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prime minister and members of the cabinet, advisers, MPs, justice, high-level government officials and politicians and updates those regularly. It also recommended for introducing an integrated online supervision system to monitor the government procurement process, revenue collection and project activities regarding budget.

## ACC signs MoU with TIB

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) and the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the objective of strengthening anti-corruption prevention activities in the country on 25 May 2015. At a simple ceremony held at the mini conference hall of ACC head office in Segunbagicha, TIB's Executive Director Dr. Iftekharuzzaman and ACC's Director General (DG), Dr. Md Shamsul Arefin signed the two-year MOU on behalf of their respective organizations. ACC Chairman Md. Badiuzzaman, two Commissioners, Secretary and senior officials of both TIB and ACC were present during the signing.

During the signing ceremony, speakers agreed that the process of curbing corruption will be more dynamic and easy if the corruption can be prevented effectively. The MOU stipulates undertaking joint activities to implement and monitor anti-corruption campaigns at upazila and district levels involving members of Satata Sangha (integrity association) to aware people about corruption marking the International Anti-Corruption Day on December 9. Collaboration also covers the areas of research and campaign, including TIB's two new initiatives: Report Corruption and Advice and Legal Advocacy Centre (ALAC), where ACC will take necessary measures in view of public complaints against corruption received through TIB.

It may be mentioned here that TIB played the lead catalyst role in the enactment of the Anti-Corruption Act, 2004 and setting up of the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC).

Along with ACC, TIB implemented a country wide anti-corruption campaign 'Jago Manush – Wake up people' in 2007-08, with ACC. Since 2009, it has been relentlessly campaigning for effective implementation of the Act and ensuring the independence of the ACC.

## National News

### Ensure transparency, openness and accountability in the national budget 2015-16: TIB

On May 31 in a letter, TIB requested Finance Minister to ensure transparency, openness and accountability in the national budget 2015-16. Reminding that good governance and combating corruption have been put as central agenda in the government's vision 2021, the Sixth Five-Year Plan, the National Integrity Strategy and election pledges, TIB emphasized on optimum use of public money by being economical, efficient and effective in the utilization of budgetary allocation to achieve desired goals of the budget. TIB also underscored that it is not possible to ensure sustainable economic development without bringing transparency, accountability and integrity in the budget process.

As a short term success, it may be possible to reach to the goal to become a middle-income country bypassing the principles such as democratic accountability, elimination of discrimination and basic human rights, however, in terms of sustainability the dream may not comes true, TIB observed.

Placing the 11-point budget recommendations through a statement, TIB's Executive Director Dr. Iftekharuzzaman said, "It is imperative that the national budget is consistent with the structure of government policies through effective and transparent formulation and implementation of budget."

The recommendations includes release of all budget related information specially allocation in defence sector, abolishing provision of whitening black money and strengthening inter-agency collaboration to recover stolen assets from abroad. It also recommended giving priority to allocation in social safety-net programmes and projects, disclosure of wealth statements of

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In 2010, the Government initiated a process of changing certain provisions of the ACC Act 2004. TIB played a key leadership role in a successful campaign opposing the amendments and calling for the continued independence of the AAC. TIB's research identified the key issues which were taken up by TIB and its partners both nationally and locally through CCC and Yes groups. It launched a signature and sms campaign, online petition, organized joint demonstrations with other CSOs and activists; presenting signatures of support and a memorandum countering the changes to the Prime Minister.

In spite of such vigorous campaign, the Government amended the ACC Act in 2013 inserting a provision for taking prior government approval to initiate corruption case against any public servant. Later, the President gave his consent to the bill.

Again TIB raised its voice and supported a public interest litigation in 2014, follow which the High Court declared unconstitutional the latest amendment to the ACC Act curtailing its power. It was a victory of TIB's research and advocacy campaign. Hailing the verdict, TIB said everybody is equal in the eyes of law as per the constitution.

It is hoped that the new MOU between TIB and ACC will usher a new era in mobilizing the public through various preventive activities to send a strong message to end impunity and punish the corrupt without fear or favour.

