In the parliamentary form of government the role of the Parliament is central to the strengthening of the national integrity system, institutionalization of democracy and establishment of good governance. Effective parliament is also a sine qua non for holding the government accountable. The upcoming parliamentary election is of historical importance for Bangladesh. The possibility of meeting public expectations for an accountable and democratic government and for a truly effective and sustained anti-corruption drive as well as institutional reforms will depend to a great extent on the commitment of Members of the Parliament who will be elected to the ninth parliament.

According to a study conducted by TIB, a total of 122 candidates in 38 constituencies had spent Tk 18 crore 55 lakh 45 thousand 350 for election campaign up to the day of withdrawal of nomination papers for the cancelled Ninth Jatiya Sangsad Election which was planned for 22 January 2007. Some candidates had spent even Tk one crore, although the upper limit for such expenses was Tk 5 lakh. The influence of black money and muscle-power in politics and elections has been a longstanding problem in Bangladesh.

The parliamentary election was transformed into a profit-making investment. As a consequence, the key attributes of an effective parliament was largely absent from the Jatiya Sangsad of Bangladesh. Delay in forming Standing Committees and their ineffectiveness, quorum crisis due to lack of interest of MPs to attend sessions, and non-holding of debates on important issues like corruption, electricity crisis and terrorism undermined the credibility of the Eighth Parliament. On the other hand unscheduled debates and unwarranted partisan sycophancy or demeaning critique of the opponent became common. People do not wish to see the next Jatiya Sangsad playing a similar role.

The revised Representation of People’s Order (RPO) has made provisions for some highly significant regulations conducive to reduction of malpractice and influence of corruption and black money in election. These include mandatory registration of political parties, disclosure of eight sets of information of candidates, preparation and updating of voter list with photographs, delimitation of constituencies, issuing national ID Cards to voters and introduction of transparent ballot boxes. The independence and capacity of the Commission has to be enhanced for effective enforcement of these provisions and to take due action against violators.

The political parties will have to play the most important role in holding a free and fair election. Whatever may be the legal provisions on matters like registration of parties, refraining from nominating corrupt candidates, stopping the flow of black money, keeping the electoral expenses within limits and adhering to the amended Representation of People Ordinance, no effective progress can be made if the political parties and their leaders fail to observe these with full commitment. It is not possible to free the election from the influences of terrorism, muscle-power and corruption without the willingness of political parties.

The mass media and the civil society have a special role in ensuring transparency of the electoral process. The public demand to prevent repetition of nomination business, terrorism and influence of black-money as observed during previous elections must be sustained at the centre-stage of public discourse.

National and international election observers play a significant role in monitoring the pre-election and election-time occurrences. They need to do so with full integrity, honesty, impartiality and transparency. Questions were raised in the past regarding the integrity and neutrality of some election observers. Allegations of misuse of funds were also raised. Utmost caution should be exercised on this from the very onset. The Election Commission and funding organizations should play a responsible role in this area.

Transparency of the electoral process is essential for ensuring a genuinely representative and effective parliament. The political parties will have to play the most important role in holding a free and fair election.

Transparency of the electoral process is essential for ensuring a genuinely representative and effective parliament. This responsibility is not the purview of the Election Commission alone; progress can be made towards achievement of our cherished objective only through robust roles of all, including the government, the political parties, the candidates, the voters at large, the administration, non-government organizations, the mass media, development partners, law enforcement agencies and the judiciary.
The National Household Survey conducted by TIB shows that the pervasiveness of corruption remains undiminished although positive changes have been initiated in some areas. The incidence of corruption has slightly decreased in some sectors during 2007 compared to 2006. But it has increased in many sectors. The people had to pay a bribe of Tk 5,443 crore on an average during the year for obtaining various services.

TIB conducted this survey among 5000 households (3000 rural and 2000 urban) in 62 districts of the country during June and July 2007 with the objective of measuring the nature and magnitude of corruption and losses incurred due to its presence, as well as framing effective policies for curbing it. The law-enforcement agencies, local government and land administration have been found to be the most corrupt sectors. The corruption scenario in other service-providing sectors, judiciary, health, education, power, banking, NGOs and the tax department were also depicted in the report.

The survey report was released on 18 June through a press conference held at the National Press Club. The programme was attended by the Chairman of TIB Trustee Board Professor Muzaffer Ahmad, Treasurer M. Hafizuddin Khan, Executive Director Dr. Iftekharuzzaman and other officials. The report was presented by Waheed Alam, Senior Research Officer of TIB.

According to the survey, the incidence of corruption appeared to be the highest among the law enforcing agencies. The local governments and land administration came next. These sectors were the leading bribe-takers. No significant difference could be observed in the pervasiveness of corruption in rural and urban areas. It only showed the depth of the roots of corruption.

The research showed that one-third of the households had fallen prey to corruption. 42.1 percent of the households received services after paying bribes. The households had to pay Tk 4134 on an average for obtaining services from various organizations. The amount of per capita bribes paid by the service-recipients was Tk 861. Overall, 3.84 percent of per capita income had to be given up as bribes.

96.6 percent of the service-recipient households were victims of corruption at the hands of law enforcement agencies. Among these services, Tk 10,927 per household had to be paid for evading arrests. In addition, Tk 3,983 per household had to be paid for filing FIR, Tk 2,605 for police enquiry or clearance, Tk 1,703 for charge-sheets, Tk 795 for GD and Tk 5,120 per household for obtaining other services. Total bribe for the year in this sector amounted to Tk 879 crore.

On the other hand, 53.4 percent of the households had fallen prey to corruption while obtaining services from the local governments. The average amounts of bribe for services in this sector were Tk 5,005 for approval of residential plans, Tk 3,120 for distribution of VGD/VGF cards, Tk 828 for procurement certificate of fertilizer, Tk 505 for trade licences, Tk 310 for old-age allowances, Tk 84 for birth, death and citizenship certificates and Tk 1,172 on an average for obtaining other services. The amount of bribes extracted in this sector during the year totalled Tk 187 crore.

If measured in monetary terms, corruption in land administration was the highest. The total amount of bribes extracted by this sector during the year was Tk 1,606 crore. If land-related corruption is examined, then it is observed that 52.7 percent of the households were victims of corruption in one manner or another. Tk 5,680 per household had to be paid on an average for allocation of khas land, Tk 4,237 for land registration, Tk 3,857 for land survey and delimitation of boundary, Tk 3,303 for mutation of land, Tk 1,857 for sale-purchase of land, Tk 1,639 for collection of documents, Tk 1,170 for payment of tax and Tk 4,281 on an average for obtaining other services.

An examination of corruption in the judiciary demonstrated that 47.7 percent of the households were victims of corruption. Total bribes paid in the sector during the year Tk 671 crore. Of these, Tk 6,124 were paid to the employees, Tk 5,516 in Judges Courts, Tk 2,167 in the High Court, Tk 5,840 in Special Courts, and Tk 2,333 on an average in other areas of judiciary.

