

National News

The Government of Bangladesh to annually observe the International Anti-Corruption Day (IACD) on 9th December

On 10th July 2017, the Government of Bangladesh has approved to commemorate the International Anti-Corruption Day (IACD) officially on 9th December every year. Proposed by the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC), the government's endorsement is expected to play pivotal role in enhancing public understanding of corruption issues, good governance principles and measures to fight against corruption. The decision also includes Bangladesh in the list of countries officially observing the IACD.



The breakthrough government approval has emerged as a remarkable outcome of last four years' relentless advocacy led by Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) with the Government of Bangladesh including directly with the Prime Minister's Office to persuade them to officially observe the annual IACD. As part of efforts to persuade the government on the significance of official observance of IACD, TIB apprised ACC about its communication with the Government on the IACD issue.

After the release of Anti-Corruption Agency (ACA) study by TI Bangladesh in July 2016, ACC was further apprised on this and it was proposed that if they took it up directly with the Government the case may be stronger. The ACA Chair responded positively, welcomed TIB's technical input in preparing the supporting documentation for their submission. The decision of the Cabinet to observe the IACD will be formalized soon through an official gazette notification.

The observance of IACD officially all across the country will add extra agility in the advocacy initiatives and citizens' engagement in the movement against corruption which eventually will play instrumental role in accomplishing significant progress of attaining goals included in government's Vision 2021, Seventh Five Year Plan and SDGs.

In a media statement, TIB hailed the Government's decision to observe the day nationally. TIB's Executive Director Dr. Iftekharuzzaman said the government has shown its best intention to hold its promise of curbing corruption in the country. It is consistent with the policies adopted by the government to establish good governance, and will also help in achieving specific anti-corruption indicators as enshrined in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), he observed.

Awareness to reduce carbon emission vary across six South Asian countries

Despite the fact that Governments in each of six South Asian countries including Bangladesh pledged to reduce GHG emission, a study finding revealed that the level of awareness to reduce carbon emission vary across different stakeholders. Also, Government and academic groups are less aware about the pledges by the government than NGOs and private sectors players, unearthed in a study by TIB titled "Unbundling Pledges, Actions of INDCs and Measuring Public Perceptions - A Methodological Study: The Case of South Asian Countries".



The findings of the study were unveiled in a press conference on 24 July 2017 at TIB's Dhaka office. TIB's Executive Director Dr. Iftekharuzzaman; Adviser, Executive Management of TIB Professor Dr. Sumaiya Khair; and Senior Programme Manager of the Climate Finance Governance (CFG) unit of TIB M Zakir Hossain Khan were present in the event while Professor Dr. A.K. Enamul Haque, Director of Asian Centre for Development presented the research findings.

Considering the GHG emissions pledges of six South Asian countries, the study examined the governments initiatives towards their intended GHG emission reduction path, public perception about the acceptance of the chosen path and progress made so far on GHG emission reduction. Dividing the concerned stakeholders into two broad categories: 1) Government and Academics and 2) Private sector, NGOs and CSOs, the study collected their opinions through e-questionnaire. The study used responses from 140 people of these countries, collected from 17 November 2016 to 30 April 2017.

The study found that in Bangladesh, both groups of stakeholders are less skeptical on use of 'standardized gadgets' and 'accredited auditors' to reduce GHG emissions. In Bangladesh, level of awareness of energy efficient technologies among government and academic groups are much higher than that of private players and NGOs.

Perception on using rail and water transport systems to reduce GHG emission is much lower among private players too. The same is true for energy efficient fans to reduce emissions. Among the 6 major steps pledged

by the government in the INDC, fuel switching for brick kilns and promoting combined cycle power plants is relatively less known than other actions of the government.



Study showed that the top 10 strategies for reducing GHG in Bangladesh are: 1) reducing traffic jams, 2) upgrading urban bus services, 3) improving traffic management, 4) energy efficient power production, 5) fuel switching for brick kilns, 6) modernization of power plants (to make them energy efficient), 7) promotion of waste to energy projects in cities, 8) standardizing energy efficient gadgets, 9) Promoting improve cooking stoves in rural areas and 10) energy audits in factories.

