

**Research Study**

**CPI 2021: With a score of 26, Bangladesh remains the 2nd worst performer in South Asia**



The score of Bangladesh is stagnant for the fourth time at a stretch since 2018 in curbing corruption, according to Transparency International's (TI) Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) 2021.

Bangladesh scored 26 out of 100 in the Index, significantly lower than the global average score of 43. The stagnancy of score and position proves that Bangladesh hasn't fared better in curbing corruption in the country, said TIB.

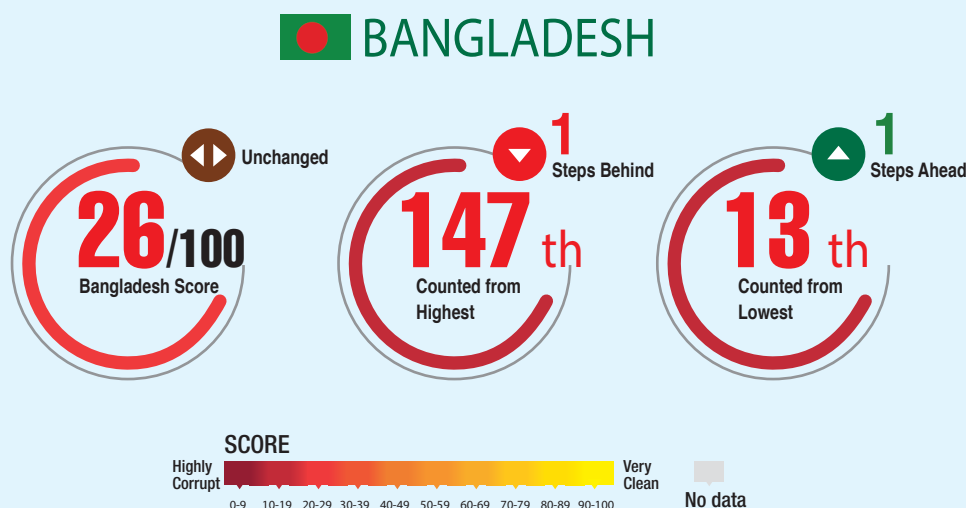
While launching the Berlin-based anti-corruption organisation's Index of 180 countries on 25 January 2022, TIB made the remarks, stressing the need for political integrity, greater accountability, and civil rights and liberties protection.

The report shows that Bangladesh ranked at the 13th position from the bottom but retained the same score. It was 12th the previous year with the same score.

The report also shows that like the last year, Bangladesh is again the second-worst performer in curbing corruption among the South Asian countries, with Afghanistan being the worst.

CPI uses a scale from 0-100 to measure the volume of corruption in a country. The very

clean country is indicated by '100' and the highly corrupt by '0'. According to experts and business people, the CPI scores 180 countries and territories by their perceived levels of public sector corruption.



This year, two African countries, Madagascar and Mozambique, stand alongside Bangladesh in the rank with the same score of 26.

