



(From left) Sultana Kamal, executive director of Ain o Salish Kendra; Shaikh Md Wahid-uz-Zaman, prime minister's principal secretary; HT Imam, prime minister's public administration affairs adviser; and Nurun Nabi Talukder, director of NGO Affairs Bureau; at a discussion in the capital's Biam Foundation yesterday. NGO Affairs Bureau organised the discussion with support from Manusher Jonno Foundation.

PHOTO: STAR

Govt-NGO efforts must to protect rights

Discussion told

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government and NGOs need to cooperate for the country's advancement and for protecting rights of people as the two parties are complementary to each other, said speakers at a discussion yesterday.

They opined that transparency, accountability and monitoring by the government should be ensured for better performance of NGOs.

NGO Affairs Bureau (NGOAB) with support from Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) organised the discussion titled "Role of NGOs in achieving Millennium Development Goals (MDG)" at the capital's Biam Foundation.

Addressing the function as chief guest, HT Imam, prime minister's public administration affairs adviser, said since the country's independence, Bangladesh has achieved successes in many sectors like education, health, sanitation, poverty alleviation and upholding human rights due to the government-NGOs partnership.

Sultana Kamal, executive director of

Ain O Salish Kendra, said along with ensuring transparency and accountability, NGOs should work to establish human dignity and equal rights.

Iftekharuzzaman, executive director of Transparency International Bangladesh, said discussion between the government and NGOs should continue to remove "misconception" between the parties.

Shaheen Anam, executive director of Manusher Jonno Foundation, said NGOs should act like watchdogs to establish good governance and promote human rights.

Presenting a paper, Rawnak Mahmud, director of NGOAB, pointed out several challenges of NGO activities in achieving MDGs. These include lack of coordination among NGOs, dependency on donor agencies, keeping a large portion of hardcore poor people out of their programmes, lack of skills and quality.

Nurun Nabi Talukder, director of NGOAB, and Shaikh Md Wahid-uz-Zaman, prime minister's principal secretary, among others, spoke.

Rights situation not satisfactory

Admits Dipu Moni

UNB, Dhaka

Foreign Minister Dipu Moni yesterday said there is no scope to be complacent about the human rights issue in the country.

She said there has been "massive" improvement in this regard in the last four years of the incumbent government, though a number of bad incidents have taken place too.

"The situation could have been much better if those (bad) incidents hadn't happened," she added.

She told journalists after attending the fifth consultation meeting to finalise the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) report on the human rights situation in Bangladesh.

Representatives from NGOs and government agencies and Director General (UN and Human Rights) Sadia Muna Tasneem also attended the meeting held at the foreign ministry yesterday.

Dipu Moni said incidents of violence have sharply come down in the country, especially state-sponsored terrorism.

The government will submit the national report on human rights to the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva today while the review will be held in the middle of this year, she said.

Writs filed to stop pepper spray

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two writ petitions were filed with the High Court yesterday seeking its directive on the government to immediately stop the use of pepper spray on people.

Supreme Court lawyers Aklas Uddin Bhuiyan and Eunus Ali Akand submitted the petitions stating that the practice was a violation of people's basic and constitutional rights.

They prayed for an HC rule upon the government to explain why the practice, during any type of demonstration, should not be declared illegal. The HC might hear both petitions today.

The petitions came against the back-drop of newspaper reports on the recent use of pepper sprays by police in the country.

Aklas, in his petition, sought directives from the court to order the government to take measures within 24 hours for stopping the practice.

He mentioned that an article published in the Los Angeles Times had stated that 61 death incidents took place between 1990 and 1995 due to the use of pepper spray.

According to US army, pepper spray can cause cancer and diseases to heart, lungs, blood circulation, nerve and brain.



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