

Solve housing problem of urban poor

Speakers tell workshop

METRO DESK

Although the urban poor contribute significantly to urban economy, their problems, specially the housing problem, is never considered seriously by any government, said the speakers at a workshop in the city on Sunday.

They said the urban poor live in slums and are subject to frequent evictions.

The workshop titled 'House for the urban poor: Past experiences and present needs' was organised by Onmehshan, an NGO, with the assistance of Manusher Jonno Foundation at Dhaka Reporters Unity, says a press release.

Moderated by MM Akash, professor of economics at Dhaka University, the workshop was attended by Prof Nazrul Islam, chairman of the University Grants Commission, as chief guest.

Prof Nazrul said what the urban

poor without homes need most is the land and the rest can be done by themselves.

The slum dwellers are even willing to pay for the land, he added.

Prof Nazrul said land is the primary problem which has held up their resettlement plan.

He however appreciated the thought of the caretaker government to rehabilitate the evicted slum dwellers.

Mostafa Quaiyum Khan, executive director of CUP, said the caretaker government undertook a plan to resettle the slum dwellers evicted during its eviction drives soon after the takeover of power.

But later on they seemed to be very reluctant in allocating the land for the purpose, he added.

Dr Atiur Rahman, chairman of Samunnay, stressed on strengthening the economic power of the slum dwellers so that their capacity to claim is increased.

He also laid emphasis on the solidarity of the urban poor on issues concerning their interests.

Prof Akash said as per law any khas land is the property of people, and as such it can be allocated for the rehabilitation of evicted slum dwellers if the government desires so.

He said a struggle lies ahead and the urban poor will have to unite to achieve their rights.

They must try to establish a government which will be poor-friendly and they must press the government to solve their housing problems, he added.

Prof Akash called upon all to be sensitive to the plight of the urban poor and come forward to join in their struggle.

He also called on sharing the poverty so that someday everybody could share the wealth.

The workshop was also attended by Pranab Saha, city editor of the Prothom Alo and DCC Commissioner Mahmuda Begum.

Prof Najma Chowdhury honoured

DU CORRESPONDENT

The Department of Women and Gender Studies of Dhaka University (DU) yesterday conferred a 'special honorary award' on Prof Dr Najma Chowdhury for her contribution to institutionalisation of gender and women education in the country.

The department arranged a gala ceremony at RC Majumdar Arts auditorium to mark the occasion.

Department's Chairperson Ayesha Banu recited a citation and handed over a crest and an Uttario (scarf) to Prof Najma on behalf of the department.

DU Vice-chancellor Prof SMA Faiz graced the occasion as chief guest while Social Science Faculty Dean Prof Harun-or-Rashid was present as special guest.

A good number of DU teachers and students took part in the programme.

Prof Faiz said the university would consider her name for the prestigious post of 'Professor Emeritus' at the university.

He urged the department to take necessary initiatives in this regard.

Speakers at the programme discussed the outstanding career of Prof Najma and called on students to build up their academic and personal lives taking lessons from her eventual life.

Prof Najma established the women and gender studies department (initially women studies department) at DU in 2000.

She served the department as founding chairperson for three years.

Prof Najma received honorary 'Ekushey Padak' for her outstanding contribution to research in 2008.

She was an adviser to the first caretaker govt of Bangladesh in 1996.

Prof Najma completed graduation and post graduation from political science department of DU.

She joined the department as a lecturer in 1962.

In 1972, she received Ph.D. degree from the School of Oriental and African Studies at London University.



Nobel laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus calls on Iceland President Olafur Ragnar Grimsson at Hotel Sheraton in the city on Sunday.

898 industries, business establishments get licences

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Office of the Chief Inspector of Factories and Establishments under the Ministry of Labour and Employment has given license to 898 industries and business establishments and renewed licences of some 5127 organisations in the fiscal year 2007-2008.

The government earned around Tk 12 lakh through providing and renewing licences, says a press release.

Meanwhile, labour courts disposed of a total of 4297 cases in the last fiscal year while around Tk 13.50 lakh have been realised as fine and deposited to the government coffer.

'Govt makes exit route by releasing corrupt suspects'

UNB, Dhaka

Revolutionary Workers Party of Bangladesh yesterday said the caretaker government is making an exit route by releasing detained corrupt suspects, criminals and black money holders.

"The government steps to release the detained suspected corrupts, black money holders, criminals and mafias are intended to politically rehabilitate them. It has compromised with them for making the exit route," party's general secretary Saiful Huq told a press conference.

These elements will foil the congenial atmosphere for holding the election planned in December, he added.

The left leaning politician urged the government to immediately stop the process of releasing suspected corrupts and criminals. "We will resist the government move to release those elements," he added.

Saiful termed undemocratic and unconstitutional the Representation of the People Order (RPO). He said it would make the election process hostage, as in the past, to the black money holders, corrupts and criminals.

He blamed the government for directly and indirectly influencing the constitutional bodies like Election Commission, Judiciary and Anti-Corruption Commission. "They can't function independently beyond the government desire."

He placed five-point demand to overcome the undesirable situations and ensuring people's democratic rights. These are - lifting state of emergency, cancellation of the RPO-2008, disqualification of the identified corrupt people, criminals, black money holders, mafias from participating in the election, stopping interference in functioning of the constitutional bodies and effective steps to bring down prices of essentials.

Party president Ali Abbas, central leaders Nasiruddin Ahmed, Abdus Salam and Bahini Shikha Jamali were present at the press conference.