The survey showed that the service-recipients had to pay a total amount of Tk 107 crore as bribes in the health sector during the year. 44.1 percent of the households were victims of corruption in this sector. Maximum corruption was resorted to in the Upazila Health Centres, the proportion being 47.9 percent of the households. While receiving healthcare services, 36.5 percent of the bribes were paid to the physicians, 31% to the nurses, 13.9% to the employees, 9% to the ward-boys, 4.7% to brokers.
and 4.9% to others. In the education sector, 39.2 percent of the households had fallen prey to corruption. The total amount of bribes paid in the sector during the year was Tk 117 crore. Notable corruption and irregularities in the education sector were anomalies in admission, distribution of stipends, late holding of examinations, forced dependence on private tutors, etc.

The research also showed that 33.2 of the households had fallen prey to corruption in the power sector. The subscribers had to pay total bribes of Tk 473.7 crore during the year in this sector. On an average, PDB was paid Tk 1,512, DESA Tk 2,552, DESCO Tk 906, REB Tk 1,468 and overall Tk 1,993 as bribes. On the other hand, bribes paid in the banking sector in one year amounted to Tk 525 crore. On an average, 28.7 percent households had fallen prey to bribery in this sector. In the NGO sector, 13.5 percent of the households were victims of corruption. Bribes paid in the sector totalled Tk 20.4 crore. 6.4 percent households had fallen prey to corruption in the taxation sector. Total bribes paid in the sector were Tk 148 crore. In other sectors, 31.3 percent of the households were victims of corruption; in monetary terms, bribes paid amounted to Tk 707 crore.

If comparative analysis of bribery is undertaken on the basis of time, it was found that whereas the incidence of bribery in the education sector was 12 percent during July-December 2006, it rose to 44 percent during January-June 2007. Similarly, the incidence of bribery rose from 32 percent to 36 percent in the health sector, from 39 percent to 45 percent in land administration, from 38 percent to 47 percent in local governments, from 33 percent to 35 percent in the NGO sector and from 35 percent to 45 percent in other service sectors. But the survey displayed a downward trend in corruption in the law enforcement, judiciary, power, banking and taxation sectors. Bribery in the law-enforcement agencies declined from 49 percent during July-December 2006 to 37 percent during January-June 2007. It came down from 31 percent to 28 percent in the judiciary, from 41 percent to 38 percent in the power sector, from 55 percent to 22 percent in the banking sector and from 44 percent to 34 percent in the taxation sector. Overall, the incidence of bribery had risen from 37 percent during July-December 2006 to 39 percent during January-June 2007.

TIB has put forward a number of recommendations for curbing corruption in the country. These include: institutionalising punitive measures against corruption; undertaking fundamental administrative reforms including enhancement of salary and allowances of government employees in line with cost of living; making the Anti-Corruption Commission more active, efficient and effective; ensuring the right of access to information of the people; making the parliament more effective; swift disposal of corruption-related cases by the judiciary through upholding transparency and accountability; establishing e-governance for ensuring receipt of correct and transparent information as well as accountability; increasing the monitoring function of relevant watchdog institutions for ensuring proper utilisation of government funds; ensuring participation of service-recipients and others concerned for making the citizen’s charter of service-providing organizations pro-people and effective; and strengthening the campaign and movement against anti-corruption in order to raise awareness and ensure active participation of the people.

After its release, the research report was given wide coverage by the mass media both within and outside the country. Editorials were published by the daily newspapers of Bangladesh highlighting the importance of combating corruption. Discussion programmes on the report were broadcast by a number of TV channels including Bangladesh Television.

YOUTH FAIR

A two-day long youth fair was held on 1 and 2 April to present the views of youths before the nation and transmit the message of active involvement of all citizens in building the country. Around 60 NGOs and service-delivery organizations from all over the country participated in the fair. Transparency International Bangladesh TIB participated in this youth fair by setting up a stall. There were arrangements in the stall to sell and distribute various publications of TIB. Besides, prominent parts of the anti-corruption concert, cartoon and debate competitions were shown through projectors. The overflowing presence of youths at the TIB stall demonstrated their eagerness to know about the fight against corruption. Many of the youths who came to the fair expressed interest to work with TIB in its anti-corruption programme. Which was an indication of a stronger anti-corruption movement in the future.
A major share of the country’s import and export trade is transacted through the Chittagong Custom House. Yet, large-scale opportunities for bribery and corruption remain here even now. Many problems exist even now including complexities related to recruitment, lack of skilled manpower, problems in the assessment process of commodities, difficulties in collection of certificates on non-tariff barriers, anomalies with regard to bonded commodities, widespread bribery in the import-export process, excessive numbers of writ petitions and mismanagement, revenue evasion through forgery and irregularities of PSI companies. Due to some procedural reforms and monitoring by the joint forces following the declaration of emergency in the country in 2007, some visible changes have been brought about in Chittagong Custom House. Additional revenue worth Tk 1400 crore has been collected even before the expiry of the current financial year. But there are apprehensions that the previous corruptions and irregularities would return if required basic reforms and sustainable changes in procedures are not ensured.

This has been revealed in the research conducted by Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) on ‘Chittagong Custom House: Problems and Way of Remedies’. A round-table discussion on ‘Chittagong Customs: Wanted Sustainable Transparency and Accountability was organized at the conference room of Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industries on 21 June on the occasion of releasing this report. Presided over by the Chairman of TIB Trustee Board Professor Muzaffer Ahmad and moderated by the TIB Executive Director Dr. Iftekharuzzaman, ACC Commissioner AH Manjur Mannan was present in the discussion as chief guest and former Adviser to the caretaker government M. Hafizuddin Khan as special guest. The report was presented by Tanvir Mahmud, Research Officer of TIB. Representatives of various institutions including Chittagong Custom, Port Authority and chambers as well as various professionals were present. TIB made a number of recommendations including deterrence of risks in the automation process for sustaining of good governance at Chittagong Custom House.

This research was carried out from November 2007 to May 2008 with the objectives of investigating the nature, magnitude and various illegal transactions in the import and export trade through Chittagong Custom as well as finding out the causes and remedies of this corruption. It appears from this research that there could be no direct recruitment in the Chittagong Custom House since 1982. Appointment to class-2 posts have remained suspended owing to an ongoing writ case in the High Court for the past 26 years seeking absorption of Mujibnagar employees and the consequent ruling on the NBR.

Only in import trade, an importer has to cross 42 official levels in four stages. The customs authority cannot play a significant role in manual examination of commodities due to dearth of equipment in the assessment process, crisis of skilled manpower, lack of modern laboratory and insufficient number of separate sheds for examining goods. As a result, files are getting piled up. Syndicates are in operation in the auctioning process of commodities. The government is deprived of a huge amount of revenue because of irregularities on account of non-publication of required SROs. Government revenues are being evaded by taking advantage of insufficient coordination between the customs, banks and other stakeholders.

