Editorial

Political parties must practise what they preach

The findings of a new study by Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) have again shed light on a long-ignored state of affairs: the dearth of good governance, transparency, accountability, and democratic practices within our political parties. While not entirely shocking, these revelations should be instructive for the parties concerned. For decades, these parties have been run with authority concentrated in the hands of a few at the top. Regular party elections, transparent candidate selection processes, and integrity have hardly been a priority for them. If the very institutions entrusted with upholding democracy fail to practise it themselves, how can they possibly help advance it? Reviewing the activities of 32 registered parties, the TIB study found that they are increasingly operating like power-centric businesses. Businesspeople accounted for 59.9 percent of elected MPs in the 2026 parliamentary election. Dynastic politics dominates leadership in at least 10 major parties, including the ruling BNP, Awami League (currently banned from politics), and Jatiya Party. National councils are irregular in at least 16 parties, while most elect their leaders largely through voice votes rather than secret ballots. And only one party constitution sets a limit on the number of terms an individual can serve as party chief. Meanwhile, most parties don't follow the RPO requirement to form candidate panels based on proposals from local committees. Wealth, muscle power, and local influence often outweigh merit in candidate selection. Grassroots members have little influence over decision-making, while women's active participation in leadership remains shockingly inadequate. In the February election, for instance, women constituted just 4.09 percent of the candidates. These shortcomings undermine the very foundation of representative politics that is essential to a functioning democracy. Party finances form another troubling part of the picture. TIB estimated that a party maintaining offices and conducting regular activities down to union or ward level could spend Tk 1,532 crore to Tk 2,188 crore annually, excluding election expenses. However, the highest expenditure reported in the published 2025 accounts of four parties was only Tk 23.91 crore. While TIB's estimate is a model of potential organisational costs, rather than verified spending, the enormous disparity underscores the need for credible financial disclosure. The study also found that none of the 16 active party websites reviewed published financial reports or election expenditure accounts, making the case for stronger oversight even more compelling. In a functional democracy, political parties represent citizens' interests. But when they are held hostage by money and patronage, capable leaders are pushed aside while business interests gain disproportionate influence.

The RMG sector must balance fair wages and industry competitiveness

Dr Selim Raihan

The latest labour unrest in the country's ready-made garment (RMG) sector, factory closures, and the workers' demands for a substantial hike in minimum wages have once again brought an important economic and industrial issue to the fore. More than 500 RMG factories in Mirpur, Savar, Gazipur, Ashulia and Mymensingh have declared a "holiday" due to protests by workers, who are demanding that their monthly minimum wage be raised from Tk 12,500 to Tk 30,000. The protests have been marked by road blocks and sporadic violence in several places, with public property as well as several factories vandalised and set ablaze. The government has responded by deploying law enforcement and forming a new minimum wage board, although no deadline has been set for announcing the new wage structure. As discussion advances, several factors must be taken into account: the erosion of workers' purchasing power due to rising cost of living, the industry's ability to pay, and Bangladesh's competitiveness in the international market.

Over the past three years, high inflation and rising prices of food and other essentials have significantly reduced the workers' real incomes and purchasing power. Therefore, their demand for a revised wage structure cannot be seen solely as a request for more money, but rather as an attempt to regain their ability to afford necessities. Besides, since 1985, which was more than four decades ago, wages in this sector have been revised only six times, increasing from Tk 627 to Tk 12,500.

Unlike some of our international competitors in the global RMG manufacturing industry, our minimum wage revision has not been incremental or regular. Over the years, it has been more reactive and often politically charged, with revisions arriving mostly after labour unrest. This time, too, the situation has arisen following a similar pattern. That is why the government's role in this case deserves scrutiny. Although plans to form a new wage board were announced on October 15, meaningful action was delayed. The decision to move forward with the wage board only after protests, road blockades, and factory closures points to shortcomings in the government's ability to anticipate labour disputes and engage effectively with the industry stakeholders. Timely intervention might have prevented the situation from escalating and reduced the resulting disruption to production.

