lawmakers, and urging the party president not to nominate them again for the national polls.

AL leaders of Jashore's Bagharpara upazila unit yesterday at a press conference in Dhaka Reporters' Unity alleged that ruling party lawmaker Ranajit Kumar Roy (Jashore-4) has amassed huge wealth in the last 10 years.

They said Ranajit, who did not have a lot of property before the ninth parliamentary election, has wealth worth several crores of taka now.

Atiar Rahman Sardar, senior vice-president of the unit, said Ranajit won the ninth parliamentary election in 2008 and the 10th in 2014.

"Since then, he began amassing wealth illegally," he alleged. He said the lawmaker in his affidavit in 2008 mentioned that he has 4 bigha of agricultural land and a tinshed house on 4 decimal land. Also, his wife and sons did not have any moveable properties.

Atiar claimed that the lawmaker now owns "11 houses in Jashore and Salt Lake City in India, 225-acre of land in Bagharpara and Chougachha and a shrimp enclosure on 50 acres of land in Dumuria upazila of Khulna".

"He drives an SUV worth Tk 1 crore. His wife and two sons use three cars worth Tk 90 lakh. Besides, there are 10 covered-vans worth about Tk 5 crore under his wife's name," claimed Atiar.

Contacted, Ranajit claimed that all allegations against him were baseless. "Instigated by a quarter, they are tarnishing my image," he added without elaborating further.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

Scrap Digital Security Act

Demands Dr Kamal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Gono Forum President Dr Kamal Hossain yesterday demanded that the government revoke the recently-passed Digital Security Act.

Speaking at the party's central office in the capital, Dr Kamal also demanded formation of an election-time neutral government and dissolution of parliament before announcement of the election schedule.

Pointing to section 43 of the Digital Security Act, Dr Kamal said it will empower a police official to search, seize and arrest anyone without warrant, causing risk of harassment through abusing the law.

The much-debated Digital Security Bill 2018 was passed in parliament on September 20 with a harsh provision allowing police officials to search or arrest anyone without warrant.

Journalists and rights activists have expressed worries over the new law, saying it was passed without addressing their concerns.

They also said the act

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

Long road ahead to get on the 'development highway'

80,000km of road network needed, only 21,000km there

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Roads and highways officials and experts have said that flawed design, high cost and lack of quality roads is a major obstacle to becoming a developed country and attracting foreign investors.

"There is a perception that in our country the cost of building roads is abnormally high," said Dr Md Abdullah Al Mamun, director of Bangladesh Roads Research Laboratory (Roads and Highways Department) at the Planning Ministry's National Economic Council auditorium yesterday.

He was speaking at a workshop on

"Building Quality Road Infrastructure: Challenges and Opportunities", organised by Roads and Highways Department where Planning Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal spoke as chief guest.

Dr Mamun also said that a study can be done on why the cost of constructing roads is so high in the country.

In his keynote presentation, he identified various problems in the road sector and said the overseeing of roads has to improve and better auditing should be ensured.

General perception of commuters is that the highways have operational weakness, roads are unsafe, and improper maintenance and premature

deterioration of pavements are prevalent.

Dr Mamun also said to get on the 'development highway' the country needs 80,000km roads. Of that, around 8,000km will have to be expressway.

However, the major road network in Bangladesh constitutes 21,000km at present, he said.

Referring to the keynote speaker's statement, Prof Md Shamsul Hoque of Buet said there is no expressway in Bangladesh, compared to 11 in Pakistan, 21 in India and 37 in Malaysia.

Prof Hoque said, "We must look into

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6



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