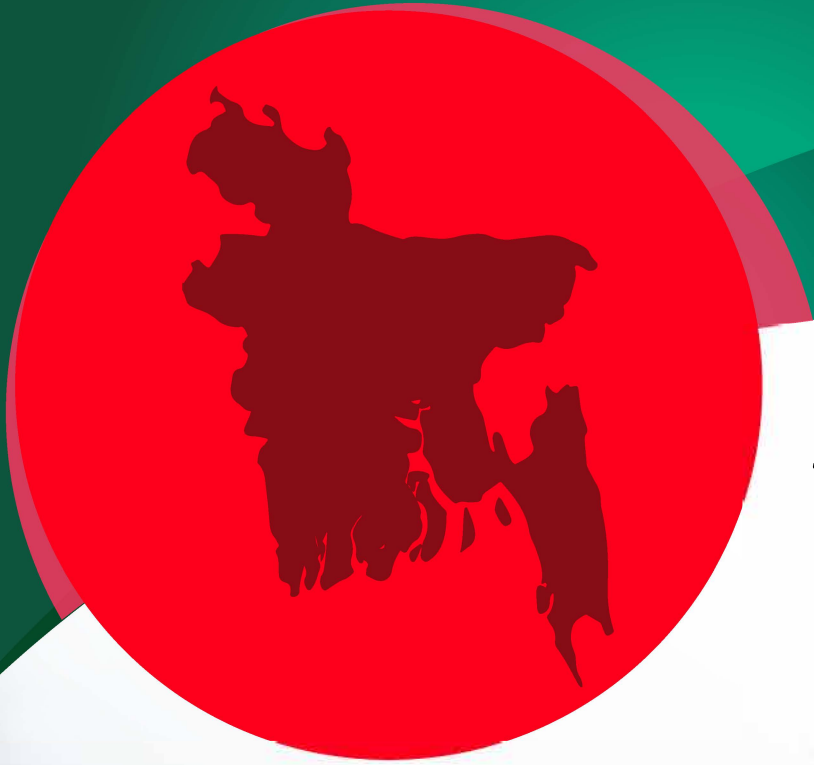


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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

**From the Editor** **Syed S. Andaleeb** **iv**

### *ARTICLES*

**Recriminations against Journalists in Bangladesh:  
Indication of a Deep-Rooted Problem** **G. M. Shahidul Alam** **1**

**Mediating Role of Organizational Commitment in  
Turnover Intention: The Case of Private  
Universities in Bangladesh** **Mohamad Yazam Sharif  
M. H. R. Joarder** **9**

**Indigenous Coping Strategies of the Cyclone-  
Affected Farmers in Coastal Areas of Bangladesh** **M. Ibrahim Khalil** **22**

**Emergence of Export-Oriented Shipbuilding  
Industry in Bangladesh: Current Position &  
Future Prospects** **Tofayel Ahmmad** **35**

**Bringing Change to Government Administration:  
Insights from the Development Projects of the  
National Board of Revenue** **Mohammad Jahirul Quayum** **47**

# Recriminations against Journalists in Bangladesh: Indication of a Deep-Rooted Problem

G. M. Shahidul Alam

## Abstract

This study assesses the state of media freedom in Bangladesh in light of reports of annual increase in the number of media professionals being subjected to various forms of repression, harassment, and physical harm since 2007, especially at the hands of politicians at different levels. It links the tribulations suffered by the journalists in part to an unsatisfactory situation obtaining in the country where the spirit of liberal democracy has not quite taken hold of the mindset of at least a substantial section of the country's population, including, crucially, both media professionals and politicians. The study concludes that, at least as critically as institutional measures to rectify the situation, the state of media freedom and the cause of liberal democracy would be vitally served if the media professionals and politicians alike could inculcate within themselves the fundamental values and the true spirit of the political ideology.

