

INSIDE

NATIONAL

- TIB hails HC's verdict on ACC Act
- TIB, CCCs and YES condemn attack on minorities, demand judicial probe
- TIB mourns death of Justice Habibur Rahman
- Money-driven control of global cricket will invite further risk of corruption; two-tiers system of test cricket is discriminatory – TIB
- Female YES learns to fight online harassments, vows to spread the fight

CCC NEWS

- Service Delivery Institutions Practices Accountability
- Anti-corruption Cycle Rally at Kurigram



TIB recommended close coordination among National Board of Revenue (NBR), Bangladesh Bank (BB) and Election Commission (EC) to bring the perpetrator under justice; failing to which would affect

the culture of disclosing wealth related information by public representatives. Mentionably, TIB got frustrated over ACC's stance of not to investigate into this issue on the ground that any such investigation would affect the election environment. TIB made strong demand to immediately launch investigation and take effective measures to this end.

NATIONAL

TIB welcomes ACC's move, demands to spare none

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) hailed Anti Corruption Commission's (ACC) move to probe into unusual wealth gain by Ministers of immediate the passed government and MPs of the ninth parliament. In a press statement issued on 27th January, TIB also demanded probing other similar cases and spare none. The anti-corruption watchdog also demanded cancellation of 32 (2) and 32 (ka) articles of the newly amended Anti Corruption Commission (Amendment) Act 2009 that made the ACC a toothless cat.

In a statement, TIB's Executive Director Dr Iftekharuzzaman said "Such unusual rise in wealth is anti-constitutional according to Article 20(2) of the constitution. We are happy to see that ACC has moved from its earlier position of not investigating such matters, however, ACC has to show highest level of professionalism in this regard and must not spare anyone who had gained such unusual and unexplainable wealth." "If anyone is spared, ACC must disclose the criteria of such exclusion to the public", he added.

Dr Zaman said, "Passing of the said act at the very last session of the ninth parliament that kept the provision of seeking prior approval from the government to file cases against public official is unconstitutional". "This is a clear conspiracy and stance against government's commitment to fight corruption", he observed.

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TIB hails HC's verdict on ACC Act

TIB hailed High Court's (HC) verdict on Anti-corruption Commission (Amendment) Act 2013 that declared articles 32(2) and 32(ka) unconstitutional and scrapped the provision of taking permission from the government prior to file corruption cases against public officials. It also hailed Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh for filing the writ petition that challenged legality of the controversial provisions. TIB urged the government to immediately start the process to nullify the amended act and take necessary actions as per HC guidance.

In a statement on 30th January, Executive Director of TIB Dr Iftekharuzzaman said, "The verdict has upheld people's constitutional rights to be treated equally." "These black provisions in the amended act made the ACC ineffective and created ample space for impunity against corruption." He added.

"The prime minister at the very first cabinet meeting reiterated her commitment to show zero tolerance against corruption. She also directed parliamentarians to stay away from any kind of corruption and irregularities. Now, is the time to show proof of such stance by taking adequate anti-corruption steps." the statement said.

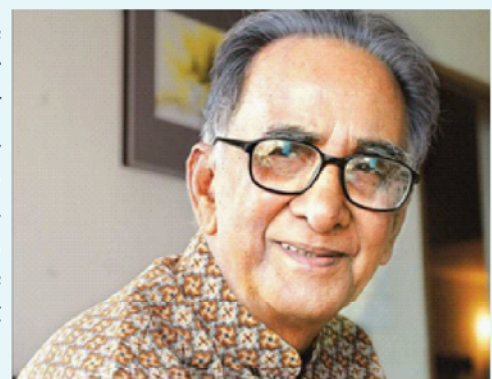
"The verdict has upheld people's constitutional rights to be treated equally. These black provisions in the amended act made the ACC ineffective and created ample space for impunity against corruption."

Earlier on 17th November, TIB in a letter urged the President not to assent to the amended Act and on 19 November reasserted the same demand to the President during a press conference saying the proposed amendments were anti-constitutional, contradictory with the electoral pledges of the government and against the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) of which Bangladesh is a party. TIB felt that this verdict will contribute in enhancing people's confidence over the judiciary.

TIB mourns death of Justice Habibur Rahman

TIB expressed profound shock at the death of former Chief Justice and Chief Advisor to the Former Caretaker Government Habibur Rahman on January 12.

In a condolence message, Dr Iftekharuzzaman, Executive Director, TIB recalled the contributions of Justice Habibur Rahman to the country and its people. He said, "The country has lost a brave and judicious person, and above all a guardian". On behalf of TIB Board of Trustees, management, Committees of Concerned Citizens (CCC), Youth Engagement & Support (YES), TIB members, YES friends, Swajon and TIB staff he recalled the contribution of Justice Habibur Rahman towards anti corruption social movement in Bangladesh.