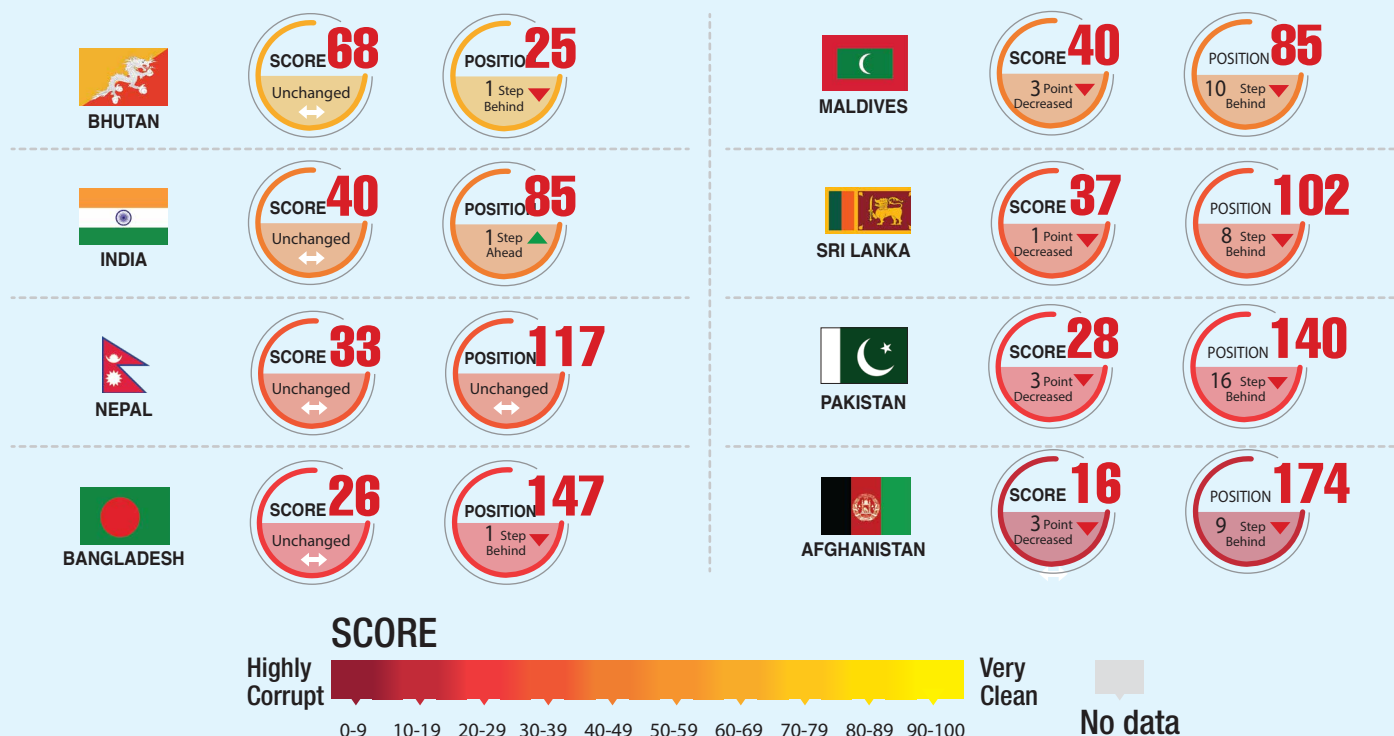
While sharing the CPI 2021 at a virtual press conference, TIB Executive Director Dr. Iftekharuzzaman said, “Bangladesh could have done better in the Index but the abuse of laws like the Digital Security Act, the erosion of political integrity and the dysfunctionality of key institutions are the main reasons behind corruption and criminality in Bangladesh. The policies are elite biased, and the freedom of media and the spaces for civil societies are continually shrinking.”

He further added, “Bangladesh loses 2-3 percent of its GDP to corruption every year. About 89 percent of the surveyed people who were victims of bribery reported that they had to pay bribe because it was impossible to access public services without bribes. Corruption is now a part of our daily lives. As a result, the benefits of development and economic growth are not reaching the common and marginalised people. We have opportunities to overcome this situation as we have laws and political will in place. But a section of the people tasked with curbing corruption immersed in corruption themselves. To overcome this, public interest should be the centre point of all policy discussions and our political culture must be changed.”

