

STATE OF PRESS FREEDOM IN BANGLADESH-2005



Bangladesh Manobadhikar Shangbadik Forum-BMSF

Report by:

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Journalism became a most risky profession in Bangladesh. The risks are on the increase day to day with harassment torture arrest and death threats with white cloths for their news reports and opinions which reflect social realities. Bangladesh are one of the most dangerous and violent countries in South Asia for journalists.

7 (Seven) Journalists were killed from January 2004 to March 2005 and 405 were given death threats , 320 tortured or harassed in 190 incidents of press bashing, Cases were filed against 75 newsman while another 85 threatened 55 injured. 18 were arrested and 43 harassed. Growing muscle power of various circles of wrongdoers is making media reporting risky every passing day, showing a substantial number of journalists subjected to assault across the country.

7 Journalist who become killed:

1. Sheikh Belaluddin Ahmmed a correspondent with the Bengali-language daily Sangram, was killed in a bomb attack on February this year. The bomb exploded at a press club in the city of Khulna on February 5, 2005. The bomb, which was hidden in a bag hanging from a motorcycle, detonated at around 9:15 p.m. as Belaluddin approached the vehicle Three other journalists were hurt, but their injuries were not life-threatening. On February 8, Khulna journalists observed a news blackout and formed a human chain at the press club to protest the bombing. Across the country, journalists took to the streets to condemn the attack, demanding that authorities find and punish those responsible.
2. Freelance journalist Shahid Anwar, of the Daily Asian Express was Killed on 24 October 2004 inside his office in Kataban area at Dhaka city. Police have suggested one possible motive for the killing is a business rivalry but are yet to confirm any suspects or motives connected to the murder. Anwar is the fifth journalist to be killed in Bangladesh in 2004. Anwar is the second journalist murdered in Bangladesh in two months.
3. Unidentified assailants killed Dipankar Charawarti, an editor of Daily Durjoy Bangla, in September in northern Bogra district. Dipankar Chakrabarty, Executive Editor the Bogra-based Durjoy Bangla newspaper was brutally murdered near his home in Sherpur Upazila On 2 October 2004, He was the fifth journalist to be killed in Bangladesh since the beginning of the year. Chakrabarty had taken tea at a local restaurant and was attacked by unidentified assailants while walking home. He was attacked with traditional axes and knives from behind and beheaded. Chakrabarty was the vice-president of the Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists, ex-president of Bogra Union of Journalists (BUJ) and Sherpur Press Club and incumbent convener of Sherpur Reporters' Unity.
4. Kamal Hossain, 35, Correspondent of the daily Ajker Kagoj was killed on 22 August. He was a general secretary of the Manikchhari press club under Chittagone Divission , He had earlier received death threats from some miscreants.
5. Bomb kills Khulna journalist Manik Shaha An unidentified man bombed to death Manik Chandra Saha, staff correspondent of the daily Sangbad, in Khulna January 15, 2004, sparking a string of demonstrations including hartal for tomorrow and Sunday in the city and a swell of panic among locals. Police said the powerful handmade bomb blew the head off his body at about 1:00pm on Mirzapur Road in the latest in a series of journalist killings in the district since 2002. The 50-year-old journalist, also Khulna-based stringer of BBC and former president of Khulna Press Club, was heading home at Ahsan Ahmed Road by rickshaw. His body was sent to Khulna Medical College Hospital (KMCH) for autopsy. Police seized bomb splinters, wires and a pencil battery from the scene, some 20 yards off the press club, after the incident that brought city life to a virtual halt. Security was tightened in and around the city, but no-one was arrested until early last night. Witnesses said a man went to the press club at about 12:30pm and talked to Manik about a personal matter