Bribes have to be paid as speed-money at each level of the customs during the import-export process in order to expedite work. Illegal transactions take place outside public view through understanding reached between some officials and relevant stakeholders despite rigorous monitoring at the present juncture. There are only 13 officials for tackling over 10 thousand writ petitions in the High Court, which fall outside routine day-to-day work of the customs office. During 2006-08, evasion of revenue per case amounted to Tk 27 lakh. A total of 505 anomalies were detected after examining the CRF Certificates issued by 4 PSI companies. The existing provision of punishment for PSI crimes appears to be encouraging corruption instead of discouraging it. Serious discrepancies have been found by the present research survey in the revenue collected from merchant overtimes.

The research report describes in detail the recent measures undertaken by Chittagong Custom House. If sustainable changes are not brought about in the procedures side by side with fundamental reforms, then the situation may once again revert to earlier times. For this, TIB has put forward a number of recommendations which calls for empowerment through complete integration of the automation process as well as expanding the sphere of technological knowledge within customs and NBR authorities. TIB also recommended swift filling up of vacant posts through recruitment; making arrangements for training; effective implementation of a complete automation system in the Customs House; installation of a ultra-modern laboratory; amendment and updating of SRO regulations and Customs Act, 1969; making the process of granting bond licence transparent, swift and preventing its misuse; enhancing coordination between the customs and the port authority following complete automation of the port activities, etc. During discussions, the Chittagong Chambers of Commerce offered to provide scanner machines instead of taking those from the donors.
Accountability and transparency should be ensured while allocating resources to hospitals for raising the quality of healthcare. Health, treatment and medicine related laws, rules and regulations also need to be reformed. The involvement of the citizenry in establishing accountability of all relevant quarters in health care also has to be ensured to fulfill people’s expectations. Besides, all required information should be available for assisting the government in taking policy decisions.

These important opinions on healthcare management were articulated by the participants during the round-table on “Problems of Good Governance in Public Healthcare Services Ways of Remedies” held at the Prothom Alo office on 6 April. Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) and the Prothom Alo jointly organised this round-table on the occasion of World Health Day on 7 April, to review the existing problems and limitations in healthcare and to devise recommendations for overcoming those.

In the keynote paper, TIB made some recommendations on formulation and implementation of policies. These included representation of the civil society in the framing of a comprehensive health policy; preparation of a citizens’ charter on health issues; formulation of a code of conduct on delivery of services by physicians with provision for punitive measures in case of deviations; raising the allocation for health sector development in the national budget; framing of proper policy for running diagnostic centres and conducting applied research on a large-scale; and furnishing of sufficient information on healthcare services by hospitals. The keynote paper was presented by Shahzada M. Akram, Senior Research Officer of TIB.

The chief guest at the round-table Health Adviser Dr. AMM Shawkat Ali expressed his concurrence with the research and recommendations of TIB and said, “the government will reform some laws for raising accountability in healthcare services for the common people. A draft policy will be adopted by incorporating the provision of citizens’ involvement with the government after rigorous analysis.” He gave assurance about taking initiative for activating 14,000 community clinics established through NGOs and local governments throughout the country and removing the legal complexities surrounding Bangladesh Medical and Dental Council, which has remained functionally inoperative during the past 16 years.

Mentioning about the dearth of information on health, the chair of the round-table and TIB Trustee Board Chairman Professor Muzaffer Ahmad asserted that adequate information, research and surveys are needed for getting a clear idea about the prevalence of any disease in any region. This country lacks education on management of hospitals, clinics and diagnostic centres. There should also be coordination among the institutions grooming specialised doctors. He further said that due importance should be attached to separate arrangements for disabled people. He advised taking steps for introducing people’s participation or citizens’ opinion in the official procedure as practiced in Thailand.

The Director General of Health Services Prof. Dr. Abul Faiz said that the advances that Bangladesh made in reducing under-5 child mortality rate, expanded programme for immunization or EPI, government and non-government measures for checking diarrhoea and tuberculosis etc. had given rise to optimism. On the other hand, Director General of the Family Planning Department Kamrunnesa Khanom and Director in Charge of education and manpower development of the Health Department Dr. Khandakar Md. Sifayet Ullah presented information on maternal healthcare development of the Health Department. Dr. Khandakar Md. Sifayet Ullah presented information on maternal healthcare and manpower in the health sector.

Joint Editor of Prothom Alo Abdul Quayum acted as moderator during the discussion. He mentioned about the important roles being played by TIB and Prothom Alo in highlighting irregularities and corruption in healthcare through various reports and programmes. In the concluding part of the discussion, TIB Executive Director D. Iftekharuzzaman opined that involvement of the common people with the health system would raise awareness among the masses and citizens would get better services if good governance could be ensured in the health sector.

Most of the participants in this four-hour long session opined that the people had maximum confidence on the government hospitals even now. They criticised the weaknesses existing in the sector, weaknesses in hospital administration, drug policy and medicine supply, marketing policy of diagnostic centres and medicine companies, private medical education, nursing system and transparency of the donor community. They put forward various recommendations including introduction of referral system in healthcare, training of attendants engaged in maternal and child health, supply of some medicine at minimum price by producing them inside the country, training for pharmacists, arrangement for treatment of the paralysed and the aged in hospitals, enhancing transparency and accountability of all personnel involved.
in the provision of healthcare and adopting the advice of relevant specialists in respective fields.

Those who put forward important suggestions during the discussion included Coordinator of Ganashastha Nagar Hospital Dr. Zafrullah Chowdhury, Chairman of Health Research and Rights Foundation Professor Dr. Nazmunnahar, Professor of the Pharmacy Department of Dhaka University Professor A B M Faruque, Senior Scientist of the clinical services department of ICDDR,B Dr. SK Roy, BRAC’s Director of Health Faruque Ahmed, former president of Bangladesh Medical Association Professor Dr. Rashid-E-Mahbub, Director of Dhaka Medical College Hospital Brigadier General Dr. Md. Abdus Salam, Superintendent of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Brigadier General Dr. Zahir Uddin Ahmed (retd.), Coordinator of the rehabilitation centre for the paralysed Valery A. Taylor, Director of Dhaka Community Hospital Professor Quazi Quamruzzaman, Director of laboratory services of BIRDEM Professor Dr. Shubhagata Chowdhury, Executive Director of the Health Centre for the Distressed Dr. Dibalok Singha, Deputy Registrar of Bangladesh Nursing Council Suraya Begum and General Secretary of Post Graduate Doctors’ Association Dr. Rakibul Islam.

It may be mentioned that TV channel Banglavision telecast a documentary programme titled ‘Corruption in Healthcare’ with the assistance of TIB on the occasion of World Health Day on 7 April. It highlighted the prevailing corruption in healthcare management as well as its impact by showing recorded clips from the round-table discussion.

**TIB Participates in Public Health Conference**

The Public Health Conference-2008 in Bangladesh was held on 13 and 14 June at BRAC Centre of Mohakhali, Dhaka. The non-government organization ‘Unnayan Onneshan’ organized this conference to discuss and share experiences on reforms in the health sector and management based on research. Three separate papers were presented from TIB on healthcare review, good governance and experiences of TIB’s YES programme. The Director General of the Health Department Professor Dr. Md. Abul Fayez was the special guest during the inaugural session of the conference. Research Officers of TIB Taslima Akter and Md. Rezaul Karim, and Advocacy Officer Atia Afreen presented papers during the sessions on ‘Role of government in healthcare services’ and ‘Partnership with the people’.

