

THESIS

“SYMBOL OF PRIDE”: SUBJUGATION OF
JOURNALISM UNDER POWER

Submitted by

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In partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the Degree of Master of Science

Colorado State University

Fort Collins, Colorado

Summer 2023

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ABSTRACT

“SYMBOL OF PRIDE”: SUBJUGATION OF JOURNALISM UNDER POWER

This study explores the influences journalists encountered in Bangladesh, a developing country under an “authoritarian” regime while covering the opening of 6.15 kilometers long Padma Bridge. Using Shoemaker and Reese’s hierarchy of influence model, Herman and Chomsky’s propaganda model, and Bourdieu’s field theory, it seeks to answer the question: How does the Bangladeshi media’s coverage of the Padma Bridge opening reflect forms of government influence on journalists? Drawing on 12 in-depth interviews with reporters and news managers working from four media outlets, the findings suggest that, in the case of the coverage of the Padma Bridge opening in the Bangladeshi media, the government used several tools to influence. This reflected the authoritarian nature of the government, the censorship, and the self-censorship of the media, which ultimately resulted in the media’s inability to provide any critical or even objective coverage of the Padma Bridge and its inauguration.

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Journalism is one of the prominent professions globally that plays a critical role in shaping society at all levels. Journalists' role in every society's political, social, and economic institutions is vital. Against this background, some scholars have long acclaimed the profession as the fourth estate of the realm (Kabah et al., 2019). This is why governments, global institutions, and transnational and continental corporations invest immensely and attempt to monopolize the media (Bezabeh, 2015). Moreover, autocracies often control the media and the broader information environment, which allows them to transmit the regime's ideology or mentality to citizens of all ages (Neundorf & Eleches, 2020). However, modern-day dictators survive not by using force or ideology but by convincing the public, rightly or wrongly, that they are competent. Citizens deduce the dictator's character from indications in their living conditions, official propaganda, and messages delivered by an informed elite via independent media rather than observing it (Guriev & Treisman, 2015).

The Bangladeshi government also controls the country's media by implementing new laws, incarcerating journalists, limiting advertisements, and giving impunity to those who attack and assault the journalists. Since the controlled election in December 2018, the ruling Awami League has entirely held the country's state apparatus and politics (Riaz, 2021). Their attempts to control the news narrative solidified after the overwhelming majority in the Parliament and decimated the main opposition party (Ahmed, 2019). Academics describe this regime as a hybrid (Shahriar, 2020; Riaz & Zaman, 2022; Ruud & Hasan, 2022). However, according to a recent Stockholm-based International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance analysis, Bangladesh has been under an "authoritarian regime" since 2014 (New Age, 2021). According to

a Freedom House report, journalists and media outlets in Bangladesh face many forms of pressure, including frequent lawsuits, harassment, and severe or deadly physical attacks. Physical assault and threats against journalists are carried out with impunity (Freedom House, 2022). On July 7, 2021, Reporters Without Borders (RSF) published a ‘gallery of grim portraits’ of 37 heads of state or government who crack down massively on press freedom. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is one of those leaders (RSF, 2021).

In this situation, Sheikh Hasina, the prime minister of Bangladesh, inaugurated the 6.15-mile “Padma Bridge,” which spans the Padma River in Bangladesh, on June 25, 2022. The government symbolizes this bridge as the symbol of pride of the nation. Since the bridge’s construction began, print and electronic news sources reported every detail, such as the installation of every pillar. Moreover, in a directive published on June 9, 2022, the Department of Films and Publications of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, which controls the distribution of government advertisements to media outlets, “mandated” all newspapers to run daily series coverage through June 25, 2022, commemorating the opening of the Padma Bridge (Appendix-A). The coverage ultimately exceeded coverage on any national topic for days.

The coverage of Padma Bridge in *Prothom Alo*, the country's most widely read Bengali newspaper, revealed the extent of that coverage. On June 1, the newspaper began its coverage with a countdown. The bridge was the subject of front-page news every day. An additional nine episodes series titled "Padma Setur Adyopant" (Padma Bridge, Until Recently) was published in the newspaper until June 24. There was supplementary coverage on June 22nd, 23rd, and 24th. In addition, Padma Bridge was the key lead on the 23rd and 24th. *Prothom Alo* produced a supplementary, four-page cover on top of the original newspaper on the day the Padma Bridge was inaugurated. Everything represented a cement company's commercials. The newspaper's

associate editor wrote the lead story in the original newspaper. A three-column piece by journalist Anwar Hossain could be found in the first fold. Reports, graphics, images, and interviews are also included on pages 3, 7, 8, 9, 12, and the last pages. There were 16 pages of special extras in addition to this.

Live broadcasts from different Padma Bridge locations have been made frequently by TV broadcasters. The bulletin also included extensive information about the bridge's coverage. Online news sites produced video stories in addition to text-based news. Some others had broadcast live videos from the bridge area on their social media platforms. Many TV stations covered the inauguration ceremony with a team of 40–50 people by setting up a temporary camp on the banks of the Padma, according to journalist Ehsan Jewell, assignment in charge and special correspondent of "Ekhon TV," in an interview with Deutsche Welle (DW), a German public, state-owned international broadcaster. He added of the coverage of the nation's first business TV, Ekhon TV, "We did 28 talk shows from makeshift studios from the day before the inauguration, from 3 pm to the day after the inauguration, until 10 am" (Niloy, 2022).

To examine the government's holistic influences through sources, advertisers, owners of the media, and the journalist's perception of autonomy, the study utilizes three theories: the hierarchy of influence model, the propaganda model, and field theory. The hierarchy of influence model explains influences on journalism; the propaganda model helps explain the context of that influence, and field theory provides insights into how journalists see that influence as a threat to their profession. Based on the five levels (1. individual, 2. routine, 3. media organization, 4. social institutions, and 5. the social system) of analysis provided by the hierarchy of influences model, the effects that might impact the decisions made by journalists and media organizations can be examined (Reese & Shoemaker, 2016). With Herman and Chomsky's (1988) propaganda

model giving journalists only a minimal amount of autonomy as they work to uphold the interests of their sources, advertisers, and other elites, more critical political and economic explanations, for instance, perceive journalism as an extension of class and corporate power. The model postulates that filters reshape and alter it from its original form before the news reaches its audience or the general public. In distinguishing realms of action that must be understood in connection to one another and that, in the instance of the journalistic field, imply autonomy, homogeneity, and a path-dependent historical trajectory, Bourdieu's (2005) field theory is comparable to institutionalism. To understand what is happening in the journalistic field, one has to understand the degree of autonomy of the field and, within the field, the degree of autonomy of the publication that a journalist writes for.

1.1 Goal and Research Question

This study looks at the factors that were in play during the significant Padma Bridge coverage in Bangladeshi media. This study specifically looks into the influences that stem from the organization and social institution level of the hierarchy of influence model in light of the government's "mandate" that all newspapers run daily series coverage commemorating the opening of the Padma Bridge and the Prime Minister's office's infiltration of 38 news ideas through a press conference. Due to the advertisements' widespread presence on Padma Bridge in the media during the inauguration month, it was obvious that the advertisers were quite active.

In addition to analyzing the propaganda model's ownership, advertiser, and source filter, this study also looks at how money and power may be used to suppress dissent, censor newsworthy publications, and open avenues of contact between the general public and powerful commercial interests. Additionally, this study looks at Bangladesh's power structure and how it

restricts journalists from doing their duties to evaluate the degree of autonomy of the journalism profession.

This study involves one-on-one interviews with two journalists and one news manager from the chosen media sources through a videotelephony software tool to learn more about the influences and limitations that journalists and media outlets encounter. After transcribing those interviews, the study determined the themes that indicate the impacts on journalists based on the three hypotheses.

This study aids in understanding how journalists reconcile their responsibilities and how the news media functions in hybrid or authoritarian regimes. Understanding their relationship and why press freedom is crucial for democracy will be helpful. To that goal, the following research question is posed in this project:

RQ1: How does the Bangladeshi media's coverage of the Padma Bridge opening reflect forms of government influence on journalists?

1.2 Organization of Thesis

Chapter 2 discusses in great detail why the Padma Bridge has received media attention ever since it was planned, why it is significant to the Bangladeshi people, how the ruling party's politicians attributed the bridge with the "symbol of pride" of the country, and how the government went about pursuing the coverage.

Chapter 3 discusses the hierarchy of influence model developed by Shoemaker and Reese, the propaganda model of Herman and Chomsky, and Bourdieu's field theory. It explores how those theories addressed the impacts on journalists and journalism and the key concepts scholars should consider while locating influences. The next section of this chapter examines

how authoritarian governments repress media outlets worldwide and what journalists should do to defend democracy. The chapter also places Bangladesh's media market in context and describes how the nation's governments have repressed the media ever since the country's independence.

The methods utilized to answer the study's research questions and goals are described in Chapter 4. The chapter explains the benefits of using qualitative interviews as a method of data collection for this particular project. The outcomes of this research endeavor are discussed in Chapter 5. It also discusses the study's findings and ends with a concluding remark.

CHAPTER 2. CORRUPTION, CONSPIRACY, AND “SYMBOL OF PRIDE”

Padma Bridge was embroiled in corruption controversy from the very beginning of its inception. It was estimated to cost \$1.69 billion initially. Papers were signed to distribute \$1.2 billion from the World Bank, \$615m from the Asian Development Bank, \$430 million from Japan, and \$140m from the Inter-American Development Bank (Basu, 2022). But following a corruption scandal World Bank and other global lending agencies pulled out of the project. The entire amount of building the bridge is financed by its government (Mahmud, 2022).

The corruption allegation was the most prominent allegation against Bangladesh government officials and created a massive buzz at home and abroad. In a statement, the World Bank Group (2012) said, ‘The World Bank has credible evidence corroborated by various sources which point to a high-level corruption conspiracy among Bangladeshi government officials, SNC Lavalin executives, and private individuals in connection with the Padma Multipurpose Bridge Project.’ The World Bank provided evidence from two investigations to the Prime Minister, the Minister of Finance, and the Chairman of the Anti-Corruption Commission of Bangladesh (ACC) in September 2011 and April 2012. In a separate statement (2012), the World Bank Group announced the debarment of SNC-Lavalin Inc. and over 100 affiliates for ten years. The Canadian company did not contest the allegations against it but agreed to a “Negotiated Resolution Agreement” with the World Bank, which resulted in the debarment. On December 17, 2012, Bangladesh's Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) filed the Padma Bridge graft case accusing seven government officials (The Daily Star, 2014).

But things started to change after two years. A Dhaka court acquitted all seven government officials following the anti-corruption commission's final report submitted to the

court, saying the charges could not be proved against the accused (Mukul, 2014). After five years of the graft allegation, a Toronto court cleared two former officials of SNC-Lavalin and a Bangladeshi Canadian businessman of the charge of planning to bribe Bangladeshi officials to secure a consultancy contract in the Padma Bridge project (Dhaka Tribune, 2017).

Following this verdict, the government of Bangladesh started a vigorous campaign against the graft allegation of the World Bank, claiming it was a conspiracy against the country and the country's first Nobel Laureate, Dr Muhammad Yunus, was involved with it. Sajeeb Wazed Joy (2017), the son of Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and the government's chief Information Technology advisor, claims in an article on his Medium blog that World Bank owes Bangladesh an apology after a failed attempt to defame the country. He wrote that the Canadian court had stated that the evidence of corruption in the project was based on gossip and rumor. In other words, it was made up. He further wrote that then-U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton had instructed the World Bank to cancel the funding of the Padma Bridge to punish our government. She did so because Mohammed Yunus repeatedly asked her to take action against his mother. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina claimed, "Dr. Yunus stopped the funding for Padma bridge. Why? So, he could hold onto the post of Grameen Bank MD" (Wazed, 2017).

A different narrative prevailed regarding the corruption allegation and the Canadian court's verdict, but the Bangladeshi media have yet to report on this. Authoritarian governments love to rewrite awkward histories, and with their control over the media, the courts, and every other state institution, they generally can do so (Bergman, 2022). Bangladesh's governing Awami League and its acolytes are doing their best to erase the corruption scandal from people's minds (Bergman, 2022). The acquittal followed a decision by a Canadian judge that wiretap surveillance evidence obtained by Canadian police —crucial to the prosecution of the men —

could not be used in a trial against them as an earlier judicial order to permit the wiretaps had not been properly given. As a result of this decision, the Canadian prosecutors decided they could not proceed to trial. The acquittals were, it should be noted, not evidence-based but based on procedural failures. However, even without a trial convicting these men, what is important about this decision, is that it does not take anything away from SNC Lavalin's prior admission of culpability for involvement in a conspiracy to bribe Bangladesh government officials (Bergman, 2022).

Following the graft allegation, Bangladesh has dropped plans to seek World Bank funding for the Bridge (Ahmed, 2013) and decided to construct the bridge with its finance (Liton & Hasan, 2013). China Major Bridge Engineering Company Ltd was awarded the Tk121.32 billion contract to build the main bridge in 2014, and they completed the construction in 2022 (bdnews24.com, 2022). It costs \$3.86 billion and is one of the most significant projects Bangladesh has ever undertaken (Mahmud, 2022).

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated the bridge on June 25, 2022. The bridge connects Louhajang, Munshiganj to Shariatpur, and Madaripur, linking the country's southwest to the northern and eastern regions. The double-layer steel truss bridge incorporates a four-lane highway on the upper level and a single-track railway on the lower level. It is the longest in Bangladesh (BBA, 2015).

Bangladesh is a riverine country with a coastline of 580 km on the northern littoral of the Bay of Bengal (Islam et al., 2020). It has a massive network of approximately 700 rivers, about 7% of the country's total area. The country's entire area comprises a 24,000 km extensive network of inland waterways (Uddin et al., 2017). Millions of people depend on rivers to cultivate their agricultural land and transport goods and products from one place to another. On

the other hand, the rivers are the barriers to communication among the different parts of the country due to insufficient bridges on the rivers (Hafsa et al., 2022).

The Padma is one of the three significant rivers in Bangladesh and is morphologically highly dynamic (Yeasmin, 2011). The river is 120 km long in Bangladesh, and its width varies from 4 to 8 km (Chowdhury 2003). The mainstream goes through the Chapai Nawabganj, Rajshahi, Pabna, Kushtia, Faridpur, Rajbari, and Chandpur districts of Bangladesh (Galib, 2011). It detaches around 60 million people of the 21 communities from the country's southwest to the northern and eastern regions. Commuters faced untold suffering as there was no direct land route between Dhaka and the southern districts.

Crossing the river channels in Paturia of Manikganj-Daulatdia of Rajbari, Shimulia of Munshiganj, and Kathalbari of Madaripur by ferry was the only way, and it causes people to suffer all through the year. Dense fog in winter and strong river currents often caused the postponement of ferry ghats at Mawa, Paturia Daulatdia, leaving people in utmost hassles and endless waiting (Hossain, 2022). Especially during festivals like Eid and holidays, the traffic congestion waiting for the ferry took hours, even days, under the open sky. The road's inaccessibility through the mighty Padma hit emergency patients hard, with many reports of patients dying while waiting for a ferry to cross the river (Monzur, 2022).

Economists estimate that the bridge will not only facilitate the socio-economic growth of the Southern part of the country but also impact the nation and the whole region. International trade, particularly with neighboring countries, will get a boost due to seamless transport connectivity, which will be facilitated by the bridge (Rahman, 2022). The bridge will add Tk 423.62 billion to the gross domestic product (GDP) in one year. The estimated amount equals 1.2 percent of GDP (Express, 2022). The Policy Research Institute's findings assert that the Padma

Bridge can achieve 29 percent growth in the construction sector, 9.5 percent in agriculture, and 8 percent in Bangladesh's manufacturing and transport sector. The Bridge will reduce overall poverty by 0.84 percent annually and contribute to industrial development, agricultural expansion, regional trade, and connectivity (Mahmood, 2022).

