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## NATIONAL

### Youth Leaders to build integrity blocks

Afroza Yeasmin Chandni wanted to be an ideal parliamentarian elected by the people while Azizur Rahman Khan Bulbul wanted to be the Chief Justice Bangladesh. Both expressed their strong desire to bring positive changes in their respective fields. Both Afroza and Aziz were among 176 Youth Engagement and Support (YES) participants at the Conference on “Youth Leaders in Innovative Anti-corruption Movement” that was held from 5-8 June in Koitta, Manikganj. YES leaders and deputy leaders from 45 Committee of Concerned Citizens (CCC) regions and 14 YES Dhaka based YES groups attended the four day conference to speak about their dreams to fight corruption and turn Bangladesh into a well governed country. They discussed on local government, land, education, health, climate finance, networking and partnership and right to information using “Open Space Technology” and came up with low cost, innovative and sustainable ideas they can implement without minimum support for TIB. The objectives of the conference were to reach to a common understanding on YES’s role in anti-corruption movement with special focus on BIBEC, identify challenges and opportunities and ways to reach project objectives and goals, Identify shortcomings and challenges of YES in Project Driving Change (PDC) and understanding innovations required to achieve the project goal.

On the very first day participants were briefed about the conference methodology – the technique of ‘Open Space’ that ensures participation of all and values every opinion. The next day, they were briefed about TIB’s planned activity in Building Integrity Block for Effective Change (BIBEC) project and intervention areas. Prior to joining the conference, each YES group made a self-evaluation of their activities to assess effectiveness, strength and weakness. They shared their findings with other groups during the conference and hanged it at the conference premise so that everyone can view and comment on it.

One interesting part of the conference was a lecture session by ICT expert Munir Hasan on the use of ICT to combat corruption and bring transparency and accountability in service delivery. Mr Hasan showcased a few ICT based innovations to solve problems. YES leaders tabled various problems they face frequently and came up with innovative ideas to solve these. One such idea was to introduce academic certificate verification process by respective educational institutions so that aspiring professionals are relieved from the struggle for attestation. Based on their interest and capacity to contribute, participants assembled themselves in seven groups. A facilitator gave a brief overview on the topic to initiate discussion. The discussion then continued for two days and on 7th June evening they finally came up with their ideas implementable with minimum resources and support from TIB.

Networking and Partnership group recommended forming a 'Youth Network' both



at local and national level and suggested to hold programmes at all YES simultaneously. Climate Finance Governance group was in favour of organising Climate Olympiad and open mass media dialogue with public representatives to bring transparency and accountability in this sector. Education group's innovation was to introduce 'Peace Class' for secondary level

students to orient them on ethics and integrity. Local Government and Health groups emphasised on introducing 'Institution Based Face Book Page' to address public grievance and showcase best practices and install Citizens Charter at public places. Right to Information (RTI) group devised a plan to assess the 'State of Implementation of RTI Act' at different local government institutions and round the year advocacy to create awareness among the stakeholders.

On the concluding day participants pledged to implement these ideas and spread the conference learning among fellow YES members and wider community. They expressed their high hope to spearhead the anti-corruption movement in their respective fields in BIBEC.

### **TIB demands allocation for Climate Change Adoption in the National Budget 2014- 15**

In a statement on 23 June, TIB expressed its concern over non-allocation of fund for the Bangladesh Climate Change Trust Fund (BCCTF) in the proposed budget for the 2014-15 fiscal and demand to continue funding to BCCTF. In the same time it also urged the Annex-I countries, responsible for climate change, to disburse their committed financial assistance to the Bangladesh Climate Change Resilience Fund (BCCRF).

In a statement TIB Executive Director Dr. Iftekharuzzaman said "The government proved its willingness and set positive examples both nationally and internationally to battle climate change by forming BCCTF and allocating resources from the revenue budget for four consecutive years. On the other hand this fund logically established the demand to get compensation from Annex-1 countries. Though the government allocated a total of Tk 2,700 crore to BCCTF since 2009-10 fiscal, suddenly it stopped the allocation without giving any explanation which surprised many. There is no

alternative but to allocate fund for BCCTF to continue climate change adaption program as per Bangladesh Climate Change Strategic Action Plan (BCCSAP). So we think that the government should allocate at least same amount of fund in 2014-2015 fiscal as was allocated in 2013-14 fiscal".

