



PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

Plumes of thick black smoke billowing from Ishaan Steel Mill, a scene quite common among the factories situated at Maizzartech in West Patiya of Chittagong, posing a serious threat to the surrounding environment and residents. The photo was taken yesterday.

'Punish khas land grabbers'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An alliance of 200 local and international non-government organisations yesterday demanded exemplary punishment of quarters who forcibly grabbed khas lands, depriving millions of small and marginal farmers of the country.

It also asked the authorities concerned to punish corrupt officials helping these grabbers and rectify the policy on agriculture input assistance, as many female farmers were left out of the scheme, says a press release.

The demands came at a dialogue titled "Farmers' Access to Common Resources and Agricultural Services" as part of a three-day programme at Cirdap auditorium in the city.

Campaign for Sustainable Rural Livelihoods (CSRL), Oxfam and its global campaign on food justice, GROW, organised the programme.

Speaking at the dialogue, Ambia Khatun, a female farmer from Kushtia, expressed her dissatisfaction for not being issued an agricultural input assistance card.

Two other women, Bibhash Mandal and Kamala Rani Gayen, spoke on local movements in Khulna and Satkhira which led to freeing up rivers from illegal grabbing.

"It became apparent from the testimonies given at the dialogue that a section of

corrupt officials are actively engaged in helping politically and economically powerful people in various districts.

"These officials help to prepare counterfeit documents so that common properties can be grabbed," said CSRL member secretary Ziaul Hoque.

It was informed at the dialogue that according to a CSRL estimate, most of the 50 lakh acres of khas and wet lands in the country are now under illegal occupation.

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Dr Mihir Kanti Majumder, secretary of Rural Development and Cooperatives Division, said officials engaged in helping the powerful grabbers must be brought to book.

Lawmakers Hasanul Huq Inu and Shawkat Momen Shahjahan and Information Commissioner Sadeka Halim spoke at the dialogue presided over by CSRL Steering Committee Member Dr Ahsan Uddin Ahmed.

PM seeks Danish investment

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday called for more Danish investment in various development sectors of Bangladesh.

The prime minister made the request when Dr Haldor Topse, a distinguished Danish entrepreneur, met her at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) in the morning.

PM's Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad briefed reporters after the meeting.

Hasina welcomed new investment from Denmark in the sectors of ICT, energy and power, infrastructure

development, agro-industry, frozen food, textiles, handicraft, leather and leather goods and tourism.

She also invited fresh investment to Bangladesh by Haldor Topse in the sectors like developing process technology for petroleum refining, ammonia production, methanol production and other industries.

She praised Danish development assistance through DANIDA for poverty reduction, agriculture, fisheries, water transport, water supply and sanitation, integrated rural development and mass education.

She requested the veteran busi-

nessman to exert his influence and exercise his good office in bringing more Danish investments and businessmen to Bangladesh.

Hasina said she is happy over the fast-growing cooperation between Bangladesh and Denmark.

She urged the Danish entrepreneurs to undertake more joint ventures to develop skilled manpower in Bangladesh.

Saying that a congenial atmosphere is prevailing in the investment sector of Bangladesh, Hasina said the Danish investors can invest here.

Dr Topose is one of the most highly esteemed businessmen of Denmark

and he ranks one of the most senior Danish entrepreneurs at the age of 98.

Owned by his family, 'Haldor Topse' is a Danish catalyst company and it is one of the top foreign investors in Bangladesh. He had investments in the very successful joint venture with the government in the Karnaphuli Fertiliser Company Limited (KAFCO) in Chittagong.

Ambassador At-Large M Ziauddin, Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister M A Karim, PMO Secretary Mollah Waheeduzzaman and Press Secretary to the PM Abul Kalam Azad were present.

Application deadline: 31 October 2011.

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