### Global highlights of CPI 2021

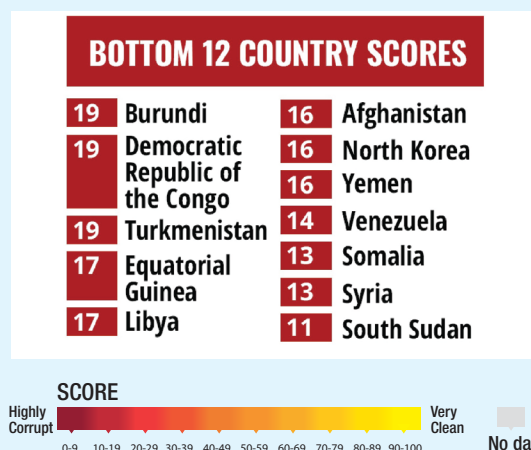
As per the report, among the South Asian countries, Bhutan retained its score of 68 and topped the table in the region, while Afghanistan lost 3 points and slipped 9 steps. New Zealand, Singapore, and Hong Kong are the top scorers in the Asia Pacific region, while Cambodia, Afghanistan, and North Korea are the lowest scorers.

## According to the score, the position of 8 countries in South Asia



The CPI global average remains unchanged at 43 for the tenth year in a row, and two-thirds of countries score below 50. The top nations on the Index are Denmark (88), Finland (88) and, New Zealand (88), all of which also rank in the top 10 per cent in the world on the Democracy Index civil liberties score. Somalia (13), Syria (13) and South Sudan (11) remain at the bottom of the CPI. Syria is also ranked last in civil liberties. 27 countries – among them Cyprus (53), Lebanon (24) and Honduras (23) – are all at historic lows this year.

154 countries have either declined or made no significant progress in the previous decade. Since 2012, 23 countries have significantly declined on the CPI – including advanced economies such as Australia (73), Canada (74) and the United States (67), the latter dropping out of the top 25 countries on the Index for the first time.



## **Corruption, human rights, and democracy**

As anti-corruption efforts stagnate and deteriorate, human rights and democracy are under attack. The continued use by governments of the COVID-19 pandemic to erode human rights and democracy could also lead to sharper declines across the globe in the future. Of the 23 countries whose CPI score significantly declined since 2012, 19 also declined on the civil liberties score. Moreover, out of the 331 recorded cases of murdered human rights defenders in 2020, 98 per cent occurred in countries with a CPI score below 45.

## **Lackluster law enforcement and illegal dealings ravages Environment Dept.: Finds TIB study**



**Dhaka, 5 January 2022:** The shortcomings of the existing environmental laws and their lacklustre enforcement, irregularities and corruption from a section of the workforce, and overall low scores in all governance indexes point out that corruption has been institutionalised at the government's Department of Environment (DoE). As a result, the department has turned out to be a weak, corrupted and incapable public office, said Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) at a virtual press briefing on the research release titled '**Governance Challenges at the Department of Environment and Way Forward**'.

The research, which collected data from April 2019 to December 2021, has unearthed that the department has been impacted by bureaucratic dependency, lack of modern surveying systems, and inadequate professional skills. A section of the department's workforce is involved in illegal transactions with corrupt parties and polluters, making corruption institutional. The department's activities are also hampered as a section of the workforce works in tandem with owners of polluting industries and surrender to their influence.

Moreover, the Geographical Information System (GIS) and the Remote Sensing Technology have not been expanded for the department's activities. As most surveys are conducted manually, the DoE cannot determine the pollution level correctly.

The DoE is more interested in collecting revenue and sidesteps the primary responsibility

of protecting the environment. Under the financial management index, the research has demonstrated that the department cannot spend the allocated budget on pollution control, despite this activity being the department's most important one.

Overall, the DoE has failed to fulfil its responsibilities outlined by laws and regulations. TIB Executive Director Dr. Iftekharuzzaman said, "The DoE has been rattled by deficiencies in every governance index included in the research. A section of the department's workforce is involved in corruption as they join hands with owners of polluting industries. As a result, the department is drowning in corruption. Even though the department is tasked with controlling corruption and dealing with climate change factors, the DoE is somewhat doing the opposite. The department has to be overhauled by curbing irregularities, corruption, lack of skills and the overall lack of governance. Good governance must be ensured, and the DoE must be freed from vested industrialists' influence by making all corrupt employees accountable. If this is not carried out, the impacts of environmental pollution and the climate crisis will be severe, and the SDGs related to this cannot be achieved."