In her paper titled ‘Government healthcare services: A review’, Taslima Akter discussed the problems in health administration of Bangladesh as well as flaws in the service sector. In her paper titled “Weaknesses in the health sector of Bangladesh: Good Governance is the solution, Atia Afreen portrayed a comparative picture of Bangladesh, India and Thailand with regard to achievements of MDG targets, government expenditures and manpower. In another paper titled ‘Role of youths in effective healthcare, equity and transparency: Experiences of Bangladesh’ presented on the last day of the conference, Md. Rezaul Karim shared experiences on various programmes undertaken by CCC-TIB and YES to raise transparency and accountability of concerned authorities in healthcare delivery alongside raising awareness about improvements in the quality of healthcare.

The papers recommended establishment of effective referral system in healthcare, raising development allocation in the national budget, establishment of good governance for ensuring transparency and accountability of those working in the health sector, raising citizens’ involvement with the health authorities and formulation of a complete and effective health policy.

**16th CSD Conference Held**

A conference of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) was held between 5 and 16 May 2008 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. Each of the biennial conferences of CSD dwells and works on a specific theme as well as some cross-cutting issues. The subject-matters of this year’s conference were agriculture, rural development, land, drought, desertification and Africa.

The conference was attended this year by the Programme Coordinator of the non-government organization ‘Association for Land Reforms and Development’ Rowshan Jahan Moni, after getting invitation as an Asian participant member of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and International Land Coalition (ILC).

A thematic session on land was held on 8 May. The discussants put emphasis on how the people who are oppressed on account of land and natural resources would confront the rising demand for land in the present-day world. Emphasis was placed during the discussion on ensuring access of backward segments, especially women and indigenous communities, to productive natural resources for ensuring good governance. It was noted during the discussion that land was the most important resource for the rural population. The livelihood and socio-economic power of people belonging to the rural societies hinge on land ownership. At the same time, land is also a pointer to the culture of indigenous people wherever they may be living. After the discussions, the ILC took a decision that coordinated endeavours would have to be made from a single platform by international and governmental organizations as well as the civil society for achieving the Millennium Development Goal-1, in order to reduce the gap between the rich and the poor.
Around 40 Thousand Youths Take Oath against Corruption in Patiya

Round 40 thousand youths have informed the world about their stance against corruption by taking an anti-corruption oath. These invincible youths shouted three times in a chorus ‘No to Corruption’. Thousands of youths started to gather on 11 May afternoon on the grounds of Patiya Adarsha High School, Chittagong. They assembled at the anti-corruption youth gathering, defying intense heat and warm rays of the sun.

In his address as chief guest, ACC Lt. Gen. (Retd.) Chairman Hasan Mashhud Chowdhury called upon the youths who had assembled on the ground, “Resist corruption from your respective positions, not merely through an one-day youth gathering; you should always maintain a conscious stand against it”. Welcoming the forward march of the youths against corruption, TIB Executive Director Dr. Iftekharuzzaman said, “The youths are the main inspiration in the countrywide anti-corruption movement being waged by TIB. TIB believes that only the invincible youths can erect a well-governed Bangladesh by uprooting corruption”.

After the inaugural formalities were over, singer Aurin came to the stage. This promising singer filled the minds of the audience with patriotic songs. She rendered a number of songs in succession. By then, there were nearly 40 thousand men and women on the ground. A daughter of Patiya – eminent young star Nishita Barua stepped onto the stage. Between songs, Nishita urged the youths to remain honest, not to indulge in corruption and to become imbued with patriotism. After that, a popular singer of the country – Hasan Abidur Reza Jewel started to sing songs in his deep melodious voice. Thousands of youths enjoyed the presentation with euphoria and clapping. TIB crests were presented to honour the artistes. Dusk arrived. All lights of the stage were lit up. There was an intermission on the stage, which was lit with dazzling lights. Suddenly, a group of youths arrived on the podium with the theme song, “Wake up people, a procession of light beckons for piercing the darkness……”. The members of YES and YES Friends Group of TIB presented a captivating choreography of the theme song.

After that came forward prominent band star Ayub Bacchu and his band LRB. Thousands of people were enthralled by the melody of the country’s renowned and popular singers. The youths also sang in tune with the rendered songs. In between took place the oath-taking ceremony. Echoing the voice of Ayub Bachchu, around 40 thousand youths took oath by saying ‘No to Corruption’. May be it was the first incident of its kind where such a huge number of people had taken oath against corruption in Bangladesh. By assuming an anti-corruption spirit and taking a stand against it through oath-taking, the common masses of Patiya once again spread the message, “The invincible youths shall resist corruption”.

It was now night time. But it appeared no one was in a hurry to go home. Ayub Bacchu rendered songs galore – one after another. Hours ticked away in this way. It was now 9 p.m. Now it was time for bringing down the curtain. But the thirst of the euphoric youths seemed unquenchable. At last, curtain fell on the anti-corruption gathering as the enchanting presentations of LRB and Ayub Bacchu came to an end.
‘Wake Up People’ Campaign Starts at the Local Level

The campaign ‘Wake Up people’ was launched at the local level on 10 and 11 May at Patiya of Chittagong through a two day long colourful youth gathering. The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) and Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) are jointly conducting this nationwide awareness-raising campaign with the goal of gearing up the movement against corruption and actively involving the general people in it. Although this campaign was launched at the national level last December, this is the first time that it took place at the local level. On the first day of the programme, anti-corruption art competition and cartoon exhibition were held at the local A. S. Ali High School auditorium in the afternoon. The Upazila Nirbahi Officer Shahidul Alam inaugurated it. Besides, convener of CCC-Patiya Professor Avijit Barua Manu and chairman of the Corruption Prevention Committee Dr. K. Akhtar were also present. A total of 74 children took part in the painting competition.

A colourful anti-corruption rally was brought out on 11 May morning from 10 to 11 a.m. The rally was inaugurated by the ACC Chairman Lt. General Hasan Mashhud Chowdhury (retd.). Others present on the occasion were TIB Executive Director Dr. Iftekharuzzaman, Upazila Nirbahi Officer Shahidul Alam, Convener of CCC-Patiya Professor Abhijit Barua Manu and Chairman of Corruption Prevention Committee Dr. K. Akhtar. Around 15 thousand people took part in the rally. The main attraction of the 2-day event – a musical show – commenced on the Patiya Model High School ground at 4 p.m. in the afternoon. Renowned musical artistes of the country rendered songs in the programme. Around 40,000 youths took an anti-corruption oath during the programme. FM radio station Foorti was the media partner of the event.

It may be mentioned that this kind of programme will be organized sequentially at different places of the country. The ACC and TIB expect that a huge number of people will be involved in the anti-corruption movement through this venture.

