

Save the World, Save Bangladesh, Save Generations: Youth in Bangladesh in solidarity with Global Climate Strike

To ensure a livable world for the future generation, hundreds of children and youth of Bangladesh called upon the world as well as Bangladeshi political and Government leaders, investors and funders to act responsibly bearing in mind the risks of survival of generations due to climate change and close down all coal-based power projects through gradually increasing use of renewable energy by 2030. Together with other specific demands, they further demanded that the global leaders must take necessary steps to implement the 'Paris agreement' without further delay to ensure committed compensation to the affected countries by the industrially developed polluter countries.



The demands were equivocally made on 27 September in human chains organized by TI Bangladesh in Dhaka and simultaneously 45 different districts and sub-districts of Bangladesh in solidarity with the Global Climate Strike. Chanting the slogan “One World, One Bangladesh: Save the World, Save Bangladesh, Save Generations!”, hundreds of children and youth of Bangladesh formed human chains with placards and banners carrying the specific demands to address critical challenges of climate change. Members of TI Bangladesh inspired Committees of Concerned Citizens (CCCs), Shojon (Citizens for Transparency), YES and YES Friends, and kids and youth with people from communities also attended in the countrywide processions.

“It is a fact that human civilization is now on the verge of destruction. The industrially developed countries are responsible for the crisis. We have to make sure that they cannot escape their responsibilities and commitments. We don’t want any emptier speech or politics regarding implementing the Paris agreement. We want them to be more responsible and implement the commitments they have made in several treaties. We call upon them to not avoid the duty of saving the world today and fulfil your commitment to ensure a livable world for the future generations.” said Dr. Iftekharuzzaman, Executive Director of TI Bangladesh in a human chain in front of the National Press Club at Dhaka on 27 September. Kids and Youth from ‘PLAN International Bangladesh’, ‘Apon Foundation Child Forum Bangladesh’, Friday for Future Bangladesh ‘Let’s Change the World’,

accompanied by TI Bangladesh inspired youth volunteers from different educational institutions of Dhaka, people from different communities and TI Bangladesh staffs also joined the human chain.

Reminding the environmental risk associated with coal-based power plants, Dr. Zaman said, “When the whole world is trying to move away from coal-fired power plants, the government of Bangladesh is including it largely as part of national strategies. Although there are other options, the country has fallen into the trap of coal-based trade interests. Considering the risks already posed for life and livelihoods of future generations, the government and investors should take the initiative to get rid of coal-based power plants.” Describing such strategies as “suicidal”, Dr. Zaman urged the government



to move away from them by dint of moral strength and called upon to shut down all coal-related projects by 2030, and gradually shift to renewable energy projects for the sake of saving the country. Although Bangladesh is considered as one of the least carbon emitter countries, however, if the development of coal-based electricity projects keeps up this pace, we will have to take the responsibility for climate change, added Dr. Zaman.



Acknowledging the exemplary initiative of the Government of Bangladesh in establishing Bangladesh Climate Change Trust Fund, Dr. Zaman emphasized on ensuring its effectiveness. “However, we are following with worry and concern that the finance and allocation in fund is decreasing contrary to the amount it received during the initial stage. Moreover, we urge the relevant authorities to ensure transparency and accountability of the ongoing projects under the fund. TI Bangladesh is ready to assist the government in strengthening transparency and accountability of these projects through citizen’s engagement” concluded Dr. Zaman.



In solidarity with the global strike and the demonstration of TIB inspired Youth volunteers in the capital, youths of 45 CCC areas formed similar human chains on 27 September 2019 at 10:30 am all across the country under respective CCCs. Members of CCC, SWAJON, YES and YES Friends Groups attended along with students & teachers from different educational institutions in

these programmes. Thousands of participants collectively raised voice demanding the guaranty of equality, integrity, transparency, accountability and citizens participation to climate change grant fund, it's accessibility, use and supervision. Participants of the human chain called upon the developed industrial countries liable for the emission of greenhouse gas to disburse funds for compensation as pledged so these could be used for technologies and innovations for adaptation. Reiterating the importance of ensuring the highest level of integrity, transparency, accountability and participation in the management, disbursement and use of climate funds, CCCs called upon stakeholders to work together to facilitate faster and easier access of potential national implementing agencies of countries like Bangladesh to such funds as Green Climate Fund (GCF).

