

Research Study

**GDI Index: Defence sector in Bangladesh
at high risk of corruption**



The defence sector in Bangladesh is at a very high risk of corruption, said the Government Defence Integrity (GDI) Index 2020 published by the Berlin-based Transparency International (TI). The global think-tank publishes the GDI by assessing the quality of institutional controls to manage the risk of corruption in defence and security institutions.

Published on 16 November 2021, the GDI Index said, "Corruption risk is very high in Bangladesh's defence sector. Owing to limited external oversight, a lack of transparency and weak civilian control, risks are particularly pronounced in procurement, finances and policymaking. However, personnel management standards are stronger and include some anti-corruption provisions."

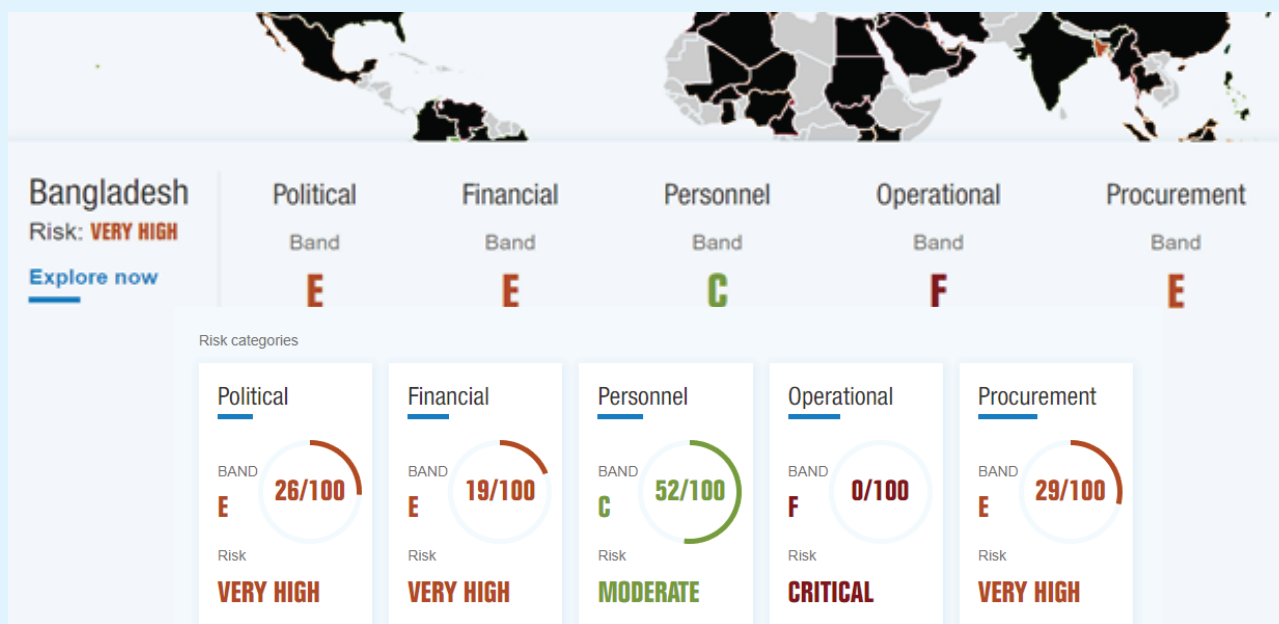
The index containing data from 86 countries shows that the risk of corruption in the defence sector is very high or critical in 62 per cent of the countries. The index assessed five key sectors by collecting data through sets of 77 questionnaires and 212 indicators. The five key sectors classified in the index are – political, financial, personnel, operational, and procurement. The scoring scale from 0 to 100 classified the countries into A, B, C, D, E and F categories, where 'A' defies very low risk and 'F' defies critical risk.

According to TI, countries with low scores on the GDI Index have weak or non-existing mechanisms to control corruption in the Defence sector. Simultaneously, countries with low GDI scores are more unstable, and prone to conflicts or human rights abuse.

Overall, Bangladesh scored a mere 25 on the GDI Index, indicating the defence sector of

<p>Band A</p> <p>Risk VERY LOW</p> <p>New Zealand</p>	<p>Band D</p> <p>Risk HIGH</p> <p>Albania Argentina Armenia Botswana Chile Greece</p> <p>Hungary Indonesia Kenya Kosovo Malaysia Portugal</p> <p>Russia Serbia Tunisia Uganda Ukraine</p>
<p>Band B</p> <p>Risk LOW</p> <p>Belgium Germany Latvia</p> <p>Netherlands Norway Switzerland</p> <p>Taiwan United Kingdom</p>	<p>Band E</p> <p>Risk VERY HIGH</p> <p>Bangladesh China Cote d'Ivoire Ghana Kuwait Lebanon</p> <p>Mali Mexico Montenegro Niger Nigeria Palestine</p> <p>Tanzania Thailand Turkey United Arab Emirates Zimbabwe</p>
<p>Band C</p> <p>Risk MODERATE</p> <p>Australia Bosnia and Herzegovina Brazil Canada Colombia Denmark Estonia Finland</p> <p>France India Israel Italy Japan Lithuania North Macedonia Philippines</p> <p>Poland Singapore South Africa South Korea Spain Sweden United States</p>	<p>Band F</p> <p>Risk CRITICAL</p> <p>Algeria Angola Azerbaijan Bahrain Burkina Faso Cameroon</p> <p>Egypt Iran Iraq Jordan Morocco Myanmar</p> <p>Oman Qatar Saudi Arabia South Sudan Sudan Venezuela</p>

