



Dhaka  
**YES** 2013  
conference

*Invincible Youth Shall  
Surely Resist Corruption*



## **Dhaka YES Conference 2013**

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## 1A Introduction to the YES movement



**Y**outh Engagement and Support (YES) is a movement initiated by Transparency International, Bangladesh (TIB) to engage and empower the youth of Bangladesh in the fight against one of the country's most challenging issues – that of corruption. It originated with the belief that corruption has strong links to the erosion of values which further allows the issue to persist and escalate. YES endeavors to sensitize and nurture strong ethical values of democracy, governance and anti-corruption among the young generation both at the local and national levels. The objective is to create future leaders who are both competent as well as conscientious to bring about sustainable economic and social changes in the country.



Since its inception, this anti-corruption movement has created awareness and demand at the local level as well as strived for specific results in selected areas of public service institutions, particularly health, education and local government, through the participation of the youth and engagement of various stakeholders. Through an interactive and participatory approach, YES has given voice to young citizens to share their own daily encounters with corruption and motivated them to resist and fight it at every level. Initially formed with students of Dhaka University, YES now involves 59 groups with over 4000 members actively working throughout the country. YES members are screened and hand-picked to ensure that they represent the desired level of honesty, integrity and commitment needed to comprehend the extensiveness of the issue and work together to eradicate it in all spheres of the community. At the national level TIB organizes various competitions, festivals, cultural programs to engage young people and create awareness about corruption and stimulate them to take a stand against it. Major activities feature issue-based anti-corruption campaigns at the grassroots level, awareness-raising activities, network and alliance building, various day observations, competitions/awards and workshops and trainings.

YES has gained momentum through the enthusiastic participation of growing numbers of youth and their hard work and determination has helped create ripples of change in surrounding communities. While the programs and activities carried out by YES groups continue to raise anti-corruption awareness and demand in areas where they work, it has also been able to catalyze social and institutional reforms focusing mostly on health, education, local government and public sectors.

## 1B Background of the Conference

**C**orruption is currently a global challenge, but more so for Bangladesh which has consistently ranked as one of the most corrupt countries in the world. As of December 5, 2012 Bangladesh stands as the 13th most corrupt country, and the main concern in such scenarios is the abuse of power for private gain, be it power in the government, public offices, or socio-economic power. This has, in turn, increased poverty, injustice, and prevented the expected growth and development of the country. In TIB's report last year, it was noted that the opportunity cost of this high level of corruption was the 3 % higher economic growth that could have been achieved by Bangladesh. Even more than the economic impact, this high level of corruption set the country back due to social frustration, poverty, reduced efficiency in the workforce, increase in crimes, violence and so on.



While TIB works with the government to encourage policy reforms and institutional change where necessary, it also understands the importance of cultivating values and ethics among the population from an early age to eradicate corruption. Through its Youth Engagement Support (YES) movement, TIB has been able to unite the youth and educate and motivate them in the fight against corruption. During the YES events and assembly, the members also take an oath to respect the laws of their nation, and prevent corruption both by refraining from it, and also proactively trying to resist it within the communities they reside in.



## 1C Conference Objectives & Overview

This year, YES organized its first Dhaka YES conference with all its groups titled '*Dhaka Youth Engagement and Support (YES) Conference 2013*' held at the Dhaka University Senate Building on the 21st and 22nd of August.

The purpose of this two-day event was to bring together members from all Dhaka YES groups and representatives from all YES groups from 45 CCCs, and give them the scope to discuss and share their successes and challenges. Around 400 young individuals, mostly students from Dhaka as well as other districts participated in the conference hosted by TIB. Eminent guests at the conference included, among others, Keynote Speaker Mr. Mahfuz Anam, Treasurer, Board of Trustees, TIB and Editor-in-Chief, Daily Star; Chief Guest Professor AAMS Arefin Siddique, Vice Chancellor of Dhaka University; Session Speakers Dr. Akbar Ali Khan, Former Adviser to the Caretaker Government, Mr. Anisul Haque, Deputy Editor, Daily Prothom Alo, Mr. Robaet Ferdous, Associate Professor, Dept. of Mass Communication and Journalism, DU, Mr. A.A. Munir Hasan, ICT Consultant and General Secretary, Bangladesh Open Source Network (BOSN), M.A. Mohit, President, Bangladesh Mountaineering and Trekking Club and Advocate Sultana Kamal, Executive Director, Ain o Salish Kendra and Chairperson, Board of Trustees, TIB.

The core objectives of this special event were manifold. Firstly, it intended to inspire the youth through the words of the widely respected and renowned guest speakers, and thus help them to connect with others who had faced and learned to overcome similar difficulties. Secondly, the event allowed them to share stories from their own communities with other YES members from different districts and universities, so each could learn from the other. Finally, it created a platform for the members to share their experiences and issues and seek suggestions directly from TIB and its guests. To this end, the Question/Answer sessions between YES members and the speakers after each session, was extremely effective, as it allowed them the opportunity to interact with TIB and each other. Each day put forward a different issue for the participants and guests to discuss that included: *Youth, Integrity and Leadership; Social Movement & Innovations; Media, ICT and Anti-corruption Movement; Women, Integrity and Society, Democracy, Governance and the Youth*. Guest speakers spoke on these topics sharing anecdotes and experiences from their own lives and showing how each of them had done their part to resist the cycle of corruption in the country. Fourteen Dhaka YES Groups as well as one YES Theatre Group also presented their own achievements, learning and challenges in their fight against corruption.

The ceremony opened with the national anthem of Bangladesh, followed by TIB's anti-corruption campaign theme song 'Manush Jaago' marked the beginning of the two-day event themed '***Invincible Youth Shall Surely Resist Corruption***'. Rezwan-ul-Alam, Director, Outreach and Communication, TIB gave a warm welcome address to an enthusiastic audience comprising students, educators, members of the TIB and distinguished guests. Dr. Iftekharuzzaman, Executive Director, TIB introduced the Keynote Speaker Mr. Mahfuz Anam who addressed the first session titled ***Youth, Leadership and Integrity***. Mr. Anam's inspiring and patriotic speech highlighted the need for positivity and hope amongst the youth for a better future. He emphasized on the need to love one's country in order to be able to improve it. The Chief Guest of the event Professor AAMS Arefin Siddique,

Vice Chancellor of Dhaka University was next to grace the stage and encourage the youth to learn more of their nation's history, understand the challenges ahead and enlighten themselves with knowledge to overcome all odds.

The second session titled **Social Movement and Innovation** brought forward Mr. Anisul Haque, Deputy Editor, The Daily Prothom Alo, as the session speaker. His humorous, yet moving speech full of satirical jokes and inspiring anecdotes engaged the participants and left them hopeful and proud to be part of YES. Next on stage was Mr. Robaet Ferdous, Associate Professor, Dept. of Mass Communications and Journalism, DU who gave his own perspective as to why the lingering problem of corruption remains unsolved. Using the concept of physics and philosophy to explain the power struggle in a socio-economic backdrop, Mr. Ferdous described how power in itself can lead to its abuse and give birth to corruption.

