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### National News

#### Good practice: Government form safe food authority and appointed a chairman to make it effective.

While a study was released last year on 20 March with some findings on the safe food sector and a gazette notification of 'Safe Food Act 2013', to ensure safe food for the people with basic right, TIB was awaiting for something good initiatives from policy level. As a result of persistent policy communication efforts made during the last 8 month, the government finally has formed a safe food authority under the Ministry of Foods (MoF) and appointed a chairman to make it effective. TIB's communication team was followed up the progress with a policy brief, a series of letter correspondence among the officials of Ministry of Foods (MoF) and also the media monitoring.

*While the government was on a way to form a Safe Food Authority (SFA) within the next couple of weeks in December 2014, TIB started shoving the initiatives into a reality.*

According to a media briefing by the government, a food safety law as 'Safe Food Act 2013' came into effect on 1 February 2015, fixing the standards of food items was likely to be good practice in effectively enforcing the much demanded law. A five-member Safe Food Authority (SFA) was formed with the food minister as its helm in accordance with the new law. Separate courts for trying food adulteration cases were being set up and steps would be taken that mobile courts can conduct drives against the food contaminators also. Finally, a government order of a Chairman appointed at 'Bangladesh Safe Food Authority' was circulated on 4 February 2015.

TIB believes those initiatives for setting food standards key would make a notable path to ensure good governance in food sector. Therefore, with an interest to accelerate more technical support to the government whether needed, TIB welcomed and thanked the government as well as the Ministry on 22 February 2015.

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Earlier, at the mid of last year (2014), following the policy brief sent to MoF on 5 June, and later the media information on 4 December about the progress while the government was on a way to form a Safe Food Authority (SFA) within the next couple of weeks in December 2014, TIB started shoving the initiatives into a reality.

In the study "Ensuring Safe Food: challenges of governance and way forward", attention drawn on the absence of exemplary punishment for adulterators, legal bindings, coordination gap among authorities, city centered monitoring and inadequate manpower are the hindrances of governance in food sector of Bangladesh. Added, Md Shahnur Rahman, Programme Manager, Research and Policy, TIB conducted the report and the findings.

Whether the government took many positive steps to fight food adulteration, absence of an integrated food safety system is limiting the expected goal, TIB thinks. Therefore, to overcome the governance challenged to ensure safe food, TIB placed sixteen point recommendations. Key recommendations include amendment of Safe Food Act 2013 and its quick implementation; introduce provision of taking legal actions by consumers, amendment of the Consumer Rights Protection Act 2009, and establishment of food courts at all districts and metropolitan cities.

The above example testifies that government commitment and political will is crucial for a good practice over TIB's evidence-based research and policy advocacy and so forth.

### TIB put up stall at the Ekushey Book Fair 2015

TIB participated at the Ekushey Book Fair organized annually by the Bangla Academy during the month of February in Dhaka. With a vow to signify the sacrifice of Shaheeds for the mother language, TIB participated in the 'Amar Ekushey Boi Mela' with more than forty research publications and IEC's at stall number 521 located behind the Moder Gorob sculpture at the Academy premises. Visitors were seen carrying packages of TIB books bought at the national book fair. TIB records indicate that tens of thousands of visitors viewed the materials and publications displayed over the month.



### Int'l Mother Language Day observed with solemn remembrance

Wearing black badges and holding bouquets tight to their bosoms, TIB officials with YES, Members and family held a barefoot march on 21 February and placed a flower wreath at the Central Shaheed Minar in the University of Dhaka. Despite the political blockade, thousands of people from all walks of life were assembled there. TIB paid tribute to the Language Movement martyrs and the environment reverberated with the Ekushey anthem, 'Amar bhaiyer rokte rangano Ekushey February'.

To memorize the significance of Mother Language Day, TIB published a special Ekushey card with a message that 'Corruption is antithetical to the spirit of Ekushey', and circulated among all relevant stakeholders.

### Investigative proposals called for IJ Fellowship 2015

TIB called for the submission of investigative proposals for IJ Fellowship 2015. Interested and eligible journalists of print and electronic media in Dhaka were invited to submit their proposals with thousand words limit by 28 March. Proposals on education, health, local government, land and climate

finance governance issues are to be accepted. Detailed instructions for proposal writing and applicable conditions have been described in the advertisement. TIB confirms that the nominated fellows will get Tk. one lakh as honorarium and a certificate after the completion of his/her investigative report.

### Introducing Report Corruption Initiative is on Alpha Test

With an active support from TI-Secretariat, a modified link of Report Corruption Initiative, (<http://reporting-repcotib.rhcloud.com/main>) introduced on 25 February to test how the new system would function when TIB go to public. Based on alpha test at this primary stage, a hypothetical report on bribery cases will be developed which will further to

make compatible with the beta version by the month of April.

It is expected that 'Report Corruption' will supplement to TIB's corruption database initiative under which people will be encouraged to report incidences of corruption through website, SMS and mobile applications.

### CCC News

#### Plea to Government for an official National Sunderban Day 2015

People of CCC Satkhira and CCC Jessore urged to officially declare 14 February as a national Sunderban Day and demanded protection of the locals from change impact and ensure accountable and transparent use of climate funds. With the theme of 'Love Sunderban and declare 14 February as Sunderban Day', CCC Satkhira had an eventful day with cycle rally, drawing competition, roundtable discussion and a documentary show on Sunderban and Climate Finance Governance. CCC Jessore also organized a seminar. Local people, public officials and representatives, professionals, civil society, media, and young people visited these events.