## **TIB Executive Director receives GPSA Award**

Executive Director of Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) Dr. Iftekharuzzaman has been awarded the first Global Partnership for Social Accountability (GPSA) Award of the World Bank for his outstanding contributions, influence and impact in galvanizing demand for transparency and good governance in Bangladesh.



Five more individuals representing government and civil society organizations from Africa, East Asia and Pacific, Europe and Central Asia, Latin America and Caribbean, Middle East and North Africa regions were also awarded for their leadership roles in promoting social accountability tools as a means to eradicate poverty and foster shared prosperity. There was also one special Lifetime Achievement award winner.

The award citation mentions that Dr. Iftekhar Zaman has been instrumental in advocating for transparency and good governance, despite shrinking social space for dissent in Bangladesh. Under his leadership, TIB has catalyzed several institutional, legal and policy and established a country wide network of over 6,500 anti-corruption platforms of volunteers as Committees of Concerned Citizens (CCC) and Youth Engagement & Support (YES).

In accepting the award, Dr. Zaman dedicated it to Committees of Concerned Citizens (CCCs), YES (Youth Engagement and Support (YES) groups, Shawjon (Citizens for Transparency), YES-Friends, YPAC (Young Professionals against Corruption) and TIB members for their unqualified commitment and untiring efforts to promote better governance in the country. Dr. Zaman said: "work against corruption and governance deficit is not easy anywhere. We have learned, however, that given the passion for the cause, and determination to practice what we preach, all challenges can be converted into opportunities." He also thanked TIB's Board of Trustees, colleagues, well-wishers and development partners for their sustained support to TIB's social movement against corruption in Bangladesh.

## The young debaters made a pledge to build a corruption free country

A crowd of youth made a pledge to build a corruption free and good governed country. They made the pledge under the umbrella of TIB-JUDO National Debate Championship 2015 in Jahangirnagar University. Coming from different schools, colleges and universities around the country, a total 300 debaters took part in the four daylong debate championship from 6 - 9 May. By the spontaneous and informative participation of them, resistance of corruption; good governance; and patriotism got a new dimension through this youth assembly.

The competition started with the slogan ‘vigilant conscience, invincible youth shall surely resist corruption’ on 6 May in association with TIB and Jahangirnagar University Debate Organization (JUDO) with the objective of anti-corruption awareness creation as well building champions against corruption. In the inaugural programme, the guests called upon the youth to play an active and awakened role for building a corruption free and well governed country. The inaugural programme was attended by the moderator of JUDO Dr A T M Atiqur Rahman, Director of Teachers-Students Centre Dr Rasheda Akhtar and Director of Outreach & Communication Division of TIB Dr Rezwan-ul-Alam respectively as chief guest and special guests. The chief guest facilitated the anti-corruption oath taking session at the end of the programme.



Different rounds of the debate championship were held with the theme of ethics, right to information, women rights, corruption, good governance, human rights, sustainable development, climate change, independence of media and education system. Khulna Zilla School; Viqarunnisa Noon School & College and Bangladesh University of Engineering & Technology secured the champion position respectively from school, college and university category while Adamjee Cantonment Public School & College, Dhaka Commerce College and University of Dhaka obtained the runner-up positions. Mahdi Mushfiq Aman from Khulna Zilla School; Shamshad Navia Novely from Viqarunnisa Noon School & College and Towhidur Rahman Turag awarded as the Debater of the Tournament from the respective category.

9 May, the final day of the championship started with a colourful rally where debaters, students, organizers participated. The rally roamed the campus area. The final round debates of all categories were held at TSC and Mukta Mancha. Arranged at Mukta Mancha, a total of 200 students, teachers and other people enjoyed the final round debates and closing programme. Pro-VC of Jahangirnagar University Prof. Dr Abul Hossen attended the closing programme as chief guest while the moderator of JUDO Dr A T M Atiqur Rahman and Director of Research & Policy Division of TIB Mr Rafiqul Hassan attended as special guests. The winning teams and debaters were awarded crest and certificate by the guests.

