

TIB responds to the Japanese Ambassador's comments on research study

Dhaka, 7 July 2022: The Japanese Ambassador to Bangladesh, H.E. Ito Naoki made some comments on TIB's recent research report titled '[Coal and LNG-based Power Projects in Bangladesh: Governance Challenges and the Way Ahead](#)' while speaking at the second Integrated Energy and Power Master Plan (IEPMP) preparation stakeholder meeting, as reported by the media on 3 July 2022. The Ambassador called upon Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) to "present evidence-based arguments". He said, "Some description of a recent report by TIB, which came out in May this year... I'm not going into the details of the project... but when this report says Japan has been influencing Bangladesh (to use) obsolete technology, I found it's rather unfounded."

In response to comments made by the Japanese Ambassador, TIB Executive Director Dr. Iftekharuzzaman said, "While we appreciate the Japanese Ambassador's expectations of evidence-based arguments, we want to assure him that globally accepted methodologies including data collection and validation procedures, and other standards of social science research were strictly followed while conducting the study. There is no scope of treating any aspect of this research unfounded."

Adding that the full report and executive summary were earlier sent to the Ambassador, the TIB Executive Director further pointed out that nowhere in the report did TIB say that Japan was influencing Bangladesh to use obsolete technologies. The study only quoted relevant experts, according to whom old and brownfield boilers from China and Japan were being claimed as green technologies and thus Bangladesh was being used as a 'dumping ground' for surplus and unused coal technologies discarded by developed countries.

Dr. Zaman further said, "On the other hand, the Ambassador stayed away from taking the opportunity to address the question of conflict of interest of Japan with respect to the IEPMP, an issue specifically highlighted in the TIB report, although the Ambassador mentioned that it was the third time that Japan was involved in preparing a master plan for the power and energy sector in Bangladesh".

"Providing technical support and consultancies by donors are unavoidable and often necessary components in donor-recipient relationships. Japanese support in developing the IEPMP is therefore welcome, but they could have set a good example of a conflict of interest-free donor practice by facilitating a credible procurement process in which participation of entities having business and investment interest in the eventual implementation of the plan were to be prevented," the statement said.

The Chief Election Commissioner's statement on election violence is suicidal and reckless, TIB calls for withdrawal

Dhaka, 17 July 2022: Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) has expressed its disappointments over the Chief Election Commissioner Kazi Habibul Awal's statement "defending with swords and rifles against swords", which refers to the commission's 'hardliner stance' on election related violence. The anti-corruption organisation has called on the chief of the constitutional institution to withdraw such a suicidal and reckless statement that is tantamount to instigating violence.

Reports published in the media mentioned that on the first day of the Election Commission's dialogues with political parties, that started with a meeting with the National Democratic Movement on Sunday, Chief Election Commissioner Kazi Habibul Awal said, "We will fail if all political parties do not cooperate. There should be united efforts, if someone stands with a sword, you have to take up a rifle or a sword. If you run, then what am I supposed to do?"

Expressing grave concern and disappointment over such reports published in the media, TIB Executive Director Dr. Iftekharuzzaman said, "The Election Commission is a constitutional institution and as the chief of the commission, it is their duty to ensure that the elections held in the state are transparent and inclusive with a level playing field for all contestants. However, while asking for cooperation, the Chief Election Commissioner has indicated that swords or rifles would be brought up against swords, which in reality is tantamount to instigating violence. While such statements instigating violence are considered criminal acts if made by any citizen, such a statement from an important position like the Chief Election Commissioner is suicidal, reckless, and unacceptable. This statement from the CEC inspires unlawful application of force, booth captures, and voter suppression, which has been normalized in the last couple of elections. TIB hopes that the Chief Election Commissioner would provide an explanation on the statement and withdraw the proposal to tackle swords with rifles or swords."

The TIB Executive Director further said, "Apart from carrying out transparent and inclusive elections, carrying out a peaceful election should also be the mandate of the Election Commission. But such advice instigating violence in the name of curbing violence clearly indicates the commission's failure to implement a strategy to tackle violence during elections. On the other hand, such a statement will inspire political parties or vested quarters working under the umbrella of the parties to choose violence during elections. We hope that the commission will step aside from the path of violence and take effective steps to come up with a strategy to curb violence and implement it."

