

'Provide special care for victims of trafficking'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Special care should be provided for the victims of human trafficking to facilitate their reintegration into society, as they are exposed to physical abuse and severe trauma.

Migration experts said this at the launch of a training manual on care and support for the victims at a city hotel on Thursday, organised by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM).

They also said those who are addressing the issue of trafficking, especially the law enforcers and government officials, need to be well trained to assist the survivors in their recovery process.

Home Minister Sahara Khatun and IOM Deputy Director General Ambassador Laura Thompson launched the training manual.

Speaking as the chief guest, Sahara Khatun said, "Trafficking in human beings is a heinous crime. It is a crime against humanity and civilization."

Landlessness, poverty, consumerism, lack of education, poor status of women, inadequate legislation and cultural and governance factors contribute to the prevalence of human trafficking, she said, adding that the government took a wide range of activities including food for work, food for education and guaran-

teed jobs during lean season to check trafficking.

"While the government took initiatives to monitor and prosecute the criminals, taking care of the victims is important. The training manual meant for capacity building of the officials concerned is expected to help in a big way," she said.

Ambassador Laura Thompson said tackling human trafficking and smuggling has become a core challenge, which requires attention, especially in Bangladesh, given the importance of labour migration from this country.

She, however, said Bangladesh has a good number of programmes to create awareness about these issues. Bangladesh's initiative to draft a comprehensive law on trafficking is laudable.

IOM Regional Representative for South Asia Rabab Fatima said trafficked persons are often forced to engage in slavery-like situations and endure physical violence and mental trauma.

"Although it is hard to document and report the exact number of such victims, it is imperative to provide care and support to each potential victim and rescued person," she said.

Social Welfare Secretary Quomaran Nessa Khanam and Prime Minister Office's Director General Deena Huq also spoke.



Dhanmondi Paribesh Unnayan Jote and other environmental organisations form a human chain in front of Dhanmondi playground in the city yesterday demanding steps to stop the move to build a stadium and shops on the playground.

PHOTO: STAR

BUDGETARY ALLOCATION

10 ministries, divisions to focus on women's empowerment

ALPHA ARZU

Apart from the women ministry, ten ministries and divisions will focus on gender budgeting in the coming fiscal year to end gender disparities.

Agriculture, education, environment, fisheries and animal resources, health, land, social welfare, water resources ministries and disaster management and relief division and rural development and cooperatives division will utilise a large portion of their allocation for women's benefit.

The agriculture ministry will spend more than 26 percent of its total budgetary allocation while disaster management and relief division 78 percent for the welfare of the women.

In 2010-11 fiscal year, 23.29 percent of total expenditure of education ministry, 44.22 of environment, 32.61 of fisheries, 32.33 of health, 18.40 of land, more than 62 percent of rural development, about 20 percent of social welfare and 39 percent of water resources will be utilised for the women's empowerment and improvement of their livelihood.

Finance Minister AMA Muhiith on Thursday at his budget speech proposed to allocate Tk 1,241 crore, development and revenue combined, for the FY2010-11 including Tk 125 crore as block allocation against various programmes for women empowerment and children welfare.

About 25.9 percent --4.4 percent of

GDP -- of the total proposed expenditure in FY2010-11 will be allocated for ensuring gender parity.

The government will extend computer-training programmes to 34 districts to create employment opportunity for women. As a result, women will get more opportunity for employment in technology-driven jobs.

The government is also decided to establish 10 new daycare centres for working mothers. Out of these, seven are for lower income and three for middle income working mothers.

Rasheda K Choudhury, former adviser to caretaker government, at her immediate reaction on Thursday said, "The initiative of gender budgeting involving large number of ministries is really appreciat-

ing approach of the government."

But the government should have better focus on establishing more daycare centres for working mothers and accommodation or hostel facilities for the females in all metropolitan cities, she said.

Khushi Kabir, a women rights activist, told The Daily Star, "The main component of the budget should not be gender blind. But as women in our country still lagging behind, we need some focus for women."

