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## National News

**ACC scored high in 21 indicators which includes legal independence and preventive measures; but got medium scores in 19 and low in 9 out of a total of 49**  
*TIB came up with 11-point suggestions to increase effectiveness*

Despite scoring high in 21 indicators including legal independence and preventive measures, Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) got medium score in 19 indicators and scored low in 9 out of a total of 49 indicators. They scored highest in legal independence and status and got lowest score in gaining people's trust in corruption prevention.

A research report titled 'ANTI-CORRUPTION AGENCY STRENGTHENING INITIATIVE: Assessment of the Bangladesh Anti-Corruption AGENCY 2016' is released by Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) in its head office on 7 August. The objectives of this study were to assess the performance and scopes of improvement of ACC; to provide all stakeholders committed to tackling corruption in the country a better understanding of the enabling and disabling factors which affect the ACC's efficacy and to produce a process of evaluation to identify the external and internal causes which influence the image and activities of ACC. The reference period for all assessments on the ACC was three years (2013-2015). The data was collected during November 2015 – April 2016.

The main findings of the assessment are based on a set of 49 indicators under seven different dimensions which are: ACC's legal

independence and status; finance and human resource; detection and investigation function; prevention, education and outreach functions; ACC's cooperation with other organizations; accountability and oversight and public perceptions of the ACC's performance. Each indicator has been assigned one of three possible scores – high (2), moderate (1) and low (0), based on the level of standards set for each of the indicators. For a clear understanding of the dimensions as well as the overall score, it has been classified into three categories – 'high' for an overall score between 67% and 100%, 'moderate' for an overall score between 34% – 66%, and 'low' for an overall score between 0% - 33%. In order to arrive at the total score, each scores of every indicator in a certain dimension were added first. Then a percentage was determined based on the possible highest score of the total indicators in a certain dimension. According to the assessment of this study, the overall score for Bangladesh ACC is 61.22%, which falls in Moderate category. ACC's Legal Independence and Status scored the highest (78.57%) whereas, the lowest score (28.57%) is for the dimension on the Public Perceptions of the ACC's Performance.

The research shows that, the strengths of the ACC includes legal independence and status with adequate legal powers and mandate; stability of budget which is gradually increased over years; staff stability with low turnover; willingness to investigate complaints, as it is responsive to complaints, willing to and has capacity to investigate influential persons, and high number of cases; corruption prevention initiatives with organizational reviews, engagement of stakeholders in prevention; collaboration with other stakeholders such as civil society, development partners; and participation in international networks.

On the other hand, the weaknesses of the ACC include inadequate budget particularly for development, investigation, hiring lawyer, and donor dependency in prevention activities; low accessibility for lodging complaints; inadequate/limited expertise and professionalism in investigation and prevention; low conviction rate; absence of independent oversight mechanism; lack of coordination with other public agencies; and low level of public confidence and negative perception on ACC's effectiveness. So the real challenge for ACC remains in gaining trust and faith of people and overcoming the weaknesses while retaining the positive aspects as well.

TIB's Chairperson of Trustee Board Advocate Sultana Kamal, Executive Director Dr. Iftekhharuzzaman, Deputy Executive Director Professor Dr. Sumaiya Khair, head of the research group and Professor of the Department of Public Administration Dr. Salahuddin M Aminuzzaman and other researchers were present in the press conference. Dr. Zaman said, "Though the activities of ACC are promising according to the research report, they have to put more effort in overcoming the weaknesses. No such legislation should be passed which can curtail the

independence of ACC. Legislations should be enacted in the sectors that limit the independence of ACC to ensure more freedom.”



He added, “No constitutional institute formed to prevent corruption in any country has managed to curb corruption singlehandedly. Other institutes should come forward to prevent corruption as well in Bangladesh. The effectiveness of ACC depends on many factors such as transparency, effectiveness and impartiality of the judicial system and law enforcing agencies.”

Advocate Sultana Kamal said, “People become desperate if the society fails to prevent corruption and ensure justice through proper legal process. Unrest becomes prevalent in society and people start taking the law into their own hands. This situation can create the risk of violation of human rights. Hence the failure of ACC to gain public trust is disappointing despite having many positive outcomes. They need to build this trust that, corruption will diminish because ACC is there.”

