Corruption is found in all countries - developed or developing, big or small. Its dimensions and implications often transcend national boundaries, which demands that corruption must be fought by combining national efforts with international. Corruption undermines economic development; prevents good governance, accountability and transparency; obstructs fairness and equity; increases poverty, injustice and exploitation; distorts market and competition; and creates social and political instability and insecurity.

While corruption affects every society, it is more punishing for developing countries like Bangladesh where it has become a key national challenge. Presence of widespread corruption, and its debilitating impact in the society, polity and economy are acknowledged by almost all political parties. Fighting corruption is also a major agenda of the Government.

Corruption has taken the centre-stage in public discourse not merely because Bangladesh has been ranked for the fourth successive year at the bottom in terms of the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) published annually by Transparency International, but more importantly for the way corruption affects the people at large – especially those without access to power.

Irrespective of whether Bangladesh ranks at the bottom or higher in international comparison, corruption must be fought comprehensively and strategically. The Government has to lead the process. The Government has agreeably taken some steps recently, which include the setting up of the Anti-Corruption Commission, though it has a long way to go before meeting the public expectation that it would be truly independent and effective.

Internationally also, Bangladesh is among the 23 Asia-Pacific countries that have joined the ADB-OECD Anti-Corruption Action Plan for Asia-Pacific. As a Commonwealth country, Bangladesh has been a party to high profile recognition of the need for international cooperation in fighting corruption.

It is this context that Bangladesh must accede to the UN Convention Against Corruption that embodies a comprehensive set of standards, measures and rules that State Parties can apply in order to strengthen their strategic and policy framework, legal and regulatory regimes, and institutional capacities. It is the first legally binding global instrument to promote integrity, accountability and proper management of public affairs and public property; and facilitate international cooperation and technical assistance to prevent and combat corruption in all its manifestations efficiently and effectively.

One hundred and thirteen countries have signed this Convention, twelve of which have also ratified it. It is unacceptable that Bangladesh has not yet signed.

At an advocacy seminar organized by TIB in Dhaka on 9 December 2004 on the occasion of the first International Anti-Corruption Day, the Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister of Bangladesh Barrister Moudud Ahmed pledged to immediately take the initiative for signing and ratify the Convention.

TIB is encouraged by the Law Minister's commitment. We urge upon the Government to sign and ratify the Convention without any further delay. By doing so apart from joining international collaboration to curb and prevent corruption, the Government could send a strong signal nationally and internationally that its commitment to wage a rigorous fight against corruption is genuine and unqualified.
Premiere show of ‘Lal Sabujer Deshey’ held

Premiere show of the drama ‘Lal Sabujer Deshey’ (2nd part) was staged on 27 November. The drama attempted to depict the present picture of corruption in major corruption-ridden sectors of the country. Staged at the premises of Mymensingh Muslim Institute, around 300 spectators enjoyed the show. The consultants of D’ID Tim Ohehi, Adam Burke, Senior Program Officer of TIB Ekram Hossain, convener of the people’s theatre sub-committee of CCC-Mymensingh Ashrafuzzaman Selim, other members of the CCC and eminent personalities were present on the occasion.

Earlier, a 4-day long need-based theatre workshop was arranged at Mymensingh between 4 and 9 November under the direction of Jewel Kabir. Assistant Program Officer of TIB Ribbon Khandkar played the role of moderator in the workshop. The drama ‘Lal Sabujer Deshey’ (second part) was produced by incorporating parts of three productions of the people’s theatres of Mymensingh, Muktagachha and Nagbitari. Various roles in the drama were played by Ankhil, Russel, Rabbani, Nital, Mosharraf, Upadesh, Tridib, Russou, Nasir and Apu. The Executive Director of TIB Iftekharuzzaman was present at the concluding session of the workshop.

‘Relief’ and ‘Asiran’s Bangladesh’ staged

Two anti-corruption people’s drama ‘Relief’ and ‘Asiran’s Bangladesh’ were staged at Nalitabari and Muktagachha on 10 and 13 December respectively. Two shows of ‘Relief’ were exhibited on 10 December at Shamoshazar Modhulilla and Teenani Bazar of Nalitabari. On the other hand, two shows of ‘Asirman Bangladesh’ were exhibited on 10 and 10 December on the open air stage of municipal library and ‘bhabikir mor’ of Muktagachha respectively. There were huge turnouts of audiences in both the shows.
International Anti-Corruption Day observed in the country
Call to sign the UN Convention

As declared by the United Nations, 9th of December was the first International Anti-Corruption Day. The day was observed through various programmes in different countries of the world. TIB observed the day at 14 locations of the country including Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi by making a call for signing the UN Anti-Corruption Convention. Programmes arranged on the occasion included seminars and discussion meetings at Dhaka and Chittagong, and rallies at 12 spots of greater Rajshahi, Rangpur and Myrings, staging of people’s drama, discussion sessions, public gatherings, speeches, debate competitions and traditional ‘Gambhira’ and ‘Baul’ songs.

