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## People's tribunal in Capital for four days

HindustanTimes.com

By HT

Tuesday September 18, 09:35 AM

A people's tribunal will converge in New Delhi for four days starting September 21 to "renew the debate on the World Bank-guided neo-liberal economic policies" of the government.

The organisers, the Independent People's Tribunal on the World Bank Group In India, have also invited six senior World Bank officials and secretaries of 40 government ministries to the meet. However, they are yet to get any response from them.

"We are studying the invite and trying to find out how fair and balanced the platform is. We will respond soon," World Bank official Sudeep Mozumder told HT.

According to the organisers, participants at the meet will put the Bank on "trial" to analyse the impact of its policies on the country. People who have suffered from the projects and policies funded by the Bank will also attend the meet and share their stories.

The meeting will look into the impact of the Bank's policies on human rights, water, health, governance, food security, environment and the Northeast. "For public finance, we now depend on the World Bank to tell us what to do and we accept it uncritically even though many of the suggestions are not relevant to us. The government has changed its economic policies under the pressure and influence of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund to push globalisation.

These market principles are having a cascading effect on our production and employment," said Arun Kumar, Professor of Economics, Jawaharlal Nehru University, at a press meet. Eminent public interest lawyer Prashant Bhushan questioned the appropriateness of allowing senior policy makers of the government to take up post-retirement jobs with the Bank or global organisations as consultants or inviting people working with these international organisations to join policy panels in India.

"These officers ensure that the policies of the Bank are implemented in India without any proper debate. We have data to show this complicity between the World Bank and many bureaucrats. There's a conflict of interest here," he added.

A 15-member jury, which includes author Arundhati Roy, social activist Aruna Roy and former Supreme Court judge P.B. Sawant among others will hear the depositions of grassroots organisations and affected people and present the findings of the jury on the last day of the meet.

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