

INSIDE

Success Stories

- Custom House to Get Rid of Middlemen – thanks to TIB report

Press Statements

- TIB Demands Government Recognition of Right to Know Day
- Disclose and make parliamentary information accessible through ICT: TIB
- Proposed amendment may curtail ACC's power, needs further consultation with stakeholders and experts

Climate Finance Governance

- Robust and Early Capitalisation of GCF; Governance in Climate Finance are must – PM echoes with TIB's stance

Day Observance

- TIB supports Information Commission to observe International Right to Know Day 2014

CCC News

- Hospital to get doctors round the clock for child ward
- CCC Lakshmipur's advocacy for quality education
- International Literacy Day observed: promise to fight illiteracy together

YES News

- Joint anti-corruption campaign by YES Group
- RTI campaign by Dhaka YES

Success Stories

Good Practice: TIB's technical assistance in developing a good governance roadmap for LGED

When TI-Bangladesh initiated a study three years ago on Local Government Engineering Department (LGED), the country's lead agency for developing the rural infrastructure, the concerned authorities were reluctant to cooperate. This soon changed as a result of persistent efforts by TIB's research team following which LGED officials provided full cooperation by way of information sharing, organising meetings to acquaint the researchers with the agency's operation and procurement process including monitoring and control mechanisms. It also provided feedback and inputs into the draft report. Finally, the findings of TIB's study titled 'Local Government Engineering Department: Problems of Good Governance and the Way Forward' was presented before senior LGED officials, local government experts and academics during a roundtable on 22 August, 2013. This study was jointly conducted by Programme Manager In-charge Nahid Sharmin and Senior Programme Manager Shahzada M Akram of Research and Policy Division of TIB.

Several rounds of discussions with the authorities and development partners, who had a keen interest in the area, followed. Under this first ever consulting project for TIB funded by ADB, TIB has been assigned the responsibility to provide technical assistance to LGED to: a) identify governance and fiduciary risks, and b) develop a road map to ensure good governance of LGED.

It will include achievable immediate, intermediate and long-term actions requiring further funding, to be developed and operationalised by LGED. The implementation of this initiative will take place in consultation with the LGD Ethics Committee chaired by the Secretary, LGD, where the LGED Chief Engineer is a member.

TIB has already formed a team of specialists with expertise in key areas of governance, procurement, public auditing, human resources management and monitoring and evaluation for risk identification and development of a roadmap. The assignment is expected to be completed by August 2015. When fully implemented, this roadmap will lead to enhancing transparency and effectiveness in LGED operations and improving its capacity to manage risks. The above example testifies that due diligence and commitment are critical for winning over TIB's stakeholders through evidence-based research and advocacy.

Custom House to Get Rid of Middlemen – thanks to TIB report

In a bid to free all Custom Houses free from middlemen and ensure their efficiency, the National Board of Revenue (NBR) issued office order and chalked out a detail plan to be implemented with the support from law enforcing agencies. These illegally appointed middlemen, popularly known as ‘Badi Alam’ have long been working as helper of custom officials at different Custom Houses. The principal task of Badi Alam’s is to negotiate with clients about custom duty in export-import. Their illegal involvement created opportunity for bribery and corruption in export-import value chain and ultimately deprived the government of a huge revenue earning.

The NBR move was a result of a TIB study titled ‘Automation of Export-Import in Chittagong Port and Custom House: Governance Challenges and Way Forward’ that was released on 14 July 2014 in Dhaka. Programme Managers, Research and Policy of TIB Manzoor-E-Khoda and Juliet Rossette conducted the study. It estimated that a total minimum value of daily illegal transactions in Custom house is Tk 4.75 million and Tk 1.72

million in port in cargo clearing process.

After release of the study, the NBR expressed its interest to discuss the report findings with TIB. Subsequently a meeting between TIB research team and NBR officials was held on 6 August at NBR’s Segunbagicha Office. The NBR appreciated TIB’s work and emphasised on effective collaboration with TIB to bring transparency and accountability in export-import. The TIB team made a very brief presentation on study findings followed by an open discussion by NBR officials. They highlighted various on-going initiatives of NBR towards full automation of Custom House. NBR is developing a Single Window to streamline export-import process which will be made operational in few years time.

Key decisions of the meeting between TIB and NBR included immediate riddance of ‘Badi Alams’, completion of all in ASYCUDA World modules within one year, immediate end of ongoing practice of signing the printed copy of the bill-of-entry by the customs officials and recruitment of third and fourth class staff to ease day to day work of Custom House etc.

Press Statements

TIB Demands Government Recognition of Right to Know Day

Expressing satisfaction over appointment of the two new Information commissioners, TIB in a statement on 15 September 2014, urged upon the government to recognize 28 September as ‘Right to Know Day’.

Executive Director of TIB Dr Iftekharuzzaman said, “Though late, we hope that these appointments will help the Information Commission to expedite its works. The present government in its previous term passed the RTI Act, took steps to implement it and also formulated National Integrity Strategy of which Information Commission is an important part.”

