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## National News

### International Youth Day observed: Pledges to Fight Against Corruption

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) observed this year's International Youth Day (IYD) by placing nine-point charter of demands to the government urging to ensure, among others, the promotion of liberalism, non-communalism, patriotism, youth engagement in the government poverty reduction plan and space to reporting corruption and discrimination. The youth day is observed throughout the world with countless events to acknowledge and encourage the actions of youth towards a more constructive future. This year the global theme is 'the Road to 2030: Eradicating Poverty and Achieving Sustainable Consumption and Production', a campaign that promotes the leading role of young people in ensuring poverty eradication and achieving sustainable development through sustainable consumption and production.

TIB's call was made through a human chain organized on 10 August in front of TSC at Dhaka University where Executive Director Dr. Iftekharuzzaman observed that youths should be inspired towards shunning the wrong path such as militancy and extremism. "Youths were taking the wrong path in absence of the right environment", he said.

The two-day observance of IYD that carried the theme: 'Invincible Youth: Together against Corruption', also witnessed enthusiastic participation by more than 100 school children in a National School Debate Competition, jointly organized by Dhaka University Debating Society and TIB. Inaugurating the debate competition,

Pro-Vice Chancellor of the University of Dhaka Professor Dr. Akhteruzzaman advised the students to come forward in resisting the ill-effects of corruption in the society. Professor Syed Manzoorul Islam of Dhaka University outlined four tasks for the school students to reduce the influence of corruption from the society: learn from the biographies of reputable personalities, raise awareness against corruption, search for role models and remain actively engaged in the fight against corruption.



During the prize distribution ceremony on 11 August, Vice Chancellor of Dhaka University Professor AAMS Arefin Siddique urged the youth to follow the ideals of the father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to curb menaces of corruption in the country.

Debashish Bishwas from Udayan High School was adjudged as the best debater while Redwanul Islam from Adamjee Cantonment Public School was declared as first runner up and Farhana Amin Ripa from Shaheed BirUttam Lt. Anwar Girls College was declared as second runner up.

The closing Ceremony was held in 11 August where Chairperson of Board of Trustees of TIB Advocate Sultana Kamal, Moderator of DUDS Professor Dr. Mahbuba Nasreen, TIB's Executive Director Dr. Iftekharuzzaman were present among others.

The day is also being observed in 45 locations of Bangladesh where YES activists are similar messagesso that young people can empower themselves and bring a fuller contribution to the society, development and peace.

It may be noted here that as part of its Youth Engagement and Support (YES) Programme, TIB has been mobilizing the youths of Bangladesh to join the social movement against corruption. Over the last 20 years, a pool of more than 1000 debaters representing schools, colleges and universities has been created who are not only knowledgeable about accountability and transparency issues, but also actively promoting and practicing TIB's anti-corruption messages.

### **TIB Presented 11-point Recommendations to Increase Effectiveness of ACC**

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 today. In the Press Conference TIB said that, 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. Iftekharuzzaman, Deputy Executive Director Professor Dr. SumaiyaKhair, 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.

### **YES Group observe the IYD**

YES Group of Institute of Social Welfare, University of Dhaka arranged a study circle on 28 August to observe the International Youth day 2016 in the campus. YES members, YES friends and students of the institute participated in the event. TIB's position paper on International Youth Day 2016 was presented there. After that, the students shared their opinions about the role of the youth against corruption.

YES- Group of Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University also arranged a similar programme on 18 August in TIB's Dhanmondi office. At the end of the programme, participants agreed to play a more effective roll in the upcoming anti-corruption activities

### **Workshop on Anti Corruption Documentary Making**

YESGroup of Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University arranged a workshop on anti-corruption documentary making on 18 August in TIB office. YES members and YES Friends of the Group participated in the workshop. They tried to make a visual presentation on the corruption related activities around the society to make people aware against corruption. It is a new anti-corruption tools which TIB is trying to introduce with the YES members.