SSC Examinees Express Their Resolve for a Corruption-free Bangladesh

Over 1500 SSC-2008 examinees of 22 Dhaka-based schools participated in an ‘A porajeyo Festival’ at Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre on 14 June by expressing their firm stand against corruption. Former Adviser of the caretaker government and member of the Trustee Board of Transparency International Bangladesh Advocate Sultana Kamal was the chief guest at this daylong festival called ‘Corruption-free Bangladesh: Our dream, our expectation’. The guests included TIB Executive Director Dr. Iftekharuzzaman, Director General of Anti-Corruption Commission Md. Abu Taleb Mia, eminent freedom fighter Akku Chowdhury and teacher of Saint Joseph’s School Rehana Begum.

The event was organized with the cooperation of Transparency International Bangladesh. TIB officer Shamim Iftekhar, student of Saint Joseph’s School Akif Ahmed and student of Viquarunnisa Noon School Faiza Anisa presented a paper titled ‘The invincible youths shall resist corruption’. The attending guests and students participated in the discussion on the paper during the seminar. Significant discussions took place in the seminar on themes like corruption, good governance, values, role of the general masses in the governance process and role of youths in combating corruption. Later, during the oath-taking session, the students expressed their firm resolve that they would never indulge in corruption and would always strive from their respective positions to resist corruption at all levels of society. A one-minute silence was observed at the start of the programme to pay respect and pray for the salvation of the departed soul of Panjat Khan – one of the initiators of the programme. The second part of the festival consisted of lively events like exhibition of anti-corruption cartoons, friendly debate, quiz contest, captivating fashion show and concert.

Advocate Sultana Kamal is delivering her speech

One part of participants in the art competition

Anti-Corruption rally
Transparency and accountability – a precondition for good governance – can be ensured through an effective information dissemination system. This system makes the people aware and active about their rights and privileges, on the other hand, it makes the government accountable for ensuring people’s rights. An effective information system has therefore come into prominence in all anti-corruption programmes undertaken by Transparency International Bangladesh. TIB has focused importance on the concern of advice and information for ensuring participation of the people to establish good governance in all public and private institutions. In this way, positive changes have been brought in a number of service-providing organizations through a programme of setting up ‘Advice and Information Desk’ (AI-Desk) in the CCCs as well as deployment of satellite advice and information desks which act as a catalyst in ensuring transparency and accountability.

People fall a prey to corruption due to lack of information and adequate awareness about their just rights. They are deprived of fundamental rights like education, health, security etc. with regard to civil services of various service-related organizations. TIB has therefore strengthened the Committee of Concerned Citizens (CCC) at the local level for providing specific information, counselling and advice on services related to their way of living. AI-Desk has been set up in 36 CCC areas as a focal point for citizens’ involvement. The general people can be able to know about their rights and privileges and make an effort claiming their logical demands by receiving adequate information and advice from these AI-Desks without cost. The organized coalition of like-minded organizations co-operates CCC at the local level for necessary legal assistance claiming logical demands.

The CCCs have taken the initiative to regulate AI-Desk in various service-providing organizations in the locality in order to consolidate the programme of AI-Desk. Necessary counselling is given to the service-recipients through the co-ordination with the demands of the common people. A group of energetic YES group members of the CCC are engaged voluntarily in this programme for its successful implementation. The citizens can easily avail of the services as they are informed about the categories of services rendered by various organizations, the places where such services are provided, the price of those services and so on. Through the satellite desk information leaflet on these services are distributed among the service-recipients of the concerned organization free of cost and direct assistance is provided if required. Detailed information and help is sought from relevant authorities for preparation of these institution-based leaflets.

The deployment of satellite AI-Desk depends fully on the support of CCC members and direct participation of the YES members. The CCC and YES members play an important role in making the common and deprived people conscious about their rights by providing necessary information based on analysis of the areas where such help is needed in the locality. A YES member of Faridpur expressed his view about the need for satellite AI-Desk as following, “We can disseminate our known-knowledge among our neighbours and local people through AI-Desk. It is often seen that the general people seek help to us with complicated problems which cannot be solved immediately. But some simple guidelines can be given which is very important at that juncture. In this way, the person seeking help is benefited, which in turn inspires us as well.” He commented that they could help the general people in getting medicine by running AI-Desk programme in hospitals. He expressed the hope that service-recipients approaching the desk more or less individually or collectively would continue to be benefited in such a way.

Coordinated effort and collective initiative by all divisions of TIB is helpful in smooth running of these activities. Based on experiences of positive changes occurring at the local level, initiatives have also been taken for deploying AI-Desk activities at the national level. It is expected that these AI-Desks would play an effective and supportive role in raising the accountability of relevant organizations.

The concerned authorities consider the satellite AI-Desks as helpful for their work. With the assistance of authorities, advice and complaint box are placed on the hospital ground. The authorities take necessary steps to ensure timely arrival of doctors, to set up

**Chandana River at Natore**

Some people who were victims of corruption centring on the Chandana river at Natore came to Committee of Concerned Citizens (CCC) for remedy of their miseries. Some conscienceless and dishonest land-grabbers had petitioned the government for getting permanent lease of khas lands of Chandana river by pretending to be landless which became a threat for the local people who were dependent on the river for their livelihood. In this backdrop, CCC members talked to the local administration on this issue on behalf of the suffering people and with the assistance of CCC members the local people got the river back once again.

**Director of Dhaka Medical College Hospital in Advice and Information Desk**
information-boards on offered services, to display the list of medicines and fees of various services in visible spots of the hospitals and to resolve the complaints received from the patients. Similarly, the list of activities of the local administration along with fees of various services has been displayed by the concerned organizations. Visible improvements have been occurred in service-providing organizations and the quality of services has satisfactorily been improved due to the cooperation of the authorities with the CCC and YES members involved in the programme.

The general people who approach different organizations for services are happy at receiving services from these desks. Some benefited people became emotional when they were asked about it, saying, “Father, I don’t have any son, but from today you are my son. I shall never forget your help in my life”. While describing her experience of a hospital desk programme, Renu Begum said, “When we receive such heartfelt love after helping somebody, then we feel that we are really doing something for the humankind as well as this country”. There are numerous instances where the people have been benefited from the CCC-run Advice and Information Desks, similar to the satellite ones.

First North Bengal Debate Festival Held

An anti-corruption debate competition entitled on the ‘First North Bengal Debate Festival’ was organized by the Tulip International English Medium School, Debate for Democracy and Transparency International Bangladesh at Lok-Bhaban of Dinajpur on 3 June 2008. Renowned organizer, convener of the forum ‘Debate for Democracy’, Hasan Ahmed Kiran was present at the festival as chief guest. After the inaugural session in the morning, the topic of the inaugural debate was ‘This house believes that corruption is the main obstacle to our development’. After that, a traditional debate on ‘The present time is the greatest’ and a parliamentary-style debate on the theme ‘Not political corruption, bureaucratic corruption is the most dangerous’ continued till noon. At the end of the programme, the theme of a highly enjoyable debating session was ‘Money is the root of all troubles’. The students who were present at the debate festival expressed their firm stand against corruption by taking anti-corruption oath. The recognised debaters at national and international levels conducted workshops on various model of debate during the festival.

