

Future to bind print, web together

Says Sir David Bell, chairman of FT

ARUN DEVNATH and PORIMOL PALMA

The news world is going to be the one in which the print media and the web will live side by side. So says Sir David Bell, chairman of the Financial Times Group, one of the world's leading business information companies.

The internet is not swallowing everything in its path. The appetite for news from the internet is growing, but it is just one part of a varied diet. In future will work the print media and online journalism hand in hand.

For the future, Bell says, "We have to think about a 24-hour newspaper, a 24-hour news service in a way which -- when I started journalism -- was unthinkable."

On the eve of Bangladesh Business Awards ceremony, organised by The Daily Star and DHL yesterday, Bell shared his thoughts with senior journalists on the future of newspapers in an age of growing online domination.

"When radio first came out, newspaper owners said the radio would kill newspapers. When the television came, they said television would kill the radio. When television came they said cinemas are finished," said Bell, who also heads a non-profit organisation, Media Standards Trust, in the UK.

"Actually in the world, there are now more cinema streets, more radio stations, more newspapers, more of everything than ever in history."

"I think the idea that newspapers are finished is rubbish. But it is not the same as saying we can sit quietly and do nothing. We have to be very creative in thinking about the future -- challenges and opportunities," Bell says.

Bell refers to Jeff Jarvis's book 'What Would Google Do?' that says, "We have to think about our readers as a community."

"And we have to connect with them as communities in a completely new kind of way than the way we had in the past," Bell adds.

He takes 'great comfort' in the use of electronic devices to increase the sales of newspapers. He refers to online retailer Amazon's new version of electronic book reader, Kindle, which can hold up to 1,500 titles. The storage capacity brings Kindle closer to the idea of being an iPod for books.

"We are pretty confident that will be the future," Bell says.

"It's more likely to be the future quicker, I would have said, in the first world. But actually electronic communications have taken hold here and some of the poorest parts of Africa."

"Development has happened just as quickly -- or even more quickly here."

With a background in journalism and deep love for the print media, Bell says new technology is a 'big challenge'.

Bell points to the squeeze on the newspaper industry, especially in the US.

In the US, the newspaper business is under 'great threat' -- first because it has lost classified advertising. American newspapers have two sources of ad revenue: classified advertising that includes cars, jobs and houses, and local retail advertising.

"That's gone -- most of it."

The second problem is, the American media have become complacent about what they are doing at newspapers, according to Bell. "They took their readers for granted. And so they lost what my news editors might call the 'wow' factor."

"Even at the Financial Times, we say 'wow' -- that's a good



Sir David Bell, chairman of The Financial Times Group, shares his thoughts on the future of newspapers with senior journalists at Sonargaon Hotel in Dhaka yesterday.

story. I didn't know that. That's really interesting."

"Newspapers tell people that they don't know that they don't know. Newspapers are very good at doing that, and also very good at presenting information in a way which is very easy to read," Bell says.

"We have to remember the 'wow factor'. All the news is about people and how people interact with other people."

Even by the most boring financial story somebody ultimately made something and sold it to somebody else, according to Bell.

The third and most basic thing is, 'the quality of the words is what really matters', Bell points out.

"We are about words. I think some big American newspapers became -- they never like to hear it -- quite dull. They really didn't think about their audience," he comments.

Bell predicts a battle between newspapers and online search engines.

"I think there's going to be a battle between us and Google and Yahoo, and other big aggregators of information," Bell says.

"For the moment, they are basically stealing. We spend a lot of money to produce special words, and they are reproducing

them for nothing and reselling to other people."

"We have to decide how we are going to deal with that. Eventually that will have to be a worldwide response. If it isn't, in countries like Britain and America, newspapers will die out. We are worried that some big cities in America and some big cities in the UK will not have newspapers in two or three years' time."

Bell is upbeat about Asia.

"It will be a long time before it happens here or in big countries like India or Indonesia or even in China where newspapers are growing," he predicts.

Google aggregates news from all over the world and uses it straight away, paying "precisely nothing, not one single cent".

"We have to ask ourselves -- 'do we accept this future'?"

The news content has a price that should reflect what costs the newspapers to create it, he affirms.