### **CCC News**

#### **Head Teachers and SMC Presidents Together to Improve the Quality of Primary Education**

Head teachers and SMC Presidents of 25 Government Primary Schools under MunsiganjSadarUpazilaput forward a number of recommendations to improve transparency, accountability and quality of education both at the local and central level. The recommendations were presented in the 22 August 2016 program titled ‘Measures to be taken at the local level to improve transparency and accountability in primary education sector’ organized by CCC Munshiganj with cordial support from SadarUpazila Education Office of Munshiganj. Member of CCC Munshiganj Freedom Fighter Md. Ali Akbar presided over the meeting while ADC (General, Education and ICT) Mohammad Harun-Ur-Rashid was present as chief guest and UpazilaNirbahi Officer of SadarUpazilaMs. SuraiyaJaman, District Primary Education Officer PanchananBala, UpazialEducation Officer Taslima Begum and Senior Program Manager of TIBFojilaKhanom were present as special guests.





Some of the recommendations are setting the teacher-student ratio at 1:30, ensuring class room and teachers for pre-primary school, allocation of khas land for school, providing government financial support for the arrangement of mid day meal for the students in school, immediate recruitment of vacant position of the teachers, improve the quality of the books provided by the government, taking effective measures to reduce drop out rate of the students etc. The recommendations also embraced the issues of removing the infrastructural problems of the schools by the government initiatives, preparing a policy keeping the probation of minimum educational qualification for selection of SMC members, formation of SMC without any interference of politics, organizing regular meeting of SMC and ensuring the participation of women members etc.

Upazila Education Officer Taslima Begum shared that Noyagaon Government Primary School has become upgraded 'A' grade and a model school for Munshiganj district for various initiatives jointly undertaken by CCC, Munshiganj and Upazila Education Office. She assured that initiatives to solve the problems identified by CCC will gradually be undertaken. District Primary Education Officer hoped that these initiatives will speed up the improvement of primary education as well as spread the practice of transparency and accountability at education sector. Chief guest Mohammad Harun-Ur-Rashid praised the initiatives of CCC for the improvement of primary education and recommended to continue such activities. He expressed the opinion that if stakeholders related to primary education play their responsible role, there will be improvement in the quality of primary education. CCC Member Ms. Khaleda Khanom presented the thematic paper and Ms. Fojila Khanom presented the TIB-CCC activities on education issues in the meeting. CCC member Tanvir Hasan moderated the meeting where among others CCC member prominent educationalist Professor Sukhen Chandra Banerjee, Shahid-E-Hasan Tuhin, Sabera Akter Soby, Assistant District Primary Education Officer Nazrul Islam and Assistant Upazila Education Officer Md. Abdul Matin took part.

### **Initiative to Ensure Quality Health Services to People**

A joint meeting with service recipients and Patiya Health Complex authority was held on 23 August 2016 at the hall room of Patiya Health Complex with an aim to improve the quality of services of the health complex. Patiya Upazila Health and Family Planning Officer Dr. Md. Shafiqul Islam presided over the meeting while CCC member Meherunnesa Begum delivered welcome speech. Dr. Md. Shafiqul Islam shared that all required initiatives have been undertaken with a view to increase the quality of health services of Patiya Health Complex. Nowadays on average around 400 people are getting treatment daily from outdoor while more than 50 patients are getting treatment at indoor. Two doctors are serving the patients in the emergency unit and initiatives has been taken to mend the X-ray machine which was non-functional for a long time due to staff shortage and low voltage of electricity. He assured to take action if any service recipients place complaint. He requested the service recipients to be more careful about the touts when they come to the health complex for treatment.



