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## Influentials gain Dhaka city land by abusing law

### Discussion told

#### Staff Correspondent

The rich and influential people are becoming the owners of the land property in Dhaka city with facilitation and manipulation of the governance system and law, experts said at a roundtable yesterday.

They said the people who could spend money, abuse law were grabbing land or buying it forcibly from the poor farmers. The influentials also manipulate law to get land, and government officials, civil society, lawmakers, politicians, and media are somehow facilitating the process, they added.

The discussion, “The political economy of urban space in Dhaka city”, was organised by the Institute of Governance Studies (IGS), Brac University, at the capital’s Brac Centre Inn.

Chairman of the Centre for Urban Studies Prof Nazrul Islam moderated the session.

In his concluding remarks, Prof Nazrul said, “The poor farmers from the fringe of Dhaka city are not able to live there or protect their farmland. Either they are compelled to sell their land or the land developers grab it.”

IGS researcher Kazi Nurmohammad Hossainul Haque showed an example of the conflict of interest of the Rajdhani Unnyan Karttripakkha (Rajuk) and the city planning authority.

He said the Rajuk developed the Purbachal area into a residential zone and allocated the land to different professional groups like the armed forces, businessmen, industrialists, government officials, judges, lawmakers, expatriates, lawyers, artists, freedom fighters, journalists and also private sectors.

However, a maximum of 24 percent of the land went to the people under government category, he said in a keynote speech.

Hossainul Haque said the Purbachal project had attracted the private land developers, and the vast tracts of rural land in the eastern fringe of Dhaka city had been a lucrative destination for them for land grabbing and forced land purchase.

An increasing level of greed is working at the back of possessing land through manipulations, said Prof Fuad Hassan Mallick, pro-vice chancellor of Brac University.

ATM Nurul Amin, a professor of North South University, and Roksana Hafiz, a faculty member of Buet, also spoke on the occasion, among others.