Speakers at the seminar organised by TIB on the occasion of International Anti-Corruption Day urged the government to sign and ratify the United Nations Convention Against Corruption. Conducted by eminent journalist and TIB Trustee Mahfuz Anam and chaired by the Chairman of Trustee Board Samson H. Chowdhury at Mohakhali BRAC Centre, it was attended by the Minister for Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Barrister Moudud Ahmed and the President of Supreme Court Bar Association Barrister Rokanuddin Mahmud as chief guest and special guest respectively.

The TIB Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman presented a paper on ‘UN Convention Against Corruption: The International Instrument in National Interest’ at the seminar. Former Secretary CM Shafi Sami and Professor CR Abrar were present as special discussants. Those who took part in the open discussion included Colonel Faruk Khan MP, GM Kader MP, Rashed Khan Menon, Professor Badiul Alam Majumdar, Dr. Tofail Ahmed, Rezaul Karim Chowdhury, TIB Member Kazi M. Mortuza Ali, Saiful Rahman, Kajal Siddiqui, Ariful Rahman, etc. Politicians, teachers, journalists, lawyers, representatives of the civil society including high-ranking officials from the government, non-government and donor agencies were present on the occasion.

In his paper, the TIB Executive Director called upon the government to sign and ratify the UN Convention Against Corruption and highlighted the importance of Bangladesh’s signing it.

On the subject of signing the Convention, the Law Minister disclosed as the chief guest, ‘I did not know that there was any such Convention’. But he promised to take initiative so that Bangladesh signed the treaty. He criticised the methodology of TI’s corruption perception index. Replying to Moudud’s criticism, the TIB Trustee Professor Muzaffer Ahmad said, there was no dearth of learned and accomplished people in both the Awami League and the BNP. The method that TIB followed in the preparation of this index was open for all to see. Everybody can look into it.

The International Integrity Award of TI was handed over to Nanda Saha, the wife of late journalist Manik Saha, during this session.
The speakers at a discussion meeting held in Chittagong on the occasion of first International Anti-Corruption Day laid emphasis on Bangladesh signing and ratifying the UN Convention Against Corruption, ensuring efficiency, neutrality and effectiveness of the newly formed Anti-Corruption Commission, checking corruption in organisations such as the Chittagong Port, Customs, etc. which are vital for the economy of the country.

Presided over by the Resident Editor of the Chittagong office of Daily Prothom Alo poet and columnist Abul Momtaj, the meeting was attended by university teachers, journalists, officials of non-government organizations, cultural activists and representatives of the civil society. Held at the Press Club auditorium, the discussion meeting called for forging a citizens' movement in Chittagong for curbing corruption.

Held under the auspices of International Anti-Corruption Day Observation Committee, which was formed by involving the local non-government organizations, the welcome address was delivered by the chief executive of YPSA Ariful Rahman at the very outset of the meeting. Senior Program Officer of TIB Ekram Hossain dwelt on the aims, objectives and activities of the organization. The coordinator of ‘Friends of TIB’ Md. Hamidul Islam Shamim gave the vote of thanks at the fag end.

Report: Ekram Hossain

A colourful rally, public gathering and cultural programme were held under the auspices of Rangpur sadar CCC on the occasion of the first International Anti-Corruption Day. The day was observed in Lalmonirhat with spontaneous participation of the local people, especially the youth. At a discussion meeting held at the office of the citizens' committee in the afternoon, the speakers called upon the government to take effective measures for curbing corruption and sign the international convention against corruption. The CCC of Kurigram sadar also arranged a rally and discussion meeting. Eminent citizens of the town including the chairman of Kurigram municipality, superintendent of police, members of the citizens' committee, social workers and journalists participated in it.

Rajshahi, Natore, Chapainawabganj

The Committee of Concerned Citizens of Rajshahi city organised a rally, discussion meeting and people's theatre on the occasion of observing the Anti-Corruption Day. The CCC of Natore sadar organised a rally, discussion meeting and people's theatre show. The citizens' committee of Chapainawabganj arranged a colourful rally, and discussion meeting, 'gambhir' songs and prize-giving ceremony.
The citizens' committee of Kishoreganj arranged a discussion meeting, rally and essay competition. The volunteers' group published a folder captioned 'Odhikar' on the occasion. The citizens' committee of Muktagachha organised a rally, discussion meeting, debate competition and prize-giving ceremony. The Nalitabari citizens' committee held a rally, recitation program, general knowledge and debate competitions and discussion meeting. Besides, a session of anti-corruption 'baul' songs was arranged by the citizens' committee.

The citizens' committee of Mymensingh sadar arranged a discussion meeting, rally, debate competition and exhibition of people's theatre on the occasion of anti-corruption day. The rally held under the auspices of Jamalpur sadar citizens' committee commenced at the Shaheed Minar and ended at the Public Library. A discussion meeting was held after the rally. Here, the speakers called upon all to build up resistance against corruption. Besides, they requested the government to sign the UN convention against corruption. A rally led by the Upazila Executive Officer of Modhupur Md. Nasiruddin paraded the main roads of the town. An attractive wall-magazine was published by the local volunteers of TIB in observance of the day. Besides, a debate competition was also arranged. A discussion meeting was held at Modhupur Degree College on the day.