The government symbolizes this bridge as the symbol of pride of the nation. In her inaugural speech, Prime Minister Sheikh called the Padma Bridge a symbol of the pride, dignity, honor, and ability of Bangladesh. She said, “Ignoring many obstacles and breaking the web of conspiracy, today, the much-desired bridge stands on the chest of the turbulent Padma River” (New Age, 2022). Her son and Prime Minister's ICT Affairs Adviser Sajeeb Wazed Joy said, “Padma Bridge is not just an engineering masterpiece but a symbol of pride and dignity of Bangladesh as well. People of this country equally share this glory (UNB, 2022).”

On May 2 of this year, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina gave World Bank President David Malpass a painting of the Padma Multipurpose Bridge (The Business Standard, 2023). After her informal meeting with the bank's Board of Executive Directors in the Shihata Conference Room at World Bank headquarters, she handed the picture to him. The event commemorated Bangladesh and the World Bank's 50-year cooperation. On this occasion, the prime minister and the president of the World Bank also opened a photo exhibition.

The Bangladeshi media covered the inauguration of the bridge extensively. The bridge first got coverage at home and abroad when the World Bank brought corruption allegations. Since the bridge's construction began, print and electronic news sources reported every detail, such as installing every pillar and span of the bridge, trolled as span or pillar journalism. Finally, the Dhaka media competitively covered this bridge during the inauguration week on the pretext of the people's interest. Although media expert says, it has reached the point of distortion (Niloy,

2022). There has been extensive discussion and criticism online and offline about this media coverage.

In an interview with DW, the German public, state-owned international broadcaster, Abdullah Al Mamun (A-al Mamun), former chair of the Department of Mass Communication and Journalism at Rajshahi University who has worked on the political economy of mass media said that “the amount of coverage in the mainstream media before the inauguration, on the day of the inauguration and after, is not just excess coverage, it can be called perverse coverage. Very unusual coverage has been given.” He said,

The reason is that the structure of the media and its reporting ethics, which will protect the balance, is not there today. Some media are forced to report. Now the pressure is too much. On the one hand, the government structure has become one with ownership and corporate interests attached to it. We used to think that news is a salable item - there is no chance to think about it anymore. News is now a tool; news is now something else. That is why the media has started a journey toward distortion. (Niloy, 2022)

Moreover, in a directive published on June 9, the Department of Films and Publications of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, which control the distribution of government advertisements to media outlets, “mandated” all newspapers to run daily series coverage through June 25, commemorating the opening of the Padma Bridge (Appendix-A).

3.1 Media Landscape of Bangladesh

Between 1757 and 1947, or over 200 years, the British colonial government ruled the subcontinent, including Pakistan, Bangladesh, and India. Pakistan was founded on August 14, 1947, consisting of East Pakistan and West Pakistan. East Pakistan was liberated in 1971 and became the independent country of Bangladesh (Das et al., 2020). With an estimated population of around 171 million people living on a land area of 56,977 square miles, Bangladesh is the tenth most populous country in the world (World Population Review, 2023). It is also the fourth-largest Muslim nation in the world (World Population Review, 2023). The name "Bengalis" derives from the Bengali or Bangla language that Bangladeshis speak and refers to them ethnically. Bengali is the nation's official language and is spoken by more than 98% of the population (Library of Congress. (2023). The most popular medium in Bangladesh is television. In the country, 83.6 percent of people aged 15 and over frequently watch television, according to the National Media Survey 2021. 18.3% of people aged 15 and over regularly read the newspaper. 13% also use the radio (Prothom Alo, 2022).

Until 1990, the nation had only a small number of newspapers and a monopoly on government-run radio and television stations. Following the overthrow of the autocratic Hossain Md. Ershad's dictatorship in December 1990, the caretaker government repealed the constrictive and undemocratic Printing and Publications Ordinance, which spurred the start of the media's expansion (Saleh & Chowdhury, 2009). Bangladesh Television, or BTV, the only TV station in the country, has occasionally been described as the official mouthpiece of the ruling class (Shoesmith & Genilo, 2013). A few international channels first appeared in 1992 after

introducing Television Receive Only (TVRO) Dish (Wahid, 2007). Before starting community and for-profit radio stations in 1998, Bangladesh Betar, the government-run radio network, held a monopoly. According to various studies, factors contributing to the seeming decline include the development of other media, the monopolistic situation in broadcasting, the perception of radio as the government's spokesperson, and enduring beliefs that the medium served as a weapon of colonial authority (Genilo et al., 2013).

Following independence, Bangladesh steadily evolved into an authoritarian-capitalist state with democratic aspirations (Riaz, 2005). The media quickly abandoned its political focus and turned almost entirely toward the market (Rahman, 2020). Early in the 1990s, Bangladesh switched from authoritarian to neoliberal policies, offering South Asia the most tolerant FDI environment that permitted 100% foreign equity ownership with a complete departure policy (Islam, 2021). Bangladesh's media sector significantly increased once this legal impediment was removed. The government permitted international TV broadcasts, private TV ownership, and aired commercial productions on state-owned television (Rahman, 2020).

Private television in Bangladesh mainly resulted from the rivalry between competing political parties. In Bangladesh, a political-commercial nexus is the broad definition of an informal power connection (Rahman et al., 2017). When granting licenses to private television networks, the ruling party always takes advantage of its friends (Khan, 2020). Both major political parties in power since 1991 share the practice of issuing licenses for private television channels to party members, particularly legislators, ministers, senior party leaders, and their devoted and ideologically similar businesses (Razzaque, 2013). Party members received the first TV licenses when the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) was in power (2001–2006). Top BNP leaders and party members received permits for ten private satellite television networks (Khan,

2007). The Bangladesh Awami League (BAL) administration continued down the same path in the following years, awarding private television licenses to individuals with party ties or business connections. Thirty-five people have received licenses from the BAL government since 2010, while the information ministry issued 16 licenses for private satellite channels in the 2013-2014 budget year (Mamun, 2015).

A small group of influential businessmen owns most of the top private media outlets. They value good government relations over preserving journalistic freedom and view their media operations as instruments for wielding power and maximizing revenues (RSF, 2023). Three significant overlapping components of Bangladesh's media ownership structure were identified by a study (Riaz & Rahman, 2020) examining more than a hundred profiles of companies and business conglomerates, their owners, and their interests in media outlets. First, these outlets are dominated by the families of many media proprietors. In Bangladesh, nepotism is a well-known feature of media company ownership and management. Second, most business owners have some direct or indirect connection to political parties. Whether a media station is licensed depends partly on the government's relationship with the station's owner. Politicians use the media channels that they possess to promote their views. Media ownership typically changes when a government is deposed due to this kind of clientelism. Third, the bulk of media outlets in Bangladesh is controlled by substantial business conglomerates, which employ a range of media outlets to further their political and economic objectives and gain the support of powerful politicians. As a result, politicians routinely choose the guests for the evening talk shows on privately owned TV networks (RSF, 2023).

Every year, there are more media outlets in the nation. Bangladesh has over 100 online news sites, 1,248 daily newspapers, 28 FM radio stations, 45 commercial television networks,

and 32 community radio stations (Riaz & Rahman, 2020). Hasan Mahmud, the minister of information and broadcasting, claimed that the media had experienced extraordinary growth over the previous 11 years (Bangla Tribune, 2021).

Hallin and Mancini (2004) developed a conceptual framework for comparing the media systems of 18 Western democracies, including nine Northern European countries. They identified three ideal media systems consisting of the four dimensions of the structure of media markets, political parallelism, journalism professionalization, and the state's role concerning media systems. The elite-oriented, low-circulation press and related centrality of electronic media are features of the Mediterranean or Polarized Pluralist Model. Press freedom and the growth of the commercial media industries typically happened later; newspapers are frequently commercially unviable and require subsidies. The early emergence of press freedom, the newspaper industry, and extremely high newspaper readership are characteristics of the North/Central European or Democratic Corporatist Model. In addition, it has a long history of supporting organized social groupings through strong party publications and other media. Although newspaper circulation now is smaller than in Democratic Corporatist cultures, the North Atlantic or Liberal Model, comparable to the Democratic Corporatist Model, is defined by the early growth of press freedom and the mass-circulation press. With the notable exception of the fiercely partisan British press, commercial publications predominate, political parallelism is minimal, and internal plurality predominates. Bangladesh's media system cannot be categorized according to the abovementioned models as mutually exclusive. While its circulation resembles that of the Mediterranean system, the dimension of political parallelism is characterized by features from both the Mediterranean and Northern European models. In terms of the professionalization of journalism, it is similar to the North Atlantic or Liberal Model; and the

role of the state resembles that in both the Mediterranean and Northern European models. This suggests that classifying the world's media systems according to these mutually exclusive categories may be oversimplifying an actually complex phenomenon. Media Control in Bangladesh

Bangladeshi media has experienced censorship under every government since the country's independence in 1971. Both democratically elected governments and military regimes have attempted to exercise control over the media, frequently suppressing any possibility for rational criticism. Government entities, including law enforcement agencies, military intelligence, and the telecommunications regulatory authority, were involved in threatening or censoring information (Ahmed, 2021). Because of the nature of self-determination, Bangladesh had a free and radical press before it became an independent country. Local media demonstrated its sincere backing of the uprising that led to independence in 1971 and its reasoned opposition to the West Pakistani elite and pro-East Pakistani autonomy sentiments. The Pakistani military junta moved quickly to muzzle journalists when conflict broke out. For the Bengali media, this meant death, but for its foreign equivalents, fear was enough (Bass, 2013).

The government of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the nation's founding father, severely repressed the media in the newly independent state. The country has inherited repressive legislation that it might apply as needed, such as the Penal Code of 1860 from colonial times, the Code of Criminal Procedure of 1898, the Official Secrets Act of 1923, and the Printing and Publication Ordinance of 1960 from Pakistan (Ahmed, 2019). The Printing Presses and Publication Ordinance 1973 replaced the Printing and Publication Ordinance 1960, which was repealed in 1973 but did not change it (Riaz, 1993). The Special Powers Act of 1974 was passed by the government and allowed for preventive detention against those who, in the opinion of the

state, might commit prejudicial reports that could incite the commission of a prejudicial act intended or likely to jeopardize public order, the administration of justice, or Bangladesh's economic interests. Put another way, anything the government determines to be dangerous may be penalized (Misbah, 2013). 1975 saw the height of the Mujib administration's persecution of the media. The foundation of a totalitarian government was the fourth amendment to the Constitution. All political parties were disbanded by the Newspaper Declaration, which also mandated the closure of 29 daily and 138 weekly journals and the nationalization of the other four, except the Awami League, which was renamed the Bangladesh Krishak Sramik Awami League (Mohaiemen, 2013).

The leash previously placed on the press after Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's murder on August 15, 1975, was tightened once Ziaur Rahman assumed power after a succession of coups and countercoups. He headed the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, and martial law ruled that reporting on topics inciting fear or anxiety or criticizing the government were both crimes (Alam, 2008). H.M. Ershad, Bangladesh's second military dictator, and Zia's successor, had an adversarial relationship with the media. During his administration, periodic press warnings were issued, instructing editors on what not to print (Ullah, 1991). Throughout Ershad's eight-year tenure, various foreign periodicals were outlawed at different times. The Customs Act of 1969 was utilized as a suppression tool to halt the flow of foreign publications (Ahmed, 2019). The media created cryptic messages that an interested public could readily decipher and appreciate as covert ways to undermine and criticize him (Mohaimen, 2013). Sixty-seven distinct cases of harassment, 24 attacks on media organizations, 12 arrests, eight orders to halt publication, and two fatalities occurred in 1990, but the journalism persisted (Nirikkha 1991).

With the advent of democracy, the BNP, led by Khaleda Zia, Zia's widow, formed the country's first elected administration. For the next two decades, she traded off being in charge with the AL, led by Mujib's daughter Sheikh Hasina (with a two-year "interim" under military control in 2007–2008). Despite some obvious and subtle variances, these two parties' approaches to press freedom were broadly similar (Ahmed, 2021). With each change in government, just the aim changed. When Ershad resigned, the press's newly found zeal may have solidified its freedom and fearlessness at the dawn of democracy. Sadly, the opportunity was lost. While the formal apparatus for repression faded into the background but was not eliminated, editors and journalists spent the 1990s succumbing to state and party favor and putting personal gain ahead of morals (Ahmed, 2019).

The emergence of new media, like private television and the internet, at the start of the twenty-first century presented difficulties for its commitment to control. The Bangladesh Telecommunication Act (BTA), revised in 2006, rendered state surveillance legal during the BNP-Jamaat era (2001–2006), giving law enforcement authorities the absolute authority to eavesdrop on citizens' private conversations at the direction of the government. The Information and Communication Technology Act (ICTA) of 2006 was enacted apparently to regulate Bangladesh's technology advancements. It contained the infamous Section 57, a conveniently unclear legal foundation for any limits on speech and journalism that might be put in place as a result of the Constitution's allowances. Launched in 2000 during the Awami League administration as a private alternative to BTV, Ekushey Television (ETV) was shut down in 2002 due to a sustained campaign against it. Its managing director Simon Dring, who had previously been expelled for his reporting on Pakistani military aggression in 1971, was expelled once more (Penna et al., 2002).

In 2007, a military-led administration assumed power under the pretext of an emergency. After taking control, it halted the broadcast of CSB News, the country's first 24-hour Bangla news channel, for alleged forgery because officials weren't happy with how the country's unrest was reported (The Daily Star, 2007). The Bangladesh Awami League administration blocked Channel One, owned by a close friend of former prime minister Khaleda Zia's son, in 2010 (Shoesmith et al., 2013). Diganta TV and Islamic TV's broadcasts were suspended in June 2013 on suspicion of presenting controversial programming to inflame public opinion. Both networks had ties to the Bangladesh Jammāt-e-Islami (BJI) and the BNP, two opposition parties (The Daily Star, 2013). Amar Desh, a publication edited by Mahmudur Rahman and once owned by Mossadek Hossain Falu of the BNP, was later shuttered during the AL administration (Papri, 2018). The print edition was shut down in April 2013, and the online edition in August 2016. The Daily Prothom Alo and the Daily Star lost significant money in 2015 due to government entities allegedly blocking advertisements (Riaz & Rahman, 2020).

The Khaleda Zia administration passed the ICT Act in November 2006 to control electronic communications. It was strengthened by Sheikh Hasina's administration in 2013, doing away with the requirement for arrest warrants. With the 2013 amendment, the prison term for crimes has increased from 10 to 14 years. Offenses under Section 57 of the Act, which allows prosecution of anyone who publishes material that is deemed false, obscene, defamatory, or any material that seeks to deprave or corrupt their audience in electronic form, have become non-bailable (Quadir & Paul, 2018). A Human Rights Watch analysis from 2018 observed that the law's "wide and expansive" language encourages abuse. It was discovered that between 2013 and April 2018, 1,271 charge papers were filed by police, the majority under Section 57 of the Act. Under intense pressure, the government repealed the ICT Act and passed the Digital Security Act

in October 2018, strengthening the terms of the colonial-era Official Secrets Act. The DSA gave the government complete latitude to launch inquiries into anyone whose behavior was deemed a "threat." According to the statute, law enforcement officials may detain them without a warrant if someone is suspected of using social media to commit a crime (Aziz, 2021). It gives authorities the authority to enter a property without a search warrant and to take objects without authorization. Furthermore, the Act provides the government with broad authority to order the deletion and blocking of any information or materials from the internet that it deems necessary, effectively putting an end to the voices of people who disagree with its policies or who speak out against human rights abuses in the country (Riaz, 2021).

Bangladeshi authorities are blocking online news websites. Before the 2018 general election, the government shut down 54 news websites on the accusation that they were disseminating false information and propaganda against the government. Well-known websites like risingbd.com, dhakatimes24.com, and reportbd24.com are among those that have been blocked by the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) (RSF, 2018). After publishing a report claiming corruption by Obaidul Quader, a prominent party figure and minister in the Awami League government, the Swedish investigative journalism website Netra News had its access to Bangladesh stopped on December 29, 2019 (HRW, 2020). Bangladeshi authorities previously blocked Al Jazeera and The Wire for publishing pieces that were critical of the administration (Bergman & Khalil, 2019). Additionally, they have arbitrarily blocked Bangladeshi news websites (Mahmud, 2019).