Dr. Zaman also demanded release of committed fund to BCCRF and expressed his concerned over allocation of insufficient fund, though the Annex-1 countries promised to provide "new" and "additional" "fund as compensation to the affected countries.

The statement demanded highest level of transparency and accountability in project selection, implementation, fund management and disbursement. TIB believes that availability of the climate fund will depend on the level of performance of the government and other stakeholders involved in climate fund management, demonstrated ability to deliver commitments and success in effective implementation of planned projects.

## **TIB members call for effective steps for good governance**

Members of Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) urged for strong political will, establish rule of law and effective role of Anti-corruption Commission (ACC) for building the country in line with the spirit of Liberation War. They also urged for making the parliament more effective and bringing stability in politics. They urged these at the Annual Members Meeting held on 21 July at Hotel Abakash in Dhaka. Member of the TIB Trustee Board Dr A T M Shamsul Huda spoke on the occasion as the Chief Guest and Dr M Nuruddin, Member of the Advisory Committee to the Board chaired the meeting. TIB's Executive Director Dr Iftekharuzzaman moderated the programme. The annual meeting also demanded devising an action plan for successful implementation of the National Integrity Strategy (NIS). Members suggested for enhancing the power of National Integrity Implementation Unit (NIIU) administered by the Cabinet Division and devising an NIS implementation action plans for all targeted institutions. They this end they also suggested for effective plan to enhance the organizational and human skills and allocate required resources for successful implementation of the NIS.



Dr Huda said, "TIB is playing supportive role by identifying governance challenges of service delivery and NIS institutions through in-depth research so that these institutions can overcome the governance challenges and reduce corruption in the long run."

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Mentionable that, TIB started its membership programme to adjoin citizens aiming to strengthen anti-corruption social movement. Till to date 347 TIB members from different walks of the society and professions have joined the programme and been providing strategic guidance to further strengthen the anti-corruption movement. The meeting adopted a declaration demanding justice for abductions, disappearances and killings; ensure transparency in Padma bridge construction; banning scope of whitening black money; empowerment of women; strengthening of local government through effective decentralisation of power and ensuring independence of judiciary in real terms.

## **TIB Calls for effective action to repatriate stolen money**

In a statement on 28 June TIB expressed deep concern over growing trend of illicit flight of money out of the country, and called upon the government to take advantage of the relevant national and international legal instruments including UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) to repatriate stolen assets and bring to justice those involved in this crime. TIB also called upon Governments of host countries to extend cooperation in sending the stolen money back to Bangladesh and strengthen their legal and financial structures to stop such flight.

Referring to recent disclosures by credible sources like the Swiss banking authority and UNDP, Iftekharuzzaman, Executive Director of TIB said, "Illicit flight of capital has reached at alarming level, costing as high as 30 percent of GDP. More importantly, rate of illegal outflow of capital from Bangladesh has allegedly become higher than that of any other countries which is a matter of deep disappointment and embarrassment." "It is high time to arrest this ominous trend. We are encouraged by the Prime Minister's announcement on June 27 that her

government will bring the stolen money back. Given the necessary political will, it is indeed the responsibility of the government and relevant agencies to repatriate stolen assets and prevent further outflow by ensuring exemplary punishment to those found guilty of this crime”, he added.

“We call upon the Government of Bangladesh to immediately reach to understanding on legal assistance framework with the Swiss and other foreign governments to facilitate this repatriation” the statement said. As a State Party to the UNCAC, Bangladesh can secure legal and technical cooperation and support from other State Parties of the convention. The recent repatriation of corrupt money from Singapore is an inspiring example.