TIB Executive Director Dr. Iftekharuzzaman said, “Bangladesh is playing active role in different levels from the beginning of climate change discussion globally. It is very encouraging that the government of Bangladesh created climate change fund prior to any foreign aids for adaptation activity. Though in South Asian countries electricity production and other carbon emission sources are under the control of government and they are responsible for emission reduction, this study reveals that general people, private sector and other stakeholders can play significant role on this besides government.”

Recommendations suggested in the study included, thorough examination of GHG emission reduction policies suggested by the governments in the light of public perception and reprioritization of their action plan for GHG reduction; incentive based policies to promote energy efficient production and consumption; assistance from development partners to these countries to examine their public policies in terms of tax, subsidy and other regulations to create incentives for firms to become energy efficient and thus contribute to reduce GHG emission.

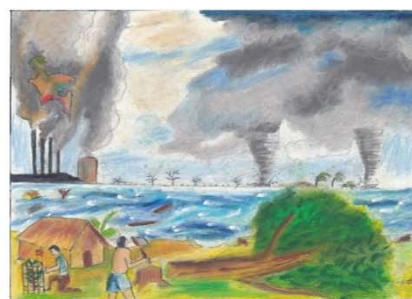
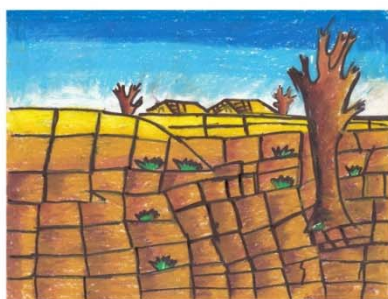
Art competition on World Environment Day

On 29 July, junior artists of the different High Schools in Dhaka illustrated their dream Bangladesh on Climate Change issue, while participated in an Art Competition organized by Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) to mark the World Environment Day 2017. The best six artists were awarded with books, crest and certificate, while those artists received recognition as ‘Special Mention’ was also awarded with book and a certificate.



Best Artworks of the competition

In the morning, a total of 68 students participated from 29 schools in two categories as group A, class 6-8 and group B, class 9-10 took part in the competition organized at the Bangladesh Shishu Academy (BSA) premises in Dhaka. The artists did their artwork on “Amar Shwapner Bangladesh o Jalbayu Paribartan (Bangladesh-My Dream: Climate Change)”.



Best Artworks of the competition

The event was organized on the theme of ‘Demanding transparency, accountability and citizens' participation in protecting environment to ensure the Sustainable’.



Best Artworks of the competition

Later in the afternoon, eminent Artist Mustafa Monwar, inaugurated the ceremony as the chief guest, and he said “Bangladesh is a country of art and culture. Children should be motivated according to their interest”. Artists Md. Muniruzzaman and Samina Nafies were also attended the event as guest of honour. The winners from group A were Nafisa Tabassum Reedy, 1st place from Viqarunnisa Noon School and College, Samia Hoque, 2nd place from T&T Girls High School and Arian Hasan Khan, 3rd place from Mirpur Cantonment Public School.

Under group B, the award recipients were Mst. Hosna Ara Sriti, 1st place from Dhaka Govt. Blind/Deaf and Dumb School, Zinnat Akter, 2nd place from Dhaka Ideal Cadet School and Md. Miraz Biswas, 3rd place from University Laboratory School and College.

South Asian Youth Debaters call for transparency, accountability and integrity in climate adaptation finance



Young debaters of South Asian countries stressed on ensuring transparency, accountability and integrity in climate finance adaptation and called for just and equitable share of the climate finance to adapt to climate change and mitigate its adverse impact. They further urged the developed countries responsible for the climate change to provide compensation as promised in the global platforms.