In recent years, Bangladesh has experienced a decline in press freedom and other forms of expression. Numerous sorts of pressure, including recurrent legal proceedings, harassment, and violent or fatal assaults, are placed on journalists and media organizations. Attacks on media

professionals often occur with no repercussions (Freedom House, 2023). There have been 35 media professionals killed in Bangladesh since 1992, 19 of them during the Awami League administration, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) (2023). Golam Rabbani Nadim, 42, the Bakshiganj upazila correspondent for Ekattor TV and the Jamalpur district correspondent for Banglanews24.com, passed away on June 15, 2023, a day after he had been attacked and hurt by some supporters of Mahmudul Alam Babu, a local leader of the ruling Awami League (The Daily Star, 2023). Golam Rabbani Nadim did some stories against Mahmudul Alam Babu.

On the other hand, for journalists, one of the worst laws in the world is the Digital Security Act (DSA). Without any warrant, it allows for arbitrary source confidentiality violations, including searches and arrests (RSF, 2023). Three hundred fifty-five journalists have been charged, making up 27.41% of the 1,295 cases submitted since the law took effect from October 2018 through April 11, 2023 (Prothom Alo, 2023).

3.2 Journalism in Authoritarian Regime

Numerous challenges or crises have faced journalism over the course of its history. Most non-democratic governments pressure the media and specific journalists to influence reportage (McMillan & Zoido, 2004). Governments can restrict press freedoms through laws and regulations or use legal action or criminal legislation to penalize journalists or media outlets when the content has already been made public (Barendt, 2007). Governments can also control news content, choose what information reaches the public, and affect political debate by constructing mass media infrastructure or granting subsidies to media outfits (Fredheim, 2017).

Nigeria experienced authoritarian military governance from 1960 until 1999. The administration passed harsh laws to muzzle the news media. In one day in July 1993, the government shut down 17 publications, including newspapers, periodicals, and one radio station, citing dangers to national security (Ojo, 2007). In the United Arab Emirates, several legal frameworks control and shape domestic business journalism, encouraging it to adhere to a Loyalist Press environment (Gibbs, 2021). Newspapers, periodicals, and magazines were shut down during Chile's authoritarian regime went out of business (Lagos Lira, C. P., 2019). Restrictions on the media have increased since the Taliban took power in August 2021, and hundreds of media outlets have shut down (ANI, 2022). Independent and opposition media are frequently punished in the authoritarian government of Azerbaijan, with law enforcement officials intimidating journalists and their families through arrests, beatings, threats, and other types of repression (Geybullayeva, 2021). In Russia, the state currently directly or indirectly owns all significant media sources, including television, important print publications, and internet news platforms (Repnikova, 2018). The influential Propaganda Department has consistently maintained control over Chinese media. Journalists and editors also receive "daily instructions on what may or may not be reported" in addition to efforts to restrict access to particular websites (Hutton, 2008).

Over the past few decades, particularly since 2006, both existing and emerging democracies have substantially eroded democracy (Repucci, 2020). Many countries that started down the path to democracy during the Third Wave of Democracy have either stalled out or gone backward; hybrid regimes have begun to thrive, and a new kind of authoritarianism has evolved (Puddington, 2017). The newly enthroned authoritarian leaders and heads of hybrid governments use some of the techniques of traditional dictators. However, they have also developed new

methods and tools for media control. These modern methods of media repression include many different components, such as censorship, regulation of media ownership, and franchising of the repression. De-democratization has resulted in new media and information legislation in many nations in the last ten years. These rules are more stringent and demanding than anything that has come before, and they are purposefully framed in a way that allows police enforcement to apply them in any way they see fit (Riaz, 2019).

New authoritarian authorities do not strictly restrict media ownership because they want to dress themselves as democratic. According to Way and Levitsky (2010), the media in many nations are no longer directly under the influence of the government. Private media is encouraged, although "major media outlets are tied to the governing party—through proxy ownership, patronage, and other unlawful ways" (Levitsky & Way 2010, p. 11). While opposition and independent media encounter significant difficulties, devoted followers and commercial enterprises are given media licenses. There have been cases where critical media outlets have been taken over with official support. By suppressing opposing viewpoints, these measures assure a domesticated media landscape and influence political narratives (Riaz & Zaman, 2022).

Numerous studies conducted in various nations have revealed that many journalists respond to intense and violent pressure by engaging in extensive self-censorship. Self-censorship denotes a self-imposed limitation of free speech resulting from deference to political interests and fear of superiors (Gessen, 2015). Journalists in Pakistan engaged in self-censorship due to unofficial government restrictions, an oligopolistic newspaper ownership structure, the judicial system, and a lack of security (Nadaur, 2007). The possibility of financial retaliation from the government, police, and court meddling, wiretapping, detentions, and arrests have increased and

normalized the self-imposition of control and discipline among Turkey's press corps (Yasil, 2014).

Additionally, many journalists adopt conformism and assert that their reporting is appropriate. Most media figures and journalists working for state-affiliated television in Russia view their primary responsibility as upholding the status quo. Through their programs, they regard themselves as significant contributors to preserving stability in the nation (Schimpfössl & Yablokov, 2014). Journalists may also reply with moral defenses on why practicing some self-censorship is acceptable. There are four main justifications found: self-censorship as a defense of the alleged advantages of development journalism among the journalists of three state-owned media institutions in Ethiopia; liberties typically accorded to editing practice; shifting ethical responsibility from the individual journalist to the institution; confidence that the audience will counter-read the news; and trust that the audience will read the news critically (Skjerdal, 2008).

Since they can select from a wide range of options, journalists have the agency to respond to pressures in ways other than self-censorship. While openly accepting some self-censorship pressure, some journalists push the envelope. It has been discovered that certain Hong Kong journalists have created their operational strategies to combat what they believed to be self-censorship initiatives (Lee & Chan, 2008). Others refuse such pressure and clash with chief editors and media owners while continuing to produce stories about subjects that might be seen negatively. Additionally, several journalists defy force by resigning from their positions in protest, participating in rallies, or supporting independent news organizations (Somfalvy & Pleines, 2021).

3.3 Journalism and Democracy

The discussion of journalism's contributions to democracy predates the profession and the field's early academic studies by a significant amount (McNair, 2009). Newspapers were connected to democracy by Enlightenment theorists with rationality, progress, and reason (Habermas, 1989; Thompson, 1996). They promoted a journalism/democracy nexus that aligned with the particular kind of modernity that most Western thinkers adhered to. They were common from the late 19th century onward, and their interpretation of modernity was based on an association with reasoned thought, order, objectivity, progress, and universal values—all of which journalism was expected to advance to foster the conditions necessary for an ideal public life (Giddens, 1991).

For the most part, journalistic duties have been examined about news concerning political life in democratic environments. It makes sense that this circumstance has contributed to the standardization of Western principles and practices in media as the "professional" standard by which journalism in non-Western regions has been measured (Hanitzsch & Vos, 2018). Journalism's fundamental connection to democracy is scarcely contested as an academic concept. Journalism is another name for democracy, or, better; you cannot have journalism without democracy, James Carey (1996) memorably said. The Western paradigm of journalism presupposes that news organizations are primarily independent of the government and that journalists are free agents who oppose authority while speaking for the public (Nerone, 2013).

Classical liberal thought is the foundation for the traditional narrative of media and democracy (Curran, 2002). It is known by several names among academics today, such as the "information model" of democracy (Bimber, 2003) and the "informed citizen" model of democracy (Schudson, 1998). The liberal narrative of journalism's benefits to democracy goes

like this: Journalism is a profession tasked with disseminating fact-based, unbiased political news. Democratic citizens need this information since it is their responsibility to form opinions about the numerous policy topics under discussion (Ryfe, 2019).

The fundamental duties of journalism in a democracy fall under three broad categories, according to Christians, Glasser, McQuail, Nordenstreng & White (2010): the task of keeping watch and informing, mainly as a public service; the duty of taking an autonomous role in public life and engaging in advocacy, critical commentary, guidance, and opinion expression; the responsibility of giving other media voices or sources a channel, forum, or platform to communicate with a self-selected audience.

The field has been focused on the political functions of the news since politics and democracy are viewed as necessary. To create a public that is capable of collective self-governance (George, 2013), journalists base their legitimacy on their responsibilities to protect the public interest, hold authorities accountable, draw attention to issues of shared interest, and take into account a variety of viewpoints (Norris & Odugbemi, 2010). According to universal consensus, democracy only helps good governance to the extent that citizens can access reliable and accurate information and, as a result, make informed decisions in elections and other situations (Chambers & Costain, 2001). From a normative standpoint, the democratic ideal is one of making informed decisions, and political journalism's results play a significant role in this. Journalists disseminate the information so that voters can compare competing candidates and parties (McNair, 2009).

Normative theories gained traction soon after World War II (WWII) when politicians and scholars started acknowledging the media's influence over public discourse. In its 1947 report, the Commission on Freedom of the Press in the United States noted that a free exchange of

reliable information and various opinions is crucial to democracy. The idea put forth by Siebert, Peterson, Peterson, and Schramm in 1956 that "the press constantly assumes the form and coloration of the social and political systems within which it operates" has held up well over time (p. 1). The functions of journalism must be understood in light of the appropriate political, economic, and sociocultural settings.

Critically examining the powerful in politics, business, or other significant realms of society is an extension of political journalism's information function in a democracy. Some academics refer to it as a watchdog position (McNair, 2009; p239), while others (Christian et al., 2010) refer to it as a monitorial role. In a democracy, journalists oversee the exercise of power to prevent the abuses that marked the feudal past (McNair, 2009). Creating policies that reflect public opinion, or the preferences of what the majority of persons want to happen concerning any given subject, is the responsibility of policymakers. One of journalism's primary responsibilities is ensuring that decision-makers are attentive to public opinion (Ryfe, 2019).

In addition, McNair (2009) views journalism's function in a democracy as that of a go-between, the citizen's representative before the political establishment, who makes sure that the public's voice is heard. As partisans in the public discourse, journalists can also support certain political positions and try to persuade the people of their point of view (p. 240).

Christian et al. (2010) describe other types of journalism as collaborative, radical, and facilitative, aside from the monitorial role. Instead of protecting individual rights and interests, the media should also play a facilitative role in creating a shared moral framework for the community and society (p 126). The radical part cannot be pushed aside in favor of market demands or professional standards. It ultimately has social and political motivations outside the news establishment's purview. It focuses on exposing power abuses and seeks to increase public

awareness of injustice, inequality, and the possibility for change (p 126). The collaborative role identifies and values the media's responsibilities when there is an inevitable need to engage with societal processes and events (p.127).

A social contract can be used to explain the link between democracy and media, and journalism (McQuail, 1992). This point of view contends that democracy is necessary for the media and journalism since it is the only system of governance that upholds the freedoms of speech, expression, and information, as well as the autonomy of the media from the government. Democracy satisfies its obligation to maintain and preserve these fundamental liberties to uphold the social compact with the media and journalism.

Hanitzsch and Vos (2018) describe journalistic jobs as discursive constructs of journalism's identity and place in society based on the framework of discursive institutionalism. These roles have been ingrained in institutional norms and practices of journalism and are open to rambling (re)creation, (re)interpretation, appropriation, and contestation. They contend journalists have significant roles in the political world and daily life. They define 18 roles for the domain of political life that satisfy the six fundamental demands of political life: informational-instructive, analytical-deliberative, critical-monitorial, advocative-radical, developmental-educative, and collaborative-facilitative. Journalists do tasks corresponding to three areas of daily life: consumerism, identification, and emotion (Hanitzsch & Vos, 2018).

Readers of journalism are referred to as citizens in the context of political life. As a result, journalism's objective is to provide the public with the information they need to take action, engage in politics, and, if allowed, be free and self-governing (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2001). One of the most significant changes of our day has been a notable shift away from the media's prioritization of public issues and toward the realm of ordinary living (Hanitzsch & Vos,

2016). The media, which promotes market capitalism, emphasizes customers' private and individual wants (Brunsdon et al., 2001). Less in the capacity of public citizens concerned with the social and political issues of the day, audiences are spoken to more in the capacity of clients and consumers, whose fears, desires, attitudes, and emotional experiences dominate the conversation (Campbell, 2004).

3.4 Hierarchy of Influence Model

Journalism scholars generally agree that it is essential to recognize the factors that affect news content at different levels of study. The effects that could influence the decisions made by journalists and media organizations can be analyzed based on the five levels of analysis provided by the hierarchy of influences model (Reese & Shoemaker, 2016). From micro to macro, these five layers of influence on the news are (i) individual, (ii) routine, (iii) media organization, (iv) social institutions, and (v) social system. The model considers the various influences on the media at once and suggests how influence at one level may interact with that at another (Shoemaker & Reese, 2014). This makes it easier to comprehend the many progressive and conservative actors impacting journalism practices on various scales (Xu & Jin, 2017). Since the model's development in the early 1990s, it has been applied to research news selection, creation, and dissemination (Milojevi & Kristi, 2018). Its popularity and use in academic research presumably result from its brevity, testability, falsifiability, explanatory power, scope, and heuristic value (Shoemaker et al., 2003).

The individual level shows how journalists actively review the material and use judgment when determining what to write (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009). According to Willnat et al. (2013), demographic characteristics like gender, age, education, and work experience, as well as

personal attributes like political beliefs and family values, are among the variables that may have an impact on a journalist's work (Patterson & Donsbach, 1996). Despite being constrained by a complex system of laws, journalists make decisions based on psychological traits. As a result, this level of study considers each person's relative autonomy and how their interactions with and contributions to the organizations in their environment create who they are (Shoemaker & Reese, 2016). Despite cultural differences, it is frequently thought that journalists worldwide have comparable qualities, values, professions, and work patterns (Himmelboim & Limor, 2011). It is, therefore, possible to speak of a dominant occupational ideology of journalism on which most news workers base their professional perceptions and praxis but which is interpreted, used, and applied differently among journalists across media (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996).

The routine level refers to the structured, routinized, recurring processes and forms that media professionals employ to carry out their duties (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). Routines, which include implicit rules and ritualized enactments that are not usually made explicit, are the modes of operation that make up social practices. These procedures and actions act as heuristics or shortcuts for choosing actions based on accepted news values (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009). Organizational policies, standards, and attitudes influence an individual journalist's work and the news they generate. Although news routines are essential for journalists and the organization, they have evolved to consider audience interest and accepted news values. The routine level focuses on how newsroom routines and journalist expectations affect content development (Hanitzsch et al., 2010). In examining these practices, scholars make the assumption that power is exercised within organizations—not always through leaders' eccentric demands but rather through the development of a pattern of procedures that serve the organization's needs, conform

to the requirements of information sources, manage the workflow, and give it a purposeful structure (Shoemaker & Reese, 2016).

Regulations regarding the preferred forms of material by news organizations may have an organizational impact on journalists. According to Milojevi & Kristi (2018), editors (newsroom), managers, and owners (media organizations) are the organizational factors of impact. At this level, it is more apparent how power is employed within organizational boundaries, how decisions are made and carried out, and whether those acts impact journalists' judgments to censor material (Reese, 2001). Others may select public affairs issues that conform more closely to traditional journalistic conventions, while some organizations adopt softer news formats that encourage interaction (Boczkowski & Mitchelstein, 2013). By assigning delicate stories to less seasoned journalists, advising them to use caution, or offering a rationale that is supported by the industry, news managers try to minimize conflicts (Lee & Chan, 2008). The influence at the organizational level refers explicitly to the media organization's economic imperatives and policies (Reese, 2019). Örnebring (2009) distinguishes between organizational and occupational professionalism to highlight the conflictual aspect of journalists' work: professionals must adapt their practice to organization goals and professional norms, which might be at odds. The realization that media representations are an organizational output was made possible by the ethnographic approach to journalism. As they create collaborative partnerships, these organizations' boundaries become more fluid. They now take on various new, evolving forms, from the massive daily news-gathering company to the lean, minimalist blogging operation (Shoemaker & Reese, 2016). While the organizational level looks at factors on which communication organizations may vary or the variables that define variances between

organizations, the routine level of communication investigates industry-standard methods (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009).