Inspired by the indomitable enthusiasm and firm stance of Greta Thunberg, a 16-year-old environmentalist and activist from Sweden in protest of insufficient initiatives towards the growing risk of climate change by the global political leaderships and policymakers since Climate Conference in 2018, kids and youth from schools and colleges of different countries also joined such protests. To amplify the protest worldwide, students from different schools and colleges of 120 countries around the world organized worldwide protests, rallies, mass protests during the UN emergency climate conference this year which is called as the Global Climate Strike.

TI Bangladesh Celebrated 2019 Int'l Right to Know Day

TI Bangladesh observed 2019 International Right to Know (RTK) Day with great enthusiasm across the country. Besides holding youth-led campaigns to encourage citizens about applying their rights to get information, TI Bangladesh also joined hands with the Information Commission, Bangladesh to observe the day. At local level, in 45 locations of the country, members of the Committees of Concerned Citizens (CCCs), YES, YES Friends and SWAJAN members observed the day with the local administration holding rallies, information fairs, human chains and discussion meetings.

As this year marks the 10th year of the enactment of the Right to Information (RTI) Act in Bangladesh, this year's celebration specially emphasized on the progress so far made and challenges to overcome in implementing the RTI Act. "Notable progress has been made during the first 10 years of the

enactment of the law however it has not yet reached the expected level, albeit 10 years is not a big-time to assess,” said Dr. Iftekharuzzaman, Executive Director, TI Bangladesh in a discussion meeting titled ‘Right to Information Act and fight against corruption; Progress in 10 years and way forward’ in the capital on 26 September.



Strategy-based short, medium and long term action plan involving stakeholders has to be taken for RTI's implementation, said Dr. Zaman. Stressing on the concerted effort of the relevant stakeholders in encouraging citizens to apply the law, “We believe the law will play a significant role in establishing good governance and tackling corruption” hoped Dr. Zaman.

With the theme ‘Tothyer Odhikar, Shushashoner Hatiyar; Toththoi Shakti, durniti theke mukti’ (Right to information is a tool of good governance; Information is power to get rid of corruption), the month-long celebration also focused on ways to increase both demand and supply of information i.e. raise awareness of people and service providers on RTI, encourage pro-active disclosure of information by both public and private sector.

In an effort to strengthen the demand part, in the capital, TI Bangladesh organized a public awareness campaign across the capital for the enforcement of people's right to information. Before the campaign, 110 selected Youth Engagement Support (YES) volunteers were exclusively trained through 5 day-long training in September on the significance of RTI law, how to file RTI application etc. On 19 September, hundreds of Dhaka-based YES members from 16 groups hold public campaigns in



different places of the capital where the trained youth volunteers disseminated thousands of leaflets among the public and show interested people how to file the RTI application.

For the supply part of information, TI Bangladesh organized a day-long training workshop on the Role of Designated Officers (DOs) in Implementing RTI Act 2009 on 27th August 2019 at its Dhaka office which brought together 31 DOs of different public offices. Dr. Iftekharuzzaman inaugurated the training while Mr. Martuza Ahmed, Chief Information Commissioner, Information Commission Bangladesh was present at the concluding session. This joint initiative focused on how to share information proactively with the citizens and to strengthen institutional capacity for disclosure on demand.



As part of the celebration, TI Bangladesh participated in a rally organized by the Information Commission, Bangladesh in front of city's BCS Admin Academy at Shahbagh on 28 September. The rally was inaugurated by the Information Minister Dr. Hasan Mahmud. After the rally, a procession paraded different streets of the city. On the same day, TI Bangladesh also participated in an information fair organized by Information Commission at the national museum, inaugurated by the State Minister of the Ministry of Information Md. Murad Hassan. Chief Information Commissioner Murtuza Ahmed and Information Commissioner Suriya Begum NDC were also present at the event.

At the local level, TI Bangladesh inspired Committees of Concerned Citizens (CCCs) and Youth Engagement and Support (YES) groups also undertook a series of public awareness campaigns in partnership with local authorities and non-government institutions for the enforcement of people's right to information. With the full support of the local administration, which was made possible after TIB's sustained advocacy, relevant government and non-government organizations set up stalls in information fairs. Awareness campaigns included rallies, human chains, street theatres, sticker campaign, advice and information desks, cultural programmes, seminars, discussion meetings and anti-corruption cartoon and photo exhibitions. Besides, different online campaigns were carried out in social media.

Out of many CCCs, CCC, Satkhira provided assistance to the district administration for organizing a two-day long information fair which was held on 28 & 29 September 2019. Besides this, Deputy Commissioner of Kushtia Md. Aslam Hossain inaugurated a day-long information fair organized by the district administration, CCC-Kushtia and British Council, Kushtia.



