

Metropolitan

Dhaka Day by Day

Power with Glory and Responsibility

by Rahat Fahmida

'Power without responsibility — the prerogative of the harlot throughout the ages,' has been a common and most ignorant comment about journalists over the years, throughout the world. Journalism is about people. It is produced for the people. And therefore the journalist has immense power and duty, too. It is the duty to exercise his power with restraint and responsibility. It is the duty to check the facts, and to assess, to as much depth as possible, the context in which those facts exist.

One journalist that fits into this picture of power and responsibility, is Atiqul Alam. He is at present the bureau chief of Reuters, Dhaka, and has recently won the highest Commonwealth award for journalism — 'Astor 1990.'

He is the first journalist in South Asia to receive this high international award. Commonwealth Press Union has taken into account Mr. Alam's excellence in international journalism, especially his contribution to this profession in the face of great difficulty and crisis.

In an interview with The Daily Star, he spoke on quite a few problems now besetting the profession in Bangladesh. When asked, 'what are the drawbacks of reporting in our country and how can they be removed?' he emphatically said, 'The main drawback in reporting in our country is that, reporters are by and large too much politicised. This is unfortunate. In this way the reporters lose objectivity and neutrality. And when a reporter loses this, he/she loses everything. The reporter becomes a laughing stock.'

The young journalists in our country have to look to the future. They should not look back, and should get on with the main stream of post-Bangladesh journalism.

'Objectivity is a vague term. A political reporter might stress that everything he is writing is objective. One of the senior editors of Reuters once said what he meant by objectivity. 'In our profession if you see you are praised by one group and criticised by another then you are not objective. If you find you are criticised by both groups, and you walk through a cross fire, then you are objective.' Mr Alam considers this to be an extreme illustration of objectivity. He then continued to say, 'Everything here is politically charged. It is not easy in our country to be objective. Hence the young journalists

should strive to be more objective. In the process people will not only accept them, but respect them too. Nevertheless, it may be that the newspaper management or their owners, who might object to objectivity and have all kinds of outlandish views on objectivity.'

When Atiqul Alam set up the Reuters bureau in Dhaka, in 1982, this was the first international news bureau in Bangladesh. With the experience of that how did he feel about the possibility of a Third World news agency.

'Why has the west never looked into this seriously? Don't they have enough confidence on the Third World media?' Alam said, 'To a certain extent it is true that the Western world do not have much confidence in the press profile and prospect of the Third World. This is mainly because most Third World countries, are run by dictators. These strong men want press to be a propaganda machine, rather than a vehicle of objective information. Even the Islamic News Agency, which is there for quite some time now, has not been able to get off the ground.'

Since Atiqul Alam is working for Reuters for the last nine years, his stories are mostly circulated abroad. Which of his stories did he himself consider as the best? He happily said, 'There are two which I remember lovingly. One was about Chittagong Hill Tracts — Where Does Bangladesh Stand vis-a-vis the Shantibahini, which I wrote in January 1990. And the other was just recently, on the day former President Ershad was arrested. The story was on his nine-year rule. Both these stories got maximum circulation and was printed in about 25-26 top newspapers around the world.'

Atiqul Alam, proud of his 34 years in journalism, went down the memory lane to recollect that he started in this profession as a sports reporter of Morning News and was introduced to serious journalism, by the editor of The Daily Star, S. M. Ali, who was then an assistant editor of the Pakistan Times by offering him a promising job in that newspaper.

Alam will leave for London in the middle of this month to receive the award personally from Commonwealth Press Union at a formal ceremony.



Atiqul Alam at work at the Reuters Bureau

Lok Sabha Speaker greets A. R. Biswas

The Speaker of Lok Sabha, Rabi Ray has felicitated Abdur Rahman Biswas on his being elected as the Speaker of the Jatiya Sangsad, reports BSS.

In a message of felicitation, Ray said, 'With your outstanding ability and vast experience, I am sure you will achieve all success in your task ahead.'

In a separate message of felicitation, the Lok Sabha Speaker greeted Sheikh Razak Ali on his election as the Deputy Speaker of Jatiya Sangsad.

Chairman of Supreme Soviet of USSR

UNB adds: Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR), A. I. Loukianov in message Wednesday felicitated Speaker of the Jatiya Sangsad Abdur Rahman Biswas on his election as the Speaker of the Parliament.

In the congratulatory message, the Soviet leader said, 'It is hoped that the bilateral inter-parliamentary ties will be revived and further developed in the interest of our two countries, for the good of peace and international cooperation', said a press release.

Report on Haripur petroleum accord today

Public Enquiry Commission on Haripur Petroleum Agreement will publish its final investigation report today (Thursday), reports UNB.

The disclosure of its findings will be given at a function at 3 pm at the Supreme Court Bar Association Building in Dhaka said a press release Wednesday.