From both economic and industrial perspectives, raising the recent minimum wage of Tk 12,500 to Tk 30,000 all at once would put significant financial pressure on RMG product exporters. In particular, small and medium-sized factories with low profit margins would face a substantial increase in production costs. The industry is already under strain due to lower export orders, higher energy costs, the global economic recession, and domestic inflation. Thus, finding a compromise that balances the need for higher wages with the factories' ability to pay them will be challenging.

The escalating unrest in the garment sector is a warning that a labour dispute can become a wider crisis when grievances remain unresolved.

Clashes in Mirpur, Gazipur, and Ashulia on Sunday brought road blockades, arson, and factory closures, disrupting production at more than 300 factories.

The government has formed a six-member wage board and stepped up security operations amid allegations of sabotage and political interference, but while these steps may contain the immediate situation, they will not resolve the underlying problem.

Workers demanding a minimum monthly wage of Tk30,000 are responding to the mounting cost of living. Their concerns deserve serious consideration, not dismissal or intimidation.

At the same time, violence, vandalism, and road blockades cannot be justified as ways to pursue those demands. Such actions put workers, commuters, and law enforcement personnel at risk, while damaging an industry that millions of livelihoods depend on.



Every day of uncertainty also threatens the confidence of international buyers, making an already difficult situation harder to reverse.

This is a moment for cooler heads to prevail. The government must ensure that the wage board begins work without delay, sets a clear timetable, and communicates its progress transparently.

Employers must negotiate in good faith and recognize that a sustainable industry cannot be built on wages that fail to meet basic living costs. Workers and their representatives must, in turn, keep protests peaceful and allow others to work. Allegations of sabotage or outside interference must be investigated impartially, rather than allowed to overshadow legitimate labour concerns.

The garment sector is central to Bangladesh's economy and its standing in international markets, and a prolonged disruption will cost businesses orders, workers income, and the country's confidence. To that end, lasting stability will only come through dialogue, fairness, and timely decisions.

All parties must act urgently to reach a credible settlement. There is little to gain from confrontation, and too much to lose if a solvable dispute is allowed to spiral further.

Increased production costs could push up export prices, potentially weakening the country's price competitiveness against Vietnam, India, Cambodia and other competing countries. Moreover, many international buyers are unwilling to provide additional funding to cover higher production costs, leaving factory owners to absorb most of the additional expenses.

While recognising that the industry faces numerous challenges, we cannot overlook the fact that workers' real incomes have continuously declined. Moreover, unresolved labour disputes, work stoppages, factory closures, production delays, and shipping delays would continue to undermine buyer confidence in Bangladesh and ultimately hurt the country's export capabilities.

Therefore, a reasonable balance must be struck between workers' demands for their right to earn a fair wage and the financial ability of the RMG industry to continue operating. In determining what constitutes a fair and sustainable wage, the wage board will have to take into account the actual cost of living, inflation rates, the financial capacity of the RMG industry, and the international competitive environment.

Instead of increasing wages rapidly in one large step, a gradual increase over time could be implemented alongside other measures, such as improving worker productivity, investing in new technologies, and strengthening the overall management of factories. Equally important is meaningful engagement with international buyers to secure fairer prices for Bangladeshi products. International brands and retailers also need to accept greater responsibility for ensuring that the costs associated with providing decent wages to workers are incorporated into the prices they pay their suppliers.

In the meantime, the government must stop simply reacting to crises after they occur. Instead, it should establish an ongoing dialogue with workers and employers, review wages periodically, and develop and enforce effective labour laws. It is important to note that Bangladesh's competitive position in the global RMG industry should not rely solely on maintaining low wages. Rather, the country's ability to remain competitive will increasingly depend on improving productivity, enhancing product quality, managing businesses effectively, and maintaining positive relationships between workers and employers. Ensuring decent living standards for the workers and sustaining industrial growth are not conflicting goals. Both are essential for building a stronger, more responsible, and globally competitive RMG industry in the long run.

International



Bomb attack in Colombia kills 4, including a child, injures 17

International Desk

Four people, including a two-month-old baby, were killed and 17 others injured when a bomb planted in a truck exploded near a military base in Colombia, authorities in the country said on Monday.

The attack, which took place on Sunday night in the town of Planadas in the western department of Tolima, is believed to have been carried out by members of a rebel group.

