The police action at Shamsunnahar Hall of the University of Dhaka and the subsequent events, including the indefinite closure of the educational institution, are very distressing for the nation. The Judicial Inquiry Commission primarily held police responsible for the midnight raid at the women’s hall of residence. The Commission also identified other factors for such an event: teachers’ involvement in national politics, feuds ensuing out of it and engagement of students in ‘political activities’.

Involvement in politics by teachers and students is only detrimental to academic atmosphere. It also adversely affects the nation in an indirect way. Public universities have repeatedly been failing to introduce academic calendars because of national politics on the campus. This failure, in a way, causes students to stay at universities for a longer period than they are required to. Various sorts of elections among the teachers are also responsible for encouraging unfair practice. The fear of losing votes deters punishment whilst killing on the campus; gun battles and other similar activities grab newspaper headlines. The academic performance becomes the real victim. The situation is unlikely to change if politics on the campus continues in the current fashion. The University Grants Commission in its annual report, almost every year, is reporting declining standards in teaching. Things will go from bad to worse if teachers and students do not carry out their specific duties.

The Commission’s recommendation on instituting an impartial commission for the appointment of the vice-chancellor is very befitting. Politics has been the prime consideration in the appointment of vice-chancellors since the 1990s. The political changeover should not bring about a change in the top administration of the universities. A teacher who takes over a university, being favoured by the government for his political activities, cannot rise above the party interests. He is most likely to place party interests above things like the betterment of the university, spirit of the teachers, guardianship of the students, among other things. We think that the vice-chancellor should be such a person who has a deep understanding of the dignity of the position, with the ability to remain true to the interests of the university and has strict adherence to the principle of good governance. The 1973 University Ordinance, although laid out to ensure the autonomy of the institution, has now been failing to meet its ends. Amendments should be made to the ordinance in light of practical experience. In order to turn the university into a real academic institution, the people behind it should have a deep conviction to uphold the highest of standards and the government should support such a conviction. The governments have continuously spoke against teachers’ involvement in politics; but, on the other hand, it bestows ‘prizes’ when it comes to the appointments on deputation. This encourages teachers to be involved in politics. It is not possible to turn it into an institution of learning and research without freeing it from politics presently indulged by both, teachers and students. The nation wants to see the universities as centres of highest learning in science and humanities, which can help building a humane society.

Both government and opposition should co-operate to make parliament more effective

TIB expressed its opinion that if the clout of the parliament is to be cohered, presence of the opposition in the parliament is a priority. It holds that the Speaker or the Deputy Speaker should be selected from the opposition, and all Members of Parliament—‘government’ and ‘opposition’ alike—should have confidence in the Speaker. The Speaker essentially needs to be neutral. There should also be new regulations to ensure quorum, and presence of the cabinet ministers in the ‘Parliament’ sessions. Laws for new members and other necessary regulations relating to national issues are needed too. Prior to the assessment of a bill there should be an open discussion on it, and civil society should be involved in this process. In order to reflect people’s opinion, all information must be accessed by the mass. Finally, for parliamentary sessions should be utilised properly.
Chairman, TIB Board of Trustees, Professor Khan Sarwar Murshid told the press conference that the public are increasingly losing their respect on both Parliament and the Parliamentarians. Most of the Parliamentarians forget about their election pledges once they go to power. It is extremely disappointing if their honesty is questioned even before they become Members of Parliament. For the sake of democracy one has to be honest, he added.

Professor Muzaffer Ahmad, a member of the TIB Board of Trustees, said there is no alternative but to make the parliament productive for the sake of democracy and people. The parliament will never be effective unless both the government and the opposition cooperate with each other. The Executive Director of TIB Manzoor Hasan, researcher on parliamentary issues, Abdul Alim, and other TIB officials were also present at the conference.

The ParliamentWatch report of TIB reveals that in the first three sessions the total time spent on law making was only 14 hours 1 minute 26 seconds. The quorum crisis surpassed all previous records. The total working days of the three sessions were 80. Duration of the sessions added up to 258 hours 43 minutes and 43 seconds.

