

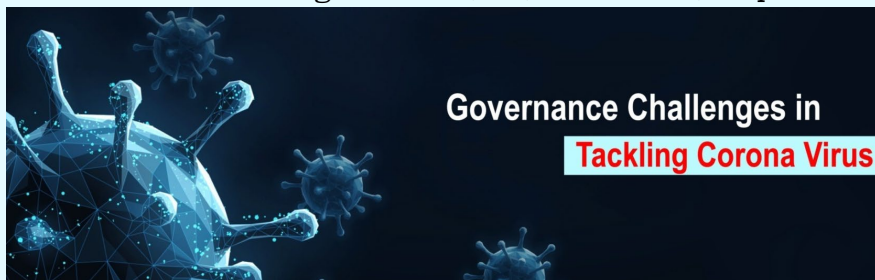
National News

Lack of planning and coordination worsen Corona Virus situation in Bangladesh, finds study

Lack of planning, coordination, and mismanagement in identifying and controlling the COVID 19 pandemic along with the country's weak healthcare system due to widespread corruption and long-term neglect towards fundamental human needs put Bangladesh in a catastrophic situation. In tackling the Corona Virus led crisis, also, lack of transparency and chronic governance deficiencies in government adopted initiatives worsen the situation.

The observations came up in a TIB study titled 'Governance Challenges in Tackling Corona Virus' launched through a virtual press conference on 15 June 2020. Analysing government adopted initiatives throughout the crisis; the study finds deficiencies in every indicator of good governance in dealing with the epidemic. The report also finds a wide prevalence of alleged corruption in procurement and distribution as well as relief operations for the poor and needy.

Using mixed methodological (qualitative and quantitative) research techniques, the study highlights the governance challenges in different government initiatives undertaken to deal with the virus-led crisis before and after its spread. The data analysis of the study was conducted under different indicators of governance, i.e., rule of law, responsiveness, capacity and effectiveness,



coordination and participation, accountability, transparency, and control of corruption.

The study observes that the government has failed miserably in taking necessary

precautions even after getting three months' time. Failing to ensure the testing facility for the suspected patients, and the spread of the infection due to lack of control in handling the situation has brought the country in an unprecedented condition. Besides, the weak capacity of the health sector as a result of lack of planning and good governance has come to light during the crisis.

Unveiling the study in the virtual webinar, TIB Executive Director Dr. Iftekharuzzaman said, "there was a lack of adequate preparation and capacity to deal with the virus everywhere in the world, including the developed world. Even though it is difficult to imagine that Bangladesh would be an exception, we became optimistic of a prospect to effectively fight the crisis when this problem was declared as a national disaster by the top echelons of the government and especially when the Prime Minister declared that no corruption would be tolerated in tackling this crisis. However, the study found deficits in all indicators of good governance regarding different initiatives taken to deal with the virus; besides, corruption has been alarming."

The study also identifies the tendency to cover up irregularities, corruption, and mismanagement through restrictions on disclosure of information and bringing the whistle-blowers under accountability in a way that encourages corruption. At a point, restrictions under the Digital Security Act 2018 were imposed on all health workers, including all physicians under the Ministry of Health for the disclosure of any statement or opinion in public, in the newspaper, or in any other media without the permission of the higher authorities. Sixty-seven cases were filed against 37 journalists for disseminating news of theft and embezzlement in relief distribution in different parts of the country.

According to the study, the health workers' health risks and crisis in medical management increased due to irresponsibility and corruption in the supply of protection materials. Moreover, the concerned authorities failed to respond effectively to the developing situations in the wake of the epidemic, observes the study.

There has been a tendency to make bureaucratic decisions by ignoring specific opinions in all cases, including 'lockdown', the study also finds. "Despite the repetitive emphasis on social isolation and distancing by the relevant experts in countering the virus spread, a situation has been created under the pressure of businessmen and influential quarters in which the government decision has been rendered nearly ineffective. Misleading messages were disseminated undermining social isolation ultimately resulted in the virus entering into the community transmission phase," said Dr Zaman.

According to the study, the actual target beneficiaries of the government initiatives were deprived due to a lack of coordination. Stating that by capitalizing on the initiatives taken to tackle the crisis, many have seen it as an opportunity to make an undue profit through corruption in collusion, Dr Zaman said, "regardless of the Prime Minister's stern warning against corruption at various stages of tackling the crisis, since those involved in irregularities and corruption are not brought to justice. It is only possible to implement the top-level declaration of the government by controlling corruption by identifying them and ensuring effective accountability."

Highlighting the importance of freedom of information and expression during such a crisis, the study observes that "If the government wants to tackle this crisis, the right to get and publish accurate information must not be diminished."

