



TI-Bangladesh Observes the International Right to Know Day

Towards strengthening the demand & supply side to enforce people's right to information

Dhaka, 30 September 2010: Transparency International Bangladesh has observed the International Right to Know Day (28 September) with a series of public awareness, voice and demand campaigns throughout the country for enforcement of people's right to information.

The day was observed with the message: ***Janbo Janabo, Durnity Rukhbo*** (*We want to know, We will let others know – we will prevent corruption*). The campaign events included rallies, human chains, street theatres, advice and information desks, cultural programmes, seminars, discussion meetings, cartoon exhibition and information fair. Special highlight of the events were 24 Information Fairs in so many different locations outside the capital where people from all walks of life were provided to opportunity to access information through information stalls set up by 25-30 different Government and non-government organizations.

The Information Fairs were organized by the Committees of Concerned Citizens (CCCs) and the Youth Engagement & Support (YES) groups working with TIB. For the first time this year in all these Fairs CCC-YES were joined with full support by the local administration which helped ensure participation many government organizations. Cabinets Ministers, senior representatives of the administration, police and other government institutions as well as NGO and civil society organizations took part. In one such event in Jamalpur the Information Minister and Industries Minister attended as Guests of Honour.

In seminars, rallies and other events organized parallel with these fairs, speakers called for successful implementation of the RTI Act 2009 for institutionalization of democracy in Bangladesh. These turned out to be a powerful medium of strengthening both the demand and supply side in implementing the Right to Information Act.

For wider dissemination of the demand for people's right to information TIB initiated a two-weeks-long media campaign from 28th September communicating TV & Radio messages on people's right to information in the key service delivery sectors - health, education and local government. This media campaign is expected to reach hundreds of thousands of viewers through the state-owned Bangladesh Television and 2 private satellite channels. Radio messages went on air for nation-wide coverage by the state-owned Bangladesh Betar, and 2 FM stations.

As a member of the Right to Information Forum (RTI Forum) TIB also co-organized a national level Human Chain on September 27, and a roundtable in Dhaka on September 28. The Roundtable was attended among others by the Minister for Tourism and the Information Commissioner as Guests of Honour. Executive Director of TIB presented the keynote paper on ***Towards People's Right to Information in Bangladesh: High Expectations, Tentative Progress, and the Way Forward***. Former Adviser to the Caretaker Government and Editor of the Daily Independent also attended the Roundtable presided over by the Convener of the RTI Forum. Representatives of the member organization of the Forum and a large number of other leading members of the civil

society, NGOs and the media participated in the discussion highlighting the challenges against implementation of the RTI Act, and ways to confront those.

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, the first organization to do so in Bangladesh. Earlier, from 2003, TIB started a local level campaign called Advice & Information Desk to inform the members of the public about their basic rights and entitlement.

Media contact: Rezwan ul-Alam rezwan@ti-bangladesh.org