Report of the Commission is based on one and half years of inquiry into allegations of an unfair deal with a 'created' foreign company, Scimitar, for exploration of Haripur oil field.

Earlier, the Commission published its preliminary report on March 29, 1990.

The then government, having failed to deny the facts and allegations made in the preliminary report, had tried to mislead the people through 'false and fabricated' statements by abusing the national media, the release said.

Grounds of detention of 115 detainees reviewed

The Advisory Board in its meetings held recently with Justice Mohammed Mozammel Haque in the chair reviewed the grounds of the detention of 115 detainees interned under the Special Power Act 74, and heard the interned persons individually, an official handout said in Dhaka Wednesday, reports BSS.

The board recommended to the government for immediate release of 99 out of 115 detainees, the handout said.

The board has been constituted under the Sub-section (2) and (3) of Section 9 of the Special Powers Act 1974.

Nepalese envoy calls on Anwar

Nepalese Ambassador to Bangladesh MP Lohani called on Minister for Inland Water Transport M K Anwar at his office Wednesday, reports UNB.

Training course on pronunciation concludes

The fortnight-long cultural training course on recitation, vocal and pronunciation practice concluded at the Shilpakala Academy on Wednesday, reports UNB.

The course, organised by the Academy, was participated by 20 artists.

Kamal Lohani, Director General of the Academy attended the concluding function as chief guest and distributed certificates among the participants.

Speaker on the occasion he said 'there is still vacuum in many aspects of our culture'. He said development and expansion of culture could not proceed further as the changes in political and social life repeatedly clash with tradition.

In this regard he emphasised the importance of planned training in creative media.

SM Mohsin, Drama Director, Biplob Bala Training Course Director and trainee Mofjur Rahman addressed the function.

Obituary

Dr. Fakhru Amin Khan (Jamal) died of liver ailment in Philadelphia, USA on Monday. He was 48.

His body will be brought in Dhaka today (Thursday) by British Airways. Family sources said, reports BSS.

His namaz-e-janaza will be held on Friday after Juma prayer at Baitul Mokarram National Mosque.

Later he will be buried at the Banani graveyard.

Dr. Khan, fourth son of late Alhaj Abdul Wahab Khan, a former Speaker of the then Pakistan National Assembly hailed from Barisal.

His Qul Khwani will be held on Saturday after Asr prayer at Mahakhal New Doha House, No 163, Block-A, Eastern Road Lane-3, Dhaka.

Thursday

- 5.00 Opening and recitation from Al-Quran
5.15 Recitation from Geeta
5.20 News in Bangali
5.30 Khelar Jagat : Sports Programme
5.55 Mabe Ramzan
6.30 Sports Programme
8.00 News in Bangali
8.40 Weekly drama
10.00 News in English
10.20 Parliamentary Roundup
10.30 Drama Serial
11.15 Khabar/ The News
11.30 Closing

Defaulters' names to be made public

Industrialists repay Tk 9,000 cr loan so far

Industries Minister Shamsul Islam Khan on Wednesday said the government would soon investigate causes behind accumulation of outstanding industrial loans and reveal the findings to public, reports UNB.

The BNP government is extremely concerned over non-realisation of huge bank loans and wants an early solution of the crisis, he said speaking at a reception hosted to him by Bangladesh Chamber of Industries (BCI) at a local hotel on Wednesday evening.

He sought cooperation from the business community in the planned government drive against the bulky defaulters.

The Minister was reciprocating some industrialists who blasted indiscriminate condemnation of entrepreneurs by the administration and other quarters for default in payback to banks.

The industrialists, while welcoming the new minister, himself an industrialist and member of BCI, accused the administration of degrading the entrepreneurial community by revealing partial truth about the bank loan issue.

They pointed out that industrialists had so far repayed

Tk 9,000 crore of their total outstanding loans which, according to them, is not being appreciated.

According to official figures, some Tk. 10,000 crores in industrial loan have been overdue, a bulk of which has reportedly been sanctioned against industrial units having no existence.

The Industries Minister said the new industrial policy, shaping of which is now at the final stage, would be able to attract entrepreneurs.

Referring to various World Bank conditionalities, being opposed by the private sector, he assured the industrialists that the government would protect the interest of indigenous industry in the current debate with the bank.

BNP spoke in favour of market economy and greater private sector participation in its election manifesto and got public mandate. 'The party is now pledge-bound to help industrialisation,' he said.

Sharif M. Afzal Hossain, Acting Chairman of BCI, which represents both public and private sector entrepreneurs, and its directors Khurshid Alam and Abdur Rashid also

addressed the reception. Afzal Hossain strongly pleaded for adequate protection to indigenous industry until it flourishes up to the desired level.

He and his colleagues unequivocally opposed World Bank conditions for ending all direct protections to indigenous industries, including concessional bank loans, and urged the new government to reconsider those.