minutes before he boarded a rickshaw to get back home. The man called Manik from behind -- his rickshaw a few steps ahead -- and another man hurled the bomb at him as soon as he got down from the vehicle. He died instantly. The rickshawpuller fled. Journalists who were at the press club rushed out on hearing the explosion and found his headless, blood-smeared body on the ground. They took the body to the KMCH. Police believe the killing was the result of his outspoken, uncompromising stand against law and order downslide in the southwestern district with a long history of outlaw violence. Local journalists brought out a procession yesterday afternoon in protest at the murder of the prominent reporter, who was also senior staff correspondent of New Age. "His reports regularly probed ... into underground political activities of the region. We consider the attack ... an infringement on freedom of expression," says New Age in a press release. Khulna Press Club called a daylong hartal in the metropolitan city for tomorrow as part of a seven-day programme that includes wearing of black badges, protest rally, mourning procession and hoisting of black flags atop local newspaper offices. The main opposition Awami League called another daylong hartal for Sunday in the city to protest the murder. Leaders of political parties, including the ruling BNP, rushed to hospital to pay their last respect to the slain journalist and expressed solidarity with the hartal call and other programmes drawn up at a meeting at 3:30pm by Khulna Press Club with its President Humayun Kabir Balu in the chair. Khulna district and city units of Puja Udjapan Parishad condemned the murder of Manik, one of parishad leaders. Manik, also member of Khulna District Bar Association and Vice-chairman of Khulna South Herald School, entered journalism in 1984 and was closely associated with many socio-cultural organisations. He left behind his parents, wife and two minor daughters. Senior police officers, including Police Commissioner Mustafizur Rahman, visited the scene and the press club. Khulna Union of Journalists and Metropolitan Union of Journalists also condemned the killing and demanded arrest of the killers in 24 hours. Manik joined BBC as a stringer in 1994 and now-closed Ekushey TV as its divisional correspondent in 2000.

6. Dainik Janmabhumi Editor Humayun Kabir Balu was killed and his elder son injured in a bomb attack June 27, 2004 apparently by a leftist extremist posing as a peanut vendor in southwestern Khulna City, police and witnesses said. Balu, 58, also president of Khulna Press Club, suffered critical injuries to his back and legs at 12:15pm in front of his house-cum-office on Islampur Road soon after getting down from his car and died at Khulna Medical College Hospital (KMCH) at 1:50pm, sparking protests. The Janajuddha faction of outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party claimed responsibility for the killing by cellphone to a photojournalist at Khulna Press Club, but police could not confirm the claim. His death was the second high-profile journalist killing after New Age's special correspondent Manik Chandra Saha on January 15 in the city, dubbed as the valley of death for bloodshed by outlaws. Witnesses said a young man approached Balu when his car pulled over in front of the house from his mother's Iqbalnagar house and hurled at least two bombs from his peanut basket at him in the well-orchestrated attack, rocking the entire area and badly damaging the car. His younger son and daughter, who were also in the car, survived the attack unscathed. The elder son, Asif Kabir, is being treated for splinter injuries at a city clinic. As the news of Balu's death in the operating theatre of the KMCH broke, hundreds of shell-shocked people, including journalists, political leaders and other professionals gathered outside the hospital, disconsolate with grief at the fatal frequency of violence in the otherwise serene city. According to his family, Balu, serving his third stint as Khulna Press Club president since last October, received several death threats from outlaws for espousing a bold stand against them in his mass-circulation local newspaper and fuelling anti-outlaw sentiment in the wake of Manik's killing. His latest death threat came from the Janajuddha faction.
7. Freelance journalists Mr Nabile Ahmmed 27, was killed in Dhaka on March 07, 2004 by some miscreants. Family members of a former reporter identified his body at Mitford hospital morgue five days after he was murdered at Keraniganj. The body of Nabil A Latif, 27, a former cultural reporter of daily New Age, was identified by his family members at

Mitford hospital morgue last night, where it was kept for five days. Nabil was hacked to death by unidentified assailants at Keraniganj Tuesday last. Police said the killers stabbed him in the throat before hacking and torturing him to death Tuesday night and dumped his body in a playground at Brahmanur, some seven kilometres from Keraniganj Police Station. After finding his body, Sub-Inspector Mohammad Afazuddin filed a murder case with the station Wednesday. In the FIR, he said unidentified miscreants abducted him by tact and hacked him to death in cold blood. Nabil, father of a one-and-a-half-year-old son, left his house at 5/C, Siddheshwari Tuesday morning telling he might go to Sylhet. He never returned home. As the family lost all trace of him, Jamal Ahmed, Nabil's brother-in-law, lodged a general diary with Ramna Police Station Thursday. Finding a chequebook issued by Janata Bank Moghbazar Branch in a pocket of Nabil's trousers, Keraniganj police contacted the branch, collected his address from there and informed his family yesterday morning. Farhana Sultana, Nabil's wife, said he also worked for Zoom Super Com Limited at Defence Officers' Housing Society (DOHS). He was also a member of a musical band named Empire. Only son of Abdul Latif, now living in Italy, Nabil was known as a modest and polite young man in his locality and among his former colleagues at the New Age.