In the press conference, among others, TIB Adviser-Executive Management Professor Dr. Sumaiya Khair and Director-Research & Policy (R&P) Mohammad Rafiqul Hassan were present. TIB Director-Outreach and Communication (O&C) Sheikh Manjur-E-Alam conducted the virtual event. Researchers of the study TIB Programme Manager (PM)-R&P Manzoor-E-Khoda and Deputy Programme Manager (DPM)-R&P Md. Julkar Nayeem presented the study findings at the event, accompanied by research supervisor Senior Programme Manager-R&P Shahzada M Akram. Other members of the study team PM-R&P Taslima Akter and DPM-R&P Morsheda Akter were also present.



The study also made 15 points recommendations to tackle the unearthed challenges, including expanding the facility of sample testing through proper use of existing equipment and manpower at government and private levels to district level through the maximum use of existing capacity. Among the other notable recommendations, it also included ensuring proper management of medical equipment, financial assistance for the ultra-poor, informal sector workers and day laborers, and waiving the current agricultural loans.

World Environment Day 2020

Protect Sundarbans to save Bangladesh; TIB called for effective enforcement of constitutional and legal obligations to protect the country's biodiversity and environment

TIB called for the effective implementation of the constitutional and legal obligations, especially the environmental laws, to protect the Sundarbans and life, nature, biodiversity and the environment on the whole, mentioning that Bangladesh will survive if the Sundarbans, the treasure trove of biodiversity, survives. TIB made this call in a statement released on 04 June 2020 to draw the attention of the government and stakeholders concerned about the theme of this year's World Environment Day theme 'biodiversity'.

Expressing deep concern over the 179th rank of Bangladesh out of 180 countries in the Environmental Performance Index (EPI) 2018, Dr. Iftekharuzzaman, Executive Director of TIB said, "Environmental pollution and biodiversity losses are increasing alarmingly in Bangladesh due to the lack of proper implementation of the existing legal framework for environmental protection. Biodiversity in Bangladesh is at high risk, grabbing of forest and water bodies have increased, stress on natural resources is increasing and soil, water and air are being polluted uncontrollably due to lack of good governance in environmental protection and management, existing institutional weakness, abuse of power and decisions influenced by authoritative domestic and foreign businessmen and investors, poor supervision, corruption and irregularities in the institutions concerned and political patronage."



According to the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, some 4,16,256 acres of forest land have been destroyed in the country since 1989, of which 1,58,031 hectares have been allotted to various government and non-government organisations and 2,68,256 acres of forest land have been forcibly grabbed. Due to increasing and uncontrolled deforestation, 39 species of wildlife have already become extinct in Bangladesh and about 30 more species, including the Bengal Tiger in the Sundarbans, are in critical existential threat – which is a grave threat to the forest-centered life cycle and ecosystem.

Dr. Zaman said, "Ignoring national and international suggestions and protests, world heritage site Sundarbans, one of the keys to biodiversity conservation, has been permanently endangered by the setting up of industrial establishments, including coal-based power plants with public and private initiatives. Whereas, Sundarbans is not only a source of life and nature but also protected the lives and livelihoods of countless people on the coast from cyclone Roanu, Fani and the recent Amphan."

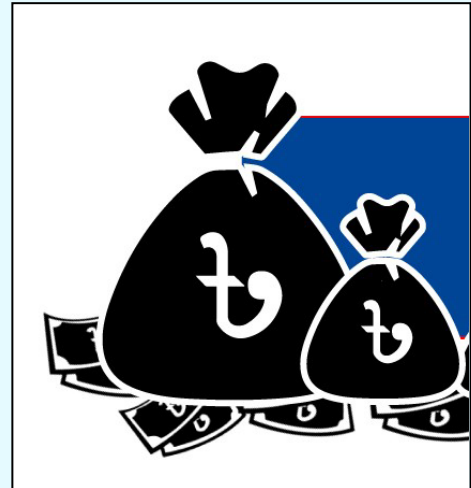
"Although Article 18A of the Constitution contains specific guidelines for the conservation and protection of natural resources, biodiversity, wetlands, forests and wildlife, putting environmentally endangered areas at risk, namely the Sundarbans, poses a major threat to Bangladesh's rich biodiversity and ecological balance.", Dr. Zaman added. He urged, "all the industries and factories already established and under construction in the Sundarbans and other environmentally critical areas of the country must be closed down and proper application of environmental laws should be ensured to conserve the biodiversity and the world heritage site Sundarbans – that protects lives and livelihoods of millions of people in Bangladesh."

Budgetary provision of legalizing black money: unconstitutional, discriminatory and corruption friendly says TIB

Expressing concern over the media reports about the expansion of scope of whitening undisclosed or black money in the upcoming budget in the name of reviving the Covid-19 affected economy, increasing revenue, attracting investment and creating jobs, TIB has urged the government to refrain from such corruption-

friendly and self-contradictory steps. At the same time, TIB has demanded for adequate allocations to the health sector as per stakeholders' suggestions, which is plagued by inadequate funding and corruption and also called for increasing employment and social security for the people who have recently fallen below the poverty line due to the pandemic. TIB also demanded an effective anti-corruption roadmap by ensuring transparency and accountability in all types of procurement, distribution, expenditure and distribution in these sectors.