He also said that, such delay was not expected, as it affected the mobility of the commission. He also urged the government to timely and transparent appoint competent individuals in future in all commissions against any vacant positions without any prejudice and party interest.

TIB, in a letter on 31 August urged the Prime Minister for government’s recognition of RTK day on 28 September and celebrate it nationally. TIB thinks that such recognition will reflect government’s willingness to implement RTI act.

Disclose and make parliamentary information accessible through ICT: TIB

On the occasion of International Democracy Day (15 September) and International Right to Know Day (28 September), TIB urged the Speaker of National Parliament to take steps to proactively disclose information on parliamentary activities. TIB urged to disclose parliamentary info through ICT and make these easily accessible by the common people.

In a statement on 16 September, TIB Executive Director Dr Iftekharuzzaman said, “Disclosure of info on parliamentary activities including law passing process are preconditions for democracy and governance. This will make the parliament more effective and help it to gain people’s confidence.”

“An ICT based info system will add new dimension in enabling people’s to access to parliamentary info. It will bridge the gap between parliament and people as well as the

gap between public representatives and people.” he added.

Dr Zaman also said, “In view of global decreasing trend in people’s confidence over state institutions, ICT based initiatives are in place to retain people’s confidence. There is no reason for Bangladesh to stay behind when the number of ICT enabled parliament is on rise across the world. Through such system, people can be served with parliamentary information at a lower price compared to other means.

Terming people as the owner of all parliamentary info, TIB ED emphasised on disclosing parliamentary info in the light of Right to Information Act 2009. TIB thinks establishing transparency in parliament - a key institution of the National Integrity System is beyond any debate.

Proposed amendment may curtail ACC's power needs further consultation with stakeholders and experts

In a statement on 25 September 2014, TIB expressed concerns over government’s move to amend the Anti Corruption Commission (ACC) Act 2013 that will empower police to investigate money laundering and corruption cases. TIB believes that any such amendment would curtail ACC’s power and therefore, it should be consulted further with stakeholders and experts.

Executive Director of TIB Dr Iftekharuzzaman said, “The November 2013 amendment of ACC Act overburdened the commission with investigations of cheating, extortion and illegal arms cases in addition to existing money laundering cases which deprived citizens from getting justice. But empowering police to

investigate money laundering cases will create conflict of interest, create scopes for intrusion of police in ACC and increase complexity its operations. People fear that through this amendment, ACC activities will come to a standstill situation and will face the risk of becoming more ineffective.”

“Government’s commitment to establish governance and resist corruption will be questioned if this very important institution of National Integrity System becomes weaker. The government ratified the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), so it must refrain from any steps that may weaken ACC” he added.

Climate Finance Governance

Robust and Early Capitalisation of GCF

Governance in Climate Finance are must – PM echoes with TIB's stance

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) since 2011 has been demanding release of “new” and “additional” Climate Funds by Annex-1 countries. The organisation in different fora also demanded integrity, transparency and accountability in fund disbursement by developed countries and its utilisation by the government. TIB is a strong advocate for effective participation of affected people in implementation, monitoring and evaluation of climate change finance programmes and projects for ensuring better governance in this sector. To this end, on 23 September 2014 on the eve of UN Climate Summit 2014 TIB and Action Aid Bangladesh (AAB) jointly called upon the United Nations and relevant Member States to ensure transparency, accountability and integrity in climate finance governance both at national and international levels. This call was made from a human chain organised by the youth groups of TIB and Action Aid at the TSC premises of University of Dhaka.

TIB and AAB expressed disappointment that the Annex 1 countries have remained far from providing the committed level of ‘new’ and ‘additional’ funds to the affected countries including most vulnerable ones like Bangladesh. They demanded immediate disbursement of the promised funds. At the same time, the organisations also called upon the Government of Bangladesh to allocate necessary funds for the Bangladesh Climate Change Trust Fund (BCCTF).

The human chain was addressed by the Pro Vice Chancellor of Dhaka University Dr Shahid Akhter Hossain and TIB Executive Director Dr Iftekharuzzaman. Dr Zaman said that effective participation of the people, especially from

climate change affected regions, must be ensured in project planning, fund allocation and project implementation. He also called upon the countries, donors and other stakeholders to work together and develop a fund depository and registry mechanism to facilitate tracking of fund disbursement and their use. TIB supported Committee of Concerned Citizens (CCC) also organised human chains with similar demands at Khulna, Satkhira, Bagerhat, Barisal, Pirojpur, Patuakhali and Barguna.

Earlier on 22 September 2014, TIB submitted a letter of appeal to the United Nations with similar demands. It was handed over to UNDP's Country Director in Bangladesh Pauline Tamesis for transmission to the Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on the occasion of the UN Climate Summit held in New York on 23 September. Along with the letter, a collection of nearly 5000 signatures in support of the call by young people from worst affected coastal regions of Bangladesh was also attached. TIB also appealed to Member States to act on their commitments under the Rio Convention, Cancun Agreement and Rio+20 Agreement.