Throughout the series of programmes during the celebration, TI Bangladesh placed 13 points recommendations including amendment of certain provisions of contradictory laws with RTI act and laws ensuring people's right to information, speech and expression such as Digital Security Act; strengthen information commission; inclusion of business, political

parties and media in the RTI act; ensure proactive disclosure by the government entities; change the culture of secrecy; ensure necessary legal protection of information seekers in the act etc.

TIB played an instrumental role in the enactment of the Right to Information Act 2009 adopted in the Parliament on 29 March 2009, which became operational in July 2009. TIB has been observing the RTK Day since 2006, as the first organization to do so in Bangladesh.

Widespread Corruption in Land Deed Registration: TIB Study stressed on Digitization of Services

Corruption is so widespread in land registry offices of Bangladesh that service seekers are forced to pay bribes at every step to get land-related services. The pervasive graft has become nearly institutionalized by a collusion of the employees of the land offices, local goons, and well-connected people, observed in a Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) study. Titled 'Governance Challenges in Land Deed Registration Service and Way Forward', the study also found that illegal transactions are frequently made for recruitment, promotions, and transfers of the land office staff.

The study, aimed to find out the reasons behind the lack of good governance in land registration-related offices and put recommendations to overcome the challenges, also focused on challenges of implementation of laws, infrastructural limitations, deficiencies of logistics, budget constraints, and inadequate human resources, lack of accountability and coordination which contributed to ever-increasing corruption in the land-related offices.

"It is unfortunate to discover the overwhelmed corruption and pervasive governance deficits in the sector despite a variety of recent positive initiatives by the government. Without a few exceptions, the study clearly shows that all the services are provided based on bribe, in a sense, people are being held hostage to the institutionalization of corruption. Although the sector has mechanisms for accountability and internal control, those were not functioning properly. The corruption and

irregularities there were based on “partnership and agreement”. A kind of “partnership outline” from top to bottom had been established, said Dr. Iftekharuzzaman, Executive Director of TIB in a press conference organized to unveil the study on 9 September at its Dhaka office.



Referring to the study finding that the district registrar and sub-registrar offices are among the most corrupt in the country, Dr. Zaman said, "land registration and corruption have become synonyms in Bangladesh. With corruption curbed and transparency and accountability established, the sector would yield more revenue for the government. The government also needs to modernize the sector, especially by introducing the digitalization of land registration and other land-related services. This would make controlling corruption easier." Dr. Zaman added.

The study, conducted between July 2018 to August 2019, further observed that, service seekers were offered “packages” to have their deeds registered. Sometimes it was a fixed amount and sometimes a percentage of the value of the land. The amount varied depending on the price, type, and location of the land as well as the type of deed and availability of other documents required to get registered. Most service seekers were found little or no idea about the actual fee for having a deed made by deed writers. Most deed writers took additional money from them, even in the name of their association, found the study. The study also identified that 10 to 50 per cent of the collected illegal money goes to Sub-Registrars' pocket and rest go to other officials based on their positions, and a certain share of the bribe goes to the pockets of the officials from the grassroots level to the office of the directorate of Registration.

At the press conference, TIB Chairperson of the Board of Trustees Advocate Sultana Kamal; Adviser Executive Management Professor Dr. Sumaiya Khair, and Director-Research & Policy Mohammad Rafiqul Hassan were also present along with the team of researchers designated for the study.

The study jointly carried out by Deputy Programme Manager Nihar Ranjan Roy, and Programme Manager Shammi Laila Islam of Research & Policy, TIB has conducted monitoring selected 41 sub-registrar offices under 16 district registrar offices as well as interviews with different key stakeholders. The study observed that deed writer in the association of office staffs, copywriter and mohrars (clerks) force the service seekers to pay extra money as bribe showing different excuses, including for ‘office maintenance’.

According to the study, service seekers had to pay up to 5 lakh for deed registration and Tk 1,000 to Tk 7,000 for the copy of a deed. They had to pay Tk 500 to Tk 5,000 to deed writers' association. The report also found that a bribe of 20,000 up to Tk 3 lakh was required to get listed as an apprentice deed copy-maker, get a license for a deed writer, and for inclusion in the deed writers' association. Up to Tk 8 lakh in bribe is required for promotion to Mohorar from an apprentice deed copy-maker, up to Tk 10 lakh for promotion to an office assistant, and up to Tk 20 lakh for transfer of a sub-registrar, according to the study.