In the first session of the 8th Parliament, 5 bills were passed spending on average 24 minutes on each bill. Altogether, only 2 hours were spent in the first session in passing all the bills. The second session passed 12 bills in 7 hours 38 minutes and 14 seconds, which means, it took each bill only 38.2 minutes on average to be passed. On the other hand, in the third session, 4 hours 23 minutes and 12 seconds were taken to pass 7 bills, thus spending 37.6 minutes on each bill on an average.

It was observed that in all three sessions speakers repeatedly deliberated upon irrelevant issues that included words of 658 praise for their leaders for as many as times, criticism of the opposition 505 times and reference to out of context matters a 591 times.

Quorum crisis was chronical problem in first three sessions of the 8th Parliament. Previously, the country’s Parliament had had the record for starting the session 45 minutes late. This was broken in the first sessions of the 8th Parliament by starting 1 hour five minutes late. Out of 19 working days of the 1st session, only on one day the House could sit on the scheduled time. For the remaining 18 days, the House started 34 minutes late, on an average. The maximum delay recorded was 1 hour 5 minutes and the minimum 20 minutes. The last days, of each sessions started even later than usual.

TIB observed the first three sessions of the 8th Parliament and made a thorough study to address the crucial role of Parliament in promoting good governance and accountability. It has disseminated this report to the national media. A number of national papers have published editorials on the report. The Daily Prothom Alo conducted a public opinion poll through their official website in this regard. They estimated the scale of gradual diminution of people’s faith in both Parliament and the Parliamentarians. The respondents were required either to vote ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to the statement. Out of 1014 participants, 94.69 per cent voted in favour of the statement, while 5.33% against.

It should be mentioned here that the first session of the 8th Parliament started on October 28th and ended on December 2nd last year. The second session started on 31st January 2002 and ended on 10th April 2002. The third, which was the budget session, was held from 4th June to 15th July. However, the budget session had to be adjourned for 18 days for various reasons and ended on 15th July.
“Political elites and their cronies continue to take kickbacks at every opportunity”.

Dr. Peter Eigen declared during the announcement of the CPI 2002

Even though the politicians speak against corruption in different seminars and symposia, they themselves are getting involved in corruption. They are also indirectly causing poverty to the whole nation and hindering sustainable development of the country. TI Chairman Dr Peter Eigen expressed this while launching the Corruption Perceptions Index in Berlin on 28 August 2002.

The poorest countries of the world are becoming the most corrupt, Dr Eigen said. He also mentioned that the developed countries that are investing in the developing countries are also involved in malpractices and corruptions in many ways. The TI report has been repeatedly saying this but with no result.

Bangladesh was placed at the bottom of the list of the Corruption Perceptions Index 2002 of Transparency International, out of a total of 102 countries. TIB held a news conference on this on the 28 August 2002. Professor Khan Sarwar Murshid, Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Professor Muzaffer Ahmad, member of the Board of Trustees and Executive Director Manzoor Hasan and others were present at the Index launching ceremony.

Professor Murshid said that the report has been prepared on the data collected on the existing internal political and administrative scenarios, and thus one should not generally judge the entire population using that as a basis. Even though the developing countries are seen as the most corrupt, the developed countries also contribute a lot towards corrupting them. It is true that the rich countries do not have monopoly on ethics. In the OECD convention of the rich countries have vowed not to get involved in the practices of bribery, yet it still continues.

The salient features of the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI)

According to the CPI 2002 Finland is the least corrupt country, which is followed by Denmark, New Zealand, Iceland and Singapore. On the other hand, Bangladesh has topped the list as the most corrupt country. Nigeria, Uganda, Indonesia, and Kenya closely follow Bangladesh. Bangladesh’s neighbour India is placed at the 71st position, Pakistan is in the 77th position. The least corrupt country in this region is Sri Lanka, which has been assigned the 52nd position. The UK and USA are 10 and 16 respectively. Chile is the least corrupt among the developing countries, which stands 17th in the list. Other than Chile the rest 23 countries are all developed countries. On the contrary, the most corrupt 25 countries belong to developing countries.

