

NATIONAL NEWS

TIB calls for transparency in new policy formulation for the gold business

The government should equally be responsible as the relevant traders and the authority concerned for the widespread corruption, fraudulence and dependency on smuggling in gold business as well as the lack of specific policy and shortage of proper law enforcement, said TIB. In formulation of a new policy for the gold sector stated in the budget speech, the anti-graft organization further urged the government to take effective steps in formulation and implementation of time-befitting policy framework immediately involving relevant stakeholders preferring transparency and accountability in composition of the policy.

In a statement released on 9 June, 2017, TIB Executive Director Dr. Iftekharuzzaman said, “Despite left out in the cold for long time, the recently launched raids by Bangladesh Customs Intelligence and Investigation Directorate should be applicable equally to all the organizations in accordance with complete legal procedures without being under any fear or influence. Likewise, any unauthorized interruption or effort to influence the process by relevant business association or any other party is completely unreasonable, unethical and illegitimate. Getting involved in any such activity is similar to the role of a conducive to corruption. We believe the directorate will get total support of the higher authority of the government in the initiative and similarly, the jewelers association will refrain from creating any barrier in application of law. Similarly, the other business sectors should be brought under scrutiny to ensure not such illegal business activities are being conducted.”

Noting that there is high possibility of making the jewelry business of Bangladesh more dynamic and upgrade the trade into an industry instrumental to sustainable development if a complete, time-befitting and effective gold import and business policy equipped with adequate provisions to ensure transparency and accountability can be formulated and applied, TIB Executive Director added, “due to lack of transparent provision and law in the sector, a group of corrupt businessmen has been conducting the gold business depending upon corruption, fraudulence and money-laundering in unethical ways, notwithstanding it is not only mysterious that no corrective steps or initiatives of the regulatory authority concerned against the wrongdoing were noticed for year after year, but also terribly harmful for the national economy. The accountability of the officials of relevant organizations concerned with such negligence and collusion should be ensured following appropriate legal process.”

Having mentioned that there is no alternative to sincere cooperation and goodwill of relevant all the parties to ensure good governance in the jewelry business, TIB urged the government and Bangladesh Jewelry Association to play instrumental role in appropriate application of law and immediately take necessary steps in formulating a gold import and business policy through mutual negotiation.

ACC and TIB to continue joint activities against corruption

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) and the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) agreed to continue joint efforts in prevention of corruption through increasing cooperation and joint activities. In this regard, to forge a further collaborative partnership and engagement in promoting their respective interrelated mandates, the two anti-graft organizations signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) at the ACC's head office in Segunbagicha, Dhaka on 5 June, 2017 which includes 15 points of joint activities in the areas of anti-corruption research, advocacy, capacity building of anti-corruption advocates and joint management of activities. The newly signed MoU is an extension with more robust joint initiatives of the previously signed 2 years MoU which ended in May 2017.



TIB Executive Director Iftekhazzaman and ACC Director General Dr. M Shamsul Arefin signed the deal on behalf of the two respective sides. During the signing ceremony, speakers agreed that corruption if can't be prevented collectively, will adversely affect the future generation, calling upon all to come forward and raise a firm voice against corruption. They further hoped the increasing collaboration and joint activities of the two organizations will play significant role in preventing corruption in the country though the goals and objectives of TIB and ACC are identical where TIB can only conduct preventive activities while ACC has the authority to take remedial actions. Among others, ACC Chairman Iqbal Mahmud, Commissioner AFM Amin ul Islam, Secretary Abu Md. Mustafa Kamal along with other senior officials from ACC and TIB were present at the ceremony.

The MoU is significant as it aims to ensure the required synergy between the two organizations in promoting democratic good governance principles focusing anti-corruption values is realized. The continued partnership between the organisations is invigorated with remarkable successes of joint efforts under the earlier MoU under which both the organizations gained outstanding achievements with wide youth involvement. During the period, both the anti-graft organizations held 23 public campaign and advocacy events i.e. information fares and public hearings, anti-corruption rallies, cartoon competition, follow-ups of public hearings, human chains across the country. In the capacity building part, TIB and ACC jointly organized training workshop on Right to Information

Act for the designated Information Officers of ACC, where 23 officers from different part of the country participated.