Congratulating the government for the gender budgeting, she recommended specific measures in the budget to address the issues regarding Adivashi women and khas land distribution among the poor women.

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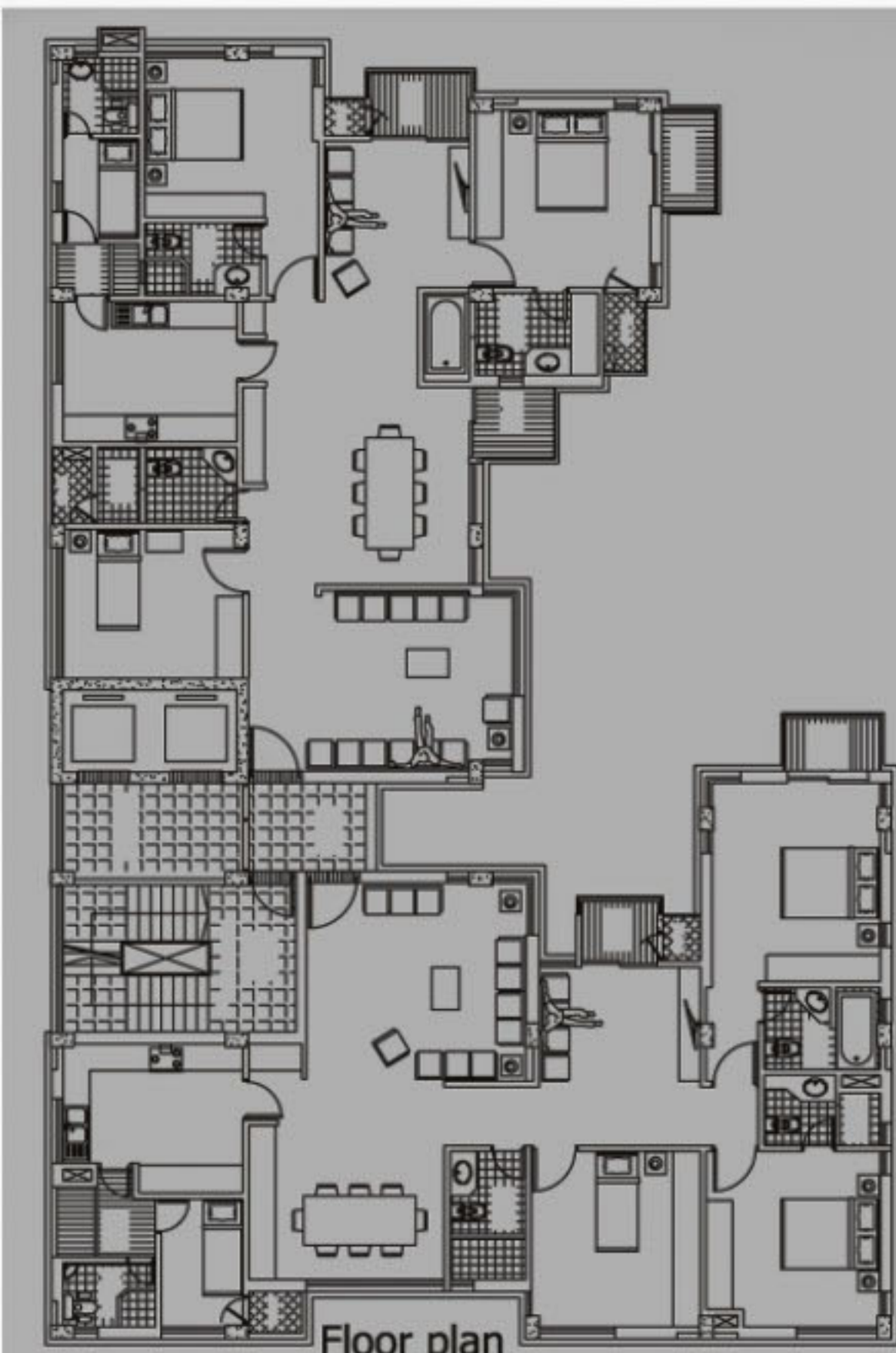
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