Shoemaker and Vos (2009) refer to communication organizations to include all forms of news organizations; more specifically, an organization in this context is a single newsroom and its associated departments; as a result, a chain is not an organization, but a conglomerate's philosophies would undoubtedly be an organization-level variable. Additionally, studies suggest that organizations often decide how to incorporate technology into the news. Therefore one of the primary factors traditionally linked to the organizational level would be technology adoption (Belair-Gagnon, 2015). Additionally, the organization determines its market orientation—which decides how closely it adheres to market philosophies. This may significantly influence the type of content journalists create (Beam, 2003; Ferrucci, 2015). Ownership can notably impact news creation (Akhavan-Majid & Boudreau, 1995; Coulson, 1994). A company also employs its leadership, affecting news production within any company (Schein, 2006). Therefore, while communication practices are consistent across the sector, organizational-level influences are set by each news company. Patrick Ferrucci and Timothy Kuhn (2022) argue that “organizations sit at the center of influences on journalism practice in the United States,” where forces must pass through an organization that decides which forces impact practice.

Creating content that will benefit the audience at the level of social institutions is under some pressure from the audience, marketers, and the market (Shoemaker & Reese, 2014). Here, the integration of the numerous media groups into a larger institution is considered. The structural dependencies impact the media institution it develops with other important systemic entities, such as the government, public relations, and advertising (Shoemaker & Reese, 2016). From the social institution level, in Mexico, journalists are influenced by criminal organizations,

governments, academic institutions, businesses, civil society, and transnational organizations (Relly & Bustamante, 2014). At *The Sopris Sun*, a weekly nonprofit community newspaper located in the town of Carbondale, Colorado, the government, the audience, donors, and advertising influence news production or the operation of the news organization in some manner (Ferrucci & Alaimo, 2020).

This extra-media level is described by Reese and Shoemaker (2016) as "the mesolevel context for media - the interplay of economic, political, and cultural variables - lying between organization and society as a whole" (p. 402). Benson (2004) argued for reintroducing the sociology of media (systems) to the analysis by focusing on the institutional journalistic field and dismantling the media system (particularly globally) into its institutional parts. This illustrates the media environment at the mesoscale, or the interaction between organizations and society regarding economic, political, and cultural concerns (Shoemaker & Reese, 2016). The media is treated by the new institutionalism perspective, which was brought from political science, as a political actor in relationships with others (Ryfe, 2006). This strategy incorporates a historical component that helps explain how practices and norms emerged due to situational factors. Institutional analysis helps to explain the homogeneity of the news media by demonstrating how they share the same objectives of obtaining legitimacy, information access, and profit (Cook, 1998; Sparrow, 1999).

The social system, the fifth and final level of study proposed by Shoemaker and Reese (2014), looks at how social structures, beliefs, and cultures might provide light on the selection and manipulation of media messages at the individual level (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009). To put it another way, the national or cultural context in which news is produced can encourage or discourage specific behaviors; for instance, playing the role of watchdog over the government is

not popular in dictatorships like North Korea but is vital to American media (Hallin & Mancini, 2011; Hanitzsch et al., 2010). How news is deemed valuable can also be influenced by cultural norms at the national level (Shoemaker & Cohen, 2012). Democracy and the relationship between politics and the media are just two examples of the social system that may affect society. This tier has some of the most divergent schools of thought in academia. The content here serves to preserve the status quo and is a product of particular ideological perspectives. The so-called hegemony perspective asserts that social pressures to maintain the status quo and advance the interests of the powerful are the primary factors influencing media content (Reese, 2007). According to the hierarchy of influences proposed by Shoemaker and Reese (2014), the social system in which journalism operates is the overarching factor that will have the most impact on journalistic practice, regardless of the effects of the other four micro-level variables (Ferrucci & Kuhn, 2022).

This study specifically looks into the influences that stem from the routine, organization, and social institution level of the hierarchy of influence model in light of the government's "mandate" (Appendix-A) that all newspapers run daily series coverage commemorating the opening of the Padma Bridge and the Prime Minister's office's infiltration of 38 news ideas through a press conference (Appendix-B). Due to the advertisements' widespread presence on Padma Bridge in the media during the inauguration month, it was obvious that the advertisers were quite active.

3.5 Field Theory

The journalistic field, according to Bourdieu's (2005) field theory, is characterized by

autonomy, homogeneity, and a path-dependent historical trajectory, all of which are shared with institutionalism in identifying domains of action that must be understood in connection to one another (Reese & Shoemaker, 2016). Similarly, the interdependencies between fields and institutions generate problems about where the boundaries between them are and how they impact news output. There is a two-way street of power, from the government to the press and back again (Reese & Shoemaker, 2016).

According to Bourdieu (1986, 1994, 1996), the term "field" refers to the social arena in which agents compete or struggle with one another for economic, cultural, social, and symbolic capital. Agents' places in the field are determined by their habits and the capital they hold. Further advancing the idea of a "journalistic field," Bourdieu (1998, 2005) describes news production as a "microcosm with its laws" (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 39).

The concept of habitus is crucial to Bourdieu's theory of structure and agency, that is, how society determines personal behavior (and vice versa). According to the definition of habitus, "it is a structuring structure that organizes practices and perception of activities... configuration of qualities indicating the distinctions objectively inscribed in conditions of existence" (Benson & Neveu, 2005, p. 3). When discussing habitus, you say that the individual, even the personal and subjective, is social and collective (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Despite this, the concept of habitus reflects a plausible idea: that people's predispositions, beliefs, judgments, and behaviors are the outcome of a protracted socialization process, most significantly in the home and secondarily in primary, secondary, and professional education. Habitus is continuously being changed (Benson & Neveu, 2005). A person's emotional and cognitive investment in the risks associated with a given sector is referred to by Bourdieu as "illusio," which can also be translated as the conviction that the game is worthwhile. A "doxa,"

or universe of tacit presuppositions, is a framework that organizes behavior in the field that agents who believe a particular game is worthwhile to play are likely to share (Benson & Neveu, 2005). In other words, journalists agree on some common set of rules which constitutes the actual field, even though they might disagree on specific ways of doing things, which displays the struggle for power inside the field and the struggle to determine the common set of rules (Møller Hartley, 2013) Journalistic doxa can contain broad social values and practices, like freedom of speech, and professional journalistic norms, such as accuracy and objectivity (Jian & Liu, 2018). However, doxa is not fixed: they can be altered by newcomers to the field or change agents, who “impose new modes of thought and expression, out of key with the prevailing modes of thought and with the doxa” (Bourdieu, 1993, p. 59). Falck and Barnes (1975) identified three ways change agents could evolve in their field: (a) through normative behavior, where they adapt to existing norms, and any new ideas merely support the dominant structure; (b) through deviant behavior, where they overturn the dominant norms and replace them with something different; and (c) through non-normative behavior, where they neither adopt nor reject prevailing norms but offer new ideas. While the first behavior results in little change and the second is typically dismissed, the third can bring about structural change in the field (Harlow, 2022)

Each field is organized around the antagonism between the so-called heteronomous pole, which represents forces outside the field, and the autonomous pole, which represents the particular capital particular to the field (Bourdieu, 2005). Fields are places of conflict where people and organizations consciously and unconsciously battle to value the types of power they wield (McNay, 1999). When agents try to transition from the heteronomous to the autonomous pole before making all the necessary payments, they resist (Benson & Neveu, 2005).

Economic and cultural power, or what Bourdieu refers to as "capital," are essential in the continual fight that is society (Bourdieu, 1991). He merely refers to things that can be converted into money or money itself as "economic capital." Cultural capital includes academic achievement, technical proficiency, general knowledge, communication skills, and aesthetic sensitivities (Benson & Neveu, 2005). The social world is organized around the conflict between these two types of power, with economic capital being more potent and fields inside fields being arranged parallel to one another (Swartz, 2012). In the journalism industry, the cultural capital is represented by perceptive commentary, in-depth reporting, and reporting techniques honored annually with US Pulitzer prizes (Benson & Neveu, 2005).

The journalistic field is viewed as the sphere of power, frequently interacting with individuals with large amounts of capital (Benson & Neveu, 2005). However, it is located within the dominant realm of cultural production within this more significant field of power. The journalistic field is most closely associated with the very heteronomous field of mass culture creation. There needs to be more independence in the journalism industry. Its organizational ideas are based on the conflict between those least affected by governmental, political, and economic influence and those most dependent on it (Bourdieu, 2005).

The level of the field's autonomy and the level of the publication a journalist writes for within the field must be understood to comprehend what is going on in the journalism field (Bourdieu, 2005). Indicators exist for this. An example might be a newspaper, which receives some of its funding from the government, advisors, etc. For a journalist, the level of autonomy will rely on their position in the industry, including things like authority. Therefore, one can create autonomy indices that, it can be argued, would allow one to forecast how agents will

behave, especially in their power to resist the demands of the state or the market (Bourdieu, 2005).

Bourdieu contends that much of this activity will reproduce the field's structure despite the inherently dynamic conflict within the fields unless and until pressure from surrounding fields is also applied (Benson & Neveu, 2005). The democratic process's creation of a new political system, significant modifications to the law generally, and economic crises are examples of such external shocks. The relative attraction of the journalistic field's autonomous and heteronomous poles to other areas of cultural production may change in response to any of these shocks.

This study looks at Bangladesh's power structure and how journalists perceive the government as acting to transform the doxa of the field by taking away some of the independence and autonomy of journalists.

3.6 Propaganda Model

More critical political and economic explanations, for example, see journalism as an extension of class and corporate power because Herman and Chomsky's (1988) propaganda model only grants journalists minimal autonomy while they work to uphold the interests of their sources, advertisers, and other elites. The model demonstrates how money and power may be used to stifle dissent, censor newsworthy publications, and open communication channels between the public and big commercial interests. The propaganda model contends that filters restructure and change it from its original form before the news reaches its audience or the general public.

Herman and Chomsky's (1988) list of news "filters" is divided into the following categories: (1) the size, concentrated ownership, owner wealth, and profit orientation of the dominant mass-media firms; (2) advertising as the primary revenue source of the mass media; (3) the media's reliance on information from the government, business, and "experts" who are funded and endorsed by these primary sources and agents of power; (4) "flak" as a method of media control; and (5) "anticommunism" as a national religion and control mechanism. These elements interact with and reinforce one another.

The majority of mainstream media are often enormous corporations, according to Herman and Chomsky (1988), and are owned by extremely wealthy people or by managers who are subject to strict limitations by owners and other market-profit-oriented factors. According to their model, media behavior will be influenced by ownership, scale, and profit orientation in various ways, ultimately promoting a right-wing bias in mainstream media discourses. Their PM notes that as most mainstream commercial media primarily rely on advertising for funding, media discourse frequently reflects the objectives of advertisers and the market. The first two filters, when combined, imply that political and economic factors are significant in news production, underlining the macro-level structural factors that essentially "form" mainstream news discourses (Klahen, 2017).

The third filter in Herman and Chomsky's approach emphasizes how news narratives are socially produced about sources (Herman & Chomsky, 1988). News discourses are often dominated by sources with institutional affiliation (the "main definers" of social reality). As a result, institutional interests are reflected in the news on a broad scale. Preferred meanings are frequently encoded into media texts within specific news stories, influencing how news articles are constructed in terms of their headlines and leads, as well as how the story is presented

overall, especially about choices of emphasis and overall tone, which Herman and Chomsky's PM is typically thought to be concerned with to identify bias within media discourses (Chomsky, 1989).

Adverse reactions to a statement or program in the media are called "flak." Letters, telegrams, phone calls, petitions, litigation, speeches, or bills before Congress, among other forms may make the complaint, threat, or punitive action. It might be run locally or centrally or consist of people acting independently. This fourth filter aspect of the model also incorporates the idea of power, emphasizing that dominant institutional actors have the necessary social-political power to exercise subtle or overt control over media performance patterns (Herman & Chomsky, 1988; McChesney, 1999, 2008). These first four filter components are thought to be dominant in "real-world" news generation processes, according to Herman and Chomsky. The filters work independently, but they also constantly communicate with one another. Specific time/place situational settings will determine how the various aspects manifest.

Anti-communism was the model's fifth filter, but it has now been expanded to include all main ideological components. The fifth filter element was first described by Herman and Chomsky (1988, p27), who stated that it "helps mobilize the populace against an enemy, and because the concept is fuzzy, it can be used against anybody advocating policies that threaten property or support accommodation with Communist states and radicalism." The term "filter" may also be used to describe recurring themes that are observed over a long period but usually go unnoticed, such as the virtues of capitalism, the deregulation of private enterprise, and media bias against unions (Wintonick, 1994). This filter's components apply to a wide range of case studies involving power and impotence, and they appear especially well-suited for studies looking into how the media legitimizes authority (Herman & O'Sullivan, 1991; Jensen, 2006). In

addition to being particularly relatable, the fifth filter element aims to deepen our knowledge of the relationships between political economics, social class, and ideological power. This PM aspect has yet to be thoroughly investigated, but it will likely serve as the basis for future empirical research (Klaehn, 2017). In addition, the fifth filter element provides a lens through which to examine how fear is used in media discourses. When it is ideologically advantageous to the interests of power, Chomsky (Chomsky & Barsamian, 1998) says that media may create or channel existing fear, depending on the circumstances. Fear can be used as an ideological control tool to mobilize resources and legitimate policies and advance particular agendas. The exact time/place situational environment will determine how the fifth filter functions regarding dominant ideological ideas, power, and othering.

The monopolistic control of the media, which is frequently accompanied by government censorship in nations where the levels of power are in the hands of a state bureaucracy, makes it evident that the media serves the objectives of a predominant elite (Herman & Chomsky, 1988). When the media are private, and there is no institutional censorship, it is far more challenging to discern how a propaganda system operates. This is particularly true when the media engage in aggressive self-promotion as representatives for free speech and the interests of the entire community, regularly criticize and expose corporate and governmental wrongdoing, and actively compete with one another. What needs to be more apparent (and goes unmentioned in the media) is the scope of such criticisms, the enormous disparity in power over resources, and how these factors affect how people can access private media systems and how they operate (Herman & Chomsky, 1988).

Whether the PM applies to nations other than the United States is debatable. There is a ton of research that, either explicitly or implicitly, backs the model, particularly for the United

States but also for other Western nations like Canada (Klaehn, 2002 & 2005), Spain (Sierra & Vázquez, 2006), Britain (Goss, 2013), and the Netherlands (Bergman, 2014). But the model is relevant to the study of Bangladeshi journalism, particularly the coverage of Padma Bridge in the country's media.

The dominant media's strong integration into the market system is one of the PM's vital structural factors (Herman, 2000). Ownership, the initial filter, is therefore crucial. The media in Bangladesh is privately held and centralized. Most of the leading private media channels are owned by a small, powerful group of businessmen (RSF, 2023). They sway media coverage to advance their commercial objectives (Riaz & Rahman, 2020). Therefore, it is crucial to consider the owner's participation in the media's coverage of Padma Bridge. TV channels in Bangladesh rely entirely on advertising (Haq, 2011), and newspapers in Bangladesh make money from cover sales and ad income (Chapal & Rahman). Because there was a lot of advertising activity at the time of the Padma Bridge coverage, the second filter of the PM is equally essential for this project. Since the prime minister's office provided a list of 38 story ideas on Padma Bridge that extol all the virtues of the bridge and the government, this study also ascertains how the propaganda model's source filter affects news content. When they find particular media content offensive, influential organizations and individuals are well-equipped to generate flak—negative criticism. Politicians' frequent critiques are likely to impact the news coverage in Bangladesh. When the World Bank brought up the corruption allegation during the Padma Bridge coverage, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina also criticized the media for criticizing the government, which makes the filter flak also relevant for this study.