Colombia's new right-wing president, Abelardo de la Esperanza, has been waging a military campaign against leftist rebel groups involved in drug trafficking since the country's violence escalated.

The rebels have responded by carrying out four attacks in the past week, including one that killed a police officer last week.

Authorities said the latest bomb blast damaged a hospital and several homes.

The blast spread debris across the street, injuring at least 17 people.

Video footage from the scene shows a woman screaming as a man pulls the frozen body of a child from the rubble.

"With deep sorrow, I announce that four people have been initially reported dead in the attack in Planadas.

Among the dead is a two-month-old baby girl," Adriana Magali Matiz, governor of the Tolima department, wrote on social media.

Colombia's defense ministry blamed the attack on a breakaway faction of the once powerful armed rebel group FARC, which signed a peace deal with the then government in 2016 to end decades of conflict.

Planadas Mayor Juan Camilo Huehe said several drones were seen flying in the city's skies before the attack.

Colombian drug trafficking rebel groups have recently increased their use of drones in their conflicts against the government, sometimes for surveillance purposes, and sometimes for direct attacks.

In a response on social media, President de la Espriella blamed "drug terrorists" for the recent attacks, including Planadas. "We will defeat you!" he warned.

Governor Matiz strongly condemned the bombing, calling it a "heinous and criminal act."

Although a historic peace agreement was signed between the government and the FARC in 2016, various rebel groups did not participate in the agreement. Since then, these groups have carried out a series of attacks in different parts of the country. The latest bombing is the latest in a series of violence.

US-backed President de la Esperanza suspended all peace talks with rebel groups after taking power last August.

He then ordered a massive airstrike on the rebels. In response, the rebels continued to bomb and drone attacks.

Last Saturday, a policeman was killed when a motorcycle packed with explosives exploded during Halloween festivities in the city of Algeciras, in the Huila department, adjacent to the Tolima department.

Meanwhile, President de la Espiritu ordered the deployment of troops to the main city of Cucuta, on the border with Venezuela, on Friday, as the number of attacks in the region increased.

Alaska voters don't care about election fraud allegations

International Desk



Long lines of voters were seen in Anchorage, Alaska's largest city, on Monday morning to cast their ballots in the US midterm elections. Despite allegations of controversy and scandal surrounding the elections, most voters showed little concern about them.

Democratic Senate candidate Mary Peltola has been accused of running another person with the same name to reduce the votes of her rival Republican incumbent Senator Dan Sullivan.

This contest could be crucial in determining which party will control Congress in Washington.

According to a report published by the New York Times, few people who came to vote in Anchorage were concerned about the allegations, even though temperatures were near freezing.

Thousands of miles away, it caused a stir in US political circles, but there was little reaction among Alaska voters.

Dale Brown, a voter in the state, summed up his response by saying, "Who cares?"

The 25-year-old carpenter considers the strategy of fielding a candidate under another name "unethical." However, he says, "it is not illegal."

He said that in the 2020 Florida Senate election, Republicans used the same tactic to field a bunch of name-calling candidates.

"American politics has now become a complete farce of lies," Brown, an independent voter, told AFP.

He added, "I think what morality means has been lost a long time ago."

But the controversy did not affect his decision to vote. He voted for the Democratic candidate.

He also said that inflation under President Donald Trump is annoying.

If Trump loses this crucial seat, his party could lose its majority in the Senate. That's why the election in Alaska is tense. In Anchorage, flyers and signs from rival candidates can be seen on both sides of neighbors' fences.

The New York Times reported that Peltola's campaign had helped plan to field another candidate with the same name, but Peltola claimed he had no knowledge of the plan.

After the report was released, Trump took the initiative to challenge the election results early.

A federal judge on Sunday rejected his request, but pressure from the Trump administration continues.

Federal authorities have already launched a criminal investigation into the incident, but they have declined to say what the legal basis for the investigation is.

Ray Hart, who arrived at a polling station in a shopping mall with a view of snow-capped mountains, admitted that having two Dan Sullivans with the same name on the ballot "could cause confusion" among voters.