Journalist arrested on "murder" charge

On 10 May, 2004 police arrested Aurobindo Pal (m) a free-lance press photographer at Nandail, Mymensingh, in north-central Bangladesh on charges of "murder" after he refused to hand over the negative films he took during police firing at a polling centre on May 9.

Police barged into the house at dawn of Aurobindo Pal, who is also the Vice-President of Nandail Press Club and searched his room and demanded to hand over the film or face dire consequences. A day earlier to his arrest, he is an eyewitness of the police firing at Achargaon High School voting centre for Nandail municipality election. He courageously took photographs of the incident, when Khohinoor Miah, Superintendent of Police (chief) of Mymensingh himself was responsible for ordering to fire upon the voters.

Earlier Khohinoor Miah, Assistant Police Commissioner was blamed for physical torture of journalist Saleem Samad in December 2003. The United States embassy and Embassies of European Union in Dhaka have imposed restriction on his travel to North America and Europe for abusing human rights.

Earlier police clashed with voters at the polling station and killed two protesters, a least 17 persons were arrested. Aurobindo with courage took photographs. He was requested to hand over the film, but declined.

Since 18 August, 2004 the daily Prothom Alo has received threats from several Islamist organisations angered by the newspaper's exposure on Middle East funding for the religious schools, the madrasas. Eight journalists were injured in grenade attacks on the Awami League opposition party rally in Dhaka on 21 August. Four journalists have been assaulted since 13 August and more than 60 others have been threatened in less than one month. In the May-June period, 108 journalists were tortured or harassed in 80 incidents of press bashing.

The highest number of 31 subjected to assault in Rajshahi division and the lowest six in Sylhet. A total of 108 newsmen having fallen under mischief of the muscle-flexing circles, 103 belong to print media while five to electronic media. Cases were filed against 30 newsmen while 30 threatened, 14 injured, six arrested and 10 harassed, Besides, the houses of five came under attack; three were prevented from distributing newspapers, three kidnapped and six obstructed from discharging their professional duties. Reporting on terrorist activities, corruption, intra-party grouping, smuggling, extortion, conflict of the UP chairmen, drug running, activities of the extremist groups and immoral acts of police were cited as the cause of ire against the reporters. Out of 80 incidents, 34 took place under the influence of political leaders and activists, 16 of

businessmen and smugglers, 11 of police and administrative officials, and three for rivalry among the journalists. Reasons for 16 of the incidents were not known.

A total of 30 journalists were injured, 29 attacked, 60 more threatened and three were arrested in the first three months (January to March)2004. Bangladesh appeared to be one of the most violent countries in the world for journalists, with almost daily cases of physical assaults and intimidation-particularly in rural areas. Local journalists say they are increasingly under threat for reporting on political violence, graft, and organized crime, but that the main cause of brutality against the press in Bangladesh is pervasive corruption. The professional rights and freedom of journalists are being curbed frequently now either by laws or by other restraints imposed by the government. The risks are on the increase with arrest, torture and even death for their news reports which reflect social realities.

Despite these risks, more and more qualified and competent youths are joining the profession of journalism, with the conviction that journalism is a noble profession. Simultaneously, big companies in the country are investing large some of money in media sector. Within the last four years the print media has been enormously upgraded in line with the growing demand of the readers. Electronic media are also flourishing in the country. Besides the state-owned television, three private televisions are in the air now. Another 3 or four companies is trying to get licenses to install private TV stations.

According to the statistics there are 7750 journalists working in different newspapers and news agencies in Bangladesh. Among them 2600 are full-time journalists. There are 25 journalists' related organizations in Dhaka.

The Bangladesh Journalists Rights Forum (BJRF) and Bangladesh Manobadhikar Sangbadik Forum-BMSF are national organization of the journalists in the country attempting to organize journalists in 64 Districts.

Working conditions of journalists are not good at all. Although the Fifth Wage Board Award was announced in October 1997, most of the newspapers are still now reluctant to implement it. Even the Newspaper Employees (Condition and Services) Act, 1974 is formulated, the professional journalists are working without wages and in extremely adverse conditions. The division in the main journalists' union weakened the struggle against the irregularities.

The Government advertisement policies are also hindering the development of newspaper industries. Newspapers, which publish news about corruption or misdeeds of the government, find themselves without advertisements, thus making it difficult to continue publication. Following are some specific cases of violation of press freedom: During the past few years journalists' organizations and leaders of journalists' community urged the government to stop harassment of journalists.