3.7 Research Question

To examine the influences behind “competitive media coverage” of the 6.15-mile “Padma Bridge,” which spans the Padma River in Bangladesh, in the week of the inauguration (Niloy, 2022), my research seeks the answer to the question: How does the Bangladeshi media’s coverage of the Padma Bridge opening reflect forms of government influence on journalists?

4.1 Brief Summary

The ability to identify factors that are influencing news content at various levels is widely acknowledged as important among journalism scholars. The researcher interviewed one news manager and two reporters from four major Bangladeshi media outlets to explore the influences that media houses and journalists experienced on the Padma Bridge coverage. News managers, also referred to as managing editors, planning editors, and chief reporters, were organizing the coverage and directing the reporters who covered the bridge.

The researcher's native country is Bangladesh, where he lived for 33 years and did journalism for more than 11 years. He has criticized the government through his journalism and firmly believes in independent journalism.

4.2 Theoretical Framework of the Method

Interviews allow respondents to express their thoughts, goals, and experiences (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011). On the one hand, conducting interviews is similar to wearing "night-vision goggles" (Rubin & Rubin, 1995) since they allow the researcher to discover and further examine complicated phenomena that could otherwise be buried or invisible.

But even more, than finding hidden data nuggets, interviews are about rhetorically crafting meaning and co-creating a narrative. Instead of being stored in the thoughts of the interviewer or interviewee and passed back and forth, meaning is formed between participants (Tripp, 1983). Indeed, interviews are active processes through which we get to know people and ourselves, not merely neutral exchanges of questions and replies (Fontana & Frey, 2005).

Researchers must therefore consider how an interview is conducted through active negotiated contact in addition to what data are gathered throughout the interview (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995)

The existing literature suggests that researchers mainly interviewed and surveyed journalists to examine the factors influencing news content. In understanding the perspectives of journalists on the reporting of a civil rights movement known as the Pashtun Tahafuz Movement in the Pakistani media, the researchers conducted content analysis and detailed interviews with journalists (Hossain et al., 2022). They identified tight control by the government to blackout the movement from the mainstream media. Moreover, journalists' organizational and personal opinions also influenced the negative portrayal. From a thematic analysis of interviews conducted with 67 journalists in Cyprus, researchers identified that despite political and ideological pressures, journalists exercise agency, trying to challenge and alter them (Şahin & Karayianni, 2020). With the secondary analysis of interviews conducted within four different research projects over 12 years, researchers in Serbia examined how media owners, managers, and journalists perceive the influence exerted on their work during the democratic transition in Serbia (Milojević & Krstić, 2018).

The government's repressive law created a culture of fear in Bangladesh, leading journalists to self-censor to avoid retribution (Riaz, 2021). In this situation, interviewing had to be done with sensitivity. To build a reciprocal relationship, this study followed responsive interviewing (Rubin & Rubin, 1995), honoring interviewers with unfailing respectful behavior, reflecting on their own biases, openly acknowledging their potential effect, and owning the emotional impact of interviews.

According to Rubin & Rubin,

Responsive interviewing emphasizes flexibility of design and expects the interviewer to change questions in response to what they are learning. It accepts and adjusts to the personalities of both conversational partners. In this model, the interviewer and interviewee are treated as people with feelings, opinions, and experiences. (1995, p7)

Rather than emphasizing detachment, responsive interviewing encourages building a relationship between researchers and conversational partners. This model encourages the researcher to adapt new information and change directions if necessary to get greater depth of surprising insights. Responsive interviewing assumes that people interpret events and construct their understanding of what happened and that the researchers' job is to listen, balance, and analyze these constructions to understand how people see their world. (p10)

4.3 Interview Focus

This research draws upon, firstly, the five levels of analysis provided by the hierarchy of influences model; the effects that might impact the decisions made by journalists and media organizations can be examined ((Reese & Shoemaker, 2016). The study specifically looked into the influences of media organization, routine and social institutions level, among the five levels of influence.

To understand the influences from the organization level, the researcher asked the journalists who covered Padma Bridge - Was there any instruction from the news managers in covering Padma Bridge? If yes, what were those? Were the news sources from the Prime minister's office or other related offices talking to them and providing any particular information that directed them in deciding news content? The researcher asked the news managers that were

they got instructions from owners of the media or any government agency on how to cover the bridge.

Secondly, Herman and Chomsky's (1988) propaganda model argues that journalists only have minimal autonomy as they work to uphold the interests of their sources, advertisers, and other elites. The model postulates that filters reshape and alter it from its original form before the news reaches its audience or the general public.

For this study, the researcher asked the reporters and news managers - Was there any impact on their news selection after they got news ideas from the prime minister's office? Did they incorporate any of the ideas? How has the directive from the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting impacted their news content?

Finally, in distinguishing realms of action that must be understood in connection to one another and that, in the instance of the journalistic field, imply autonomy, homogeneity, and a path-dependent historical trajectory, Bourdieu's (2005) field theory is comparable to institutionalism. Field theory is not simple and incorporates many concepts, such as capital, doxa, and habitus. With these concepts, Bourdieu (1990) maps the field as a spatial area where the power dynamics can be observed and as a structurally organized site with its internal logic.

For this study, the researcher asked the reporters and news managers how the prevailing situation impacts their everyday journalism practices? What changes it brings in their thinking? Do they feel any self-censorship in doing their job?

4.4 Participant Selection

Most of the media in Bangladesh formed a team headed by news managers to cover the Padma Bridge. Reporters covering roads, highways, and communication of the country were

included in the team. To understand all levels of influence in covering Padma Bridge, for this study, the researcher used a purposive convenience sample of 12 individuals: four news managers and eight journalists from four different media outlets, including newspapers and television. Four of the eight reporters had been following the bridge from its construction, while the other six had been involved in the coverage throughout the month leading up to the bridge's opening. Kvale (1996) cautioned that conducting more interviews does not always result in a more scientific interviewing procedure and may even result in less meticulous data analysis. According to Glaser and Strauss (1967), qualitative researchers should keep speaking with participants until they reach theoretical saturation or the point at which further interviews add nothing to the study's understanding. This threshold may be achieved when approximately 12 interviews have been performed for purposive samples, according to Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006).

It wasn't easy to persuade the news managers and reporters to agree to interviews. To arrange the interview, the researcher had to contact them numerous times. Some originally agreed but then remained silent. One news manager requested the questionnaire before deciding to participate in the interview. He responded "yes" or "no" to each of the questions on the questionnaire through email. He avoided being specific and did not respond to queries on the function of the government. The researcher attempted to contact him again while explaining the study's one-on-one interview technique, but he did not reply. Another news manager initially agreed to the interview but changed his mind after learning about the study's questionnaire.

The identity of the participants and the media outlets are kept anonymous for this study. If the participants' responses are made public, they could lose their job or suffer ramifications from their employers for making comments that could be perceived as being too pro- or anti-

government. The government could also harass them in ways. To ensure the safety of the participants, the study does not mention the names of the reporters. As the selected reporters from each media covered the issue and their byline stories were also published or broadcasted, it could be easy to identify the participants if the media outlet's name were mentioned in the study. For this reason, the study also does not mention the name of the media outlets. Identifiable information was collected only to identify individuals for participation and to contact them for recruitment purposes.

4.5 Interview Procedures

Face-to-face interviews could have been an appropriate choice for this thesis as interviewers can build rapport with participants more quickly during face-to-face interactions than in mediated interviews (Fowler, 2009). Interviews in person also allow researchers to capture participants' nonverbal reactions, which may provide important context during the interview process (Opdenakker, 2006). But the researcher is pursuing his higher study abroad, and the journalists and news managers who participated in this study live in Bangladesh. That is why the researcher interviewed them through the videotelephony software program Zoom and recorded the full interview.

The following is a summary of the steps the researcher took during the interview process:

1. The researcher contacted a selection of qualified participants via email, WhatsApp, and Messenger.
2. After the primary consent, he emailed them the consent form.
3. Participants read and signed the consent form.

4. To set up times for the interview, the researcher again contacted them via email, WhatsApp, and Messenger.
5. The interviews lasted approximately 45 to 85 minutes.

4.6 Data Management

The researcher maintained the following plan for handling and storing the information gathered during the study. As privacy is one of the most important considerations for this interview project, the researcher only labeled individuals in the data using pseudonyms and demographic information. Participants in the interviews were also asked to sign an informed consent document. The informed consent documents describe to participants how the researchers planned to use and store their data. The completed consent forms were stored in a password-protected file on the researchers MacBook. The interviews were recorded via Zoom with participants' advance permission, given in the informed consent document. After each interview, the audio recordings were uploaded to the researcher's computer and stored there. The collected copies were labeled with the date and code name to match them with the correct participant. The researcher also took handwritten notes during the interviews. The original copies of these notes were stored in a secure, locked location at the researcher's home, and he typed the notes into a Word document to be saved on his personal computer following each day of interviews. Notes from each interview were labeled with the interviewee's code name and the date of the interview. After the interview rounds, the audio data was transcribed to enable subsequent data analysis.

4.7 Data Analysis

Each interview was transcribed verbatim from the recorded video files and saved in separate Word files. These scripts were full of repeated words and incomplete sentences. The researcher then carefully cleaned all the scripts. After cleaning all 12 scripts, each was translated verbatim into English from Bangla. After that, the researcher used the following steps for qualitative data analysis, adapted from Marshall and Rossman (2006) to fit this particular study:

Organizing the data: The researcher followed the steps laid out in his data management plan, carefully labeling the recordings, transcripts, and notes with the date and a code for each participant and other information that is relevant to each document.

Immersion in the data: As an initial part of the analysis process, the researcher familiarized himself with the data by repeatedly reading the transcripts and notes.

Searching for expressions of meaning: The researcher used Taguette, a free and open-source tool for qualitative research, to find themes in the 12 interview scripts. He uploaded the scripts in Taguette after their original file name. He reviewed the scripts and highlighted the texts with the theme word that emerged from the study's literature review. Those themes were Advertiser, Appropriate, Audience, Autonomy, Business, Conformism, Controversy, Coverage, Criticism, Democracy, Doxa, Future of journalism, Government, Inappropriate, Independence, Journalism, Moral defense, Organization, Owner, Power Structure, Protest, Routine, Social institution, Social media, Source, Strategies, Self-censorship. The researcher reviewed the scripts several times and ensured the texts were highlighted appropriately.

Coding the data: After highlighting each script carefully, texts from each script were gathered under the relevant themes. Clicking on every theme word, the researcher got the broader picture from all the scripts.

Writing analytic memos: Throughout the process, the researcher continued to take notes and journal about his findings, impressions, and feelings.

Offering interpretations: Ultimately, the researcher's organization led to a more detailed storyline about the diverse influences on Bangladeshi journalists as they covered the opening of the Padma Bridge, and he wrote a thoughtful, coherent interpretation of the data.

Searching for alternative interpretations: As the researcher interpreted, he sought evidence contradicting his ideas. When he identified contradictions, he followed up on them, searching for explanations or adjusting and expanding his interpretations as needed.

Writing the report: Each of these previous steps contributed to the final report and story, and writing this report was also a form of data analysis.

4.8 The Media Coverage

The researcher did not conduct a systematic content analysis to assess the extent of the media coverage; however, he thoroughly read the topic's media coverage. He was intimately familiar with the subject and did review the news coverage of three media outlets for the study.

Bangladesh Pratidin is the most widely distributed Bengali daily in Bangladesh, according to the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. On June 4, the newspaper started covering the opening of the Padma Bridge nonstop. The newspaper that day included a four-column box on the front page with the headline "Dream Padma Bridge is Ready" written in red ink. Beginning on June 5, they began publishing the inauguration countdown logo on the home page, sponsored by a cement company, and other news on the bridge. The newspaper continuously covered the Padma Bridge from June 6 to June 18 by publishing news, commentary, or both. The newspaper's editor's opinion was published on June 12. The Padma

Bridge's inaugural stage design, the fixed bus fare through the bridge, the lighting of the bridge's lamp, whom the prime minister will pose with for a photo on the bridge's opening day, when cars will be allowed to drive on the bridge, what developments will be made as a result of the bridge, and other silly topics were covered in the news. The Prime Minister, leaders of the ruling party Awami League, and opposition party leaders' statements about the bridge were also frequently reported in the newspaper. From June 20 to June 30, this newspaper published news and editorials nonstop, with a pause on June 19.

Along with news coverage from June 23 to June 26, there were many commercials from different companies celebrating the opening of the Padma Bridge. Only Bridge's news could be seen in the newspaper in those days. Pictures of the bridge appeared in some of the advertisements, while others also included images of the Prime Minister and his father, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Most ads expressed gratitude to the prime minister for erecting the bridge. On June 25, the day of the bridge's inauguration, the most significant amount of news and advertisements emerged. That day's newspaper featured a special event dubbed "Glorious Padma Bridge" on the front four pages. Only advertisements for this particular event could be seen on the bridge's first and second pages. The second and third pages were split evenly between advertisements and bridge news for the first half of each page. The bridge was mentioned on every page of the original ten-page newspaper's content. In the month of June, the newspaper published a total of 5 editorials on the Bridge.

The coverage was also similar in Daily Jugantor, one of the second-highest circulated newspapers in Bangladesh. The newspaper started covering the Padma Bridge following its opening on June 2. Except for these three days on June 3, 4, and 9, they have published news, editorials, travel news, and opinions about the Padma Bridge every day from June 1 to June 29.

Some bridge-related news appeared on the first page for 18 days. Except for the Padma Bridge news from June 23 to 26, no news was visible in this newspaper, similar to the coverage of Bangladesh Pratidin. The researcher counted the stories and opinions regarding the Padma Bridge that were printed in the newspaper that month to estimate the extent of coverage and found 134 news stories and 18 opinion pieces in total.

The highest circulated English newspaper Daily Star gave a little less coverage than the other newspaper. It started the coverage on June 2 and published news and other content on the bridge for 15 days in June.

The media outlets' social media pages and web versions both carried extensive coverage of the story. On June 24, 50 text or video reports about the Padma Bridge or its impacts were posted online on Prothom Alo, the day before the bridge was officially inaugurated. The total number increased to 61 on the inaugural day. Later, the number was 32 on June 26, 26 on June 27, 22 on June 28, 15 on June 29, and 13 on June 30 (Niloy, 2022). Between June 24 and June 30, Bdnews24.com published a total of 141 text, pictures, and videos in their Bengali edition with news about the Padma Bridge (Niloy, 2022). Live broadcasts from various locations near Padma Bridge are frequently seen on TV channels. Additionally, a significant amount of the bulletin was devoted to Padma Bridge coverage.

The government used every tool to influence the coverage

The government in Bangladesh took all necessary steps to ensure that Padma Bridge received the most media coverage possible, employing every tool “to threaten, pressurize, address, and inform the media outlets for the coverage” (Participant #1, personal communication, March 2, 2023). The press wing of the prime minister's office “confirmed” the coverage (Participant #9, personal communication, March 25, 2023). They used WhatsApp groups (Appendix C) to organize reporters and news managers and periodically gave instructions. Additionally, they kept a close eye on the media coverage. Various governmental entities also “took reporters and news managers to the bridge to produce articles” (Participant #7, personal communication, March 12, 2023).

According to a mandate from the Information Ministry, the Padma Bridge series of stories was to be produced by all media sources. This ministry “controls government advertisements” (Participant #1, personal communication, March 2, 2023). The government served as an advertiser by placing several supplements and advertising on the Padma Bridge (Participant #4, personal communication, March 6, 2023). They preyed on the government advertisement by claiming that “media that extensively covered the bridge had received these advertisements” (Participant #1, personal communication, March 2, 2023).

Some national media outlets reported the World Bank's departure with accusations of a corruption plot of extensive prominence at the planning stage of the bridge's construction in 2012. After three years, the construction started, and those outlets “were subject to various pressures from the government” (Participant #6, personal communication, March 10, 2023).

