

# Enact law to empower the poor

Legal, development experts tell national consultation meeting

## STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The poor and those involved in the informal business sector should be brought under a legal framework in order to establish social justice system, legal and development experts said at a national consultation meeting yesterday.

They said the poor, especially in the developing world, live in fear of forced eviction and become victims of corruption and violence for not having property rights and access to justice.

The UN Commission on Legal Empowerment of the Poor (CLEP) in collaboration with the School of Law, Brac University, organised the meeting on thematic issues at Brac Inn Centre in the city.

It should be ascertained how the existing legal structure and malfunctioning of laws deprive the poor of their

rights, said eminent jurist Dr Kamal Hossain who chaired the meeting.

Properly identifying the impediments will help lift the poor out of poverty, he noted.

The people are at the centre of development and all should have equal access to amenities, employment and resources to reach the goal, he added.

"We must look at how laws can support the poor," Dr Kamal said.

The lawmakers who promised to change the fate of the poor before the elections have simply forgot their promises, he said, mentioning that hawkers and slum dwellers are now being evicted as they do not have legal documents although they are entitled to housing and employment facilities for their survival.

"We hope that the MPs who will sit in the next parliament will formulate

laws for the poor and those in the informal sector," he said.

Co-chairing another session, renowned economist Prof Rehman Sobhan said the fate of the poor would remain the same unless they are legally empowered both in democratic and economic spheres of life.

Conditions must be created where the poor are entitled to equal opportunities and equal rights to property, resources and democratic process, he said.

Brac founder and Chairperson Fazle Hasan Abed said the poor everywhere are out of legal framework. As a result, they do not have access to banking and housing facilities and even fail to get identity cards or passports, he added.

Abed, also member of CLEP, said the commission is working to simplify the registration process of businesses in the informal sector so that the authorities cannot arbitrarily drive the poor away, depriving them of their right to survive.

Both Fazle Hasan and Dr Kamal Hossain think that the government should take the human rights issue into account during the eviction drive against hawkers and slum dwellers.

Law Adviser Barrister Mainul Hosein said the poor should be brought under legal framework to establish their rights.

The government is also taking steps to rehabilitate hawkers and slum dwellers, he said, adding that determining who are the genuine evicted people, however, is a practical problem. "We are working to solve it."

According to a mission statement of CLEP, the majority of the world's three billion poor live their lives outside the rule of law, without the basic legal protection.

"Without enforceable labour laws, they suffer from unsafe and abusive work conditions. If they own an informal business, they cannot access the legal business protections that entrepreneurs in the developed world take for granted," the statement said.

Thus, they are locked out of economic opportunity in their own countries and in the global services, said CLEP Executive Director Naresh Singh.

As the poor have no access to basic public services and justice, the ability of the poor to create wealth is frustrated, he said, adding that their dignity is violated due to lack of access to justice.

Barrister Amir-Ul Islam, Supreme Court Advocates Sharif Bhuiyan and Shahidul Malik and development experts Shamsul Bari and Khushi Kabir also spoke.



Law Adviser Barrister Mainul Hosein speaks at the concluding session of the National Consultation Process on the Thematic Issues of the UN Commission on Legal Empowerment of the Poor (CLEP) at Brac Inn Centre in the city yesterday. On his right are Prof Rehman Sobhan and Naresh Singh and on his left is Fazle Hasan Abed. UN Commission on Legal Empowerment of the Poor and Brac University School of Law jointly organised the event.

## ICDDR,B SCIENTIFIC CONFCE BEGINS TODAY

# 'Child mortality to be cut by two-thirds within 2015'

## UNB, Dhaka

The 11th Annual Scientific Conference (ASCON) of International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research Bangladesh (ICDDR,B) begins at its Saksawati auditorium in the city today.

This year the theme of the conference is 'Partnerships in Achieving the Millennium Development Goals.'

Since 1991, ASCON has been the platform for disseminating research findings of ICDDR,B to health care providers, health planners, administrators, medical educators, policy and decision makers, donor communication and other development organisations.