Richard Gunther and Anthony Mughan offer a fundamental tenet of media function, and functioning, in a democracy: "Respect for, and guarantees of, freedom of the press have long been regarded as among the fundamental tenets of democracy since the unhindered flow of political information was recognized as integral to holding governments accountable for their (in)actions. Accordingly, governments were to interfere as little as possible with the free flow of information through the print media. Among the consequences of this hands-off approach was that newspapers could determine their own partisan stance, the level at which they would pitch their appeal, and the style and type of story that would constitute their hallmark" (Gunther & Mughan, 2000, pp. 9-10). Amendment 1 of The Constitution of the United States guarantees freedom of the press: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."<sup>1</sup>

The United States is an advanced democracy that has constitutionally enshrined freedom of expression and of the press soon after attaining its independence. Bangladesh is a developing country that has been experiencing parliamentary democracy, despite a major interruption, since 1991.<sup>2</sup> Like the United States, it too was able to come up with a Constitution soon after having gained independence. A noted legal scholar of Bangladesh views as remarkable the adoption of the Constitution by the Constituent Assembly on November 4, 1972, and its coming into force on December 16, 1972 (Malik, 2002). That Constitution also guarantees freedom of the press.

According to Article 39, (1) Freedom of thought and conscience is guaranteed and (2) Subject to any reasonable restrictions imposed by law in the interests of the security of the State, friendly relations with foreign states, public order, decency or morality, or in relation to contempt of court, defamation or incitement to an office:

- (a) the right of every citizen to freedom of speech and expression; and
- (b) freedom of the press, are guaranteed.<sup>3</sup>

"But it is not enough to write into the constitution the concept or right of a free press. More than that, media audiences themselves need to be educated as to what it means to have a free press, to have a voice, to make government accountable in a society where the concept of democracy is still in its infancy." (Kareithi and Kariithi, 2005, pp. 261-62.) These words could well have been written with Bangladesh in mind, but they were composed in the context of the African continent. Furthermore, because the road to the essence of liberal democracy is painful and hazardous, Nyamnjoh's counsel to the African media could be equally applicable to Bangladesh. Media coverage, he suggests, should be anchored to democracy as a continuous process, rather than on stereotypes and baseless presumptions (Nyamnjoh, 2005). Just how effectively is democracy practiced in Bangladesh may partly be deduced through a study of the state of its media, its functioning, and the media professionals.

## Objective of this Study

The purpose of this study is twofold: it assesses the state of freedom of the media in Bangladesh in view of a report that, in 2008, 166 media professionals

were subjected to various forms of repression, harassment, and physical harm.<sup>4</sup> The other intent is to show that the tribulations suffered by the media professionals is a manifestation of an unsatisfactory situation. The spirit of liberal democracy has not quite taken hold of the mindset of at least a substantial section of the country's population, including, crucially, both media professionals and politicians.

A democratic mindset essentially entails that the principal norms of liberal democracy become established as a matter of course in the minds of the general citizenry of a society. They are then routinely practiced. The essential attributes of liberal democracy include political pluralism, freedom of speech, of the press, and of political expression, tolerance of differing viewpoints, periodic elections, equality before the law, civil liberties, and human rights. Such a mindset requires that liberal democracy be continuously practiced in a country. It has only been intermittently done so in Bangladesh, which has had a long history of having been deprived of the practice of liberal democracy. Barely four years after its creation, the 4<sup>th</sup> Amendment (1974) to the Constitution introduced a one-party system (Bangladesh Krishak Sramik Awami League, or BKSAL) in the country to replace the country's parliamentary system of government. A series of military and quasi-military rule followed, until, after extensive political agitation, parliamentary democracy was restored in 1991. The country's relatively short duration of having experienced liberal democracy is a major reason why its citizens still have not been able to significantly develop a mindset for its spirit and norms.

