

## National News

### ACC and TIB extends partnership against corruption

To continue joint efforts in forging a further collaborative partnership and engagement in the fight against corruption, Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) and TI Bangladesh signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on 7 October 2019. The two anti-graft organizations inked the MoU, for the 3rd time, at the ACC's head office in Segunbagicha, Dhaka.

The newly signed MoU ranging from 1 October 2019 to 30 September 2022 is invigorated with remarkable successes of joint efforts under the two previous MoUs, under which both the organizations gained outstanding achievements with wide youth involvement. TI Bangladesh's Executive Director Dr.



Iftekhharuzzaman and ACC's Director General (Prevention) Mr. Sarwar Mahmud signed the three-year MOU on behalf of their respective organizations.

The MoU further stipulates joint data sharing on monitoring the progress with regards to achieving the SDG 2030 especially the goal 16. It also includes, among others,

undertaking joint activities to implement and monitor public awareness regarding anti-corruption laws, anti-corruption campaigns all across the country at upazila and district levels involving youth to mobilise citizens against corruption and ensure implementation of right to information act.

Presided over by ACC Secretary Md Dilwar Bakht, senior officials of both TIB and ACC were present during the signing. At the event, speakers agreed that corruption if can't be prevented collectively, will adversely affect the future generation, calling upon all to come forward and raise a firm voice against corruption. They further hoped that the increasing collaboration will play significant role in preventing pervasive corruption in the country as TIB creates awareness among citizens against corruption while ACC holds the authority to take remedial actions. The newly signed MoU is continuity with more robust joint initiatives of the previously signed two MoUs of which the last one ended in September 2019.

The partnership further stipulates joint observance of International Anti-Corruption Day on December 9 and Right to Know Day on 28 September. Besides, ACC will continue investigating into complaints following legal provisions forwarded by TIB. Moreover, the collaboration also covers joint research and campaign; capacity building of the relevant officials of the investigation and prevention division of the ACC; capacity building of the members of Satata Sangha (integrity association), youth voluntary associate group of Durniti Protirodh Committee (DUPROC) formed by ACC following TIB inspired Committee for Concerned Citizens (CCC), SWAJAN, Youth Engagement Support (YES) and YES friends at the local level.



It is highly expected that the new MOU between ACC and TIB will add significant impact usher in ongoing mobilization of citizenry through various preventive efforts to send a strong message to end corruption and punish the corrupt without fear or favor.

### **Workshop on Strengthening Good Governance in Local NGOs held**

To inform, include and encourage the local NGOs on effective implementation of an action plan developed to improve governance in the NGOs, NGO Affairs Bureau (NGOAB) under the Prime Minister's office and TI



Bangladesh organized a workshop on 31 October at Khulna. Participants of the workshop included senior officials of the local administration and representatives of selected 39 local NGOs of Khulna division.

The workshop, the first of the planned eight divisional workshops across the country, was organised to share an action plan with the local NGOs. The action plan was developed by TI Bangladesh in consultation with national and international NGOs to strengthen internal governance in NGOs, followed by the issuance of a circular by NGOAB instructing to implement 11 recommendations of TI Bangladesh study titled 'NGOs of Bangladesh Funded by Foreign Donations: Governance Challenges and Way Forward'.

The action plan emphasized on the effective implementation of government circulars and policies, increased practice of transparency and integrity, institutional development, strengthening internal control and accountability mechanism, and effective participation of the local community in NGO activities.

K.M. Abdus Salam, Director General (Additional Secretary), NGOAB graced the day-long workshop as the Chief Guest, accompanied by Nishchint Kumar Poddar, Additional Divisional Commissioner, Khulna; and Mohammad Helal Hossain, Deputy Commissioner & District Magistrate, Khulna as the Special Guests. Dr. Iftekharuzzaman, Executive Director, TI Bangladesh conducted the inaugural session while Professor Anwarul Qadir, President, Committee of Concerned Citizens (CCC), Khulna also spoke at the workshop.