“We call upon the Government of Bangladesh to immediately arrange Mutual Legal Assistance with the Swiss and other Governments of host countries of corrupt money so that stolen assets can be brought back”, the statement said. As a State Party to the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), Bangladesh can secure legal and technical cooperation and support from other State Parties of the Convention. The recent repatriation of corrupt money from Singapore is an example.

“We call upon the Government, and particularly Bangladesh Bank, Anti-corruption Commission,

### **TIB against whitening black money**

TIB expressed deep concern over the government’s move to allow unquestioned legalization of black money in real-estate and demanded scrapping of such opportunity in the national budget for 2014-15 fiscal.

In a statement on 29 June TIB’s Executive Director Dr Iftekharuzzaman said, “This unethical provision of whitening black money in the national budget indicates that policymaking is overpowered by corruption. Although the finance minister opposed such provision both inside and outside the parliament, continuation of such unethical option without any logical explanation is frustrating and embarrassing. The provision is contradictory to the constitution, government’s stance against corruption and initiatives of bringing laundered money back to

National Board of revenue and the Attorney General’s office to launch a coordinated effort to take advantage of the opportunity created by Bangladesh’s membership of UNCAC and Egmont Group”, Iftekharuzzaman said. “The primary responsibility for such international corruption does lie in the systemic weaknesses and governance deficit in Bangladesh. Enforcement of laws, effective monitoring and accountability at the supply side through highest level of political commitment without fear or favour are indispensable”, he added.

“However, we are also deeply concerned that a welcoming environment for laundered money in the capital markets of the recipient economies remains no less an offender”, he further said. Some such countries like Switzerland have recently become more proactive than before in facilitating repatriation of stolen money to the countries of origin, which may be helpful for Bangladesh.

“Nevertheless, legal and financial incentives in host countries continue to create the demand and scope of landing of corrupt money in their countries. We, therefore, call upon host governments of stolen money to not only fully cooperate with the Government of Bangladesh to freeze and send the illicit money back, but also undertake further stringent reforms in a manner that flow of illicit money can be totally stopped”, the statement said.

the country. The provision is nothing but to award institutionalization of corruption.”

“According to the National Board of Revenues and Government’s sources that legalizing black money did not bring any positive change in terms of revenues collection and investment over the years. By continuing this provision, the government is harbouring the interest of a vested quarter and safeguarding their unethical stance and undermining transparency and accountability.” added Dr Zaman.

Over the years TIB has been demanding scrapping of this unethical provision of whitening black money in the budget. The organisation earlier on 27 May urged the government not to continue such provision in 2014-15 fiscal.

## **TIB recommends 16 measures for governance of Private Universities**

Though private universities in Bangladesh started its journey as non-profit entities with high hopes of further expansion of higher education, numerous irregularities by university authority including board of trustees, university administration, teachers and students blended with inadequate monitoring and corrupt practices by government agencies like the education ministry and University Grants Commission (UGC) have turned private universities into profit earning institutions backed by mutually agreed corrupt practices. This was revealed in a TIB study titled 'Private Universities: Governance Challenges and Ways Forward' released before the media on June 30 at a hotel in Dhaka.

Research & Policy Division's Director Mohammad Rafique Hasan and Deputy Programme Manager Neena Shamsun Nahar presented the findings of the study. TIB Executive Director Dr Iftekharuzzaman and Deputy Executive Director Dr Sumaiya Khair were also present during the programme. The findings came from 22 randomly selected private universities over a period of two years from May 2012 – June 2014. It captured a number of achievements of private universities including creation of higher education opportunity for a large number of student, its emergence as an alternative to highly expensive foreign education, establishment of dedicated universities for women, creating study opportunities for professionals, scholarship opportunities for meritorious, poor and freedom fighters' children etc.