There is a possibility of Bangladesh signing the UN Convention Against Corruption soon. This was disclosed in a news report published by the English daily 'The Independent' on 14 December. The report said, the law ministry has already sent a proposal to the foreign ministry for starting the process of signing and extending support to the convention. In a letter sent to the foreign minister M. Morshed Khan, the law minister Barrister Moudud Ahmed has urged him to take the initiative for signing the convention. The law minister had pledged to sign and support the convention at a seminar organised by TIB on 9 December on the occasion of International Anti-Corruption Day.

It may be mentioned that the Convention Against Corruption was adopted by the UN General Assembly on 31 October 2003 for combating corruption throughout the world. 113 countries have already signed this convention. 12 countries have also ratified it. The convention would become operational if 30 countries ratify it.
The Corruption Perception Index (CPI) of Transparency International (TI) was released for the tenth time on 20 October. There was widespread reaction after Bangladesh was ranked as the most corrupt country for the fourth time. While releasing the CPI-2004 in London, TI Chairman Dr. Peter Eigen said, "Corruption in large-scale public projects is a daunting obstacle to sustainable development. All the governments have to curb corruption stringently if the Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations is to be achieved by the year 2015. If we hope to reach the Millennium Development Goal of halving the number of people living in extreme poverty by 2015, governments need to seriously tackle corruption in public contracting."

While informing the journalists about the index at the National Press Club on 20 October, TIB Trustee Professor Muzaffer Ahmad said, the political parties have to fulfill their pledges if corruption is to be eliminated. Especially, appointment of an Ombudsman, separation of the judiciary, generation of free information flow and establishment of transparency and accountability in all fields has to be ensured.

In his reaction after the publication of the index, Finance Minister M. Salilur Rahman said, Bangladesh is considered to be the most corrupt country due to publication of negative news in the newspapers. On the other hand, TIB Executive Director Ittekaruzzaman said in a BBC interview, newspaper reports are not considered in the preparation of corruption index. This index is prepared on the basis of surveys carried out by various independent organizations.

In the meantime, Finance Minister M. Salilur Rahman met TI Chairman Dr. Peter Eigen during his visit to Germany last November. He told journalists after returning home on 27 November that TI was going to bring some changes to the methodology followed in preparing the corruption perception index, as some countries including Ethiopia had threatened legal measures against TI. Later, in a letter written to the Chief Editor of UNB news agency, TI Director for policy and research Dr. Robin Hodess informed that TIB had no plan to change the methodology of CPI as reported in some newspapers.

146 countries were included in the current year's index. According to this index, the position of Bangladesh is at the top of the corruption ladder, in other words Bangladesh is at the bottom of the index. Haiti has jointly occupied the bottom position alongside Bangladesh. Nigeria occupied the 144th position. On the other hand, as in previous years Finland has retained her position as the least corrupt country. New Zealand and Denmark occupied the second and third positions.

A technical committee of experts under the supervision of Professor Johann Graf Lambsdorff of Passau University, Germany, had prepared the index. A country is included in the index only when the number of surveys on that country is at least three. The 2004 index was prepared on the basis of results of surveys conducted by 18 internationally reputed independent research organizations. This year, Bangladesh was included in the index based on the results of 8 such surveys. The 8 surveys which were used as the basis were 'Country risk service and country forecast 2004' of Economist Intelligence Unit, 'State capacity survey 2003' of Columbia University, 'Risk ratings 2004' of World Markets Research Centre, 'Grey area dynamics 2004' of Merchant International Group, 'Global Competitiveness Report 2002, 2003, 2004' of World Economic Forum and the 2002 survey of a multilateral development bank. Executives of foreign organizations, senior executives and managers of domestic and international companies and country analysts were the respondents of these surveys. For further information please visit http://www.transparency.org/surveys/cpi

### Political parties are most corrupt institution worldwide according to TI Global Corruption Barometer 2004

The public around the world perceive political parties as the institution most affected by corruption, according to a new public opinion survey published on 9th December by Transparency International (TI) to mark UN International Anti-Corruption Day. In 36 out of 62 countries surveyed, political parties were rated by the general public as the institution most affected by corruption.

On a scale from a corrupt-free 1 to an extremely corrupt score of 5, parties ranked worst worldwide, with a score of 4.0, faring most poorly in Ecuador, followed by Argentina, India and Peru. After political parties, the next most corrupt institutions worldwide were perceived to be parliaments followed equally by the police and the judiciary, according to the TI Global Corruption Barometer 2004. Governments must enhance efforts to fight graft, starting with ratification of UN Convention against Corruption, said TI.