At the end, the organizers of the championship expressed their gratitude and vote of thanks to the debaters, students, teachers and authority for completion of a successful debate programme. They also showed interest to hold such championship again.

## Street theatre highlights land sector corruptions

TIB has been using the people’s theatre as a tool to spread its anti-corruption messages across 45 locations in the country. Cultural activists among the Youth Engagement and Support (YES) groups are picked up through a rigorous process to use drama as means for reaching out to the community with powerful messages to fight corruption in health, education, local government, land and climate finance areas. A total of 46 theatre groups exist now, with 45 such groups in CCC areas.



Dhaka YES’s theatre team recently staged a street theatre show on 28 May 2015 at Capital’s Uttara area, with the support from Uttara University. Their production ‘Berajal’ (web of barriers) attracted a sizeable audience who cheered every dialogue as those mirrored their sufferings from land sector corruption. One spectator even stole the show by describing his own bad experience, prompting the audience to shout on top their voices that they will no longer tolerate such corrupt behaviors.

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.

Dhaka YES theatre team, composed of cultural activists from its 14 groups, 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.

### **The three city corporation elections were not free, fair and neutral: TIB**

A TIB report titled ‘Dhaka North, Dhaka South and Chittagong City Corporation Elections 2015: Tracking the Process’, released on 18 May. It has found that the recent elections in three city corporations - Dhaka North, Dhaka South and Chittagong – were deeply flawed in term of violation of electoral law, rules and conduct. With violation of permissible campaign spending limits took place at unprecedented rates, muscle and money determined the outcome as the Election Commission failed to create the level-playing field, while election officials including law enforcement agencies failed substantially to discharge entrusted authority and responsibility with impartially.

Releasing the report at it’s head office, TIB’s Executive Director Dr. Iftekharuzzaman said, “The ruling party activists were engaged in vote rigging, occupying polling centre, ballot papers stuffing and different irregularities to ensure victory of their party-backed candidates.” The study also found that in some polling centers, even law enforcing agencies directly assisted the ruling party men for vote rigging.

The findings of the study showed the Election Commission failed to discharge its responsibilities independently to create equal opportunities for all candidates, due to the lack of firmness in conducting the election, non-application of election law equally for all, and partiality in taking actions for violation of electoral code of conduct. In many instances, the Presiding Officers, magistrates, officials of the law enforcing agencies failed to perform their professional responsibilities. Overall, the three city corporation elections cannot be termed as free, fair and neutral.

TIB proposed a seven-point remedial measures for ensuring a free, fair, and inclusive elections in future. Please visit [www.ti-bangladesh.org](http://www.ti-bangladesh.org) for the report and presentation of the study.

### **CCC News**

#### **Participatory Budgeting: A Tool to Promote Transparency in Public Expenditure at Municipality**

CCC, Gaibandha organized an open budget programme titled ‘Citizens Thought in Upcoming Budget of Municipality’ on 23 May to make the municipality development budget participatory. The Municipality authority assured to take initiatives to meet the peoples demand within their capacity mentioning some examples of initiative which they will start given priority like: proper management of public toilets of Mitali Bazar and Kamornoi school, allocation of ring slab for few families within two months, installation of water treatment plant, increase the number of over head tank from two to three, special allocation for Dalits community and connection bridge between Auest Para and Jumma Para. The municipality authority attended the programme and told that a proposal for Ghaghot lake has already been submitted for approval from the concern authority.



The programme was presided over by CCC President Gobinda Lal Das and moderated by CCC member Professor Mazharul Mannan while Municipality Mayor Md. Shamsul Alam was present as the Chief Guest.

#### **Health Authority Pledged for a Service Friendly Hospital**

‘Despite having many limitations in hospital services, it is noticed that now a days services of hospital have been improved but not in expected level’ stated by the participants in an opinion sharing meeting with the Kishoreganj District Hospital Authority on 17 May at the hospital premises. CCC, Kishoreganj arranged this meeting with an aim to improve the quality of services of the hospital.