It needs to be emphasized that the conclusion arrived at in terms of the inadequacy in the feel for the spirit of liberal democracy might not be unreservedly authoritative. A scientific study on the issue has yet to be carried out.<sup>5</sup>

### **The State of Media Freedom in Bangladesh**

The 2008 figures on repression and harassment, quoted earlier, serve as the starting point of our discussion. However, to underscore the position that the repression, harassment, and physical violence committed against the media professionals have increased since then, actual figures and extrapolations are being presented. In the first two months of 2009, 35 journalists have fallen victims to similar acts (Ferdous, 2009, p. 15). Although presumptive, an extrapolation of this figure would suggest that 210 journalists would be subjected to oppression in 2009. That would signify a marked increase over the

previous year. According to one published account, the number exceeded 300, including the killing of three journalists.<sup>6</sup> The troubling aspect of the projected, as well as the published, increase is that it will have taken place during the first year of a democratically elected government.<sup>7</sup>

Odhikar, a human rights organization in Bangladesh, in a graphic presented in its Human Rights Monitoring Report for January-March 2010, comes up with the number of 97 instances of violence that is tantamount to creating obstacles to freedom of the press.<sup>8</sup> However, in the same report, under the heading "Journalists Under Attack", the number of journalists tortured and harassed during the same three-month period has been put at 90.<sup>9</sup> The difference of seven is noted, but whichever figure is taken to be representative of the real picture, it represents a higher trend from the subsequent three months. Ain-o-Salish Kendro (ASK), basing its inference on reports from eleven newspapers of Bangladesh, has come up with the figure of 74 instances of journalist harassment during the period from April to June 2010.<sup>10</sup> The variables used to arrive at the figures of harassment of media professionals by Odhikar, covering the period from January to March 2010, and by ASK from April to June 2010, are slightly different from each other. It could be that Odhikar would come up with a different set of numbers for the second three-month period. It appears, though, that the incidences have decreased to some extent in the second period over that of the first. However, if the two sets of figures are added up, then the sum for the first half of 2010 would come out to be either 164 or 171, depending on which of the Odhikar figures is considered. If either number is doubled to cover the end of the year, then 2010 would see either 328 or 342 cases of journalist harassment. This figure would top that of the previous year, irrespective of which of the two sets of statistics, the one given by *Amar Desh* and the other by ASK, is taken into consideration.

The situation prior to 2008, as documented by the Bangladesh Manobadhikar Sangbadik Forum (BMSF), a human rights journalists association, was by no means satisfactory in the context of journalistic freedom. BMSF records that, in the 2006-2007 period, political leaders and political party activists verbally abused journalists on various occasions. Significantly, plenty of media bashing and harassment of journalists took place when the press unearthed, and reported on, corruption and anomalies purportedly engaged in by government ministers, Members of Parliament (MP), local leaders and workers of BNP.<sup>11</sup> The BNP-led four-party alliance

was in power in 2006. BMSF documents at least 89 incidents of violence that were perpetrated by the BNP-led alliance in 2006. The subsequently protracted caretaker administration assumed the responsibility of government when the alliance's normal term in office came to an end in October 2006.

Soon after the proclamation of emergency on 17 April 2007, the military-backed caretaker administration issued a letter to all the country's media outlets, asking them to refrain from publishing or broadcasting ill-motivated, hurtful, or misleading reports about anybody.<sup>12</sup> The expansive term "anybody" could serve as enough of a pretext for curtailing the freedom of the press. Thus, notwithstanding the constitutional stipulation of press freedom, its application has fallen short of the ideal. It comes as little surprise, then, that Bangladesh was ranked 138 (jointly with Liberia) out of 195 countries in a listing of global press freedom rankings for 2009, and, critically, was tagged with the status of its press as being not free.<sup>13</sup>

The scenario has not changed for the better following the assumption of power by the AL-led grand alliance in 2009. AL MPs have engaged in various acts of journalist harassment ranging from filing supposedly motivated false charges with the police, to physically assaulting them. One respected English-language daily newspaper of Bangladesh reports on two instances of journalist harassment, among other activities, that have "embarrassed" senior AL leaders.<sup>14</sup> Other examples provide a graphic picture of media professionals being targeted by ruling party or alliance partners' political leaders and activists for real or imagined grievances. An academic in the Mass Communication and Journalism Department of Dhaka University, concludes that administrative failure and an unsatisfactory legal system are major factors contributing to journalist torture and killing in Bangladesh (Haque, 2010).