The recommendations emerged from a two-day long Westminster Parliamentary Style debate competition held in Dhaka from 19-20 July 2017 involving University level debaters from South Asian countries, selected through

national level competitions. A total of 16 debaters from 8 universities from Maldives, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh competed in the debate on the theme “Transparency, Accountability and Integrity: The Key to Ensuring Effective Mobilization and Use of Adaptation Finance” from 19 July 2017. After completion of three round of preliminary debate, the two-day South Asian debate competition concluded on 20 July 2017 urging the developed and developing countries to ensure the highest level of transparency accountability and integrity in climate finance. The topic of the final debate was “Developed and Developing countries have equal responsibility to ensure Transparency, Accountability and Integrity in Climate Finance Governance”.

In continuity of TIB’s year long advocacy and youth engagement programme to raise awareness and motivate young people to raise their voices against corruption through different social accountability tools, TIB organized the event to acquaint South Asian youth on adaptation finance related governance issues and enhance learning and knowledge sharing on effective implementation of adaptation finance projects ensuring good governance, especially transparency, accountability and participation.

The initiative also eyed to develop a network of youth stakeholders on adaptation finance governance in South Asia for strengthening collaboration on common issue.

In the final, Team Sri Lanka from Sri Lanka Law College became Runner up while Team Islamic University of Technology (IUT) of Bangladesh emerged Champion by defeating Tribhuvan University, Nepal and Institute of Business Administration (IBA), University of Dhaka also. Sadaf Md. Halim of IUT bagged the coveted 'Best Debater' award. Earlier in Bangladesh, 12 university teams from both public and private attended in national round debate on 19 May to qualify in the South Asian Round and four winner teams competed in the South Asian Round.



TIB seeks review of National Online Mass Media Policy and Urges to form a Broadcast commission

Voicing concerns over couple of provisions of newly approved Mass Media Online Policy 2017 in the cabinet, Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) called upon the government to halt the implementation of the policy until formulation of a broadcast commission and rectification of such provisions in participatory system. The organization also urged to form an independent, neutral and effective broadcasting commission with universally acceptable individuals in coordination with the relevant stakeholders.

In a statement released on 6 July 2017, TIB Executive Director Dr. Iftekharuzzaman said taking opinion from the stakeholders in preparation of the draft online policy by the information ministry was a positive example; however their opinions and recommendations were not properly reflected on the outcome, which caused a potential risk of blocking freedom of expression of online and other media.

Noting the ambiguity of the definition of the online media, Dr. Zaman said considering registered agencies and organizations in Bangladesh as online media and bringing those under the policy is irrational, so the definition of the online media should be clearer. He observed that as per the policy, the editorial policy of the media outlets is supposed to get clearance from the proposed broadcast commission, which may hamper the freedom of mass media and impede media development. Besides, the online media with others must abide by controversial clauses such as subsection 57 (1) and section (80), (86) of Information and Communication Technology Law 2006; 5 (1.3), 5 (1.5) and 5 (1.9) of National Broadcast Policy, 2014 as these are included in the policy, which is main obstacle to the fair development of mass media and contrary to the freedom of thought and conscience recognized by the constitution.

TIB also urged the government to form an independent broadcast commission immediately with qualified, acceptable and neutral individuals in the relevant sector in consultation with relevant stakeholders, and called upon the government to ensure work environment, so that the commission can work fearlessly and impartially. TIB further urged the government not to provide the temporary responsibility of policy implementation to the information ministry and halt the implementation to ensure increased press freedom until the proposed commission was formed.

Female members will uphold transparency and accountability at UP's activities

Female members of five Union Parishads of Rangpur Sadar upazila made commitment to uphold transparency and accountability at UP activities at a training workshop organized by the Committee of Concerned Citizens (CCC), Rangpur with assistance of Rangpur Sadar Upazila administration. The training workshop was held on 10 July 2017 at Rangpur Sadar Upazila Parishad Hall Room.

Sadar Upazila Nirbahi Officer Mr. Ziaur Rahman inaugurated the workshop. He said, female members have a vital role to ensure transparency and accountability on activities Union Parishad. But they are not clearly aware about their roles and responsibilities. This workshop will be an effective platform to reduce this gap. He also addressed that female members face various difficulties to take and implement initiatives. He encouraged female members to lodge formal complaint to him, if they face in such case. In welcome speech, Ms Moshfeka Razzak, president of CCC, Rangpur made importance to women empowerment and raising women's voice for their own rights.