Despite these positive achievements lack of proper and long-term plan, nonexistence of accreditation council even after four years of enactment of Private University Act-2010, commercialisation of education have resulted in mal-governance in this sector. Only limited numbers of private universities have been able to provide quality education to the students. There are evidences of managing complaints lodged by University Grants Commission (UGC) against

private universities for violating laws, non-compliance and corrupt practices. Besides lack of human resources in education ministry and in UGC to monitor private universities, political pressure in approval and running of universities have resulted in limiting success of this sector ultimately downgrading the quality of education. According to the report, illegal transactions ranging from taka one to three crores for approval; taka fifty thousands to three hundred thousand for fake certificates and taka fifty thousands to one hundred thousand for approval of audit report are transacted at different levels.

The study also revealed that only two of the surveyed universities obtained permanent certificates and the rest either failed or by-passed provisions of obtaining this certificate within 12 years. These universities now are operating by renewing their temporary certificates. According to the report the board of trustees often directly interferes in university businesses including academic issues contributing to such level of poor performance.

Commenting on governance challenges, TIB Executive Director Dr Iftekharuzzaman said, "The private university sector is facing these governance challenges due to lack of transparency, accountability in their operation; ineffective monitoring by government agencies and lack coordination among these agencies." "The tripartite nexus among university authority, a section of education ministry and UGC officials has endangered this sector and there is no other alternative but ensuring governance to save this sector." he added.

TIB made 16 recommendations to avert the existing irregularities in private universities. Major recommendations include formation of an accreditation council and a policy framework to implement relevant laws, amendment of Private University Act 2010, strengthening of UGC's monitoring system, allowing only high ranking foreign universities to run branches and closure of all outer campuses etc.

## CCC NEWS

### Theater create awareness against corruption to the local in Jessore

On 11 June YES Theatre group of CCC Jessore staged a drama 'Rukhe Darao Bangladesh' at Mothbari Primary School premise in Deara Union. The drama illustrated different irregularities of health, primary education and local government sectors and called upon the authority to address these irregularities and also the people to fight against such irregularities and thus strengthen the anti-corruption social movement in the long run.



### Hospital authority to work for further improvement of health services

CCC Rajshahi organised an opinion sharing meeting with the authority of Rajshahi Medical College Hospital (RMCH) on 12 June. The meeting focused on state of hospital services, particularly the One Stop Crisis Centre (OCC). It identified a number of challenges and also recommended ways to improve these. Hospital Director Brigadier General A K M Nasir Uddin presided over the meeting. Rajshahi CCC



president and Pro-Vice Chancellor of Rajshahi University Professor Dr Chowdhury Sarwar Jahan gave the welcome speech and CCC Vice President Akbarul Hasan Millat moderated the discussion. Participants emphasised on smooth functioning of the OCC, friendly attitude of the service providers, permanent appointment of counselor, issuance of gender sensitive medical certificate etc. CCC members, hospital doctors and staff, local civil society members took part in the discussion.

### Participatory Open budget session at Khadimnagar Union Parishad

It was a different day for the inhabitants of Khadimnagar Union Parishad. With great enthusiasm, the draft UP budget was placed before the union people on 23 June. CCC Sylhet in collaboration of the UP office organised this event aimed at enhancing the transparency and accountability in UP operation and ensure people's participation in UP activities. The budget was prepared in consultation with the people based on their development need of the locality. Former CCC President Faruq Mahmud Chowdhury moderated and UP Chairman Delowar Hossain chaired the programme. Mr Delowar presented the draft budget of One Crore and Seventy Lacs that gave special emphasis on education, road construction and maintenance, healthcare and sewerage management. After presentation of the budget, the discussion focused on revenue generation at UP level. The Chairman said "If we can increase our income at local level then we will be able to address many service delivery issues quickly and it will ultimately reduce our dependency over the central government". He then urged the people to pay tax regularly and help his effort in UP building. There were suggestions to reduce the fee of death certificate and increase the fee of trade license. He said that the UP would seriously consider these.

### **Civil Society members pledged to play active role in Madaripur**

CCC Madaripur organised an opinion sharing meeting titled 'Social Movement Against Corruption in Bangladesh: Local Level Initiatives' on 28 June at the Madaripur Legal Aid Association. TIB Executive Director Dr Iftekharuzzaman and General Secretary of Madaripur Legal Aid Association Fazlul Haque, were key discussants while Madaripur CCC President Khan Md Sahid presided over the sharing meeting. CCC members Sahana Nasreen Rubi gave the welcome speech and Sahadat Hossen Liton moderated the discussion.