For a non-Bangladeshi perspective on the state of media freedom in Bangladesh, Vincent Brossel of Reporters without Borders presents a grim scenario obtaining in the country in the first half of 2010. He also alludes to a similar situation that had existed before: "The recent developments in Bangladesh are like an old nightmare that is beginning again: arbitrary arrests, closure of news media, attacks on journalists by ruling party supporters, torture of detainees and intimidation" (Brossel, 2010). He cites the examples of the arrest, harassment and mistreatment in prison of *Amar Desh* editor

Mahmudur Rahman, closing down of TV Channel 1, placing political obstacles to the launching of private TV channel Jamuna, and others, to make his point.

### **Perspectives on Media Professionals**

The foregoing account on the state of media freedom paints a bleak picture of politician-journalist interface whenever the political leader or activist has felt aggrieved by negative media reporting on him/her or the party he/she represents or supports. That sense of outrage could be felt as a defensive (alternatively, offensive) mechanism as a reaction to reports the politician knows are authentic. It could also be real, when he/she is equally positive that they are totally fabricated or prejudiced or malicious. We will pick up on the second reactive emotion to illustrate the maxim that freedom and responsibility are inseparable from each other where media professionals are concerned.

The Center for International Media Assistance (CIMA), a project of the US-based National Endowment for Democracy, encapsulates the critical role that independent media play in establishing and preserving democracies, societies, and economies (Graves, 2007, p. 20). Graves goes on to conclude that, "Not only are countries more democratic with free and independent media, but their governments are also more accountable." For many countries, though, the norms of liberal democracy are idealistic, something to aspire to, but, often unattainable due to the powerful influence of local customs, traditions, and character of the people. However, an independent media taking due cognizance of local customs, traditions, and the peoples' psyche would be vital in the promotion and continuance of liberal democracy in a country.

Bangladesh is one of those traditional countries practicing parliamentary democracy since 1991, and having a media that may appear free and vigorous on first impression. One would find instances of journalists quite regularly reporting negatively on the government, big business, institutions, legislators, and even the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament. Such criticism of the head of government, although intermittent and often sharp or vitriolic, occurs in spite of the provision of Section 99A of the Code of Criminal Procedure that stipulates that any printed matter that is defamatory of the country's President or the Prime Minister is an offense punishable by imprisonment from two to seven years.<sup>15</sup> Another non-Bangladeshi assessment, made during the first year of a military-backed emergency rule, also gives the impression of a free

and vibrant press that had existed in this country prior to its imposition: “Bangladesh’s military-backed government dealt a series of crippling blows to what had been one of the freest presses in Asia.”<sup>16</sup>

The instances of highly critical reporting and commentary related to the government are almost exclusively restricted to the print media. The broadcast media is conspicuously docile, preferring to chart safe waters that will not ruffle too many important political feathers, or be generally supportive of government policies and programs. The state-controlled television and radio channels, Bangladesh Television (BTV) and Bangladesh Betar, respectively, like many other government-controlled institutions in other countries, only toe the government line. They provide little news of opposition political parties and their leaders, and even fewer that is positive.

The Bangladeshi media professional also pursues his/her own brand of aggressive journalism. In fact, it is precisely what passes for reporting on seemingly everything and everyone without fear that often lands Bangladeshi journalists in trouble. It places them squarely at loggerheads with mostly politicians who have both clout and muscle power and use them as retaliatory measures. Fahmidul Haque to a degree faults the journalists for bringing misfortune upon themselves. He reasons that some journalists get involved in the very acts of financial irregularities and other crimes that they report on. When they are unable to keep those activities and their outcomes under control, they fall victims to violence committed by rivals for what amounts to expansion and control of turf.<sup>17</sup> Jabber Hossain recounts how a Bengali-language national daily newspaper, *Kaler Kontho*, repeated its editorial page contents of one issue the following day, and wonders at the standard of journalistic ethics media professionals were setting (Hossain, 2010). Saiful Alam Chowdhury gives a detailed account of biased and irresponsible journalism from both the print and the electronic media during national elections. He worries that the readers and viewers are getting the wrong impression about media function and responsibility (Chowdhury, 2010).

