

Press Release, Dhaka 21st May 2011



Rights group urged Finance Minister to keep his last year promise

Initiate District Budget, Scrap Colonial Top down Process

Dhaka, 21st May 2011. Today fourteen rights based civil society organizations, led by EquityBD organized a rally in front of national press club urged Finance Minister to keep his promise which was given in parliament last year and to initiate district budget, they mentioned the present budget preparation as colonial top down process, they also said without District Budget there is no alternative to achieve Vision 2021. Fourteen civil society organizations comprise Arpon, Ahish, Online Knowledge Center, EquityBD, Eso, SDO, MABS, Lead Trust, Prodip, BNNRC, Voice, Bangladesh Bhumihin Somiti, Bangladesh Krihsok Federation, and Sirak Bangladesh. The rally was moderated by Mostafa Kamal Akanda of EquityBD, while it was spoken by Swapan Bhuiyan of Krishok Forum, Subol Sarkar of Bhumihin Shomiti, Kalu Mondol of Krishok Federation, SM Saikat of Sirak Bangladesh, Feroz Ahmed of Lead Trust, Dr. Sohel Iqbal and Rezaul Karim Chowdhury of EquityBD.

SM Saikat of Sirak Bangladesh said that, present budget has no participation of people and even of political leaders, there are no means that from district level people will be able to monitor this, and it is one of the reasons that corruption being increased. Feroz Ahmed of Lead Trust mentioned the top down process basically responsible of growing trend that which are responsible of increasing regional disparity. Subol Sarkar of Bhumihin Somiti mentioned that Finance Minister hardly take any participation or organize any consultation with Farmers, Finance Minister only take participation from business people and urban elite, which is not a fair process in a democratic society.

Dr. Sohel Iqbal of EquityBD mentioned that at present in view of the legal regime it is the Prime Minister and Finance Minister has the authority to prepare and made addition in the budget, even Member of Parliaments has no authority. He urged to review the process.

Rezaul Karim Chowdhury of EquityBD, remind the Finance Ministry launched a concept paper in last budget session title “Unified Budget and District Budget” with a course of action that during this financial year there will be at least one district budget initiative in each of the division. He quoted the concept paper that has mentioned that budget process must have to change if the government wants to achieve vision 2021 and achieve 8 % growth by 2012-13. He urged Finance Minister to give explanation in the parliament on this as the there are hardly any action on this. Mostafa Kamal Akanada of EquityBD concluded the rally with three demands first Finance Minister must declare a process of reform in budget process, second the Ministry must initiate district budget in view of its concept note and third, government must ensure available information on sector wise allocation in each of the district offices for mass monitoring.

Reported by

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