

ACC to warn officials, politicians

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"I shall approach the Election Commission and National Board of Revenue for checking the wealth statements submitted by the candidates," Sultan Hossain Khan told the delegation.

Stressing legal reforms in the Election Commission for resisting the influence of black money in the election process, he said, "Whatever legal power the Election Commission earlier had for taking actions against the delinquent candidates, has already been curtailed."

He explained various limitations of the commission and legal barriers regarding taking actions against individuals.

"Still I shall take actions if there are allegations against anyone, be he a big shot or small," he said.

The corrupt section in the society does not want to see the Anti-Corruption Commission effective and that is why the commission has been

made weak in the context of manpower and financial ability, Khan said.

Corruption is observed in the election process, the chairman said, adding that black money is being used for election purposes as many candidates engage hundreds of microphones and set up many election camps while going for election campaign.

He said only 40 per cent of allocation for Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) is actually used for development purposes while rest of the money goes to the corrupt people and a significant amount is used for election purposes.

The delegation members sought cooperation from the ACC and a comprehensive programme comprising the NBR and AG office for curbing election related corruption. They also urged the commission to take actions against election campaign by high officials at government expenses.

"The meeting has been successful

as we have been able to bring election related corruption to the focal point," Debapriya Bhattacharya, executive director of the Centre for Policy Dialogue, told the journalists after the meeting.

He said the Nagorik Committee also urged the ACC to keep watch on government officials who engage in election related corruption. They urged the commission to apply full power in curbing election related corruption and if necessary speak out for more power from the government.

The Nagorik Committee will provide full support for empowering the commission, said the delegation that also included M Syduzzaman, M Hafizuddin Khan, ASM Shajahan, and Laila Rahman Kabir.

As part of its campaign for honest and competent candidates, the Nagorik Committee met NBR Chairman Khairuzzaman Chowdhury on May 8 and discussed curbing election related corruption.

The civil society initiative already held three regional dialogues on the subject in Mymensingh, Jessore and Comilla. The next round of regional dialogue will be held in Barisal on Saturday next.