The survey included more than 50,000 respondents from the general public in a total of 64 countries and was conducted for TI by Gallup International as part of its Voice of the People Survey between June and September 2004. Bangladesh was not included in this survey.
‘Building political will to fight CORRUPTION’ vital in South Asia

The absence of political will is a critical constraint that hinders the effective implementation of anti-corruption reform in South Asia,” according to a statement issued today by five national chapters of Transparency International after a TI South Asia regional workshop on National Integrity Systems, held in Karachi, Pakistan on 18-20 December 2004. The workshop, building on the TI National Integrity System country studies completed in the course of 2004, was supported by the UK Government’s Department for International Development (DID).

TI’s national chapters in Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka have identified reform of the judiciary, creation of permanent and independent anti-corruption institutions, a clampdown on political corruption, and transparent rules on public procurement as priority areas to strengthen National Integrity Systems.

“The absence of political will is a critical constraint that hinders the effective implementation of anti-corruption reform in South Asia,” said the statement. The workshop noted that Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka are signatories to the United Nations Convention Against Corruption and that Sri Lanka has ratified the convention. It urged the governments of Nepal and Pakistan to ratify, and those of Bangladesh and India to sign and ratify the convention as soon as possible. All of the governments should implement the convention fully as it represents an international standard all countries should abide by. The statement also urged all South Asian governments to actively implement the OECD-ADB Anti-Corruption Action Plan for Asia and the Pacific.

In their joint statement, the five TI national chapters called for “rational and transparent recruitment processes” in the judiciary, for country-specific strategies to address weaknesses in the judiciary, for courts to be independent of the executive, and for special anti-corruption courts to be considered to expedite decisions in corruption cases.

The workshop also concluded that anti-corruption bodies should be permanent and independent “with a constitutional mandate”, and for their design, and the monitoring of their work, to include the participation of civil society groups.

Reforms in political culture, including the depoliticisation of the civil service, mandatory asset declarations by public representatives and officials backed up by odes of conduct, were identified as priorities. The workshop also called for a strengthening of parliamentary committees, and for the prohibition of anyone with a criminal conviction from standing for public office.

Country-specific public procurement rules “must be transparent, updated and strengthened,” according to the statement. “Civil society should continue to exert pressure on the public and private sectors to ensure transparency in procurement and should be encouraged to play a monitoring role.”

The National Integrity Systems TI Country Study Reports and the full statement of the Karachi meeting can be downloaded at: http://www.transparency.org/activities/nat_intog_systems/country_studies.html

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**TI Annual Members Meeting and international conference at Nairobi**

The TI Annual Members Meeting was held in Nairobi, Kenya, on 9-10 October, ahead of the conference New Anti-Corruption Governments: The Challenge of Delivery, hosted by the Kenyan government and co-organised with TI-Kenya and the TI International Secretariat. The conference, taking place on 12-13 October, is designed to foster constructive dialogue on the anti-corruption strategies open to new reform-minded governments and to develop key recommendations to support their efforts. Speakers include Kenyan President Mwai Kibaki, TI Chairman Peter Eigen, and Georgian Prime Minister Zurab Zhvania. The meeting included participants from Ghana, Indonesia, Madagascar, Mexico, Nigeria, Peru, Slovakia, South Africa, South Korea and Zambia.

The members of TI meeting in Nairobi on 10 October, elected three new members to the TI Board of Directors. The new board members are Geo-Sung Kim (South Korea), Valeria Merino-Díaz (Ecuador) and Akere T. Muna (Cameroon). TI’s Annual Membership Meeting, which took place in Nairobi, Kenya, on 9-10 October, was attended by more than 200 delegates from more than 75 countries. Members of the TIB Board of Trustees Professor Muzaffer Ahmad, TIB Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman, represented TIB at the TI Annual Members Meeting and international conference.
TIB’s publicity campaign against corruption

TIB has launched multifarious publicity campaigns for generating mass awareness against corruption. Keeping in mind the International Anti-Corruption Day, posters, stickers, T-shirts containing anti-corruption slogans were produced by TIB. Ten bill-boards were set up at various places of the country where there are large concentration of people. A television advertisement is being telecast through private TV channels as part of the anti-corruption campaign of TIB.

12 persons including 6 journalists awarded in investigative journalism and essay competitions

Two journalists have been awarded in investigative journalism this year by the TIB. Besides, 6 students received prizes in essay competition organised by TIB on the occasion of International Anti-Corruption Day. Minister for Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Barrister Moudud Ahmed handed over cheques/books, certificates of honour and crests to the winners at a function arranged on the occasion of International Anti-Corruption Day at Mohakhali BRAC Centre on 9 December.

Senior Reporter of Daily Janakantha Sharifuzzaman Pintu and Staff Reporter of The Daily Star Pinaki Roy were selected for the first prize in Bengali and English sections respectively for TIB’s investigative journalism award 2004. The second position was jointly occupied by the Staff Reporter of the daily Prothom Alo Shamima Binte Rahman, Staff Reporter of The Daily Star Sultana Rahman and the Senior Reporter of The New Nation Rafiqul Islam Azad (for report published in the Bangladesh Today). Staff Reporter of daily Sangbad Rafiqul Islam Sabuj was selected for a special prize for his report published in the daily Bhorer Kagoj.