This year the Index was prepared from 15 reports from 9 independent sources. Last year, it was prepared from 14 reports from 7 independent research organisations. In 2002, Bangladesh has secured the last position among 102 countries and scored 1.2. Last year, also, Bangladesh was the last on the Index out of 91 countries and it scored 0.4 from 3 reports and had a high-low range of 2.9. Last year the highest and lowest levels were -1.7 and 3.8. This year they have used 5 base line reports from 4 different organisations which were: Global Competitiveness Report 2002, Global Opportunity Competitiveness Report 2001, World Business Environment Survey 2001, Economic Intelligence Unit 2002 and Columbia University 2001. The countries, which were included in last year’s Index, were included in this year’s index too.

In addition, 11 more countries were included, which are: Albania, Belarus, Angola, Ethiopia, Georgia, Haiti, Jamaica, Madagascar, Morocco, Paraguay, and Sri Lanka.

TI has been publishing this Index since 1995. None of the chapters of Transparency International is involved in the actual preparation of the reports in any way. What TI does is to construct the Index from the reports of some independent research organizations, and a particular country can only be included if there are at least 3 independent researches on it. This year’s Index was prepared by a technical committee under the supervision of Dr Johann Graf Lambsdorff of Gottingen University, Germany.

After the publication of the Index all daily newspapers in Bangladesh carried editorials and special features on the findings. The Daily Prothom Alo also conducted an on-line survey in their website on the following statement, “The former Finance Minister Shah AMS Kibria then said that the report was a fabrication and misleading, and this time he said ‘It’s not surprising’; why do you think he said that? Is it because of the change of government?” The result showed, out of 988 participants 89.88 per cent said “Yes” while 10.12 per cent said “No”.

Country

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A part of Corruption Perceptions Index 2002
Where Bribery is an open secret

The office of the BRTA, Chittagong has become a seat of crime and corruption. Here bribery is an open secret. Nothing is done here without money. Application for automobile licenses, registrations, fitness tests, route permits are deferred for months for extracting money. It is hard to get these things done without bribing the officials.

Source: The Daily Jugantor, 4th August, 2002

Bribery in primary education office

Files in Sayeedpur primary education office do not move sans bribe. It has been complained that one has to pay 20 to 30 thousand taka in order to get one’s LGR pension and gratuity. Reports are there that some teachers have spent even half their pension money in order to recoup their dues.

Source: The Daily Orthoniti, 10th July, 2002

Taka 20 lakh monthly income!

The police earn about taka 20 lakh from about 35 fake liquor factories, 16 illegal oil shops and 118 other fake factories of different types in Keraniganj. One of the sub-inspectors and 12 linemen collect this amount from the factory owners and divide it among the officials including some high-ups. There are about 118 fake factories for producing/manufacturing different items in Keraniganj. The police are paid on a monthly basis for running such fake factories and they are the ones who issue forged licenses for them.

Source: The Daily Prothom Alo, 16th July 2002

TIB ACTIVITIES

TI B officials meet hospital authorities

In order to improve standard of healthcare and overall management the CCC representatives had meetings with the authorities of different hospitals in greater Mymensingh recently. A survey on the quality of health service was conducted at the thana level, by the six Committees of Concerned Citizens (CCC) with TIB’s assistance. The meetings were held to exchange opinions with the hospital authorities before publishing the report.

Muktagacha

Muktagacha Committee of Concerned Citizens had a meeting on 29 July 2002. The convener of CCC Advocate Shamsul Haque, members, A K Mahbubur Rahman and Selima Begum (Baby) were present at the meeting. CCC had pointed out many irregularities in the hospital management and made subsequent recommendations for reform. The authority assured the CCC that measures would be taken and improve the service. A number of doctors including Dr H. A. Mahmud-dunessa were present on the occasion.

Kishoreganj

To improve the standard of healthcare and overall management the CCC representatives held a meeting with the management of Kishoreganj sadar Hospital. In the meeting on 8 August 2002, they referred to a number of irregularities committed at the hospital. The findings of the report card survey also confirmed these allegations. TIB exchanged opinions with the hospital authorities before publishing it, which the authorities appreciated. But they also identified a few limitations of the report. Civil surgeon of the hospital, doctors, nurses, office staff and Khorsed Uddin Bhuiya convenor, CCC, members, Deen Mohammad, Shamsun Nahar Huda from CCC were present.