The study further observed that the introduction of appointing sub-registrars through the Public Service Commission decreased corruption in their recruitment process. However, the officials and employees in the course of their job extract bribe from the service seekers many times the money they spend on their appointment and posting, another finding of the study showed.

Mentioning the district registrar and sub-registrar offices among the most corrupt in the country, Dr. Zaman said that land registration and corruption have become synonyms in Bangladesh. With corruption curbed and transparency and accountability established, the sector would yield more revenue for the government. The government also needs to modernize the sector, especially by introducing digitalization of land registration and other land-related services. This would make controlling corruption easier." Dr. Zaman concluded.

Advocate Sultana Kamal said shortage of competent manpower and lack of monitoring of internal control system are the major problems in the land offices. "TIB recommends strengthening the capacity of manpower and internal monitoring system in land offices to improve services. To ensure good governance in the sector, it is imperative to increase institutional capacity," she added.

Besides, to overcome governance challenges, the study put 15 points recommendations, which included, better monitoring and making public the income statements of all the officials and employees of the relevant directorate; strong enforcement of laws and review of the land values set in the Fixation of Lowest Market Price of Property Rules 2010 in line with the actual market price. The study also recommended reducing the land registration fees in the country; introduction of e-registration and one-stop service delivery system; ensure proper financial allocation, adequate infrastructure, logistics, human resources for all sub-registrar and district registrar offices based on proper need assessments; effective and smooth internal coordination among offices etc.

Irregularities, Mismanagement Fueled Dengue Outbreak: TIB Put 15 points recommendation

Lack of national work plan to counter emergency situation, ignoring potential risk of spread of Aedes mosquito despite prevalence for couple of years, widespread irregularities and corruption in controlling initiatives fueled horrifying Dengue outbreak this year in Bangladesh, which caused the ailment of several thousands and nearly two hundred deaths from the mosquito-borne disease, observed TI Bangladesh. Unveiling a rapid research study which was done considering the dengue situation an emergency health hazard, the anti-graft organization also stated that organisational shortcomings and

lack of coordination among the organizations concerned in the mosquito eradication program worsened the dengue situation across the country although there are mechanisms in place to ensure healthy environment. Calling for robust accountability sparing no one involved, TI Bangladesh also placed 15 points recommendation to the authorities concerned for controlling Aedes mosquitoes.

To unveil the findings of the rapid research study titled 'Aedes Mosquito Control in Dhaka City: Governance Challenges and Way Forward', TI Bangladesh organized a press conference on 25 September 2019 at its Dhaka office. TI Bangladesh Executive Director Dr Iftekharuzzaman and Executive Management Adviser Dr Sumaiya Khair, Director-Research & Policy (R&P) Mohammad Rafiqul Hassan attended the event. TI Bangladesh Deputy Programme Managers-R&P Md. Julkarnayeen and Mostofa Kamal presented the research findings at the event accompanied by the research coordinator Shahzada M Akram, Senior Programme Manager-R&P.

Dr. Iftekharuzzaman said, "Though there were dengue outbreaks in Bangladesh in the last few years, enough importance was not given at local and national levels to control it. The mindset of concerned authorities ignoring the dengue prediction and the lack of preparation and strategies to take preventive measures caused the overall situation to spiral out of control." There had been no coordinated plan or actions to control Aedes mosquito, Dr. Zaman said, adding that relatively ineffective pesticides were used to show off to the country's people.

The study was based on secondary resources and focused on finding out the sort of irregularities and corruptions were prevalent, and what was barring the country in tackling the situation. It also tried to



focus on measures that could be taken to get the situation under control. Conducted between August 20 and September 20 in the wake of severe dengue outbreak in the country, information about the last five years' (2015-2019) mosquito control activities was taken into consideration for the study.

According to the report, Aedes mosquitoes need to be controlled via environment management, organic management, with a mechanical method, and by applying chemicals. But the two city corporations apply chemicals only. Dr. Zaman said, "even though applying larvicide and destroying the source of mosquitoes proved effective, both the city corporations were conducting anti-mosquito drives with adulticide, as

chances of irregularities were higher in purchasing the adulticide. People's attention is easily drawn during application of adulticide, which is another reason for giving more importance to it. The study identified that the Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) and the Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) adopted unplanned and uncoordinated efforts to fight the menace of Aedes mosquito, which paved the way for irregularities in every step. It said that the authorities made mistakes in anticipating massive Aedes mosquito breeding and paid no heed to the warnings given by the ICDDR, B and the Disease Control Wing of the Health Services. The authorities also paid no attention to the warnings that ineffective adulticides used to control the dengue virus carriers. The city corporations took no plans to control mosquitoes from the environmental angle but only used ineffective adulticides to fumigate the roads. Adulticide application was less effective than larvicide but the city corporations were more interested in procurements to misuse funds, according to the study.