At the workshop, referring to the electoral commitments of the government, K.M. Abdus Salam said, NGOs in the country shall be governed by their own rules and regulations. The government shall not interfere here. However, to ensure that the NGOs operate their activities as per approved mandate, the government shall be monitoring and evaluating the activities of the NGOs commonly to ensure transparency and accountability.

Dr. Iftekharuzzaman said that TIB has tried to figure out the challenges of governance for the NGOs that run activities with the help of foreign funds through research. Similarly, it has placed a number of recommendations which has to be implemented by NGOs to resolve the challenges. Later, with the participation of national and international NGO representatives, TIB has identified a set of specific recommendations for the improvement of good governance of NGOs which shall be finalized upon your inputs and observations through the workshop.

At the workshop, the participants at the group work session identified internal governance challenges and steps to address the challenges. In interactive sessions of the workshop, the participants also provided their opinion and observations on implementing the action plan.

### **TIB on Abrar Fahad's brutal murder: 'A blow to the freedom of expression'; demands student politics be freed from partisan politics**



According to TIB, the murder of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) student Abrar Fahad was a blow to the freedom of expression in the country. In a press statement issued on 10 October 2019, TIB observed that the existence of the glorious tradition of student movement of the country is in a dire crisis due to non-stop student violence, rampant corruption and irregularities, sponsorship of the party's politically influential university authorities, and the inactivity of the law enforcement agencies. There is no alternative to freeing all party organizations, including all student organizations, to ensure a fair atmosphere of education through ensuring exemplary justice for Abrar's murder, stated TIB.

In the statement, TIB Executive Director Dr Iftekharuzzaman said: "We call upon the government to realize that the murder of Abrar is not a separate incident. The ruthless influence of this criminalized politics on student organizations has been eroding the glorious past and the extraordinary role of student movement in Bangladesh." Expressing his concern, Dr Iftekharuzzaman hoped, the responsible section of the political leadership would realize the gravity of the concern and free student organizations from the clutches of sick politics considering the welfare of future generations and to establish rule of law.

Teachers who are responsible to inspire students to become ideal citizens, a section of them have failed miserably due to their political affiliation. Some of them are now getting involved in corruption and irregularities in collusion with so-called student leaders, observed Dr. Zaman.

Calling for a proper investigation into and an exemplary punishment to the killers of Abrar, Iftekharuzzaman said the government should not view this incident as an isolated one but as a symptom of deadly disease in political arena.

### **'Rupali's rescheduling bid disgraceful'; TIB reiterates Bangladesh Bank to form an independent commission to initiate reform**

TIB on 6<sup>th</sup> October 2019 came down heavily on state-run Rupali Bank for its decision to reschedule a loan of Mother Textile bypassing all rules. In a statement, TIB Executive Director Dr. Iftekharuzzaman requested the

central bank not to give approval to the rescheduling proposal, calling the decision taken by the Rupali board highly disgraceful.

Dr. Zaman suggested taking punitive action against the board of directors for their involvement in giving consent to the proposal. According to a media report, Mother Textile did not show any interest in paying back loans despite getting rescheduling facility seven times. “Despite that the state lender waived the whole interest amount of Tk 440 crore incurred by the company and also extended the repayment period to 2040, which is unprecedented,” said Dr. Iftekharuzzaman.

The bank even has not taken minimum down payment from the company while approving the rescheduling proposal. The proposal, which has been sent to the central bank for approval, indicates that the board of Rupali Bank has its hands tied by the vested quarter and has lost professionalism completely in taking decisions. “The central bank should not limit its stance only by rejecting the proposal. Rather it should verify the whole matter to see why the unlawful proposal has been submitted by the Rupali board,” Dr. Zaman said.

If required, the central bank should take stern action against the board if it is found that there has been conflict of interest in making the rescheduling recommendation, Dr. Zaman said. TIB also reiterated its demand of forming an independent commission with a view to resolving the existing “dreadful crisis” in the banking sector. “An unholy alliance has acted to protect the interest of the habitual defaulters in the banking sector. There is no option but to form an independent banking commission to rein in the alliance.”