TIB also pointed out ten recommendations to overcome challenges in the DoE. The most prominent one is to bring all mega projects and industries under accountability mechanisms by sidestepping all pressures and financial incentives.

The full report and recommendations can be found here - [পরিবেশ অধিদপ্তরে সুশাসনের চ্যালেঞ্জ ও উত্তরণের উপায়](#) Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) ([ti-bangladesh.org](http://ti-bangladesh.org))

## **COVID-19 response: NGOs displayed integrity while facing fund crisis and political meddling, finds TIB study**

**Dhaka, 13 January 2021:** The Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs) actively participated in humanitarian responses amid the coronavirus pandemic in the country



while dealing with funding crisis issues and political interference and other challenges, a

recent study by Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) finds.

To resolve the funding problem in an emergency like the pandemic, the TIB study suggested a 10-point recommendation stressing the government and donor agencies' forming of two separate funds.

The study titled **'The Role of Non-government Organisations in Response to COVID-19 Pandemic: Challenges and Way Forward'** was launched on January 13, 2021, through a virtual press conference.

The study was conducted on 74 NGOs (09 international, 23 national, and 42 local) operating across the country between July 2020 and December 2021.

About 66.2 percent of the organisations participating in the study faced obstacles or challenges at the field level in undertaking and implementing the programmes, said the report. The challenges included raising funds for COVID-19 response, selecting beneficiaries, reaching remote areas, and meddling of local politics and administrations.



Speaking at the conference, TIB Executive Director Dr. Iftekharuzzaman said, "Despite the multiple challenges, especially in raising funds, non-government organisations played an active role in COVID-19 response in the country. Although there were allegations of some irregularities, no significant information was found on the overall number of illegal financial transactions."

Depicting the funding challenges of the NGOs amid the pandemic, he urged the government and the donor agencies to form two separate funds so that no NGOs fall short in funds while responding to any emergency needs like the pandemic.



**Policy Stance**

**ELECTION  
COMMISSION**

**RMG INDUSTRY  
REGULATION**

**FINANCIAL  
IRREGULARITIES**

## **EC formation law: TIB demands inclusion of all stakeholders' opinions**

**Dhaka, 18 January 2022:** TIB demands to give importance to public expectations and opinions of civil society and all stakeholders when drafting the law on Election Commission formation.

The statement came a day after the Cabinet approved the draft of the Chief Election Commissioner and Election Commissioner Appointment Act, 2022 in order to have a law in this regard as per the Constitution.

In the statement issued on 18 January 2022, TIB said that it was a matter of optimism that the draft law was approved following month-long talks between the president and registered political parties over the constitution of an independent, neutral, and non-party election commission. However, the anti-graft watchdog demanded the draft law be made public so that the stakeholders can give their opinions and reflect public expectations.

In the statement, TIB Executive Director Dr. Iftekharuzzaman said that the sudden step taken by the government to enact the election commission law, reflecting the constitutional commitment and the long-standing public expectation, is positive.

He said the civil society has long been calling for formulating this law long before the president's talks with various registered political parties started over the EC formation. Most of the political parties that joined the talks also demanded the formation of the law.

"According to media reports, the law has proposed to form an election commission through a search committee as usual; which is consistent with international experience. But the details of the draft law, apart from some general criteria for the search committee, are still unknown to stakeholders and civil society," said Dr. Zaman.

He further stressed that the law needs to clarify regarding the inclusion of a woman representative in the search committee, the eligibility criteria of the two citizen representatives to be nominated for the committee, working procedure of the committee and disclosure of names proposed by the committee.

It also needs to articulate further about qualifications, skills, experiences, neutrality and acceptability of the CEC and election commissioners, he said.

## TIB slams draft EC act over candidate eligibility

**Dhaka, 20 January 2022:** The proposed Chief Election Commissioner and Election Commissioner Appointment Act, 2022 will fail to fulfil the constitutional commitment and people's expectations, said Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB).

