

Expected Control over Corruption may contribute 3-4% rise in National Growth

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) Executive Director Dr. Iftekharuzzaman said, “country’s national growth will rise 3-4% if corruption can be controlled at expected level.” Practice of democracy, transparency and accountability are essential in controlling corruption. Political Parties as well as the citizens have the responsibilities to become aware and raise voice in controlling corruption, Dr. Zaman added.



Dr. Zaman was addressing a meeting with CCC, SWAJAN, YES and YES Friends member of CCC, Chapainawabganj at the conference room of Chapainawabganj Municipality on 09 October 2018. Presided over by President of CCC, Chapainawabganj Md. Saiful Islam Reza, the meeting was organized to strengthen anti-corruption social movements at local level.

Dr. Zaman also emphasized on inclusion of the anti-corruption commitments in the election manifesto of all political parties.

In the open discussion, members of CCC, SWAJAN, YES and YES Friends emphasized on inclusion of chapter/article on anti-corruption issues in the curriculum of Primary and Secondary Education, working on the improvement of secondary education, creating awareness on drug abuse, working on the improvement of the quality of living of indigenous people, organizing coordination meeting in the capital at Dhaka with heads of different service sectors and employees of relevant ministry, working on safe migration and stopping coaching business, taking initiatives to reduce corruption at the examination of Teacher’s Registration, engaging more Youths in the anti-Corruption social movement, working on reducing corruption during the appointment of government officials, launching of CCC Offices at Upazila level, organizing Choose the Right Candidates Program (CRCP) etc.

CCC’s Vice-President Golam Faruk Mithun moderated the meeting while CCC member Selina Begum delivered welcome speech. CCC, SWAJAN, YES and YES Friends members, TIB Staffs attended the meeting.

Hospital Authority appreciates CCC's efforts, commits to continue reform initiatives



Reform initiatives at Kishoreganj 250 Bed General Hospital gained momentum especially in cases of service delivery and reducing rampant irregularities. Despite various limitations due to excessive number of service-seekers, many previously unnoticed service-related issues have now been resolved. To ensure better services, the hospital authority is determined to continue such positive initiatives.

These developments were presented in a sharing meeting organized by Committee of Concerned Citizens (CCC), Kishoreganj held on 25 October 2018. Applauding suggestions of Committee of Concerned Citizens (CCC), Kishoreganj' in improving services delivery, the hospital authority wished to continue the initiatives to improve the quality of health services too. In the meeting, appreciating CCCs observations, Superintendent of the hospital Dr. Razia Sultana stated that CCC's recommendations had helped the hospital in resolving the various issues. Despite having limitations, they all tried to improve the environment of the hospital. Due to excessive number of patients it was difficult to provide services at expected level, she added.

In the meeting, the improvements in hospital services and future plans were shared. Area Manager of TIB Md. Fazle Elahi shared CCC's observations and recommendations. It was shared that many positive changes were made like upgrading of emergency services, food quality, cleanliness at different wards of the hospital etc. Nevertheless, there are still scopes for further improvements. In this connection, CCC recommended to increase security of the hospital, strengthen waste management system, control disruptive activities of medical representatives and broker, and restrict the overcrowding of patient's relatives etc.

Assistant Director of the hospital Dr. Ramjan Mahmud, CCC Member Advocate Nasir Uddin Faruque spoke, among others, in the meeting. CCC President Saiful Haque Mollah Dulu thanked hospital authority for their cooperation.

In the meeting, the Principal of Shahid Sayed Nazrul Islam Medical College Dr. Md. Ruhul Amin was present as Chief Guest while Vice-Principal Dr. Sajal Kumar Saha, General Secretary of BMA Dr. M. A. Wahab (Badal), CCC President Saiful Haque Mollah Dulu were present as special guests in the meeting. Among others, Consultants of different departments, representatives of Nurses and Ward Management, CCC and YES Members, TIB employees attended the meeting.