However, this Republican voter believes that very few people have been fooled by this deceptive tactic.

"I heard people standing in line saying, 'Don't forget to vote for the right Dan Sullivan,'" said Hart, a 37-year-old criminal investigator.

Many voters in Alaska who spoke to AFP said they had received flyers, advertisements and various types of mail-order messages over the past few weeks about the controversial election.

However, the two Sullivans are easily distinguishable on the ballot.

Senator Dan Sullivan's name is listed next to his name as "Registered Republican" and "Current Senator."

On the other hand, Daniel J. Sullivan Jr. has no political affiliation next to his name. Trump has called him a "fake" Sullivan.

Poll workers have also made preparations in advance to answer voters' questions on the issue.

However, a polling station volunteer, speaking on condition of anonymity, said, "It seems that the issue is quite clear to voters."

Airline pilot Luke Clement also thinks it's clear who the real candidate is on the ballot.

However, 47-year-old Clement laments that this year's election campaign has become a mudslinging campaign instead of a discussion of important issues.

He is particularly concerned about the continued inflation caused by Trump's Iran war.

Clement said Alaskans are feeling the pressure of inflation more than other Americans because of the state's geographic location, "where everything has to be imported and everything is dependent on the price



National plan is being further enriched and implemented: Dr. Zahid Hossain

City Desk

Minister for Women and Children Affairs and Social Welfare Professor Dr. AZM Zahid Hossain MP has said that the national plan is being continuously enriched and made more effective in line with the needs of the time.

He said that under the leadership of Prime Minister Tarique Rahman, the election manifesto was formulated with utmost importance to the expectations of the people of the country, and currently the government is working relentlessly to implement it.

He further said that Dr. AZM Zahid Hossain said this as the chief guest at a discussion meeting organized to mark the release of the World Bank's report titled 'Demographic Change in South Asia: From Tailwinds to Headwinds for Development' at a prestigious hotel in the capital today.

State Minister for Planning Md. Jonayed Abdur Rahim Saki, MP, was present as a discussant in the meeting.

Also present as panelists were Dr. Hossain Zillur Rahman, Chairman of the Power and Participation Research Center (PPRC), Dr. Nazneen Ahmed, Executive Director of the Center for Policy Dialogue (CPD), and Kem Meti, South Asia Regional Practice Director (People Vertical) of the World Bank.

The event, moderated by Jean Esme, Division Director for Bangladesh and Bhutan at the World Bank, was also attended by senior World Bank officials, prominent economists, researchers, and high-ranking representatives of various relevant ministries and departments of the government. Dr. AZM Zahid Hossain said, one of the main goals of the current government is to ensure women's empowerment. Keeping this goal in mind, 'Family Cards' are being provided to families of five members, mainly the eldest woman. This assistance will help women meet their daily family expenses and ensure good education for their children, as well as help them develop as entrepreneurs, which will make a significant contribution to the growth of the national GDP. He said that no 'family tree' has been preserved in the past for families in our country. Through the family card, a family tree based on specific information of each family will be created and the national development plan will be further enriched with information from there.

The minister further said that the current government has allocated about 1 lakh 43 thousand crore taka in various sectors under the social security program. To protect the future generation from the risk of malnutrition, women are being provided with allowances for up to 1 thousand days during maternity leave. In addition, seed money and necessary materials are being provided after various income-generating trainings to make women self-reliant.

He said, "Taking into account the demographic dividend, the government has ensured the highest allocation in history for the education sector. Along with formal education, priority is being given to skill development of the young generation."

He further said that in addition to the welfare of people with special needs in society, parents will also be brought under specialized training for their care and overall support. Md. Jonayed Abdur Rahim Saki MP said that the current government has adopted a 'lifecycle-based security strategy' to build an inclusive and humane state, where policies are being formulated by prioritizing the health and nutrition of one-day-old newborns to the social security and dignity of senior citizens. He said that to bring the financially backward marginalized population under this protection blanket, the government is not only expanding its scope horizontally by covering new people, but is also strengthening it vertically by increasing the amount of allowances, quality of assistance, and depth of facilities, which is ensuring sustainable social and economic equality by eliminating inequality overall.