The inaugural function of the three-day conference was held at the Radisson Water Garden Hotel yesterday.

Inaugurating the function, Health Adviser Major General (Retd) Dr ASM Matiur Rahman said the GDP growth rate has to be raised to seven percent on average to achieve the poverty reduction target as envisaged in the Millennium Development Goals.

He said the government intends to adopt a medium-term pro-poor macro-economic framework from the next fiscal year.

The adviser said Bangladesh might be one of only six countries from among the developing world that is poised to be successful in reducing the mortality of under-5 children by two-thirds within 2015.

Dr Matiur identified HIV/AIDS as one of the recent emerging issues that has been taken seriously by the government with several measures,

including national committee for the prevention of HIV/AIDS, safe blood transfusion programme, and HIV/AIDS prevention projects.

Prof Henry Mosley of the Department of Population, Family and Reproductive Health of Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, Baltimore, USA presented the keynote paper at the inaugural function.

In his paper titled 'Transforming Health Systems to Facilitate the Household Production of Health in Developing Countries,' Prof Henry identified three key issues confront-

ing the production of health in developing countries.

These are obstacles in making investments in health interventions more effective and efficient, ensuring greater equity in access to the knowledge, skills and technologies that facilitate the production of health, and sustainable health outcomes.

The inaugural function was also addressed by ICDDR,B Executive Director David A Sack MD, Deputy Executive Director Alejandro Cravioto and Prof Dr Richard Cash of USA.



Alan Field, regional manager (South Asia) of Edexcel International, speaks at a seminar on 'Potential of BTEC Qualifications in Bangladesh' at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel yesterday.



## Dry weather likely

### UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky over the country in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is also likely at one or two places.

Met Office said day temperature may rise by 1-3 degree Celsius over the country.

Highest temperature 31.6 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Cox's Bazar and lowest 14.0 degree Celsius at Srimongal.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:02pm today and rises at 6:17am today.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature		Humidity in percentage		
	In Celsius	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	28.0	17.6	59	72	40
Chittagong	30.6	18.0	72	59	71
Rajshahi	27.0	15.2	64	72	64
Khulna	28.0	17.6	62	80	61
Barisal	29.5	17.0	61	84	61
Sylhet	28.7	14.7	46	74	62
Cox's Bazar	31.6	19.4	62	68	62

## Seminar on BTEC qualifications

A seminar on 'Potential of BTEC Qualifications in Bangladesh', organised by the Edexcel International, was held at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel yesterday, says a press release.

Speakers at the seminar said that the demand for internationally recognised qualifications are increasing very rapidly because of globalisation.

Alan Field, regional manager (South Asia) of Edexcel International, conducted the seminar while Saidur Rahman, country manager, delivered the welcome speech. Shahin Reza, regional operations manager, was also present.

Visc-chancellors/representatives from private universities and heads of different institutions attended the seminar.

Edexcel is the UK's largest educational awarding body and a part of Pearson Plc, the world's largest education services organisation.

In Bangladesh, Edexcel is offering GCE O & A levels qualifications over the last 35 years through British Council. It also offers BTEC qualifications -- more than 50,000 students study BTECs each year as a leading vocational route into employment, further or higher education.

Some more plots were allotted to Asma Mirza, daughter of Abdul Mannan (plot no A-934/23), Monwara Mirza (plot no A-934/22), Mirza Khamil Hossein (plot no yanw-12/1), Saima

Hossein (plot no yanw-12/1), Saima



Campaign for Good Governance organised a discussion on 'South Asian Mass Solidarity and Saarc' at Cirdap auditorium in the city yesterday. From right are former adviser to the caretaker government Sultan Kamal, Rezaul Karim, Mohsin Ali, former adviser to the caretaker government CM Shafi Sami and Mohammad Zamir.

... for not following doctor's undue advice

## STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An elderly patient was about to be discharged by a doctor at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) for not going for medical test at the doctor's prescribed diagnostic centre.