Mr. A A Munir Hasan, ICT Consultant, and General Secretary, Bangladesh Open Source Network, spoke on the third and final session of the day on **Media, ICT and Anti-Corruption**. This discussion opened its doors to a completely different dimension of corruption which involved cyber crimes and the abuse of the power of social media, the internet. Mr. Hasan addressed a bevy of questions from YES members about how the youth could protect themselves from Internet-related crimes. Many interactive videos and presentations were shown during the conference, which depicted the issues of cyber and real-life crime and corruption and the importance of standing up to it.

On the second day of the conference, a real-life role model for many YES members - Mr M. A. Mohit, President of the Bangladesh Mountaineering and Trekking Club joined the conference. As the only Bangladeshi to have climbed to the peak of Mt. Everest twice, Mr. Mohit showed real-life footage and photographs of himself and his crew during their Everest heist and spoke of his experience. He finished his speech with the encouraging words that everyone had an Everest in their own life and field of work, and with hard work and determination they could surely overcome those obstacles just like he had.

The 15 different YES groups of Dhaka then gave their annual presentations, comprising of their best moments of success in regards to spread awareness about corruption, along with the challenges they met, and the lessons they learned.

Ms. Selina Hossain, Secretary General, Board of Trustees then spoke on the next topic of the day titled **Women, Integrity, and Society**. Ms. Hossain discussed how women have been the victims of corruption in the past, and how they will continue to suffer unless they take a stand against it. Drawing on examples of female protagonists like Pritilota – one of the women who had resisted the British colonial rule – Ms. Hossain encouraged the women to stand up for their rights and be empowered.

In the final session - **Democracy, Governance and the Youth** – Dr. Akbar Ali Khan, former Advisor to the caretaker government spoke to the participants about how the youth would be instrumental in bringing about positive changes to the country through courage and passion. Advocate Sultana Kamal, Executive Director of Ain o Salish Kendra and Chairperson, Board of Trustees, TIB who could not be present at the conference, expressed her support for the YES members and their cause through a video message that was shown at the conference. TIB shared its own presentation and the session came to a close with a speech by Dr. Sumaiya Khair, Deputy Executive Director, TIB. In the inspiring words of Ms. Khair, *'There's still time. Reach out for your fellow YES members today, and together you can be the change this country needs.'*

### Welcome Address by Rezwan-ul-Alam

Director, Outreach and Communication  
Transparency International, Bangladesh (TIB)



Mr. Rezwan-ul-Alam extended warm greetings to all in attendance, stressing the need and aim to eradicate corruption. He welcomed the Chief Guest, Dr. A.A.M.S Arefin Siddiqui, Vice Chancellor of Dhaka University and Mr. Mahfuz Anam, the Keynote Speaker and Treasurer, Board of Trustees, TIB and Chief Editor of The Daily Star. He also greeted the international guests from Bangkok, India and Norway as well as fellow TIB members, journalists and others.

Mr. Alam recalled the year 2006 when the YES Movement first started with 6 groups within Dhaka and a few outside and noted that there were now 14 YES groups in Dhaka. The purpose of the event, he stated, was to bring together all the members of YES and introduce them to each other as well as the Speakers. He encouraged everyone to participate and contribute to the sessions.

Mr. Alam emphasized that TIB had taken up such a program to engage the youth since they are not only the future, but also the present and would soon take over the helm of politics of governance. Quoting from the National Anthem, “*Tomar bodon khani molin hole ami noyon jole bhashi*” Mr. Alam stressed that any step forward must be taken bearing in mind that the country’s well being should in no way be compromised. He offered his best to Dhaka YES and concluded his welcome address by once again addressing all the guests in attendance.

“**The youth are not only the future, but the present.**”

### Introduction of Mahfuz Anam by Dr. Iftekharuzzaman

Executive Director, TIB



Dr. Iftekharuzzaman commenced enthusiastically by asking whether all were present and with him for which he received an equally enthusiastic ‘YES’ from the members present. He went on to introduce keynote speaker Mahfuz Anam and his various accomplishments and achievements including winning the All Pakistan Debate during his schooling days, being a freedom fighter in the 71 war, his work with UNESCO, his work in philanthropy and with the Bangladesh Freedom Foundation and now being the Chief Editor of The Daily Star. He highlighted how it would be impossible to narrate all that Mr. Anam had accomplished during his lifetime. He spoke of Mr. Anam’s witty and straightforward nature and observed that The Daily Star was more than just a newspaper, having promoted the youth by initiatives like rewarding O and A level candidates for excellent results. Dr. Iftekharuzzaman briefly spoke of Mr. Anam’s family, including his father Abul Mansur Ahmed, a satirist, his wife Shaheen Anam

who was head of the *Manusher Jonno Foundation* and his daughter Tahmina Anam, a published writer and winner of multiple awards in the UK. He expressed his appreciation for Mr. Anam's strong inspirational support and invited Mr. Anam to take the floor.

## Address by Key Note Speaker, Mahfuz Anam

Treasurer, Board of Trustees, TIB &  
Editor, The Daily Star



Mahfuz Anam began humbly, thanking everyone for the warm welcome. Stating his preference for conversation rather than speeches, Mr. Anam started by speaking on the topic he believed was of paramount importance – ‘*desh*’ (country). Mr. Anam’s motivational and patriotic speech encouraged the need for the youth of the country to rethink their roles and contribution to the country. If a person’s talent was of no use to the country, said Mr. Anam, then it was hardly of any use. He considered his role as a freedom fighter and a journalist his biggest achievements in life even though he had plenty of experience working abroad. In his words, true respect is only earned when you get respect from the country and its people and called upon the youth to think about how they could help the country, rather than how the country was helping them. Instead of bickering or blaming others or the government about the problems in the country, Mr. Anam emphasized on the need to instead focus on the bad habits that people cultured within themselves and improve on that. ‘*Desh comes first*’, he emphasized again, urging the youth to not feel helpless, but empowered to do their part. “Just start with your own change and the world will change with you,” stated Mr. Anam and invited everyone to recall something they had done which they had felt was a good deed and that they felt proud of. Any good deed – from being grateful to parents and teachers to helping others – was relevant. In his words, Mr. Anam said that by simply take a stand against spitting on the roads, one could be patriotic to the nation.

“Your individual qualities have no meaning if you cannot use them for your country.”

Mr. Anam shared a personal anecdote where as a student he received a yearly scholarship of Tk. 1700 from the Dhaka University. One day, he accidentally left his scholarship money behind on a rickshaw, and to his surprise, the rickshaw puller came back a little while later to give him his money. The reason the rickshaw puller returned with his money was simply the fact that Mr. Anam had addressed him with a deferential ‘*apni*’. No one, the rickshaw puller admitted, had referred to him in that way before. Mr. Anam used this example to show participants how by being nice to others one could contribute significantly towards changing the country.

