

Grafts hurting FDI

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needed slows down or is totally missing because of this existing corruption. If you don't tackle this problem, you cannot get out of poverty," he said. The EU wants to help Bangladesh come out from this difficulty, he added.

The EU ambassador said the poverty reduction strategy must look at an "anti-corruption programme".

Making his first public appearance, Frowein replied to a volley of queries on Bangladesh's next general elections, initiatives of the Tuesday Group and the EU to make the election fair as well as EU development efforts in Bangladesh.

The new EU envoy said, "We are very committed to supporting the process of holding free and fair elections in Bangladesh. The EU has already launched a 2.7 million euro programme to support the civic awareness-raising project to be implemented by NGOs and interested organisations."

On the much-talked about Tuesday Group's move, of which the EU is a partner, Frowein said although the

government does not accept the idea of the Tuesday Group, "we may re-propose the same proposal...to find out how we can contribute to help Bangladesh hold free and fair elections."

The envoy said the last three general elections were fairly free and fair and the transfer of power through the ballot is a good sign of democracy. "We want to ensure that this process is followed."

On the functioning of democracy, Dr Frowein said all institutions like elections, peaceful transfer of power and parliament are in place in Bangladesh, but it is not good that the opposition attends the standing committee meetings without attending the House proceedings.

Terming this an internal affair of Bangladesh, the EU envoy said during his discussions and dialogues with people from different strata he raises these points but "again it is a matter that should be resolved by the people of this country".

On the EU's priority areas in

Bangladesh, he said they are working on the Country Strategy Paper for 2007-2013, focusing on social sectors like education, good governance, human rights and economic and trade development.

Besides, there are non-focal sectors like environment, disaster management, food security and rural development. He said the EU will help implement the government's poverty reduction strategy paper to help combat poverty.

Dr Frowein said the EU's assistance will go up to 440 million euros from 260 million by the end of this year to implement various projects in Bangladesh. Describing Bangladesh as "the second largest EU commitment in Asia", he said the total EU assistance rose to 1.7 billion euros over the past decade.

On the recent resolutions adopted by the EU parliament expressing concern over Bangladesh's human rights and democracy, EU official Charles Whiteley, who was present at the function, said the EU parliament keeps close watch on these issues, including the next election, which are critical to Bangladesh's development.

National Church Council executives

The 54th election to the executive committee of the Bangladesh National Church Council was held recently, says a press release.

Elgin Saha, executive director of HEED Bangladesh, was elected president while Bishop Nibaron Das was elected vice-president.

Augustin Dipok Karmakar was elected treasurer.

Bribery in 10 levels to get medicare

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at 10 different levels, including the doctors and nurses, for x-rays and pathological tests, for surgeries, injections, and for intravenous infusion devices and fluids.

The report found that the doctors on duty prefer attending to representatives of different pharmaceutical companies rather than concentrating on patients. The practice is driving away patients to private clinics.

Reading out the report, CCC member Dr Chowdhury Sarwar Jahan told journalists that the 'health for all' slogan became futile resulting in many preventable deaths since the government had allocated only 8.6 percent of the development budget for the health sector.

Every outdoor patient pays on

average Tk 20 in bribes each time they visit the hospitals. A patient usually visits a hospital 5.31 times a year on an average and 6.10 percent of the admitted patients have to pay Tk 1,159 a year in bribes, said the report.

Outdoor patients pay Tk 110 as bribes for X-rays and Tk 25 for different pathological tests while the admitted patients have to pay Tk 36 as bribes for tests and Tk 3,000 for surgeries. These payments are not required by the policies of government hospitals.

Besides, the patients have to pay Tk 42 as bribes to obtain the privilege of using a gurney or a stretcher, Tk 80 for required injections or infusions, Tk 20 for getting a bed, and Tk 66 for other help from the staff.

The report said 24 percent of the

patients interviewed did not find doctors at the emergency room; 32 percent of patients complained that the doctors and nurses did not attend to them with due attention; and 46 percent alleged that visits by the representatives of pharmaceutical companies during their treatment hampered their medical care.

In the hospitals, 48 percent of admitted patients and 44 percent of outdoor patients do not get any prescribed medicine while 52 percent of outdoor patients and 46 percent of admitted patients get their medicines partially, while 4 to 9 percent of patients have to buy medicines from the pharmacies referred by the doctors.

The survey studied opinions of adult family members of 500 households in 25 areas of the city and 92 percent of the surveyed people sought medical treatment from the RMCH, while 8 percent received treatment from health centres that are not run by the government.

Answering questions, the CCC members said attendants of the patients have to pay Tk 400 as bribes for the discharge of dead bodies and Tk 3,000 to Tk 5,000 for getting certificates of injury.

The report suggested 10 points, including posting of lists of available medicines and allocated food, forbidding exchange of money without receipts, forbidding visits by representatives of pharmaceutical companies, and making public the duty rosters of doctors.

CCC convenor Golam Arif Tipu, and members Mosharraf Hossain Akhunjil and ANM Wahid attended the briefing.

Soul Dance opens 4th outlet in Sylhet

Soul Dance, an international male fashion shop, opened its 4th outlet in Sylhet City, says a press release.

Sylhet City Mayor Badar Uddin Ahmed Kamran inaugurated the branch, located on the 2nd floor of the Hotel Golden City at East Zindabazar on October 12 in presence of representatives of Soul Dance including its group director T Chowdhury.

Soul Dance already has three outlets in the capital at ARA Centre, Bashundhara City and Plaza AR.

It has added a new product titled Sole Dance, a collection of shoes and sandals.



Newly elected president of Bangladesh National Church Council Elgin Saha (middle), Albert Costa (left), associate executive director-HRM of HEED Bangladesh, and Samuel Gain (right), manager of Disaster Management Programme.



PHOTO: STAR
Gono Mukti O Jatiya Sampad Rakkha Sammilita Andolon stages a demonstration at Muktang in the city yesterday demanding foods and relief for Monga-affected people in northern region.