PACTA inception at CCCs

Government offices to extend support for implementing the new project

Inception meetings on TIB's new project "Participatory Action against Corruption: Towards Transparency and Accountability (PACTA)" were held at different CCCs throughout the month of July 2022. Officials from the respective District Administration and other government offices, stakeholders, journalists, NGO representatives, members of Committee of Concerned Citizens (CCC), Youth Engagement and Support (YES) Group, and Active Citizens Group (ACG) attended the events.

The meetings focused on the TIB's PACTA project that has been adopted to contribute to the prevention of corruption and to build a more inclusive, equitable and non-discriminatory society with particular focus on SDGs. Under PACTA, CCCs will implement various programmes aimed at monitoring and improving the quality of service, good governance in education, health, land, construction, environment and social safety-net programmes where applicable.



Munshiganj: Additional Deputy Commissioner (Education and ICT) Kamrul Islam Khan as the chief guest called upon all the local level government departments to cooperate in the implementation of the project. He also urged everyone to speak out against corruption to bring about the success of the project. As the special guest, Dr. Sohag Hasan, the representative from the civil surgeon office pledged to assure all kinds of cooperation on behalf of the health department in the future.

Brahmanbaria: Deputy Commissioner of Brahmanbaria Md. Shagir Alam said that the field administration and officials of various government departments are continuously working to reduce corruption under the guidance of the honorable Prime Minister. Government offices of Brahmanbaria district have started e-filing process and they will play an important role in increasing transparency and accountability of service providers to ensure good governance. In addition to institutional corruption, non-institutional corruption should also be addressed. He said these while addressing as chief guest at the PACTA inception meeting organized by CCC, Brahmanbaria at the Deputy Commissioner's conference room on 26 July 2022.

Upazila land authority urges to ensure harassment-free services

Committee of Concerned Citizens (CCC), Patiya organized a discussion meeting jointly with upazila land authority on improvement of service quality on 28 July 2022 at the Upazila Land Office. CCC President Professor Ajit Kumar Mitra presided over the meeting while Assistant Commissioner (Land) of Patiya Upazila Rakibul Islam was present as the chief guest. Advocate Kabishekhar Nath Pintu, member and convener of land affairs sub-committee of the CCC delivered the welcome speech.

Assistant Commissioner (Land) Rakibul Islam said that our first task is to inform the people well about the online services of the government which can be completed at home without coming to the land office. In Patiya Upazila, the number of union land offices is very less compared to the number of unions, so we will take initiatives to increase the number. In order to reduce the harassment of the service aspirants, as per the government rules, the mutation will be completed within 28 working days of the application. Any service aspirant who moves month after month for mutation will not be acceptable in this office. He also said that there are plans to prepare citizens charter, bill boards, a new quality complaint box and leaflets to increase public awareness.



CCC President Prof. Ajit Kumar Mitra said, all of us have the same goal to ensure service to the service users without suffering with the government fixed fees. To make people aware at the union level and to improve the service quality of the Land Office, CCC Patiya will continue to cooperate in various activities of the Land Office.

Orientation for ACG members on anti-corruption social movement

An orientation on 'Voluntary anti-corruption social movement' was held on 17 July 2022 under the initiative of Committee of Concerned Citizens (CCC), Jhenaidah. Members of the Active Citizen Group (ACG) of Jhenaidah 250-Bed General Hospital, and Jhenaidah Sadar Upazila Land Office participated in the orientation at the CCC office.

This citizen platform called 'ACG' has been formed with the aim of improving the quality of health and land sector services through the participation of the local citizens of the region. Convener of the health sub-committee of the CCC Md. Abu Taher presided over the

orientation while convener of land related sub-committee of the CCC Elahi Boks delivered the welcome speech.

TIB's CE Division Coordinator Kazi Shafiqur Rahman and Khulna Cluster Coordinator Md. Firoz Uddin discussed in detail about the Transparency International Secretariat, TIB and voluntary anti-corruption social movement. After the open discussion and question-and-answer session, the participants took an anti-corruption oath under the leadership of the Joint Convener of CCC's health related sub-committee Sharifatun Nesha.



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