TIB came up with a set of 11-point suggestions to increase the effectiveness of ACC which includes: enhancing the budget for ACC; reviewing of ACC's organogram and increasing staff strength; increasing transparency in appointment of Chairman and Commissioners; digitalizing of the complaint system; taking measures to increase the conviction rate (such as exploring and addressing the challenges of investigation and prosecution, consulting with lawyers before filing corruption cases and pursuing with the panel lawyers); enhancing drive for asset recovery; taking long-term comprehensive strategic plan; improving website; enhancing cooperation with other integrity agencies; boosting public confidence by initiating positive programmes.

### **Terrorism and Extremism against the spirit, values and vision of Bangladesh: TI Chair confident of overcoming challenges**

In the backdrop of the Gulshan tragedy Mr Jose Ugaz, Chair of the international Board of Directors of Transparency International (TI) expressed deepest condolences for the loss of innocent lives as a result of the worst ever terrorist attack in the country on July 1. Mr. Ugaz expressed solidarity with the people of Bangladesh at this challenging time.

In a telephone call yesterday evening he and Iftekharuzzaman, Executive Director of Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) expressed the conviction that terrorism and extremism were absolutely contradictory to the values, spirit and vision of Bangladesh as a successful and proud nation that emerged independent upholding principles of justice, equality and peaceful coexistence of religious, cultural, ethnic and various other forms of diversity and fundamental freedoms.

He expressed the hope and confidence that the people of Bangladesh have the courage and capacity to overcome the challenges of terror and extremism. The TI Chair specially condoled the death of Ishrat Akhond, a volunteer member of TIB and prayed for the eternal peace of the departed souls of victims of the tragedy.

He conveyed solidarity and support to everyone involved with TIB including its Board, staff and volunteers. He called upon the people of Bangladesh in general and everyone involved with TIB in particular to keep the moral high which is extremely important in confronting the challenges facing the country.

## **YES Groups from different universities arranged Study circle and Essay competition**

YES groups from many universities arranged anti-corruption essay competition and study circle in their campuses during the month of July. Students shared their experience and suffering due to corruption in their essays. They also discussed about new anti-corruption tools and other ideas to prevent corruption in Bangladesh.

YES group of Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University organized a study circle on women and corruption and an essay competition on 28 July in their campus. Some members presented papers on that topic and then other participants shared their opinion.

A similar programme was arranged by the Yes Group of Institute of Social Welfare, University of Dhaka on the same day in their campus.

Uttara University YES group organized a study circle on women and corruption in 25 July in their main campus. All the programmes were attended by YES members, YES friends and students.

## **CCC News**

### **Information Fair and Public Hearing at Sharankhola**

Information Fair and Public Hearing were organized at Sarankhola Upazila of Bagerhat district on 18 July 2016. 'Information is Power: Know, Notify and Resist Corruption'- based on the motto, the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC), Committee of Concerned Citizens (CCC), Bagerhat and Durniti Pratirodh Committee (DUPRAK) jointly organized the Information Fair and the Public Hearing in front of Sharankhola Upazila Parishad.

Dr. Nasiruddin Ahmed, Commissioner of ACC, inaugurated the fair and the hearing as chief guest following an anti-corruption human chain. A discussion meeting presided over by Mohammad Atul Mandal, Upazila Nirbahi Officer of Sharankhola was held following the inaugural session. Dr. Nasiruddin Ahmed, Commissioner of ACC was the chief guest and Alhaz Dr. Mozammel Hossain, Member of the Parliament from Bagerhat-4 was the honorable guest in the discussion meeting where ACC Director (Prevention and Mass Awareness) Md. Moniruzzaman and DUPRAK President Muhammad Abdus Sattar delivered the welcome speech. Upazila Parishad Chairman Md. Kamal Uddin Akon, CCC President Adv. Ram Krishno Basu and Rajesh Adhikari, Programme Manager-CE of TIB also took part in the discussion session.