Experts at the meeting said that after 2034, the number of young and working-age people in South Asia will start to decline, and the region will rapidly become an aging society by 2049, before it can become economically self-sufficient like rich countries.

CSOs urge stronger climate commitments, equitable action ahead of COP31

City Desk



Civil society organisations (CSOs) on Tuesday called for equitable climate action, accessible climate finance and stronger global commitments ahead of the 31st Conference of the Parties (COP31), urging world leaders to move beyond political pledges and deliver tangible results.

The call came at a national seminar titled "31st Conference of the Parties: Articulating CSOs' Positions Together", organised by the Center for Participatory Research and Development (CPRD) in collaboration with the Climate Justice Alliance–Bangladesh (CJA-B) at a hotel in Dhaka.

The seminar brought together policymakers, climate negotiators, researchers, civil society representatives, youth, media professionals and representatives of climate-vulnerable communities to discuss Bangladesh's priorities for COP31 and strengthen coordination between the government and civil society.

Participants also presented a civil society position paper prepared by CPRD and CJA-B member organisations, outlining key demands for climate negotiations and the implementation of global climate commitments.

The priorities include aligning the third cycle of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) with the 1.5°C temperature goal, accelerating the implementation of National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), strengthening arrangements to address loss and damage, and ensuring adequate and accessible climate finance under the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) and Article 9 of the Paris Agreement.

The discussions also emphasised implementing the outcomes of the first Global Stocktake, safeguarding the environmental integrity of Article 6 carbon market mechanisms, and advancing an inclusive, rights-based and adequately financed Just Transition Mechanism.

In his welcome address, CPRD Chief Executive and CJA-B Coordinator Md Shamsuddoha called for a unified civil society voice to strengthen Bangladesh's negotiating position at COP31.

Highlighting the growing risks faced by frontline communities, he stressed the need for stronger government–CSO collaboration to ensure climate commitments translate into concrete action grounded in equity and climate justice.

Presenting the alliance's key positions and demands, Sheikh Nur Ataya Rabbi, manager of research and advocacy at CPRD, outlined the priorities developed by CJA-B and its partner organisations.

Representatives of alliance member organisations also shared their perspectives on the COP process, calling for climate outcomes that prioritise vulnerable communities, uphold rights and deliver meaningful progress on climate justice.

Participants included Nuzhat Jabin, partnership and strategy lead at Christian Aid Bangladesh; Shahnawaz Whara, programme coordinator for climate adaptation and resilience at Concern Worldwide; Tazeen Hossain, head of programmes at Educo; Farhana Afroz, programme director at HELVETAS; ASM Rahmat Ullah Bhuiyan, deputy country director of Save the Children Bangladesh; Rabeya Begum, executive director of SDS; Mohsin Ali, executive director of WAVE Foundation; Partha Hefaz Sheikh, director of programme and policy advocacy; and Mohammad Shahjahan, director of YPSA. Expert reflections on the civil society position paper were delivered by Professor Niaz Ahmed Khan, former vice-chancellor of the University of Dhaka; Dr Shah Abdul Saadi, joint secretary at the Economic Relations Division (ERD); and Dr M Asaduzzaman, former research director at the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS).

Speaking as a guest speaker, ERD Additional Secretary AKM Sohel highlighted the role of civil society organisations in influencing international climate negotiations and shaping global climate positions.

He urged CSOs to strengthen their advocacy on climate finance and just transition, while recognising CPRD and CJA-B's publications and activities as useful resources for negotiators and climate activists.

Situation Normal in Kaliakair Amid Worker Protests; 13 Platoons of BGB Deployed

Shakil Hossain, Kaliakair (Gazipur) Correspondent:

On the 6th day of ongoing worker protests demanding a minimum monthly wage of Tk 30,000, the situation remained completely normal at Chondra Tri-Morh, Fire Station, Kharajora, Palli Bidyut, and Safipur areas in Kaliakair, Gazipur. Vehicles were operating smoothly on the highways, stated Gazipur Superintendent of Police Mohammad Jasim Uddin.

