

Political interference having disastrous impact on justice administration

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Experts on Saturday said that political interference was causing a disastrous impact on the administration of justice.

At a workshop at CIRDAP auditorium in the city, they also said a permanent attorney service could resolve the problem of political interference in justice delivery system.

The workshop titled 'Law officers of the state and permanent prosecution service' was organised by rights organisation Centre for Rights and Governance.

International War Crimes Tribunal prosecutor Tureen Afroz, also BRAC University school of law associate professor, presented the keynote paper based on a research conducted in 2012 on the public attorney service in Bangladesh.

She said that even though the law stipulated specific process of appointing public attorneys, the appointments were overtly being manipulated and controlled politically.

The state attorneys are seen to behave as 'political puppets' of the ruling parties, Tureen said.

The research also identified a number of problems in the existing structure of the public attorney service. The problems include lack of operative law for government pleaders, over burden of cases, inadequate remuneration, unethical practice, lack of facilities and support system, absence of effective supervision, insecure tenure and lack of capacity building, Tureen said.

She said that a permanent attorney service with proper supervision and monitoring mechanism could resolve political interference, enhance performance of public attorneys and ensure transparency and accountability.

Addressing as chief guest, former law minister Shafique Ahmed said that Bangladesh's judiciary was about to collapse as it was burdened by huge backlog of cases.

He also said that there were no appointments in the state attorney service including public prosecutor and government pleaders without political consideration.

He suggested that permanent attorney service could be ran on trial basis to see its' outcomes. Defence ministry senior secretary Kazi Habibul Awal, also former law secretary, said that it was difficult to say that there was no corruption in the present system.

The speakers also recommended that professionalization, proper monitoring system and proper recognition system in the public attorney service should be ensured.

The workshop was attended, among others, by jurist and rights campaigner Shahdeen Malik and Dhaka University law professor Shahnaz Huda.