Anti-Corruption Debate on the Occasion of Bangla New Year 1415

The Dhaka University Debating Society organized an attractive debate programme with assistance from Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) on the DUS compound of Dhaka University on 2nd Baishakh afternoon; it upheld the slogan “Breaking the doors of exploitation, we wake up with our own language”. The topic of debate on the day was “This house believes that corruption makes the observance of Pahela Baishakh festival a farce”. Professor of the sociology department and moderator of DUDS Dr. Mahbuba Nasrin acted as speaker during the event. The treasury team in the debate included Falguni Majumdar (Sherebangla Agriculture University), Junanjina Ahmed Trina (Jahangirnagar University) and Md. Suhel Rana (Jagannath University). The opposition party was represented by Amit Das Gupta (Dhaka University), Upama Mahbub (Dhaka University) and Murad Hossain Rony (Dhaka University). The number of spectators, including students, in this lively debating session was around 350. The General Secretary of DUDS Md. Ziaul Haque Sheikh was in charge of overall coordination of the programme, while the President of DUDS Tahmid Alam supervised it.

Setara Gets Back her Recognition

Setara Begum is the 16-year old lone daughter of day-labourer Mohammad Petan, hailing from Puk-Pukuria village of Chakoria upazila. Shahidul Islam of the neighbouring village used to tease her in various ways when she went to a Madrasa for education. As Setara did not respond, Shahid picked up Setara one day, took her to an unknown place and abused her physically. After capturing her for five days, Shahid sent back Setara to her house giving assurance of that he would marry her. Setara could not disclose this to anyone being ashamed. After a few days when Setara became pregnant, Shahid killed the foetus by taking her medicine of abortion told her that it was vitamin and then demanded from Setara 5 lakh tk as dowry. Setara went for shelter to Shahid’s uncle and aunt for this but they did not support her. In this situation, Setara came to the CCC office after learning about its work. At last, Shahid conceded his fault with the co-operation of the CCC convener, TIB officer and with the assistance of the upazila human rights commission and then married Setara through registration. At present, Setara is leading a happy conjugal life with her husband.

Setara’s parents commented on this concern, “Our daughter would not have received recognition if the CCC had not played any role; and may be she would never have been married. Who would have married her after so many incidents?”
Corruption in the water sector is a root cause and catalyst for the global water crisis that threatens billions of lives and exacerbates environmental degradation, according to the Global Corruption Report 2008: Corruption in the Water Sector, released 26 June by Transparency International (TI).

The report, first of its kind to explore the impact and scope of corruption in different segments of the water sector, identifies a range of problems, from petty bribery in water delivery to procurement-related looting of irrigation and hydropower funds; from covering up industrial pollution to manipulation of water management and allocation policies.

“Water is a resource without substitute. It is paramount to our health, our food security, our energy future and our ecosystem. But corruption plagues water management and use in all these areas,” said Huguette Labelle, Chair of Transparency International. “Corruption’s impact on water is a fundamental governance problem, yet it is not sufficiently addressed in the many global policy initiatives for environmental sustainability, development, and food and energy security. This must be changed,” added Labelle.

TIB organised a discussion meeting at the CIRDAP auditorium at Dhaka on the occasion of realising the report. The programme was attended by the Chairman of TIB Trustee Board Professor Muzaffer Ahmad, Treasurer M. Hafizuddin Khan, and other officials of government, NGO and civil society. The report was presented by Shahzada M Akram, Senior Research Officer of TIB.

It is mentioned in TI’s report that the water crisis is undeniable and the corruption challenge it faces is urgent. More than 1 billion people worldwide have no guaranteed access to water and more than 2 billion are without adequate sanitation, which has devastating consequences for development and poverty reduction.

The problem is very acute in South Asia, where an in-depth analysis found that contractors frequently form cartels and pay bribes to win water contracts. They also pay kickbacks to cover up sub-standard work during the construction period. These two forms of corruption alone are estimated to have raised the price of a sustainable water connection by 25 to 45 per cent.

TIB Executive Director Dr. Ifekharuzzaman and Research Officer Tanvir Mahmud discussed about Bangladesh in this report of 367 pages which published from Cambridge University Press with the initiative of TI.

Bangladesh Scenario

Like other sectors of the Bangladeshi economy, water sector is also plagued by corruption and failures of integrity. Corruption in the sector includes flouting financial rules in tender and project implementation processes. It is common that influential persons with political links with the help of Engineers and other officials get involved in corruption in major development projects, such as irrigation, river dredging and flood prevention.

Another category of rampant corruption in urban areas involves encroachment onto the lakes and rivers flowing through cities, especially in Dhaka. Illegal occupation of the shoreline in Dhaka’s Gulshan-Banani-Baridhara Lake threatens the lake’s very existence.

Many officials in Rajuk often allegedly collude with land grabbers. This is the main reason for the failure to demarcate, develop and conserve water bodies which is also crucial for Dhaka’s environment, water supply and drainage. The report however takes note of the caretaker government’s anti-corruption drive including demolition of illegal structures encroaching on the lake.

Corruption thwarts global response to climate change and global food shortage

“Climate change requires the world to come up with what is likely to be the most far-reaching and complex global governance framework ever devised. Without addressing the corruption risks, especially as they relate to water, such plans stand on shaky ground”, said Labelle. The report demonstrates corruption’s potential to obstruct effective enforcement of water-sharing pacts and resettlement arrangements, both key to confronting the fallout from climate change.

Irrigated land helps produce 40 per cent of the world’s food, but corruption in irrigation is rampant. Addressing this risk is fundamental to increasing food production and tackling the global food crisis. “Massive new investments in irrigation have been announced worldwide to help counter the food crisis, yet water shortage means food shortage and if corruption in irrigation is not also addressed, these efforts will fail short,” stated Labelle.

For the Philippines, which has allocated close to US$1 billion for irrigation and related agricultural improvements, the report presents case evidence of how corruption has hindered the building and performance of irrigation dams. In India, a country at the centre of the crisis, corruption is estimated to add at least 25 per cent to irrigation contracts and the proceeds help maintain a corrupt system of political handouts and compromised oversight. In the end, investment costs rise, systems are rendered inefficient and small farmers are left especially vulnerable to water shortage.

Drinking water and sanitation: the poor carry the greatest burden

When corruption occurs, the cost of connecting a household to a water network increases by up to 30 per cent, raising the price tag for achieving the Millennium...
Development Goals for water and sanitation by a staggering US$48 billion, according to expert estimates in the report.

Corruption in drinking water and sanitation emerges at every point along the water delivery chain; from policy design and budgeting to building, maintaining and operating water networks. It drains investment from the sector, increases prices and decreases water supplies. One result is that poor households in Jakarta, Lima, Nairobi or Manila spend more on water than residents of New York City, London or Rome.

Industrialised countries are not immune from corruption of water sector. Corruption has plagued the tendering of water contracts in cities like Grenoble, Milan, New Orleans and Atlanta. Likewise, cases of bid-rigging and price-fixing in water infrastructure provision have surfaced in Sweden, while in Chicago water budgets fell victim to misuse for political campaigning.

