

Call to provide housing facilities for homeless in Khas land

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a workshop on 'Implementation of women empowerment with emphasis on housing rights' stressed the need for housing for homeless people in the country.

They said that along with increased number of poor people in urban areas, the number of homeless people has been increased much in last few years, which is almost 40 lakh in the capital.

Participatory Development Action Programme (PDAP) organised the workshop at LGED auditorium in the city yesterday.

A large segment of the homeless people are women who are more vulnerable and live on begging, working as domestic help or sex workers. Even those who live in slums are deprived of education, sanitation and medical facilities.

These homeless people can be provided with housing facilities in 'Khas lands' and Sri Lanka and India are the best examples of rehabilitating the homeless people, the speakers said.

They also said that to achieve the goal three of Millennium Development Goals, promoting gender equality and women empowerment, providing housing facilities to the homeless people along with training for income generation is a must.

Rejaul Karim, member of the National Housing Authority, was present at the workshop as the chief guest.

Engineer Ali Ahmed of Urban Partnership for Poverty Reduction and Khandker Millatul Islam of Dhaka City Corporation were present as special guests at the programme, while Quaium Khan of Coalition for the Urban Poor, Fatima Akhter of Habitat for Humanity, Kishore Singh and Quazi Baby of PDAP, among others, spoke.



A man washes used polythene bags collected from garbage dumps in Banani-Gulshan lake in the city. As most such bags contain toxic chemicals and are collected from clinical waste bins in the area, such activities lead to pollution of lake water, posing health hazards to local residents. A group of traders have been using lake water to wash such polybags for the purpose of recycling.

PHOTO: SHAWKAT JAMIL

Establish rights of indigenous people to land, forest

Speakers urge govt

METRO DESK

A three-day international seminar on ILO Convention on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples was held at the Brac Centre at Rajendrapur in Gazipur recently with a call for establishing the rights of the indigenous to land, forest and natural resources.

A total of 60 participants and volunteers from Bangladesh, Nepal, India, the Philippines and Malaysia attended the seminar with the theme 'South Asia Training Seminar on Indigenous Peoples' Rights: Promotion and Implementation of ILO Convention 169 and UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples', says a press release.

The seminar focused on key aspects relating to the implementation of indigenous peoples' rights in South Asia, includ-

ing consultation and participation; land and natural resources; self-government; conflict and peace; constitutional reform; cross-border contacts and systematic and coordinated action of the States.

Chairman of Chittagong Hill Tracts Regional Council Jyotindra Bodhipriya Larma (Santu Larma) inaugurated the seminar.

Raja Devasish Roy, Panudda Boonpala, country director of ILO, Md Abul Hossain, joint secretary to CHT affairs ministry, Joan Carling from Asian Indigenous Peoples Pact Foundation, Gagan Rajbandary, deputy director, ILO Dhaka, Chandra Roy and Sanjeeb Drong were also present at the seminar.

Santu Larma urged the government to ratify the ILO Convention No 169 and implement the Convention No 107 for

Indigenous and Tribal Populations.

He also said that the government should fully implement the CHT Peace Accord.

Panudda Boonpala said, "ILO is committed to working for the development of indigenous people in Bangladesh."

The participants recommended strengthening the capacity of indigenous people and their organisations to decide their own priorities for the process of development; engaging in meaningful participation, to be consulted at all levels of decisions and policy, legislative and administrative processes affecting indigenous peoples.

They also stressed the need for holding dialogues between the government and the indigenous people with mutual trust and good faith.

VESTED PROPERTY RETURN (AMEND) ACT 'Consult with HR bodies, experts'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Mahila Parishad yesterday expressed concern over the move to pass the proposed Vested Property Return (amendment) Act 2009 in parliament without consulting with experts, human rights organisations and representatives of the victims who lost their lands through loopholes of the vested property return act.

In a statement, the Parishad said the cabinet has recently approved the Vested Property Return (amendment) Act 2009, which would soon be placed in parliament.

But the fact is that no discussion took place with the representatives of the victims, legal

experts, civil society members, researchers and rights activists before finalising the law, it added.

Those who have been harassed and lost their lands and properties due to the loopholes of the Vested Property Return Act would again fall victim to vested quarters and their rights would not be protected if the proposed amended act is passed without any changes, the Parishad said.

So, it called on the government to consult with the experts and representatives of the victims and bring changes to the amended act as per their suggestions with a view to protecting the rights of minorities.

10 DU journalism students receive Sitara Parvin Award

DU CORRESPONDENT

Ten students of Department of Mass Communication and Journalism at Dhaka University (DU) received Dr Sitara Parvin Award for excellent performances in their BSS (honours) examinations 2007.

The awardees are -- Kazi M Anisul Islam, Ujjal Kumar Mandal, Mohsina Islam, Muhammad Yasin Arafat, AHM Yasin, Mohammad Minhaz Uddin, Tania Afrin, Rajib Ahmed, Saiful Samin and Mohammad Rezaul Karim Shammi.

DU Vice Chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique distributed prizes [cheque] among them at a function at Business Studies Faculty auditorium yesterday.

Prof Gitiara Nasrin, chairman of the department, presided over the function, which was also addressed by Syed Badrul Ahsan, editor, current affairs, The Daily Star. Teachers and students of the department were present on the occasion.

Speaking at the function Prof Arefin paid tribute to the memory of Sitara Parvin and called upon the awardees to follow the ideology of Prof Sitara in their life and work.

'Prof Sitara Parvin Trust Fund', a trust fund, founded in memory of late chairman of journalism department Prof Dr Sitara Parvin, gave away the award.

Prof Sitara, daughter of former president Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed and wife of Prof Ahaduzzaman Muhammad Ali, was killed in a tragic road accident in the US in 2005.

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2 women murdered

UNB, Gazipur

Two housewives were killed in separate incidents in Sadar and Kaliakoir upazilas yesterday.

A housewife was hacked to death allegedly by her husband in Laxmipura area under Sadar upazila following a family feud.

Police said Nargis, 24, died on the spot at about 9:45am as her husband Abdus Salam stabbed her indiscriminately.

Police arrested Salam.

Meanwhile, Sharmin Sultana, 35, wife of Rafiq was strangled by a gang of miscreants in her house at late night at Chandhara village in Kaliakoir.

Police suspected that her husband with the help of his accomplices might have strangled. Rafiq is absconding since the incident.

Golam Faruq Ahmed, vice-chairman of Mercantile Bank and Popular Life Insurance Co Ltd, got the 'Knight' award from the king of Belgium. Belgian foreign minister gave away the award on behalf of the king to Golam Faruq recently.

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