The newly signed MoU stipulates undertaking joint activities of the two anti-graft organizations to implement and monitor public awareness regarding anti-corruption laws, anti-corruption campaign all across the country at upazila and district levels involving members of Satata Sangha (integrity association) to aware people about corruption marking the International Anti-Corruption Day on December 9. Besides, ACC will investigate into complaints following legal provisions received through TIB two initiatives 'Report Corruption' and 'Advocacy and Legal Advice Centre (ALAC)' with monitoring and follow up of the cases.

Collaboration also covers research and campaign; capacity building activities of the anti-corruption activists i.e. the capacity building of the members of Satata Sangha (integrity association), youth voluntary associate group of Durniti Protirodh Committee (DUPROC) formed by ACC following TIB inspired Committee for Concerned Citizens (CCC), SWAJAN, Youth Engagement Support (YES) and YES friends. At the local level, both the organizations will adopt, implement, monitor and evaluate variety of anti-corruption initiatives involving youth in the Zilla and Upazilla level.

It is highly expected that the new MOU between ACC and TIB will add significant impact usher in ongoing mobilization of citizenry through various preventive efforts to send a strong message to end corruption and punish the corrupt without fear or favor.

TIB calls to review inconsistent and corruption-friendly proposals placed in the Budget 2017-18

Terming the budget placed for fiscal 2017-18 'Guideless', TIB voiced concerns over the proposals of recapitalization of tax money in corruption-prone state-owned commercial banks, discriminatory taxation on lower- and middle-income people and continuation of opportunity of whitening black money, imposition of 10 percent tax on import of solar panel and lack of specific guidelines to ensure transparency and accountability to reduce corruption in the mega projects. In a statement released on 6 June, 2017, expressing fear that such proposals would only institutionalize corruption, the anti-graft organization demanded reconsiderations of the proposals.

Pointing inconsistencies in the proposals, TIB Executive Director Dr. Iftekhharuzzman said the banks recapitalization would only encourage embezzlement of money instead of curbing the ongoing corruption in the banking sector and ending money laundering. Moreover he said although there is no proposal in the proposed budget to check the ongoing corruption in the banking sector and money laundering, allocation of 20 billion Tk to state-owned commercial banks ultimately indicates patronizing and promoting corruption. Not only that, it is an evil initiative to institutionalize current loan default and looting culture in the banking sector at the expense of people's money, he further added.

The proposal to impose excise duty on the bank account balance of the limited and middle-income people would also create a barrier in the way of earning a little more money legally, said Dr. Zaman. He said Tax proposals have created additional burden on middle and low income people compared to that of wealthy and rich people, which is discriminatory in one hand and not sustainable in the other hand. He said the government is gradually getting dependent on VAT due to failure in increasing revenue by the revenue authority through expanding the tax net. The result will finally cause unbearable burden on the general people especially the low-income and limited income people; in addition of inflation and collusion of dishonest traders, the overall output will increase dissatisfaction of general people and create unrest.

Dr. Zaman also expressed dissatisfaction on the inadequate allocation of 1 Billion Tk to Bangladesh Climate Change Trust Fund (BCCTF) where a minimum amount of 4 Billion Tk is needed. He urged the government to implement a people-friendly revenue policy by avoiding corruption-friendly path and calls to take attempt of effective institutional reforms for good use of public money instead of causing unethical burden on the citizens.

CCC NEWS

Increase Scope for Women UP Members' Participation in Decision Making Process



The efficiency of the women members of the Union Parishad (UP) needs to be enhanced more and their active participation in UP affairs should be further increased for quality service delivery. The call was made by the speakers at an advocacy meeting with the UP Chairman of Jhalakati Sadar Upazilla on 21 June 2017. Titled 'Ensuring Quality and People Friendly UP Services' with the slogan 'Local Development: The Quest for Transparency, Accountability and People's participation', the event was organized by Committee of Concerned Citizens (CCC), Jhalakati with District Administration held at the Deputy Commissioner's office.

Chaired by Delawar Hossain Matubbar, Deputy-Director, Local Government, the Deputy Commissioner of Jhalakati Mr. Hamidul Haque attended the event as the Chief Guest and Md. Sultan

Hossain Khan, Chairman of Upazilla Parishad and Md. Makbul Hossain, Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) of Jhalakati Sadar Upazilla were present as the Special Guests in the meeting.

In the meeting, Md. Hamidul Haque stressed the need to raise the efficiency of the women members of the UP and their active participation in UP affairs. He advised the UP Chairman to take steps in the light of CCC's observation on UP's Vulnerable Group Development (VGD) program. Delawar Hossain Matubbar made couple of instructions to the UP Chariman to enhance the quality of services of the UP. He underscored the need to mobilize the UP Standing Committee and keeping the resolutions properly.