Risks for the environment and energy security

Corruption in water resources management undermines the sustainability of water supplies, fuels highly unequal water sharing which can incite political conflict and fosters the degradation of vital ecosystems. In China, for example, corruption has weakened the enforcement of environmental regulations, abetting the pollution of aquifers in 90 percent of cities and making over 75 per cent of urban rivers unsuitable for drinking or fishing.

Corruption in hydropower inflates the cost of dams and related projects. It also makes re-settlement more challenging by preying on compensation funds and initiatives meant to aid displaced people. The stakes are high: hydropower accounts for one-sixth of the world’s electricity production and investment volumes are projected to reach US$60 billion annually over the next 20 years.

A time for action: solutions to clean up the water sector

Corrupt conditions in water persist because their greatest impact is exacted on those with the least chance of redress, disproportionately affecting women, the poor and those with no voice at all: future generations and the environment.

Nonetheless, as the Global Corruption Report shows, taking action against corruption in the water sector is both timely and feasible. Key recommendations of the report include:

Establish transparency and participation as guiding principles for all aspects of water governance: From transparent budgeting and participatory policy-making to public mapping of water pollution, public audits of projects and access to know about contract terms and performance reports, transparency and participation will strengthen integrity in water governance, but need to be adopted globally.

Strengthen state’s regulatory oversight: Government and the public sector continue to play the most prominent role in water governance and should establish effective regulatory oversight, whether for the environment, water and sanitation, agriculture or energy. Institutional reform and capacity-building are essential to bring oversight in water up to the standards already achieved in other sectors.

Ensure accountable implementation of water projects: All stakeholders related to water sector have a role to play. Any Contract of this sector should incorporate anti-corruption measures. Governments and contractors can enter into agreements for fair public procurement. Lenders and donors must strengthen anti-bribery provisions in their due diligence requirements.
Men and women have equal contributions in the emergence of a disciplined society from a dark world of jungles. But the womenfolk have not received their due recognition and proper evaluation of their talent and labour has not been made in comparison to men. Just as blacks are continuously oppressed by the whites, the poor by the rich, the weak by the powerful, the lower castes by the higher ones, similarly the women face deprivation in a patriarchal society; they are abused in family, in the society and even by the state. But the struggle for establishing women right has not stopped despite countless harassments, deprivations and mountain-like obstacles. The womenfolk of the world have today raised their head together on the same podium for speaking out about their rights and attaining what they deserved.

If we review the history of women right, we can divide it into three phases: ancient era, medieval era and the modern era. The ancient era was an era of equality. Men and women used to lead lives on the basis of mutual cooperation, empathy and equality of status. They used to divide responsibilities between themselves on the basis of necessity and justice in order to survive in the struggle for life. The medieval period was the starting point for gradual weakening of women’s right. People learnt agriculture and livestock-rearing during the era. This responsibility was particularly taken by the womenfolk. Gradually, these household jobs took the shape of personal services. Women became disconnected from their role in the social production process. Men got relief by imposing the responsibility of household chores on women. But they forgot to evaluate the worth of women as human beings. This discrimination has continued for thousands of years. Basically; the history of class discrimination and exploitation had started centering on women. The episodes of discrimination begin in the life of a women offspring right from her birth. Discriminations are observed in families-societies-states; in economic, social and political spheres. Discriminations abound in all corners of society and civilization.

In the past, this discrimination was massive – on a global scale. Although discrimination has now decreased in the developed world, it still remains acute in the third world. It is sad but true that the history of global progress has not been a history of women’s development. And the reality is that societies and civilizations cannot attain fullness without equal rights for women, who constitute half of the population. We therefore have to change our ‘gender-insensitive’ outlook. We shall have to rid ourselves of the prevailing perceptions and narrowness with regard to women.

The present civilization is determined about removing all kinds of discriminations. But how is that possible when such discriminations exist everywhere against women. Elimination of gender discrimination is essential for social development. However, the womenfolk started speaking in support of themselves long-ago. It was probably Christine de Pisan of Europe who picked up her pen first. In her book titled ‘The Book of the City Ladies’, she wrote in Germany in 1405 that there was no doubt that both men and women were the subjects of God and part of mankind. Women were not a different species, nor a separate group. Consequently there was no logic for excluding them from receiving moral education.

One hundred years after this episode, Mary Wollstonecraft challenged all prevailing beliefs and notions about women in her epoch-making book ‘A Vindication of the Rights of Women’, which demanded education for all women. Treading this path set by Mary, the feminist movement in the West and demands for women’s rights in got momentum in various regions and advanced towards success. Then during the First International Women’s Conference held in Copenhagen in 1910, the pioneer of the movement for labour rights and German socialist leader Clara Zetkin put forward the proposal for an ‘International Women’s Day’. This struggle for establishing women’s rights had a considerable impact on global humanity and the United Nations accorded recognition to 8 March as ‘International Women’s Day’ in 1975. Four World Summits on Women have successively taken place since then, in Mexico, Copenhagen, Nairobi and Beijing, with the cooperation of the United Nations. In the backdrop of a long history of women’s movement, the first ‘National Women Development Policy’ was officially declared in Bangladesh on 8 March 1997, with the objectives of establishing equality of men and women at levels of national life, ensuring security for women and their political, social, administrative and economic empowerment, grooming them as educated and skilled human resources, etc. It was a major milestone in the movement for women rights despite complexities in its implementation.

In the modern era, the womenfolk realised their right to education in the Indian subcontinent through the efforts of Raja Rammohun Roy and Ishwarchandra Bidyasagar. They put an end to the practice of burning widows (Satidaha). Women’s liberation was initiated through the emancipation of widows. The Muslim women got their right to education because of the tireless efforts made by a pioneer in women’s awakening – Begum Rokeya. After that, many courageous Bangalees like Sufia Kamal, Shamsunnahar Mahmud and...
Nurjahan Begum spoke out about women's emancipation. After the independence of Bangladesh, the constitution adopted for materialising the cherished dream of establishing equality in the country clearly speaks about equal rights for men and women.

Article 9 of the constitution says, "The State shall encourage Local Government institutions composed of representatives of the areas concerned and in such institutions special representation shall be given, as far as possible, to peasants, workers and women". Article 10 says, "Steps shall be taken to ensure participation of women in all spheres of national life". Article 28(1) says, "The State shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth". Article 28(2) says, "Women shall have equal rights with men in all spheres of the State and of public life". Article 28(4) says, "Nothing in this article shall prevent the State from making special provision in favour of women or children or for the advancement of any backward section of citizens". Article 29(3) (c) says, "Nothing in this article shall prevent the State from ‘reserving for members of one sex any class of employment or office on the ground that it is considered by its nature to be unsuited to members of the opposite sex’.