TIB said some "average criteria" set in the draft law to determine eligibility and ineligibility for the appointments of the CEC and ECs are the reasons behind it. In addition, there is no mention of any provisions to determine their skills, experience, impartiality, transparency and acceptability.

While the government's sudden move to formulate the law is positive, there's a due process to enact such an important and sensitive law, said TIB Executive Director Dr. Iftekharuzzaman in the statement issued on 20 January 2022.

Referring to media reports, Dr. Zaman said that most recommendations made by civil society and stakeholders were not considered in the draft law.

Citing the draft law, he said three provisions have been incorporated in the proposed law to determine the eligibility of the CEC and ECs. However, there is no specific directive in those provisions regarding the CEC and ECs' honesty, righteousness, impartiality, objectivity, courage and acceptability, he added.

"No provision has been made for the inclusion of women members. Even the proposal that determines disqualification allows an individual to become a commissioner even if he is convicted of a criminal offense for less than 2 years. Besides, there is no instruction regarding their non-partisanship i.e. political affiliation or involvement in debt default and corruption, etc. Even in the case of serious inconsistencies, there is no specific provision for their removal, which is disappointing," he said.

## RMG code of conduct policy: TIB expects participation of all stakeholders

**Dhaka, 11 January 2022:** Expressing optimism over the initiative to formulate Ready Made Garment (RMG) Code of Conduct, Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) suggested engaging all stakeholders from RMG workers, labour bodies, researchers, and social organisations to frame an effective code of conduct for the RMG sector.

Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) and Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA) on January 09 organised a meeting at BGMEA's Gulshan office to form a committee, in order to make a unified code of conduct for the RMG sector.



In a statement published on 11 January 2022, TIB Executive Director Dr. Iftekharuzzaman said, “The country’s apparel sector has largely been able to overcome the image crisis created following the Rana Plaza tragedy by ensuring a safe work environment through joint ventures of local and foreign bodies. But still, it needs to go far to accomplish the desired progress in this sector. Under such circumstances, the initiative to frame a code of conduct for the sector by BGMEA and BKMEA is a timely step.”

He stressed the need to review the Code of Conduct, Third-Party Audit Protocols, local laws, regulations and policies, and the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

Besides, if a comprehensive code of conduct is formulated and implemented involving all stakeholders in the sector related to labour rights, safety and welfare, it will be possible to set an example in the international arena as it will play an important role in ensuring the working environment of the sector, he also added.

## **TIB slams BB for giving 'unethical' advantage to Padma Bank**

**Dhaka, 8 January 2022:** TIB heavily criticised the decision of Bangladesh Bank (BB) to allow Padma Bank to clean its balance sheet by erasing its accumulated losses in order to receive Foreign Direct Investment (FDI).

The anti-graft watchdog termed the facility as ‘unethical’ and ‘deceptive’ in a press statement issued on 8 January 2022, saying it would jeopardize Bangladesh Bank’s credibility in establishing discipline and good governance in the financial sector in the future as well as risk tarnishing its image abroad.

According to the media reports, BB has agreed to create a separate account for the troubled Padma Bank by keeping the information of the bank’s financial losses hidden, as per the terms of the consultancy firm DelMorgan, to bring in USD 70 crore worth of foreign investment, which is to be adjusted from the bank’s profits over the next 10 years.

TIB Executive Director Dr. Iftekharuzzaman said that shortly after its inception, the bank management and owners resorted to massive financial irregularities and then changed the name to save the former Farmers Bank. The Ministry of Finance and the central bank have been supporting the Padma Bank by relaxing various rules and proving support like --injecting Tk715 crore capital from four public banks (Sonali Bank, Janata Bank, Agrani Bank and Rupali Bank), Investment Corporation of Bangladesh (ICB) and exemption of statutory liquidity ratio or SLR.