Another ill that has afflicted the Bangladeshi media is the buying off of journalists by politicians, political parties, and other vested interests to produce what a Bangladeshi writer has called “paid news”.<sup>18</sup> Rezwani-Alam observes, “...the practice and wooing (of) journalists by awarding them favors and special privileges is rampant. The trend started before independence but flourished afterwards, especially

during the 15 years of direct and indirect military rule” (Alam, 2008, p. 144). It stands to reason that the benefactors would expect favorable treatment in the media from the beneficiaries. That, in turn, could, and does, lead to tendentious or spurious reporting. Furthermore, if the beneficiaries decide to turn on their patrons, then the prospect of journalists being subjected to political repression becomes strong.

### **A Deep-Seated Problem**

Largely because of the nature of politics and that of the media, a degree of friction may be expected between politicians and media professionals in any society, except in absolute totalitarian systems. This is not necessarily an unhealthy state of things. On the contrary, it can contribute to a healthy, vibrant democratic system by a responsible watchdog media keeping errant politicians in check from unwarranted and uncalled-for transgressions. The key word is “responsible”. In Bangladesh, as we have noted, there exists a condition of manifest antagonism between the politicians and the media professionals. This paper, to reiterate, believes that underlying this unhealthy situation is a general lack in large sections of both the groups of a key ingredient of liberal democracy: a mindset for its essential elements. That incorporation will require tolerance of other opinions, however repugnant to ones own, and responsibility. This last attribute should lie at the very heart of first-rate, objective (not necessarily impartial) journalism, something that is absolutely essential for the spirit and practice of liberal democracy. In Robert McChesney’s (1998) words, “...the media in a democracy must foster deliberation and diversity, and ensure accountability.” Acting responsibly means not attacking institutions and individuals out of pure spite, resorting to spurious or inordinately biased reporting, and other negative journalism that fall under the collective rubric of “yellow journalism.”

In Bangladesh, notwithstanding the vendetta at times waged by politicians in power against real or perceived opposition media professionals and establishments, we have seen examples that are a microcosm of a growing trend in yellow journalism over the years. The present government of Sheikh Hasina is evidently worried enough about the phenomenon for its Information Minister Abul Kalam Azad to contemplate plans to introduce new law to target yellow journalism because “newspapers and television and radio channels that are making false and misleading news to tarnish the image of ministers, lawmakers, the government and the country are in fact doing yellow journalism.”<sup>19</sup> One could credibly argue that the minister was alluding to

opposition media professionals. After all, during the previous three democratic administrations, the same trend was noticeable, although Azad was the first to mull over introducing laws to punish journalists perceived to be practicing the yellow version. There could be no quibbling if no codes existed for reprimanding such journalistic endeavors, or if it was applied even-handedly, without making it an instrument of opposition witch-hunting.

In fact, the first AL government introduced the Special Powers Act of 1974, which “made the profession of journalism decidedly risky. The journalists of the country termed the Act as the blackest of all laws, because it made it an offence, punishable by five years of imprisonment and or a fine, or both, to print, publish or distribute any reports which might be prejudicial to the interests of the government” (Alam, 2008, p. 112). And, on 16 June 1975, coinciding with the formation of BKSAL to rule over the country, the government “ordered the closure of all newspaper (sic) except for four” (Alam, 2008, p. 112). It would be erroneous to draw parallels between two eras of government, even if both have been AL or AL-led. However, track record is a notorious harbinger of things to come in the minds of the average Bangladeshi, and Azad’s contemplation of the introduction of restrictive law could raise memories of the 1974 Special Powers Act in relation to journalists or even the 1975 closure of newspapers. The very thought of introducing the law runs counter to the ideals of liberal democracy. Azad’s declaration is indicative of a general malaise running through many of this country’s politicians (as well as civil society members, academics and other professions): that of a difficulty in tolerating opposing viewpoints, and it is an attribute that severely hampers the establishment of the spirit of liberal democracy.

