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### National News

#### TIB recommends measures for improving governance in the Drug Administration

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) recommends 12 measures for improving good governance in Drug Administration along with a timely policy structure, a unified law, effective implementation of law, increment of human resources and capacity and proper process of punishment for corruption allegations. TIB made these recommendations during a press launch of a study titled "Governance of the Directorate of Drug Administration: Challenges & Way forward" on 15 January at the Conference Room of TIB. Md. Shahnur Rahman, Programme Manager and Nazmul Huda Mina, Assistant Programme Manager Research and Policy, TIB presented the findings. The study was conducted during March 2014 - January 2015. Advocate Sultana Kamal, Chairperson, Board of Trustees, Dr Iftekharuzzaman, Executive Director and Dr Sumaiya Khair, Deputy Executive Director, TIB were also present.

The report also elaborated on the government's recent initiatives to strengthen DA's capacities. These include increase of manpower in field offices and measures to construct central drug laboratory and its capacity building. Moreover, it has taken initiatives to implement directives given by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Health for strengthening its operations to prevent upsurge of fake and adulterated drugs, formation of an Ethics Committee as per the National Integrity Strategy 2013 and formation of an Innovation Team for bringing visible changes in its client service delivery. Despite immense potentials of this sector and above regulatory measures, some problems and anomalies persist in the drug sector.

The study revealed allegations of taka five hundred to one million unauthorized payments in different activities of DGDA along with

renewal of drug license and providing new license, project transfer/shifting, approval of recipe, registration of drug, sample testing and quality control and export license and GMP certificate etc.

Among five types of medicines (allopathic, unani, ayurveda, homeopathic and herbal), this study revealed problems, irregularities and corruption associated with marketing and regulation of allopathic medicines. Governance challenges were examined by collecting and analyzing information in line with some governance indicators like rule of law, transparency, accountability, participation, responsiveness, and deficits in service provisions and corruption in Drug Administration.

According to the report, the capacity of Drug Administration discords with its vast working area, geographic coverage and expansion of the drug market. Existing laws are not adequate to address emerging issues and challenges. Lack of transparency and accountability in administrative activities also exist and there is no noticeable political will to build up the capacity of this sector. Because of all these problems and limitations two-thirds of the market remain outside the purview of regulation and each year around 70% of the drugs go untested. Commenting on the report, Dr Zaman said:

**"We feel proud that there are lots of companies in Bangladesh exporting medicines however, some companies use raw materials of higher standard for export, and lower standard for the local market. Consequence of this malpractice is that we incur many health risks. It is very alarming that even they do not follow any level of quality to manage the risks."**



TIB's recommendation on Directorate of Drug Administration

- ◆ Emphasis should be given for harmonization of drug related laws;
- ◆ Medical devices, food supplements, and cosmetic products, should be included;
- ◆ Inconsistencies in terms of punitive measures for different offenses should be eliminated and rigorous punishment should be introduced;
- ◆ Drug administrator's own infrastructure should be set up in every district and logistical support and transport facilities for inspection should be ensured;

- ◆ Representation of the pharmaceutical owners in different drug related committees should be avoided;
- ◆ Speedy legal actions should be taken against pharmaceutical companies producing sub-standard, fake and adulterated drugs.

### TIB study finds corruption in the Office of Comptroller and Auditor General

A new study by Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) to analyze the nature and extent of corruption and various irregularities in the Office of Comptroller and Auditor General found unabated corruption in this constitutional body resulting from legal, institutional and organizational limitations. The study highlighted how the constitutionally independent office has become tainted with irregularities for external and internal factors when its job is to prevent financial anomalies in government offices, statutory bodies and foreign-funded projects. The research was conducted between March 2013 and December 2014 and is based on interviews of 68 government and semi-government officials, 24 incumbent and former officials of the OCAg and ministries and also two experts.

The report found that though the CAG has got some momentum in its operations in the last five years and some positive changes have taken place, institutional and legal limitations are still crippling its performance. Also, transparency in public expenditure has been jeopardized as audit objections are not properly reflected because of the corruption of its officials and employees during audit process and non-realization of public money that have been embezzled and misused through corruption. The findings of the study also indicate that the OCAg has lost its ability to control corruption, and there are complaints of widespread irregularities and corruption such as getting favors in matters of recruitments, promotions, postings and trainings. Along with political influences in recruitment,

complaints have it that top officials are taking bribes ranging from Tk 300,000 to Tk 500,000 for appointing auditors, their subordinates, and drivers.

The payments of bribes range from Tk 4,000 to Tk 150,000 in civil audits, work audits, audit of foreign-aided projects, commerce, defense, disposal of objections, posting, telecommunication, science and technology, disposal of long-standing objections, and the selection of the auditors.