Speaking to journalists on Wednesday (November 4) at around 9:00 AM after inspecting various points of the Dhaka-Tangail highway in the Palli Bidyut area of Kaliakair upazila, the Superintendent of Police shared this update.

The Superintendent of Police said, "Over the past few days of worker protests, workers are gradually realizing that the government and the state are actively working toward accepting their demands. Recognizing this, they are showing reluctance to join the protests and are staying away. As you can see from the current situation, the roads are entirely normal, vehicles are moving, and everything is functioning smoothly now."

He informed that multiple police units are working to maintain law and order in the Gazipur industrial zone. Specifically, district police, industrial police, BGB, SRB, Armed Police Battalion (APBn), and Ansar members are deployed on duty.

Additionally, to maintain law and order in the industrial zone, the district administration reported that alongside police forces, 13 platoons of BGB, SRB, and Ansar have been deployed, operating under the leadership of 25 executive magistrates.

Housewife Raped by Nephew After Threatening to Hold Child Hostage in Ishwardi

S. M. Raja, Ishwardi, Pabna:

A housewife was allegedly raped by her nephew after he threatened to kill her four-year-old child in Ishwardi. The incident occurred on the afternoon of November 3, 2026, in a mustard field in Bokhtarpur village under Salimpur upazila.

In connection with the incident, the victimized housewife filed a written complaint at the Ishwardi Police Station, naming Shiblu Mridha-the son of her husband's elder brother-as the sole accused. The accused, Shiblu Mridha, is the son of Md. Insan Mridha from Bokhtarpur Paschimpara village in Salimpur union.

According to the victim's family and the written complaint filed at the police station, the housewife's husband left home for Gangni, Meherpur, in search of work at around 4:00 AM on Tuesday. At noon, the housewife went to graze goats in the fields of Bokhtarpur Madhyapara village accompanied by a neighboring relative.

Around 2:00 PM, the accused Shiblu approached her and falsely informed her that her younger son's lower waist was bleeding from an injury. Hearing the news of her child's accident, the housewife rushed back toward home. When she reached near a mustard field belonging to a man named Haider in Bokhtarpur Madhyapara village, Shiblu brandished a sharp hashua and threatened to kill her child, subsequently subjecting her to forcible rape.

The victim stated that immediately after the incident, she informed the accused's mother and sister, but they took no action. Later, she informed her husband over her mobile phone. Returning home from Meherpur and discussing the matter with family members, her husband went to the Ishwardi Police Station and lodged a written complaint.

Although attempts were made to contact the accused Shiblu Mridha via mobile phone and other means, he could not be reached.

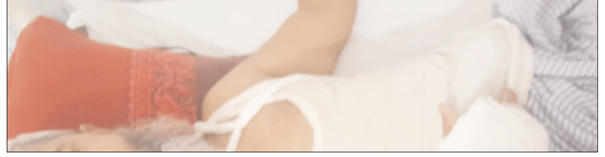
Ishwardi Police Station Officer-in-Charge Md. Ashadur Rahman stated that a woman came to the police station on Tuesday night with a written complaint of rape. Immediately upon receiving the complaint, a police team launched a drive to arrest the accused. The victimized housewife has been placed under police protection and sent to Pabna General Hospital for a medical examination as per rules, and a formal case has been registered.

Cousin Hacked to Death Over Betel Nut Tree Dispute in Narail; Additional Police Deployed

Ujjwal Ray, Narail District Correspondent:

A 55-year-old man named Hasanur Sheikh was hacked to death by his cousin and his cousin's children over a dispute regarding planting betel nut trees in Lohagara upazila of Narail.

According to Ujjwal Ray, Narail District Correspondent, the incident took place around 6:30 AM on Wednesday (November 4) in Boyra Purvapara village under Lakshhipasha union of the upazila. The deceased, Hasanur Sheikh, was the son of Suttar Sheikh from the same village. According to locals and police sources, Hasanur went to water the betel nut trees planted near his house on Wednesday morning. At this time, his cousin Hasdel Sheikh raised objections, claiming that the shade of those trees would fall on his land, and questioned why the betel nut trees had been planted in the first place. This triggered a heated argument between the two. At one point, Hasdel Sheikh's sons Mamun Sheikh and Arman Sheikh, along with his daughter Taslima Khanam, allegedly hacked Hasanur with sharp local weapons, inflicting severe injuries. Later, relatives rescued him and rushed him to the Lohagara Upazila Health Complex, where emergency department doctors declared him dead. As the accused fled the scene immediately following the incident, their statements could not be obtained. Lohagara Police Station Officer-in-Charge (OC) Shariful Islam stated that police were dispatched to the spot upon receiving information. Additional police personnel are currently deployed in the area, and efforts are underway to apprehend those involved in the incident.