"Probably we have to start in the US or UK. It will require all the newspapers to work together, which is very difficult. We have to find ways to get newspapers to work together."

Some people think news 'comes like rain'. "It's like one day

clouds open and there are news stories," he quips.

"Actually that's not true."

"It's not easy to create news. You have to go, research, write and edit them," Bell says.

"Unless we have good editors, we will not have good stories," he stresses.

"I think we have to start somewhere in courts and gradually establish a principle, and then the governments will follow it."

Bell calls for newspapers to work together to create 'some basic principles' for copyright.

"Otherwise there will be no newspaper," he said.

It is interesting that politicians like newspapers, he notes. In England, MPs have constituencies, and for anything to be known by anybody, one has to read newspapers. So, they worry what will happen if the local newspapers disappear, according to Bell.

He stresses the need for convincing politicians that the survival of a newspaper is not just for the interest of its owners or journalists. "It's also ultimately -- more than anything else -- in the interest of democracy."

"What we do is something very precious. If we are not there, everybody will miss it," he says.

"Whatever is on the web or in print, the way does not matter. But it is the cost of doing it and doing it properly does matter," he stresses.

Bell says the role of newspapers in today's digital age is not only to say what happened, but to explain why it happened and what it means.

"We have seen -- despite the credit crunch -- our readership has gone up because what we are doing is explaining or trying to explain and interpret."

PROFILE

Sir David Bell is the chairman of the Financial Times (FT) Group and also the chairman of Pearson, an international media and education company that owns the FT. Pearson is also the owning company of Penguin and Longman, which together form the world's largest English language publisher. With 34,000 employees based in more than 60 countries, Pearson is listed on the London and New York stock exchanges.

Bell became chairman of the FT, having been its chief executive since 1993. He is a non-executive director of The Economist. Bell was also chairman of the Millennium Bridge Trust (1995-2002). He was educated at Cambridge University and the University of Pennsylvania, is married with three children and lives in Islington. Bell received his knighthood for services to industry, the arts and charity.

31 Hizb-ut Towhid men arrested

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He claimed he has a High Court order that clears them of allegations of militancy.

Police sources said more drives might be conducted following information gleaned from the arrestees.

They say that a large number of trained Hizb-ut Towhid men are active in Kushtia, Meherpur, Chuadanga and Jhenidah of Khulna division.

Different sources say that at least 1,200 trained members of the outfit are active in the region. Most of them are madrasa students belonging to poor families and Imams of mosques.

According to Kushtia and Meherpur police, they raided different dens of the outfit and arrested many Hizb-ut activists in the last few years.

On September 9, 2003, 45 people including Hizb-ut Towhid men were injured when they clashed with locals at Poradah Bazar in Mirpur upazila in Kushtia. Police later arrested 43 Hizb-ut Towhid activists.

Of them 13 were produced before court. They were sent to jail and later released.

In Meherpur, 14 Hizb-ut Towhid men including its Meherpur unit chief Anisur Rahman were arrested in separate raids by Rapid

Action Battalion (Rab) and police at Gangni on April 13, 2007.

Police recovered firearms, bomb-making materials, books on jihad and leaflets from their possession.

In Jhenidah, 34 Hizb-ut Towhid men were arrested on July 13, 2004. Police also seized books and leaflets and other materials from them.

According to a press report published a few months ago, the law-enforcement agencies have listed 29 Islamic organisations for suspected involvement in militancy and Hizb-ut Towhid is one of them.

Allahr Dal, Islami Samaj, al Harat al Islamia, Jama'atul Faliya, Towhid Janata, Biswa Islami Front, Jum'a'atul al Sadat, Shahadat-e-Noboot, Jama'at-e-Yahia al Turat, Joyshe Mostafa Bangladesh, al Jihad Bangladesh, Woarat Islamic Front, Jamaat-as-Sadat, al Khidmat, Harkat-e-Islam al Jihad, Hijbullah Islami Samaj, Muslim Millat Shahria Council, World Islamic Front for Jihad, Joysh-e-Mohammad,

Hijbul Mahadi, Kalem Dawat, Islami Dawati Kafela, al Islam Martyrs Brigade, Dawat-e-Islam, Tanjim, Hizb-e Abu Omar, and Jadiid al-Qaeda Bangladesh are in that list.