The report was released on 29 January through a press conference in Dhaka. TIB Executive Director Dr Iftekaruzzaman while commenting on the findings said that there were allegations in some cases of 'partisan political consideration' during the appointment of the comptroller and auditor general. "Along with six ministers, two state ministers, chief of a parliamentary standing committee, an MP, and a member of the PSC (Public Service Commission), political leaders lobbied and pressed for recruiting an official into the OCAg. It can be said those who are supposed to control corruption has become uncontrolled," he said.

The picture of the corruption in the office of the CAG is unacceptable. The institution that is supposed to unveil corruption has fallen victim to widespread corruption. There is no other alternative to remedying this," Dr Zaman further added.

TIB also placed a total of twenty recommendations to bring transparency in OCAg and improve overall governance.



Highlights of TIB's recommendation on OCAG

- ◆ Proposed Audit Act, organogram and Rules of Appointment should be approved immediately
- ◆ All recruitment in Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General of Bangladesh should be free from political influence and interference
- ◆ The accountability of the officials and employees should be ensured
- ◆ The important and large-scale corruptions information should be submitted to Public Accounts Committee for recommending exemplary punishment

- ◆ The internal control mechanism should be established in each ministry for increasing the transparency in public expenditures and accounts

### TIB calls to shun the path of violence, avoid use of force and leave the people in peace

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) has expressed deep concern over the on-going inhuman and cruel manifestation of violence and use of force in an unhealthy competition for power at the cost of basic rights of the people and prospect of democracy and good governance. TIB has called for parties to shun the path of violence and avoid the use of force and undemocratic means and to adopt peaceful ways of bridging differences and move towards mutual understanding.

In a statement issued on 20 January, Iftekharuzzaman, Executive Director of TIB said, "by indulging in an unhealthy competition and show of force in the name of democracy the two largest parties are crushing basic rights of the people, particularly children, women and the youth. People are being deprived of the whole range of fundamental rights starting from right to life to right of normal death. Having locked themselves in a zero-sum game of power, our political parties and leaders are not only exposing their political bankruptcy, but also expanding their distance from the people and public interest on a daily basis. Independence and professionalism of key institutions of rule of law and democratic accountability, particularly the law enforcement

agencies are being severely compromised. These are an extremely high-risk game for democracy and good governance".

He also added, "Political freedoms such as right of assembly, rallies, human chains, etc., are fundamental to democracy and democratic practice. However, violent programmes in the name of movement putting people's life and living at risk are absolutely unacceptable in any democratic society. On the other hand, the way the law enforcement agencies like Police, RAB and BGB have threatened the use of disproportionate force and are apparently acquiring license to become law-breakers is inconsistent with the spirit of our independence achieved thanks to highest sacrifice of millions of martyrs. These also expose the political space to militant and undemocratic forces to gain ground".

The statement said, "There are no winners in such forms of political activism and practice except for undemocratic, militant and violent forces who may gain further ground. Not merely in the interest of the people but also for their self-interest, the two confronting sides must find peaceful ways and means for political game and leave the people in peace".

### TIB Members' Meeting

Quarterly Member's Day was held on 29th January at the TIB conference room. TIB members and other officials joined the event. Members were briefed about TIB activities held during previous quarter and upcoming events in the future. TIB Executive Director moderated the meeting. This was a unique opportunity for the members as well as TIB to speak on various issues including governance and contemporary politics. Executive Director of TIB told that TIB will work against political violence and confrontational politics. Members shared their ideas to accelerate its anti-corruption movement in the country.

**Good Practice: Chief Justice assures to implement TIB recommendations on Judiciary**

TIB’s efforts to ensure transparency in the judiciary received a tremendous boost when the new Chief Justice assured the anti-corruption watchdog that he would actively consider its policy brief recommendations of 2011 and 2014 and also make necessary endeavors to implement the same.

After assuming office the Chief Justice Surendra Kumar Sinha, in a reception meeting on 18 January 2015, reaffirmed his firm commitment to ensure transparency and accountability in the justice sector. Greatly encouraged by this, TIB thanked the Chief Justice and sent two policy briefs on 20 January stemming from its: a) National Integrity System Assessment: Judiciary of 2014 and b) TIB’s recommendations for enhancement of the Judiciary’s excellence of 2011

On receipt of the two documents, the Registrar of the Appellate Division of the Bangladesh Supreme Court on 22 January thanked TIB and informed about the Chief Justice’s assurance that “he would actively

consider TIB’s recommendations contained in those policy briefs and would also endeavor to implement those.”

TIB has long been pursuing relentlessly to ensure transparency and accountability in the Justice Sector.

As direct result of several advocacy initiatives, two important steps were taken by the judicial authority in 2010:

- a) a complaint box was set up in the Supreme Court allowing people to submit corruption allegations, b) a number of judges including the then Chief Justice proactively disclosed their wealth statements to the public.

Inspired by the latest assurance from the new Chief Justice, TIB will continue to work to ensure independence, transparency, accountability and integrity of the justice sector in Bangladesh.