Mymensingh

A meeting of civil surgeons of Mymensingh Medical College Hospital in Mymensingh and Muktagacha Health Complex with the CCC representatives was held on 21 August 2002 with a view to improving the standard of healthcare and overall management of the hospitals. Maltreatment of the patients, scarcity of medicine, negligence of nurses and doctors towards the patients, unclean wards, beds and toilets, scarcity of pure drinking water and food, rampant bribery in order to get treatment...
Bribery rewarded with promotion

An official accused of corruption with positive evidences has been promoted to the next higher post. The right reward for corruption, perhaps! This unique example can only be found in Bangladesh. This official in BCP’s sister concern Padma Oil got the promotion even after corruption cases were made public.

The name of this corrupt official is Abul Khair. No sooner had the complaint been filed against him with the regional office, he got promoted. He was promoted to the post of Operation Manager from that of Engineering and Planning Manager, which is a higher and more responsible position.

Source: The Daily Manobjomin, 18th August, 2002

Tk 31 crore tax evaded

An owner of a garments factory has allegedly dodged taka 31 crore tax with the help of 3 customs officials. This factory owner misused the bond facility and in the name of export, he sold out the materials in the open market. As much as 30 crore 69 lakh and 53 thousand taka tax has been evaded.

Source: The Daily Jugantor, 6th Sep 2002

Smuggling of Bangladesh currency

Smuggling networks are channelling huge amount of Bangladesh currency across the border through fake accounts. These networks work in the cities as well as in district towns and deposit about taka 5 to 7 crore in different bank accounts that is later sent abroad by means of hundis. This was revealed in an investigation run by Bangladesh Bank.

Source: The Daily Jugantor, 7th Sep, 2002

**TIB newsletter**

**OF NEWSPAPERS**

highlighted the discussion. The Civil Surgeon Dr. Mohammed Akbar Ali welcomed the report. He accepted the suggestions to fix a notice board at the entrance, post a list of names of the doctors working there, a suggestion box, and hanging of a chart of the medicines and services provided by the complex. An immediate action would be taken to wipe out the existing anomalies, he added. He asked for everyone’s cooperation for this to be undertaken. Advocate Anisur Rahman Khan of CCC Mymensingh, Muktagacha CCC convenor Advocate Shamsul Haque were present at the discussion.

**Doctors too have to be bribed for treatment**

**TIB report on Madhupur Health Complex**

Twenty-six percent of the patients who come to Madhupur Health Complex pay the doctors up to Tk. 29 per person to get their treatment. This was revealed in a joint report compiled by the CCC, Modhupur and TIB. The report was formally released on the 26 August 2002 through a press release at the Tangail Press Club. The Convener of the Committee of Concerned Citizens Professor Golam Samdani, members, Dr Mir Farhadul Alam Moni and Sri Coomar Guha Neogi along with TIB representative Ekram Hossain were present at the conference.

A survey carried out on Madhupur Health Complex shows that 77% of patients complained to have paid certain amount of money to the doctors at the Complex because they asked for it.

The survey also revealed that 54% of the patients who came for treatment at the outdoor got only half the medicines prescribed by the doctors from the hospital, 28% got all the medicines and 16% no medicine at all. On the other hand, 77% of the in-door patients said they got half the medicines prescribed, and 18% said they didn’t get any medicine at all. Only 1% said they got all the prescribed medicines. 53% of the patients were not happy at all with the cleanliness of the toilets. 7% were very unhappy, 13% said they were quite unhappy. This survey shows only 16% of the patients were happy with the food they were given.

It should be mentioned that the survey was conducted only in the CCC areas. This was done in order to find out the standard of health care in each of these thanas.

**Members meeting**

Members meeting of Transparency International Bangladesh was held on 22 August 2002, at the auditorium of Dhanmondi Women’s Voluntary Association. The meeting started with a welcome note from TIB’s Executive Director Manzoor Hasan which included a power-point presentation on TIB activities. It was followed by group discussions. Attending members were split into different groups to discuss their possible future involvement with TIB. The groups were: Research, Programme and Publication. These groups later gave their opinions and recommendations regarding the modalities of member-
involvement in different areas of TIB activities. The meeting was concluded through a presentation of a drama called, *Rukhe Dandao* performed by the people’s theatre group of Nalitabari.

