

DESCRIPTION

43) Search, Seizure and Arrest without Warrant—1) If a police officer has a reason to believe that a crime under this law has been or is being or will be committed in any place, or there is a possibility of it happening, or if there is a possibility of evidence being lost, destroyed, deleted or altered or being made scarce in some other way, then the officer, upon putting in writing the reason for his/her belief, can undertake the following tasks:

- a) Enter and search the said place and, if intercepted, take necessary action in accordance with the Code of Criminal Procedure;
- b) Seize the computer, computer systems, computer network, data and information or other objects used in committing the crime or documents that can help prove the crime while conducting a search in the said place;
- c) Bodily search anyone present in the said place;
- d) Arrest anyone present in the said place if suspected of committing or having committed a crime under this law.

SECTION 43

COMMENT

This is by far the most comprehensive and most threatening provision of the law. It gives the police complete control over citizens' bodily and technological privacy. Beyond invading their privacy, this provision will also prevent the media from doing their work. They will have no freedom or safety when the police can arrest them merely on suspicion, without any warrant. Moreover, 14 of the 20 provisions are non bailable, meaning that journalists will operate under the constant fear of being arrested without proper cause. This will seriously hinder a journalist's ability to take risks, to reveal facts that may antagonise those in power, and to avoid being exploited by them through the law enforcers—all of which are crucial parts of a journalist's job. Finally, and most importantly, newspapers and TV stations are centralised around their digital systems. If authorities can confiscate their computers, networks, servers, and other equipment, they can essentially shut down the entire operation of that media house.