In a statement released on 09 June 2020, TIB stated that as per media reports government is expanding scope of whitening undisclosed money through buying flats, land as well as investing those in development projects and the stock market. Dr. Iftekhruzzaman, Executive Director of TIB said, “the forthcoming budget is not only giving the opportunity to whiten black money on a large scale but also it's going to remove the provision of the Anti-Corruption Commission to inquire about the sources of the money, which is not expected at all. This provision is self-contradictory with the prime minister's declaration of zero tolerance against corruption and will encourage corruption. The country's economy has never been benefited from such provisions in the past years neither it helped to collect significant revenue, rather it questioned the government's anti-corruption stance.”



Terming the provision as ‘discriminatory’ towards the honest citizens and against the spirit of article 20(2) of the constitution, Dr. Zaman urged the government to refrain from taking such move. Dr. Zaman said, “Government should bring back the laundered money which was exposed in recent media reports. Some influential individuals and groups have been laundering money in other countries from unknown sources. The government should take measures to ensure accountability of those people instead of patronising them.”

The Corona virus pandemic has exposed the poor condition of the health sector of the country. The government hospitals are struggling to provide necessary healthcare, even media reported that people are dying for not getting proper medical treatment from the hospitals. Dr. Zaman added, “such a fragile situation in the health sector was not created in one day. Inadequate funding in the health sector for years, lack of coherence in spending, and rampant corruption in the sector have led to such catastrophes. TIB expect that the government will have a specific roadmap on this sector in the upcoming budget which may include announcement of universal healthcare system and effective example of eradicating corruption in the procurement process of this sector.”

The outbreak of Covid-19 has also raised concern about the social safety net programmes of the country and its implementation process. The pandemic made many people unemployed in both the formal and the informal sectors. Dr. Zaman said, “It is necessary to take effective measures to control the vested group that is embezzling the benefits meant for affected people and the declaration should come in the upcoming budget. In line with allocation increase, a central database of all the beneficiaries eligible for inclusion in the social safety net programmes need to be built and the database should be regularly updated and published through websites and other easily accessible modes.”

Disappointment about lack of budget allocation in the health sector, TIB urges to withdraw scope for whitening black money and expressed

TIB has called upon the government to revoke the provision of whitening black money in the proposed budget for fiscal 2020-2021, terming such scope as unethical, discriminatory, and anti-constitutional. TIB has also expressed disappointment at the inadequate allocation in the proposed budget for health sector and incomprehensive action plan to check corruption and ensure good governance in this sector, which has been plagued by long-term irregularities, mismanagement and corruption.

In a follow-up statement released on 12 June 2020 after the announcement of annual budget of Bangladesh on 11 June 2020 for fiscal 2020-2021, Dr. Iftekharuzzaman, Executive Director of TIB criticized the proposed provision in the income tax ordinance - 50 percent fine to check money laundering through over and under invoicing. He said, “such imposition of fines is nothing but a small punishment for a big crime like money laundering. Those who prepared the budget have not thought of its impacts on rule of law and the government commitment towards the international community. This will create the scope for a festival of money laundering, instead of controlling it. Government has announced a corruption-facilitating budget. TIB urges government to refrain from such suicidal provisions.”

There has been an expectation that the government would significantly increase allocation for the health sector in the wake of the Corona virus pandemic. Stating the budget for health sector is conventional, apart from a special allocation of Tk 10,000 crore as an emergency fund to address the pandemic, Dr. Zaman said, “there should be a roadmap regarding the distribution of this allocated fund to avoid mismanagement and corruption. On the other hand, there has been no reflection of a strategy to reform the health sector, which is why the rate of allocation for the sector has come down to 5.1 percent of the total budget, which was 5.8 percent in the last fiscal year.”

Besides, the expectation of a wide range of programme plans to create jobs and widen safety net programmes to include the people who have become jobless and went below the poverty line due to the pandemic, is also ignored in the budget. Government has given more priority on VAT and TAX exemption for various industrial sectors.

The government should be congratulated for withdrawing duty waiver on import of furnace oil as oil-based power plants are expensive, but no announcement has been made to stop provision of subsidy to the rental power plants. Moreover, although Bangladesh Climate Change Trust Fund (BCCTF) should have received more allocation to address the rising number of natural disasters and increasing climate change impacts, but only Tk 100 crore has been allocated. The disaster management and relief ministry also should have received more allocation given the impacts of Cyclone Amphan, but that has actually decreased. TIB urged the government to consider all these aspects before passing the budget.

“Interrogation of journalists about the leak of a letter a threat to the freedom of the press” TIB demands investigation of corruption, not the source of the leak

TIB expressed grave concern over the summoning of several journalists for interrogation by an inquiry committee formed after the leaking of a letter by the Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) Commissioner that contains corruption allegations against a senior police officer.