It would be easy for the government to take recourse to Article 39(2) of the Constitution and use the excuses of looking after the security of the State, or public order, or defamation, or incitement to an office to formulate a law that could interpret yellow journalism in the broadest of terms. However, there exists an institution that has been constituted to deal with issues like “yellow journalism”, as well as preserving press freedom. The Bangladesh Press Council (BPC) Act of 1974 entrusted the BPC with responsibility for devising a code of conduct for maintaining high professional standards. That provision is articulated in Article 12(1) of BPC Act:

“Where, on receipt of a complaint made to it or otherwise, the Council has reason to believe that a

newspaper or news agency has offended against the standard of journalistic ethics or public taste or that an editor or a working journalist has committed any professional misconduct or a breach of the code of journalistic ethics, the Council may...warn, admonish or censure the newspaper, the news agency, the editor or the journalist, as the case may be.”<sup>20</sup>

The BPC Act held the BPC responsible for *protecting the fundamental rights of citizens against any “unscrupulous or irresponsible” newspaper or journalist.*<sup>21</sup> In practice, it would help *the press avoid a conflict with the government through self-censorship.*<sup>22</sup> However, while it provides the right of journalists to confidentiality of a news source, it has no power of action against the government for transgressing freedom of the press, nor does the government consult it before taking any action against a newspaper or journalist.<sup>23</sup> Even with its limitations in relation to the government, BPC has been given enough powers to curb yellow journalism. It could thereby help the media in avoiding conflict with the government through the adoption of self-censorship. But it will not, or cannot, exercise those powers largely as a result of the media choosing to ignore it and any stricture it may give against it. In fact, on 26 August 2010, the parliamentary standing committee on information ministry derided the quasi-judicial body as being a “paper tiger” and declared that it was going to recommend the government reorganize the BPC and amend the Press Council Act --- 1974 and Press Council Regulation --- 1980.<sup>24</sup> “It is the task of press council,” observed the committee’s chief, “to preserve freedom of press and improve standard of the newspapers and news agencies. But it has failed to achieve that so far.”<sup>25</sup> Giving the BPC more teeth would be laudable, and, ultimately productive, provided the political authority adds its full weight to its functioning and decisions.

The media in Bangladesh, while frequently espousing the imperative of establishing liberal democracy, and there can be no equivocation that a section of it is sincere in doing so, often act in ways that negate the very principles of the political philosophy and system. The media cannot think itself to be omnipotent and still proclaim itself to be a catalyst of a liberal democratic system functioning in the country. The politician, because of the inherent attribute of leadership that comes with his/her vocation, will have to lead by example in developing the mindset for the democratic spirit within him or herself. The media professionals will have to do the same in order to be able to spread the democratic spirit through journalists’ writings and commentaries.

Thomas Jefferson, commenting on the draft Bill of Rights of the US constitution, remarked: “The people shall not be deprived of their right to speak, to write or otherwise to publish anything but the false facts affecting injuriously the life, liberty, property or reputation of others, or affecting the peace of the confederacy with foreign nations.”<sup>26</sup> In other words, Jefferson believed in freedom of expression with responsibility. These words were written over two centuries ago for a new nation and a new democracy. They would be as applicable for the media in an old nation, new nation-state, and a new, as yet struggling democracy that is Bangladesh.