Noting Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's call for war against corruption, Md. Sultan Hossain Khan urged everyone to work for fulfilling Bangabandhu's dream of a Sonar Bangla. Md. Makbul Hossain thanked CCC for its pioneering role in implementing the VGD monitoring activities and urged to continue with increased involvement. Md. Lal Miah, the President of CCC, Jhalakati urged everyone to take active role against corruption.

Earlier in the meeting, Md. Firoz Uddin, Program Manager of TIB gave a multi-media presentation in the meeting depicting the current problems of Union Parishad, the ways to make UP more functional under existing laws and the recommendations of participants of a workshop exploring the role and duties of elected women members of UP held on 30 November 2016. This was followed by open discussion by UP Chairman on their plans to enhance the quality of services of UP.

CCC's Vice-President Rabeya Kabir moderated the meeting and CCC's Vice-President Mr. Hemayet Uddin Himu delivered welcome speech. Among others CCC members, TIB officials and YES members also attended the meeting.

Findings on Climate Finance Projects shared with implementing body

CCC, Brahmanbaria organized a meeting with Water Development Board (WDB), Brahmanbaria for sharing the report of a study on Climate Finance Projects on 19 June 2017. As a part of TIB's



initiative to ensure good governance in climate finance, the study inspected the 'Flood control embankment project along the right bank of Titas river under Sadar Upazilla of Brahmanbaria' funded by Bangladesh Climate Change Trust Fund (BCCTF). The study was conducted by collecting information in the light of five indexes of governance (i.e. the relevance of the project, transparency, accountability, integrity and civic engagement).

According to the findings of the study, the Executive Engineer of the agency that is implementing the project, local representatives of the people and the majority of the beneficiaries of the project observed that the decision to implement the project in that area was justified. The study report put forward a number of recommendations to ensure transparency and accountability which included

ensuring the accountability, people's participation, ensuring the transparency of the project and the practice of integrity etc.

The WDB officials present at the program assured that they would present the study report to their higher authorities. They discussed the need for the appointment of a Designated Officer for ensuring the transparency and accountability of the project. In the meeting the CCC members and TIB officials discussed for arranging a 'Public Hearing' to ensure people's participation and the WDB officials pledged to take decision of such program soon.

Executive Engineer of WDB, Md. Saifullah, Vice-President of CCC Engineer Md. Rafiqul Islam, Convener of CCC's the Climate Finance Governance related Sub Committee Mr. Abdun Noor and CCC member Md. Arzu, Senior Program Manager of TIB Zakir Hossain Khan and senior officials of WDB were present at the program.

The Role of Journalists in Social Movement against Corruption

CCC, Chakaria organized a discussion meeting with local journalist of Chakaria Upazial of Cox's Bazar district titled 'The Role of Journalists in Social Movement Against Corruption'. In the meeting, the speakers sought cooperation of the news media to prevent corruption.



CCC President A K M Shahabuddin presided over the meeting while TIB's Area Manager Md. Jashim Uddin gave a presentation titled 'Social Movement Against Corruption' which depicted the role of journalists in social movement against corruption along with the emergence of Transparency International (TI) and Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB), the vision and mission of TIB, the necessity of social movement against corruption, the mission and vision of current BIBEC project and its expected outcome.

In the meeting, journalists shared their several engagements with TIB inspired different initiatives. Highlighting on current involvement in health sector, they observed that the quality of services of Chakaria Upazilla Health Complex is gradually deteriorating. The doctors seldom attend office in due time. The patients remain unattended. Moreover, the patients sometimes do not get required medicine from the health complex. The stock of the medicine is not revealed by the authority. Furthermore, labour patients are refused without treatments. The journalists sought the cooperation from TIB to stop the local private health clinics from taking high cost for treatment. The journalists said that there is rampant corruption in different public institutions and CCC has to take active role in fighting the corruption of these institutions. In the meeting the journalist of different print and electronic media of Chakaria actively took part.

CCC-YES Observed World Environment Day 2017

CCCs across the country observed the World Environment Day on 05 June 2017 with an aim to create awareness on the protection of national resources, including the wildlife and forests. Various



programmes, including colorful rally, discussion meeting, quiz competition, Video Drama Projection etc. were chalked out across the country by different CCCs in observance of the day. With a call to make contributions to the preservation of environment and biodiversity, this year's theme of the day was 'Connecting People to the Nature'.