## YES NEWS

### UAP-YES ran anti-corruption campaign in UAP club fair



In a day-long Club Fair at the University of Asia Pacific (UAP), YES Group ran an anti-corruption Campaign on 31 October 2019. On the occasion, UAP-YES launched a set of events including Quiz Competition on YES activities. National Professor and the vice-chancellor of UAP Prof. Dr. Jamilur Reza Chudhury inaugurated the event. Approximately six hundred students visited the YES Group stall and received various messages of anti-corruption social movement. Among the visitors, one hundred and thirty numbers of students took part in the quiz competition. To sensitize the students on social

movement against corruption, YES members informed them about the activities of TIB and YES groups and disseminated various IEC materials among the interested visitors

### IER-YES prepares a wall magazine on SDG 16

To project a wall magazine on SDG-16, YES Group-Institute of Education and Research (IER), University of Dhaka has conducted a daylong anti-corruption Campaign in its campus on 31 October 2019. During the campaign, the YES volunteers propagated different anti-corruption messages among the general students of IER.

The Director of IER Prof. Syeda Tahmina Akhter inaugurated the event and Dr. Taposh Kumar Biswash, Associate Professor of IER and Advisor of IER-YES presided the inaugural session. Approximately



two hundred and fifty numbers of students has visited YES Group booth and received various messages on anti-corruption social movement and SDG-16.

## **CCC News**

### **CCCs demand justice for BUET student Abrar Fahad Killing**

Committee of Concerned Citizens (CCCs) formed human chains all across the country in October 2019 protesting the brutal murder of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) student Abrar Fahad. TIB inspired CCCs also demanded that student politics in all the educational institutions, including BUET, be freed from partisan politics and urged for a fair investigation into the murder and ensure exemplary punishment of the perpetrators.



People of all walks of life including members of CCC, Swajan, YES and YES Friends members with the local government representatives, teachers, students of different educational institutions, journalists and representatives of civil society and TIB staffs took part in the human chains seeking justice for Abrar Fahad.

Abrar, a second year student of the EEE department in BUET was beaten to death at a room of Sher-E-Bangla Hall of BUET on 06 October 2019.

### **Celebrating 10 Years of Right to Information Act, 2009 Roundtable Discussion held in Rajshahi**

CCC, Rajshahi City organized a roundtable discussion on 23 October 2019 with the theme '*Empowering People through Information for Shared Prosperity*' at CCC Office with the participation of Designated Officers of GO-NGOs, academicians, journalists, human rights activists and students of different institutions. As a part of National Convention to be held on 29 October 2019 organized by Right to Information Forum to mark 10 years of enactment of Right to Information Act, the divisional level roundtable was organized to learn citizens' opinion on the achievements of 10 years of enactment of RTI Act, 2009, learning's and recommendations.



Professor Dr. Dipakendra Nath Das, President of CCC, Rajshahi City presided over the roundtable discussion while Mosammat Fojila Khanom, Senior Program Manager, Civic Engagement division of TIB moderated the event.

In the meeting, the discussants pointed out the advancements followed by the enactment of the RTI act which engaged mass people becoming empowered as they were entitled with access to information. RTI is the only act which citizens can use to ensure transparency and accountability of Government and non-government organizations. It was also observed that citizens have become empowered through RTI Act and its application along with the practice of setting up Citizens Charter and Complaint Boxes in many government and non-government institutions. The government organizations are organizing public hearings and embarked on



implementing national integrity strategy. A culture of disseminating information has also grown among government employees. As an outcome of the enactment of RTI Act, 2009 Complaint Redress Strategy and National Integrity Strategy have also been formulated, observed the discussants.

