

Remove policies hindering women's land rights

Speakers tell ALRD, *Star* roundtable; urge for resumption of agricultural khas land distribution for marginalised women

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Distribution of agricultural khas land must be immediately resumed, prioritising marginalised women, said speakers at a roundtable yesterday.

They also urged the removal of discriminatory provisions in existing policies.

Access to agricultural khas (state-owned) land for marginalised women is often shared with husbands or granted only to widowed or abandoned women with "able-bodied" sons, they said, deeming the practice highly discriminatory.

They also said although khas land allocation was halted under the pretext of development, those are not lying idle; they are being used by influential groups.

They were speaking at a roundtable titled "Barriers and Steps to Establish

typically receive Tk 250 to Tk 300 for the same work."

He called for strengthening the National Women Development Policy 2011 by including specific provisions on women's land ownership, use, and control.

He also urged the withdrawal of reservations on Articles 2 and 16(c) of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) to ensure legal protection against gender discrimination.

Sabina Hembrom, a paralegal assistant and president of Landless Women Association in Dinajpur, said although the government provided homes under the Ashrayan Project, it did not significantly improve lives.

"Most tenants in my area live hand to mouth as day labourers. If given access to agricultural khas land, they could farm



Speakers at a roundtable titled "Barriers and Steps to Establish Women's Land Rights," jointly organised by ALRD and The Daily Star at The Daily Star Centre in the capital yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Women's Land Rights," jointly organised by ALRD and The Daily Star at The Daily Star Centre in the capital.

In his keynote presentation, ALRD Programme Officer Rafiqul Islam discussed how legal, cultural, and policy-based inequalities exclude women from land ownership, hindering their economic empowerment and gender equality.

"Distributing agricultural khas land was a commendable government initiative, but this practice has been informally suspended since 2014 through verbal directives rather than official notifications," he said.

He said restricting land ownership to joint ownership with spouses or able-bodied sons limits women's access and deepens inequality.

"According to the latest survey by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 58 percent of the agricultural workforce consists of women, while 74 percent of the total female workforce is engaged in agriculture. However, they are rarely acknowledged as farmers, a status that would grant them access to government services, agricultural loans, and markets," he added.

Women in agriculture earn significantly less than men, with some receiving no monetary compensation, said Rafiqul.

"For instance, while male labourers earn Tk 400 to Tk 500 per day, women

and support their families," she said.

Momtaz Begum, general secretary of Karnaphuli Women Mass Cooperative Association in Mymensingh, said although khas land is meant for landless families, it is often taken by influential individuals.

She alleged that agricultural benefits meant for farmers are frequently distributed among the officials' associates.

She also suggested designating market corners for women farmers to help them sell their products more easily and get fair prices.

Afzal Hossain, executive director of RULFAO in Rajshahi, emphasised the need to provide women with access to agricultural tools and technologies.

"Recognising and involving women in agriculture would not only empower them but also create employment opportunities," he said.

He condemned derogatory remarks about women from certain religious groups, calling for an end to such narratives to achieve gender equality.

Bangladesh Mahila Parishad President Fauzia Moslem stressed the need to address negative portrayals of women in public discourse, particularly regarding participation in sports, comments on clothing, and perceptions of special privileges.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6



Multiple people stand on the roof or hang by the sides of this locomotive as it moves. The actions are quite risky and could lead to an accident at any moment. The photo was taken at the Jurain Rail Crossing yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Form squad to break up extortion rackets

Task force proposes in its report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A recurring challenge for Bangladeshis in accessing public services from public transport to passport processing is the widespread "prevalence of extortion," according to a task force report.

One of the task force's major economic recommendations is the creation of an "Anti Goon Squad" to crack down on extortionists who have long held public services, markets, and infrastructure projects hostage.

The unit could either operate within the public sector or be outsourced to private security firms, provided there are safeguards to prevent misuse. The report also calls for monitoring and oversight by youth and citizen groups to ensure the squad remains accountable.