Mass Media and Laws

According to the Ministry of Information, 2215 newspapers and periodicals, including 378 national and regional dailies, are being published in the country. Additionally, Four news agencies including Bengali News service Bangladesh Sangbad Sangtha (BSS), a state-owned national news agency, and the privately owned national news agency- the United News of Bangladesh (UNB), Annandha Bangla Sangbad (ABAS) News service and National News Service (NNB) are operating in the country.

At present, Bangladesh also has a state-owned television and three satellite television stations in the private sector. The media in Bangladesh face restrictive laws enacted right from 1876 to 1991 which restrain freedom of expression. These laws control private media, news agencies, radio, television, theatre, audio-video materials, VCR rental and video copying, cinema, advertising, and

telecommunication. Main reason for repression of journalists . The disunity among of journalists and journalists organizations has been continuing to the harm of the country and the community have main reason for repression of journalists .This disunity is responsible for oppression of journalists who can not raise united voice . This situation must be changed for the wealthy growth by journalists and healthy growth of democratic society. Journalists will be fighting for their rights and this call for total unity of the journalists community. Most of the press lord of Bangladesh have been publishing news papers to protect their businesses and others interest . It is time for journalists to get united to realize their demands and work for realization of their democratic rights as well the rights of the people.

At least five journalists in southern Bangladesh received death threats during the week of 6 to 12 March 2005.

Shumi Khan, a correspondent in Chittagong, southeastern Bangladesh, for the Dhaka-based weekly "Shaptahik 2000", received a letter on 12 March that read, "If you continue to write about Jamaat-e-Islami in Satkania [a Chittagong suburb], we will kill you." The fundamentalist Jamaat-e-Islami party is a member of the ruling coalition, together with the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP).

On 25 February, "Shaptahik 2000" published an article by Khan implicating Shahjahan Chowdhury, a Jamaat-e-Islami member of parliament, in criminal and terrorist activities.

Khan was the victim of a knife attack in April 2004 and takes the death threats very seriously (see IFEX alert of 30 April 2004). The investigative journalist told RSF that she felt she was "in danger and did not know what to do." The editor of "Shaptahik 2000" said the paper had received several phone threats in recent days. "Jamaat-e-Islami claims that we publish false information and favour other parties, but this is not true . . . Whenever we receive threats, we have asked the government to take effective measures, but we have found that this does not work," the editor stated.

On 10 March, Jamaat-e-Islami members in Chittagong issued similar threats against Shamaresh Boiddya, of the daily "Bhorer Kagoj", and Jubayer Siddiqui, of the daily "Ajker Surjodoy".

At a meeting four days earlier, Nurul Haque, the head of Jamaat-e-Islami in Satkania, threatened journalists who write about his party.

In a separate incident, on 12 March, Salek Nasir Uddin, of the daily "Sangbad", received a death threat in Mirershorai, a Chittagong suburb. The threat was reportedly made by Sultan Salah Uddin, a leader of Jubodal, an organisation linked to the BNP. The journalist had included Sultan Salah Uddin's name in a list of criminals published in the daily. According to the daily "Prothom Alo", however, the Jubodal leader denied having made any threats.

Finally, on 6 March, Zillur Rahman Jalil, of the daily "Janakantha", based in Patuakhali, southern Bangladesh, received an anonymous letter that read, "Journalists in Khulna and Jessore have been killed, [you also wrote about us]. Be prepared, your turn is coming up."

Khulna too hot for journalists

Aasiya and Lucy, two reporters from BBC Radio, had flown in from London to do a story on shrimp cultivation, and Khulna, being the hub of the industry, seemed like the best place to interview a journalist who has witnessed and reported on the gradual developments in this fast growing industry.

When we arrived on the afternoon of Sunday, 30 January, I rang up Shaikh Abu Hasan, the President of the Khulna Press Club, and solicited his help. Soon he was sitting in our hotel, listing out several young reporters who have extensively reported on the environmental, social and economical impacts of the industry.

As our conversation proceeded, it became clear that none of the journalists in Khulna, the country's third largest metropolis, enjoy peace of mind, since almost all of them have received threats on their lives. At the press club, a reporter for a national Bangla daily described to me how, two weeks earlier, several young reporters had narrowly escaped certain death when a powerful bomb failed to explode after it hit one of them in the back.