**Seminar on anti-corruption in Kishoreganj**

The Committee of Concerned Citizens of Kishoreganj, TIB, arranged a seminar on *Flaw in basic education: its remedy* at the local Press Club Mukt Mancho. Professor Shafi Ahmed of Jahangirnagar University read out the key note paper.

The main speaker, Professor Zatin Sarker said, corruption has spread not only in education sector but also in all sectors. Corruption is not a new phenomenon; it had started from the day society started splitting up. Unfortunately mostly educated people are involved in corruption. There are still some people in the administration and in political arena who possess the will to help the people. But it is almost impossible for them to penetrate through the fortified walls of corruption and thus we have to wait for a mass movement. District Commissioner Md. Mahfuzur Rahman, was present as the special guest. The other participants in the discussion were former MP and member of Committee of Concerned Citizens Shafiqul Islam, and TIB representative Ekram Hossain.

The CCC Convenor Khurshed Uddin Bhuiya presided over the meeting while Saiful Haque Molla Dulu, a member of CCC conducted it. After the discussion prizes were given out to the winners of the debate competition.

**Production-based workshop**

The Committee of Concerned Citizens of Nalitabari has formed a people’s theatre group in order to generate awareness about and against corruption, at the grass-roots level. The theater group of Nalitabari produced its first production ‘Rukhe Dandao’ during the 10-day workshop from 9-18 August 2002. The workshop also carried out trainings on theatre games, speeches, voice projection, meditation, choreography, improvisation, character building and acting. About 25 young participants of the locale attended the workshop.

Executive Director of TIB Manzoor Hasan inaugurated the workshop. Among others Program Officer Ekram Hossain, Assistant Program Officer Samapika Halder, Convenor, CCC Nalitabari, M A Hakam Hira, Convenor, of peoples’ theatre sub-committee, Muhfuzur Rahman, and member, Sayedul were also present. The play *Rukhe Dandao* was staged on the Shahid Muktijoddha Mancho on 19 August 2002. About 1,000 local people along with the Chairman of Nalitabari Pouroshavna enjoyed the performance.

It should be mentioned here that the chief Instructor of the workshop and Scriptwriter as well as Director of the play was Jewel Kabir Akash. TIB’s peoples’ theatre Coordinator Kamal Hossain Mintu assisted in the overall management.

**Meetings with local education officials**

*Jamalpur Sadar*  
**The local CCC officials had a meeting on 26 August 2002 with the local education authorities. The Report Card survey carried out by TIB detected irregularities in the Primary Education. The topic of the discussion was how to eradicate these anomalies. CCC suggested introduction of stipends, reduction of exam fees, appointment of more teachers and observance of parents’ day to ensure their involvement in the children’s education. TIB also recommended to make sure that the higher officials visit the school regularly, meetings of the managing committee are regularly held and teachers are made accountable for implementing different rules and regulations. The officers accepted the suggestions given by TIB and expressed their good will to implement them.**

**Nalitabari**  
A Report Card titled “Corruption in Primary Education” was presented at a meeting of Nalitabari CCC with the local teachers’ association. Naitabari CCC and TIB recommended that the exam fees (for class 3/4/5) should be reduced to taka 15 from taka 20, mass cheating at the exam has to be checked, students should not give any subscription, education office should be free from bribe taking practices, and the managing committee should be more pro-active. They also suggested that the government’s recent programme for distribution of money among the students should be transparent. The teachers’ association spoke highly of TIB activities and also informed that if the students paid their dues and the expense were reduced, only then it would be possible to cut down the exam fees. They expressed their willingness to consider other suggestions too. Convenor and 3 other members including the Secretary of CCC and TIB Programme Officer were present at the meeting. Among others, the Chairman of the Union Parishad Mohammed Safar Uddin, Editor, Din Mohammed and 9 participants from the committee attended the meeting.