Evidence-based approach sought to measure corruption

City Desk

A two-day national workshop titled "Measuring Corruption for Reform: Strengthening Evidence and Accountability in Bangladesh" ended here on Tuesday, highlighting the critical importance of strengthening institutional capacity to generate credible data on corruption. The workshop concluded with panel reflections from key oversight bodies and development partners on establishing sustainable accountability mechanisms going forward.

Jointly organised by the Anti-Corruption Resource Centre, partner Embassies of Switzerland, Norway, UK, Denmark, and Germany, and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the event brought together key government officials, development partners, academic experts, civil society leaders, and international partners.

Over the course of two days the workshop aimed to help enhance Bangladesh's ability to track corruption trends over time and strengthen its capacity to assess the impact of reform initiatives.

The workshop featured international good practices, the operationalization of the UNODC statistical framework as well as group work to identify gaps, opportunities, and priorities for improved corruption measurement and collaboration in Bangladesh.

Utilizing the UNODC Statistical Framework to Measure Corruption, approximately 40 expert participants from relevant institutions reviewed existing data sources - such as household surveys, administrative records, and transparency assessments - to build towards a comprehensive evidence base for ongoing national reforms.

The opening high-level session featured prominent national and international figures, including Justice A. K. M. Asaduzzaman, Chairman of the Anti-Corruption Commission, who attended as the chief guest.

He emphasised that sustainable anti-corruption reform requires collective commitment. "Strong institutions, effective oversight, public participation, and a culture of integrity are indispensable to building a society where corruption has no place."

Director of the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics Md Emdadul Haque highlighted that the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics remains committed to supporting national efforts to strengthen the evidence base for development and governance reforms, within its mandate and if necessary in collaboration with relevant institutions.

Ambassador of Switzerland to Bangladesh Reto Renggli said collectively, society needs a shift in attitude and in mindset to address corruption. "This must start in kindergarten and classrooms. Following rules is one thing, believing in the rules is a social precondition."

Ambassador of Norway to Bangladesh Håkon Arald Gulbrandsen also attended as the special guest.

He highlighted that Bangladesh will be one of the first countries to implement the UNODC Statistical Framework to Measure Corruption if this endeavor moves forward and that it will be noticed internationally as a highly positive and practical action.

UN Resident Coordinator a.i. Max Tunon emphasised that measuring the scale of corruption and assessing the effectiveness of anti-corruption efforts are strategic imperatives for effective governance, sustainable development and building public trust in institutions.

Tunon expressed the UN system's commitment to implementing the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) and relevant resolutions of the Conference of the States Parties related to corruption measurement. He also reaffirmed the UN's commitment to strengthening evidence-based public policies through the adoption of the UNODC statistical framework to demonstrate the real impact of anti-corruption efforts in Bangladesh.

Acknowledging the extremely important role of strengthening the capacity to generate credible data on corruption, Dr. Iftekharuzzaman, Executive Director of TIB said the problem in Bangladesh is often not so much the generation of data, as the lack of interest and commitment to use the available data and knowledge that already exist on corruption.

He also called on the importance of exploring innovative ways of measuring the comparative implications of the multi-trillion-dollar global economy of money laundering for the source and host economies.

Dr. Sofie Schuette, Principal Adviser, Anti-Corruption Resource Centre at Chr. Michelsen Institute and Shah Mohammad Naheeaan, Head of Office, UNODC were also present in the high-level segment.

"Credible evidence can help Bangladesh turn anti-corruption commitments into meaningful change by guiding reforms, strengthening accountability and making progress visible" Dr. Schuette stressed the importance of data for reform.