Sharifuzzaman Pintu got the first prize for his series of reports on ‘Police Corruption’ published in the daily Janakantha in September and October 2003 while Pinaki Roy got the prize for the serial investigative reports on ‘corruption in pharmaceutical companies’ published in The Daily Star between 21 and 25 June 2003. They were both awarded cheques of Taka 50 thousand, certificates of honour and crests. Shamima Binte Rahman got the second prize for her investigative report captioned ‘All files on the killings of intellectuals case missing’ published on 3 December 2003, Rafiqul Islam Azad for the report captioned ‘When law makers break the law’ published between 10-14 June 2003 and Sultana Rahman for her serial report titled ‘Developer swindles clients with plot offers in wetland’ published on 8 December 2003. They were all awarded cheques of Taka 20 thousand, certificates of honour and crests. Rafiqul Islam Sabuj got the special prize for his serial report headlined ‘Irregularities in the Jatiya Sangsad’ published in the daily Bhorer Kagoj between 21 and 25 September 2003. He was given a cheque of Taka 10 thousand, certificate of honour and crest.

This year, the panel of judges included Professor Dr. Ahaduzzaman Mohammad Ali of the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, Dhaka University, Resident Editor of the daily Prothom Alo in Chittagong Abul Momen, Professor of English Department at BRAC University Ferdous Azim and the Managing Editor of the weekend magazine of The Daily Star Aasha Mehrin Amin. For the sake of neutrality, the names of newspapers and reporters were erased while sending them to the judges. Separate code numbers were used for each report. The marks received on the basis of separate evaluation of the reports by the judges were then averaged. A list of competitors was then prepared in a descending order starting from those who received highest marks. In accordance with it, the panel of judges finalised the names of winners who had received the highest marks by holding a meeting.

98 competitors in two categories participated in the essay competition organised by the TIB. Here, a science student of HSC second year of Bangladesh Rifles School and College, Dhaka, Md. Habibur Rahman (Jewel) stood first in the ‘Ka’ category (classes nine to twelve), science student of HSC second year of Mirzapur Cadet College Md. Mahamudur Rahman got the second prize and student of class ten of Rajuk Uttara Model School and College Saadi Islam occupied the third position.

In the ‘Kha’ category (graduate and post-graduate level), a second year (honours) student of Economics Department, Chittagong University, Umm Habiba received the first prize, student of Masters final part of Botanical Science, Kishorganj Gurudayal Government College Enamul Haque Sagar stood second, and 4th year B.Sc. (Honours) student of Electronics and Computer Science at Jahangirnagar University Kazi Ziaul Hoque stood third.

Learned judges in the essay competition included Professor Hayat Mamud, litterateur Selina Hosain and the Principal of Motijheel Ideal School and College Sahab Ara Begum. For the sake of maintaining neutrality, the names of participants and their schools were erased from the essays while sending them to the panel of judges.

Report: Mohammed Imam Uddin
Members’ meeting of TIB held
A lively meeting of TIB members was organised on 4th November. Held at the Chalet Restaurant of Gulshan in capital Dhaka, the meeting was presided over by the TIB Secretary General S. Ruhi Ghuznavi. The welcome address was delivered by the Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman.
Dr. Zaman presented an outline to the members on the ongoing activities of the organization. He invited the members to participate in the TIB programmes arranged on the occasion of International Anti-Corruption Day. The TIB Executive Director welcomed suggestions from the members for enhancing their participation in the activities of the organization. The officials of TIB dwelt on the programmes implemented during the past one and a half year. The officials also spoke on what was needed to be done for success and for facing future challenges.
Some members expressed the view that the members’ meeting should be held on a quarterly basis. The Executive Director opined that ‘Members Day’ could be held after every three months at the TIB office. A total of 32 members were present at the meeting. The members and TIB officials took part in an iftar party after the meeting.

TIB staff convention held at Rangamati
The fourth staff convention of TIB was held on 30 and 31 December at Rangamati – a town of scenic natural beauty, hills and lakes. Held at a local hotel, almost all TIB employees including the Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman joined this convention. The programme started with observation of one minute’s silence seeking salvation of the departed souls of over one lakh who had perished during the recent tsunami. The Executive Director delivered the welcome address dwelling on the aims and objective of the convention. On the first day, discussions were held on goals and objectives of the ongoing ‘Making Waves’ project of TIB, its achievements during the past one year and lessons learnt. The latest evaluation of the donor community regarding the programme was included in the discussion. The strengths and weaknesses of the organization were also discussed in the convention. On the second day of the convention on 31 December, discussions were held on the work-plans of the Research, Program, Information and Advice Centres, Advocacy and Administration Departments for the year 2005. The convention was concluded with the presentation of a colourful cultural function.