“But despite all of this, there is no sign of the bank turning around, but the scale of losses is getting heavier day by day. In such a scenario, the attempt to make the bank’s financial statements clean by omitting the loss information is not only unethical but also fraudulent

from the point of view of accounting,” the TIB executive director said.

“It is not clear why Bangladesh Bank as the regulatory body of the financial sector is taking the responsibility of creating all the unprecedented examples in the name of saving the bank. The bigger question is, what is the guarantee that it will be possible to get the promised foreign investment only if the financial statements look artificially alright? “Dr. Zaman questioned.

“If the large-scale investment can’t be collected as expected, which is highly likely, then it is unwise and suicidal to take such an unethical and deceptive path without considering the consequences. This calls into question the logical decision-making process of the central bank as a regulatory body,” he criticised.

## CCC NEWS

### Faridpur Municipality to establish e-Centers at ward level

Amitav Bosh, mayor of Faridpur Municipality said the authority is committed to ensure citizens access to its entitled services. Faridpur municipality is going to establish e-Centers at ward level as part of its efforts to ensure services. The e-Centers will start its operations at three wards primarily and will be expanded in other wards later. Training programme for the respective officials has been started in this regard.

The mayor shared this information in an opinion sharing meeting with Committee of Concerned Citizens (CCC), Faridpur held on 24 January 2022 while delivering his speech as chief guest. CCC President Advocate Shipra Gowsami presided over the meeting.

Municipality mayor said, municipality has a special attention to ensure citizens access to information regarding its services. It has an up to date Citizens Charter and assigned Designated Officer for providing information to the citizens.



## **Hospital authority to form a Grievance Redress Committee**

Aiming to ensure proper health services to citizens, an opinion sharing meeting was held on 26 January 2022 with the authority of Rajbari Adhunik General Hospital. Committee of Concerned Citizens (CCC), Rajbari organised the event titled **'Health services during coronavirus pandemic: Challenges and way forward'** was presided by the president of the CCC Professor Md. Nuruzzaman. Superintendent of the hospital Dr. Dipak Kumar Biswas was present as chief guest in the meeting along with other doctors, nurse, and officials.

The meeting focused on different issues and its smooth operations to citizens' health rights. CCC recommended to take appropriate measures against irregularities, prohibit payment without money receipt, disclose information regularly and to ensure women friendly services.

Superintendent of the hospital Dr. Dipak Kumar Biswas said, "almost one thousand patients are taking health services daily on average and newly appointed doctors are trying to deliver proper services to them. The authority is distributing medicine in a sufficient manner, and has established Central Oxygen System based on requirement during coronavirus pandemic. Superintendent informed in the meeting that the hospital authority will discuss the information disclosure issue with the District Administration to take initiative to form a Grievance Redress Committee soon."



## Opinion sharing meeting with DPEO held

Gaps that took place in the education sector during coronavirus pandemic needs to be recovered soon. Cordial cooperation from teachers can make this happen. Though the education authority including teachers took different initiatives for ensuring continuation of study for students through online classes and worksheets, there were limitations for students who do not have smartphones.

Md. Ruhul Amin, District Primary Education Officer (DPEO) of Satkhira district said this in a webinar held on 26 January 2022. Committee of Concerned Citizens (CCC), Satkhira organised the event titled 'Delivering quality primary education: Challenges and Way forward after interruption for coronavirus pandemic'.



Pabitra Mohon Das, president of CCC, Satkhira presided over the meeting while officers from the District Primary Education office, Satkhira Sadar Upazila Education office, Head Teachers from 201 primary schools of Satkhira Sadar Upazila, Coordinators of Active Mothers Forums and members of CCC attended.

Md. Abul Basar, member of the CCC delivered the welcome speech while Md. Firoz Uddin, respective Cluster Coordinator from TIB made a presentation titled 'Role of Active Mothers Forum to improve transparency & accountability and quality of primary education'. In the open discussion session, mothers from primary students shared their experience of education during coronavirus pandemic.

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