

Land reform a must for poverty cut

Speakers say at Cirdap seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a seminar yesterday said land reform should be made for ensuring the people's access to land and eradicating poverty from the society.

They also said that government should give more attention on land confiscation and distribution.

Styled 'Access to land by the rural poor: The case of Nepal,' the seminar was organised at the Cirdap auditorium in the city on the occasion of the 29th founding anniversary of Cirdap.

Nepal Development Research Institute Coordinator Jagannath

Adhikari said poverty is concentrated among the land dependents and the government should reform the land to ensure the people's access to land.

"Land policy should be made in favour of farmers, women, indigenous and Dalits, because people from these groups are mostly poor and landless," he said while presenting a keynote paper at the seminar.

Secretary to Rural Development and Cooperatives Division Fazlul Karim said despite global awareness and efforts, progress on securing access to land by the poor based on sustainability has been rather

slow.

Addressing the seminar as the chief guest, he said, "The issue of access to land and other natural resources by the extreme poor, particularly women and indigenous people, is very important. We will have to give more priority in land issue."

Cirdap Research Director Dr Nasreen Khandker said a national consensus is needed to solve the land disputes.

Cirdap Director General Dr Durga Paudyal presided over the seminar where Dr Selim Raihan of Dhaka University also addressed.

EXCESS BUS FARES Chief adviser's interference sought

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a meeting yesterday sought the interference of the chief adviser (CA) to protect citizens from the harassment by the transport owners by charging excess bus fares.

The view-exchange meeting with the journalists was organised jointly by Consumers Association of Bangladesh (Cab), Citizen's Rights Movement (CRM) and Nagorik Sanghati (NS) under the banner of Citizens' Rights Protection Movement (CRPM) at the National Press Club in the city.

Leaders of the organisations also urged the government to clarify whether the CNG and diesel-run buses would run under separate policy or under one policy.

The CRPM placed a 13-point demand to the government to reduce the citizens' sufferings in transport sector.

The demands include re-fixing the fares taking the people's demands into account in a just way, and giving more manpower to BRTA so that it could monitor the bus fares set and taken actually.

The speakers accused the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) of not doing much to reduce the public sufferings.

They said the BRTA, with the manpower it has, should monitor on the roads whether or not the government-fixed fares are taken from the passengers.

CRM Vice-president Mohammad Mafizul Haque Sarkar Bir Bikram said there was anarchy in the transport sector in the past and the scenario is also the same now.

"The bus owners are violating the fares that the government has set for them, if somebody does not obey the laws then what is the utility of the state of emergency," he said.

The government must approach in a planned way to bring the transport sector into order and the citizens should also help the government by forgoing movement for their rights.

Cab President Borhan Ahmed presided over the meeting which was also addressed by NS President Dr ASM Atiqur Rahman, Cab General Secretary Kazi Faruque and Cab Programme Officer Emrad Hossain Malek.



Haji Bhaban, right, at Masterpara leans on another building following an earthquake that hit Rajshahi on Saturday night.

PHOTO STAR

Termination of journos protested

BSS, Dhaka

Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ) yesterday formed a human chain in front of the National Press Club to protest termination of journalists from the ETV, the RTV, the Shamokal, the Ittefaq, and demanded implementation of the wage board award.

Leaders of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) and DUJ including the journalists took part in the human chain that lasted for one hour, said a press release.

The leaders urged the owners of the concerned media establishments to reinstate the terminated journalists and also fulfill other demands.

The journalist leaders also announced that a token hunger strike will be observed on July 12 at the National Press Club in support of the demands.

Baroness Tonge's visit postponed

UNB, Dhaka

Visit of Baroness Tonge to Bangladesh has been postponed, a British Council release said.

She was scheduled to arrive here today on a three-day visit.

PRICE HIKE OF ESSENTIALS Adviser's remark protested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Different political parties yesterday protested the remarks of Finance Adviser AB Mirza Azizul Islam that there is no possibility of reducing the prices of the essentials.

Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) President Manjurul Ahsan Khan and General Secretary Mujahidul Islam Selim in a statement said the remark of the finance adviser is a silly joke with the people who is under severe pressure due to inflation.

The leaders said the comment was unexpected. In the past many unscrupulous businessmen increased prices of essentials due to such types of comments of some advisers, they added.

They said the finance adviser is running the economy in the International Monetary Fund (IMF)-prescribed way and that's why the real income of the people did not increase but the prices of commodities did for several times.

The CPB will hold protest rallies and meetings across the country on July 9 demanding reduction of fuel price and containing price hike of essentials.

Democratic Left Alliance (DLA) also formed a human chain yesterday protesting the finance adviser's remarks.