Those who verbally and in writing raised suspicions of corruption were “viewed as traitors” (Participant #2, personal communication, March 3, 2023). The Prime Minister referred to this reporting in several speeches and pronouncements as the “conspiracy against the government” (Participant #6, personal communication, March 10, 2023). Because of the “government's stance,” media outlets felt “that they would be portrayed as being against the Padma Bridge, the administration, or the state” (Participant #1, personal communication, March 2, 2023) if they didn't give the story more attention. Moreover, media outlets that “are born to serve the purpose of the government” (Participant #2, personal communication, March 3, 2023) heavily covered the bridge, “putting pressure on other outlets, who are trying to do journalism independently” (Participant #8, personal communication, March 13, 2023).

The media coverage for Padma Bridge was organized by the press wing of the prime minister's office. To ensure favorable coverage of the bridge, they kept constant contact with reporters and news managers, scheduled meetings, and developed and distributed story ideas. They brought journalists to the Padma Bridge to create news material. On May 30, 2022, in a WhatsApp group with news managers called “PMO Padma Bridge Publicity” (Appendix-C), the press wing sent a message (Appendix-D) and "requested" electronic, print, and online news media outlets to “display the countdown logo with the picture of Padma Bridge and Hon'ble Prime Minister's” on television screens and in a prominent location of the front page of newspapers and online outlets round the clock from 12:01 PM on June 1 until the inauguration ceremony on June 25. Additionally, they asked for “small Padma Bridge promotions to run on television media during peak times.” Following the “request,” newspapers and online media outlets began publishing the Padma Bridge logo in a prominent first-page position, and television stations began displaying it on their screens.

The prime minister's press secretary, Ihsanul Karim, organized a meeting with news managers and reporters in the prime minister's office on May 31, 2022. This meeting aimed to “discuss how to cover Padma Bridge for a month” (Participant #1, personal communication, March 2, 2023). At the gathering, there were more than 300 journalists. The press secretary and his deputy secretaries, Hasan Jahid Tushar and Shakhawat Moon instructed everyone to cover a month's worth of events. They sought “adequate coverage where everything on the bridge had to be fully explained” (Participant #8, personal communication, March 13, 2023). They were instructed to “run a countdown for a month, where no foul language is allowed” (Participant #1, personal communication, March 2, 2023). At the meeting, a list of possible news stories was provided to use when covering the bridge. However, during the conference, some media outlets declared they would provide extensive coverage for over a month and have their own plan (Participant #7, personal communication, March 12, 2023).

The WhatsApp groups were created to advise journalists on their coverage. These groups continually provided guidelines, such as “what should be the news title, what should be the subject of the stories” (Participant #9, personal communication, March 25, 2023). Some of those instructions were sent to the groups with news managers, and some with reporters of the Prime Minister beat. The media outlets requested “to ensure that there is no criticism” of the bridge in the news on numerous occasions. Such a directive was also given: “No negative words can be kept in the news; all words must be positive” (Participant #7, personal communication, March 12, 2023).

The Prime Minister's office and other ministries also escorted journalists to the Padma Bridge region. The prime minister's office planned such travels at “regular intervals starting with the commencement of the bridge's construction” (Participant #4, personal communication,

March 6, 2023). The Ministry of Information and the Ministry of Road, Transport and Bridges also took journalists to the Padma Bridge as the inauguration ceremony drew near. Reporters covered the story in their media outlets after returning from the trip. About 200 journalists were taken on the final excursion to the Padma Bridge by the prime minister's office, organized five or six days before the bridge's official opening. Following their return, “journalists from almost all the media did a byline news” about Padma Bridge (Participant #7, personal communication, March 12, 2023).

On June 9, 2022, just two weeks before the inauguration of Padma Bridge, the information ministry sent a directive to all the daily newspapers to publish daily news on Padma Bridge (Appendix-A). The directive was sent when media outlets “already started giving everyday coverage on Padma Bridge” (Participant #4, personal communication, March 6, 2023). If one or two did not cover a full length, this order had been given “to pressure the media as a whole” (Participant #2, personal communication, March 3, 2023). To get the government advertisement, they had given the “coverage more seriously” (Participant #4, personal communication, March 6, 2023). The government made many supplements and advertisements for the Padma Bridge, which was given by the Ministry of Information (Participant #7, personal communication, March 12, 2023). Each newspaper received advertisements “worth about one and a half crore taka” (1.4 million US dollars) (Participant #1, personal communication, March 2, 2023). They would not have received this advertisement without listening to the instructions.

The Prime Minister's Office put news concepts into practice through various media. Most media outlets relied heavily on the lists of good news ideas they offered to choose the content. The researcher collected a list of 38 news stories for this study. However, a journalist claimed to have received a list where “the number of the news ideas was roughly 75” (Participant #2,

personal communication, March 3, 2023). The list also included several concepts that had already been printed or aired. Because of this, some reporters were required to produce the same story before the inaugural ceremony. Furthermore, "some of the media outlet's news ideas also matched the list" (Participant #4, personal communication, March 6, 2023) because no one thought or did any news critically or adversely. As a result, news concepts were shared by numerous media.

In most media outlets, news management did not alert the reporters about the list. They did it instead by offering suggestions for everyday news stories. "They would say that such a story has to be done" (Participant #7, personal communication, March 12, 2023). Later, the journalists discovered that the concept is consistent with the list of the Prime Minister's Office and other media outlets. The government's efforts to influence the media to give the Padma Bridge a lot of favorable attention ultimately succeeded since the outlets heeded their orders.

Authoritarian government influence on journalists

Reporters and news managers described the current "government's style in Bangladesh as authoritarian" (Participant #6, personal communication, March 10, 2023). Some underlined that they had to "obey the government's directives due to this power system" (Participant #1, personal communication, March 2, 2023). Others claimed that journalists in Bangladesh are "constantly under attack, regardless of the political party or form of government" (Participant #8, personal communication, March 13, 2023). They recognize the issue with media owners and journalistic leaders who compromise due to their involvement in party politics or other financial endeavors.

Since 2009, Bangladesh's Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina, has served three consecutive terms in office. She was chosen in a vote held during a caretaker administration. By passing legislation restricting free speech after assuming power, she changed the political system in favor

of an authoritarian one. The legitimacy of the national elections in 2014 is under debate. In that election, “153 MPs were chosen without opposition, which was unprecedented in the nation's history because the major opposition parties abstained from participating in the election and questioned the impartiality of the administration” (Participant #1, personal communication, March 2, 2023). People were conned even more in the 2018 election. “The night before the election, supporters of the winning party cast their ballots” (Participant #6, personal communication, March 10, 2023). With the help of “law enforcement agencies, they occupied almost all the polling centers across the country” (Participant #1, personal communication, March 2, 2023). They did not allow the voters to cast ballots anywhere or visit polling centers.

To illustrate the shifting power structures under the Sheikh Hasina government over time, one news manager compared the media coverage of two national elections. He claimed that “their newspaper ran a major lead piece claiming that the 2014 election had been rigged” (Participant #6, personal communication, March 10, 2023) the day after the results were announced. But following the 2018 election, “all of Bangladesh's media outlets could not cover how the vote was rigged. The live telecast was shut down for all televisions” (Participant #6, personal communication, March 10, 2023). The next day, however, “every journalist reported that the vote was fair and free. They expressed gratitude for the government” (Participant #1, personal communication, March 2, 2023). After the 2014 election, the administration grew increasingly autocratic, which is why this coverage occurred. Some media outlets considered that if this government remains in power for another five years, the scenario for media outlets would be grave following the 2018 elections. To protect the institution, “they chose not to report on electoral irregularities as a survival policy” (Participant #6, personal communication, March 10, 2023). This coverage is being penalized by journalists, according to another journalist. He said,

“The circumstance would not exist today if the media reported anomalies in the 2018 election” (Participant #9, personal communication, March 25, 2023).

Receiving directives from several government departments on the coverage of various issues has become commonplace. All now embrace these directives. One journalist shared the experience: “Intelligence agencies pressed our newspaper to discontinue critical coverage of the banking industry because they said it was spreading panic among the populace.” (Participant #6, personal communication, March 10, 2023). Additionally, “newspaper publishers, editors, and journalists are frequently the targets of lawsuits. Several media outlets have been closed down by the government” (Participant #2, personal communication, March 3, 2023). This government's ability to do anything is now a source of worry. Nobody even dares to attempt writing as a result. Journalism that was “conceivable in Bangladesh ten to fifteen years ago is neither occurring nor will be possible in the future” (Participant #9, personal communication, March 25, 2023).

Some journalists contend that Bangladeshi journalism is continually under attack, irrespective of the ruling party or political system. “The failure of the media owners, the journalists' partisanship, and the reporters' lack of professionalism” (Participant #8, personal communication, March 13, 2023), in their view, are the root causes of the issue. They contend that proprietors and editorial authorities have the lion's share of the blame. In the name of journalism, they primarily engage in Awami League and BNP politics.

Intelligence agencies influenced the coverage

The Awami League government involved the country's army in constructing the Padma Bridge. They were appointed to ensure the security of the area. The military was also involved in the land acquisition for the bridge, land development in rehabilitation areas, construction of approach roads and bridges and facilities in the approach road, and to prevent river erosion. This

involvement with the construction gave them a way “to meddle with the media coverage of the construction of Padma Bridge” (Participant #2, personal communication, March 3, 2023).

Media outlets were under pressure to cover the Padma Bridge incident by the Directorate General of Forces Intelligence, also referred to as DGFI, the military intelligence organization of the Bangladesh Armed Forces. The PRMC (Public Relations Monitoring Cell) division team from the DGFI “was keeping an eye on the coverage under the command of a brigadier” (Participant #2, personal communication, March 5, 2023). They contacted the “journalists, put in some requests, gave some considerate counsel, and had the coverage verified” (Participant #1, personal communication, March 2, 2023). The meeting with journalists that the prime minister's office organized also “included representatives from this spy agency” (Participant #9, personal communication, March 25, 2023). They illustrated themselves by citing news coverage provided by “media outlets that support the administration and pressured other outlets to follow” (Participant #9, personal communication, March 25, 2023). “They would contact them again and remind them about the coverage they sought” if any media outlets failed to comply with their instructions” (Participant #1, personal communication, March 2, 2023).

The companies who provided materials, including cement, iron, and bricks, to the industrial enterprises that have sprung up around Padma Bridge were requested to advocate on behalf of the government. Intelligence agencies were also involved in the distribution of the advertisements. Two news managers confirmed this during the interview, saying, “Numerous companies have informed this” while giving advertisements (Participant #1, personal communication, March 2, 2023). The companies also sent numerous adverts after the leaders of the ruling party asked them.

Military intelligence in Bangladesh uses intimidation to force media organizations to carry out orders from the government. To gauge the extent of the general government's influence, it is vital to take notice of their impact on Padma Bridge coverage.

Advertisers placed pressure on journalists to publish positive stories

Almost all print, electronic, and online media in the nation carried a significant number of advertisements for different cement and steel companies, and this advertising "had a significant influence on the media coverage of the construction and opening" (Participant #1, personal communication, March 2, 2023) of the Padma Bridge. Companies who provided materials for the building of the Padma Bridge and wished to be connected with future megastructures "were enthusiastic about praising the government and advertising their participation" (Participant #6, personal communication, March 10, 2023). They wished to demonstrate that providing supplies for the Padma Bridge was their "big achievement" (Participant #4, personal communication, March 6, 2023). But the flow of the advertisement was high as the government put pressure on the advertiser through intelligence agencies and ruling party leaders in providing advertisements on Padma Bridge. Following the government's desire, they also gave advertisements on the condition of favorable coverage.

Nearly all of the journalists and news managers in this study's interviews acknowledged the impact of the advertiser on the Padma Bridge coverage. Two of four news managers admitted following sponsors' requests to generate income. According to two news managers, they disregarded the advertiser's directives. However, one reporter from each of these media outlets who covered the story claimed that the news managers had given them instructions to write the story in response to the demands of the advertisers, raising doubts about the news manager's assertion that advertising influence was not a factor.

The advertisers requested to place advertisements in the Padma Bridge coverage under the stipulation that the "news would be positive" (Participant #4, individual contact, March 6, 2023). They sometimes chose how the story should be "covered and written" (Participant #1, personal communication, March 2, 2023). Their influence was a direct driving force behind Padma Bridge's news coverage. Some enterprises sought news on the bridge's favorable effects to launch their businesses in the region connecting to the capital. Companies who provided the cement and rod for making the bridge advertised with the news that their product was used to build the Padma Bridge (Participant #1, personal communication, March 2, 2023).

Media outlets produced a few less-important news stories to satisfy advertisers' demands. These reports focused on the business' "involvement with the Padma Bridge construction and praising the material they produce" (Participant #3, personal communication, March 5, 2023). It has been observed that only the piling of the bridge was described in the news as a result of the advertisement. The amount of rod, cement, and bitumen utilized and what is in each bridge span have all been the subject of press reports. These were "different companies' marketing, not matters to inform the readers" (Participant #7, personal communication, March 12, 2023). That advertisers went beyond merely asking for positive coverage of the bridge but also requested positive coverage for their companies shows the depth of their influence.

The advertisers also changed the layout and appearance of the media outlets. As advertising increased, "it was noted that supplements also increased" (Participant #7, personal communication, March 12, 2023). In some publications, the strategy was even carefully thought out. One newspaper created a wholly customized dashboard to cover the Padma Bridge. The only item slated for publication on the website was the Padma Bridge news. The website was created

exclusively for advertisers, and many advertisements were there (Participant #4, personal communication, March 6, 2023).

If there had been any potential to be critical of the bridge, "that coverage was removed because the media outlets willingly accommodated all the advertisements" (Participant #4, personal communication, March 6, 2023). Some news executives interpret this increased supply of advertisements as the advertiser's "extended hand of cooperation" (Participant #12, personal communication, April 10, 2023). Others say there is a "great deal of exchange" here (Participant #1, personal communication, March 2, 2023). However, everyone agrees they won't get advertisements if they publish negative news about Padma Bridge. This shows that a trade-off was made to exchange favorable publicity for ad income.

Some journalists concurred that the advertiser's sway on the Padma Bridge reporting harmed journalism. This journalism has never been done before in Bangladesh. The public's "right to know information has been violated in every way possible by interested parties" (Participant #1, personal communication, March 2, 2023). However, they also defend media outlets' commercial strategy. According to the news managers, the fact that "running a media organization is a business, not CSR (corporate social responsibility), and that money is required to support it" (Participant #12, personal communication, April 10, 2023) validates their acceptance of advertiser influence. Surprisingly, despite being involved in news production and not media outlet management, every reporter offered the same reasoning. They "defended the owners' right to earn a living legitimately" (Participant #3, personal communication, March 5, 2023). According to some news managers, advertisers are now impacting media content worldwide.

Producing positive stories was the policy of media outlets

News managers told reporters that "the coverage would be only positive" regarding Padma Bridge (Participant #2, personal communication, March 3, 2023). They advised the journalists that the coverage "would be given utmost importance as nothing should be left out about the bridge" (Participant #11, personal communication, April 3, 2023). They instructed the reporters to be ready and see everything positively for the coverage. While covering the story about Padma Bridge, journalists received detailed instructions. It was forbidden for them to express any criticism of the bridge. Television journalists were instructed "not to comment negatively while standing on the bridge" (Participant #3, personal communication, March 5, 2023). Given the government's stance, no one attempted to stir up a controversy by criticizing the Padma Bridge because the project was the government's top priority (Participant #11, personal communication, April 3, 2023).

The government and advertisers gave the news managers specific instructions to portray the coverage favorably. The owner of some media outlets also ordered news managers "to assist the government" (Participant #1, personal message, March 2, 2023) as soon as the intelligence agency contacted them. The government stated that specific individuals were plotting against the bridge while mentioning their identities. Additionally, the owners gave the "news editors instructions to write stories on such people" (Participant #8, personal communication, March 13, 2023). When it came down to it, news management told the reporters that this was the "policy of the outlets" (Participant #3, personal communication, March 5, 2023).

The Padma Bridge was opened before the project was finished. The bridge's construction required more time to complete. When the journalists who had gone to cover the bridge returned, they claimed much work was still to be done, and it was inappropriate to inaugurate it. When the reporters were providing these updates, "it was told by the office manager that nothing negative

or critical could be written” (Participant #9, personal communication, March 25, 2023).