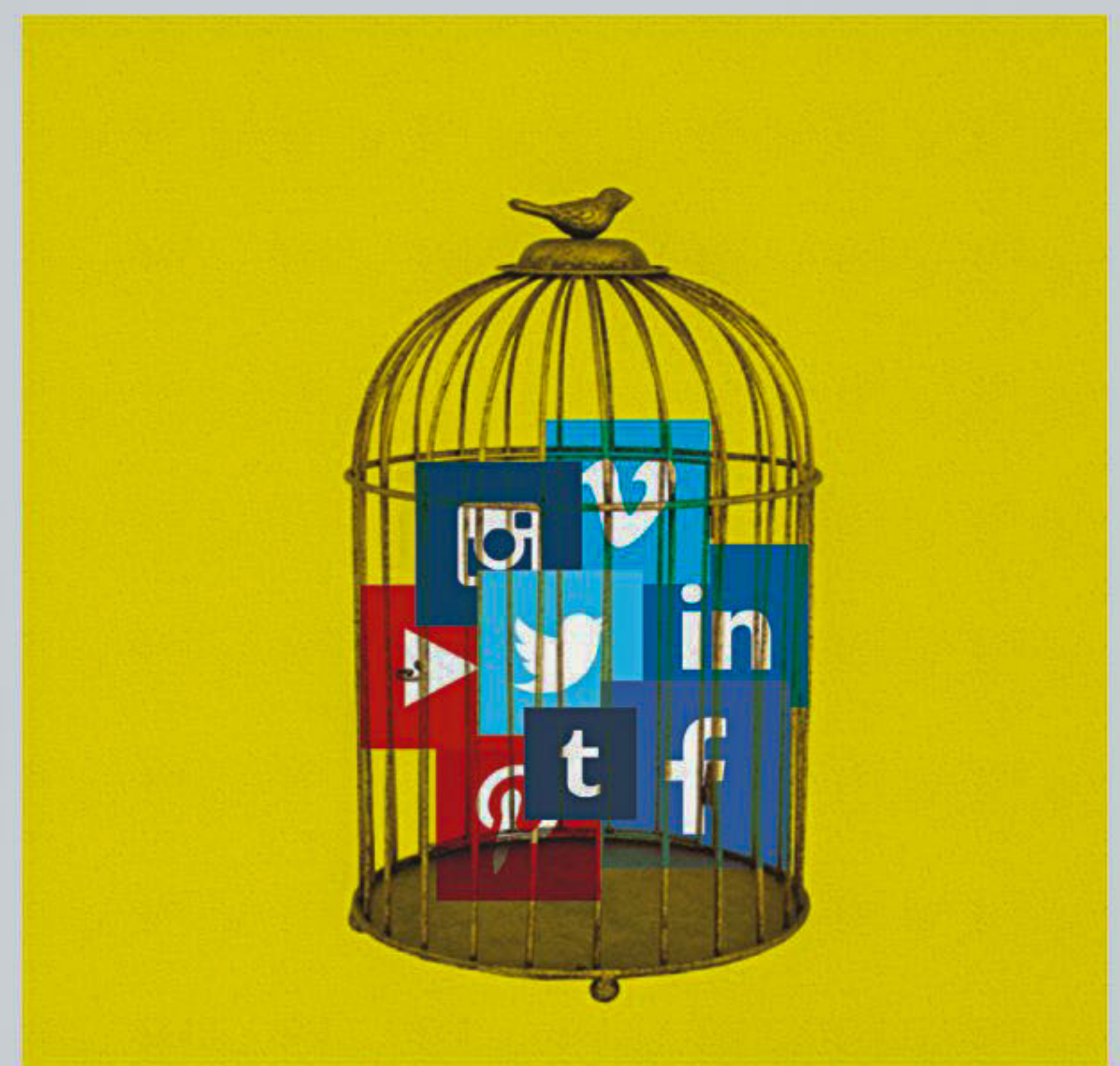


ILLUSTRATION: KAZI TAHSIN AGAZ APURBO

DESCRIPTION

53. Offences that are cognisable and bailable. In this law (a) Sections 17, 19, 21, 22, 23, 24, 26, 27, 28, 30, 31, 32, 33 and 34 are cognisable and non-bailable offences and (b) Section 18, and sub-section (1) (B) 20, 25, 29 and 48 sub-clause(3) are non-cognisable and bailable.

SECTION 53



COMMENT

Fourteen of the 20 or so provisions of this law are cognisable and non-bailable. It threatens media freedom especially with police power to arbitrarily arrest anyone with no warrant or on suspicion, opined the Editors' Council.

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Meanwhile, Prithvi holds the opinion that news about celebrities should contain more critical and academic commentary on the social values underlying the gossip. A common conception about the young generation is that they have a short attention span. While this claim cannot be disregarded entirely, many respondents said they enjoy reading longform features, opinion pieces, and investigative reports. Ahad Farhan, 31, mentioned he enjoys in-depth articles the most. "Basic reports seem perfunctory, and often fail to provide thorough explanations or analyses. I would prefer knowing the big picture," he said. Khaleda, on the other hand, said she reads in-depth reports only when she is very interested in the topic. "Although useful—lengthy features take time to read, so it would be great if I could get summaries of long-form reports," she said, adding that follow-up



articles on certain issues should contain the original story as a hyperlink for readers' ease. While everyone has personal preferences, readers prioritise the subject matter over form of content. If the topic is of their interest, they will click on it, regardless of it being a video or a longform report. The media's effect on public opinion is

undeniable. Readers no longer blindly believe something they read on the internet, they check if the source is trustworthy, and verify the facts. In an age when political opinions are more polarised than ever before, how important is it for a news outlet to have a political stance? Saadman Chowdhury believes that it's unnecessary for newspapers to have a clear stance, as that might create biases in their news. Meanwhile, Mansura believes that it's impossible to eliminate bias. "So instead of staying under the pretense of neutrality, I believe a clearer political stance would serve the purpose of accountability [of media houses]." Acknowledging that newspapers are also a business entity, Prithvi said, "Even if a newspaper demonstrably changes its political bias, it is still bound by the material interests of its majority shareholder, which more often than not happens to be a holding group or a corporate establishment."

"Instead of concealing their agenda, newspapers should espouse it. Being avowedly political is not the same as distorting facts or dishing out fake news," he added, "Every time a newspaper critiques the government's policy, it is committing a political act. Being political is not the same as being partisan propagandist; the very act of criticising the state is a political act." Countless news outlets from home and abroad, with varying ideologies and stances, are trying to capture the young audience's attention every day. Only a few succeed in making a lasting impression, and it's clear that the readers are not ignorant. They are informed, mature individuals who are passionate about making their voices heard. **Aanila Kishwar Tarannum will forever be indebted to Star Weekend magazine for providing an outlet for her rants, musings, and serious research, and helping her grow as a writer. You can reach her at aanila.tarannum27@gmail.com.**