Marbia Begum, 50, of Rayerbagh, Shyampur, was admitted to ward no. 21 (female, medicine) with fever and chest pain on Thursday evening.

Dr Shahidur Rahman, assistant registrar of ward no 2 (male, medicine) and half of ward no 21, referred the patient to Renal Lab at Dhanmondi for four diagnostic tests the same day.

But, the relatives of the patient, due to financial problem, completed three tests at the DMCH free of cost.

Dr Shahidur got angry having seen the test reports of the DMCH instead of the Renal Lab's yesterday morning. He verbally gave the discharge orders of the patient.

The doctor also misbehaved with the patient's relatives when they refused to comply with the orders.

When this correspondent asked for the reason for discharging the patient, Dr Shahidur declined to comment.

Marbia was not released from the hospital finally, as other patients and their relatives at the ward strongly protested at the orders of the doctor.

Sources said Dr Shahidul allegedly used to force the patients under ward no 2 (male, medicine), and ward no 21 (female, medicine) to get the test done from three fixed labs in the city.

## CA goes to Barisal today

### UNB, Dhaka

Chief Adviser Dr Fakhrudin Ahmed goes to Barisal today to hold a meeting with senior government officials in the country's southern division.

He is also scheduled to hold an opinion-exchange meeting with professionals and elite of Barishal.

The Chief Adviser will return to the capital later in the day.

As part of his series of tours of divisional cities, Dr Ahmed first visited Chittagong on February 27.

## Abortive bid to loot Armanitola JB branch

### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Robbers' attempt to loot the vault of Janata Bank at Armanitola Branch in old part of the city failed, as they could not break the heavy vault.

The police sources said locals found one of the guards, Shafullah, unconscious out of the bank gate and rushed him to the Sir Salimullah Medical College. Later police picked up the guard from the hospital for interrogations.

The police sources said they rushed to the spot at around 9:00am as the manager of the branch Serajul Islam informed them.

Abul Kalam Azad, another guard found the locks broken at the main gate of the bank and he immediately collected two locks and put it on the gate.

Asad soon informed the incident to the manager. Getting inside the bank, the manager and police found scratches and other signs that proved that someone tried to break the vault.

The manager has filed a case with the Kotwali Police Station and police is interrogating the guards they captured.

## Abbas gives park land to brothers, sisters

### FROM PAGE 1

Sources said Mirza Abbas (father -- late Razzak) under the name of Mirza Abbas Uddin Ahmed was the beneficiary of the compensation scheme under LA Case no 63/59-60, who was allotted lands at CS points 1162, 1163, 1165 and 1404 of Khilgaon mouja, as he had been shown as an affected person.

A meeting of the Land Allocation Committee of Khilgaon Rehabilitation Area on 21 March 1996, suggested allotment of 3.3 khata of land at plot no 934/19 for Mirza Abbas.

Erstwhile local ward commissioner Zahiruddin Babul along with former deputy secretary of the housing ministry Sirajul Anwar, former executive engineer of public works department Mohsin Faruq, and former general secretary of the land distribution committee of Khilgaon, Mojamal Haq Bhuiyan were present at the meeting.

All recommendations and decisions of the committee were made under pressure from Abbas, said officials of the public works department, wishing anonymity.

Plots were also allotted to Abbas's sisters Kamala Khatun (plot no A-934/13), Renu Mirza (plot no A-934/14), Ishrat Mirza (plot no A-934/15), Sahida Mirza (plot no A-934/16), Rashida Mirza (plot no A-934/17), and to his brothers Mirza Idrishul Haq (plot no A-934/18), and Mirza Ekrumul Hossein (plot no A-934/20) in the same area.

Some more plots were allotted to Asma Mirza, daughter of Abdul Mannan (plot no A-934/23), Monwara Mirza (plot no A-934/22), Mirza Khamil Hossein (plot no yanw-12/1), Saima

Hossein (plot no yanw-12/1), Saima