"This deeply entrenched problem extends beyond public services into markets, transportation systems, and construction sites," said the task force formed by the interim government.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

People deserve a fair election

Tarique tells event

UNB, Dhaka

BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman has said his party is expecting a credible national election in Bangladesh through which people can decide who should look after them for the next five years.

Speaking virtually at four workshops, he also said the problems of the country and its people cannot be resolved without a proper electoral system and elected representatives who are accountable to the public.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5



Justice Nuruddin resigns amid inquiry

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Justice Shahed Nuruddin, a judge of the High Court Division of the Supreme Court, resigned yesterday while under inquiry by the Supreme Judicial Council.

He submitted his resignation letter to the president through Chief Justice Syed Refaat Ahmed, SC Spokesman Muajjem Hussain told The Daily Star.

In response to queries, Muajjem said Nuruddin cited personal difficulties as the reason for his resignation.

Nuruddin is among the 12 HC judges who were barred from judicial proceedings since October 20 last year.

The action followed

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

Dismissed cops block road for reinstatement



PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A group of dismissed police officers and their family members gathered in protest near the Shikkha Bhaban in Dhaka yesterday, demanding reinstatement to their jobs with all benefits restored.

According to a written statement from the protesters, around 2,200 police officers were "unjustly dismissed" during the previous

leaving many lower-ranking officers fearing for their jobs.

Some senior officers, in a desperate bid to keep their positions, were "coerced into committing crimes", including genocide, during the July-August uprising, it said.

Former ASI Toudin Mandal, who was among those dismissed, said, "We have a family. We stand together. If authorities investigate our situation, corruption, etc, nothing will be found."

MONEY LAUNDERING 'Casino Brothers' Enamul, Rupon jailed for 7 years

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday sentenced "Casino Brothers" -- Enamul Haque Enu



and Rupon Bhuiyan -- to seven years and seven others to four years in jail in a case filed over laundering Tk 17.16 lakh.

Enamul, the former vice-president of the Gendaria unit of Awami League, and Rupon, the joint general secretary of the same AL unit, were fined Tk 34,26,600 each while seven others were fined Tk 17,16,300 each. They will have to serve three months more imprisonment if they fail to pay the fine.

Judge Md Masud Parvez of the Dhaka Special Judges' Court-6 pronounced the judgement.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



Due to the blockade staged by Titumir College students, many had to abandon their vehicles and walk long distances to reach their destinations. Inset, an ambulance with a patient stuck in traffic jam triggered by the protests.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS



Fakhrul holds meeting with US Chargé d'Affaires

UNB, Dhaka

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul

Islam Alamgir met Ambassador Tracey Ann Jacobson, Chargé d'Affaires at the US Embassy in Dhaka, yesterday.

In the hour-long meeting at Jacobson's residence, they discussed the country's latest political situation and the upcoming election.

BNP standing committee member Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury and Organising Secretary Shama Obaid accompanied Fakhrul at the meeting.

Speaking to reporters afterward, Shama Obaid said, "The new US Chargé d'Affaires is engaging with various political parties, and this meeting was part of those discussions."

She said, "The US envoy tried to understand BNP's perspective on these issues."



Ensure reforms in judiciary, law enforcement

Urge speakers at CGS discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a dialogue yesterday condemned the recent attack on indigenous students, saying they see no rule of law under the interim government.

The national flag was used in the attack, yet no sedition case was filed. There is no rule of law, they said.

The dialogue, titled "Democratic Reconstructions on Constitutional Bodies," was organised by the Centre for Governance Studies at the Bangladesh Institute of Strategy Studies in the capital.

Advocate Subrata Chowdhury, general secretary of Gono Forum, stressed the need for reforms in the judiciary and police.

"A BNP-leaning attorney general has been appointed, although this is not a BNP government," he said.

"Even in the ICT Tribunal, a member of the AB Party was made the chief prosecutor. These decisions raise questions. Two parties have their share in everything -- Jamaat is receiving more, while BNP is receiving slightly less. Naturally, BNP is somewhat disappointed," he added.

He called for a shift in mindset, noting that political appointments have long been the norm in Bangladesh.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4