Moving onto politics and the nation, Mr. Anam questioned whether the youth felt they were ready to shoulder the responsibility of being leaders of tomorrow. “We need democracy, freedom, good laws and regulation and their proper implementation in order to create a good country,” said Mr. Anam. “Learn what makes a country work and nurture yourself. We know there is corruption everywhere but what is our role in it?” He mentioned that even cheating in an exam was a form of corruption and urged everyone to shun any form of corruption to create a movement to end it.

Referring to another common complaint among Bangladeshis about how the country lacked everything, Mr. Anam pointed out how, even with all its shortcomings, the country had much to be proud of – such as its wealth of population, being the second largest RMG exporters in the world, building high quality ships for EU nations, and not suffering any famine since 1970. He stressed on the need to focus on the positives and not only the negatives for there to be confidence and progress. Mr. Anam related his experience in Paris where his Palestinian friends had expressed their amazement at the fact that Bangladesh had been liberated in 9 months, while their country was still at war after 70 years. He expressed his gratitude and appreciation for the greenery in a country that was lush with crops, fruits and vegetation, where there is no dearth of water or food and urged

transforming the hand that begs to the hand that creates. He spoke of how in the present age, one could be part of a global community simply through outsourcing and sitting at one's computer. According to Mr. Anam, it was important to have adequate skills and abilities to be leaders. One could lead through any kind of positive impact – be it as a mother, doctor, teacher etc. He concluded by saying that corruption and bribes are like termites which eat the tree from within so that even though the tree looked perfectly fine, it would crumble and topple over one day. He encouraged the youth to focus on the positives, pursue their dreams and acquire the ability to make them come true to conclude his address.

### **Address by Chief Guest, Dr. A A M S Arefin Siddiqui**

Vice Chancellor, Dhaka University



Thanking all the participants and TIB for the program, Dr. Arefin Siddiqui applauded Mr. Anam on his inspiring speech. He then spoke at length about Sheikh Mujib's assassination on 15 August 1975, stating that Sheikh Mujib was supposed to visit the students at Dhaka University on the day of his assassination but could never make it. He recalled the attacks on Sheikh Hasina on 21 August 2004, expressing his condolences for all the victims and strongly proclaiming that the killing of innocents is the worst form of corruption. Dr. Arefin emphasized on the rights of the youth to dream, which, he opined, is as important as their right to education, health care etc. He acquiesced with Mr. Anam on looking at the positives and working on the negatives, stating that scientifically it was important to look at the surpluses and scarcities and fulfill the scarcities and nurture the surpluses. A glass half empty is always full, said Dr. Arefin, just with two different fluids; and this is the mentality he encouraged the youth to culture in order to move forward. He mentioned that TIB is the bridge that can propel the youth towards a better nation, but it is the youth's responsibility to improve.

“  
**The right to dream is as important as any other basic right.**  
”

Dr. Arefin emphasized the need of the youth to truly love their country and know as much about it as possible to fight corruption. If corruption was truly hated universally, he speculated, how could it possibly persist? He concluded by thanking TIB and once more drawing attention to the killing of innocents and offering his condolences for the victims of the 2004 grenade assault.

## YES members ask **Mahfuz Anam**

- 1 You spoke of skills that the youth must have. Specifically what are the skills you are referring to?
- 2 How can we overcome some of the barriers to change?
- 3 How long do you think it will take for us to achieve a country free of corruption?
- 4 What can be done to improve the conditions of the farmers and the RMG workers?
- 5 Why is it that we are unable to get proper support from higher authorities for youth-related issues?
- 6 How can we overcome our lack of patience?
- 7 How do we get the encouragement to dream?
- 8 The scope to fighting corruption is limited. How can we overcome that?
- 9 What can be done to address the ethnic minority in Chittagong and ensure their safety? I come from the hill tracks in Chittagong where recently, four of our villages were burnt down, and we are scared to even go to school.

## **Mahfuz Anam's Response**

Responding to the question regarding the problems faced by ethnic minority groups, Mr. Anam expressed his support, stating that the Daily Star would certainly support the cause. He condemned the burning of the villages and urged the students to conquer their fears. Elaborating further, Mr. Anam stressed the importance of overcoming one's weaknesses. He pointed at the perks that corruption offered – easy access to money and better jobs – which make it a frustrating battle. Often, he stated, one had to sacrifice their children's happiness by not being corrupt in Bangladesh. However, he noted that people like Hitler and Stalin eventually did not succeed. "The struggle must go on," insisted Mr. Anam, "no matter how tough it may seem to be."

Mr. Anam spoke of how every great person in society had started off as one lone individual with the firm decision to persevere regardless of the adversities. He urged the need to learn to freely appreciate others and feel joy at their success, without bearing any personal grudges. Metaphorically Mr. Anam described how dreams would not resemble a lushly carpeted flight of steps, but rather would be a mountain, where one would need to pull oneself up with a rope after shooting high to hook a point. He encouraged the youth to aim for the peak. He concluded with an apology for not being able to answer all the questions properly due to time constraints and urged everyone to continue with their good work before taking their leave.



“ **The Struggle Must Go On.** ”

## YES Members Ask **Dr. Iftekharuzzaman, Executive Director, TIB**

- 1** We, who are trying to fight corruption, are very few in number. There was once an anti-corruption bureau, which had the power to punish the people in Government as well for any wrong-doing. At one point however, this bureau was shut down possibly because it was a threat to the Government. What does TIB say about this?
- 2** How can honest people work under corrupt senior officials? How can they be expected to work without being involved in corruption, when their seniors are corrupt themselves?
- 3** I gave a good admission exam and started dreaming about all the possibilities, but when I went back to Rajshahi, I found out that the question papers had been leaked. I was asked to come back to Dhaka, and sit for the exam again, but financially this was not possible for me. How is this fair? I had to pay additional money for my ride back here, more than what it was supposed to be, so I could fulfill my dream. I had to unwillingly get involved in corruption, and yes the end result gets me nothing.
- 4** My teacher was corrupt. We wrote an anonymous letter, but very soon, everyone knew about it, and I was forced to apologise to the teacher. We've been fighting against this in a fair way as students for the last 2 years but since we do not have political backup, we're not being able to do much. What should I do now? Should I become affiliated with a political student group just for this?
- 5** As a YES member, when we come across small scale corruption, we are advised by our seniors to only respond with a lecture and set them back to whatever they were doing. Can we not use our legal system to set examples and create deterrence? Otherwise our policies are not being very effective in fighting corruption.
- 6** Why does TIB only release anonymous statistics about people who are corrupt and thus rank Bangladesh globally as a corrupt nation? Instead, why can't we release their names in public, via media, with proof of their corruption to socially humiliate them and deter them from future corruption?

### **Dr. Iftekharuzzaman's** Response

Dr. Iftekhar acknowledged the questions, promising to look into them and try and find solutions for them. He then ushered everyone to stand up to take the oath against anti-corruption before concluding Session 1.

