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NATIONAL

Invincible youth pledges to fight against corruption and injustice

On the eve of UN declared International Youth Day (IYD) on 12 August 2014, the Dhaka Yes Engagement and Support (YES) group with support from Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) organised a human chain at the TSC of Dhaka University. Students, youths, teachers, TIB officials, students from different educational institutions and representatives from like minded organisations participated in the human chain. This year's theme was "Invincible Youth Shall Surely Resist Corruption" that appealed to all youths to join the social movement against corruption and injustice.

Professor Dr Nasreen Ahmad, Pro Vice Chancellor (Academic) of University of Dhaka joined the human chain as the Chief Guest while Dr Sumaiya khair, Deputy Executive Director and Dr Rezwan-ul- Alam, Director of TIB were also present.

Dr Sumaiya Khair said, "Development of a nation depends on the desire and perseverance of youths work. Youths play active role in creating a corruption free and good governed Bangladesh practicing patriotism and increasing their skills."

Dr Nasreen Ahmad said, "Youths played a significant role in our Language movement in 1952, Mass uprising in 1969, Liberation War in 1971 and democracy movement in 1990. Only youths can fulfill



the desire of nation and they must utilise their full potentials for betterment of the society, country and for their own."

IYD is celebrated on every 12 August, as a United Nations-designated day of observance initiated in 1999 to raise awareness of issues affecting young people around the world. It is also a day to recognise

the efforts of the world's youth in creating a global society. The Day aims to encourage their participation for the wellbeing of the society and community.

TIB is celebrating IYD since 2006. The theme of IYD 2014 was "Youth and Mental Health" under the slogan 'Mental Health Matters'. For mental health development of youth of Bangladesh, YES placed several demands including supporting the young generation to achieve

their goal through social engagement; Effective implementation of laws to save youths from drug addiction, pornography and online harassment; Collective and series of initiatives of government for mental health development of youths; ensuring adequate play grounds and entertainment facility; initiatives to reduce unemployment problem; creating positive environment for productive learning, training, self-employment and leadership.

TIB for National Broadcasting Commission first

The government should form a fully independent National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) entrusted with the task of drafting the National Broadcasting Policy (NBP) in consultation with stakeholders. TIB made this demand at a press conference to spell out its stance over the newly adopted 'National Broadcasting Policy 2014' on 14 August 2014 at a hotel in Dhaka. TIB also demanded to enact law to facilitate the formation of NBC. The anti-corruption watchdog believes that the NBP contains a few articles which go against Chapter 39 of the Bangladesh Constitution that ensures freedom of thoughts and conscience. Dr S M Rezwanaul Alam, Director, Outreach and Communication presented TIB's position on NBP. Advocate Sultana Kamal, Chairperson, Board of Trustees; Dr Iftekharuzzaman, Executive Director; Dr Sumaiya Khair, Deputy Executive Director and Meer Ahsan Habib, Senior Programme Manager, TIB were also present during the press conference.

Earlier on 2 October 2013, TIB sent a critical review with a set of recommendations on the draft NBP to the Information Minister. In a press statement on 21 October, the minister thanked TIB for its role and subsequently on 29 January 2014, TIB also formally requested the minister to update about the status of recommendations. Regrettably, no response was made and finally, the government finalised the NBP through a gazette notification on 6 August ignoring some of TIB's key recommendations including formation of NBC in the first place. However, the NBP more or less accepted 5 recommendations of TIB on

background, licensing, broadcasting of news and information related programmes, advertisement and rights of women and children.

The NBP contains a number of positive aspects including upholding the spirit of Liberation War, promote Bangladeshi culture, adherence to state principles, respect towards all religions, promote equality in the society etc. Besides, the policy also gives special emphasis to broadcast developmental programmes specially empowerment of women, disable and the marginalised. It also attempts to protect the rights of the consumers by including a guideline on broadcasting of advertisement. Another commendable thing is the provision of following National Women Development Policy and National Children Policy.

The position paper revealed that the NBP is neither unique nor industry friendly rather, a policy document of the government based on existing rules, policies and acts such as Bangladesh Television Film Censor Rules 1985, Policy for Broadcasting Foreign Films in Bangladesh Television 1988, Amended Television Advertisement Policy (proposed), Ordinance for Cable Television Network Operation and Related Regulations 2006, Policy for Commercial Operation of Bangladesh Betar 1989, Programme Policy for Radio Bangladesh and Bangladesh Television 1986 etc.