Addressing the issue as a threat to the freedom of the press, TIB Executive Director Dr. Iftekharuzzaman said in a statement issued on 18 June 2020, “journalists won’t disclose the sources of their information, this is the established rule. Now, if a journalist is summoned and questioned about his or her sources then no one will even dare to speak up against corruption in the future. This will be considered as an obstruction to independent journalism. The policy of pressuring journalists in this way is suicidal and is also against the public interest, and may raise the question of whether a professional force like the Bangladesh Police is at all interested in curbing their organizational corruption.”

Stating the journalists as co-fighters for anti-corruption activities, Dr. Zaman said, “the DMP commissioner has lodged a written complaint of corruption against a senior police officer and that should be the main concern for the force. A full and admissible investigation over the allegations should be prioritized and exemplary punishment should be ensured if he is found guilty. Instead, the police force got busy in finding out how the letter was leaked to the media. This is tarnishing the image of the force and putting their actions to question. Moreover, it is very much possible to find out who leaked the letter by conducting an internal



investigation. But the visible ways of mounting pressure on the media personnel is making the general people like us panic.”

Mentioning that the police did not refute the veracity of the letter, Dr. Zaman demanded strong and effective action by the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) over the matter. He added, “if the letter is authentic then one of the parties is for sure responsible. However, the commissioner only requested a transfer of the accused officer, which cannot be considered as punishment for corruption. Rather, police are trying to harass journalists. The ACC should immediately launch an investigation into the allegations to take appropriate legal action by identifying the extent of such corruption and those involved in such criminal activities.”

**The constitutional right to free flow of information and expression
is under threat in the name of digital security**



TIB has expressed deep concern over the recent incidents of attacks, lawsuits, threats and intimidation against the people of different professions across the country, specially the writers and journalists for reporting corruption and irregularities through news, cartoons or photographs or social media content. TIB also has demanded prevention of such arbitrariness from being normalized and immediate and unconditional release of the detainees to ensure people's constitutional right to freedom of expression.

In a statement issued on 20 June 2020, TIB Executive Director Dr. Iftekharuzzaman said, “media reports show that recently many people, specially journalists, teachers, writers, cartoonists, social workers, and even health workers were harassed, attacked, cases were filed against them and sacked from jobs for collecting or publishing news on various issues, expressing their opinion or revealing irregularities, specially on the irregularities in the healthcare system, relief distribution, and other activities amid the pandemic. They were convicted in cases of so-called ‘spreading rumour,’ ‘spreading false information,’ ‘criticizing the government,’ ‘defamation,’ and ‘death threat’ etc. on news and social media and some were even sent behind bars in these cases. Such incidents are not only oppressive, unconstitutional, and curtailing people's freedom of speech, but institutionalizing and normalizing such arbitrariness.”

Dr. Zaman added, “The authorities concerned should respond to the criticism with their work and control the alleged corruption and irregularities on the basis of disclosed information rather than controlling the flow of information or suppressing dissent and walking on an undemocratic and arbitrary path. TIB demands the withdrawal of these wrongful cases and the immediate release of those unjustly arrested. TIB also demands exemplary punishment of those involved in these alleged corruptions by bringing them under the purview of the law and investigation.”

Referring to the recent incident of missing journalist Shafiqul Islam, whose disappearance mystery was not solved rather arrested in a framed trespassing case, he added, “such response to disclosing or criticizing corruption and irregularities is on the one hand contradictory to the prime minister's zero tolerance against corruption, and on the other, is against the constitutional right to free expression. In particular, where prosecuting a citizen on charges of independent expression or publishing news is preventive, the

harassment of detainees in such cases is the ultimate violation of civil rights. It is the task of the state to take action against the accused by verifying the information disclosed regarding corruption or irregularities, while ensuring the informant's safety. But it is the informant who is being punished. So it is not usual to raise question as to whether the state is discouraging corruption or indulging in corruption.”

Criticizing the arrests of different individuals in over 50 cases under the Digital Security Act this year, Dr. Zaman said, “the state should have created an environment in which the media could publish information in an independent, impartial and objective manner. Because if there is a deficit in the normal flow of information, rumours and mistrust will develop. The greater the gap between the information published in a controlled way and the actual information, the greater the panic, crisis, and the risk of mismanagement will be created. Therefore, controversial sections of the law must be repealed immediately and detainees must be released ensuring the protection of informants.”

As per media reports, 180 journalists were sued from the beginning of 2018 to June 2020 under the Digital Security Act and Section 57. After the Covid-19 outbreak, 67 cases including 37 against journalists were filed under the Digital Security Act. Besides, on charge of spreading rumours on social media, 88 people including cartoonist and journalists were arrested.