Jhenaidah Hospital Authority to Redress Grievances

Service recipients of Jhenaidah Sadar Hospital discussed issues of grievances regarding prevalent service related problems with the hospital authority. The hospital authority responded to the allegations raised by the service recipients with assurance to resolve those as soon as possible. The sharing meeting was organized by CCC, Jhenaidah on 28 October 2018. Presided over by CCC President Md. Abu Taher, Superintendent of the hospital Dr. Md. Ayub Ali, Dr. Md. Imdadul Haque and Residential Medical Officer Dr. Apurba Kumar Saha spoke at the meeting.



বভলং সিয়েনে: জিনাইদহ সদর হাসপাতালের কর্তৃপক্ষের ডা. মো: আয়ুব আলী

In the open discussion session, pointing to frequent service related problems, the service recipients placed a number of demands which included, among others, implementation of commitment of solving water problem, updating complaint receiving and information providing register, controlling the brokers, visible signs of separate toilets in indoor and outdoor wards, maintenance duty roster of the doctors, appointment of doctors against 16 vacant position etc.

Earlier, Convener of CCC's health Sub-Committee M. Saiful Mabud welcomed the attendees in the meeting. Professor of Govt. KC College Anutos Kumar, Vice-Principal of Jhenaidah College Kazi Mahbubur Rahman, President of Jhenaidah Press Club M. Raihan, General Secretary Nizam Joarder Bablu and CCC's Vice-President Suraiya Parvin Moli, among others, took part in the meeting

Call for amendment of the Digital Security Act scrapping repressive sections

TI Bangladesh (TIB) expressed grave concern over the recently enacted 'Digital Security Bill'. Terming the act as contradictory to the spirit of the Liberation War and the Constitution, TI Bangladesh demanded that the government must overhaul the entire law, including scrapping all the repressive sections.

In a statement released on 2 October, TIB Executive Director Dr. Iftekharuzzaman said, there was no alternative to amending the act by scrapping all the repressing provisions that could be used to gag freedom of expression

and opinion. Although the discussion with the Sampadak Parishad (Editors' Council) over the Act and the announcement to place the issue before the Cabinet had been promising to some extent promising, concern remained as how much it would contribute to appease the insecurity created among the common people, Dr. Zaman said in the statement.

Dr. Zaman also said, "We want to believe that the announcement to place the concerns of the Sampadak Parishad before the Cabinet is a positive step. However, after passing the bill in Parliament in an unusual hurry ignoring grave concerns and specific suggestions of the stakeholders, the suggestion of settling dispute

through discussion has made us more worried.” Dr. Zaman said that the people of the country as well as the media are facing uncertainty as “law enforcers were provided with unabated power which may lead to misuse the repressive sections of the act”.

Dr. Zaman said many sections of the Act go against the spirit of Liberation War and the Constitution and any partial change will not address the sense of insecurity. “There’s no alternative to removing the sections the section that may potentially create obstacle to freedom of speech, freedom of expression and scope of misusing the law in the absence of accountability,” he said. Against this backdrop, any hasty attempt to settle the matter will be frustrating and suicidal, he said adding such steps would make the government's attempt questionable.

TIB also said a timely Act was needed to ensure digital security and that they are not against the Act. However, the attempt to gag freedom of speech is suicidal and undemocratic.

The much-debated Digital Security Act 2018 was passed by Jatiya Sangsad on September 19 with harsh provisions allowing police to frisk or arrest anyone without warrant. Stakeholders including representatives of NGOs, Journalists and rights activists have expressed concerns about the new law, saying it was passed without addressing their concerns.

Lauding approval of ‘Gold Policy 2018’, TIB calls for strict implementation

Welcoming the approval of much-awaited draft of ‘Gold Policy 2018’ in the cabinet meeting, TIB expressed gratitude for allowing the opportunity to contribute to the formulation of the policy considering TIB’s recommendations in this regard. TIB observed

that the policy has created an unprecedented opportunity to ensure transparency and accountability, and overcome lack of good governance that has been prevailing in the gold sector for a long time. To ensure due implementation, TIB called for a complete law in light of the policy for the gold sector.