They proposed a high-level committee comprising the Industries Minister and the Finance Minister be formed to evaluate the said World Bank conditions.

'If necessary, we should reject credits which counteract national interest,' the BCI Acting Chairman said.

He also urged for immediate steps rehabilitating 'sick' industries, number of which, according to him, is as large as 1430.

Afzal Hossain also suggested the labour law be amended making it production-oriented.

Industries Secretary Shaiful Alam, senior government officials and leading members of the business community were present.

KMP offers award for informer

By Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Apr 10: Khulna Metropolitan Police offered cash award for information or arrest of the seven accused persons who attacked and injured several students in a procession of All-Party Students Unity (APSU) on November 27 here.

The wanted persons are Deputy Mayor of Khulna City Corporation Iktiaruddin Babu, Prof Ali Reza Babu, Subash Banarjee, Zakir Hossain, Kalachand, Asgar Ali and Abul Kalam.

The informer for the number one accused will be given Tk. 5,000 and the informer for the rest of the accused will be given Tk. 2,000 each.

Khulna city unit Joint Secretary of BNP Shaharuzzaman lodged the case on behalf of APSU on December 15.

Police also announced cash award for information about 67 blacklisted persons including four former MPs, Mayor of Khulna City Corporation, President of Khulna Chamber of Commerce and seven Upazila chairman.

Women's bodies urged to work unitedly

By Staff Correspondent

Women's Congress recently organised a discussion at 6, Free School Street, Hatirpool in the city to observe Independence Day 1991.

Eminent writer Badrunnessa Abdullah was the chief guest in the function which was presided over by litterateur Hazera Nazrul, Professor Hamida Raham, President, Nari Mukti Sangsad, Professor Mahbuba Jalal and Sultana Rizla, secretary of the congress. Sayeeda Zaman, Publicity Secretary, Women's Congress conducted the function.

Badrunnessa Abdullah said the women's community contributed a lot alongside their male counterparts in the liberation war. She said if the women's organisations work unitedly, it would be easy to reach the fruits of democracy to everybody.

Hazera Nazrul called upon the women's organisations to play pioneering role in helping women to participate in nation building activities.

Cancer cure through mind control claimed

A healing technic for cancer has reportedly been found through the Silva Mind Control method of USA by Silva graduate Md. Liaquat Ali Jewek, says a press release.

He read out a paper entitled 'Cancer, it has an answer' at Silva graduates reunion, held recently at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel. Organised by Isometric, UK's local representative Khorsheed Group and presided over by Isometric UK instructor A. Hamid Kazi, the reunion was attended, Silva graduates, by Khorsheed Ahmed, Ivy Ahmed, nature-cure physician Dr. Siddique Rahman Ashrafi and magician Jewel Aitch. Liaquat Ali Jewel, an industrial chemist by occupation, claimed that by effective application of his findings it is possible to create a favourable impact on nervous system that can check and deter growth of cancer cells.

Observers expressed the opinion that anti-smoking drive could not be successful in real terms. They said the newspaper industry has been hit hard financially due to ban on cigarette ads. If only warning clause is allowed in the bodies of cigarette ads in the newspapers, common sense about the effects of cigarettes smoking could prevail among the general people, they said.

PROGRAMME today

Rotary Club of Uttara

The 10th regular weekly meeting of the Rotary Club of Uttara will be held today (Thursday) at 5.15 pm at the residence of RTN. Md. Selim, Managing Director, Bangladesh Erectors Ltd. House-3, Road 2/C, Sector-4, Uttara. The meeting will be followed by Iftar.

Death condoled

By Staff Correspondent

The officers and employees of Titas Gas Transmission and Distribution Company Limited have expressed their deep shock and condolence at the death of Delwar Hossain Khan, Manager (Audit and Investment) of the company.

Khan died of heart attack at Suhrawardy Hospital on March 31.

Syed Anwarul Haq, Managing Director of the company in a condolence message expressed sympathy to the members of the bereaved family.



Minister A. S. M. Mustafizur Rahman receiving his Bhutanese counterpart Lyonpo Dawa Tsering at Zia International Airport on Wednesday.

Ban on cigarette ads won't stop smoking habits

By Staff Correspondent

Country's newspaper industry has been severely affected due to ban on advertisements of cigarettes. Ousted President Ershad approved the Tobacco Products Marketing (Control) (Amendment) Ordinance on October 10, 1990 which imposed total ban on all forms of advertisements, publicity and promotions of tobacco products in any media.

The ordinance is likely to be placed before the current session of the Parliament as a bill for its legal approval.

After the promulgation of the ordinance, the producers of bidi and cigarettes have stopped giving ads to the media. Earlier, these advertisements carried on their body a health warning clause as per stipulated regulation.

