



Govt defends actions against some NGOs

FE Report

The government Sunday defended its recent actions against some local non-governmental organisations (NGOs) following questions raised by donors at the Bangladesh Development Forum (BDF).

The government made answer to donors' query by saying, "Since there are certain allegations against a few NGOs on their involvement in political activities, which is contrary to existing rules, the government has initiated legal actions against them," the meeting sources said.

Raising their questions over the government's ongoing relations with some NGOs, donors, however, suggested a well-coordinated Government-NGO collaboration to achieve the common goal of poverty reduction, they said.

Donors and development partners also advised the authorities

concerned to quicken the process on the regulatory framework for the NGO, which has already been initiated by the Bangladesh Bank (BB).

After the meeting, LGRD Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan told the waiting newsmen that the government informed the donors that it had initiated an investigation into the said matter and necessary actions would be taken on the basis of it.

"The government wants that NGOs must keep their activities out of politics. So, it should make sure whether any NGO (non-government organisation) is involved in politics directly or it is being used for any political purpose," he said.

He also said, except a few NGOs, the government has very good relations with all NGOs working in the country as they are engaged in various development programmes with the government.

Responding to a question on the donors' disagreement over the government's audit reports on NGOs, the minister said, except some points, there were no major differences in this connection.

However, the meeting revealed that there was no guideline from the government for NGOs to follow set rules and regulations for their internal administration. As a result, different NGOs follow different policies in regard to their salary structures, credit operations and job termination ect.

Besides, assets of NGOs are not well accounted for, and, as a result, a lot of assets simply disappear when an NGO ceases to function or when it is dissolved.

Theoretically, NGOs should follow the relevant laws but they often remain self-governed, the meeting said.

On the Government-NGO relations, donors said the government requires NGO supports for the maximum utilisation of its limited resources while NGOs need cooperation of the government in implementation of their projects.

On the human development issues, donors said, despite the fact that Bangladesh has made some progress in several areas, its maternal mortality ratio is still one of the highest in the world.

Identifying the existing gender inequality as major impediments to the country's economic growth and poverty reduction, they said discrimination against women often begins before birth and lasts throughout their lives.

Stressing the need for depoliticisation of education to ensure the continuity and sustainability of overall developmental efforts, donors suggested that the government must have political commitment to this effect.

Terming the government's progress toward the healthcare services still inadequate to meet its Millennium Development Goals (MDG), it recommended a bold programme with strong policy commitment and a willingness to reform its health sector to achieve the goal.