The study also found that the necessary government rules were not followed properly in buying insecticides. Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) bought insecticides from a company that was blacklisted by Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC). The DSCC lost 40 per cent of its money spent on insecticides in 2018-2019. DSCC bought insecticide for Tk 378 a litre from Narayanganj Dockyard and Engineering Works Ltd. Agro products Ltd, which supplied the insecticide to the company, offered DNCC Tk 217 per litre, which means the DSCC lost Tk 161 per litre by buying from a third party, found the study. The study also found in many cases, insecticides and fuel of fogger machines were sold and larvicide was discarded. The field-level workers also took Tk 50 to Tk 200 to apply adulticide at garages or on ground floors of buildings, the report said.

Referring to lack of coordination and poor information sharing of relevant stakeholders, Dr. Zaman said, "Corruption took place in every step of pesticide purchase. Black-listed organisations were awarded work orders following no procurement rules whereas they also didn't qualify to carry out the works. Illegal transactions were made at all levels including approval of bills and supply of goods. As a result, there has been a huge waste of state money. In one case, nearly 40% of the purchasing cost was spent on bribery and corruption." Acknowledging the dengue problem as a problem for a long time, Dr. Zaman called upon the government to formulate a national strategy. Dr. Zaman also underscored the need for adopting short-, medium- and long-term plans to combat the mosquito menace. Observing on the allocation of budget in controlling the Aedes mosquitoes, Dr. Zaman said, "I don't find the allocated budget insufficient. Sufficient amount of money was allocated from the budget, even more, could have been allocated if needed, however, we have identified that irregularities in one hand, and lack of skills on the hand in making fair use of the money. Government's goodwill can bring the involved under accountability, through which significant progress can be made in tackling such challenges." Concluded Dr. Zaman.

At the press conference, TIB put 15 points of recommendations to strengthen the challenges in controlling Aedes mosquitoes in Dhaka city. The recommendations included, among others, coordinated activity by the city corporation's authorities involving relevant stakeholders; locating hotspots of Aedes breeding in the city before the outbreak; develop concentrated database of all the government and private hospitals, diagnostic centres in Dhaka with easy access for everyone; sufficient recruitment of human resource for the field level followed by assessing requirements; capacity building of the human

resources; establishing transparency and accountability in operations and management of city corporations etc. Also, the existing laws have to be amended, and real estate companies and government and private organizations need to be instructed what to do about controlling mosquitoes. There must be a provision for punishing those who fail to comply. Furthermore, The city corporations will have to identify hot spots of Aedes mosquitoes each year after conducting surveys with the help of Directorate General of Health Services and Icddrb. Necessary steps will have to be taken immediately based on the survey findings. Moreover, surveys on Aedes mosquitoes have to be carried out outside Dhaka as well. The authorities concerned may take the help of local universities, entomologists and private research organizations.

Flood preparedness, relief distribution rife with irregularities: TIB

Flood relief distribution efforts were marred by irregularities and corruption this year, including making political considerations when preparing lists of flood victims and distributing relief items, dispensing less relief than the stipulated amount and depriving those who raised their voice against the dishonesty. The discrepancies in the flood preparedness and relief work also include, among others, insufficient assessment of the flood vulnerability, lack of coordination among concerned authorities, scarce government allocation, lack of initiatives to shift the vulnerable people to safer shelters, inadequate shelters and delicate embankments due to lack of proper maintenance.

These observations were made in a study titled 'Integrity Watch in Flood 2019 Preparedness and Relief Operations' by TI Bangladesh. To unveil the study, TI Bangladesh organized a press conference at its Dhaka office on 29 September 2019. TIB Executive Director Dr. Iftekharuzzaman, Adviser-Executive Management Professor Dr. Sumaiya Khair, Senior Programme Managers of Research & Policy and Climate Finance Governance A S M Juel and Zakir Hossain Khan respectively, Deputy Programme Manager-R&P Amit Sarkar were present at the press conference. Md. Mahfuzul Haque, Program Manager, Climate Finance Policy and Integrity, and Md. Newazul Moula, Deputy Program Manager, Climate Finance Governance of TIB presented the study report at the event.