"The reporter has been so terrified ever since that he decided to leave Khulna this morning for Dhaka," he said. The actual situation for working journalists in Khulna started to emerge when the BBC selected Mr. Karim (not his real name) to be interviewed along the shrimp polders in Paikgacha.

"Please pick me up from my house when you start for Paikgacha tomorrow morning. I do not dare take a rickshaw to your hotel. I fear that they will kill me any time," Karim told me.

"Who are 'they'?" I asked.

"They are the ones who keep killing journalists," he replied in a low voice.

Throughout the following day, as I drove to and from Paikgacha, Karim narrated how a once peaceful Khulna has been turned into a ghastly place for journalists, thirteen of whom have been slain within the last ten years. He said he is also on a death list drawn up by so-called outlaws, who have vowed to kill all those opposing their "ideological stand for a class-free society." Karim added that members of the outlawed parties, who claim "to murder and extort for safeguarding their ideology," are none other than petty criminals in the hands of moneyed men.

He elaborated that over the last fifteen years a section of influential individuals has grabbed thousands of acres of agricultural plots from innocent farmers, hoping to establish shrimp ponds in the region.

Shrimp exporting is now the second highest wage earner in the country after garments. To enforce a solid grip on the lucrative business, these powerful individuals first bought up the local administration, then deployed their own army of armed hoodlums in the region. Conveniently ignored by the administration, the hoodlums slowly started to grow their own roots, and it was not long before the entire Khulna region, especially its rural areas with shrimp ponds, fell into a state of lawlessness. Karim added that now any journalist with a track record of writing to protect human rights is a potential target.

A senior journalist at the Khulna Press Club said that when he walks or takes a rickshaw ride on the streets of Khulna, he often suffers from "terrible paranoia." "Sometimes I start sweating thinking that my killers are just behind me and I start to run," he said.

This was just five days before the bomb blast on the Press Club premises, which seriously injured Hasan and three other Khulna journalists.

4 journalists hurt in blast in Khulna

One battles for life; bombs kept on motorcycle on Press Club premises Four journalists including Khulna Press Club President Sheikh Abu Hasan were wounded, one critically, in a powerful bomb explosion on the press club premises last night in another attack on newsmen in this region.

The other injured are Sheikh Belaluddin Ahmed, bureau chief of daily Sangram, Sheikh Jahid Hossain, staff photographer of daily Jugantor, and Tutul Ahmed, staff reporter of daily Loksomaj, published from Jessore.

Of them, the condition of Belaluddin, also president of Metropolitan Journalists Union (MJU), was stated to be most critical. With critical burns all over the body, he underwent a surgery at midnight. Doctors amputated his wrist.

Five journalists were killed in Khulna district alone in the last 10 years. Daily Janmabhumi Editor Humayun Kabir Balu and New Age Bureau Chief Manik Saha were the recent victims in this outlaws-prone southwestern region.

Witnesses said Belaluddin along with Abu Hasan, also bureau chief of daily Prothom Alo, and Jahid was heading for their motorbikes parked in the lawn of the press club at around 9:15pm when Belaluddin saw a bag on his motorbike.

Surprised to see the bag hung on the right handle of his bike, Belaluddin said, "Who left the bag on my motorcycle?" As soon as he touched the bag, the witnesses said, a bomb kept inside it exploded with a bang.

The three journalists, along with Tutul, a reporter of daily Loksomaj who was standing near the motorbike, were injured in the blast.

The police suspect someone might have kept the one or more bombs there intentionally to kill the journalists. A police officer said the bombs might have been exploded by a remote control device when the 'target' reached there.

Two motorbikes of Belaluddin and Jahid were burnt in the blast, said witnesses, adding that the bombs were so powerful that it also damaged wall of the club, windows of the newly constructed canteen and some furniture of the club.

Firefighters rushed to the spot and doused the fire in 20 minutes.

Belaluddin, whose right palm was blown in the explosion, was rushed to Khulna Medical College and Hospital (KMCH), while the rest were admitted to Nishu Clinic, adjacent to the club.