**Mymensingh**  
A meeting was held between the Additional District Commissioner (ADC) Mohammed Abu Bakar Siddique Molla and CCC Mymensingh on 25 August.
2002. The ADC lauded TIB programmes for eradicating corruption and welcomed the suggestions put forward by TIB in collaboration with CCC for preventing corruption in primary education. He said that problems of primary education are very simple and those can be solved easily with a little effort. CCC had an official meeting with the Additional District Commissioner on 22 August 2002. He answered the questions asked by the CCC officers with extreme patience and agreed to have more meetings in future.

Muktagacha
A meeting of the Teachers’ association with the Upazila Nirbahi Officer Mohammed Faruque Alam was held on 19 August 2002. The meeting was organised to determine ways and means to prevent corruption at the primary education level. Member Secretary of Education Committee Mr. Rafiqul Islam who is also the Upazila Education Officer, all education officers, members of CCC Ekhlasur Rahman Jewel, Paritosh Kar, Rumi Das and TIB field Assistant Koruna Kishore Chakrabarti were present. Both Upazila Nirbahi Officer and the education officer praised the effort as the Report Card on corruption at the primary education level was read out. They both agreed to the suggestions made by TIB in order to eradicate corruption from education sector. Upazila Nirbahi Officer appreciated CCC’s efforts in preventing corruption and hoped that everyone worked together as dutiful citizens to prevent corruption then the task would not be very hard to accomplish.

Formation of volunteer groups
All the CCCs have formed volunteer groups with a view to making the present-day youths stronger, patriotic, and preventing themselves from getting deranged and mostly to be able to speak against wrongdoing in their own locality. Each CCC celebrates one day in each month as a volunteers day. On the day, TIB imparts lessons on different subjects to the volunteers. The subjects include Bangla Language, Literature, Politics, Geography, Democracy and European History, Good Governance, Corruption and different national and international topics along with ethics and principles of TIB. The volunteer group also celebrates different national and international days. They also help the CCC to carry out different programmes to eradicate corruption.

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Essay and debate competitions against corruption
For launching a new movement against corruption, TIB and Committees of Concerned Citizens jointly launched essay and debate competitions. The motion of the competition was Let argument enlighten morality. The topics of discussion under the theme were democracy, transparency, accountability, good governance, independent anti-corruption commission, education system, cheating in public examination, government, political parties and the role of citizens etc. The Madhupur CCC has completed the first round of the month-long debate competition on 31 July, 2002 which was participated by five groups from different schools and colleges. The winners at the school and madrasa levels, were Rani Bhabani Pilot High School and Modhupur Pilot High School. At the college level, the winner was Modhupur Degree College. The second round of competition, which was participated by two groups, was held in Dhanbari on 14 August 2002. The winner was Dhanbari Asia Hasan Ali Mohila College. CCC Nalitabari organised a weeklong debate competition on 25 August. A total of 22 groups with 66 competitors from 10 different schools, colleges and madrasas from a number of Upazilas took part in it. Every evening the debate took place at Taraganj Pilot School. Champions in two groups at the college level were Nazmul Smriti College and Taraganj Senior Madrasa and at school level winners were Alhaj Yakub Ali K.G. School and Taraganj Pilot Girls’ School. In the essay competition 66 participants from 12 schools, colleges and madrasas competed. On 5 September another month-long debate competition (first round) started in Muktagacha CCC in which two groups from the college level took part. The winner was Muktagacha College. The remaining phases of the competition were held in same month.

The debate competition in Mymensingh started on 11 September. A number of groups from different schools and colleges and a few universities took part in this competition. CCC Kishoreganj conducted the competition in February and a lot of enthusiasm was noticed among the students and parents. This can be termed as a new campaign against corruption designed by TIB that had success at all levels in different CCC areas. Hundreds of people from different levels took immense interest in the competitions. Teachers from different colleges, CCC members and TIB officials also spoke on the occasion.

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The CCCs of Mymensingh, Muktagacha and Kishoreganj observes...
the last Wednesday, second and fourth Thursday of every month as voluntary service day. These CCCs have 25, 25 and 15 volunteers respectively.