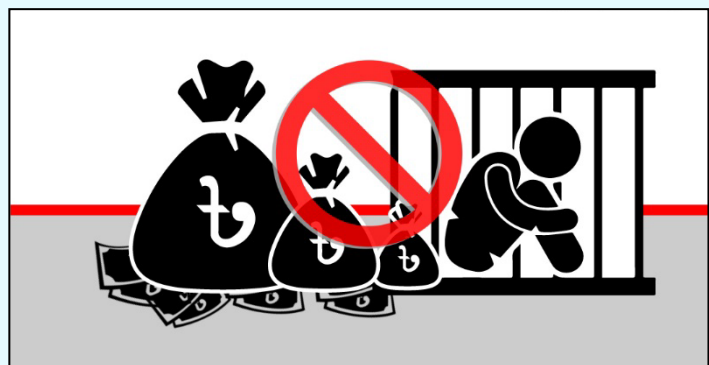
Alleged involvement of a lawmaker in human trafficking and money laundering is a disrespectful example of mischief in Bangladesh's politics; TIB called for immediate investigation and action to protect the dignity of the parliament

TIB termed the allegation of human trafficking and money laundering against a Bangladeshi lawmaker disrespectful example of mischief in Bangladesh's politics and public representation. In a statement released on 23 June 2020, TIB has called upon the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) and the national parliament to launch an immediate investigation and take legal action to preserve the prestige of the parliament.

According to the reports published in the media both in Kuwait and Bangladesh since the beginning of this year, no evidence found that the government, the parliament, the ACC, the Financial Intelligence Unit, the revenue authorities, and the concerned law enforcement agencies had given serious consideration to the allegations from the very beginning, rather there were signs of attempt to look away from the issue.

TIB Executive Director Dr. Iftekharuzzaman said, “Following the reports published in the Kuwaiti media regarding a Bangladeshi lawmaker involvement in human trafficking, the ambassador of Bangladesh to Kuwait issued a written report that the allegations were baseless after a so-called investigation, which was also published in the media. And, our government and authorities concerned, including the ACC, comfortably remained confident of that investigation. The national parliament also did not take any measures in this regard. Even after the recent news of the arrest of the accused MP on specific charges and the confiscation of his assets, a responsible minister reiterated more than once, said that the government had nothing to do unless the Kuwaiti government officially informed them. Such indifference on the part of the government is a matter of shame and concern considering the country's reputation in the international arena and the future of the employment of thousands of migrant workers.”

Stating that it was possible to initiate an investigation against the allegations without waiting for the official communication from the Kuwaiti government, Dr. Zaman said, “Thousands of workers who have been trafficked in the name of employment and have been held hostage for money are the citizens of this country. There is definitely an organised network of human traffickers operating inside the country with the involvement of government high-ups. All the alleged violations of the law are serious



crimes in Bangladesh as well. Then why should we still look to Kuwait for investigation? It is quite clear from the course of events that the government has not always had the political will to effectively investigate the allegations and there was involvement of an influential quarters.”

Dr. Zaman added, “Without being involved in any political activities in the past, the accused MP was elected as an independent candidate with the direct support of the ruling party. Then, in an unprecedented way, his wife was also elected a Member of Parliament in the reserved women's seat. TIB expects that the responsible will find out how the couple received the party's support or nomination. There are also questions whether the lawmaker couple's entry into the politics is for the benefit of the people of the country or for using the parliament for their personal benefit. Especially after the formal investigation in Kuwait, the way wife of the accused MP made a statement on behalf of her husband on the pad of the parliament is ridiculous and certainly insulting to the parliament. We do not know whether the Speaker considered the matter at all and whether the parliament members had been embarrassed.”

Mentioning the importance of expatriate workers who bring in large sums of remittance for the country's socio-economic development, Dr. Zaman said, “considering the contribution of these expatriate workers, the government should take tough stance in this regard by acknowledging its responsibility to the country and its people. We also hope that the Speaker will take the initiative to scrutinize this incident to see how much shame this has brought for our Parliament and what can be a remedy for this situation.”

CCC News

Pre-Budget Discussion and Public Hearing

Madaripur Municipal authority pledged to ensure budget for COVID-19 response

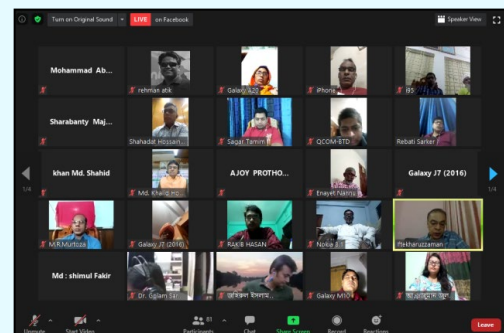
Madaripur Municipal authority assured to allocate budget for COVID-19 response at a virtual pre-budget open discussion and public hearing titled ‘Budget for Madaripur Municipality combating COVID-19 crisis’.

