



Myanmar nationals stage a protest against the military government of their country in Dhaka yesterday to mark the 15th anniversary of the crushing of pro-democracy demonstrations.

NGOs need to improve auditing system for accountability: WB

BSS, Dhaka

The World Bank (WB) has suggested greater involvement of government and professional institutions in ensuring financial accountability of NGOs in view of their growing role in the development process.

In a recent country study, the WB said despite timely rendering of most financial statements and audit reports, the influential NGOs tend to act independently though the involvement of their apex body, the government and professional accounting institutes was required for greater financial accountability.

"Most financial statements, audit reports and annual reports are said to be rendered on time, though the larger and more powerful NGOs tend to act independently," said the WB study titled "Bangladesh: Financial Accountability for Good Governance".

It added: "Association of Development Agencies in Bangladesh (ADAB), NGO Affairs Bureau and professional accounting institutes need to work together to promote international standards of accounting, reporting and auditing in NGOs."

Without naming anybody, the study said, "89 per cent of donor funding goes to just four very large NGOs".

The WB identified the "fragile and fragmented development of formal political institutions" along with NGO-biased trends among donors as reasons for growth of numerous non-government organisations in the country.

The NGOs are generally divided into two categories with one operating micro-credit activities mainly with self-financing and the other engaged in grant-financed delivery of social services and advocacy.

According to officials, there are 1,544 NGOs receiving foreign funds, registered with the NGO Affairs Bureau, of which about 1,000 undertakes microcredit activities through 795 projects.

In addition, they said, there are about 22,000 locally funded voluntary organisations registered with the Social Welfare Department.

NGOs receiving foreign funds are subject to tight accountability requirements of respective donors as well as government control though the government regulations are mainly concerned in ensuring if the NGO activities were conflicting with the government policy or the law of the land.

The WB study, however, praised the transparency of major NGOs to donors, saying that "the larger NGOs readily make available their audited accounts and reports and are said to have fairly good accountability and transparency toward their donors."

"But there is scope for improvement," it said.

Under the regulations, funds from donors are sent directly to NGOs' bank accounts, but they cannot lawfully be drawn until the Bureau approves the relevant projects.

NGOs are required to submit their project proposals to the Bureau, which consults with the relevant government ministries and gives clearance to NGOs' banks holding donor funds to allow withdrawal.

The Asian Development Bank, another major development partner of the country, however, recently carried out a study on modalities of donor funding with some suggestions and officials said it was now being reviewed by the government for policy actions.

Mason stabbed to death

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A mason was stabbed to death by unidentified miscreants at Amin Bazar in Savar on Thursday.

Savar police recovered the body of the victim Jamal from his residence at about 12:30pm and sent it to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) for autopsy.

Police also seized a knife from the spot.

Locals initially could not identify Jamal as the miscreants stabbed him indiscriminately in his eyes, face and abdomen.

The victim's father Khalilur Rahman of Shimulia village under Shiboloy thana in Manikganj district identified him at DMCH.

Police are yet to establish the motive behind the murder.

A case was filed with Savar police station in this regard.

No one was arrested so far.