Exceptional initiative of Nalitabari volunteers

The volunteers in Nalitabari have been observing 2 working days as voluntary service day. Each day is divided into three parts: Quiz competition (news items published in the newspaper), readings from essays of one’s own choice and a cultural show. Besides, every month, a debate is organised on topics related to corruption, good governance and democracy. The CCC officials in rotation attend all these programs. Volunteers also arrange debates, rallies, discussion meetings and publish posters on national and international events. Last July, volunteers actively involved themselves in relief works for flood-affected people and also for raising awareness among them. In such a working meeting organised by the Community Development Library (CDL) on 31st July the organizers pointed out the purpose, principles and programmes of TIB. About more than 40 volunteers participated in different programmes carried out by CCC and this has created a new dimension of thought among the local residents. CCC Nalitabari considers this a unique approach in building their character and also hope that it would play a vital role in reshaping the society.

Networking meeting at Nalitabari CCC

On 31 August 2002, Nalitabari CCC arranged a meeting in which local NGOs, government officials and responsible citizens participated. The CCC urged everyone to work concertedy to prevent corruption.

Meetings for eliminating irregularities at the railway stations

Black marketing of tickets, absence of waiting rooms, untidy and dirty atmosphere of the station premises, anomalies in the reservation of seats, offices is really scary for the people. Both their life and property are not safe at all. They are disappointed to notice how politics and crime go hand in hand. Thus patronised by the politicians toll collection and tender hijacking have become regular practices. But unfortunately no one is admitting to be responsible for this dismaying situation. We all know that accountability needs to be in place for good governance. Everyone including government officials and public representatives has to be made accountable, and only then a good governance would be ensured.

Condolence Meeting

A condolence meeting was held in the memory of the late Debashish Achariya in the Community library auditorium of Muktagacha on August 9, 2002. The meeting was chaired by the convenor of CCC, Advocate Shamsul Haque. Among others TIB Executive Director Manzoor Hasan, members of the CCC and local elites were present. Debashish Acharya was the last decedent of the Achariya family who were the landlords of Muktagacha. He died of heart attack on 23 July 2002 in his own house.

Free flow of information

Secrecy was a practice of the past and it was done in the name of national security. But at present it is believed that access to all kinds of information is a democratic right of the people in a welfare state. Regrettably in Bangladesh, the law to keep the information secret is still in force. But the people have the right to know all about the government policies. In order to ensure transparency and accountability, we must get rid of this law (the Officials Secrets Act). The TIB newsletter of June 2002 containing this news was really timely. TIB must be thanked for this initiative.

Nadira-binte-Afsan
Kajir Deuri, Chittagong

Irregularities at the land registration office

Irregularities and corruption have reached their peak at the land registration office in the country. A large number of people visit these offices everyday. But a section of officials cause a lot of unnecessary sufferings for them. For every mutation case the employees demand 5,000 taka as bribe. They compel us to pay that money by making things complicated for us. Files don’t move for those who cannot pay bribes.

Abul Baset Majumdar
Alfadanga, Faridpur

Accountability for good governance

Inhuman and corrupt nature of the country’s government offices is really scary for the people. Both their life and property are not safe at all. They are disappointed to notice how politics and crime go hand in hand. Thus patronised by the politicians toll collection and tender hijacking have become regular practices. But unfortunately no one is admitting to be responsible for this dismaying situation. We all know that accountability needs to be in place for good governance. Everyone including government officials and public representatives has to be made accountable, and only then good governance would be ensured.

Rifat
Hajaribagh, Dhaka

Effective Parliament

ln a democratic country Parliament is the symbol of people's representation. Therefore, the Parliament should work for the nation and with the help of the nation. In our country, instead of working together, both the government and opposition are always at loggerheads. Irrelevant matters get more priority than social matters that affect the people most. Even Speaker’s neutrality is questioned. Quorum crisis has become a common phenomenon and regular presence of the ministers in the JS is appalling. The standing committees have also not been formed even after one year. The parliament, in fact, shows a bleak chance of functioning well. Initiatives have to be taken to reflect people's participation in parliamentary affairs and it is urgent that political will of the befitting nature is projected in the house to associate people in its functioning.

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