## Session 2 SOCIAL MOVEMENT & INNOVATIONS

The session commenced with a series of internationally recognized inspirational videos. The Speaker, Mr. Anisul Haque, Deputy Editor, Daily Prothom Alo was introduced by Mr. Rezwan-ul-Alam, Director, Communication and Outreach, TIB, as a highly respected and well versed individual who had pursued and excelled at literature in all its forms. He praised Mr. Anisul Haque on his effective ideas to tackle corruption through various social movements and innovations.

### Address by Session Speaker Anisul Hoque

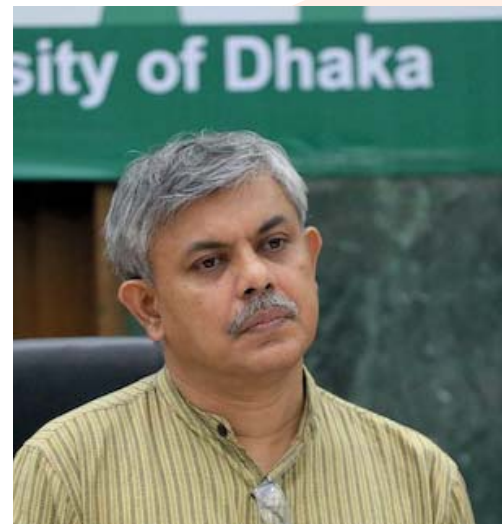
Deputy Editor,  
The Daily Prothom Alo

Mr. Anisul Haque, Deputy Editor of Daily Prothom Alo, engaged the participants with his humorous speech, using the metaphor of a monkey piloting an aircraft with the staff fast asleep and asking what would happen if the drivers of the country are asleep. Lamenting the country's status as one of the most corrupt of countries, Mr. Haque noted how corruption adversely affected the innocent. He described the dangerous traffic situation, holding unskilled, uneducated drivers with illegally acquired licenses responsible. He stressed on the need for drivers to have a certain level of education for better understanding of the value of life.

Shifting to the positives, Mr. Haque highlighted the fact that more than 90% of children are currently attending primary school and if they continued on till high school then everyone, including farmers, fishermen and drivers would be educated. He also gave the example of his district (Rangpur) where most houses are now unaffected by famine and have proper tin-shed roofs. He noted the contribution of the Jamuna Bridge in bringing about positive changes through better communication and emphasized the need for the Padma Bridge to be built for greater development and easier trade.

"If you tell yourself that you will not take a bribe, you will succeed" Mr. Haque asserted, acknowledging that it was far more difficult not to give bribes in the country, as it was often a necessity. Focusing further on the many positive developments in the country, Mr. Haque spoke of the five people who had climbed the Everest, the abundance of properly constructed buildings, and the substantial foreign reserve. He described the people as adaptable and quick to learn and observed that in spite of the immense population, the farmers continued to effectively produce enough food through new and innovative means.

Mr. Haque opined that with majority of children now being educated, in 20 years Bangladesh would be where Malaysia is now. When that time arrived, today's youth would be taking the lead and decide which way to steer the country. He attributed the country's lack of discipline to its lack of preparation and noted that with 60 million youth population, a little good from every person would accumulate to a lot. He exclaimed that simple facebook statuses about hating corruption might spread and a leader might be born out of it. "In fact, it will happen," He asserted, urging members to never feel inferior.



“ Small solutions can solve a much bigger problem. ”

Acknowledging the effects of darkness and negativity, Mr. Haque called on everyone to 'make the light viral' instead of the dark. He sadly attributed lack of harmony as one of the nation's biggest flaws and remarked upon the need to learn to express ourselves and allow others to express themselves as well. Mr. Haque reminded that everyone had equal rights and urged students to keep in mind that every child was born with the hope of being an honest human being and not to be corrupt. Personifying the country as a second mother, he urged everyone to collectively strive to succeed and fulfill their duties. He concluded by acknowledging the good work that was in progress and his belief that the tide would continue in the right direction and help the country prosper.



### Address by Session Moderator Robaet Ferdous,

Assoc. Professor, Dept. of Mass Communication and Journalism, University of Dhaka

Mr. Robaet Ferdous, Associate Professor at Dhaka University proceeded to break down social movement as a gathering which is mobile and innovations as new thoughts and ideas. He quoted from the book [Physics and Politics](#) that one of the greatest pains of humankind was the pain of a new idea which seemed like a paradox. He explained however that only the rich could afford innovations. So the challenge was to extend innovations to the masses. An author may die after he had written a novel, but the readers get inspired, and multiple versions of that novel could be created afterwards with vastly different interpretations. Thus, as he stated, 'they are dramatically empowered'. The protests in Egypt were progressive, but the end result was not desirable. Hence, he noted that social movements might not always yield in success which was dependant on both intention and implementation.

“**The challenge is to make innovations available to the poor.**”

“There is dominant discourse and counter discourse in everything,” noted Mr. Ferdous, stating that timing was vital for any social movement. He noted how all humans are naturally champions from their very conception. It better to try and fail, he said, rather than be lazy and unproductive and if one couldn't beat time, then time would get the better of them. He concluded by stating to the members that they all had the innate ability but needed to nurture it in order to succeed.

# Q & A session

**Yes Member (YM) :** A doctor is threatened with a transfer if he doesn't resort to taking or giving bribes. What can he do?

**Robaet Ferdous (RF):** The doctor is advised not to resort to bribes. How many doctors can you transfer? At one point, if you're strong enough, you will succeed.

**YM:** Is the freedom fighter quota just?

**RF:** Most quotas are needed, but this can be debated.

**YM:** When lawmakers themselves break law, what do we do?

**RF:** If you haven't broken laws and are unfairly treated, then you must protest and make the incident public. Law enforcers cannot think they are beyond the law and cannot break the law themselves.

**YM:** How can we save the intellect that is dying through corruption?

**RF:** When you do good work for the country, you are contributing to making a country better. This must be realized. You are serving your country when you do good work. This belief will help us overcome this problem.

**YM:** Why is the condition of farmers not improving even though they're helping to make the entire country better off?

**RF:** If we give a solution right now, it cannot be implemented. We do need to think about our actions so that in the future, farmers too can be incorporated into these actions and everyone can benefit.

**YM:** Is it my fault that I am an ethnic minority, and thus be given less rights?

**RF:** Our Constitution prioritizes Bengalis and Muslims. We need to change this in order to take everybody's rights into account.

**YM:** What do we do when our seniors do not listen to our queries properly?

**RF:** Seniors will always put barriers and the youth must continue to battle through these barriers.

**YM:** Can we stay without giving bribes?

**RF:** If you really are strong enough and try, then yes, you definitely can.

**YM:** If a country is a vehicle, and the Government the drivers, then what are we?

**RF:** Your task is vital yourself, and you will need time. Good people in this country need time to get popular and relevant.