Reporters brought information about the never-ending river management and the environmental effects of the Bridge in the surrounding areas, but "news managers were saying that they don't want to print such negative stories before the inauguration of the bridge" (Participant #7, personal communication, March 12, 2023). Finally, only the development work was left for reporters to follow up on.

Some media outlets "planned to earn money" by providing the coverage because they "knew there is no space for criticizing the Bridge" (Participant #4, personal communication, March 6, 2023)). “With the editorial decision, these media outlets” (Participant #6, personal communication, March 10, 2023) offered it to the advertisers after carefully planning the content. Other media outlets acknowledged the bridge’s construction as an "achievement of the government" (Participant #8, personal communication, March 13, 2023). They covered it thoroughly as "a part of their patriotism" (Participant #12, personal communication, April 10, 2023). However, they also designed the coverage "to draw in commercial sponsors and advertisers" (Participant #12, personal communication, April 10, 2023).

The owner and news manager bowed to the pressures for financial benefit because “advertisement is the most significant source of income for media in Bangladesh” (Participant #4, personal communication, March 6, 2023). The financial "condition of Bangladeshi media is terrible after two years of COVID shock" (Participant #6, personal communication, March 10, 2023). As the government or advertisers requested, the media considered advertisements when covering the Padma Bridge. "They avoided the suffering or the negative news beyond that development" while spreading all the good news (Participant #5, personal communication, March 6, 2023). According to one manager, he would never have provided this coverage if he

had financial independence. Everybody and everything would come under his criticism and challenge.

Eight reporters were interviewed for this study. Among them, only one journalist mildly objected to the organization's directive to write only positive stories. He showed “irritation and insisted again that this kind of reporting was inappropriate” (Participant #2, personal communication, March 3, 2023). Furthermore, he did not want to be named in the byline of many of his articles. Other reporters “followed the instructions to avoid losing their beat and, ultimately, their jobs” (Participant #7, personal communication, March 12, 2023) because the news management routinely evaluates their performance.

According to reporters, "viewership of the Padma Bridge news grew as the day of the bridge's inauguration drew near" (Participant #2, personal communication, March 3, 2023). It also affected the policy, in addition. Televisions broadcast continuously for 12 hours, “considering the viewer interest in the bridge” (Participant #8, personal communication, March 13, 2023). Some believe that "the media have fulfilled their responsibility from the place of the people's interest" (Participant #10, personal communication, March 28, 2023).

In order to satisfy the demands of advertisers and the government, the media outlets established a policy of only publishing positive stories. The primary driver of its acceptance was the desire to make money. To keep their jobs, reporters likewise followed the instruction.

Reporters were not allowed to think critically

The news managers' declaration that it was media outlets' policy to write favorable stories about Padma Bridge affected reporters' daily routines. All Bangladeshi media outlets carried “this instruction, which forced everyone to think in a certain frame” (Participant #9, personal communication, March 25, 2023). Journalists typically approach news stories as having to

present multiple viewpoints or perspectives. However, to comply with the directive, they were "forced to see and think about the bridge in one way" (Participant #4, personal communication, March 6, 2023). It also altered the news manager's routine, "as they were instructing reporters according to their house policy" (Participant #8, personal communication, March 13, 2023).

Reporters didn't even need to consider possible news stories. The media outlets developed a few story ideas, and some were taken directly from the list provided by the prime minister's office (Appendix- B). The news was assigned to the reporters by the news managers, who utilized that list. Later, the news managers "with regular instructions and follow-up" (Participant #4, personal communication, March 6, 2023) took the news from the reporter. In addition, the prime minister's office required that something be written for the countdown each day. If any ideas weren't on the list, reporters had to sit down with news managers and explain how they were positive ideas (Participant #4, personal communication, March 6, 2023). On the other hand, some journalists searched everywhere despite the "news managers' requests for only positive reports, even though they knew they couldn't write" (Participant #2, personal communication, March 3, 2023), and some even "cut back on traveling there somewhat" (Participant #7, personal communication, March 12, 2023) because they could only report on some of the news regarding this project.

The reporters' altered routine impacted the interaction with the sources. Reporters ceased looking for information about the bridge's construction since they were told only to offer good news. On the other hand, sources were reluctant to reveal information because of intense monitoring at many levels. "The Military Secretary of the Prime Minister's office kept a close eye on this project" (Participant #2, personal communication, March 3, 2023). He routinely spoke with the project director or other personnel. As a result, sources "frequently refused to

provide broad details” (Participant #7, personal communication, March 12, 2023) on the Padma Bridge. Even sharing information came with the requirement of anonymity. It was impossible to get them to provide any printed material.

Typically, the office requests reporters for investigative, critical, and breaking news pieces. To satisfy the demands of government authorities and advertisers, they had to limit their Padma Bridge coverage to just positive stories. It disrupted the journalists' routine and forced them to adapt to a new pattern in which they were only doing as the media outlets told them.

Self-Censorship is deeply rooted in Journalists

Reporters were required to conduct self-censorship by refraining from including any critical or negative reporting while covering Padma Bridge due to media outlets' directives to take an all-out positive stance. When they approached the news management to produce some critical articles, some reporters stated they were rejected, making it harder for them to continue. They wanted “to report on the cost and duration of the Padma Bridge's construction” (Participant #3, personal communication, March 5, 2023) and “demonstrated interest in working on the effects of river erosion, river siltation, the closure of the entire shipping channel, and the livelihoods of people reliant on the ports” (Participant #11, personal communication, April 3, 2023), but the news managers did not accept those ideas. Instead of focusing on the negative aspects of the bridge, the reporters were urged to write stories about how the government's rehabilitation effort had been carried out successfully, including the construction of schools and mosques for the displaced ordinary people.

News managers utterly encompassed reporters during the Padma Bridge coverage. "The opportunity to think about news and inquire was no longer there" (Participant #4, personal communication, March 6, 2023). At that time, they lacked independent thought. Due to the

official directives, they "did what the office told them to and saw everything positively" (Participant #7, personal communication, March 12, 2023). "The reporters did not expect that much more could be done" (Participant #11, personal communication, April 3, 2023) after being unable to produce critical and negative stories regularly. They could not even say how many people were hurt and killed while building this Padma Bridge. The employees also had other demands, "but reporters avoided discussing them because they couldn't report on them" (Participant #11, personal communication, April 3, 2023). In the end, those who have been a part of Padma Bridge since the beginning "did not even have to be asked by the news managers not to do negative stories because self-censorship rooted into them so deeply that the way they worked, no negative story came up" (Participant #3, personal communication, March 5, 2023).

Not only in covering Padma Bridge, but journalists also frequently experience self-censorship while reporting in Bangladesh. They now worry about two things before coming up with any news ideas: "whether the media outlet could publish this information and how the government will respond if or when the news is published" (Participant #2, personal communication, March 3, 2023). The media outlets, according to some journalists, are to blame. Because of government pressure, "fear is working on media outlets, and they do not want to go against the government by reporting negatively" (Participant #11, personal communication, April 3, 2023). They eventually became adept at self-censorship, and the reporters also picked it up. The office "trained and taught them what word has to be used or what word has to be thrown away as part of the censorship, and they constantly follow it" (Participant #5, personal communication, March 6, 2023). In addition, they have an intense attachment to the nation's political reality. They are now guided by this circumstance while deciding which news ideas to consider and which to reject.

Managers of news organizations claimed that because of their constant dread of the government, they had imposed strict self-censorship. They are continuously "aware of not angering the government and intelligence agencies" (Participant #1, personal communication, March 2, 2023). They feel uneasy when writing about political topics or important issues. No media in the nation discusses certain subjects as a result of self-censorship. They are "proceeding with a largely unannounced decision not to write anything critical against the Prime Minister and her family" (Participant #6, personal communication, March 10, 2023). Numerous significant corporate entities that cannot be reported against are now included on this list of untouchables. Government agencies like DGFI will begin calling to stop if media organizations "start gathering information on those business groups." They exert pressure and obstruct in numerous ways (Participant #6, personal communication, March 10, 2023). The media "could not write anything against the army and DGFI" as well (Participant #2, personal communication, March 3, 2023).

Some reporters denied facing any self-censorship. They claimed to use "their reporting sense to do it as it should unless the house gave them some direction or told them about their policy" (Participant #10, personal communication, March 28, 2023), where the news managers acknowledged "imposing strict self-censorship" (Participant #12, personal communication, April 10, 2023). But all journalists, regardless of news manager or reporter, agreed that the government's influences hinder practicing journalism objectively. Media workers also do not get to reveal as much as they should. Even while publishing the news, they face various kinds of official obstacles. They believe that more freedom is needed to do objective journalism.

CHAPTER 6. DISCUSSION

The findings above suggest that, in the case of the coverage of the Padma Bridge opening in the Bangladeshi media, the government used a number of tools to influence the media. Firstly, the government itself, through the Prime Minister's Office and the Ministry of Information, dictated the media coverage, determining the content to be published/broadcast and ensuring that the coverage was only positive. Secondly, the government used advertising as a means to influence the media. Thirdly, it used intelligence agencies as a means of control. This reflected the authoritarian nature of the government, the censorship, and the self-censorship of the media, which ultimately resulted in the media's inability to provide any critical or even objective coverage of the Padma Bridge and its inauguration.

Additionally, under the direction of the government, companies, particularly the materials suppliers to the bridge, exerted pressure on the media to portray the story favorably. Certain media took advantage of the situation by adopting their requirements and presenting the coverage exactly how they asked. They made as much money as possible from the government and commercial advertising. With constant instructions and follow-up, the news managers took out the news from the reporter and made sure they were not writing any critical or unfavorable pieces on the bridge. The media owner, news managers, and reporters did not voice any objections to the coverage because some of them thought it was morally correct to profit from the commercial, while others were afraid of losing their jobs or being demoted from their beat.

The findings, which can be related to most filters of the propaganda theory, the levels of hierarchy of influence, and field theory, reflect the major characteristics of media in an authoritarian regime. These findings, in relation to the theories, are discussed in more detail below.

The context of the influences

An atmosphere of terror had already been established due to the government's efforts against journalists and media organizations throughout the year in Bangladesh. The Digital Security Act led to accusations against and imprisonment of numerous journalists to quell criticism. They closed down a few media outlets that belonged to the opposition political parties. Additionally, since the controlled election in December 2018, the ruling Awami League has entirely held the country's state apparatus and politics (Riaz, 2020).

After launching the Padma Bridge's construction without assistance from the World Bank, The Awami League administration, led by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, took the project to demonstrate the capability and competence of the government after starting the Padma Bridge's construction without support from World Bank in 2013. They called the Padma Bridge the "pride of the nation." From the beginning of the initiative, they looked for positive media publicity. It worsened as the bridge became more apparent and finally in the final month leading up to the opening in June 2022. They applied systematic pressure to enforce their demand by utilizing many government agencies.

Following the World Bank's allegations of a massive corruption plot that gained attention during the planning stage, the government demonstrated its intolerance for criticism of the bridge by denigrating individuals who raised their voices in writing and verbal form. They were considered traitors, and criticism of the bridge was perceived as a plot against the government. Media sources that prominently covered the corruption allegation before construction began "were subject to various pressures from the government" (Participant #6, personal communication, March 10, 2023). This reporting was characterized as a conspiracy by the prime

minister in multiple addresses. She claimed that those scheming against the bridge included Mahfuz Anam, editor of The Daily Star, the highest circulated English-language newspaper, and Dr. Md. Yunus, the first Bangladeshi recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize. The government's stance caused media organizations to worry that, if they didn't cover the Padma Bridge more thoroughly, they would be perceived as being against the government or the state, which could make it more difficult for them to conduct their business.

According to Herman and Chomsky's (1988) fourth filter of the propaganda model (PM), dominant institutional actors have the necessary social-political power to exercise subtle or overt control over media performance patterns. They could show adverse reactions to a statement or program in the media through letters, telegrams, phone calls, petitions, litigation, speeches, etc. Similarly, the government of Bangladesh openly used its position to dominate the news by branding people who raised questions about corruption around the Padma Bridge as traitors or conspirators.

The advertisers substantially impacted the Padma Bridge coverage. Companies that provided the materials for the construction of the Padma Bridge marketed under the condition that the "news would be positive" (Participant #4, individual contact, March 6, 2023) in nearly all major print, electronic, and internet media. This was in line with the demand made by the government. Following that, the media did not condemn the bridge. Instead, they published some unimportant news articles that highlighted the corporations' contributions to the construction of the Padma Bridge and praised the quality of their products.

The second filter of the PM observes that, as advertising provides the majority of mainstream commercial media with their primary source of revenue, media discourse frequently

reflects the goals of advertisers and the market. As asked by the sponsors and to accommodate the advertisements, the media in Bangladesh also gave the Padma Bridge favorable coverage.

During the Padma Bridge reporting, the prime minister's office also supervised the sources. They suggested news ideas to media outlets and selected experts for the media outlets' interviews. Some experts were named in the news suggestions they offered, while others were proposed through reporters covering the PM beat. On the other hand, sources were reluctant to divulge information due to the close supervision by "the Military Secretary of the Prime Minister's office" (Participant #2, personal communication, March 3, 2023).

The third filter in Herman and Chomsky's approach emphasizes that sources with institutional affiliation often dominate news discourses. As a result, institutional interests are being reflected in the news on a broad scale. During the Padma Bridge coverage, the sources regarding the Padma Bridge were controlled and monitored by the government, and it was evident that the news stories were consistent across media platforms and with the Prime Minister's Office list.

The opening of the Padma Bridge was heavily reported by all Bangladeshi media. However, media organizations with ties to the government have been heavily covering the bridge since it was built. It had placed pressure on other sources that were attempting independent journalism. Most owners of commercial television in Bangladesh are connected to the Awami League administration either directly or indirectly. This is because 35 of the 45 privately held television stations gained their licenses under the Awami League's rule, and they did so as government favorites. Additionally, most media outlets are owned and operated by big business conglomerates, who employ a variety of media platforms to further their political and economic objectives and get the support of powerful politicians (Riaz & Rahman, 2020). On the other

hand, several media organizations planned to make money by covering the story because they knew there was no room for criticism of the Bridge. These media sources meticulously planned the material before making the editorial choice to make it available to the advertisers.

According to Herman and Chomsky's (1988) first filter, media behavior is influenced by ownership, scale, and profit orientation in various ways, ultimately promoting a right-wing bias in mainstream media discourses. The media's behavior regarding the Padma Bridge coverage was heavily impacted by ownership and profit orientation, which also helped to advance the government's preferred rhetoric.

The way influence was administered

The prime minister's office played a key role in administering the influences to get the coverage in Padma Bridge. Ihsanul Karim, the press secretary for the prime minister, welcomed news executives and journalists to the prime minister's office and wanted sufficient coverage where everything on the bridge needed to be thoroughly described. The media outlets were told to run a countdown for a whole month. The press wing of the prime minister's office organized reporters and news managers to receive orders regularly via WhatsApp groups. They also monitored media coverage to ensure no one was disparaging the bridge using words or sentences.

On the other hand, several governmental organizations simultaneously played their part in influencing the coverage. The information ministry instructed all daily newspapers to publish daily news about Padma Bridge (Appendix-A). The government also used its advertisement by suggesting that media outlets actively covering the bridge would receive these adverts. The news managers and reporters were also brought to the bridge and fed to produce articles. The

Directorate General of Forces Intelligence (DGFI) also exerted pressure by contacting the media, making specific requests, offering helpful advice, and arranging for the coverage to be validated.

The leaders of the ruling party and the intelligence agency gave the advertisers instructions to promote government interests. Advertisers so heavily influenced the coverage that they somehow decided how to report and write the story. Media outlets have to enlarge their space and alter their layout and presentation to handle the tremendous flow of advertisements. As the day of the bridge's inauguration approached, more people were watching the Padma Bridge news, which prompted the media outlet to provide more coverage, according to several reporters.