**YPAC members oriented on BIBEC project, vow to play their role**

With a view of introducing ‘Building Integrity Blocks for Effective Change (BIBEC)’ project of TIB and raising awareness among the Young Professionals Against Corruption (YPAC) members about their role, an orientation programme was held on 24 January 2015 at TIB conference room. Some 22 YPAC members participated in the programme.

Ms Fajila Khanom, Mr Shahazada Akram, Mr M Zakir Hossein Khan and Mr Zahidul Islam, Senior Programme Manager, TIB conducted the sessions in

the programme. An open discussion session was also held. The YPAC members raised various questions and recommended setting up an online anti-corruption platform for young professionals throughout the entire country where they can share corruption-related experience and can raise their voice against corruption at the same time. In the concluding session the YPAC members vowed to spread the anti-corruption movement in their own organizations and among all young professionals.

**CCC News**

**Patuakhali hospital committed for quality health services**

Authorities of Patuakhali’s 250 bed hospital committed to ensure transparency and accountability in quality health service delivery to patients at all levels. In an opinion sharing meeting organized by CCC Patuakhali, on 29 January 2015, Superintendent (In-Charge) of the hospital, Dr. Md. Abul Ahsan, expressed the above commitment as the chief guest of the program. The meeting focused to improve quality of services at the hospital.

In the meeting, the CCC requested the authority to take necessary measures to improve cleanliness of toilets, update medicine list in the display board, separate sitting facility for female patients, and charge accurate fees at the emergency ward. Moreover, CCC articulated the progress initiated by the authority against the earlier observations which were highly appreciated by all.

The meeting was presided over by Health Sub-committee Convener of CCC, Patuakhali Pizus



Kanti Hari. Resident Medical Officer Dr. Md. Atikur Rahman along with other officials of the hospital, CCC and Swajan members also attended and shared their views and commitments. A number of CCC, YES and YES Friends members were also present.

## Jamalpur upazila welcomes CCC Madupur for improving quality of primary education

Jamalpur upazila education authority welcomed CCC Jamalpur for their supportive contribution in improving quality primary education during a meeting on 27 January 2015 at the office of Upazilla Education Officer. Muhammad Mukhles Uddin, Upazila Primary Education Officer (UPEO) of Jamalpur Sadar Upazila expressed his concern while presiding over the meeting organized by CCC Jamalpur.

The discussion focused on the role of school management and relevant stakeholders to improve quality education and designed a yearly action plan for TIB's project BIBEC. CCC, Jamalpur planned to improve the quality of primary education sequentially in Sharifpur Govt. Primary School, Kanil Govt. Primary School and Chalapara Govt. Primary School also. Moreover, a progress review was made against earlier decisions of previous meeting held with education authority. CCC's Education Sub-committee Convener Md. Abdul Hai, CCC Members S. M. Quaid-Uz-Zaman and Sukumar Chowdhury expressed their hope that the combined effort of CCC and education authority will create an example to others to replicate.

Assistant Upazila Primary Education Officer (AUPEO), Nurunnahar Beauty thanked CCC for Mothers Gathering and mothers for pointing out the problems to the teachers and authority and for raising concern on children's study and presence as a result of which enrollment and attendance rate has increased, and the school now has a 100% pass rate which can be learning to others. UPEO Muhammad Mukhles Uddin, AUPEO of different clusters, CCC and YES members and TIB's CCC official also attended.

## Madaripur Municipality vows to resist corruption

To set Madaripur municipality as a role model for local government institutions, the City Mayor, Md. Khalid Hossain Yeard committed to resist all sorts of corruption during a meeting organized by the CCC-Madaripur on 15 January 2015. The opinion sharing meeting focused on increasing the quality of service for ensuring transparency and accountability in the municipality services.

In the meeting CCC, Madaripur recommended to ensure safe drinking water supply management, ensure cleanliness and direction of

public toilets, cover municipality drains, hold ward level citizen's consultation meeting, regularly manage queries in the suggestion box and organize



Face the Public Program with Municipal Authority to facilitate the culture of transparency and accountability. Mayor also asked the CCC to continue their cooperation. The meeting was presided over by CCC President Khan Md. Shahid. Councilors, Secretary of the Municipality, City Planner, other officials,

CCC, YES and Swajan members attended.

## Health Secretary inspired Satellite AI-Desk to continue at Satkhira

The Secretary of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Md. Manjurul Islam visited an Advise and Information (AI) Desk of CCC Satkhira and appreciated YES members distributing government services information to the people. The AI-Desk was set up by YES group of CCC, Satkhira in the Digital Fair-2015 organized by district administration and Access to Information Project of Prime Minister's Office from 24-26 January 2015 in Satkhira.

Various IEC materials made by TIB were displayed and distributed from the desk to approximately six hundred visitors. YES members assisted 86 citizens including 6 females in filling RTI applications to the specific authority. Among them 54 person were oriented on machine readable passport. Deputy Commissioner of Satkhira Mr. Nazmul Ahsan, CCC President Professor Abdul Hamid and other CCC members also visited the stall.

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