Although there are 13 objectives and 4 strategies to attain these, but they do not supplement each other. There is no guideline on how to promote

level playing field for private and state owned broadcasting channels; similar is the case with private-public partnership; no explanation of the innovative model to be applied for bringing transparency and accountability within the industry etc. The policy also includes provisions that have created ample scope of abuse by the state as these do not specify the extent of violation. Article 3.2.1 stipulates that no programme that is either anti-state or against public interest should be broadcast, article 3.2.2 says talk shows must not broadcast or present any false or misleading info, article 5.1.5 prohibits against any news and programmes that might affect the image of the armed forces as well as the law enforcing agencies. The policy also curtails the power of the proposed NBC by creating provision of submitting its annual report to the ministry. Most shocking articles 7.4 and 7.5 awarded unlimited power to the Information Ministry to regulate and dictate any broadcaster. Even though the NBC has placed a number of don'ts, it did not mention anything about foreign satellite channels.

TIB Building nation through anti-corruption movement- chapter EDs feel

For Youth Engagement and Support (YES) members of TIB, it was a double surprise: first, to see three Executive Directors of three different TI Chapters visiting them to learn from Bangladesh's anti-corruption social movement and second, the team visiting those young activists in the field is also known as YES: (Youth, Engagement/Empowerment and Scale [of impacts]). When both these YES leaders interacted during the last week of August in Cox's Bazar, Patiya, Chittagong and Sylhet, one strong theme emerged: YES volunteers are in fact building Bangladesh through their anti-corruption social movement.

Executive Directors from TI chapters in Germany, Georgia, and Rwanda and an external facilitator from the UK visited TI Bangladesh on a 10 day mission from 21-31 August 2014 to gain a 360 degree perspective on all the issues and challenges involved in the field of anti-corruption in Bangladesh. After engaging with TIB's various stakeholders, the visiting team returned on 1st September, not only with rich experiences, but also with a hope that

Examining the NBP, TIB tabled 6 recommendations to ensure governance in this sector as well as help the industry to grow further. Other recommendations include ensuring participation of stakeholder and address their concerns while enacting laws and rules to avoid controversy, avoiding political and administrative influence over the search committee to keep the commission formed by the committee above all debate, keeping licensing system free from political influence and review the existing policy, introducing a code of conduct and self-control concept based on the experience of broadcasting leaders and professionals to enhance professionalism in journalism & broadcasting and separate the advertisement policy from the NBP and enact an advertising policy in consultation with product producers, ad makers, performers and broadcasters.

Bangladesh's bright future holds with those young anti-corruption fighters who will surely make it a difference when their turn come up. So, when TIB's YES activists rally for a common cause or demand accountable governance by organizing mothers' gathering at schools and face the public at union parishads, or provide information and advice services at local hospitals, or mobilize public through street theatres, or train people how to submit right to information applications, and get involved in many other activities using various social accountability tools, these are not simply anti-corruption works. These are also a part of nation building, says Richard Kemp, TI's facilitator.

Eka Gigauri, executive director of TI Georgia is very impressed with the works of YES activists and foresees a brighter future for Bangladesh. Her colleague Temur Ovchiev travelled with the delegation all the way to make a documentary to showcase what inclusive leadership could achieve through anti-corruption social movement. And Apollinaire Mupiganyi,

executive director of TI Rwanda vows to replicate many of Bangladesh's successes to build stronger movement in his country.

The visit of YES team comprising executive directors from three Chapters proved very

beneficial for personal leadership development and also provided first-hand experience with a number of case studies from Bangladesh for raising leadership impacts through experiential and peer-to-peer learning.

Seek public opinion on impeachment of judges

In a press statement on 23 August 2014, TIB urged the Government to seek public opinion and consult with Constitution experts, civil society & media personalities on its move to amend the Constitution aiming to restore the Parliament's authority to impeach Supreme Court Judges. TIB also urged the government to determine the impeachment process through deeper and objective analysis of the issue. The Cabinet in a meeting on 18 August 2014 approved the draft amendment bill. The amendment will take away the power of the Supreme Judicial Council to impeach Supreme Court Judges and give it to the Parliament. It will also abolish the council.