Participation in international workshops and trainings
Some TIB officials, CCC convener and members have participated in some international workshops and trainings in recent days. These programmes were held in Germany, Kenya and Sri Lanka.
Program Officer of TIB Mohammad Arif Hossen Khan attended a 3-week long training course ‘On Measuring Democracy, Governance and Human Rights’ at the invitation of Germany’s Capacity Building International (InWEnt) between 9 and 29 September. A total of 18 participants from 12 countries of the world participated in this training, which was held at the Munich centre of InWEnt. Professors of various reputed universities and representatives from various international organizations acted as trainers.
TIB’s Senior Program Officer Sydur Rahman Molla attended a workshop organised by TI at the Kenya capital Nairobi on 6 and 7 October. 21 representatives from various TI chapters of different countries participated in this workshop on the subject ‘tackling corruption in education: understanding and monitoring budgets’. A huge sum of money from the sanctioned budget of the education sector is wasted each year due to corruption. The main theme of the workshop was how various organizations related to the civil society could monitor this phenomenon.
Research Officer of TIB Md. Abdul Alim visited Germany between 10 and 31 October. He participated in the course titled ‘the economics of corruption’ organised by the Passau University of Germany. Besides, he also went to the TI headquarter in Berlin under the ‘visitor exchange programme’ of TI. During the trip, he studied the ‘integrity pact and public contracting programme’ of TI in detail. Besides, he held separate meetings with the Asia-Pacific Team, research department, online communication manager Roberto Perez Rocca, TI Africa Team and the Global Program Director Cobas D. Shroed.

Team of TIB trainees at Colombo
A 10-member team of trainees from TIB joined the South Asia regional resource mobilisation workshop 2004 titled ‘diversifying funding sources: challenges and opportunities’ at the Sri Lankan capital Colombo between 20 and 23 November 2004. The workshop was organised by the UK-based The Resource Alliance with assistance from the Centre for Development of Resource Mobilisation of Colombo. Discussions were mainly held at the workshop on basic issues of fund mobilisation and the various techniques. Held at the Trans Asia Hotel, activities of the civil societies and NGOs in India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Nepal were discussed at the workshop due to their relevance.
Well-planned and effective for generation of newer ideas among the officials of various government-private organizations, international NGOs and donor community, the resource persons in this workshop were Tony Elisher, Mel Warwick, Surat Sadhu, Kader Beg, Simi Kamal, Nasir Dadrawalah, Anitha Vikramanyayeke, and so on. Emphasis was placed on creativity in resource mobilisation, research, leadership quality, effective communication and selection of appropriate strategies.
The TIB trainees who joined the workshop included TIB officials Ekram Hossain, Sampaika Halder, SM Jahanur Ibne Awwal and Ujjal Bhattacharya and Advocate Mohammad Nazrul Islam (Jamaipur), M A Hakam (Naitabari), Advocate Ashok Sarkar (Kishorganj), Professor Md. Golam Samdani (Modhupur), Advocate Mahbubur Rahman (Muktagachha) and Professor M. Ashrafuzzaman Selim (Mymensingh) from the 6 Committees of Concerned Citizens of greater Mymensingh.
The citizens’ committees and TIB organizes various opinion exchange meetings and workshops with the goal of transforming the union councils and municipalities into corruption-free, transparent, accountabile, effective, pro-people and well-governed institutions. These opinion exchange meetings were recently held at Kishorganj, Jamalpur, Mymensingh, Muktagachha and Nalitabari with the participation of local representatives, government officials and representatives of the civil society.

Kishoreganj: Municipal councils can be transformed into transparent and accountable institutions through assistance and active participation of the citizens and effective role of the people’s representatives. The speakers expressed this optimism during an opinion exchange meeting with a 5-member delegation of local CCC at the municipal office on 5 October. Discussions were held at the meeting on the results of report card survey on ‘Quality of municipal services’ conducted by the TIB and CCC in order to identify problems and find solutions. Chaired by the municipal chairman Md. Abu Taher, the meeting was participated by the CCC members and people’s representatives. An opinion exchange meeting with land authority: A 5-member delegation of citizens’ committee held an opinion exchange meet at the premises of Kishoreganj sadar upazila land office with the concerned officials on 21 December. Discussions were held at the meeting on identification of problems, their solutions and what to do to curb corruption based on the results of report card survey titled ‘corruption in land administration’. The Assistant Commissioner (land) of the upazila gave assurance that the problems would be solved.

Jamalpur: An opinion exchange meeting was held between the municipal commissioners and citizens at Muslimabad Government Primary School field on 18 December under the joint auspices of CCC-Jamalpur sadar and the TIB. Chaired by CCC member Meer Ansar Ali, discussions were held at the meeting on ensuring transparency and accountability at ward no. 4. Those who spoke at this opinion exchange meeting included CCC members Advocate H. R. Zahid Anwar, Sukumar Chowdhury and Mostafa Babul, from among local citizenry Hasmat Ali, A. Jali, Md. Majedul Islam Sattar, Md. Asaduzzaman and TIB official Al-Amin Mia. Another discussion meeting was arranged on 20 December at local Shailerkanda High School field titled ‘tall union council face to face with the people’. During the meeting, the council members and the citizens pledged to work together through mutual cooperation for overall development. A similar programme was arranged at Shahbazpur union on 24 December.