In the open discussion session the service recipients pointed out many service related problems concerning the health complex. In the meeting a Complain and Advise Box was handed over to Patiya Health Complex Authority on behalf of CCC, Patiya. Among others Residential Medical Officer Dr. Sujan Kumar Dhar, Dr. Abirul Islam, Dr. Sarder Md. Gias Uddin and Area Manager of CCC, Patiya Md. Jahangir Alam spoke at the meeting. Dr. Henara Begum, Senior Staff Nurse Arpita Dutta, Jahanara Begum, CCC member Nitamoy Chowdhury, Md. Solaiman, Mahmudul Haque, Project Manager of Nari Unnoyon Shakti, Upazila Manager Md. Foyaz Ali, TIB Staff and YES members were present in the meeting.

### **Initiative to Ensure Quality Health Services to People**

Information Fair and Public Hearing were organized at Mohanganj Upazila of Netrokonabased on the theme 'Information is Power: Know, notify and will resist corruption' on 10 August 2016. Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC), Committee of Concerned Citizens (CCC), Mymensingh Sadar and Durniti Protirodh Committee (DUPRAK), Mohanganjin cooperation with Netrokona district administration and Mohanganj Upazila Administration jointly organized the Information Fair and the Public Hearing in the auditorium of Mohanganj Upazila Parishad.

Chief guest Dr. Nasiruddin Ahmed, ACC Commissioner stated that through organizing public hearing and information fair human rights and government services to the citizens were being ensured. He assured to take

effective measures to address the complaints raised in the public hearing. ACC Commissioner sought cooperation from all to resist corruption. He also discussed about erecting display boards declaring citizen charter in the open place of all offices, displaying the name along with the picture of Designated Officers, fixation of union wise land price, providing services to the citizens according to the existing laws and policies etc. In order to increase the satisfaction to government services, ACC Commissioner emphasized need to extending cordial behavior from the government employees to the service recipients. He advised the relevant officers to resolve the discussed problems within a short time and to make follow-ups.

The Public Hearing was moderated by Deputy Commissioner of Netrokona district Dr. Mushfiqur Rahman while CCC President Sharifuzzaman Parag delivered welcome speech on behalf of CCC-TIB. Among other institutions, Mohanganj Upazila Land Office, Sub-Registry Office, Upazila Health Complex, Social Welfare Office, Palli Bidduyut Samati, Cooperative Office etc. participated in the hearing. The local citizens raised complaints against different institutions for getting services. In the Question and Answer session the respective authority made commitment to resolve the problems raised by local citizens. Information Fair and the Public Hearing were inaugurated by the guests following a colorful anti-corruption rally. A total of 20 public and private institutions provided their service related information to the visitors by installing booths in the information fair, among them 17 were from govt. organizations. Representatives from different government institutions, people's representatives, journalists, women leaders, local citizens participated the events.



### Journalists Promise to Work for Combating Corruption

Journalists from different media working in Rajshahi pledged to work for combating corruption in association with CCC, Rajshahi City. The pledge came out in an opinion sharing meeting organized by CCC, Rajshahi City on 18 August 2016 at CCC office. The journalists pointed out that the social movement against corruption must be intensified and they expressed their solidarity with the activities of TIB. CCC President Professor Md. Abdus Salam presided over the meeting while the journalists of print and electronic media of Rajshahi took part.



In the meeting CCC member Akbarul Hasan Millat shared TIB and TI's vision, activities etc. through a PowerPoint presentation. He pointed out that though participating in the social movement against corruption and writing report on corruption in the media both are risky tasks, we must, as concerned citizens, carry on with integrity. In the open discussion session Staff Correspondent of Daily Amar Desh Bulbul Habib stated that journalism is also a social movement like TIB's social movement against corruption. These two movements could jointly resist corruption from Bangladesh. Staff Reporter of Daily Sonali Sangbad Taiyabur Rahman emphasized the need of the efficiency and carefulness while writing a report on corruption. Special Correspondent of Daily Sun Shine Rashed Ripon expressed that people should be awakened against corruption and TIB could play a vital role in this regard. CCC President Professor Abdus Salam said that we will work together in social movement against corruption.

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