Dr Iftekharuzzaman also conveyed deep sympathy to his bereaved family members and prayed for the eternal peace of the departed soul.

TIB, CCCs and YES condemn attack on minorities, demand judicial probe

TIB and Committee of Concerned Citizens (CCC) and youth Engagement and Support (YES) members strongly condemned attacks on minorities and urged the government to initiate judicial probe into such ill-motivated attacks to bring the perpetrators under trial, take effective steps to protect victims' lives and properties and compensate them as well. Over the last few days, the minorities came under heavy attack at several upazillas of Dinajpur, Jessore, Sathkhira, Chittagong and Thakurgaon.

In a statement on 7th January, Executive Director of TIB Dr Iftekharuzzaman said, "Attacks on the minority communities and their religious entities are against the spirit of the Liberation War and spirit of Independence. Such attacks are not acceptable at all in a country that believes in the communal harmony and equal rights of all citizens, irrespective of caste and creed." "Such ill motivated and political onslaughts and intimidation on minorities prior to parliament election may take a deadly turn if the administration, law enforcing agencies and above all political leaders do not take immediate steps to stop it," he added.

“Attacks on the minority communities and their religious entities are against the spirits of the Liberation War and Independence.”

He also said, "Even after presence of military forces, such attacks indicates failure of election commission, law enforces agencies and administration. The concerned authority did not take adequate measures to avoid repetition of politically backed attacks on minorities that took place immediate after the national election in 2001.

Different Committee of Concerned Citizens (CCC) and Youth Engagement and Support (YES) groups also organised rallies, human chain and condemning attacks on religious minority communities. TIB and CCCs YES groups demanded protection, compensations and independent judicial probe into these incidents of attacks and urged

Money-driven control of global cricket will invite further risk of corruption; two-tiers system of test cricket is discriminatory

TIB in a statement on 28th January strongly condemned the proposed two-tier system of test matches. TIB observed that the newly proposed money driven system is discriminatory and called upon the International Cricket Council (ICC) and all national cricket authorities including Bangladesh to do everything possible to prevent such self-defeating reforms.

In a press statement issued on 28 January, Dr Iftekharuzzaman, Executive Director of TIB said, "the proposed two-tiers system is highly discriminatory, conspiratorial and unjustified. It will eliminate relatively newer test playing nations like Bangladesh from the global cricketing arena, which is absolutely unacceptable".

"Nothing but a fear of being defeated by teams like Bangladesh who have already demonstrated the capacity to win against the so-called elite teams can explain such a cowardly and ill-motivated move," he said. "We also call for rejecting the proposal to delink ICC from the future tour programmes (FTP) which will convert FTP into exclusive domain of bilateral arrangements", the TIB statement said.

“We are deeply concerned that the proposed changes will create concentration of power in the so-called big three (Australia, India and UK). There will be no effective representation of other cricketing nations in governance of global cricket. The creation of reserved places for the three in the proposed four-member executive committee of ICC will create the scope of abuse of power with a full range of unaccountable authority which cannot serve the interest of the game. All these are contradictory to good governance in global cricket, to which ICC is committed to”, said Iftekharuzzaman.

The statement further said that the proposed reforms will transform the ‘gentleman’s game’ of cricket into a business enterprise for quick profit at the expense of sportsmanship, morality and level playing field. The priority given to money power will expose cricket to further risks of corruption both on and off the field, which is unacceptable and must be rejected without any hesitation.

A joint statement issued on 27 January by 9 cricket loving national chapters of Transparency International (TI) in Australia, Bangladesh, India, Jamaica, Netherlands, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Trinidad & Tobago and United Kingdom is attached. The statement has been directly sent to ICC and BCB.

Female YES learns to fight online harassments, vows to spread the fight

The power of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and social media in bringing positive change in the society is acknowledged globally. Yet with its spread online harassment against young females and girls has been a recent phenomenon and Bangladesh is no exception. This is not because of the spread or strong presence of ICT rather a tendency among a section of users to negatively use ICT. Keeping this into mind Dhaka YES and Bangladesh Open Source Network (BdOSN) organised an open seminar titled “Combating Online Harassment of Women through Information and Communication Technology” on 29 January 2014 at the R C Majumder Art Auditorium of Dhaka University. Mr A A Munir Hasan, General Secretary, BdOSN presented the key note paper at the seminar while Dr Suraiya Pervin, Professor, Department of Computer Science and Engineering, University of Dhaka and Ms Luna Shamsuddoha, Chairman, Dohatech Mr Javed Morshed, Joint Secretary, BdOSN discussed. Around 100 female YES members learned techniques on how to apply ICT tools to fight harassment and also to raise awareness at mass level. They also learned how to maintain security while using social networks and communicate through e-mails.