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14 female members of five UPs participated in the training workshop. The participants learned about the activities of Union Parishad, role of UP members, specifically the female members, importance of transparency and accountability at UP's activities etc. Relevant Programme Manager and Area Manager of TIB conducted the training sessions.

Authority assures to meet patient's expectations through strengthening supervision

With an aim to increase the quality of health services, an opinion sharing meeting with the authority of Comilla Medical College Hospital was organized at Director's room of the Hospital on 19 July 2017. President of CCC Comilla Mr. Ali Akbar Masum presided over the programme. Findings received from service recipients who visited the YES driven Satellite Advice and Information Desk at the hospital premises were shared in the meeting.

Service recipients of the hospital welcomed the disclosure of information related to health services while visiting the Satellite AI desk. They demanded to cut off extra fees of various tests and to take initiatives for cleanliness activities of different wards. Director of the hospital Dr. Swapan Kumar Adhikari said, already initiatives have been taken to the said concerns. He instantly instructed relevant staff members of the hospital to ensure government circulated proper fees for getting services.



Director made commitment to ensure good governance and strong monitoring system to meet the expectations of service seekers. CCC, Comilla handed over few festoons to the authority regarding raising awareness of both service providers and receivers. Hospital authority agreed to introduce comment register book at Gynae, Pediatrics, Medicine and Surgery wards for the service recipients.

Active Mothers Forum identifies few problems to ensure quality education

Active Mothers Forum of Bhutiargati Government Primary School of Jhenaidah Sadar upazila identified few problems to ensure quality education. They shared the issues in an opinion sharing meeting with CCC, Jhenaidah held on 16 July 2017 at Bhutiargati. CCC president Md. Abu Taher presided over the meeting while Coordinator Active Mothers Forum Ms Jesmin Islam and Coordinator Monowara shared the issues. Members of the Active Mothers Forum



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shared that students of the school are very weak in English and Mathematics; teachers should provide extra efforts for weak students. They demanded to recruit subject wise teachers at the school. Mothers also urged to ensure transparency and accountability in activities of Bhutiargati Government Primary School. They agreed in the meeting to raise these issues in multi-stakeholders meeting.

Anti-Corruption Campaign at Lama Adorsho School

YES Friends group of Lama & Alikodom organized anti-corruption campaign at Lama Adorsho Government Girls High School in Bandarban district on 30 July 2017. Anti-corruption oath taking, cartoon exhibition and extempore speech competition and discussion meeting organized at the school as part of the campaign. Six hundred students along with teachers took part in oath taking session and head teacher of the school Mr. M. A. Imtiaz moderated the oath taking programme.

A discussion meeting was organized at the school in where Mr. Ang Thoyai Hla and Mr. Muhammad Mohiuddin Sydee, teachers of the school, Mr. Tanfizur Rahman, member of DUPRAK delivered their speech. Discussants made importance to motivate themselves to lead corruption free life.

ULAB says NO to plagiarism



Faculties and students of University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB) took anti-plagiarism oath in an oath taking ceremony organized by ULAB -YES Group at its Campus-A in Dhanmondi on 20 July 2017. In addition, the participants of the event also signed the statement of oath to show their solidarity with the message and provided their feedback on the program through a survey questionnaire.

In the highly appreciated initiative by the youth voluntary group, the Chief Guest Professor Milon Kumar, Treasurer, applauded the organizers and participants at the event. Among others, ULAB Co-Curricular Coordinator and Associate Professor, ULAB School of Business Dr. Pinky Shah and Advisor of ULAB YES and Senior lecturer, ULAB School of Business Mr. Muhammad Hasibul Hasan were also present along with other faculties and students.

Dr. Pinky Shah had expressed her desire to include such initiative in other academic and co-curricular events at the university and requested to arrange such event prior to every semester final examination. To appreciate the courageous step of the students and faculties, ULAB YES conferred on the participants with TIB's badges.

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