The meeting came to learn that due to lack of awareness and less interest of citizens, application for information is yet to hit a satisfactory level. It was also learnt that the poor and grassroots people are not so much interested in applying for information as the written application process is complicated; instead citizens are interested to collect information directly. The number of application is decreasing due to the process being time consuming and there are harassments involved. In addition, few laws and articles which contradict with RTI law are interrupting the proper implementation of RTI Act.

Based on comprehensive discussion, the participants placed a number of recommendations which included: make the application process more citizen friendly and easier; take initiatives to aware the grassroots people about RTI Act, 2009; and proper measures to stop harassment while seeking information. The recommendations also included, make the Designated Officer of GO-NGOs accountable for providing information; taking initiatives to make visible the name of Designated Officer at each government and non-government institutions; implement application and appeal process through 'Apps'; formation of Citizens Forum in all districts and work for the proper implementation of RTI Act, 2009. The meeting also suggested to take measures to make all district level committee effective; Make information friendly institutions and enrich information hub; Organize 'Olympiad' on RTI Act, 2009; create proper provisions for providing protection of information provider and receiver as well, and make effective monitoring of relevant authority of Information Commission regarding information receiving and providing process.

Among others Vice-President of CCC, Rajshahi City Professor Dr. Siddhartha Shankar Talukder, RTI Activist Subrato Kumar Paul, Assistant Deputy Director (Crop), Agriculture Extension Office Most. Umme Salma, Asstt. Inspector-District Education Office, Rajshahi Selim Abdullah Al Mahmud, ATEO, Boalia, Rajshahi, Most. Runa Laila, Program Manager-Civic Engagement (Rajshahi Cluster) of TIB took part in the meeting.

### **Sharing Meeting with Union Parishad Authority for the improvement of services held**



one.

A sharing meeting with Kurban Nagar Union Parishad (UP) was organized by CCC, Sunamganj on 17 October 2019 aiming to improve various services of UP.

CCC President Dhurjoti Kumar Basu presided over the meeting while Union Parishad's Chairman Mr. Abul Barkat was present as the Chief Guest. The meeting discussed about different activities, plan and development of Union Parishad to make the UP a model

At the meeting, Mr. Abul Barkat expressed that Kurban Nagar UP is organizing an Open Budget for the first time with the support of CCC, Sunamganj. The UP has many constraints and limitations. Despite having the limitation of budget and other obstacles, the UP has been working for the welfare of the citizens. He further sought cooperation from CCC in future and expressed to work with more transparency and accountability.

Mr. Dhurjoti Kumar Basu assured CCC's cooperation to make the Kurban Nagar Union Parishad more functional. On behalf of CCC, Mr. Nirmal Bhattacharjee, Member of CCC, Sunamganj thanked UP authority for selection of beneficiaries, distribution and stopping undue payment in social safety net programs like VGD

and VGF, inclusion of women in Standing Committees and for proactive disclosure of information by Union Parishad etc. On the other hand, CCC Member Jugeshar Das placed few recommendations which included use of Register Book for complaint redress and setting up of Complaint Boxes in a visible place, encouraging people to get information from Ward Meetings and use of Register Book for the information, organizing standing committee meetings, ward meetings and open budget program, ensuring inclusion and presence of female members in different social safety net programs etc.

Area Manager of TIB shared the minutes of last meeting and progress of decisions in the meeting. Among others CCC's Vice-President Kaniz Sultana, CCC Members, Union Parishad Secretary and Members, YES Members and TIB staffs were present in the meeting.

**Editor: Sheikh Manjur-E-Alam**

**Sub-Editor: Mohammad Tauhidul Islam, Shakil Md. Faisal, Dilruba Begum Monalisa, Yasmin Ara**

**Write us: Transparency International Bangladesh | email: [advocacy@ti-bangladesh.org](mailto:advocacy@ti-bangladesh.org)**

**Join us: [www.ti-bangladesh.org](http://www.ti-bangladesh.org);**

**[www.facebook.com/TIBangladesh](https://www.facebook.com/TIBangladesh)**