### Endnotes

1. The first ten amendments to the Constitution, collectively known as the Bill of Rights, were adopted on 15 December 1791. Together, they establish a fundamental principle of representative democracy: securing individual rights and limiting the power of federal and state governments. The first amendment is the first written document ensuring the right to express ideas and opinions free of government restrictions on the basis of their content.
2. The state of political culture has been abysmal in Bangladesh, ironically, since the beginning of the parliamentary democracy system that was reintroduced after years of one-party dictatorship, and military and disguised military rule. Distrust between the two major political parties of the country, Awami League (AL) and Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) has reached such a stage that a Non-party Caretaker Government system needed to be introduced in the Constitution for ostensibly conducting free and fair election to the Parliament. Under the parliamentary government system, the usual practice is for the outgoing government to act as an interim administration that does not initiate new policies or legislation, or commit to new or large expenditures, but remains only till the next elected government takes office. But the political culture of Bangladesh is not normal. Consequently, the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution introduced the Non-party Caretaker Government with a view to ensuring free and fair election to Parliament, and “was a last-ditch effort to save democracy from partisan manipulation” (Masihur Rahman, *Democracy in Crisis*, Dhaka: The University Press Limited, 2008, p. 11). It is made up of persons who are not connected with any political party, or, at least, not overtly, and is constitutionally obligated to hold election within ninety days after dissolution of Parliament. For reasons that cannot be discussed here because they are not relevant to the subject matter of this paper, the 2006 caretaker administration went beyond its jurisdiction, and continued in power for a little over two years until a new government took office in 2009 on the basis of the December 2008 election results. For gaining useful insight on the period of emergency from 11 January 2007 till near the end of 2008, the interested reader may go through *From The New Nation: writings during the emergency*, Shahidul Alam (Dhaka: Ankur Prakashani, 2008), and *Notes from a Prison BANGLADESH*, Muhiuddin Khan Alamgir (Dhaka: The University Press Limited, 2009).
3. The Constitution of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh. As modified up to 31<sup>st</sup> December, 1998.
4. *Bangladesh Journalism Review*, Volume 5, Issue 11, March 2009, p. 32. However, the figures provided in individual issues of the *Review* from April to December 2008, and January-February 2009, when tallied, show a discrepancy from the composite number given in the March 2009 issue --- 166. This point will be discussed more comprehensively later on in the paper.
5. It would be an interesting, and instructive, exercise if a scientific study was carried out along these lines.
6. “Deshe Manobadhikarer Chorom Longhon Genevae Ulto Kotha Dipu Monir” (“Grave Human Rights Violation in the Country: Dipu Moni (Bangladesh Foreign Minister) Says Otherwise in Geneva” --- author’s translation), *Amar Desh*, 4 March 2010, p. 1. The figure quoted is taken from a report prepared by Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK), a human rights organization in Bangladesh. However, ASK’s data given under the heading “Journalist Harassment 2009” in the “Civil and Political Rights” section of “Human Rights Monitoring” add up to 270 during the period from January to December 2009. It includes 84 instances of cases filed for published news in newspapers, 41 of Torture/Attack/Harassment by AL and its front organizations, and 3 by BNP and its wings ([http://www.askbd.org/web/?page\\_id=672](http://www.askbd.org/web/?page_id=672), accessed on 15 August 2010). Notwithstanding the apparent discrepancies between the figures quoted by the daily newspaper *Amar Desh*