Dr Iftekharuzzaman said "Government has failed to set example in punishing corruption practices and as a result there is no significant achievement in reducing corruption." "Government must strengthen the Anti-corruption Commission to realise its election pledge to build a corruption free Bangladesh". He added. He called upon the people to resist corruption at every level and thus reinforce social movement against corruption.

Former Municipal Mayor, Chowdhury Nurul Alam Babu; Unit Commander of District Muktiyoddha Sangshad Shahjahan Howlader; former Municipal Chairman Freedom Fighter Khalilur Rahman Khan and BMA President Dr. Abdul Bari also took part in the discussion. They urged for combined effort to strengthen the on-going social movement against corruption. Government and non-government officials, teachers, journalists, CCC, Swajan, YES and YES Friends members also attended the meeting.

### **Natore Mothers Voice for practicing Accountability and Transparency**

On 12 June CCC Natore organised a Mothers Gathering at Mosirunnesa Government Primary School in Natore. Mothers urged the school management to practice transparency and accountability to improve the quality of education. Education Sub-committee Convener of CCC Natore and Principal of Dighapatia



Degree College Md Abdur Razzak presided over the program and CCC member Paritosh Kumar Adhikary moderated the event. On behalf of the mothers of school students Nazma Akther, Bela Rani and Nasima Khatun spoke at the gathering. They acknowledged positive contribution of teachers as well as pointed out some issues like students' attendance, insufficient fan and light, transport facility for students etc. They also voiced for increased participation of mothers in such gatherings. SMC and CCC members, teachers were among others who took part in the discussion.

## **YES NEWS**

### **Youth learns to fight online harassment against women**

This month the ongoing open seminar series on 'Combating Online Harassment Against Women Through ICT' was held at the Stamford University, Bangladesh on 12 June. The open seminar series is a joint initiative between Bangladesh Open Source Network (BdOSN) and TIB. So far seven such seminars have been held at different universities jointly organised by BdOSN and TIB. The seminar series is aimed at equipping young girl students with online security techniques, fighting online harassment and also raising awareness.

BdOSN General Secretary Mr A A Munir Hasan, made a presentation on the topic followed by question and answer session. He called upon the victims to be vocal against any harassment and fight back with courage.

## Orientation programme on Climate Finance Governance at JU

An orientation programme on “Transparency and Accountability Challenges in Climate Finance in Bangladesh” was held on 30 June at the Jahir Raihan Auditorium of Jahangirnagar University. The objective of the orientation was to introduce JU YES members and interested students with the climate finance governance and challenges in ensuring transparency and accountability in this sector. Coordinator of TIB’s Climate Finance Governance Project (CFGP) M



Zakir Hossain Khan made a presentation focusing on global and national context of climate change impacts and its implications in climate finance mechanisms - climate fund flow from international and national sources as well as its utilisation by both government and NGOs. Geography and Environment Department Professor Dr Md Shahedur Rashid was also present as the special guest. Around 120 YES members and students attended the orientation. According to the presentation, Bangladesh marked some progress including funding the

Bangladesh Climate Change Trust Fund (BCCTF) from own sources but there are evidences or non existence of implementing NGOs and building of useless housing structures to shelter victims of climate change and fight the impact. He emphasised on proper use of the foreign and domestic funds failure to which would pose direct threat to the life of climate vulnerable people instead of saving them. Dr Shahed emphasised on blending institutional and academic experiences to have better understanding on climate change, promote governance and battle the impact by planning and effective implementation of adaptation programmes.

After completion of the presentation participants took part in the lively question and answer session and students were interested to know more about how to address the governance challenges in climate finance mechanism and adoption of appropriate adaption measures in Bangladesh to cope with climate change impacts.



Around 120 YES members and interested students were present in the orientation program.

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