In a statement released on 4 October, TIB Executive Director Dr. Iftekharuzzaman said, “the approval of the draft of the much-awaited Gold Policy 2018 in the cabinet is certainly a satisfactory step towards establishing good governance in the sector. Now an opportunity to grow the whole sector in light of the policy is created.

TIB Expresses concern over increasing ‘Ghostly cases’

TIB expressed deep concern over implicating people in ‘ghostly cases’ by the law enforcing agencies. Terming such instances as indicative of incompetence and negligence of duty on the part of Police, the anti-graft watchdog urged the law enforcing agency to refrain from such ‘suicidal acts’. In a statement released on 17 October 2018, TIB also demanded the law enforcing agencies remain free of political influence in its duty.

Citing recent media reports that incidents of ‘ghostly cases’ where police had implicated such persons who were not involved in the incident, remained abroad or even died long before, TIB Executive Director Dr. Iftekharuzzaman called such action as example of worrying depletion in professionalism on the part of police.

Dr. Iftekharuzzaman said, “Such incident of falsely implicating people in cases having been influenced by the ruling party is not a new phenomenon. It has unfortunately become a political trend of the country to misuse

government institutions or police to gain political mileage. Questions will be raised normally if such action were the result of professional inadequacy and ineptitude of a section of the police. Even though police have been forced to act upon political influence, it is the responsibility of the force to explain to the people why the dead and persons absent in the country or at the place of occurrence were implicated in the cases.”

Dr. Zaman also said, “On one hand, the use of political influence on law enforcers is an impediment to rule of law; on the other hand, we are very concerned because people will lose confidence in law enforcement agencies and rule of law if inefficiency and professional weakness continue to prevail in the police force.” He urged that the law enforcing agencies give sufficient explanations about the 'ghostly cases' to the countrymen for ensuring transparency and accountability.”

TIB urged the government to take necessary steps to keep state institutions, including police, out of political influence in order to ensure discipline and rule of law. It also called upon the law enforcing agencies to stop such suicidal acts by defining the influence and perform their duties in the spirit of integrity and firmness.

Civil Service Act 2018
“Provision of Prior Permission to arrest public official discriminatory and unconstitutional”: TIB Calls for reconsideration before approval

TIB voiced grave concern over placing the long-awaited draft ‘Civil Service Act 2018’ before the parliament on 21 October keeping the controversial provision of obtaining prior permission to arrest public official. Considering the significance of ensuring capable, public friendly, transparent and accountable public administration, TIB called upon the parliament

not to pass the bill for the ‘Civil Service Act 2018’ pointing out a discriminatory provision in it which is contradictory to the country's constitution.

In a statement released on 22 October 2018, TIB Executive Director Dr. Iftekharuzzaman said, “the proposed provision is discriminatory and contradictory to the constitution. While permission will not be required in case of [taking action against] common people and public representatives for similar kind of offences, adding the provision for [obtaining] permission in case of a certain quarter is contradictory to the constitution, which specifically provides that all citizens are equal before law.”

Dr. Zaman also said, “The contested provision is further contradictory to section 54 of the Code of Criminal Procedure 1898 (CrPC) as it would be an obstacle to ensure honesty, transparency, and high professionalism of state servants, as well as an impartial public administration.” If the bill is passed as it is, it will also be contradictory to the National Integrity Strategy, which was passed during the tenure of this government and is now being implemented, Dr. Zaman added.

The provision in question makes it compulsory for the Anti-Corruption Commission to seek permission before arresting any public servant. As per the bill, no public official can be arrested until a court frames charges against them unless prior permission is obtained from the authorities concerned.

Dr. Zaman expressed fear on the implications of the bill if passed, “If the bill is enacted with this provision, such crime will flourish under the law instead of resisting corruption and irregularities, and the relevant risk of amplification of such crime will increase.” Dr. Zaman urged the government especially the parliamentary Committee to reconsider the draft act and make it public so that all the

stakeholders including relevant experts can provide suggestions.

Earlier, the draft act was placed in parliament on October 21 with the proposed provision

which provides that the Public servants can only be arrested after taking prior permission from the authorities concerned.

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