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National News

World Health Day 2015

Safe food is the precondition of healthy life

The World Health Day is observed globally on 7th April every year. as t all over the globe. This year's theme is 'Food Safety'. The government of Bangladesh is observing the day with the slogan "Nirapod Pushtikor Khabar, Sustho Jiboner Angikar" (safe, nutrient food promises healthy life).

Food is one of the fundamental rights of people. The constitution of Bangladesh in section 15 (a) says "It shall be a fundamental responsibility of the State to attain, through planned economic growth, a constant increase of productive forces and a steady improvement in the material and cultural standard of living of the people, with a view to securing to its citizens– the provision of the basic necessities of life, including food, clothing, shelter, education and medical care".

TIB's report titled 'Ensuring Safe Food: Governance Challenges and Way Forward' (2014) recommended to taking some effective initiatives to ensure safe food in Bangladesh, which included, among others:

- Amendment of Safe Food Act 2013 and its quick implementation
- Provision of legal actions by consumers
- Amendment of the Consumer Rights Protection Act 2009 and
- Establishment of food courts at all districts and metropolitan cities.

Unsafe food is one of the main causes behind people's health problems all over the world. To create a healthy, beautiful world we all need to be aware and particularly the government should take effective measures to solve the problems giving special priority on this issue.

Rampal and Matarbari Power Projects: Governance Challenges in Environmental Impact Assessment and Land Acquisition

A TIB study titled "Rampal and Matarbari Power Projects: Governance Challenges in Environmental Impact Assessment and Land Acquisition" found major breaches of laws, ordinances and regulations in the land acquisition and environmental assessment processes of the two projects. The study was released on 16 April 2015 at the Conference Room of TIB.

According to the report, the Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) of both Matarbari and Rampal projects are flawed and replete with corruption. There are obvious evidences of conflict of interest, law violations in the Department of Environment (DOE) approval, ordinance and regulations violation regarding site clearance, inadequate public participation in the stages of project planning and implementation, carelessness on human and environmental issues, neglected ash pollution and pollution caused by coal transport through the Sundarbans, neglected water withdrawal and discharge impacts, un-implementable employment plans, illegally and unethically concealed information as well as falsifications and manipulations of scientific findings in both the projects.

The study highlighted some of the impacts caused by fallacious EIAs and land acquisition processes. Improper EIAs weaken Bangladesh's demand for climate finance and generate inaccurate cost-benefit analysis. Similarly, improper land acquisitions displace a significant number of families, increase poverty levels and create risk of mass protest against the project (power plants).

TIB made seven recommendations to neutralize and ameliorate the situation that has resulted from rampant corruption in the Matarbari and Rampal coal fired power plant projects. Please visit www.ti-bangladesh.org for more details.

TIB recommends 10 measures to overcome challenges and to ensure good governance in garment sector

Although notable progress has been achieved, however, various deficits still exist indicating that a lot needs to be done to consolidate reforms gained in establishing good governance in the country's Ready-made Garment Sector (RMG) sector, a TIB study revealed. The study "Good Governance in the Ready Made Garment Sector: Review of Progress during Last One Year" released on 21 April, assessed the progress and implementation status of different initiatives undertaken to ensure good governance in RMG Sector in the last one year (April 2014 to March 2014).

In October 2013, TIB conducted a research that identified some causes of such accidents and lack of compliances in RMG sector that included coordination gaps among relevant stakeholders and their negligence of duties, political influence, and irregularities and collusive corruption between regulatory agencies and factory owners. TIB also conducted a follow-up study on the first anniversary of the accident in 2014 to assess progress of numerous initiatives undertaken by various stakeholders in the aftermath of Rana Plaza accident. As part of continued follow-up, TIB undertook the present research on the occasion of the second anniversary of the accident to assess progress of remaining and new initiatives during 2014 -2015. According to the second follow-up study, 56 issues were considered for assessing progress and implementation status of various reforms initiatives. It discarded seven issues that were covered in 2014 study. Out of 56 issues, no initiatives were taken on 8 issues in the last one year, leaving 48 issues for assessment under current research. It is observed that 80 initiatives covering those 48 issues were undertaken, of which 15% were implemented completely, 45% made considerable progress and 15% showed slow implementation and 25% made no notable progress.



The study highlighted major progress of the government-initiated projects, which included, among others, amendment of EPZ law, 2013; appointment of panel lawyers to help workers in the labor tribunal, finalization of labor rules and preparation of guideline for sub-contract factories, formation of two taskforces to monitor inspections carried out by Accord and Alliance. It also made progress in the appointments of staff to enhance the capacity of Director General of Factory and Establishment and Fire Service, including realization of decentralization process of Director General of Factory and Establishment and RAJUK.