Dr. Iftekharuzzaman said, "Bangladesh's expertise and reputation in dealing with disaster has gained fame both at home and abroad and has been recognized as an example. In this context, continual development of the highest excellence of integrity is essential. Bangladesh has gained significant institutional capacity in dealing with disaster and relief activities in the country, although there were

some positive initiatives taken by the government to deal with the floods, there was opportunity for further improvement in view of overall progress.”

With an aim to identify the institutional limitations in the government’s planning of relief distribution, rehabilitation programmes, emergency response and overall preparedness for such a disaster, the study also conducted a survey in 683 thanas in 20 unions of 10 Upazilas of Kurigram, Gaibandha, Jamalpur, Bogura and Sylhet from Jul 31 to Aug 7 of this year. According to the study, nearly 4 million people were marooned in 28 districts for about 10 to 15 days during the flood season this year, leaving 108 people dead.

Referring to this year’s flood, Dr. Zaman said, “there has been a lack of transparency, accountability, equity and public participation in relief activities, as well as the expected coordination of the overall oversight of the administration in dealing with floods and the role of public representatives. In addition, due to lack of budget, manpower and planning deficit during the floods, there has been a shortage of essential services including shelters, medical treatment, drinking water, sanitation, protection to women, children and especially disabled people as well as domestic animals and household goods in the flood shelters and other flood-affected places.”

Apart from the negative aspects, the study also identified positive initiatives by the government during the flood situation which included, uploading flood-related information on the relevant website on a regular basis, and allocating and distributing rice, dry food, tents, and food for livestock at a limited scale.

Pointing towards the study findings, Dr. Zaman also said, according to the survey participants, they could not get the satisfactory service of the government and public representatives due to allegations of distribution of relief in political considerations and nepotism, distribution of rice at a lower proportion than the allotted proportion, in some cases unequal relief based on the identity of the person, reduction of grievance redressal system, use of relief resources in the other sector, including ministerial visitation costs.”

The research findings showed that at the household level, 73% got less than allocated relief, 32% said relief was distributed under nepotism, 26% said relief was distributed without considering household members, 23% said names have been deducted from the relief list, 17% said it was possible to get relief even if the name was not listed, 17% said there was misappropriation of relief, 9% said there was inequality, and 7% reported irregular monetary help. Furthermore, around 25.92% said there was no system for complaint, 92.24% said they did not know about the amount of relief, 33.95% said there were irregularities in relief distribution, 71.3% said there was insufficient relief distribution after flood, and 48.32% said they did not get any relief after being flood affected. According to the study, TIB found a lack of transparency and accountability as the relief list was prepared without field visit. At the same time, the study found negligence of government and public representatives in relief distribution – 35.12% said they did not get any treatment, 48.5% said insufficient steps were taken to protect river embankment, 18.78% complained about the weak law and order situation, while 76% felt public representatives did not do their jobs properly.

The study also observed non-compliances with disaster management related law/guidelines, plans and standing orders, especially poor coordination in relief distribution by NGOs at the union level; absence

of disaster-related sub-committees and voluntary groups; no early warning dissemination in remote areas; ignoring the more vulnerable families. Moreover, the study identified the lack of initiatives to shift the vulnerable people to the safer shelters, insufficient in numbers and most of them are in poor condition with inadequate facilities, damaged barrage due to the poor maintenance and also coordination gaps in flood preparedness which causes the rapid loss and damages at the flood-affected areas. Besides, government allocation was inadequate against the loss and damage incurred which prompted exclusion of many vulnerable people from the relief supports. Overall, besides a significant lack of transparency, accountability, equity and public participation overall weak monitoring of the administration in relief operation was observed.

The study further made several recommendations for better management of flood preparedness in the three different levels: pre-flood, during flood and post-flood, which includes but not limited to, building necessary flood shelter centres including livestock protection centres considering local geographical features and population; strengthening the early warning system and improving the broadcasting mechanism at least 24 hours before the flood; a comprehensive plan and prior preparation to relocate the vulnerable communities to a safe shelter; complete repair of embankment, dykes and road infrastructure before the rainy season starts. Also, the recommendations included, disclosing information regarding allocation of funds at local level, amounts of procured relief and their lists and distributed relief; include affected communities while estimate the loss and damages; preparing list of beneficiary; ensure effective inter-agency coordination in providing emergency supports, relief distribution and its monitoring and supervision; effective grievance redress mechanism for ensuring accountability of duty bearers.

