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**Metropolitan**

## Reform police during CG

Speakers tell roundtable

Staff Correspondent

Legal experts, politicians, civil society members and NGO personalities yesterday advocated for reforms in the police department during the tenure of the present caretaker government as the previous political governments did not bring any reform in the department.

Addressing a roundtable titled 'Proposed Police Ordinance and Citizens' Thinking', they suggested to make the police accountable to local government representatives or local committees to check harassment by police by filing false cases and arresting people and recommended for increasing their salary.

Political leaders at the roundtable advocated for taking opinions from political leaders on the draft ordinance and enactment of the draft by a political government.

Noted jurist and Gono Forum President Dr Kamal Hossain said enactment of laws for reforms in the police is urgent.

Dr Kamal said the state should be brought under people's control, not under politicians, as citizens are the real source of power.

Referring to politicians, Dr Kamal said, "Police will work for the people if we can elect such real representatives."

Former IGP and ex-adviser ASM Shahjahan said the proposed ordinance has been prepared aiming at making police as an institution which will be service-oriented, pro-people, professional and respectable to the rules of law.

Organised by Sushashoner Jonno Nagorik (Sujan) at the National Press Club in the city, the roundtable was moderated by TIB Chairman Prof Muzaffer Ahmad. Two keynote papers were presented by Sujan Secretary Dr Badiul Alam Majumder and Deputy Inspector General of Police Benzir Ahmed.

Prof Muzaffer Ahmad said political parties did not bring the reforms as the existing laws served their interest. He said he has found police to stand beside both victims and oppressors. So, it needs to be removed the dual pictures of the police before reforms.

Former adviser M Hafizuddin Khan said initiatives were taken to bring reforms in police several times, but nothing happened. He opined that police should be kept free from political influence. He also stressed on non-politicisation of police, but

transparency and accountability in the force should also be ensured.

Stressing the need for enhancing skills among police personnel, Dr Zafrullah Chowdhury of Ganoshasthaya Kendro suggested for increasing training period for police cadre officers to two years and a half with one year's training at military academy. He also suggested for submitting wealth account of policemen when they join the service.

He opined for inclusion of a woman leader, political leader and a civil society member in the selection panel of the police commission.

Awami League leader Lt Col (Retd) Faruq Khan said the present caretaker government should not pass the ordinance because if it is enacted now, it may not work during the tenure of any political government next. So, a political government should enact it as a law.

Jatiya Party leader GM Quader viewed that the draft ordinance seems to have been formulated unilaterally.

Former cabinet secretary Hussein Tawfiq Imam said He also said power of police has been expanded so extensively in the draft ordinance that the country can be turned into a police state.

In the keynote speech, Sujan secretary said it is urgent to make a legal framework for the police, instead of the existing one, to make the force skilled, transparent, accountable, pro-people and respectable to human and women rights.

Criticising the proposed police ordinance-2007, he said the ordinance should be made clear about the coordination among home ministry, national police commission, police complaint authority and police research bureau. It also should be made clear how will be the relations between district police and the district administration, he added.

Dr Majumder also viewed that as the post of chief justice is non-political, neutral and honourable, a judge nominated by the chief justice as his representative should be made chief of the selection panel for appointing neutral member of the national police commission.

He also suggested that an assistant superintendent of police (ASP) should be made chief of a police station.

Former IGP Nurul Huda, Inam Ahmed Chowdhury, Additional IGP Baharul Alam and CPB leader Ruhin Hossain Prince also spoke on the occasion.