

## Indigenous People of Plain Land Separate land commission if necessary: Minister Staff Correspondent

The government, if it deems necessary, will form a separate land commission to resolve the land-related problems of the indigenous people of plain lands, said Land Minister Rezaul Karim Hira yesterday.

Talking to journalists after attending a seminar on 'Land Rights of the Indigenous People of the Plain Land', he said the government is committed to resolving all the problems of the indigenous people but it would take time.

Commenting on the objections from different organisations about the land survey in the Chittagong Hill Tracts scheduled to start on October 15, the minister said they opposed it as it went against their interest.

The seminar organised by Caritas Mymensingh region was held at the Biam auditorium in the city.

Speakers at the seminar also demanded the government form a separate land commission to this end.

State Minister for Cultural Affairs Promod Mankin, who is also a member of the indigenous community in plain land, said land related problems cause the indigenous people suffer most.

"Proper investigations should be carried out to resolve the land related problems in the area and for that the government can form a separate land commission like the land commission in the Chittagong Hill Tracts area," he said.

Syeda Rizwana Hasan, director (programme) of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA), said the government should formulate Forest Right Act like India, which would ultimately help the indigenous people in establishing their land rights.

Shamsul Huda, executive director of ALRD, said the government should form separate laws for the indigenous people to establish their rights.

At the seminar, representatives of different indigenous communities of the plain land shared the problems they had been experiencing in their respective areas.

The seminar presided over by Dr Benedict Alo D Rojario, executive director of Caritas, was also addressed by Theofil Hajang, operations director of World Vision, Bangladesh National Office, and Prof Mesbah Kamal of Dhaka University.

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