

## Scandalous land deal: Senior federal minister among NICL beneficiaries, says FIA

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The minister for trade amassed as much as Rs500m in the scam.

### **KARACHI:**

**The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) has established that certain influential political people benefited from illegal National Insurance Company Limited (NICL) land deals and officers of the NICL and others acted as front men for various state dignitaries, including the federal trade minister, Makhdoom Amin Faheem.**

Sources also said that intense political pressure was brought to bear upon FIA, whose officials were told to hide facts in a report submitted to the Supreme Court about the involvement of influential people in the deal.

FIA investigators alleged that the minister amassed Rs500 million in the deal, inflicting a massive blow to the national exchequer.

According to sources, other accounts in which the ill-gotten money was later transferred were operated by less known persons or business associates with distinct political associations.

Interestingly, the FIA was being pressed into withholding his name from being included in the investigation.

According to sources, an investigation into the bank accounts of the central accused, Khalid Anwar, disclosed that of the Rs900 million paid from the national exchequer Rs40.1 million was used to write off debts of the federal minister and other members of his family.

On January 31, the FIA submitted a report in the Supreme Court according to which NICL paid Rs900 million for a 10-acre plot in Korangi in August 2009. The money was paid into an Atlas Bank account (10210662390100 of Khayaban-e-Tanzeem branch). This is a joint account operated by Khalid Anwar and Khwaja Akbar Butt.

Later, Rs300m were transferred to another account of the same bank branch.

Khwaja Akbar shifted this amount into his Dubai Islamic Bank account (0067754001 of Main Boulevard branch) in Lahore.

One month later, on September 29, Rs40.1 million was paid to write off three loan accounts in the II Chundrigar Road branch of the Standard Chartered Bank. An amount of Rs24,504,750 of a joint loan account operated by Makhdoom Amin Fahim and his son Makhdoom Jaliluz Zaman.

As much as Rs8,498,231 of a business loan (0100925952) owed by Makhdoom Jaliluz Zaman was also paid from this money as well as the home loan account (M050523034L 7997081) operated in the name of the wife of the federal minister, Rizwana Ameen.

FIA mentioned details of the shifting of Rs900 million into various accounts, including the Hashwani Hotels Limited, which runs a five-star hotel chain across the country. About Rs45 million was shifted into their account at Chappal Plaza branch of the National Bank of Pakistan on September 15 last year.

A careful look at the report submitted in the apex court revealed interesting facts, the sources said.

Although the report contained full details of all beneficiaries, including account numbers and titles of the bank accounts and the amounts transferred from the accounts of main accused Khalid Anwer and Khwaja Akbar, names and other details of the federal minister, his son and his wife were withheld.

The sources said that FIA investigators were facing such intense political pressure that an investigating officer, Assistant Director Bashir Shaikh, had disassociated himself from the case on the pretext of illness. The case has now been handed over to another officer.

FIA's report also showed that Rs300 million was paid to front men of the federal minister and NICL officers from the account of the main accused Khalid Anwer.

Despite repeated attempts at communication, *Daily Express* could not reach Amin Fahim and his spokesman Aslam Pirzada for their comments.

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