Jointly organized by the Madaripur Municipality and Committee of Concerned Citizens (CCC), Madaripur, the webinar took place on 28 June 2020 via Zoom App. After the welcome speech by the Mayor of Madaripur Municipality Md. Khalid Hossain Yad, President of CCC, Madaripur Khan Md. Shahid shared the aim and objectives of the program. Mayor presented the draft budget of the municipality for 2020-2021 fiscal years.

Dr. Iftekharuzzan, Executive Director of TIB and the key discussant of the event said that the money allocated in the municipality budget is for the people, not personal. Therefore, decision regarding how to spend the money must be taken in consultation with the local citizens. To make the budget citizen-friendly, scopes must be created to inform people about the expenditure of the budget in every sector, Dr. Jaman added.

Mayor Khalid Hossain Yad made the budget commitment following citizens' demand in the public hearing where over 80 people from different professions including teachers, journalists, lawyers, students, development activists, physicians, bankers and businessmen participated. More than 24 citizens expressed their opinions regarding the COVID-19 response budget for the citizens of Madaripur Municipality.

Participants took part in the open discussion session and expressed their expectations and placed a number of recommendations on the proposed budget to solve the crisis during pandemic. The recommendations included: allocation for setting up PCR Lab for Covid testing, allocation of special budget for addressing Covid situation, allocation of budget for ICT, arranging parking in the market, allocation for protecting rare species including monkey, increasing budget for sports and cultural events, implementation of Right to Information Act, increasing budget for anti-corruption campaign etc.



In the closing remark, Mayor Khalid Hossain Yad expressed gratitude to all participants and assured to share the final budget by addressing all the recommendations. The discussants also expressed their special thanks for organizing such online event in this pandemic situation.

Webinar on `Corona crisis: public expectations, challenges and way forward`

`Precautions and necessary measures will be taken to ensure all kind of safety for the people of Kushtia during Covid-19 crisis`, proclaimed by the Deputy Commissioner (DC) of Kushtia, Md. Aslam Hossain at a webinar titled `Corona crisis: public expectations, challenges and way forward`.

The webinar, organized by the CCC, Kushtia and presided over by the CCC President Md. Rafiqul Alam Tuku, was held on 29 June 2020 via Zoom app where Deputy Commissioner of Kushtia, Vice-Chancellor of Islamic University Kushtia D. Harun-Ur-Rashid Askari, Kushtia Zila Parishad Chairman and President of Chamber of Commerce Alhaj Rabiul Islam, Civil Surgeon Dr. A H M Anwarul Islam and Deputy Director of Kushtia General Hospital Dr. Nurunnahar Begum were the panel discussants.

Assuring to take initiatives to tackle all kind of hurdles during the pandemic situation, DC, Kushtia urged the citizens to play their own role by following the health advisory, maintaining social distance and wearing face mask. He also requested all for not to be inhuman to the COVID positive patients.

Vice-Chancellor of Islamic University Kushtia, D. Harun-Ur-Rashid Askari shared that online classes have been started for the students and university will provide the internet data cost to the students who are unable to manage. Kushtia Zila Parishad Chairman shared that local administration, police and political parties are working together in this crisis and distributing relief to the vulnerable people. Deputy Director of Kushtia Sadar Hospital shared the preparations taken by the hospital authority for COVID patients. She informed that 10 ICU Bed and central oxygen system have been arranged for the COVID positive patients which will be available within a month. Civil Surgeon stated that necessary initiatives have been taken to control the spread of Corona virus in Kushtia.

About 100 people from different sectors including representatives of GO-NGO, teachers, journalists, lawyers, development activists, physicians, bankers, businessmen and students participated in the webinar. They shared their expectations and opinions to the authorities. CCC Vice-President Mizanur Rahman Lucky and Area Manager of TIB Md. Ariful Islam moderated the event.

Voluntary initiatives by core actors in response to Covid-19

TIB's core actors of local level including CCC, Swajan, YES and YES Friends members shouldered their responsibility to carry out a series of voluntary activities to respond COVID-19 pandemic ranging from public awareness campaigns to food and essential good distribution and financial support for the vulnerable people because of pandemic crunch.

Braving the risk of exposure during this pandemic, many volunteers sprayed disinfectant in the crowded areas like hospital premises, roads, mosques, vehicles etc.



A total of 1306 Core Actors of TIB (Female: 364 Male: 942), predominantly youth (700), were voluntarily involved in COVID-19 response initiatives. Among them CCC members 407, SWAJAN members 199, YES members 484 and YES Friends members 216.

The YES and YES Friends members launched awareness campaigns by distributing health advisory, face masks, soap, hand sanitizer, bleaching powder at their respective communities. Some of them even were directly involved in the making of mask and hand sanitizer. As a part of awareness raising, volunteers used megaphones to request people for maintaining social distance and staying at home.

A number of CCCs mobilized fund to support the vulnerable core actors and the community people. Few CCCs contributed fund to the local administration and provided Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to the health authorities.



