

Corruption Reaching Turning Point in India

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- The exposure of corruption has reached a crucial turning point in India, panellists said at World Economic Forum on India today
- Social media and citizen empowerment are increasing transparency
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National Capital Region, Gurgaon, India, 7 November 2012 – The exposure of corruption has reached a crucial turning point in India, according to the man responsible for uncovering some of the country ' s highest-level scams. Vinod Rai, Comptroller and Auditor General of India, said at the World Economic Forum on India today that for too long, politicians have believed they were entitled to govern without accountability.

“ We were once transparency averse, but no longer, ” said Vinod Rai, who investigated India ' s biggest corruption scandal, the 2G telecoms scam which cost the country US\$ 39 billion.

“ I think everything is coming out into the public domain, ” he added. But he called for citizen groups to become more engaged in exposing corruption. “ Why do we leave it to government alone to introduce accountability and probity? ” Rai asked. “ Leaving it to government has not succeeded. ”

The country still requires more independent, constitution-based institutions to keep the government and corporations accountable, Rai added.

A series of high-level corruption scandals have rocked the country in the last two years and threaten to damage India ' s brand internationally. But panellists at the World Economic Forum discussion on inclusive governance said the country is at “ an inflection point ” in terms of moving towards greater transparency and good governance.

Ramesh Ramanathan, Chairman, Janalakshmi Financial Services (JFS), India, said: “ This is the best and most exciting window of time we are in. ” Ramanathan who is also founder of the anti-corruption website www.ipaidabribe.com, said citizens of India are now feeling empowered and important and have momentum for change. “ The media are important in catalysing that, ” he said.

Social media, Internet crowdsourcing of data on corruption and measures for e-governance all contribute to a greater sense of transparency, which is instrumental in exposing abuses of power, the panellists said.

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