Mymensingh: Everybody calls us hard. But we have to spend three or four times, sometimes even more money than the amount fixed by the government to carry the wheat given to us by the government to our area. Nobody believes that money from our own pockets have to be spent while discharging official responsibilities. We want the government to free us from this suffering by framing a policy on this subject. This was stated by the disgruntled union council chairmen who attended a workshop on ‘union council services: duties of local citizens and the council’ on 19 December at Mymensingh sadar upazila auditorium. The workshop was organized by TIB and CCC-Mymensingh. Chairman by the CCC convener Professor Shamsul Islam, Upazila Executive Officer of sadar upazila Dr. Nazmunara Khanum was present at the workshop as chief guest. Prof. Zatin Sarker, TIB official Samapika Halder and some UP chairmen spoke on the occasion.

Muktagachha: A workshop titled ‘services of the union council and duties of the citizens and the council’ was held at the Muktagachha upazila council auditorium on 7 December. Presided over by the CCC convener Swapna Kumar Das, the workshop was inaugurated by the Upazila Executive Officer of Muktigachha Muhammad Shukur Ali. 53 delegates including UP chairmen, secretaries and members of the reserved seats, journalists, teachers, lawyers, politicians, women’s rights activists and civilian leaders participated in it. Those who attended the workshop pledged to work in unison for ensuring transparency, accountability and good governance at their respective levels.

Nalitabari: Various problems facing the municipalities could be solved through optimum utilisation of the local resources. This view was expressed by the speakers at an opinion exchange meeting between the newly elected members of the Nalitabari municipal council and the inhabitants of the area on 8 October. Conducted by the convener of Nalitabari CCC M A Hakam Hira, municipal chairman Abdul Halim Ukel, some commissioners, TIB official Samapika Halder, CCC members and local elites were present at the meeting.

Modhupur: An opinion exchange meeting was held on 7 October between the newly elected members of the municipal council and the local citizens. Discussions were held on how to improve civic amenities in the municipality. Another opinion exchange meeting was held with the Assistant Commissioner (land) of Modhupur upazila and the Sub-registrar on 15 October focusing on the report card on land administration prepared by the CCC and TIB.
Inspired by TIB, Committees of Concerned Citizens have been formed at Rajshahi city, Natore and Chapainawabganj sadar to create awareness about the harms caused by corruption, mobilise public opinion and ensure better quality services through establishment of transparency and accountability in government and private service providing organizations at the local levels. The committees were formed with inclusion of eminent citizens acceptable to all in the concerned areas. A 6-member advisory council was also formed in Rajshahi city to render assistance to the activities of citizens’ committee by giving advice.


Former Vice Chancellor of Rajshahi University Professor Md. Saidur Rahman Khan, economist Professor Sanat Kumar Saha, Advocate Mohammad Yahya, Advocate Abdur Razzaq, Dr. Golam Kabir and cultural activist Abul Hossain have been included in the advisory council.


Chapainawabganj sadar committee: Convener – Advocate Saiful Islam Reza, Members – Professor Muzammel Haq, journalist Anowar Hossain Dilu, Selina Hafiz, Mahbubul Rahman (Mintu), Rafiq Hasan (Bablu), Gauri Barmon Shidu, Golam Rashid, Abul Kashem (Anu).

Induction ceremony held: A day-long induction ceremony of 3 newly-formed CCCs of Rajshahi region sponsored by TIB was held at the ADD Auditorium of Rajshahi. Presided over by veteran lawyer and language movement activist Golam Arif Tipu and participated by the CCC members of Rajshahi city, Natore sadar and Chapaiaganj sadar, the inaugural ceremony was attended by the TIB Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman as chief guest. Senior Program Officer of TIB Ekram Hossain dwelt on the ‘TIB and the background, objectives and programmes of the citizens’ committees at the function. Others who spoke on the occasion included the convener of Natore committee Dr. Zakir Talukdar, convener of Chapainawabganj committee Advocate Saiful Islam Reza and member of Rajshahi metropolitan advisory committee former Vice Chancellor Professor Saidur Rahman Khan.

In his address, the TIB Executive Director termed the programmes of the Committees of Concerned Citizens as very challenging and congratulated the committee members for getting involved in these activities. He said, most people in our society dream of changing the society. In other words a corruption-free society. He called upon the members of the civil society to unite such silent populace in order to build up a social movement against corruption. After his speech, the Executive Director replied to various queries of the members who were present.

In the second half of the day, discussions were held on the CCC Manual and future work-plans for the 3 CCCs following identification of the most corrupt sectors in their areas. TIB officials Arif Hossen Khan, Mohammad Mohsin and Rafiqul Islam were present at the function.

Training on Report Card Survey

A 2-day-long training course on ‘report card survey’ was held at Rangpur RDRS between 11 and 12 December for the members of 6 CCCs of Rajshahi division. Apart from 20 CCC members of Rajshahi metropolitan, Chapainawabganj sadar, Rangpur sadar, Lalmonirhat sadar and Kurigram sadar, TIB officials of concerned areas also participated in the course. Senior Program Officer of TIB Syedur Rahman Molla conducted the course.