Bangladeshi intelligence agents search for The New York Times sources:

Intelligence agents have been assigned to look for anyone who might have provided interviews or information for the January 23 New York Times article on the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in Bangladesh, according to a Bangladeshi intelligence source quoted in the Dhaka-based newspaper The Daily Star. The search has been extended to include journalist Saleem Samad, who did not work on the Times article but who has contributed to foreign news reports in the past, The Daily Star reported. Two agents visited Samad's family home in Dhaka yesterday evening and asked his father about the whereabouts of Samad, his wife, and his son, according to his brother. Samad, currently a reporter for Time Asia, has been living in Canada since mid-fall 2004. Samad told that he now fears for the security of his wife and son, who remain in Dhaka. Samad was previously arrested in November 2002 and imprisoned for two months for working with a documentary crew preparing a report on Bangladesh for Britain's Channel 4. Samad has said that he was tortured in prison. Eliza Griswold's Times article, titled "The Next Islamist Revolution?", reported on militant Islam taking hold in Bangladesh. The topic is a particularly controversial one, and Bangladesh's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Iftekar Ahmed Chowdhury, condemned The New York Times article as "baseless, partial and misleading." Griswold and photographer Meredith Davenport, who were followed by intelligence agents while they were conducting their reporting for the story in November, told that they were concerned for the safety of their sources.

Jugantor journo survives bomb attack Khulna Bureau Chief of Daily Jugantor Dip Azad escaped unhurt when a bomb hurled at him did not burst in Khulna yesterday. Dip blamed the attack on outlawed Janajuddho operatives who had long been making death threats against him. Also former treasurer of Khulna Press Club, Dip was strolling along the road to Moilapota Crossing with his friends when someone from a running motorbike threw the bomb at him at around 9:30pm. The bomb hit his back but did not explode. Police stationed nearby chased the motorbike but failed to catch the attackers. They cordoned off the area and carried out a search, but to no effect.

Khulna Police Commissioner Javed Patwari and other top officials had visited the area. Dip claiming the attackers to be Janajuddho operatives said, "They on several occasions had threatened to kill me for writing against their extremist activities." After he had lodged complaint few months ago, he was given police protection at Jugantor office in Khulna.

Among the most serious violations documented by BMSF in 2005: a February 5 bombing at the Khulna Press Club, which killed journalist Sheikh Belaluddin of the daily Sangram; a series of death threats against journalists in the towns of Satkhira and Lalmonirhat; and the brutal February 23 beating of Al-Mamun Sagar, local correspondent for the daily Jugantor.

HC warns media 7 newsmen fined for contempt of court:

Convicting seven editors, publishers and reporters of daily Prothom Alo and Bhorer Kagoj for contempt of court, the High Court on Monday warned the media against sensitizing news items creating tension and shaking the people's confidence in the judiciary, reports UNB.

Editor Matiur Rahman, publisher Mahfuz Anam and reporters Enamul Haq Bulbul and Masud Milad of Prothom Alo were each fined Tk 1000, in default to suffer one month in jail.

Similar punishment was awarded to Editor (former) Abed Khan and publisher Saber Hoasain Chowdhury of daily Bhorer Kagoj. But its reporter Samareh Baidya was sentenced to two months' rigorous imprisonment.

None of the convicts were present in the court as their presence was waived by the HC bench of Justice MA Matin and Justice AFM Abdur Rahman earlier on a petition.

The two vernacular dailies published identical reports on October 30 last year that sitting additional judge of the High Court Faisal Mahmud Faizee had tampered with his LL.B results. The report had shaken the confidence in the highest judiciary.

Faizee's father advocate Mohammad Faiz filed a contempt suit against the editors, publishers and reporters of the dailies.

The bench, comprising justices MA Matin and AFM Abdur Rahman, had issued rule upon the respondents to show cause why contempt proceedings should not be drawn against them on November 8. The court had also asked them to explain why they should not be punished for maligning the highest judiciary by publishing the reports.

Respondents of court contempt case usually tender unequivocal apology. But the editors and publishers of Prothom Alo and Bhorer Kagoj contested the case and lost.

Their lawyers told UNB that they are waiting for the certified copy of the verdict as well as advice from the clients for the next course of action, which include appeal before Supreme Court.

Delivering the judgment the court observed "the report is distorted, baseless and false Headline of the report has no synonymy with context of the report."

“No documents have been placed before the court to substantiate the report that Faizee tampered with his results ... The report is contemptuous,” added the court.

It said reports published in the dailies had questioned the competency of a judge, which no newspaper could do in the name of freedom of the press.

“Press exercises its freedom subject to certain conditions, not to scandalize the judiciary. The report has interfered in the administration of justice shaking the confidence of the judiciary in the minds of the public.

The court warned the media that the press must not sensitize news item unnecessarily creating tension in the minds of the people and shaking the confidence in the judiciary.

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