National Committee for Saving the Sunderban (NCSS) involving TIB and more than 30 other members' organizations made a joint effort in Dhaka. With the theme of 'Love Sunderban and Save Sunderban', a human chain followed by a rally was organized in front of the national press club on 14 February 2015. The committee placed 10 points demand for the removal of Rampal power plant and other projects from Sunderban and nearby.

### **Muktagacha Mayor vows to quality healthcare for all**

Muktagacha municipal Mayor emphasized to make the local people aware of their entitlement to government health care. In an opinion sharing meeting jointly organized by CCC Muktagacha and Muktagachha Upazila Health Complex on 17 February 2015, the Mayor Abdul Hye expressed the above concern as the chief guest at the program. The meeting was focused on combined efforts to improve quality of services at the hospital.

In the meeting, the participants asked the authority to stop extra charges for ambulance, nebulizer, oxygen, generator services, and maternal health care and efficient steps against inadequate medicine supply and poor information and enquiry services. Due to

the short-fall of manpower and government allocation for this 50 bed hospital, Upazila Health and Family Planning Officer, Dr. Md. Harun-Ur-Rashid urged cooperation from the Mayor for sufficient lights in Health Complex compound, dustbin facilities with regular cleaning, reconstruction of the roads around the hospital etc.

The meeting was presided over by CCC President Md. Akhlasur Rahaman Jewel. CCC Vice-president Professor Md. Ayub Khan and CCC member Professor Akteruzzaman shared their views in the meeting. A number of CCC, Swajan, YES, YES Friends were also present.

### **Barguna Union Parishad welcomes the way of people's participation**

With a spirit of people-government joint efforts to set an effective local government institution in Barguna, a Face the Public (FtP) was organized by CCC Barguna and Gaurichanna Union Parishad on 11 February 2015. The program was presided over by CCC President Alhaji Abdur Rob Fakir and Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) of Barguna, Golam Mohammad Bhuain was present as Chief Guest.

In this FtP program, Chairman of Gaurichanna Union Parishad Md. Monirul Islam and members Mst. Zulaikha Begum and Md. Afzal Hossain answered the queries of local audiences. Limitations of UP services like VGF, VGD, deep tube-well for safe drinking water, 40 days employment program, reconstructions of canal and roads were also shared. The authority

asked for people's cooperation on the next plans and activities of UP and CCC to facilitate a culture of accountability through a series of FtP programs.

The Chief Guest of the program inspired the participants to monitor and share the irregularities of Union Parishad's activities this way. Along with others, CCC Vice-President Baby Das, Local Government Sub-Committee's Convener Monir Hossain Kamal, CCC member Advocate Md. Anisur Rahman, Dr. Dharendra Nath Sarder and Sukha Ranjan Sil, Swajan Coordinator Shamsuddin Khan, member Shamsunnahar, UP members, UP Secretary, local NGO representatives and around three hundred local people attended the program.

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### DPE authority hail CCC Lakshmipur for school's up-gradation from C to B category

District Primary Education (DPE) authority thanked CCC Lakshmipur for the contribution to Paschim Charmandal Govt. Primary School's up gradation from C to B category. In a consultation meeting of CCC and the District Primary Education (DPE), the Head Teacher of the school, Haradhan Chandra Hawlader, conceded this contribution on 12 February 2015 at the Office of District Primary Education Officer.

In the meeting, the Head Teacher of another Yusufpur Govt. Primary School Ms. Aktarunnesa and SMC President Sahid Miah drew attention on weak infrastructure, shortage of class teachers, rooms and

support staffs and lack of a boundary wall for the student's security also. The meeting was presided over by CCC Vice-President Banasree Pal Chowdhury while Assistant District Primary Education Officer (ADPEO) Mohammad Mahbubur Rahman was present as Chief Guest.

Assistant Upazila Primary Education Officer (AUPEO), Md. Habibur Rahman and Humayun Kabir CCC member Professor Mahbub Ali attended and shared their views to extend cooperation to CCC initiatives. CCC Vice-President Bhanu Nag shared the yearly action plan accordingly while CCC member, Saiful Islam Bhuiyan (Tapan) moderated the meeting

### Youth march towards the dream of a future at CCC Sylhet

"It is a time for youth to shoulder the responsibilities of the nation"- the prominent science fiction writer Dr. Mohammed Zafar Iqbal inspired youth to come forward for knowledge and serve for Bangladesh. At the closing program 'The March of the Youth Towards the Dream of a Future' on 11 February 2015, he also facilitated the administering of TIB's anti-corruption Oath to the participants. CCC Vice-President Samik Shaheed Jahan presided over the program.

With the support of CCC Sylhet, YES and YES Friends Group organized the two day-long program on 9 and 11 February. With the slogan of 'awakened conscience, invincible youth, shall surely resist corruption' the two-day long programm began with various anti-corruption competitions like quiz, extempore speech, slogan and wall magazine followed by cultural program and prize giving.

Earlier on 9 February, an orientation on RTI was conducted by CCC Member A. K. Sheram and TIB representative at North-East University Bangladesh in Sylhet.

The Pro Vice-Chancellor, Dr. M. Khalilur Rahman delivered welcome speech at the opening and CCC Member Sayed Monir Ahmed and YES Leader Jani



Ranjan Dey spoke at the closing. Along with others CCC Members, Swajan members, YES and YES-Friends members, students and teachers of Metropolitan University, Leading University, North-East University Bangladesh and Sylhet International University attended the program.

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