Many positive and negative comments were shared regarding quality of services of the hospital. Along with some improvements YES group shared some significant remarks like: hospital authority is trying to serve their best despite having lack of sufficient resources and instruments, shortage of manpower, irregular attendance of doctors, cleanliness of toilets of different wards, nonexistence of dustbin at outdoor etc.

CCC placed some recommendations to the hospital authority which includes: ensure timely presence of doctors, nurses and other employees; display name of absent employees, duty roaster of doctors and nurses in front of specific room through a notice board; provision of uniform and ID card and ensure its uses for the employees; activate district hospital management committee and organize meeting at regular basis according to the circular of Health Ministry, update the medicine list, provide breast feeding corner, assign

Designated Information Officer according to the RTI act etc.

Agreeing with the recommendation given by CCC-YES, Deputy Civil Surgeon Dr. Md. Habibur Rahman pledged to work jointly with CCC to improve the quality of services of the hospital. The Civil Surgeon also promised to build a service friendly hospital by solving the problems with the help of all. The meeting was presided over by CCC President Saiful Haque Mollah.

### **Authority Agreed to Improve the Quality of Education**

With an aim to improve the quality of education, a meeting with District Primary Education Authority was organized by CCC, Pirojpur on 19 May at CCC Office. Participants of the meeting discussed about progress and limitations of 15 No Brahmanakati Govt. Primary School where CCC, Pirojpur is implementing its interventions against corruption. The meeting also discussed on overall education system and different governance challenges issues.

The Head Master of Brahmanakati Primary School Nihar Kana Mukherjee shared that the parents are more aware now. As a result the success rate of this school has been increased. Attending as the Chief Guest (DPEO) Md. Abdul Latif Majumder told that the incomplete work of this school will be done accordingly. He requested to the relevant officials to take necessary measures for introducing co-curriculum activities and to take extra care for the special child of this school. The meeting was presided over by CCC President Rama Rani Saha while Sadar Upazila Education Officer Shikder Atikur Rahman Jewel was attended as the Special Guest.

### **ALAC Launched in Rangamati and Lalmonirhat**

With the assistance from TIB, CCC Rangamati and Lalmonirhat arranged a launching programme of Advocacy and Legal Advice Centre (ALAC) on 2 May and 18 May respectively. ALAC is an important tool through which CCC will able to stimulates the local citizens about their legal rights and encouraging them to take action against cases of corruption that they have witnessed or been a victim of. In launching ceremony CCC Rangamati and Lalmonirhat shared that ALAC will assist and provide free and confidential legal advice to the citizens who are victims and witnesses of corruption on the issues of education, health, local government, land and climate finance governance.

In the launching programme held in Rangamati and Lalmonirhat Chairman of CHT District Parishad Rangamati Brish Ketu Chakma and District and Section Judge Mia Muhammad Ali Akbar Azizi attended as the Chief Guest respectively and inaugurated the event. In Rangamati Uma Chowdhury, Director of Civic Engagement of TIB presented a PowerPoint presentation on ALAC in the meeting and addressed the questions on ALAC implementation raised by the participants.

### **DANIDA team visited TIB's Intervention in Barisal**

A three member team from Danish International Development Assistance (DANIDA) consisting of Nikoli Stin Nelson, Mahal Aminuzzaman and Sakib Mahbub visited different interventions of TIB in Barisal on 31 May. During the visit the team met CCC's, Swajan, YES and YES-Friends members to understand the leadership of core actors in anti-corruption movement, social accountability process, results, challenges etc.

The visiting team observed some social accountability tools like Mothers Gathering, Theater Show, Open Budget, Face the Public Programme etc. to get essence of effectiveness of these anti-corruption tools.

In a sharing meeting, DANIDA team also talked with the school and health authority and with the local government representatives regarding anti-corruption social movement and got some experiences on various interventions. The visiting team praised the spirit of volunteerism of the core actors of TIB and also for their commitment to contribute for the society.

Editor: S M Rezwan-ul-Alam

Sub-Editor: Zahidul Islam

Design: Barkat Ullah Babu

Write us : Transparency International Bangladesh, e-mail: [advocacy@ti-bangladesh.org](mailto:advocacy@ti-bangladesh.org)

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