The discussants of different events observed that current acts of human beings are not only contributing to the erosion of biodiversity, but also threatening the survival of many species. The survival of all animals and biodiversity is dependent on nature however rapid industrialization and urbanization along with increasing population cause severe damages to the environment and biodiversity. Due to global warming due to the climate change, polar ice is melting fast which is contributing to sea level rise and forcing the coastal area people leave their dwelling places, the speakers added.

They also expressed grave concern over the risk of environment and biodiversity due to the increase of population and human-induced activities, which are contributing to rise in global warming. The speakers further emphasized on to come forward along with government efforts to protect environment and biodiversity. The speakers also put emphasis on making people aware on the issues of climate change and environmental crises. Through different events, events organized by CCCs emphasized on the transparency, accountability and people's participation in protecting life and environment for sustainable development.

Apart from CCC led YES teams, different YES groups of Dhaka also observed the World Environment Day.



YES group Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University (SAU) organized a seminar to aware the student about the effect of climate change and Climate Finance Governance in Bangladesh on 6 June 2017 in Campus Auditorium. The program was moderated by YES adviser Mr. Rabbani, Asst. Professor,

SAU. On the first half Muhammad Zakir Hossain Khan, Coordinator TIB CFG project presented a paper. Mr. MD. Sumon, Asst. Professor, SAU discuss on the paper. On the question and answer part student share their idea and ask different question. Yes members, YES friends, YES advisers, Teachers and general student of the university were present at the seminar.

In addition, YES group Institute of Social Welfare and Research, DU organized a study circle to observe the World environment day 2017 to aware the YES members about the on effect of climate change and Climate Finance Governance on 1 July 2017 in campus. YES members shared the TIB climate information booklet on “Climate Finance Governance” in the study circle. Relevant Yes members and friends were present and participated in the event.

YES NEWS

The role of citizen journalism in anti-corruption movement



YES Group-Uttara University organized a discussion titled ‘Role of Citizen Journalism in Anti-Corruption Movement’ on 7 June 2017 in their main campus at Ashulia in Dhaka. YES advisers Prof. Md. Khairul Islam Khan, chairman of the department of physical education and Dulali Rani Saha, Assistant Professor of the department of education attended the discussion. Some professors and students of different departments of the university along with YES members participated in the programme.

TIB Deputy Programme Manager Md. Masum Billa clarified the definition and characteristics of citizen journalism and highlighted the importance of social media as a tool for citizen journalists in his discussion and presentation. As the key discussant, he pointed out the opportunity of utilization of the power of social media in forming public opinion to fight corruption at different layers of the society. He also discussed the risk of misuse of social media in the context of ICT Act. Prof. Md. Khairul Islam Khan and Ms. Dulali Rani Saha also stressed the importance of citizen journalism in anti-corruption social movement in their speeches. In the open Q/A session, the participants shared their interest and queries with the resource persons. Along with the YES members of the group, students and teachers from different departments of the university also joined the event.

Orientation on Leadership & Communication



YES Group– Stamford University Bangladesh (SUB) organized an Orientation on Leadership & Communication on 1 June 2017 at the Dhanmondi Campus of Stamford University Bangladesh. The event was attended by a total of 30 members’.

Mr. Mohsinul Hakim, Assistant Professor of the Department of Economics, SUB and advisor of the YES group- SUB was present in this program and expressed his valuable experience regarding the issue. He also discussed on Leadership where he highlighted the power of leadership and the process of how to become a good leader. The members of the group also shared their experience and thinking regarding leadership. Later Mr. Zafar Sadiq, Assistant Program Manager, TIB orient the participants on communication process, tools and the rules and norms of different form of leadership communication.

Orientation of the new members and friends



On 14 June 2017 an orientation for the new members of YES group- Department of Development Studies, University of Dhaka held at the conference room of the department. Total 20 new members and friends attended the event.

In the orientation, Mr. Mohammad Zahidul Islam, Senior Program Manager, TIB discussed about TIB and its activities highlighting the role of youth against corruption. Welcoming the new members and friends to TIB’s anti-corruption movement, he expressed his gratitude to the members and wished that their joining to the movement will strengthen the fight against corruption.

Mr. Imran Hossain Bhuiyan, Lecturer, department of Development Studies, DU and advisor of the YES group thanks TIB for providing the opportunity of these voluntary activities for his students. Among others, members of the group and students from different departments were present at the event.

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