**YM:** What can the youth do to help the unrest?

**RF:** As Socrates told Plato, do your own duty. Do whatever it takes to be as good. You need to be able to cherish life and gain sensitivity. This will come gradually, but when it does happen, it will be incredible.

## Session 3 MEDIA, ICT AND ANTI-CORRUPTION MOVEMENT



### Address by Mr A A Munir Hasan

ICT Consultant and General Secretary,  
Bangladesh Open Source Network (BOSN)

Mr. Munir Hasan, ICT Consultant and General Secretary, Bangladesh Open Source Network began with a video depicting Bangladesh and commenced with his speech on a positive note commending the fact that we are managing a country near impossible to manage and hence not consider ourselves a backward nation. He observed that we have great strengths and a sharp and innovative population, but unfortunately those strengths are being used negatively. Mr. Hasan pointed to the powerful weapon of technology at the youth's disposal and stressed the need to properly use it against corruption. He urged the members to be patient and persistent in pursuit of their goals, "even if it means you have to disturb other parties to claim what is rightfully yours."

"There were 10,000 cameras in the year 2,000 but now there are 25 million cameras in 2013. Can we not use those cameras positively?" queried Mr. Hasan. He stated that an innovation driven by good intent was wonderful but finishing the movement with satisfactory results was equally important, urging members to not give in to exhaustion halfway. Mr. Hasan reported that Facebook currently had 54 lakh users in Bangladesh and noted their importance in the upcoming elections. He discussed the misuse of technology and stressed the need to properly implement its usage in our daily activities, since it is the future, just like the youth. He encouraged the youth to occupy the net and spread the word to bring the change quoting Gandhi who said, 'the change must be you.' He pointed out that Nelson Mandela's house was the size of his living room, but the enormity of his contribution is what sets him apart and that should be an inspiration for all.

Recalling his own contributions, Mr. Hasan spoke of the challenge of increasing female enrolment in Shahjalal university in Sylhet where he succeeded in increasing this by 10% by introducing the mechanism of applying online. He drew attention to the power of media and ICT and stated that many people now can express themselves and to a bigger crowd than ever before. He urged everyone to realize the power of ICT and also enjoy and live life, without overlooking one's responsibility to fight corruption.

“ We must learn to complete initiatives and not give up half-way. ”

## Q & A session

### YES members Ask **Mr. Munir Hasan**

**YM:** What can be done regarding all the fake accounts in Facebook of girls?

**MH:** You must report to Facebook with proof of your identity and tell your friends to report the fake account.

**YM:** Can there be a software which filters content on the internet so that children are protected from it?

**MH:** These kinds of software are there, but the important thing to note is that the barrier that has been created between parent and child must be destroyed so that children will not need to resort to such means.

**YM:** How can one avoid hacking?

**MH:** Changing your password regularly and keeping a note of your account properly will ensure your account doesn't get hacked.

**YM:** What do freelancers do when they are not getting paid properly?

**MH:** They are dependent on you, and you need to realize this. Ask for payment promptly and in installments so that they cannot cheat you out of what is rightfully yours.

**YM:** EVMs are used for elections, but how reliable are they?

**MH:** They shorten the time taken for elections greatly and are a valuable asset. Furthermore, they can always be checked to see if they're functioning properly

**YM:** How do you protect your published writing online?

**MH:** There is a digital signature option which you can use. Also, when you publish, you should do it from your authorized account, or scan the document and sign it, so that any kind of fraud can be detected.

**YM:** What do girls do when their edited pictures are all over the web?

**MH:** Remember firstly that you are not to blame for it. Do not pay heed to it. Also, there is a strong likelihood it was done by one of your close friends, so choose your friends wisely. We are working on a forum where you can report such incidences.

**YM:** How do we know an outsourcing website is authentic?

**MH:** You must check the website carefully, if they are asking you to pay anything, then it is a scam. You are supposed to get paid, not the other way round.

**YM:** Why is there a recent trend of needing to verify Facebook accounts?

**MH:** Verification is important in recent times due to other people trying to breach into your account.

**YM:** Why is the internet speed so slow and why is it so expensive?

**MH:** You have to fight for these problems. There has been nothing in Bangladesh to address these issues to the government; hence they do nothing about it. There are so many protests regarding so many issues, so why not for this?

**YM:** How can students studying in National University shorten the time needed for exam results to be published? It takes months, and we often are in the following year of education before results are published.

**MH:** The problem lies in implementation. This country takes actions without thinking about consequences. We have offered to help the authorities with these problems, but they refuse to take our help so we are helpless. However, I would urge you to be hopeful and carry on.

The session concluded with Mr. Rezwana-ul-Alam, Director, Communication and Outreach, TIB requesting Mr. Munir Hasan to help organize an anti-corruption video competition. Mr. Rezwana thanked him for his encouraging and informative words and urged all the members to follow up.

After a video compilation of the Mt. Everest climbing expedition Mr. Rezwatul-Alam, Director of Outreach and Communications, TIB introduced Mr. MA Mohit, President of the Bangla Mountaineering and Trekking Club, stating it was a proud moment for him to be able to do so, to which Mr. Mohit received a standing ovation. Mr. Rezwam further described Mr. M.A. Mohit as a man exemplified how with determination and effort, one could overcome barriers and move forward. Comparing the climbing of Mt. Everest as an uphill battle similar to that against corruption, he requested Mr. Mohit to share his experiences.

## Session 1

### Address by Mr M A Mohit

President, Bangla Mountaineering and Trekking Club

Mr. Mohit started with warm greetings to everyone and Began by describing mountain climbing as a form of extreme sports where deaths were likely. He mentioned how even though the Everest was first climbed in 1953, expeditions to reach the peak where being planned since 1885. Rather than live and eat to make money, he said, the idea was to eat and make money in order to live, noting that humans have always loved a challenge.

Mr. Mohit mentioned that there were 14 mountains over 8000m high and he had climbed three of them.

He had climbed the Everest twice, through two different routes, once in 2011 through Tibet and in 2012 through Nepal where he was also accompanied by Nishat (the first Bangladeshi woman to climb Everest). Mr. Mohit then gave a detailed account along with pictures of his expedition last year, showing all the harrowing dangers and multiple challenges one faces in attempting to scale the Everest. He mentioned the unpredictable nature of avalanches one faces, and how his team was separated and Nishat was severely injured. He applauded the mental fortitude she showed in moving forward without complaining once about her injuries and finishing the expedition.

Mr. Muhit stressed on the ability of the human body to do many things which was often impeded by lack of mental strength. He asserted that just about anything was possible if one put their mind to it. "So, how many of you want to climb the Everest," he asked? Many hands were raised in response, to which he exclaimed that each person has such an Everest in their lives in their profession, homes, society, etc. He stated that everyone could reach the peak in their own fields, and overcome the Everest of problems to achieve and fulfill their dreams. For this, he stated, one required courage as well as the ability to discern between good and bad values. True courage, opined Mr. Muhit, comes from the ability to refrain from bad habits; from not smoking, doing drugs, abusing women, resisting corruption etc.