In addition, core actors, specially the YES and YES Friends members supported local administration and different voluntary organizations to reach out to the people in need. They extended themselves as volunteers of District or Upazila administration, City Corporation, Union Parishad, voluntary organizations etc. and helped out to prepare lists of persons desperately in need of relief. The guidance of respective CCCs paved a smooth way for the volunteers.

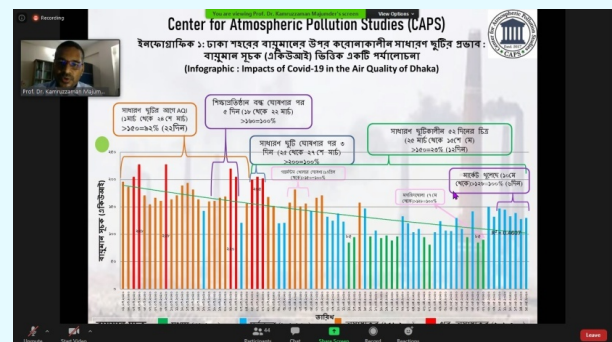
YES News

World Environment Day 2020

Webinar on “Environment and Nature during COVID-19”

A zoom webinar on “Environment and Nature during COVID-19” was organized by the YES group- Stamford University Bangladesh on 28th June to mark the World Environment Day 2020.

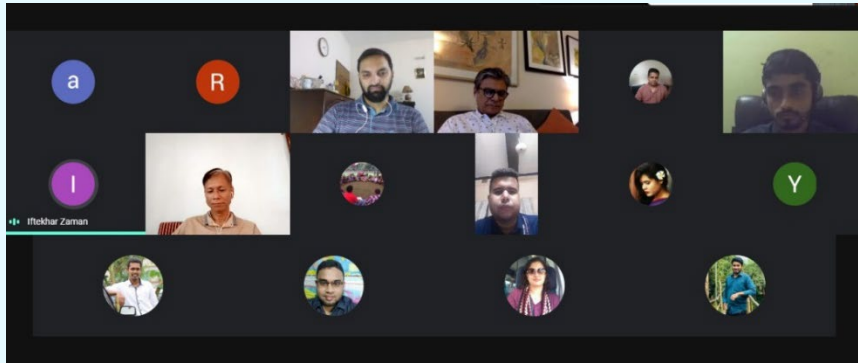
Dr. Ahmad Kamruzzaman Majumder, the Dean of the Science Faculty and Chairman of the Department of



Environmental Science, Stamford University Bangladesh was the keynote speaker and Dr. Iftekharuzzaman, ED, TIB, Mr. Ziaul Haque, Director of DoE, Mrs. Debra Efroyimson, ED, Institute of Well Being and Mr. Mohammad Zakir Hossain Khan, SPM-CFG, TIB were the panel discussants. Dr. Majumder presented the findings of his research on the air quality of Dhaka during Covid-19 days. 54 YES members from Stamford University, Uttara University and Savar, Madaripur Sanak attended the session and they also participated in a Q&A session.

Virtual-Adda: Invincible Youth in the Crisis of Covid-19 Pandemic

YES Group-University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB) organized a Virtual Adda (chat) titled "Invincible Youth in the Crisis of Covid-19 Pandemic" on 28 June 2020. Thirteen YES representatives from CCCs and ULAB-YES shared their experiences of volunteering and the best efforts they made during ongoing Corona pandemic.



Professor Dr. Imran Rahman, Special Advisor to the Board of Trustees and Dean, School of Business, ULAB and Dr. Iftekharuzzaman, Executive Director of TIB graced the event as the guests. Ms. Farhana Ferdous, Director, Civic Engagement; Sheikh Manjur-E-Alam, Director, Outreach and Communication; Senior Programme Managers,

Programme Managers and Area Managers of Civic Engagement division of TIB also attended the event. About 130 YES members from CCCs and Dhaka YES groups joined the event.

Webinar on "Understanding the Covid-19 Pandemic"

YES Group-University of Asia Pacific (UAP) organized a webinar on "Understanding the Covid-19 Pandemic" on 16 June 2020. Professor Dr. Abul Hasnat Milton, Director, Epidemiology Resource Centre, Australia, the key speaker of the event focused his speech on Covid-19 and its nature, and how youth can protect themselves physically and mentally during this pandemic. Air Cadre (Retd.) Ishfaqullahi Choudhury,