The Keynote presenter discussed about how ICT contributes in ensuring social justice and promoting good governance. He then focused on how online harassments occur. Users on good faith disclose security features like password to their close friends and husbands and as a result they easily become vulnerable to harassments. Once a close friend or a beloved husband, harasses her female friend or ex-wife. Mr Munir then continued on techniques of online security. He urged the participants to build



knowledge, evidence and awareness to initiate a social movement against online harassment and ensure social injustice for females.

After the presentation, YES members shared their harassment experiences and asked various questions around the topic. The speaker and discussants answered to these and suggested

probable remedies. The discussants urged the participants not to hide anything particularly from parents and concerned authorities and be vocal against any sort of online harassment. They said that any kind of harassment is punishable by law if the victim takes immediate actions. Mentionable that the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MoWCA) is operating a helpline (10921) that provides quick support to victims.

In the context of digitalisation, this seminar is expected to sensitise and aware participants to positively use social media and ICT, fight and launch a social movement.

CCC NEWS

Service Delivery Institutions Practice Accountability

Comilla Sadar Hospital

CCC Comilla, in association with the office of the Civil Surgeon, organised an opinion sharing meeting with the service recipients on 20th January at Comilla Sadar Hospital Auditorium. District Civil Surgeon Dr Md Muzibur Rahaman attended the meeting as the Chief Guest and CCC President Alhaj Shah Md Alamgir Khan chaired the session. Civil Surgeon requested doctors, nurses and hospital officials to provide quality and satisfactory health services to the citizen and sought cooperation from the service recipients to best utilise limited resources.

Participants expressed their satisfaction on overall service of the hospital. They, however, pointed out various problems of the hospital including cleanliness, food service etc. Participants and CCC members expected that hospital authority would pay proper attention to the observations of the meeting and would take necessary actions to further improve hospital services.

Mahinanda Union Parishad

Another opinion sharing meeting was held at Mahinanda Union Parishad (UP) of Kishorganj on 23 January. CCC Kishorganj with support from the UP organised the meeting to encourage people to get actively involved in the planning and implementation of Union development programme as well as encourage local level public representatives to practice accountability. UP Chairman Md Nurul Huda presented details of various development activities undertaken by the parishad and showcased their success in ensuring quality education, preventing child marriage, operating of village court and controlling law and order situation. He informed the participants that UP had become free from early marriage. Participants emphasised that members of UP needed to be open and accountable to the citizens. They also should be responsive to their needs and demand. UP officials, CCC members and people from different walks of the union attended the meeting. The meeting concluded that such opinion sharing meeting will be held on regular basis on the form of "Face the Public".

Batna Government Primary School

On 18 January CCC Barisal organised an opinion sharing meeting with the teachers, School Management Committee (SMC) members, local government representatives and guardians of Batna Government Primary School of Sadar Upazilla, Barisal. The aim of the meeting was to evaluate the performance the school in primary school certificate and annual examination. The CCC has been working closely with the school authority, SMC and guardians through various programmes like opinion sharing meeting, mothers' Gathering, installation of info board, reception of meritorious student etc. to encourage students to concentrate on studies and also encourage mothers to actively participate in educating their children at home. Meeting participants expressed their satisfaction over the performance of the school and emphasised on strong cooperation among stakeholders to retain the success achieved. SMC President Md Abdul Khaleque presided over the meeting. Teachers, CCC, SMC and UP members attended the meeting.



Anti-corruption Cycle Rally at Kurigram

With this slogan 'Invincible youth will surely resist corruption' Kurigram YES and YES Friends group organised an anti-corruption cycle rally on 30th January to raise awareness against corruption. The rally started from the CCC office and encircled main roads of the city, Kathalbari bazaar and Halokhana union parishad. Participants circulated leaflets and flyers on Right to Information Act - a strong and effective tool to challenge and fight corruption. The participating youths chanted various slogans against corruption and carried national flag, festoon, banner, leaflet, stickers etc. UNO of Sadar Upazilla Mr Md Mustafizur Rahman inaugurated the rally. He urged for participation of all to fight corruption. A good number of CCC, Swajan, YES and YES Friends member joined the rally. They also demanded an independent, neutral and effective Anti Corruption Commission to showcase government's commitment to reduce the high prevalence of corruption in the country.

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