Mr. Muhit gravely discussed how he personally believed that someone who followed and practiced corruption all their lives could not possibly change at a later stage of life. He likened it to brushing one's teeth, a daily habit which if nurtured for years cannot suddenly be forgotten overnight. However, he mentioned the next generation as being able to overcome it due to not being habituated to it, and concluded by declaring that everyone was duty-bound to help the country prosper to the best of one's ability, and do so by following the right path.



There is an Everest to climb for each one of you.





All 14 YES groups and the Dhaka YES Theatre Group from Dhaka presented their progress over the past year with great eagerness and enthusiasm. These groups included:

Dhaka YES 1(Dhaka University)  
Institute of Social Welfare and Research (Dhaka University)  
IBAIS University  
Rokeya Hall (Dhaka University)  
Stamford University  
Uttara University  
East West University  
Bangladesh Kuwait Maitree Hall  
Institute of Education and Research (Dhaka University)  
University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh  
Fajilatunnessa Mujib Hall (Dhaka University)  
Jahangir Nagar University  
Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University  
Development Studies (Dhaka University)  
Dhaka Yes Theater Group

The presentations revealed work undertaken by the YES Groups in several areas, some common to majority of the groups and some unique to particular groups. The presentations also brought forth the numerous challenges faced in these undertakings. Over the last year, through their various achievements and the challenges they'd faced in the path to success, the YES groups acknowledged that they had all gained valuable learning. These achievements, challenges and learning are outlined below:

### ACHIEVEMENTS

- ▶ Raised awareness about the Right To Information (RTI) Act
- ▶ Gained knowledge about using ICT tools to fight corruption and set up many Facebook groups to showcase it
- ▶ Distributed of warm clothes to the poor
- ▶ Established a network with fellow YES groups
- ▶ Assisted in the rehabilitation of Rana Plaza victims in Savar
- ▶ Generated awareness regarding corruption and increasing interest to support TIB
- ▶ Set up information desks during various admission tests to aid the applying students
- ▶ Organized a multitude of events and activities to promote anti-corruption activities, including exhibitions, competitions, game shows, seminars, films, plays, wall magazines, workshops, cultural programs and study circles

## CHALLENGES

- ▶ Lack of support from academic institutions
- ▶ Political Unrest
- ▶ Internal struggles and unrest
- ▶ Cancellation of intended activities
- ▶ The difficulty of balancing education with work
- ▶ Communication barrier with TIB
- ▶ Time management and punctuality
- ▶ Limited financial support given to the YES activities
- ▶ Lack of space to rehearse activities such as dramas
- ▶ Quality of YES members' activity
- ▶ Lack of dedication among YES members
- ▶ Lack of initiatives
- ▶ Taking activities beyond campus premises

## LEARNINGS

- ▶ Increased patriotism and sense of morality
- ▶ Increased team work, responsibility and coordination
- ▶ The need for cost effective budgeting during programs
- ▶ Establishing a professional attitude
- ▶ The need to innovate and come up with new ideas to fight corruption
- ▶ The need to reduce dependency on TIB
- ▶ The stress on patience and perseverance in order to succeed
- ▶ Increased confidence to raise voice against corruption



## **YES Members Ask Mr. Iftekharuzzaman, ED, TIB after The presentations:**

- 1.** Students backed by political families instantly get residence while we have to wait months. How can this be resolved?
- 2.** Can there be a group for Yes members who are over the age limit?
- 3.** Why were no representatives from outside of Dhaka selected to give presentations?
- 4.** Why do people say that TIB itself is corrupt and if I am asked that question, how am I supposed to respond?
- 5.** Where does TIB get funds from? We often find TIB accused of getting their funding from corrupt organizations so what does TIB say about that?
- 6.** People often associate giving women rights to giving them all the power. How can this misconception be addressed?
- 7.** It seems to me that only Dhaka members are improving and outside representatives are lagging behind. We don't compare with the Dhaka members, but can we not be taught the ways to present confidently so that we too could improve?
- 8.** How can members from outside Dhaka expect to learn anything when we are being treated as outcasts by some of the Dhaka members?
- 9.** Our seniors often do not aid us completely but rather mistreat us. How can this be tackled?
- 10.** We often need money to reward students for their efforts, but often there is a lack of funds often to do so properly. Would TIB help to get further funds?
- 11.** How can TIB help in identifying real freedom fighters from the fake ones?
- 12.** We have seen in TIB's reports that the police rank very high on corruption. Yet, the police deny this claim, which implies TIB reports false information. What has TIB done to address this?
- 13.** Why is everything so politically biased?
- 14.** Should we not try and make the primary leaders and officers non-corrupt? In that case, their subordinates would also be non corrupt.

15. Why the conference is on weekdays when TIB knows our education could be hampered as a result of it?
16. Can TIB do anything so that each ministry has an anti corruption branch to monitor and report their activity?
17. What according to TIB makes a successful program?
18. When a corrupt individual does not even confess to his crimes, how can we expect him to better himself for the future?
19. Can't the handouts TIB provides be given online instead of printed out? This would help spread the word better and also reach the outskirts of Dhaka.
20. Why do we invite and glorify individuals at TIB events who are corrupt themselves?
21. Will TIB ever work regarding the power and electricity of the nation?



## Dr. Iftekharuzzaman's Response

Dr. Iftekharuzzaman, in his response, admitted to a lack of communication, whether due to shortcomings by TIB or the members. He urged everyone to read TIB's documents carefully as most of the answers were there. Regarding the funding, he stated that their funding comes from International sources from the UK, Switzerland, Sweden and Denmark. He said TIB was always ready to accept mistakes, but also urged members to not be swayed by outside parties in their understanding of TIB. He pointed out that there would always be people who would try and manipulate members against TIB. He stated that all findings of TIB are defended rigorously in every possible way. "TIB is threatened all the time, but the logic and scientific reasoning that drives the organization and its studies allow it to be able to defend itself against all detractors," Stated Dr. Iftekharuzzaman. However, he acknowledged that due to these studies being part of social science, there would always be a margin of error and not much could be done to rectify that.



“ You have to make the people in power accountable for their actions. ”

Dr. Iftekhar went on to discuss the recent claim by BNP that the majority of the citizens were satisfied with the police. He asserted that while that is the dream one should have, our reality is very different, and that TIB is not here to oppose the government as many may believe but to strengthen the government by removing the thorns of corruption from it. Dr. Iftekhar stated that starting from the top to remove corruption is indeed important. However, it was not easy and the only way to fix it is to gather in number and protest as one. "You must highlight to them that being corrupt will eventually get them punished and show them the legal documents which outline these facts. You have to make the people in power accountable for their actions."