They also demanded the government withdraw the fuel price hike.

They took out a procession from Purana Paltan but police intercepted them.

DLA leaders at a rally said the production cost in the agriculture sector would increase due to fuel price hike and food security could be threatened.

Coordinator of the DLA Moshrefa Mishu, leaders Tipu Biswas, Zanaed Saki and Bazlur Rashid Firoz spoke on the occasion.

Terming the finance adviser irresponsible, Revolutionary Workers Party of Bangladesh (RWPB) President Khandaker Ali Abbas and General Secretary Saiful Haq in a statement said the finance adviser's remarks would encourage dishonest businessmen.

Bangladesh Jubo Union (BJU) demanded the finance adviser resign if he fails to control the price hike.

Building leans as tremor jolts Rajshahi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

A five-storied building leaned on another building while cracks developed on a number of houses following an earthquake that hit Rajshahi and its adjoining areas on Saturday night.

The five-storied building owned

by an official of Rajshahi City Corporation leaned some three feet onto another building at Masterpara in the city.

Besides, many houses at Chhoto Bongram, Seroil, Masterpara and Laxmipur in the city developed cracks.

However, no injuries or casual-

ties were reported.

The earthquake, measuring 5.1 in the Richter scale, jolted the northwestern region of the country for nearly six seconds from 10.56pm.

The epicentre of the quake was recorded at Bishpur of Indian State of Assam, some 290km to the

northeast of Dhaka. Witnesses said the tremor was felt strongly in Chapainawabganj, Rajshahi, Natore and Naogaon districts.

Panic-stricken people rushed out of their houses and shops during the quake and stayed in open place till the midnight for fear of aftershocks.



Left Democratic Alliance stages a demonstration at Purana Paltan in the city yesterday protesting the finance adviser's remark on price hike of essentials.

PHOTO STAR

Strengthen local govt bodies for disaster risk reduction

Speakers tell workshop

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Key stakeholders at a workshop yesterday called for developing capacities of the local government bodies in the disaster risk reduction and mitigation efforts.

They also stressed the need for developing a better understanding of how local government bodies and communities can play effective role in managing and reducing disasters risks.

Titled 'Strengthening the role of local governments in disaster risk reduction,' the World Bank (WB) organised the workshop at a city hotel in a bid to develop better understanding of how local governments and communities can play effective roles in reducing disaster risk and its management.

Addressing as the chief guest, Local Government Division Secretary Shaikh Khurshid Alam said we have already asked the local government authorities to get ready to tackle the possible upcoming flood this year.

He said Bangladesh is improving day by day in disaster management, adding that local government authorities play key role in disaster management and also to mitigate the human sufferings.

The LGRD secretary said, "We give instructions from here (ministry), but it is the local governments that play active role in disaster management."

WB Bangladesh Operations

Adviser Mohamed Alhousseyni Toure said, "It is very important to ensure harmonisation among the government departments and development partners in their support for strengthening local governments' role in disaster risk reduction related initiatives."

The speakers, including local government leaders, suggested ways to strengthen the union parishads for undertaking disaster risk reduction initiatives as well as integrating those initiatives within the WB-funded ongoing Local Government Support Project (LGSP).

Around 50 government and WB officials are taking part in the two-day workshop.



Toriqlul Secured Golden GPA-5

Md. Toriqlul Islam (Romeo) secured A-5 in all subjects (Golden A+) from Science Group in the S.S.C Examination 2008 from Uttara Model School & College under Dhaka Board. He is the only son of Mr. Md. Rafiqul Islam, Managing Director of Aman Group & Mrs. Shahana Khatun. Romeo wants to be a Nuclear Scientist in the future.

He seeks blessings from all for success in life.

With best wishes Officers/ Staff & Well-wishers of Aman Group, Dhaka.

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DMC foundation day celebration on July 10

METRO DESK

Dhaka Medical College Alumni Trust will celebrate the 62nd foundation day of Dhaka Medical College (DMC) at Shaheed Dr Milon auditorium on July 10, says a press release.

Health and Family Welfare Adviser AMM Shawkat Ali will be present as the chief guest while Health and Family Welfare Secretary AKM Zafar Ullah Khan and Health Services Director General Prof MA Faiz will be the special guests at the inaugural session.

Dhaka Medical College Alumni Trust Chairman Prof Mirza M Islam will preside over the inaugural session.

All DMC graduates are requested to attend the ceremony. The graduates have been requested to contact Subir Costa over Phone -- 01712486905 for registration.

Chowk Bazaar through the ages

11823, etching by Charles D'Orly

(2) 1880, photo by Johnston and Hoffman

(3) 2008, photo by Iresh Zaker

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