



Dr Hamidul Haque speaks at a view exchange meeting at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. On his left are Kamal Sen Gupta, Shaheen Anam and ABM Ashraf Uddin Nizan.

Save coastal fisheries

Speakers urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a view exchange meeting yesterday urged the government to take effective steps immediately to save coastal fisheries as well as to develop the livelihood of fishermen in the areas so that they can continue their profession.

They called on the government to bring necessary amendments to different fisheries-related acts, including marine fisheries act 1983, so that the troubled fishermen can get necessary help from the law.

The concerned ministry should take an immediate step to provide identity (ID) cards to the fishermen so that they can get the government subsidy and save them from different harassment as well, they added.

The speakers said this at the meeting titled 'Fishermen of coastal area: Their struggling livelihoods, rights and law' organised by Community Development Centre (Codec) in association with Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) at the National Press Club in the city.

The meeting was aimed at disclosing the findings of a research work related to fishermen.

researcher of the study funded by MJF, presented his findings at the meeting which was also attended by around 20 lawmakers of coastal areas.

He pointed out that fishermen of coastal area are being deprived of their rights including, subsidy, security, legal assistance, and they are facing different harassment by local influential fish traders, forestry department and even by the administration.

Dr Haque made some recommendations, including amendments of some clauses to marine fisheries act 1983, national fisheries policy 1998, fisheries protection and conservation act 1985 and fisheries protection and conservation act 1950.

Lawmaker ABM Ashraf Uddin Nizan, also the chairman of parliamentary standing committee for fisheries and livestock ministry, said a proposal to provide ID cards and compensation to the fishermen was placed to the ministry one month earlier, but still there is no headway in this regard.

He called on the lawmakers of coastal areas to work as lobbyists to resolve the problems facing the fishermen in order to protect the country's fisheries industry.

Khan Badal of Chittagong-7 constituency stressed the need for distributing khas (fallow) land to the fishermen to empower them and setting up a commission for coastal management to address the problems easily.

He also underscored the importance of establishing an army cantonment in the char (island) areas to lessen a number of crimes, especially by pirates, extortionists and muggers, which are hampering the activities of fishermen.

MJF Executive Director Shaheen Anam said, "If we want to save fisheries sector, we will have to save coastal fishermen first. The government must come forward to saving the sector in this regard."

The government should consider distribution of khas land to the fishermen for their economic empowerment, she added.

Shaheen Anam said it is also important to ensure their social security when the fishermen go for deep-sea fishing, as there is an allegation that female members of the families fall victim to rape during the period.

Deputy Executive Director of Codec Kamal Sen Gupta presided over the meeting.

Aggrieved JCD leaders continue protest

DU CORRESPONDENT

Aggrieved leaders and activists of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) continued demonstrations for five consecutive days protesting the newly formed central committee of the organisation. They brought out processions and held

rallies on Dhaka University campus and in front of BNP central office yesterday.

The leaders during the demonstration chanted slogan against party decision and demanded to dissolve the newly formed committee and include acceptable leaders.

Several hundred agitating leaders and activists formed a human chain and held a

rally on the campus. In the afternoon, they took out processions and held a rally in Paltan area.

A large portion of JCD leaders and workers started agitations since the name of the five top leaders of the new central committee was announced by the BNP high-ups with Sultan Salauddin Tuku as

president and Aminul Islam Khan Alim as general secretary.

They alleged that top leaders of the new committee have link with militancy and were involved in conspiracy against BNP during its bad time. Moreover, none of the five leaders are student now and four are married and two have children.

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