Cigarettes are definitely injurious to health and the experts are not contesting this truth. But this is also correct that the main source of revenue income originates from bidi-cigarettes industry. No steps could be taken as yet to reduce tobacco cultivation and stop smuggling of foreign cigarettes and production of bidi-cigarettes. Only restriction on newspaper advertisements could be enforced.

Talking on the issue, a spokesman of the Bangladesh Sangbadpatri Parishad (BSP) said the fallen regime took the decision to enforce ban on newspaper advertisements only to destroy the newspaper industry in a systematic way.

He said compulsory warning clause on the media ads adequately serve the purpose of

warning the people.

An official of topmost cigarettes manufacturing organisation Bangladesh Tobacco Company (BTC) said use of filtered cigarettes is being reduced as a result of ban on cigarette advertisements but use of low quality bidi was rising. Net revenue income from tobacco industry will therefore fall and as a consequence, this will leave negative impact on country's economy.

Smoking is injurious to health but cigarettes with filters are less harmful which has been internationally recognised. Knowledgeable sources say many countries of the world have stopped marketing of filterless cigarettes. But situation in Bangladesh is completely different. After ban on cigarette advertisements, use of cigarettes with filters is reducing while those of filterless bidi and cigarettes are rising.

Observers expressed the opinion that anti-smoking drive could not be successful in real terms. They said the newspaper industry has been hit hard financially due to ban on cigarette ads. If only warning clause is allowed in the bodies of cigarette ads in the newspapers, common sense about the effects of cigarettes smoking could prevail among the general people, they said.

DU admission test results today

By DU Correspondent

The results of first year admission test of 'KA' unit (Science and Biological Science) will be published today (Thursday) at the dean office of Science Faculty.

Municipality executives asked to ensure services

The five-day advanced training course on municipal administration, organised by the National Institute of Local Government (NILG) ended in Dhaka Wednesday with a call for greater efforts towards ensuring civic amenities and services in the country municipal areas, reports BSS.

State Minister for Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives Kabir Hossain attended the concluding session and gave away certificates among the participants.

Director General of NILG Dr KM Das also spoke on the occasion.

Kabir Hossain called upon the municipal Chief Executives, participating in the training course, to employ

their best in promoting the mobilisation of local resources so that the local programmes and projects could be expeditiously implemented.

He said the local government bodies should strive to attain self-reliance and, with that end in view, these institutions should explore potential areas of augmentation of local resources.

He called upon the municipal executives to add an element of dynamics in the course of their performance. He also called upon them to free the pourashavas from corrupt practices for earning the trust and confidence of the people.

Chief Executive Officers from 25 pourashavas participated in the training course.

Weather

Fair weather likely

By Staff Correspondent

Rain/shower occurred all over the country on Wednesday. Met office recorded one millimeter rainfall in Dhaka, Sylhet, Tangail and Bogra, 11 mm in Faridpur, 10 mm in Khulna, 16 mm in Jessore, 6 mm in Ishardi, 4 mm in Rangpur and 8 mm in Dinajpur till 6 pm on Wednesday.

Rain accompanied with thunder occurred at Dhaka and adjoining areas in the evening which disrupted the normal life in the city for sometime.

Thundering also disrupted some power lines in Goran and Khilgaon areas plunging the areas into darkness. Repair work was going on till writing this reports.

Met office forecast on Wednesday that light rain with hail accompanied by temporary gusty wind may occur at a few places over Chittagong division and the region of Rajshahi, Pabna, Bogra, Dhaka, Tangail and Mymensingh and one or two places elsewhere over the country during the next 36 hours.

Tuesday's westerly low lay over Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal which later moved to eastern Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Orissa, West Bengal and adjoining Bangladesh.

Outlook for subsequent two days : weather likely to improve. Extended outlook for another five day : weather likely to deteriorate.

Temperature and humidity recorded on Wednesday at major cities and towns were:

Table with 4 columns: Cities/towns percentage, Temperature, Min, Humidity in 6pm. Rows include Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi, Khulna, Sylhet, Cox's Bazar, Jessore, Dinajpur, Rangpur, Sitakunda.

CROSSWORD PUZZLER

Answer to Previous Puzzle

Crossword puzzle grid with clues and answers. Clues include: 1 Fish sauce, 2 Bones, 3 God of love, 4 Synagogue, 5 Control, 6 Above and singer touching, 7 Play part, 8 Finish, 9 Female sheep, 10 Selen's, 11 Carine, 12 Period of time, 13 Rita, 14 Devoured, 15 Meadow, 16 Perched, 17 Chastise, 18 Be in debt, 19 Missive, 20 Acted as stool pigeon, 21 Guido's high note, 22 Predicament, 23 Wax, irritate, 24 Solo, 25 Falsifier, 26 Spanish pot, 27 Grate, 28 Partridge, 29 Sift, 30 Other.

Large crossword puzzle grid with numbers 1-31 indicating starting points for words.