- (which could have been taken from some other ASK report) and ASK's own report that has been cited, the numbers are still high, and exceed this author's extrapolation.
7. The testing first year of the Awami League-led coalition regime headed by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina ended in January 2010.
  8. Statistics of Human Rights violations 01 January to 31 March 2010, Human Rights Monitoring Report January-March 2010, Odhikar, [http://www.odhikar.org/documents/2010/English\\_Reports/Odhikar\\_Report\\_3months\\_Jan\\_Mar\\_Eng.pdf](http://www.odhikar.org/documents/2010/English_Reports/Odhikar_Report_3months_Jan_Mar_Eng.pdf), accessed on 15 August 2010.
  9. *ibid.* The breakdown given of the 90 instances is as follows: 38 journalists were injured, 26 threatened, 17 assaulted, and 8 journalists and 1 newspaper office were attacked. One may legitimately be confused about the use of assault and attack as separate semantic entities, but the total number is still not affected if the two are merged into one or the other. In this context, it would be instructive to refer to Note number 4 above. The discrepancy noted is that the tally from the individual issues of the *Review* show a much higher number --- 255 from April to December 2008 --- when individual victims are counted, and 108 during the same nine-month period when incidents of repression are taken into account. Even though the figures for the first three months of 2008 are missing it is seen that, when extrapolated from the total arrived at for the last nine months, the number of individuals would total over 300 for the entire year, while that of incidents would be 144 (one incident criterion could have multiple individual victims). It is likely that *Bangladesh Journalism Review* was referring to the number of incidents (which could well be 166, rather than 144, if the incidents for January to March were higher than the extrapolation arrived at for those months), but the discrepancies highlight that statistical anomalies, however minute, do at times creep into various quantitative studies conducted by even authoritative journals and researchers in Bangladesh.
  10. "Journalist Harassment", [http://www.askbd.org/web/?page\\_id=672](http://www.askbd.org/web/?page_id=672), accessed on 15 August 2010.
  11. "Press Freedom in Bangladesh --- 2006-2007", Bangladesh Manobadhikar Sangbadik Forum, [http://bmsf-bd.org/Press\\_Freedom\\_0607.pdf](http://bmsf-bd.org/Press_Freedom_0607.pdf), accessed on 23 January 2010.
  12. *ibid.*
  13. "Freedom of the Press 2009: Table of Global Press Freedom Rankings", <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=470>, accessed on 23 January 2010.
  14. One lawmaker, Sarah Begum Kabari, reportedly slapped Sheikh Shahidul Islam Sentu, a photojournalist of the daily newspaper *Sitalakkhya* in Narayanganj district, on 15 March 2009, for bringing out a report that was not to her liking. In Galachipa of Patuakhali district, companions of AL lawmaker Golam Moula Roni filed four apparently fabricated cases against two local journalists. Their "fault" lay in reporting on the illegal grabbing of land on a river bank, and then setting up a market there that was carried out with the lawmaker's connivance and support. ("Errant MPs embarrass ruling party", *New Age*, 18 August 2010, pp. 1, 4.)
  15. One commentator explains it as a manifestation of the free spirit of the Bengalis, <http://www.pressreference.com/Bangladesh.html>, accessed on 4 September 2010.
  16. "Attacks on the Press 2007: Bangladesh", <http://www.cpj.org/2008/02/attacks-on-the-press-2007-bangladesh.php>, accessed on 4 September 2010.
  17. *op.cit.*
  18. S.A. Taleb, "Bharoter Shwadhin Gonomaddhomer Paap 'Paid News'" (" 'Paid News' --- The Sin of India's Independent Mass Media" --- author's translation), *Mediawatch*, 28 June 2010, pp. 35-38.
  19. "Bangladesh media concerned over law to prevent yellow journalism", posted by Rachel McAthy in *Politics, Press freedom and ethics* on 2 July 2010, <http://blogs.journalism.co.uk/editors/2010/07/02/bangladesh-minister-plans-law-to-prevent-yellow-journalism>, accessed on 15 August 2010.
  20. <http://www.pressreference.com/A-Be/Bangladesh.html>, accessed on 4 September 2010.
  21. *ibid.* Emphasis added.

22. *ibid.* Emphasis added.
23. *ibid.*
24. “Reform Press Council, amend laws”, *The Daily Star*, 27 August 2010, p. 2.
25. *ibid.*
26. S.K. Padover, ed., *Thomas Jefferson on Democracy* (NY: Appleton-Century, 1953), p. 48, quoted in Howard H. Frederick, *Global Communication & International Relations* (NY: Harcourt Brace, 1993), p. 56.

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