An expert Headmaster's Guide

# Facing the Press

**CHINTITO**

ONE of the boorish surprises on the streets these channel days is the threat of being ambushed by a fast-talking telly-journalist propping up a two-yard microphone on your face and pouncing a question of apparent public interest. Duh!

Make sure you lower the microphone with a push of your fingertips (manicuring is essentially important) because you want the world to see you above a mike and not behind it when you are on television. But, do you know what you want to say? Are you prepared to talk about politics? Is your voice deep enough to make an impression? Did you finally get that haircut? Was today your no-shave day?

With fourteen crore the population and, say, ten channels on the loose interviewing ten baffled citizens each day, chances are one in almost one-point-five million that you would be pressed with a query. But you never know; it's a small world. So, the next best thing to being caught sweating on TV is to be prepared for such an eventuality, just in case.

There are, of course, straightforward ways to repulse the reporter and the camera; such as carrying the logos of different channels in your pocket and waving the wrong one when you are about to be attacked. In case you get cornered, get out your dark glasses, muffler and hat. And see them run away.

But, if you are keen on expressing your views, the obvious thing to do is to walk on the street and look good, twenty-four hours a day. You should rehearse daily in front of a mirror an answer (or two, in case lightning strikes twice) to probable questions, which are, no fret, of the BCS type usually out but that is so because they focus on 'current' issues, such as the failure of electricity.

Here are some helpful sample questions and multiple answers to choose from.

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Q1. Do you come to this kitchen market often?
Ans.a. No, this is my first visit.
Ans.b. We live in *Kyanada* (hee hee) and we are kind of lost. You call this a market!
Ans.c. I have to. I work here.

Q2. Since when are you not getting any water in your area?
Ans.a. Ever since our member *shaheb* did not get his nomination.
Ans.b. Since the last flood.
Ans.c. Aaa... (scratching scalp) let me see... I had a bath last week... and hey! Where are you going?

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Q.3. How much did you buy the cow for?
Ans.a. At twice the price of that one there.
Ans.b. I did not buy it. I am trying to sell mine.
Ans.c. Shhh... he will hear you; the cow has actually bought me.

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Q. 4. Do you think the price of essentials has increased?
Ans.a. A little, but then the price of dollar has also increased.
Ans.b. You should know that in the States a cup of tea costs Taka 200. We are so lucky.
Ans.c. Your question is meaningless because of our increased *croy khamata*.

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Q.5. Will the upcoming national elections be *feaceful*, *fropper* and *pair* (with a Feni accent)?
Ans.a. Absolutely! There is no competition.
Ans.b. If everybody stays home, yes!
Ans.c. If all the black marketers use fair and lovely for ninety days.

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Q.6. Why do you think there is so much power shortage nowadays?
Ans.a. Because people who had power used up all the energy to get more power.
Ans.b. Because we have been using it for such a long time. There is a limit, you know.
Ans.c. Because now there is this caretaker government. Wait for a few more days, and everything will be *fok-foka*.

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Q.7. How are you feeling the bite of the cold wave?
Ans.a. I am not biting in this cold lest my upper and lower jaws destroy each other.
Ans.b. Frankly, I can't feel a thing, because my house is cordoned off by layers of security blankets. Perhaps you should ask them.
Ans.c. After two years, I have just come from Merica where this is so normal, you know. (Cough! Cough!)

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Q.8. What is the best way to rid yourself of a headache?
Ans.a. Stop watching the news and discussion programmes on TV, and don't read the newspaper.
Ans.b. Pass it on to someone else, say an Advisor.
Ans.c. An apple a day keeps the doctor away. But if the doctor is groovy, dump the fruit.

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Q.9. Do you think that we are a failed nation?
Ans.a. Nah! We may be the most corrupt, but failed, *nahhh*...
Ans.b. I have never sat in any exams where the entire country appeared. So how can we fail?
Ans.c. Depends on what is the pass mark.

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Q.10. Do you believe this country has a future?
Ans.a. You have to have belief if you live in a country.
Ans.b. The sun will rise tomorrow, won't it? Huh? That's future, isn't it? You do ask some dumb questions.
Ans.c. In 1971, someone asked me the same question and I said 'yes'. Thirty-five years later, the answer is still 'yes', and if you ask me thirty-five years later, the answer will still be 'yes', but we may have to depend on some as yet uninvented gadget to communicate between your earth and my heaven. ■