The TIB ED observed that there are times when one is unable to fight corruption and is completely helpless. "People are forced to pay bribes for their pensions, for their certificates, etc. because it is their need and they cannot do without them so they are helpless." He acknowledged that the members have to work alongside studies and said that education is primary and they should never compromise their education for TIB. However, he remarked that they have to make time and work in between. He said that other members and TIB should work harder to bridge the gaps and work better for the future. He hoped that people outside Dhaka were not angry and explained that this conference was intended for Dhaka YES, but the intention was to create a platform for other members to interact, communicate and express their views as well. The intention was to improve communication and not cause a rift to form.

Responding to the concern of the members from outside Dhaka of being treated as outcasts, Dr. Iftekhar stated that those showing disrespect were letting down all of YES and TIB with their actions and he was extremely saddened by this unexpected news. Regarding TIB's work, Dr. Iftekharuzzaman stated that he expected TIB to be involved regarding the nation's power crisis but not as a primary agenda. He also said that the identification problem of freedom fighters is not something they directly work with and falls outside the purview of TIB's work.

Dr. Iftekharuzzaman urged everyone to read the oath carefully to understand its meaning. He stated that only when the intention of an event is realized and absorbed by the target audience can the event be successful. Budgets and cost effectiveness have little to do with a successful program. He concluded his remarks with further encouragement to the students to continue on with their good work.

## Session 2 WOMEN, INTEGRITY, AND SOCIETY

### Moderator: Professor Sumaiya Khair,

Deputy Executive Director, TIB

Professor Sumaiya Khair introduced Ms. Selina Hossain, Secretary General, Board of Trustees, TIB as a renowned writer who had written books in a multitude of fields, with her work being translated in various languages and recognized with numerous awards. She welcomed Professor Sumaiya to speak on women's integrity and corruption and how women are more often than not victims of corruption and how they can help fight to create a corruption free society.

### Ms. Selina Hossain

Eminent Litterateur & Secretary General, Board of Trustees, TIB

Ms. Selina Hossain, an eminent litterateur and Secretary General, Board of Trustees, TIB started enthusiastically by expressing her love for the youth and their strength and ability to create the brighter future regardless of gender. She broke down integrity into honesty and commitment, explaining through a poem by 'Khana' how a king was unsuccessful if his people were left dissatisfied. "You must keep your word," she said. "You need your actions to reflect your words."

Ms. Hossain recalled how Pythagoras assigned identities to men and women, and restricted women to only the earth and specific earthly duties. She discussed how women have had to fight for their rights throughout history, starting from the right to education to the right to vote, nothing has come easy for them. Ms. Hossain passionately claimed that if women were allowed more power and empowerment, plenty of problems that persisted in the world would be abolished. Women had the ultimate power to nurture children. According to UNESCO, children up to 3 years have the ability to take in most knowledge and thus, she explained, women had a big hand in shaping the future. She spoke of Khudiram and Pritilota, aged only 18 and 21 respectively who happily gave their lives to fight the British. She expressed the belief that Khudirams and Pritilotas are needed in our fight against corruption in today's generation, to be able to successfully fight corruption.



“ You need your actions to reflect your words. ”

## Questions asked by YES members to **Ms. Selina Hossain**

1. If girls and boys are equal, why are there separate seats for women in buses?
2. Why are girls always seen as different entities?
3. What can we do to change the idea that women are secondary and are unable to do the things that men can?
4. What can YES do to stop Hefazot Islam's idea that women don't need to study?
5. What can be done to stop the negative influence of Hindi serials?
6. When I protest against eve teasing, the boys all gather and say that if the other girls aren't complaining, why are you getting bothered by it? What do I do?
7. Girls in the hill tracts are lagging behind in every arena. Is there a solution to this?
8. How can we stop the objectification of women in today's advertisements? Is this an objectification or the woman's independence to do what she feels?
9. How can we convince our guardians to allow women to join YES?
10. Why are we still a patriarchal society even though our principal leaders are all women?
11. There is eve teasing even here at the Senate hall at this very conference. We've come to be friends here, yet, this is what we get. How can we overcome this problem when things like this happen?
12. I've had an incident where a woman sought my attention, yet blamed me afterwards for teasing her. What do men do in such circumstances?



## Selina Hossain's Response

Selina Hossain in her general response to the questions from the participants discussed laws which do not help our women enough. She stated that the primary problem is our mindsets which need to change to allow man and woman to coexist perfectly. The ones who try and achieve that mindset are very few in number. Eve teasing, she affirmed, is a social problem and we needed to address it collectively. If that boy who teased the girl today was opposed by others and punished, then that would be one less eve teaser. She acknowledged that humans cannot be controlled; they have emotions and plenty of negatives. It is necessary to accept that and work on the negatives and change our point of view so that our children in the future can be rid of this negativity, she remarked. Giving the example of Oishee, a teenage girl who was recently reported to be involved in the killing of her parents, she said that perhaps proper nurturing and care could have prevented the incident altogether, and urged stronger bonds to be formed in order to tackle the barriers to success.

Professor Sumaiya further addressed the questions after the departure of Ms. Selina Hossain. She urged the youth to have the courage to be able to make the change. She observed that we are not necessarily ready to take the entire burden that is upon us, but that we must persevere. She stated the importance of stopping this man and woman debate and be human centric, stressing we are born as equals. Society, social institutes, families, upbringing, media and all related social reasons are factors that contribute towards the inequality, said Professor Sumaiya, emphasizing the need to keep this in mind when going forward.

## Session 3 DEMOCRACY, GOVERNANCE AND YOUTH



### Moderator: Dr Syed Manzoorul Islam,

Department of English, University of Dhaka & Member, Board of Trustees, TIB

Dr. Syed Manzoorul Islam, Professor, Department of English, University of Dhaka and also a Trustee Member of TIB acknowledged the need for democracy, but noted that we aren't in a good position with democracy. He expressed his dissatisfaction at the current government's inability to live up to the trust the youth showed in them during the elections. He mentioned that it was his good fortune to serve as a teacher and spend time amidst the youth unlike many of his fellow peers who were frustrated with work. He then proceeded to introduce Dr. Akbar Ali Khan as not only one bearing the title of an Adviser to the Caretaker Government but a man who consistently thought about the country and how it could be improved. Dr. Islam lauded Dr. Akbar Ali Khan for being among those who can make a difference, and continuing to act as a driving force in the field of economics and finance before inviting Dr. Akbar Ali Khan to take the stage.



### Dr Akbar Ali Khan

Former Adviser to the Caretaker Government

Dr. Akbar Ali Khan greeted everyone and spoke frankly of how, without a government, there would be anarchy with the rich and powerful taking away all the rights of the poor. Thus, he claimed that a government is needed for which a nation is needed. Through an old Chinese tale about Confucius, Dr. Khan remarked that in today's generation the youth themselves must become a natural force which drives away corruption. He noted how human civilization has persisted for thousands of years without coming close to achieving a perfect government. However, according to Dr. Khan, Democracy was the most ideal among all of them at this point. He noted that unlike an authoritarian government which would have an indefinite time to wield power, the government could be changed by the people in democracy if it was deemed unsatisfactory. However, he noted that in order to have proper democracy, the people needed to feel empowered; they needed to feel that they too were making a contribution. "Bangladesh may be facing steady growth rates but without the democratic ideologies, this growth is meaningless. It addresses nothing of where and how that additional wealth is being distributed, and if the poor continue to suffer while the rich continue to prosper, then there is no point of this growth." He stated that only if the ones in need were helped would the progress be of actual legitimacy.