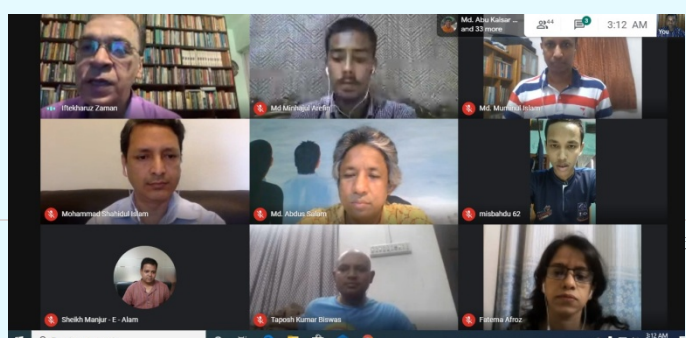
Treasurer and Director of the Directorate of Student Welfare, University of Asia Pacific (UAP); Dr. Iftekharuzzaman, Executive Director, TIB; Sheikh Manjur-E-Alam, Director and Mohammad Tauhidul Islam, Senior Programme Manager of Outreach and Communication, TIB; Mr. Tareq Khan, Assistant Director, Directorate of Student Welfare (DSW) and Mr. Ipshit Tarafdar, Assistant Director, Board of Trustees, UAP and Adviser to the UAP YES Club also attended the event. About

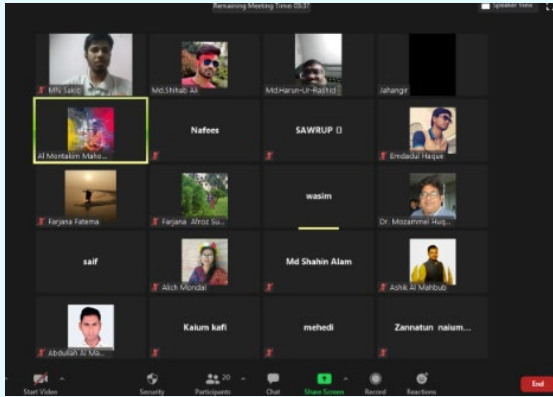
132 members from CCC and Dhaka based YES groups attended the webinar and joined in an interactive Q&A session.

Webinar on "Covid-19 Pandemic's Impact on Education"

YES Group-Institute of Education and Research (IER), University of Dhaka organized a webinar on "Covid-19 Pandemic's Impact on Education". Dr. Abdus Salam, Professor and Chairman, Department of Non-formal and Lifelong Education, Dr. Ahsan Habib, Associate Professor, Department of Education Psychology and Guidance, IER and Mr. Shahidul Islam, Senior Education Adviser, USAID's Missions in Bangladesh and Afghanistan attended the event as the featured speaker.

Total 160 YES Members from Dhaka and CCC YES groups, general students of IER and people from different walks of lives attended the event. Dr. Iftekharuzzaman, Executive Director of TIB; Ms. Ferhana Ferdous, Director, Civic





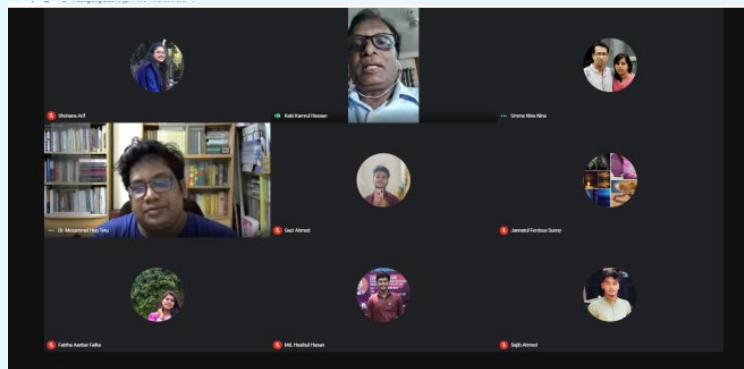
Engagement, Sheikh Manjur-E-Alam, Director and Mohammad Tauhidul Islam, Senior Programme Manager of Outreach and Communication, TIB and Dr. Taposh Kumar Biswas, Associate Professor, IER and Adviser of the IER YES Group also graced the event with their presence. Speakers discussed about the impact of this pandemic on different tiers of the education system of Bangladesh. They also emphasized on the importance of initiating online classes in all the public and private educational institutions of Bangladesh during this pandemic period. Participant YES members joined in an interactive Q&A session after the speeches.

YES members received training on the basics of photography

To develop the skills of YES and YES Friends members, YES groups organize various trainings and workshops on different topics as per the requirement of the members. Following that, YES groups of Institute of Social Welfare and Research, University of Dhaka, East West University and Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University organized a training on the “Basic Course of Photography” respectively on 23rd, 25th and 26th June, 2020. Dr. Mozammel Huq Tetu, Photographer, Bangla Academy and Adjunct Faculty, University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB) facilitated the training programs.

In the first session of the training, Dr. Mozammel covered some basic issues of photography including but not limited to the function of camera, lighting, composition, framing, shutter speed etc. Then he discussed about the prospect of photography as a profession in respect of Bangladesh.

More than 60 YES and YES Friends members received the training and participated in the Q&A session. Advisers of the YES groups and Dhaka YES coordinators also attended the training. In the closing session, YES advisers, Leaders and Deputy Leaders gave vote of thanks to the facilitator.



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