For the last few years Hizb-ut Towhid has been carrying out secret operations in the name of "dawat" in different parts of the country, especially in the southern region.

In some cases police arrested some activists of different Islamic organisations during their suspicious activities.

For instance, law enforcement arrested a few Hizb-ut Towhid activists in Bhola in early September last year for their suspicious movement.

Superintendent of Police of Bhola GM Azizur Rahman had told The Daily Star last year that Hizb-ut Towhid has started its activities in the district.

He said the outfit seems suspicious as Hizb-ut Towhid's activities have similarity with the activities and groundwork of banned militant organisations.

The organisations' activities surfaced early in 2008 when some of its operatives were seen distributing books and leaflets propagating Islamist militancy among students of the school.

Hizb-ut Towhid in its different publications being distributed among youths is trying to teach them that jihad or military programme or armed struggle is a must to establish the rule of Islam.

The organisation campaigns for armed struggle using the verses of the holy Quran. "... [if anyone] leaves jihad or armed struggle, they shall not be accepted to Allah as a moment [devout]," reads a publication of Hizb-ut Towhid titled "Islam Prokrito Salah" [Real Salah of Islam].

In the book Hizb-ut Towhid says the Muslims as a whole are a military nation. The whole nation is a military force, each and every Muslim [man and woman] is a soldier, a Mujahid and a warrior. "The training of this military force is called Salah," the book reads.

"As long as the government allows such campaigns or activities and does not prohibit such propaganda, we cannot consider it as an offence," observes a top-level official of a law-enforcement agency.



Officials of Apollo Hospitals Dhaka cut cakes at a programme celebrating the hospital's stepping into its 5th year on the hospital premises in the city on Thursday.

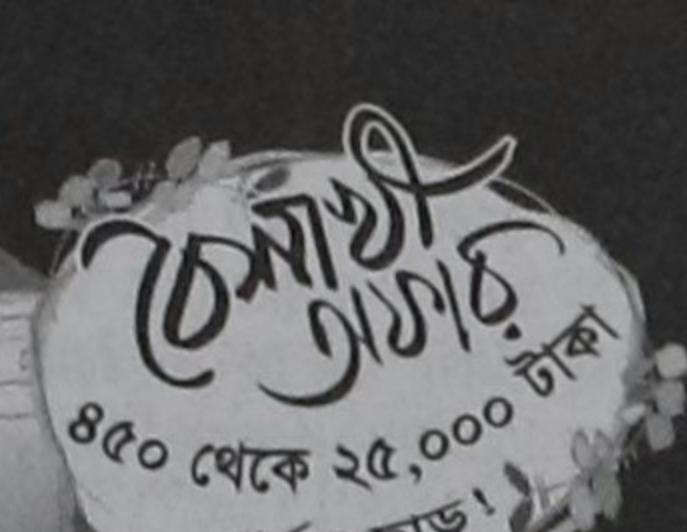
PHOTO: APOLLO HOSPITALS DHAKA



যেখানে ভবিষ্যৎ নিয়ে কথা...

...নেখানে আপোষ কেন? বিশেষ করে, সামনে যখন পরীক্ষা! রহিমাফরোজ আইপিএস নিচে নিরবচ্ছিন্ন বিদ্যুৎ ব্যবস্থা।

এবার, কমপ্লিট হোক আপনার বাসা!



RAHIMAFROOZ IPS

এক সেকেন্ড প্রীজ

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কিষ্টিতে রেডি দোকান বিক্রয়

যোগাযোগ : পানি লিলি, (বে এ এল অল), পর্স এ এল, পানি লিলি, কিষ্টিতে রেডি দোকান বিক্রয়।
ফোন নম্বর : ০১৬২৪৪২০৫, ০১৬২০৫০৫, ০১৬২০৫০৫০৫, ০১৬২০৫০৫০৫০৫, ০১৬২০৫০৫০৫০৫০৫, ০১৬২০৫০৫০৫০৫০৫০৫, ০১৬২০৫০৫০৫০৫০৫০৫০৫, ০১৬২০