TIB's response to the news of BB's consent to reschedule loan of a top defaulter: Call for no further abuse of legal authority to protect the banking sector in crisis

TIB has expressed deep concern and disappointment over yet another reported compromise and non-compliance by Bangladesh Bank (BB) of its own policy to allow a leading loan defaulter another round of rescheduling and set another bad precedence with terrible consequences for the ailing financial sector. TIB called upon the BB to refrain from this self-defeating move and appealed to the Government to consider TIB's long-standing recommendation to form an independent commission to recommend a new national banking sector strategy.

In a statement issued on 13 September 2019, the executive Director of TIB Dr. Iftekharuzzaman aired disappointment and grave concern over the reported move and called upon BB not to take such a self-defeating decision. Dr. Zaman said, "the reported rescheduling of the loan is particularly ominous for the economy at a time when the state is reportedly starving for cash and the Government is resorting to a legal provision to go for an unprecedented type of borrowing from public and autonomous institutions that may lead to a panicky deepening of public trust and paralyze the economy. If conscious of public interest, the BB cannot afford to continue to protect and grant impunity to loan defaulters, nor can it further institutionalize the default culture and continue to shift the burden of this menace on the people."

“Loan defaulters irrespective of identity or status cannot be allowed to dictate terms to BB and cause non-compliance of its own policy-decision to get an illegitimate extension of endless privileges of rescheduling, nor can BB allow itself to be held hostage and continue to accumulate ever greater risks to the sector. We call upon the Central Bank to have the courage to play its entrusted role in the national interest and refrain from any such move”, Dr Zaman said.

The TIB statement said that the reported move by the Central Bank of the country sets yet another extremely bad precedence and undermines the credibility of the BB. It will open floodgates of further similar compromises and only deepen the ongoing crisis in the financial sector in general and banking sector in particular.

“We reiterate our call upon the Government to form a fully independent committee of experts consisting of reputed, independent and credible specialists to analyze the deepening crisis in the sector and recommend short, medium and long term strategy to address it, failing which the situation may become absolutely unmanageable causing the bubble of high growth to burst”, Iftekharuzzaman said. Dr. Zaman further said, “We also call upon the Government to acknowledge the deep crisis in the banking sector and by shunning the denial syndrome form an independent banking sector reform commission so as to develop a national strategy to address the deepening crisis”.

According to media reports published on 13 September, 2019, the Bangladesh Bank is going to grant the above-mentioned rescheduling facility to Beximco Ltd which was earlier in 2015 granted an already unprecedented concession of similar rescheduling on condition that no further rescheduling would be applicable to this and other similar beneficiaries. The Central Bank, according to the media report, is reneging on its own position apparently under pressure which is the last thing expected from a Central Bank of any degree of credibility, the statement said.

Corruption of the youth and student leaders: Tip of the iceberg, says TIB; calls for robust accountability sparing no one

TIB considers the revelations by the ongoing actions against the allegedly corrupt youth and student leaders as just a tip of the iceberg and calls for robust measures of accountability sparing no one at any level. The drive being conducted over the last few days are encouraging and will raise public expectation, though it's the end result in terms of effective control of corruption will depend on the extent to which it is comprehensive and sustained, TIB said.

In a statement issued on 13 September 2019, Dr. Iftekharuzzaman, Executive Director of TIB said, “what has been exposed so far out of the actions taken against a few youth and student leaders in last few days are terrifying examples of deep-rooted corruption in the name of politics under political protection”. Commenting that the revelations are shocking, but not surprising at all, he said, “political linkage and position of power have been viewed as a license to self-enrichment at the expense of public interest for too long irrespective of whichever party has been in power. It is only natural that corruption and abuse of power would deliver such outcomes. Corruption has been institutionalized at nearly every levels and aspect of life through connivance and collusion of business, politics, administration and law

enforcement. What is needed now is to ensure that the drive that has just started is not put under the carpet short of ensuring accountability of everyone involved at all levels.”

Dr Zaman said, “what has so far been exposed in the last few days have not taken place in isolation, and is most likely to be just a tip of the iceberg. Similar scenarios are most likely to emerge if the drive is robust enough to uncover the depth and breadth of corruption elsewhere. Corruption and abuse of politically linked power is no monopoly of leaders of the student and youth organizations in the capital and around, nor are other front organizations of the political party immune from the malaise. It is also no secret that the student and youth leaders simply follow and replicate the practices of their leaders in parent bodies who are also their role models in this regard”.

