

## Justice Habibur Rahman Khan at the investigative journalism award of TIB

Although  
the newspapers  
enjoy freedom,  
the journalists  
do not

The Chairman of Bangladesh Press Council Justice Habibur Rahman Khan stated that journalist are yet to enjoy press freedom granted by the country at the Investigative Journalism Awards-2000 ceremony organized by TIB. Money and muscle power are responsible for this. Despite all constraints, the journalists are playing a major role in combating corruption and terrorism. TIB arranged the programme on 29th March at the VIP lounge of National Press Club for conferring the Investigative Journalism Awards-2000. Chaired by the Chairman of TIB, Professor Khan Sarwar Murshid, the function was also addressed by renowned journalist ABM Musa, Chief Editor of Financial Express Reazuddin Ahmed, Director General of Press Institute of Bangladesh (PIB) Dr. Sheikh Abdus Salam, former Director General of Bangla Academy Dr. Syed Anwar Hossain, former Auditor General Hafizuddin Khan and members of TIB Board of Trustees Professor Muzaffer Ahmad and Samson H Chowdhury. The Executive Director of TIB Manzoor Hasan and representatives from different newspapers and news agencies were present at the ceremony. The chief guest Mr. Justice Habibur Rahman Khan pointed out that corruption, drug-addiction and terrorism are the principal obstacles to development of Bangladesh. The corrupt people do not get punishment due to political patronization.

The Chairman of Bangladesh Press Council said, "police in Bangladesh do not investigate cases properly and often diverts them in the wrong direction. I have seen this while investigating the 'Rubel murder case'. The journalists helped me in the assignment. Nowadays, many journalists are playing a fearless and courageous role in presenting news. We can never become a civilized nation unless we eliminate corruption and terrorism". He called upon the journalist community to play a more vigilant role in eradicating corruption from the society. The chief guest distributed prize money,



The chairman of Press Council Justice Habibur Rahman Khan poses with the prize-winners

citations and crests among the winners.

Staff Reporter of Daily Ittefaq Anwar Aldin and Senior Staff Reporter of Daily Star Morshed Ali Khan were awarded the first prize in Bangla and English, respectively. The second prize of the Investigative Journalism Award-2000 jointly went to Staff Reporter of Daily Janakantha Quamrul Hasan and the Daily Star's Naimul Haq. The third prize went to Senior Staff Reporter Santosh Mandal of Daily Muktakantha. The joint winners of the first prize received Taka 50,000 each in addition to citations and crests.

Participating in the discussion, senior journalist ABM Musa recalled that it was first proved through TIB research that the lower courts of Bangladesh are corrupt. He said that corruption is excessively high at individual level in Bangladesh and the criminalization of politics is abnormal. "Corruption is so much intertwined with politics that a corrupt person does not have to go to

jail if he is politically influential. All his misdeeds would be forgiven and he would be given all types of concessions", ABM Musa said.

Journalist Reazuddin Ahmed opined that the best way to overcome corruption is to ensure accountability. Corruption can be stopped only if democracy, parliament, parliamentary committees and the judiciary function effectively. He stressed on the role of the newspapers in this regard.

Hailing the role of TIB in giving awards for investigative journalism, the Director General of PIB Dr. Sheikh Abdus Salam said that although press freedom exists in the country, writing investigative reports is rather risky. Building a social movement against corruption would become easier if the journalists could be encouraged to focus their attention on writing corruption-related reports.

Former Director General of Bangla Academy Dr. Syed Anwar Hossain pointed that building a good society requires high quality journalism. A developed society is not possible without developing high standard professional journalists.

Praising the journalist community, Professor Muzaffer Ahmad said that the journalists have always shown a cooperative attitude towards the activities of TIB. If this trend continues, TIB would be able to attain its objectives. He termed the journalists as guides of the society and added that TIB's aim is to work in unison with those who are working for building a balanced society. Professor Ahmad opined that corruption has now reached an alarming height in our society and all should endeavor to find a way out after conceding this reality.

Mr. Samson H Chowdhury stated that while we advocate the issue of

**AWARD 2001**  
TIB has already invited entries from journalists for the Investigative Journalism Awards 2001. The reports should have been published in any Bengali or English Daily between 1 January and 31 December 2000. The reports would be evaluated on the basis of exposition of institutional and systemic corruption and administrative anomalies and irregularities. All prizes carry a cash value of Taka 50,000. The reports should reach TIB by 31 May 2001 at the following address: Post Box 6119, Gulshan, Dhaka-1212, or Transparency International Bangladesh, 121/C (3rd floor), Gulshan Avenue, Dhaka-1212.