the country is at high risk of corruption. Among the five key sectors of the index, Bangladesh scored its highest (52 points) in the personnel management sector and scored the lowest (0 points) in the operational risk management sector. In the GDI methodology, Transparency International says, "The power disparity among different actors in the defence establishment can lead to situations of undue influence, in which one party uses their status to pressure another into making decisions that are not in the best interest of the state. Often it is the executive that coerces parliament or the defence sector in acquisitions, exports, or prosecutions. Any situation in which a process of scrutiny or decision-making is not independent can lead to undue influence, such as with personnel recruitment and oversight mechanisms."



TIB Executive Director Dr. Iftekharuzzaman expressed concerns over such low scores, "The index is not saying that there is rampant corruption in the defence sector, but it's pointing out that there is a lack of integrity and a high risk of corruption in different sections. It is now mandatory to consider this index seriously so that the defence integrity system can be redesigned and anti-corruption mechanisms can be fortified. We think that the first step should be to establish and practice a Defence Integrity Strategy in line with the National Integrity Strategy (NIS) adopted in 2010. If political leaders, civil society organisations, media personnel and other stakeholders can be involved alongside specialists in designing the draft of such a strategy, it will be more acceptable with a solid sense of ownership."

To know more about the GDI 2020, [visit !\[\]\(cbe80b694ebd74fcfe136a095b608235_img.jpg\)](https://ti-defence.org/gdi/) <https://ti-defence.org/gdi/>

Research Study

Women UNOs face gender discrimination and non-cooperation, finds TIB study

ROLE OF WOMEN UPAZILA NIRBAHI OFFICER (UNO) IN ESTABLISHING GOOD GOVERNANCE AT THE LOCAL LEVEL: CHALLENGES AND WAY FORWARD

[CLICK HERE FOR DETAILS](#)

Dhaka, 4 November 2021: While discharging their duties, female UNOs of Bangladesh endure political pressure and non-cooperation from different officials, including the law enforcers, reported a TIB study released on November 4, 2021, through a virtual press conference.

The research titled 'Role of Women Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) in Establishing Good Governance at the Local Level: Challenges and Way Forward' revealed that female UNOs also faced sexual harassment and gender discrimination.

Over an incident of physical harassment, a female UNO said, "I was deliberately pushed from the back when I inspected a development work with a chairman and a minister. I complained in this regard and asked to provide security in future."

More than 78 percent of female UNOs participating in the study said they faced challenges while discharging their official duties.

Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used for the research. An online survey for the report was conducted from June 2020 to March 2021, where 45 female UNOs responded. As of June 2020, out of 485 Upazilas in the country, 149 had female UNOs.

The report identified that female UNOs mostly face challenges while carrying out four activities, including secretarial support to the Upazila Parishad, assistance to the Upazila chairman, coordination with other divisional officials or institutions at the Upazila level, and following government instructions.

Speaking at the event, TIB ED Dr. Iftekharuzzaman said, “In the global context, we see those countries with a high number of women participation in politics and administration have lower rates of corruption and a conducive environment for good governance. In contrast, countries that have failed to effectively empower women politically and administratively are more prone to corruption and challenges in good governance.”

As per the study, while providing secretarial assistance, local political leaders and public representatives pressurise the UNOs to commit irregularities in distributing relief supplies, force them to make recommendations for additional relief items, demand not to verify expenditures, and compel the UNOs to approve fake expenditure bills.

Besides, the report showed that while assisting the Upazila Chairman, the UNOs did not get enough cooperation, and 5.7 percent of UNOs complained about sexual harassment. While coordinating with other divisional officers or institutions at the Upazila level and following government instructions, the UNOs went through similar experiences.

The report also found that apart from pressure from the vested political groups, a section of local journalists, law enforcement personnel, and government officials, including Deputy Commissioners (DC) and additional DCs, also create obstacles for the female UNOs.

Talking about an example of non-cooperation from the law enforcement, a female UNO said, “I wanted the police force to stop a gang of drug addicts, but there was no support. I was told that everyone was busy”

To create a more suitable working atmosphere for women UNOs, the TIB study suggested eight recommendations, including the adaptation of policy-level decisions by the ministries to stop illegal influence over the women UNOs, and necessary legal aid and safety measures for them.