"In the light of political science and ideal democratic system, the move may seem fit but this requires deeper analysis as the Constitution of 1972 had been a tool for power politics which

was originally introduced with the hope of establishing rule of law, justice and institutionalisation of democracy. Any move to make the Supreme Judicial Council powerless may affect the independence of the judiciary and neutrality of the judges", said TIB Executive Director Dr Iftekharuzzaman. He also feared that as a consequence, Judges may not able to perform their duties free from political influence.

Dr Zaman further said, "Transparency must be ensured in the impeachment process by keeping it free from political influence and providing the opportunity for self defense by the Judges. If the Parliament is awarded such absolute authority by abolishing the Supreme Judicial Council, it will increase the risk of institutionalisation of political influence instead of making the judiciary more transparent and accountable."

CCC NEWS

Opinion sharing meeting with Barisal General Hospital Authority held

On 31 August 2014, Committee of Concerned Citizens (CCC) Barisal arranged an opinion sharing meeting with the Barisal General Hospital authority with an aim to discuss the state of services at the hospital, identify scopes for improvement and take necessary steps to improve the quality of services of the hospital. The Convener of Health sub-committee of the CCC Shuvankar Chakraborty presided over the meeting. Different types of service related irregularities including overcharging at the emergency unit, absence of night guard, non-existence of separate room for female patients in the diarrhoea ward, uncontrolled movement of medical representatives and clinic middlemen, poor cleanliness etc. Meeting participants also recommended a number of measures to address these irregularities. Residential Medical Officer (RMO) Dr Delwar



Hossain that despite many limitations, the hospital authority was committed to provide the best medical service at Barisal and assured that they would try their level best to improve the quality of services and mitigate these irregularities.

Initiative to ensure quality services to people

On 26 August 2014, Kishoreganj CCC organised an opinion sharing meeting with Mahinanda Union Parishad (UP) under Kishoreganj District. Convener of the CCC local Government Sub-committee Advocate Nasir Uddin Faruqi presided over the meeting. Participants discussed progresses of ongoing development activities and successes in education and health service, law and order situation and prevention of child marriage. Participants also emphasised on holding standing committee meetings on regular basis. In response to the concern raised in the meeting UP Chairman Md Nurul Huda said that the development activities were designed based on needs of the people. UP and CCC members along with a good of union inhabitants attended the meeting. UP Chairman thanked the CCC and TIB for their continuous support in promoting transparency and accountability and improve the quality of UP service.

Opinion sharing meeting to strengthen anti-corruption movement at local level

Gaibandha and Nilphamari CCCs arranged opinion sharing meetings with the civil society members, district level government and non-government officials. The objective of these meeting was to strengthen the social movement against corruption by engaging multi-level stakeholders and cross section people of the society including government official. Executive Director of TIB Dr Iftekharuzzaman was present as the key speaker.

CCC Nilphamari arranged the meeting on 11 August 2014 at the auditorium of the Diabetic Hospital. Dr Iftekharuzzaman made a presentation on 'Advancement of Democratic Governance and Anti-corruption Social Movement' and CCC President Prof Naresh Chandra Roy presided over the meeting. Dr Zaman said that that advancement of democratic governance was the most important pathway for human development, poverty alleviation and

Multi-stakeholder sharing meeting at Alokdia Government Primary School

On 27 August 2014 CCC Madhupur organised a multi-stakeholder sharing meeting at Alokdia Government Primary School of Madhupur in Tangail. Teachers, School Managing Committee (SMC) members, School Watch Group (SWG) members, Local Government representatives and guardians attended the event. The meeting was presided over the SMC President Md Abul Kalam Azad. School authority thanked the CCC for selecting their school and implement different interventions like opinion sharing meeting, meeting with SMC, Mothers' Gathering, setting up information board, reception of meritorious student etc. These interventions contributed toward overall improvement of the quality of education of this school. Participants reiterated their commitment to jointly work sustain achievements.

establishment of social justice. He underscored the contribution of CCC in fighting corruption at the local level.

CCC Gaibandha arranged the meeting on 12 August 2014 at the Public Library auditorium. Deputy Commissioner of Gaibandha Md Ehsane Elahi was present as the Chief Guest and CCC President Professor Mazharul Mannan presided over the meeting. Dr Iftekharuzzaman said that the common people of Bangladesh were deprived from enjoying the benefits of national growth and development due to corruption and other mal-practices. He said that there was no other alternative but strong political will to fight corruption and mal practices.

Participants in these meetings expressed their keen interest to actively participate in the anti-corruption social movement and build a better Bangladesh.

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