According to the study findings some 85% of the financial assistance deposited into the Prime Minister's Relief and Welfare Fund for the victims of the Rana Plaza is yet to be disbursed two years after the world's worst workplace disaster. The Fund received about \$16 million or Tk 127 crore from local sources, mainly commercial banks, for the victims and their families since April 24, 2013. But about Tk 108 crore of the Fund remained unused, the study said.

TIB put forward a set of recommendations on this sector and also suggested releasing name of partnering factories in Bangladesh on website of every buyer and quick settlement legal cases relating to Rana Plaza collapse. Please visit www.ti-bangladesh.org for more details.

A production-based Theater Workshop held

A production-based Theatre Workshop for Dhaka YES Theatre Group was held on 25-30 April in Dhaka. 18 YES members from different YES Groups participated in the workshop. Prof. Yusuf Hassan, Department of Drama and Dramatics, Jahangirnagar University; Sudip Chakroborty, Chairman and Assistant Professor, Department of Music & Drama, University of Dhaka; Mahmuda Akhtar recitation artist; theatre activist Muhammad Shahinur Rahman and Mohammad Ishaque Faruqee joined the workshop as facilitator of the five-day long workshop.

The improvised drama centers on land grabbing and occupying water bodies by powerful quarters in Dhaka metropolis. It also highlighted cases of unauthorized payments in the cases of land registration and mutation where public sufferings have become a norm and a way of life. The connivance of the officials with the politically powerful and absence of rule of law, accountability and transparency in land sector was also depicted, much to the cheer of the crowd.



On 30 April, the last day of the workshop Dhaka YES Theatre Group presented the technical show named 'Berajal' (Web of barrier). At the end of the show Executive Director of TIB Dr. Iftekharuzzaman thanked the YES members for their efforts and also for their contribution to fight against corruption.

The theatre team comprising cultural activists from 14 groups of Dhaka YES, will perform similar road shows in several places of Dhaka City this year to raise public demand for ensuring transparency, integrity and accountability in land-related services.

CCC News

TIB-CCCs Journey towards Promoting Good Governance in Land Sector

With a view to promote good governance in 'Land' sector, a launching programme was organized by the CCC Barisal, Gazipur and Chapainawabganj. Deputy Commissioners of respective district were present as Chief Guest and inaugurated the programmes in all three CCCs. Representatives of the media, NGOs, women organizations, CCC members and general service recipients were also took part.

Deputy Commissioner of Chapainawabganj Md. Jahangir Kabir told, "Corruption will be reduced if we are able to create mass awareness and ensure transparency and accountability in different service delivery institutions. Deputy Commissioner of Barisal Md. Shohidul Alam said, "In Bangladesh land related laws are back dated and these should be modified and reform as per the requirements." Deputy Commissioner of Gazipur Md. Nurul Islam said, "The process of digitalization of Land Administration has already been initiated and Gazipur district is under a pilot project."



Candidates pledge for a transparent, accountable and citizens friendly Chittagong City

Before the Chittagong City Corporation Election, a Choose the Right Candidate programme was held on 19 April 2015 jointly organized by CCC Chittagong and Sujon at Muslim Institute Hall. Candidates pledged to turn the Chittagong City Corporation into a transparent, accountable and citizen friendly institution. The candidates presented their electoral manifesto to the audience and answered different questions from the citizens.

Engineer Md. Delwar Hossain Majumdar, President of CCC Chittagong presided over the event. Central Secretary of Sujon Dr. Badiul Alam Majumder, Director - Civic Engagement of TIB, Uma Chowdhury and President of Sujon Chittagong, Professor Md. Sikandar Khan also spoke. A statement on the election pledge was read out.

Uma Chowdhury urged to vote for a candidate with high level of integrity and capable to contribute for the community.

The citizens demanded quick initiatives to solve water logging of the city, elimination of communalism, terrorism and drug syndicate, advancement of female education and improving the traffic system etc.

‘Face the Public’ programme in Brabmanbaria

Mr R. A. M. Obaidul Mukhtar Chowdhury MP attended a ‘Face the Public’ programme organized by CCC Brabmanbaria and shared the election manifesto of his party as well his own development plan for the constituency.

During the open session the audience urged reducing harassment from different service providing agencies like hospital, Gas and Municipality. They also demanded improving road condition, building new schools and medical college, reducing traffic in the town.



Teachers and SMC Presidents recommended for better education in Madhupur

A set of recommendations was proposed by the Head Teachers and SMC Presidents of 109 Government Primary Schools under Madhupur Upazila to follow both at the local and national level with a view to improve

transparency, accountability and quality of education. The recommendations were presented in a programme titled ‘Measures to be taken at the local level to improve transparency and accountability in primary education sector’ organized by CCC Madhupur with the support of the Upazila Education Office of Madhupur held on 11 April.



The key recommendations included, among other, ensuring stipend for 100% students; arrangement of Tiffin for the students in school; depositing allocations directly to the account of the school; setting teacher-student ratio as 1:30 and ensuring transparency in recruitment process at all level of the school.

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