“ There is no use being old wine in a new bottle. ”

Dr. Khan expressed his hope that the youth would be a tremendous source of strength that had the courage to step forward and make things happen. "The aged have certain factors holding them back, but the youth have the freedom to express themselves fully without being afraid." However, he exclaimed, there was no use being an 'old wine in a new bottle' and that the change must be throughout, through innovation, courage and persistence in order to be able to make the right impact.

# Q & A session

## YES members ask **Dr. Akbar Ali Khan**

**Yes Member (YM):** If I don't find a single party worthy of my vote in national elections, what can I do about it?

**Akbar Ali Khan (AAK):** You have to get involved in politics yourself if you feel no one is worthy of being voted for, and try and do so in a clean uncorrupt manner.

**YM:** How else can the youth protest and revolt besides taking to the streets?

**AAK:** Protest is not all about setting flames to property and resorting to violence. Being collective is key, come up with arguments and discussions and challenge the authorities, and the problems will eventually be solved. You revolt when you decide to change yourself.

**YM:** The government is supposed to be the strength of the nation and the heart of democracy, but all we have is the two oppositions fighting with each other and unable to work for the nation. What can be done to address this?

**AAK:** Democracy is an empty shell in our country. Our procedures, decisions, just about everything are not correctly done. To address the issues, find the problems in our Constitution and try and fix it and we can use that to help strengthen our democracy.

**YM:** We can see that our democracy is not working in the country, so is there an alternative?

**AAK:** Your words are right and there is no perfect democracy. However, the alternatives are worse because in the case of a democracy, one at least has some say. But we do need a democratization of democracy and you all have to prepare for that.

**YM:** If the Government is for the people, of the people, by the people then why are the people in power still sticking to their party identities?

**AAK:** When people take an oath to take power after elections, they say that there will be no bias in terms of the political party they come from, rather all the policies will be made equal for all. They take an oath in front of the Almighty Allah. If after that, they still remain biased, then there is little more that can be done about it.

Dr. Akbar Ali Khan addressed an allegation by a member about him making a statement in a newspaper that there was no hope for the country. He said that he had been misquoted, and acknowledged that a lot of good work had been done to further the country towards prosperity. He proudly exclaimed that history showed that there are strides being made, and the trends show that this will continue in the future.

# Closing Session

## Address by Advocate Sultana Kamal

Chairperson, Board of Trustees, TIB

Advocate Sultana Kamal, Chairperson, Board of Trustees, TIB opened her address by earnestly regretting her inability to attend the conference, stating that being unable to witness the youth discuss the means to fight corruption and work to alleviate the country from its effects was a great loss to her. She expressed her firm belief in the youth's ability to eradicate all negativity and barriers that hinder the progress of the country, and discussed how, in her youth, it was the time for the youth to go to war for independence, and this time, the immense wealth of youth would successfully fight another war – against corruption. She offered her greetings to everyone present and expressed her sincere wishes for the success of the conference. She stressed the need to succeed through the right means and concluded her address by stating her firm belief that the consequences of this conference would have tremendous impact and provide inspiration and momentum for all of our future endeavors.



“  
The Youth shall succeed in  
this war against corruption.”

Mr. Rezwan-ul-Islam, Director, Outreach and Communication Transparency International, Bangladesh introduced 5 guests, both from within Dhaka and beyond who were integral parts of TIB onto the stage to give their brief encouragement to the members and speak about their opinions regarding the conference. All of them took to the stage with enthusiasm and passion, and encouraged and inspired the students with their words, commending them on their intellect, dexterity and analytical ability while acknowledging the magnitude of TIB's work and presence. They discussed how the students were lucky to have the platform they held, and offered their support of the work they were persisting with.

## Closing Remarks

### Dr. Sumaiya Khair,

Deputy Executive Director, TIB

Dr. Sumaiya Khair wistfully noted that all good things must come to an end and recalled that there were many demands from the youth of the country and its people. She stated that if anything positive was gleaned from this conference, then it would be a positive outcome of the event. She described how there was a war, but not one of violence, but against wrongdoing, and she urged cooperation to fight this battle collectively. She looked forward to an effective engagement as YES members and expressed hope and good wishes for an even larger initiative in the future to unite even more members of YES. She concluded by wishing everyone good luck in their future endeavors.



“  
You must fight this battle  
collectively in order to  
succeed.”

## Outcomes from the Conference

Arguably the most integral and significant feature of the conference was the participation of YES members from outside Dhaka. This provided them with the opportunity of witnessing a TIB conference in Dhaka while at the same time, allowed them to express their opinions and queries directly to TIB in addition to communicating with their fellow YES members from Dhaka. There was also the opportunity for these young members to directly interact with the distinguished personalities giving their speeches. This interaction was a big step forward in encouraging and engaging the youthful members. Mahfuz Anam's assurance to use the Daily Star to aid the ethnic minority was also appreciated.

## Challenges identified, lessons learnt and ways to move forward:

Throughout the two day conference, a number of distinguished speakers spoke freely with the only aim to encourage and motivate the nearly 300 young YES members present to act out against corruption. Through the active participation of the members and the prompt replies by the personalities, it was obvious that there would spring forward multiple issues that needed to be addressed. The 14 YES members themselves presented their individual challenges, and indeed these challenges could be looked at from a broader perspective, for political unrest, internal struggles and unfair hierarchy are issues that persist in nearly every sector of Bangladesh. Some of the challenges identified can be summed up as follows:

- The communication barrier between YES members at the grass root level and the officials of TIB. Both parties readily agreed that steps needed to be undertaken immediately to quell the issue.
- Lack of communication among members in general, and specifically between Dhaka YES members and those outside.
- Minimizing the negativity and hopelessness persisting among the people in the country. To do this, participants were informed of the importance of ICT as a weapon to overcome this challenge. They had also learnt the importance of teamwork, discipline, patience and perseverance and the only way forward was to be able to integrate everything, unite and stand together as one against corruption in order to abolish it from the country.

## Issues voiced by YES members during the conference

- 1 A lack of harmony amidst the YES members in general
- 2 A communication barrier between TIB and YES members
- 3 Inability to find motivation and belief for work
- 4 An underlying feeling of inferiority and helplessness as students
- 5 Disagreement with senior management and authority which hinders work
- 6 The clear discrimination the ethnic minority face in all fields
- 7 The need for innovation and cooperation to battle corruption
- 8 An overdependence on TIB to implement tasks
- 9 TIB activities being mostly Dhaka centric with not enough attention given to other regions.
- 10 Disagreement with guardians and fellow seniors.

