

# NEWSLETTER



## Brave New Bangladesh: Reform Roadmap for Press Freedom

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB), in partnership with UNESCO Dhaka and the Embassy of Sweden, hosted Brave New Bangladesh: Reform Roadmap for Press Freedom, uniting national and grassroots journalists to demand real change.

From threats to job insecurity, journalists shared how fear still defines their work. “My office was vandalized. My family no longer feels safe,” said Saifullah Kamrul from Noakhali. Speakers called for a Journalist Protection Act, Media Commission, and National Broadcasting Authority to protect journalists and ensure independent media.

Information Adviser Md. Mahfuj Alam added, “Accountability must apply to both policymakers and media.”

TIB Executive Director Dr. Iftekharuzzaman condemned secrecy in drafting laws and exposed the continued control of intelligence agencies. “This is unacceptable in a new Bangladesh,” he declared.

The event featured Kamal Ahmed, Dr. Susan Vize (UNESCO), H.E. Nicolas Weeks (Embassy of Sweden), Rezwanul Haque Raza, Sheikh Sabiha Alam, and A.K. Azad with Dr. Iftekharuzzaman serving as moderator.

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## Governance Challenges in Mobile Financial Services Sector in Bangladesh

TIB conducted an in-depth study revealing that customers in the mobile financial services sector pay seven to fifteen times higher fees than bank users, far exceeding regional standards. The research exposed collusion among service providers, regulators, and political actors, leading to a monopolized market dominated by bKash and Nagad and facilitating widespread fraud, money laundering, and misuse of public funds. TIB calls for urgent reforms including a dedicated legal framework, regulation of service charges, stronger oversight, and strict enforcement to protect consumers, especially women and marginalized groups, while ensuring transparency and fair competition in the sector.

## 'New Bangladesh': Governance in the Education Sector

Addressing persistent governance challenges in the education sector, 53 reform recommendations have been proposed based on thorough research and policy engagement by Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB). The findings reveal critical issues such as discrimination, politicization, irregularities, and corruption that continue to undermine the sector.



Despite the formation of reform commissions for 11 sectors by the interim government, education remains excluded. TIB urged the immediate formation of an Education Reform Commission to build an inclusive, accountable, and effective education system aligned with the Constitution and national development goals.

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## Press Release

### TIB Demands Amendment to Public Audit Ordinance



Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) has strongly criticised the recently passed Public Audit Ordinance, 2025, for undermining the constitutional authority of the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG). Terming it a pro-corruption legal instrument, TIB warned that the ordinance weakens the CAG's independence, excludes revenue assessment from audit, and opens the door to tax evasion and corruption. TIB urged the government to revise the ordinance immediately to protect the CAG's impartial role and uphold constitutional accountability.

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### TIB Warns Revenue Ordinance Undermines Autonomy, Risks Executive Control

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) has expressed concern over the hasty issuance of the ordinance abolishing the National Board of Revenue (NBR) and creating two separate revenue divisions. TIB warned that the move risks placing the revenue system under direct government control, ignoring expert recommendations and raising risks of corruption and conflicts of interest. TIB urged the government to suspend the ordinance and reform it through an independent, expert-driven process to ensure transparency, accountability, and autonomy in revenue management.



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### TIB Calls to Permanently Abolish All Ways to Legalize Black Money



TIB has urged the government to permanently abolish all remaining provisions that allow the legalization of black money, calling them unethical, unconstitutional, and corruption-enabling. Welcoming the interim government's decision to scrap the 15 percent tax provision for whitening black money, TIB warned that three similar clauses still exist in the Income Tax Act 2023. These include special tax benefits for undeclared investments in property and voluntary income disclosures without source verification. TIB called for an immediate ordinance to eliminate these loopholes and uphold Article 20(2) of the Constitution. Citing poor outcomes from past amnesty schemes, TIB emphasized that legitimizing illicit income undermines honest taxpayers and fuels corruption.

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## TIB Welcomes UK's Asset Freeze on Illicit Wealth, Calls for Global Action



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TIB has welcomed the United Kingdom's move to freeze nearly 90 million pounds of illicit wealth linked to associates of Bangladesh's former authoritarian regime, calling it a breakthrough in the global fight against money laundering. Describing the frozen assets as just the tip of the iceberg, TIB urged the UK to expedite recovery efforts and expand investigations to others who benefited under political protection. Executive Director Dr. Iftekharuzzaman called on countries such as the United States, Switzerland, Canada, Singapore, and the UAE to take similar action within their legal frameworks to trace and repatriate stolen assets. TIB stressed the need for stronger mutual legal assistance and international collaboration to hold money launderers accountable and return illicit wealth to Bangladesh.

## CCC News

### CCC Advocates for Urgent Healthcare Improvements

TIB's Committee of Concerned Citizens (CCC), Jhalakathi, organized an advocacy meeting with the Civil Surgeon and Superintendent of Jhalakathi Sadar Hospital, urging sustainable improvement in healthcare services at district and union levels. Members of the Active Citizens Group (ACG) raised several key issues identified through community monitoring, action meetings with service recipients, and TIB's PACTApp. These included restarting X-ray and ultra-sonogram services, stopping referrals to private clinics, preventing harassment by brokers, and ensuring visible, updated information on charges, duty rosters, and complaint procedures. CCC also stressed the need to address the shortage of doctors, nurses, and staff, calling for effective and timely action to resolve the problems in hospitals and sub-health centers.



Civil Surgeon Dr Mohammad Humayun Kabir assured that steps are underway, including opening an observation room, purchasing X-ray films, and preparing to restart ultra-sonogram services. He also confirmed efforts to secure the new hospital building and pledged continued collaboration with the district administration to stop broker harassment. Dr Kabir reaffirmed the commitment to sustainable healthcare improvements. The meeting took place on 25 May 2025 at the District Civil Surgeon's office.



## CCC Rajshahi Leads Call for Healthcare Reform



A Community Action Meeting was held to advocate for better healthcare services at Nowhata Health and Family Welfare Center. The event, organized by Transparency International Bangladesh's Committee of Concerned Citizens (CCC) in Rajshahi through the Active Citizens Group (ACG), gathered 33 participants from Purba Baghata village. Attendees voiced concerns about timely services, respectful treatment by doctors, proper supply of prescribed medicines, and separate washrooms for men and women. Chaired by ACG Co-Coordinator Md Shahidul Islam, the meeting ended with ACG members assuring the community that their demands would be forwarded to the relevant authorities for action. The meeting took place on 27 May 2025.

## TIB's YES Mobilizes Students Against Corruption

TIB's Youth Engagement & Support (YES) Group at Daffodil International University inspired students through a lively orientation and anti-corruption cartoon exhibition focused on the Right to Information Act, 2009. Students took a strong anti-corruption pledge, participated in engaging games, and received eye-catching awareness materials. Facilitated by TIB's Civic Engagement Coordinator Md. Atikur Rahman and inaugurated by Vice Chancellor Dr. M. Lutfar Rahman, the event sparked enthusiasm among students to join YES and lead the charge against corruption. Held on 28 May 2025, the program celebrated the power of youth as catalysts for change.



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