The Public Hearing Meeting was moderated by Md. Azmul Haque, Additional District Magistrate of Bagerhat where representatives from different government institutions were present. Among other institutions, Upazila Land Office, Sub-Registry Office, Health & Family Welfare Office, Social Welfare Office, Palli Bidduyut Samati, Cooperatives Office and Upazila Project Implementation Officer's office effectively participated in the question and answer session and made commitment to resolve problems raised by local citizens. ACC Commissioner advised the relevant officers to resolve the discussed problems as soon as possible and to make follow-up of the issues in future.

A total of 30 public and private institutions provided their service related information to the visitors by installing booths in the fair. YES members of CCC, Bagerhat shared the procedure of submitting RTI application to the related institutions. Hundreds of visitors attended the day-long fair.





### **Hospital Authority committed to resolve service related problems**

The Health Management Committee (HMC) of 250 bedded Mohammad Ali Hospital, Bogra assured to organize Face the Public programme to ensure proper service to the patients. They made commitment to take necessary initiatives to aware people about services of the hospital. A speed breaker would also be constructed in front of the hospital soon.

Md. Nurul Islam Omar, President of the Health Management Committee of the Hospital and Member of the Parliament from Bogra-6, declared these initiatives in an opinion sharing meeting organized by Committee of Concerned Citizens, Bogra. CCC President Mr. Bazlul Karim Bahar, Vice President Mr. Masudar Rahman Helal and other CCC members shared some issues for increasing the level of services of the hospital which includes regularly arranging HMC meeting, building a speed breaker in front of the hospital, organizing Public Hearing etc.

The Hospital Superintendent Dr. Md. Rafiqul Islam shared some problems and limitations of the hospital and urged to provide assistance to solve the problems and limitations. Dr. Samir Hossain Mishu, Upazila Health and Family Planning Officer of Sadar Upazila said that the hospital authority should try to provide better services to the patients despite having some limitations as it is a renowned hospital in this region. President of the Health Management Committee Md. Nurul Islam Omar MP made commitment to provide assistance to solve the problems and organize HMC meeting on a regular basis. Other members of HMC, doctors of the hospital and CCC & YES members were present in the meeting.

### **Initiatives taken towards a Model Union Parishad**

With an aim to make the Union Parishad development budget participatory, 6 No. Shariktola-Dumritola Union Parishad organized an Open Budgeting and Face the Public programme by the assistance of CCC, Pirojpur on 24 July 2015. The programme was held at 55 No. Keshorota Govt. Primary School presided over by CCC Vice President Advocate Shahidullah while UP Secretary Chanchal Kumar Sarkar presented the proposed budget for the fiscal year 2016-2017. UP Chairman Md. Mirajur Rahman along with other elected representatives answered various questions raised by citizens of that union. The chairman urged the citizens to inform him or UP members if any type of illegal, especially militant activities were noticed under the territory of the union.

Local citizens demanded sufficient budget for safe drinking water, reconstructions of roads-drainage-bridges, tree plantation at road side and special budget for vulnerable women in the meeting. UP chairman assured to take initiatives to meet those demands within their capacity mentioning some limitations also. He added, Parishad would provide any type of information and set up a display board on its services. Standing Committees would be effective soon and special budget would be allocated for disaster management, he mentioned. UP Chairman hoped to get citizen's cooperation to make a model Union Parishad by 2021. He urged them to pay taxes in due time. Members from CCC, Swajan, YES and YES Friends along with other community leaders and citizens were present in the programme.

### **Anti-Corruption awareness campaign in Bandarban**

More than five hundred students of Bandarban Govt. Women College and Bandarban Govt. College were made aware of social movement against corruption drove by CCC and TIB. They took part in awareness raising sessions held on 25 & 26 July at Bandarban Govt. Women College and Bandarban Govt. College respectively. TIB organized the programmes with a motto to form a Youth Engagement and Support (YES) Friends Group in these colleges.

At Bandarban Govt. College, a documentary on anti-corruption movement was presented while Vice Principal Md. Abu Taher Bhuyan presided over the programme. Md. Abul Kashem, Associate Professor of History Department, delivered the welcome speech. Ang Sa Mong, President of DUPRAK, Bandarban, Md. Hasan Ali and Kazi Shafiqur Rahman, Senior Programme Managers-CE of TIB, teachers of the colleges also participated in the programme.

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