



Curbing graft top priority, free anti-graft body soon

PM tells BDF meet

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Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday said the government has given top priority to curbing corruption and steps are underway to make the Independent Anti-corruption Commission operational soon.

"The commission will be vested with adequate financial, administrative and legal authority to carry out its functions independently," she said while inaugurating the three-day Bangladesh Development Forum meeting at Sonargaon Hotel in Dhaka.

The process of separating the judiciary from the executive has also started and Judicial Service Commission has been constituted to recruit judicial officers, the prime minister mentioned.

"I would like to reaffirm our commitment to establishing an accountable government. In pursuance of this commitment we have

already implemented various reforms for improving governance, law and order and investment climate," she said.

Enactment of Speedy Trial Law and setting up of speedy trial tribunals have resulted in rapid disposal of a good number of heinous criminal cases, Khaleda said, adding these measures have brought noticeable qualitative changes in the criminal justice delivery system.

"We have made good progress in protecting and ensuring children's rights. We are now taking steps to create the office of Independent Children's Commissioner to further uphold the cause of our children."

She said, "We recognise the role of civil society and NGOs in Bangladesh's development process. Many of our success stories in the areas of health, education, micro-credit, women empowerment etc are the result of government-NGO

collaboration and cooperation."

The prime minister also said the NGOs in Bangladesh enjoy adequate operational freedom in carrying out their development activities. "We are committed to maintaining an enabling environment for them, so that they can be effective development partners."

Effective utilisation of external resources remains a major area of this government's initiatives, Khaleda mentioned.

"We still have a long way to go. A large section of our population still lives under the poverty line. Against this backdrop, we need continued support of our development partners to sustain and carry forward our priority poverty reduction initiatives."

The prime minister said during the last two and a half years, her government has taken a number of measures to promote good governance and establish financial discipline and accountability.

She said steps have been taken to rationalise the size of government organisations and agencies, which include merger, liquidation, closure and partial closure of state-owned enterprises.