For more detail, visit -

<https://www.ti-bangladesh.org/beta3/index.php/en/research-policy/92-diagnostic-study/6354-uno-women>

Policy Stance

TIB expresses concerns as Bangladesh sidesteps COP-26 decision to stop deforestation by 2030

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) has expressed concerns as the Bangladesh government did not unanimously agree with the global consensus on stopping deforestation, which was adopted at the COP-26 conference in Glasgow, Scotland on 2 November 2021. The anti-corruption watchdog has demanded the government immediately express unity with the global consensus and adopt a specific roadmap to stop deforestation and regenerate lost forests within 2030.



In a statement published on 3 November 2021, TIB Executive Director Dr. Iftekharuzzaman said, "It is extremely disappointing that Bangladesh has not aligned with 124 countries with the Glasgow consensus to stop deforestation within 2030. It is unbelievable that many African nations and Brazil have signed the consensus, but Bangladesh, one of the most climate change impacted countries in the world, has not agreed to it! Yet, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, Bangladesh loses 2.6 per cent of forest land annually, which is almost double the global average. Just in the last 17 years, around 66 square kilometres of tropical rainforest have been destroyed in Bangladesh. According to the Forest Department of the government, 2 lakh 87 thousand and 453 acres of forest lands have been occupied, of which 1 lakh 38 thousand acres are protected forest lands. Even the natural protection zone of the Sundarbans is under threat due to reckless activities of government and

private entities. Amidst these harsh realities, it is the responsibility of the government to be a part of the global consensus.”

Dr. Iftekharuzzaman also commented that the timeframe of 9 years to stop deforestation is very limited as world leaders failed to implement a similar consensus adopted in the 2014 climate conference. “If world leaders fail again, it will be more difficult to attain net-zero emissions within 2050. As a leader of the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF), Bangladesh must immediately sign the global consensus and try to initiate further actions from polluting countries. We hope that Bangladesh will take steps to reinforce global financing initiatives to stop using coal to reduce carbon emissions, stop deforestation and recover lost forest lands.”

The TIB Executive Director also voiced concerns over the lives and livelihood of 19 million people who are dependent on forest lands and added that the destruction of forests will endanger the entire nation. He said, “Despite concerns of environment protection organisations and protests from local communities, the government has initiated many projects in ecologically critical areas like the Rampal power-plant in the Sundarbans, the administrative academy in 700 acres of land Jhlongja forest in Cox’s Bazar, and a Safari Park in the Lathitila reserve forests. These projects will severely impact the environment and increase deforestation. We expect the government to be sensible by cancelling these projects immediately alongside retaining from initiating any further coal-based power projects after 2021.”

TIB also expects that the government will take initiatives to protect forests and the livelihoods of the people by following specific roadmaps and ensuring transparency, accountability, and integrity in order to attain SDGs related to climate change and environment.

Policy Stance

Disappointments as COP-26 ends without any specific roadmap for the promised 100 billion dollars in climate funds, TIB urges Bangladesh and CVF representatives to take a stronger stance

TIB thinks the COP-26 summit in Glasgow is just limited to conversations as there were no steps to establish a specific roadmap to stop global warming. Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) was disappointed as the developed nations sidestepped discussions on the promised 100 billion dollars which was supposed to assist climate vulnerable countries including Bangladesh. The anti-corruption watchdog has also urged Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF) representatives and its leader Bangladesh to take a stronger stance over increasing allotment in the adaptation fund and accelerating the climate fund intakes. It has also urged the developed nations to play more responsible roles in curbing the climate crisis.

At a press briefing on 11 November 2021, TIB Executive Director Dr. Iftekharuzzaman said that the high expectations raised by world leaders to combat global warming before the summit have not been met. On the contrary, they have tried to illogically and unethically raise the threshold to 2 degrees Celsius increase from the existing 1.5 degrees Celsius temperature rise goal. "The resolution did not set a deadline for stopping coal-based energy production. Similarly, developed and polluting nations have yet again failed to mobilize the promised annual 100 billion dollars needed for adaptation and loss & damage recovery. Yet, they had agreed to pay 100 billion dollars annually since 2020 under the Paris Agreement. In total, they have paid around 80 billion dollars, of which 20 billion are climate funds according to reliable reports. For vulnerable countries, the adaptation fund was considered the most important under the Paris Agreement, but only 25 per cent of the climate funds have been allotted for this. The latest summit saw no progress in increasing the funds, which yet again exposes the questionable role of the developed countries in fighting climate change."

However, Dr. Iftekharuzzaman said the inclusion of Loss and Damage separately in the draft resolution is a step in the right direction as the Paris Agreement did not previously isolate it from other expenditure columns. We hope the developed nations can reach a consensus on Loss and Damage to properly compensate climate vulnerable nations. This will ensure accountability and transparency in both polluting and affected countries."

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