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Govt obstructing local bodies' dev

Roundtable told

Staff Correspondent

Political criminalisation and influence of government obstruct proper development of city corporations and municipalities, and halt establishing good governance there, viewed discussants at a roundtable yesterday.

In most of the cases, the elected mayors are considered as titular because the cities are run by different syndicates formed under nexus of politicians, criminals and law enforcers, they said. They were addressing the roundtable titled “State of Cities: Re-thinking urban Governance in Narayanganj” organised by Brac Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD) at the Brac Centre Inn auditorium in the capital.

Speaking as the chief guest, Narayanganj City Corporation Mayor Selina Hayet Ivy said the scenario of city corporations and municipalities would not be changed as long as “godfathers” of different cities were getting patronisation from the state.

Former adviser to a caretaker government Hussain Zillur Rahman said the philosophy of autocratic rule is prevailing in the centre of the government, while another ruling system of “politician-criminal nexus” was prevailing in the local level.

These two ruling systems are major barriers for establishing good governance, he said. Local government expert Dr Tofail Ahmed said cities and municipalities were being run by underworld leaders.

If we look at Narayanganj, Feni, Laxmipur, we can realise that the trend is rising, he said. Architect Mobasser Hossain said criminals and godfathers were destroying rivers that were considered as the lifeline for cities.

In the roundtable, findings of a study on “Urban land use and Social Space in Narayanganj” were presented that said industrialisation and residential structures in the city and its adjacent areas was expanded in unplanned manner.

It results wastages of land and sharply reduced social spaces like parks, playgrounds and walkways.

In between 1998 and 2009, agricultural land reduced from 19 percent to 3 percent in city, the report said. BIGD Executive Director Dr Sultan Hafiz Rahman chaired the programme.