“This is where lies the importance of accountability of all without sparing anyone as the Prime Minister announced, as reported by yesterday’s media. Her earlier pledge of zero tolerance against corruption and the latest announcement of tougher action against party men who indulged in corruption and misdeeds must be firmly implemented without favour or fear irrespective of identity or status”, Iftekharuzzaman added.

“Equally pressing and urgent is the need to ensure accountability of those in the relevant academic and other institutions as well as administration and law enforcement agencies under whose participation, protection or collusion this ominous scenario has evolved. A drastic overhaul of the key institutions has become mandatory with the principal objective of their depoliticization to ensure professional integrity, neutrality and excellence”, the statement added.

‘Active Mothers Forum is an innovative idea for ensuring quality education at primary level’

With an aim to ensure the active roles of mothers for ensuring quality education at primary level, CCC, Lakshmipur organized orientation and CCC, Satkhira organized training workshop for the coordinators of Active Mothers Forums (AMF). A total of 448 Coordinators of Active Mothers Forum and Head teachers of the respective schools participated in the orientation and training workshop held in Lakshmipur&Satkhira.

Lakshmipur: CCC, Lakshmipur organized the orientation on 3 September 2019 in association with Upazila Education Authority in were coordinators of 22 AMF and Head Teachers of the respective 22 C-graded schools participated. Additional Deputy Commissioner (General) of Lakshmipur district Mohammad Shafiuzzaman Bhuiyan was present as chief guest at the inaugural session of the orientation while Professor ZM Faruki, vice-president of the CCC, presided over the session. Additional Deputy Commissioner said, AMF is an innovative idea for ensuring quality education at the primary level; other schools of the district can amplify the idea. Md. Atikur Rahman, Senior Programme Manager of TIB, shared the goal and objectives of AMF along with a brief discussion on social movement against corruption. The orientation took part in two different sessions for the coordinators and for the headteachers.

Satkhira: CCC, Satkhira organized a training workshop titled 'Role of members of the AMF for increasing transparency, accountability and quality of services at primary education' on 18 September 2019 held at District Cultural Academy Auditorium in Satkhira. Coordinators of Active Mothers Forum and headteachers of 202 Government Primary Schools participated in the workshop. Ms. Meherunnesa, Khulna Divisional Director of Primary Education was the chief guest and Satkhira District Primary Education Officer Mr. Ruhul Amin was the special guest at the inaugural session of the workshop. Md. Abul Bashar, President of the CCC, Satkhira presided over the inaugural session.

Ms. Meherunnesa said, AMF has the opportunity to play active role for ensuring transparency, accountability and quality education at primary schools. All primary schools of the district can replicate the idea for the betterment of the primary education.



Ms. Ferhana Ferdous, Director-Civic Engagement of TIB briefly shared the concept of social movement against corruption and Kazi Shafiqur Rahman, Senior Programme Manager of TIB discussed the objectives of the programme at this session. Following the inaugural programme, coordinators participated in a rally. The training workshop was organized in six different groups held at PN School & College, Satkhira. Besides this, another discussion was held at the District Cultural Academy Auditorium where the headteachers raised various demands and issues for further advocacy.

Sotota Store launch Launched at Gaibandha

A Sotota Store was inaugurated at Gaibandha Collegiate Model Government Primary School in Gaibandha on 04 September 2019. Sotota store is an idea of the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) with a view to increasing moral uprightness among students. The stores keep on display with price tags goods and educational equipment so that the students of the school can usually buy.



The students can take items from the store as per their choice and put prices of those in the designated cash boxes on their own.

Md. Abdul Matin, Deputy Commissioner of Gaibandha district was the chief guest at the inaugural programme while President of the School Management Committee (SMC) Mr. Fazle Karim presided over the meeting. Speakers said, this initiative has been taken to pursue honesty among the students. They expressed that the Sotota Stores will help school students to improve their sense of morality. And this is how they will learn practicing honesty from their early age. As part of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between ACC and TIB, Gaibandha CCC installed the Sotota Store.

Among others, Principal of Gaibandha Government College Prof. Mizanur Rahman, District Primary Education Officer Md. Hosen Ali, President of the CCC, Gaibandha Principal ZahurulQuayyum, President of the District Corruption Prevention Committee M. A. MannanSarker were present as special guest. Ms. ArjumanAra Begum, head teacher of the school, delivered the welcome speech in the session.

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