Meanwhile the Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, MP at the UN Climate Summit Round-table on 22 September 2014 at New York stated among others that robust and early capitalisation of Green Climate Fund (GCF) is crucial for Bangladesh and that developed countries must come forward to match with commitments. Mentionable that Action Aid Bangladesh and TIB through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs also placed similar call for consideration by the Prime Minister to include in her climate summit speech.

Day Observance

TIB supports Information Commission to observe International Right to Know Day

TIB celebrated the Right to Know Day with great enthusiasm on 28 September 2014. Nationally, the organisation joined hands with the Information Commission and other like minded organisation. In the capital rally, discussion meeting, information fair, campaign were organised to aware the people

campaign were organised to encourage proactive disclosure of information and to aware people to this end. Minister, bureaucrats, local government representatives, CCC, YES and Swajan members, common citizens, students attended these programmes.



on their rights to get information at ease. All 45 CCCs, its YES, YES Friends and Swajan members joined hands with the local administration to celebrate the day at local level. Rallies, information fairs, discussion meeting, anti-corruption cultural programmes, RTI application procedure and

CCCs of Jessore, Nilphamari, Satkhira and Sunamganj organized 2 days long Information Fairs where different government agencies, departments and NGOs installed stalls and provided service related information to the visiting people. Senior officials and Local Govt. representatives including Mayor of City Corporation, Deputy Commissioner, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Superintendent of Police, Upazila Chairman and Vice Chairman, Upazila Nirbahi Officer, other Local Govt. representatives, Information Officer, Civil Society members, Directors and senior officers of TIB attended the local celebrations.

CCC News

International Literacy Day observed: promise to fight illiteracy together

Different CCCs in collaboration with government and non-government organisations observed International Literacy Day with the theme “Literacy and sustainable development” on 8 September 2014. Rallies, discussion meetings, hand writing competitions etc were organized on the occasion. Government officials especially from education departments, teachers, CCC members, eminent citizens, NGO personals, students, Swajan, YES and YES Friends group members attended these programs. Discussants urged cooperation from all concerned to eliminate illiteracy from the



country. They promised to work together to ensues sustainable development and free Bangladesh from illiteracy.

Hospital to get doctors round the clock for child ward

The Pediatric Ward of Chapainawabganj Adhunik Sadar Hospital is likely to get doctors round the clock. The district civil surgeon Dr A K M Mozahar Hosen made this commitment at the discussion meeting organised by Chapainawabganj CCC on 30 September 2014. Convenor of CCC Health Sub-committee Dr Nur-E-Akhtar Zobeda presided over the meeting. The hospital marked some improvements in different services like cleanliness, timely delivery of different

services, supply of quality of food etc due to joint efforts by CCC and the hospital authority. The Civil Surgeon stated that some steps had already been taken against some dishonest officials and brokers. He assured the CCC that he would seriously look into other problems and solve these with support from hospital authority and the CCC. Hospital doctors; other officials officers; CCC, Swajan and YES members also took part in the discussion.

CCC Lakshmipur's advocacy for quality education

West Char Mandal Govt. Primary School recently attained grade 'A' status from previous 'C' – thanks to the efforts of Lakshmipur CCC that has been working closely with the school authority to improve the quality of services. The CCC organised mothers gathering, opinion sharing meetings with School Management Committee (SMC) and school authority. These programmes provided strategic guidance to improve the quality of education of the school. A similar meeting was held on 14 September 2014 at the

Primary Education office. CCC President Professor Mahbub Mohammad Ali presided over the meeting and Assistant District Primary Education Officers Md Mosaddek Hossen and Md Mahbubur Rahman attended the program as the Chief Guest and the Special Guest respectively. Participants urged the CCC to replicate these initiatives in other schools of the district. The Chief Guest appreciated the role of CCC in improving the quality and assured authority's all-out support.

YES News

Joint anti-corruption campaign by YES Group

On 10 September 2014, YES members of Ruqayyah Hall and Dhaka YES 1 groups jointly organised an anti-corruption campaign. As part of the campaign, an anti-corruption quiz competition and RTI campaign was organised. Sixty female students of Ruqayyah Hall participated in the quiz competition. Dhaka YES-1 made a social media campaign to popularise the RTI Act among students. The campaign was followed by a prize giving ceremony among winners of the quiz competition.

RTI campaign by Dhaka YES

AS part of its regular campaign to raise awareness on 'Right to Information', all 14 groups of Dhaka YES organised a daylong campaign at the Dhaka University campus on 25 September 2014. Fifty YES members assembled themselves in five groups campaigned throughout the day in five spots of Dhaka University. The campaign included filing and appealing procedures of RTI Act, individual role to promote RTI etc. The campaign reached more than one thousand and five hundred general students and passersby. Earlier on September 23, TIB organised an orientation on the same topic at its Dhaka office.

Editor: S. M. Rezwan-ul-Alam **Sub-Editor:** Meer Ahsan Habib **Design:** Barkat Ullah Babu

Write us: Transparency International Bangladesh, e-mail: advocacy@ti-bangladesh.org

Join us: www.ti-bangladesh.org www.facebook.com/TIBangladesh