Assistant Chief of Air Staff (Operations and Training) Air Vice Marshal Muhammad Enamul Bari hands over certificate to a student-officer of BAF Aircraft Accident Investigation Course at Flight Safety Institute at Dhaka Cantonment in the city yesterday.

Campaign to save children's lives

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Save the Children UK and Eminence, a non-government research-based organisation, jointly launched a campaign titled 'Get on Track to Save Children's Lives' in the city yesterday.

Save the Children UK is also organising the programme across the world for people to demand that the governments and UN agencies 'get on track' with the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) to stop millions of preventable child deaths.

This campaign will help make the people aware of the issue and they will then create pressure on the government and the UN organisations to achieve MDG-4 - ensuring healthcare for pregnant mothers and proper nutrition for children and reducing infant mortality rate, said Chief Executive of Eminence Dr Shamim Hayder Talukder at a 'Meet the Press' programme at National Press Club.

Every day, 26000 under-five children die from preventable causes across the world, and 98 percent of them are from developing countries, he said in his written speech.

According to a survey in 2006, 65 children per thousand die from preventable causes in Bangladesh and the figure was 151 in 1990. Some 26.4 percent of children suffer from moderate stunting while 16.7 percent from severe stunting, according to another survey in 2007.

As part of the campaign, Save the Children-UK will arrange extensive programmes in the next seven days. The programmes include a national seminar, human chain in six divisional cities, signature collection campaign, creating a network of the media people, a television programme and campaign by 30 eminent civil society representatives.

The media partner of the event is The Editor.

The national seminar will be held on September 6 with the participation of UN officials, civil society members and policymakers.

Country Director of Save the Children-UK Sumon Sengupta, senior advisor of Eminence Dr Zakir Hossain and Editor of The Editor Maskwath Ahsan also spoke at Meet the Press programme.

'Lift emergency, hold nat'l polls immediately'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Awami Jubo Ainjibi Parishad, a forum of lawyers, yesterday demanded immediate steps to hold the national elections after lifting the state of emergency.

The Parishad leaders also demanded withdrawal of cases against Awami League President Sheikh Hasina.

They also called for steps to control the prices of essentials during the month of Ramadan.

If the demands are not met immediately, the people will launch a tough movement, they said at a rally on the Dhaka Bar Association premises, says a press release.

Mahfuzur Rahman Likhon, Hafizur Rahman Tota, Abdul Kader Patwary, Moktar Hossain Sujan, Sahab Uddin Ahmed Tipu and Anwar Shahadat Shaon spoke at the rally presided over by AKM Tauhidur Rahman, convener of the Parishad.

Higher Education British Council project to strengthen partnership

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The British Council yesterday launched a project titled 'INSPIRE' to strengthen strategic partnership in higher education between the UK and countries in Central and South Asia.

Top universities in Bangladesh, Kazakhstan, Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan and the UK will collaborate on internationalising institutions, research and higher education standards under the 6 million pounds project.

University Grants Commission (UGC) Chairman Prof Nazrul Islam launched the project at a ceremony at the Dhaka Sheraton Hotel.

The project International Strategic Partnerships in Research and Education (INSPIRE) will focus on the subjects of Environment and Climate Change, Renewable and Alternative Energy, Biotechnology and Genetic Engineering and Fine Arts.

The project will be run by four main programmes, including Strategic Partnership Awards, Partnership Exploratory Grants, Talented Researcher Exchange Opportunities and Education Policy Dialogues.

The Strategic Partnership Awards will develop institution-to-institution links that involve a range of departments and subjects, resulting in multi-dimensional, international partnerships. The talented Researcher Exchange Programme will provide opportunity for early stage researchers over 40 with travel awards a year enabling them to acquire new cutting edge skills, participate in international research teams and network with others in the same field.

Applications forms, guidance notes and other relevant information are available on INSPIRE website www.britishecouncil.org/inspire

Peter Ashton, acting director, British Council Bangladesh, delivered the welcome speech and brief programme outline at the ceremony and Raiqah Walie-Khan, education promotion and marketing manager of British Council, and vice chancellors of different universities and senior academicians of the country were also present.

Attack on 3 students BUBT, Commerce College students continue protest

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Several hundred students of Bangladesh University of Business and Technology (BUBT) and Commerce College continued their angry protest at Mirpur in the city yesterday and demanded arrest of a local businessman who and his hired cadres allegedly beat up three students.

The students staged a demonstration for about two hours from 11:00am, took out a procession and chanted slogans demanding the arrest of Elias Kazi, witnesses said.

The roads remained blocked during the demonstration, disrupting traffic movement.

Anwar Hossain, deputy police commissioner of Mirpur zone, told The Daily Star that the police have already arrested three men for assaulting the students.

On Sunday, the students went on a rampage in protest against the attack.

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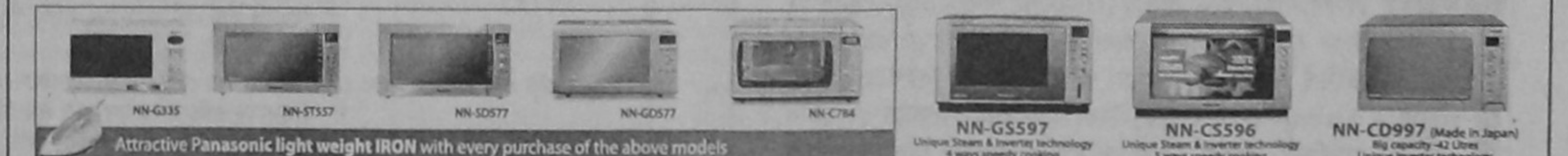
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