Apart from the above mentioned legal rights stipulated in the constitution, many other opportunities presently exist for the womenfolk. The women are deprived of these opportunities only because of lack of education and awareness. Provision for the highest penalty of death sentence has been kept for repression of women under the purview of Prevention of Women and Child Repression Act. Besides, there are numerous women's rights and human rights organizations for rendering free legal assistance to tortured women. Apart from bodies like Progati Sangha, Ain-O-Shalish Kendra, BLAST, many other national and international organizations are working for curbing discrimination and violence against women.

Nobel Prize-winning economist Amartya Sen has placed maximum emphasis on education while dwelling on poverty alleviation in developing countries. The pioneer of women's emancipation in the sub-continent Begum Rokeya had also realized the need for education as the only path to women's liberation. Presently, the advances made in women's education are quite notable. Whereas, the rate of women's education ten years ago was only 30 percent, it now stands about 60 percent. But the real emancipation of women is still far away. The patriarchal values nurtured by society are responsible for that. Not only men, women are also to be blamed for nurturing these values. The patriarchal values always seek to subjugate women and expand men's sphere of influence. No values are nurtured to make women self-reliant and allow them to establish control over their destiny. It is observed in most cases that women tend to remain mentally dependent on men even in higher education. These values need to change. And transformation will come only when women get equal rights in all spheres. That may be in the social, economic or political arena. Women will never achieve a position of prestige as long as discriminations exist.

A full and complete civilization is not possible by ignoring half of the population. There is a story in the Greek mythology. It says: God created the world. Humans, moon, sun, light, darkness – everything was created with perfection. But the world remained submerged in darkness. It could not be illuminated. Finally, God gave smiles to women. The world was illuminated. Come; let us also allow the womenfolk to laugh. The world will definitely be illuminated.

Monjuara Begum, Convener, Gender Sub-committee, CCC-Nalitabari

Anti-Corruption Rally

With the pledge "Won't indulge in corruption, won't heed it, won't accept it", Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) is continuing its programs to raise social resistance against corruption. Firmly standing of ACC against corruption along with the anti-corruption movement of TIB has been accumulated positive expectations among the general masses to establish corruption-free governance in Bangladesh. As a result, thousands of people gathered in anti-corruption programs in response to TIB. The mentioned thing was that ACC and TIB arranged an anti-corruption rally in local level. With the slogan ‘Wake-up people, resist corruption...’ spontaneous participation belonging to various classes and professions alongside representatives of ACC, TIB and Committee of Concerned Citizens (CCC) local Corruption Prevention Committee (CPC) and the representatives of CCC of TIB has been noticeable in the rally. Mymensingh Sadar and District Corruption Prevention Committee (CPC) arranged an anti-corruption rally on 29 April in Mymensingh. The ACC Chairman Lt. General (Retd.) Hasan Mashhud Chowdhury inaugurated the anti-corruption rally from the Circuit House ground. Among others TIB Executive Director Dr. Iftekharuzzaman, CPC Chairman Advocate Anisur Rahman Khan and Prof. Muhammad Mokkaram Hossain Convener of CCC-Mymensingh Sadar delivered their shortened speeches. Beside Moulibazar District CPC and CCC- Sreemangal also arranged anti-corruption rally on 21 June in the same.

Obituary

Prominent member of Committee of Concerned Citizens (CCC), Pirojpur Dr. S h u b i m o l Shamadder expired on 17 June, 2008 at M a g b a z a r ’ s Community Clinic in Dhaka (Innallahae........Rajeun). He was joined in teaching in Pirojpur Govt. College for a long time. Finally, he took his retirement as the Principal of Motbaria Govt. Degree College. He was vociferous against all types of injustice, unfairness and corruption and also contributed his efforts to curbe the corruption. He worked persistently and actively in drawing up of all types of project planning and implementing since the establishment of CCC. Pirojpur on 20 November, 2005. TIB has expressed its deep shock at his demise.
People’s Theatre News

The People’s Theatre is the companion of life struggle of the people. Its objective is to make the people aware about their rights. The dramas are invariably purposeful and educational. They are aimed at awakening the regressive culture on the one hand, and making it lively on the other. It seeks to enrich civilization and culture of life anew through expansion of mass communications. These plays kindle new thinking on life in the minds of the audience through presentation practical problems. The real shape of problems as well as their remedies can be gauged from these projections. The theatre groups formed by TIB are working to fulfil those expectations by highlighting various anomalies prevailing in society as well as their probable solutions. The people’s theatre groups are staging shows in their respective areas for generating mass awakening. They are also receiving feedbacks from the audience. For example, what is their role in the anti-corruption social movement? Responding to this question, many spectators responded – to assist in the anti-corruption movement, make other people aware, help them become conscious, build up resistance, raise voices of protest, wage social movement, keep one’s own family free from corruption, etc. The audience get involved in many ways. The theatre groups are continuing their work with all sincerity throughout the year. A variety of programmes have been implemented by various theatre groups of CCCs. Refreshment workshops have been held in a number of areas. Two-day long workshops were held on 7 and 10 April at Lalmonirhat and Rangpur. The theatre group of Brahmanbaria held a workshop at CCC office on 28-30 May and then staged two shows. Refreshment workshops were held on 7-8 May in Jamalpur, on 30-31 May in Madaripur, on 21-22 May in Kurigram, on 3-4 June in Bagerhat, on 6-7 June in Satkhira and on 3 and 8 June in Khulna. Besides, the theatre groups have continued to stage drama shows regularly.

Anti-Corruption Rally and Awareness of the Common People

I came to know from the January and March issues of TIB Newsletter that the Anti-Corruption Commission and Transparency International Bangladesh have organized anti-corruption rallies all over the country. Side by side with saying ‘No to Corruption’, people are now becoming aware about all kinds of anti-corruption activities. The countrymen think that the Anti-Corruption Commission is discharging its responsibilities quite courageously because of the present changed circumstances. Whatever may be the case, a long-felt hope of the people for a strong Anti-Corruption Commission has now materialised. I congratulate Transparency International Bangladesh as an associate in that fulfilment of our expectation.

Iftekhar Alam, Kazir Deuri, Chittagong

Committees of Concerned Citizens and Youths in the Anti-Corruption Movement

It does not need repetition that corruption is a dangerous disease. Transparency International Bangladesh has been working resolutely to bring down that corruption within tolerable limits. The organization has faced the ire of various governments at different times. But it is continuing its work with neutrality. I came to know from the January and March issues of TIB Newsletter ‘WAVES’ that the conscious citizens of the country and a reservoir of infinite strength – the youth community have involved themselves with this anti-corruption social movement of TIB. I extend my sincere felicitations to TIB. I have faith that TIB would be able to take the country to a respectable position by combining the thoughts and strengths of our two generations in the anti-corruption movement.

Rehana Haque, Dhanmondi, Dhaka

Post Box

Executive Editor : Mohammed Imam Uddin

Waves : TIB Newsletter
Progress Tower (5th floor), House-1, Road-23, Gulshan-1, Dhaka-1212, Bangladesh. Phone: 9887884, 8826036, Fax – (880-2) 9884811
E-mail: advocacy@ti-bangladesh.org, Website: www.ti-bangladesh.org