

transparency, efforts are being made to hide facts on the plea of Secrecy Act. He asserted that everybody has the right to gather information and the secrecy law should therefore be repealed.

Transparency International Bangladesh introduced the journalism awards in 1999. The reports are evaluated on the basis of exposition of institutional and systemic corruption as well as administrative irregularities and improprieties. A panel of judges evaluates these reports after entries are sought through advertisements in the newspapers. The panel of judges for the year 2000 included the Director General of Bangla Academy Dr. Syed Anwar Hossain, Chief Editor of the Financial Express Reazuddin Ahmed and Professor Syed Manzoorul Islam of Dhaka University English Department.

The first prize winner for 2000 Anwar Aldin was awarded for his serial report on 'the real things have vanished in a crowd of spurious goods', published in the Daily Ittefaq between 3-18 January 1999, while Morshed Ali Khan received the award for his report 'systemic corruption all the way' (systemic extortion on the roads) published in the Daily Star on 12 November 1999.

Syed Zahirul Abedin of the New Nation and Patuakhali correspondent of Daily Sangbad Niiikhil Chakravarty received the 1999 TIB Award for investigative journalism and later participated in a training course in the UK with the cooperation of the British Council and the Thomson Foundation. They were also handed over their citations and crests formally on 29 March.

TIB holds the view that free and independent press acts as a counter against criminal and corrupt elements. Corruption would decrease if journalists become vocal against prevailing corruption in the state machinery, criminal tendencies in society, bribe-takers and corrupt people. Only an economically self-reliant press can play an effective role in tackling corruption. Building a social movement against corruption would become easier if the journalists are encouraged to write investigative reports on these themes.

Committee of Concerned Citizens formed at Muktagachha

A meeting including leading citizens and representatives of various professions and classes of Muktagachha was held on 20 December 2000 at Mymensingh town for constituting the Muktagachha branch of TIB's Committee of Concerned Citizens (CCC). A 15-member committee was formed during the meeting on the basis of consensus. Veteran politician and former MP Advocate Shamsul Haque



A segment of participants in the discussion meeting of Muktagachha CCC

Discussion meeting of the Committee of Concerned Citizens



was selected the convener of the committee. Other members of the committee are: chairman of Muktagachha municipality Khandaker Abdul Malek Shahidullah, veteran politician Subhash Chandra Rakkhit, chairman of Daogaon union council under Muktagachha thana Advocate Sharfuddin Ahmed, Advocate Ramzan Ali Pathan, social worker Debashish Acharya Chowdhury, human rights activist Advocate Mahbubur Rahman Bulbul, politician and social worker Paritosh Kar, farmer Nurul Islam Nuru, women's rights worker Selima Begum, commissioner of Muktagachha municipality Rumi Das, Principal of Muktagachha College Swapan Kumar Das, Lecturer of Haji Kashem Ali Degree College Ekhlashur Rahman Jewel, Lecturer of Muktagachha Shaheed Smriti Govt. College Ali Idris and Upazila Education Officer Naila Yasmin. Presided over by the convener of Mymensingh sadar CCC professor Shamsul Islam, those who spoke on the occasion included TIB Executive Director Manzoorul Hasan, Research Officer Saidur Rahman Mollah, Programme Officer Ekram Hossain and the members of newly formed CCC.

During discussion, the speakers opined that the incidence of corruption is progressively increasing in the country, becoming the principal obstacle to development. So corruption has to be tackled by gaining organizational strength. The speakers urged upon all to become vocal on the issue.

TIB Initiative

Committee of Concerned Citizens formed in Jamalpur

A Committee of Concerned Citizens for Jamalpur was formed through TIB initiative at a meeting of eminent citizens of Jamalpur on 3 February 2000. Held at the Public Library auditorium, the meeting was chaired by former Principal of Ashek Mahmud College A.Y.M. Ekramud-daulah. TIB Executive Director Manzoorul Hasan and Programme Officer Ekram Hossain was present at the meeting, attended by citizens from various professions and classes.

Former MP Mohammad Shahnewaz was selected convener of the committee through consensus during the meeting. Other members of the committee are: Prof. A.Y.M. Ekramud-daulah, BSS correspondent AK Mahmudul Hasan, Advocate Mukhlesur Rahman Ansari, Professor Shahidur Rahman Khan, Muhammad Azizur Rahman, politician and

advocate Nazrul Islam, social worker Sukumar Chowdhury, Advocate HR Zahid Anwar, Advocate Rawshan Ara Arzoo, Advocate Shamim Ara, correspondent of Protham Alo Mostafa Manju, Advocate Anwar Hossain and Tanzina Khanam Shikha of Mohila Parishad. The committee will work for curbing corruption and ensuring transparency, accountability and good governance in different private and public sector services.