TIB’s Senior Program Officer Ekram Hossain dwelt on its aims and objectives. TIB officials Arif Hossen Khan, Rafiqul Islam and Mohammad Mohsin were present on the occasion.

Workshop on action-plans of CCCs in the northern region

Three separate workshops on the action-plans of CCCs in the northern region, viz. Rangpur, Lalmonirhat and Kurigram, were held at the respective locations. The members of the citizens’ committees identified the education and health sectors as most important from people’s perspective. Draft action-plans were prepared on the major problems facing these sectors, sources of information on these sectors, research methodology, advocacy strategy, levels, responsibilities and sphere of work of TIB and CCC. The workshops were held at Rangpur on 25 October, at Lalmonirhat on 9 November and at Kurigram on 2 December. Concerned CCC members and TIB officials were present on the occasion.

Peshkar arrested while taking bribe

The Peshkar (reader) of a court was arrested red-handed while taking bribe at Feni on 12 October. A Mohr (scribe) of a Feni court named Md. Ibrahim Majumdar went to Zainal Abedin, a Peshkar of Feni sadar settlement office, for submitting a petition case under section 30. Zainal informed him that Taka 600 would be required for filing the case. Ibrahim informed the matter to District Anti-Corruption Officer Md. Hasibur Rahman and Magistrate Ziauddin Al Mamun. The Anti-Corruption Officer and the Magistrate signed 5 notes of 100 taka denomination. The moment Peshkar Zainal Abedin took the signed notes from Ibrahim and put them in his pocket, the Anti-Corruption Officer and the Magistrate recovered the money from his pocket and arrested him.

Source: Daily Prothom Alo, 13 October 2004

Rush for returning bribe money

There has been a rush in Bogra for getting back money paid as bribes by people who got appointments through monetary transactions after the cancellation of appointments of class three and class four employees by the Deputy Commissioner. The appointees have started approaching those people through whom they had bribed the administrative officials and ruling party leaders. They are seeking assurance regarding their jobs; otherwise they want their money back.

Source: Daily Janakanta, 22 November 2004

Peon riding a car of Taka 3 million

The post is that of a peon. But MA Hanna, a fourth class employee of Dhaka Medical College Hospital, rides a car of Taka 3 million very boldly. There is a flag-stand in front of the car. He pays the driver a salary of Taka 6 thousand. He has married five times. He now stays with 3 wives. And everybody including the physicians, nurses and others remain fearful of him. Hospital tenders, appointments-transfers of employees, everything takes place at the tilling of his fingers. Hannan is the General Secretary of Bangladesh Fourth Class Employees Federation. He is at the same time the President of Dhaka Medical College Hospital Class Four Employees Association.

Source: Daily Manabzamin, 19 December 2004

Criminal backgrounds of Indian parliamentarians

In the first exercise of its kind for India, the Bangalore-based Public Affairs Centre, a non-governmental organisation, has reviewed the criminal, financial and educational background of all 543 members of India’s new Parliament. According to the findings, the largest percentage of those with seriously "criminal backgrounds" - those facing charges that entail a minimum five years' imprisonment - belong to the Raishriya Janata Dal (People’s State party), which rules Bihar, India's third most populous state with 80m people. The RJD, which is led by Laloo Prasad Yadav, the colourful minister for railways, is the second largest party in India’s coalition government after Mr Singh’s Congress party. Two of Mr Yadav’s colleagues, Mohammed Shabuddin and Pappu Yadav, were elected from prison (where they remain) and face multiple charges of murder, extortion and kidnapping.

According to the PAC, just under a quarter of India’s parliamentarians face criminal charges, but more than half of those are concentrated in the four north Indian states of Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. Some states, such as Himachal Pradesh and New Delhi, have no MPs with criminal backgrounds. Likewise some parties, notably the communist block, with 61 seats, have no MPs facing criminal charges.

Source: Financial Times, 21 October 2004

Committees of concerned citizens

I came to know from year-8 no. 7 issue of the Newsletter that TIB is forming committees of concerned citizens at various places of the country for establishing good governance. This type of committees at the local level are undoubtedly playing a vital role in establishing good governance. We know for so long that TIB only publishes reports on corruption. But the TIB authorities should inform the people in a bigger way on the efforts they are making by forming citizens’ committees at the grassroots level in order to curb corruption. As a result of this, the local conscious segments of the population would come forward to form such committees and play a leading role in transforming various regions of the country into corruption-free and well-governed areas.

Source: TIB Newsletter, 21 October 2004

Corruption-free Bangladesh of my dream

Bangladesh has not reached such a stage in the field of corruption that she cannot be brought back. We all have to wage a war against corruption. It is not the sole responsibility of the government or some special agencies or the TIB’s to build a corruption-free Bangladesh of our dreams. As good citizens, this responsibility falls on us all. Come, let us all fight corruption together.

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