According to Shoemaker and Reese (2014), creating content that will benefit the audience at the level of social institutions is under some pressure from the audience, marketers, and the market. On the other hand, the structural dependencies impact the media institution it develops with other important systemic entities, such as the government, public relations, and advertising (Shoemaker & Reese, 2016). The government, advertisers, ruling party, and intelligence agency influenced the media outlets during the Padma Bridge coverage. Through the Prime Minister's Office and the Ministry of Information, the government dictated the media coverage, determining the content to be published/broadcast and ensuring that the coverage was only positive. They also used advertising and intelligence agencies to influence and control the media. In Mexico, these influences come from criminal organizations, governments, academic institutions, businesses, civil society, and international organizations (Relly & Bustamante, 2014). On the other hand, news production or the management of *The Sopris Sun*, a weekly nonprofit community newspaper in Carbondale, Colorado was impacted by the Government, readership, funders, and advertising (Ferrucci & Alaimo, 2020).

The media outlets were wholly subdued under pressure from the government and advertising. The owner of some media outlets also ordered the news managers orders to assist the government. The news management asked the reporters to focus only on the bridge's good aspects. Reporters were not allowed to criticize the bridge in any way. They had to get down with news managers and defend any ideas that weren't on the list as being good ones.

Patrick Ferrucci and Timothy Kuhn argue (2022), “Organizations sit at the center of influences on journalism practice in the United States,” where forces must pass through an organization that decides which forces impact practice. At the organizational level of the hierarchy of influence model, it is more apparent how power is employed within organizational boundaries, how decisions are made and carried out, and whether those acts impact journalists' judgments to censor material (Reese, 2001). During the Padma Bridge coverage, it was seen that the media outlet's policy to cover the inauguration positively compelled journalists to think and produce news in that way. Ownership itself can have a notable impact on news creation (Akhavan-Majid & Boudreau, 1995; Coulson, 1994). Some owners also asked the news managers to provide coverage during the Padma Bridge coverage.

Journalists had to adjust their daily schedules to provide the coverage. Usually, reporters are asked to write investigative, critical, and breaking news stories by media outlets. They have to restrict their Padma Bridge coverage to just positive news to meet the requirements of the government and advertisers. Journalists frequently approach news events with the mindset that they must give several perspectives or points of view. However, they were compelled to perceive and think about the bridge in a certain way to follow the instructions. It interfered with the journalists' daily routine and made them adjust to a new pattern in which they were solely following the instructions of the media outlets.

The routine level refers to the structured, routinized, recurring processes and forms that media professionals employ to carry out their duties (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). Organizational policies, standards, and attitudes influence an individual journalist's work and the news they generate. During the Padma Bridge coverage, the media house's policy of providing positive coverage changed the routine of the journalists.

Influences as a Threat to Journalism

In the end, all the factors that contributed to Padma Bridge receiving the most attention did so because of Bangladesh's current authoritarian style of governance, which reporters and news management characterized as such. Receiving instructions on how to cover various issues from multiple government departments is becoming routine in this power arrangement. In addition, lawsuits frequently target newspaper editors, publishers, and journalists. Journalists are being threatened, injured, and even killed, but because there are frequently no consequences, there is already a sense of impunity around these acts. In the imaginations of journalists, the administration is capable of anything. Under pressure from the government, media entities that were once utilized to challenge the governments are now in survival mode. Journalists emphasized that because of this power arrangement, they had to follow government orders while covering the Padma Bridge.

On the other hand, the financial situation of Bangladeshi media is dire following two years of COVID shock. When reporting on the Padma Bridge, the media considered advertisements as asked by the government or advertisers. Beyond that development, they avoided bad news while promoting all the good news. One manager claimed that if he had financial freedom, everyone, and everything would be the subject of his criticism and challenges.

Journalists frequently have to practice self-censorship while reporting in Bangladesh because of this system of power. Before they come up with any news ideas, they now consider two factors: whether the media outlet will publish the information and how the government will react if and when the news is revealed. News organization executives claimed that they had strict self-censorship in place due to their ongoing fear of the government. They are constantly conscious of the need to avoid upsetting the government and intelligence services. When writing about political subjects or significant issues, they experience discomfort. Due to self-censorship, they are not writing anything negative about the Prime Minister, her family, the army, the DGFI, and several important corporations close to power. Some reporters denied facing self-censorship and claimed to use their reporting sense to do it as it should be done unless the house gave them some direction or told them about their policy. Other reporters followed the instructions to avoid losing their beat and their jobs because the news management routinely evaluates their performance.

The journalistic field, according to Bourdieu's (2005) field theory, is characterized by autonomy, homogeneity, and a path-dependent historical trajectory, all of which are shared with institutionalism in its identification of domains of action that must be understood in connection to one another (Reese & Shoemaker, 2016). Journalists agree on a common set of rules, called *doxa*, which constitutes the actual field, even though they might disagree on specific ways of doing things, which displays the struggle for power inside the field and the struggle to determine the common set of rules (Møller Hartley, 2013). However, *doxa* is not fixed: they can be altered by newcomers to the field, or change agents, who “impose new modes of thought and expression, out of key with the prevailing modes of thought and with the *doxa*” (Bourdieu, 1993, p. 59). There is relatively little independence in the journalism industry. Its organizational ideas

are based on the conflict between those least affected by governmental, political, and economic influence and those most dependent on it (Bourdieu, 2005).

This study clearly shows that during the Padma Bridge coverage, the doxa of the journalism industry evolved in Bangladesh to accommodate the impacts of the political systems. The journalists did not have the autonomy to decide on news ideas. Journalists lose independence and have less creative direction over their own work, and the doxa of journalism shifts toward less power for journalists and more power for political actors. In this scenario, journalists lose independence and objectivity, which are typically critical parts of the doxa of professional journalism.

The authoritarian nature

Over the course of its history, journalism has faced numerous challenges. Non-democratic governments can restrict press freedoms through laws and regulations or use legal action or criminal legislation to penalize journalists or media outlets when the content has already been made public (Barendt, 2007). Governments can also control news content, choose what information reaches the public, and affect political debate by constructing mass media infrastructure or granting subsidies to media outfits (Street, 2011). During the Padma Bridge coverage, the Bangladeshi government also controlled news content and chose what information reached the public by ensuring positive coverage.

New authoritarian authorities do not strictly restrict media ownership because they want to appear democratic. They encourage private media, although "major media outlets are tied to the governing party—through proxy ownership, patronage, and other unlawful ways" (Levitsky & Way 2010, p. 11). To ensure a domesticated media environment and shape political narratives

in Bangladesh, devoted followers and commercial companies are granted media licenses, while opposition and independent media face significant obstacles.

Studies in multiple nations have shown that many journalists respond to strong and violent pressure by participating in severe self-censorship. Some journalists adopt conformism and claim that their reporting is appropriate. Few defy the pressure by resigning from their positions in protest, participating in rallies, or supporting independent news organizations (Somfalvy & Pleines, 2021). Journalists in Bangladesh who covered the Padma Bridge incident exercised self-censorship under the direction of news editors whom the government and advertisers also influenced. Reporters were perceived as caving into pressure; some even viewed it as patriotic behavior.

To highlight the common problems and significant difficulties that occur when the press faces competing demands and value positions in its operational environment, Christians, Glasser, McQuail, Nordenstreng & White (2010) concentrated on four roles: Monitorial role, refers to all aspects of the collection, processing, and dissemination of information of all kinds about current and recent events, plus warnings about future developments; facilitative role, refers to develop a shared moral framework for community and society, rather than just looking after individual rights and interests; radical role focuses on exposing abuses of power and aims to raise popular consciousness of wrongdoing, inequality, and the potential for change and “collaborative role” in media - where journalists collaborate with the government and willingly participate in propaganda activities to promote the government’s interests. However, collaboration between media and the state is often advocated, if not mandated, under unusual conditions of crisis, emergency, or threat to society, from external or internal causes. During the Padma Bridge coverage, the media in Bangladesh were mandated to collaborate with the government. While

scholars of Bangladeshi politics and governance have categorized it as a hybrid regime (Shahriar, 2020; Riaz & Zaman, 2022; Ruud & Hasan, 2022), the state of press freedom, or rather its lack thereof, suggests that it is actually an authoritarian one. This was evident in the nature of coverage of the Padma Bridge discussed above, which demonstrated not only government control of the media but also the media's conforming nature and acceptance of this government control. This was also stated by multiple interviewees for this study.

CHAPTER 7. CONCLUSION

This study on the media coverage of the opening of Padma Bridge in Bangladesh showed how a government with authoritarian nature systematically employs its tools and pressures media outlets to get extensive coverage and how the journalists and media outlets reconcile their responsibilities. The media was subdued under pressure, and the government successfully achieved only positive coverage of the bridge after constantly dictating and determining the content to be published/broadcast.

The researcher acknowledged the constraints of speaking with journalists from particular Bangladeshi media sources. The Padma Bridge is covered extensively in the nation's print, electronic, and online media. However, it was challenging to reach many journalists due to time restrictions and the researcher's location abroad. Speaking only about one subject might have been a drawback, but the in-depth interview provided a firm overview of the coverage and the Bangladeshi media industry. On the other hand, the researcher included journalists for interviews from various media outlets regarding circulation or viewership and ownership to eliminate personal bias. It aided in identifying the key themes and bring out multiple viewpoints on the coverage.

This study's result depicts the current situation of journalism in Bangladesh, where freedom of the press has been largely absent, and an atmosphere of terror has already been established due to the government's efforts against journalists and media organizations. As a means of silencing their efforts to reveal the truth, journalists are increasingly subjected to violence, which includes beatings, imprisonment, kidnapping, and even murder. The government and its followers are using the Digital Security Act against journalists to quell criticism which

empowered law enforcement agency officials to detain individuals suspected of using social media to commit a crime without a warrant. After a few media outlets from the opposition political party were closed down, other media outlets that used to oppose the government were forced into survival mode. However, the government is getting favorable coverage from privately owned television stations because 35 of the 45 television stations received their licenses under the current Awami League administration.

Journalists interviewed for this study expressed concern about the nation's current state of journalism. In any case, exclusive coverage should go to the government. Earlier, under military dictator Ershad, Bangladesh faced a similar predicament. However, after the 1990s, this was different. There may have been coverage for and against the government.

In the current power structure, receiving directives on addressing various issues from numerous government agencies has become routine. Investigative reporting or even a small amount of corruption news has been drastically reduced in journalism as a whole. Today, the news is produced on a very local scale and is very person-centric. Does this imply that there isn't any corruption in the nation? Through corruption, thousands of dollars are being trafficked elsewhere. But many journalists lack the necessary time to devote to covering them. The scope for criticism has been dramatically reduced, and the media now operates daily. Superficial journalism is being produced, and the reporters are also not getting enough time for doing in-depth news.

The media avoid writing anything disparaging about the Prime Minister, her family, the army, the DGFI, and many significant businesses close to the Prime Minister's family because of self-censorship. Government-owned media has long been utilized in Bangladesh, like in other nations, to support the ruling party. The same action is being taken under the guise of private and

independent media. It will cause a catastrophic reaction in society, according to journalists. People will eventually stop accepting the media, as they did following the 2018 national election. The circulation of all newspapers in Bangladesh fell in 2019 after a strategy to preserve the institution involved ignoring news of election irregularities. The reader stepped out. After a year and a half, when the newspapers gradually began publishing critical articles, the readers also started returning.

The public mistrust journalists because they are unable to criticize the establishment. They lost faith in journalists and attempted to restore it by placing some of their trust in the unfiltered content of new media, such as Facebook videos, YouTube Channels, and IPTV, which frequently disseminate false information and cause social and political chaos and intergroup conflict.

For the current exploitation of journalists in Bangladesh, some people hold the owners and journalist leaders primarily responsible. The bulk of media outlets in Bangladesh is controlled by substantial business conglomerates, which employ a range of media outlets to further their political and economic objectives and gain the support of powerful politicians. On the other hand, the media leaders who are meant to represent the media and free speech are immersed in party politics and exploit their position to their advantage.

To end this situation, the truth must be told in all media. Everyone must practice free and independent journalism. The journalist would eventually regain the public's trust if they could distinguish between fact and fiction.

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9.1 Appendix-A: Directive from Ministry of Information and Broadcasting

The Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Department of Films and Publications
Ministry of Information and Broadcasting
Information Building
112, Circuit House Road, Dhaka.
www.dfp.gov.bd

No-15.57.0000.007.15.003.156680

Date 26 Jaistha, 1419/June 9, 2022

Subject: Publication of series of reports on the occasion of the inauguration of the Padma Bridge. Attracting attention on the subject, it is being informed that the Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will inaugurate the Padma Bridge, a symbol of the pride and unique example of the Bengali nation, on June 25, 2022. This bridge will contribute significantly to Bangladesh's transportation and economy development. The bridge will create easy connectivity between the southwestern part of Bangladesh and the whole country. It will play an important role in the socio-economic development of the people of the southwestern region.

It has been ordered to request you to publish series reports every day till June 25, 2022 in your widely circulated newspaper on the occasion of the inauguration of the Padma Bridge.

Roksana Akhter
Director (Advertising & Audit)
Phone: 02-8300683

To
Editor/Publisher
All Daily Newspaper

No-15.57.0000.007.15.003.15

Date Jaistha, 1419/June 2022

Copy to:

1. The personal secretary to the Minister of Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (to inform the minister), Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Bangladesh Secretariat, Dhaka.
2. The personal secretary to the Secretary of Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (to inform the Secretary), Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Bangladesh Secretariat, Dhaka.
3. Office Copy

Md. Towfiqul Islam
Deputy Director (Advertising & Audit)
Phone: 02-48313036

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
চলচ্চিত্র ও প্রকাশনা অধিদপ্তর
তথ্য ও সম্প্রচার মন্ত্রণালয়
তথ্য ভবন
১১২ সার্কিট হাউস রোড, ঢাকা।
www.dfp.gov.bd

নং-১৫.৫৭.০০০০.০০৭.১৫.০০৩.১৫

৫৫৫০

তারিখ:

২৫ জ্যৈষ্ঠ ১৪২৯
০৯ জুন ২০২২

বিষয়: পদ্মা সেতুর উদ্বোধন উপলক্ষে ধারাবাহিক সংবাদ প্রকাশ।

উপর্যুক্ত বিষয়ে দৃষ্টি আকর্ষণপূর্বক জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, আগামী ২৫ জুন ২০২২ তারিখে প্রধানমন্ত্রী শেখ হাসিনা বাঙ্গালি জাতির অহঙ্কার ও অনন্য দৃষ্টান্তের প্রতীক পদ্মা সেতু উদ্বোধন করবেন। এ সেতু বাংলাদেশের যোগাযোগ ব্যবস্থা ও অর্থনীতির উন্নয়নে গুরুত্বপূর্ণ অবদান রাখবে। সেতুটি বাংলাদেশের দক্ষিণ পশ্চিমাঞ্চলের সাথে গোটা দেশের সহজ যোগাযোগ গড়ে তুলবে এবং দক্ষিণ পশ্চিমাঞ্চলের মানুষের আর্থ-সামাজিক উন্নয়নে গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ভূমিকা পালন করবে।

আপনার বহুল প্রচারিত সংবাদপত্রে ২৫ জুন ২০২২ তারিখ পর্যন্ত পদ্মা সেতুর উদ্বোধন উপলক্ষে প্রতিদিন সিরিজ আকারে সংবাদ প্রকাশের জন্য নির্দেশক্রমে অনুরোধ করা হলো।

১৫/৫/২০২২

০৮-০৬-২০২২

রোকসানা আক্তার

পরিচালক (বিজ্ঞাপন ও নিরীক্ষা)

ফোন : ০২-৮৩০০৬৮৩

প্রতি

সম্পাদক/প্রকাশক

দৈনিক সকল পত্রিকা

নং-১৫.৫৭.০০০০.০০৭.১৫.০০৩.১৫

তারিখ:

জ্যৈষ্ঠ ১৪২৯

জুন ২০২২

অনুলিপি: সদয় অবগতির জন্য প্রেরণ করা হলো:

- ১। তথ্য ও সম্প্রচার মন্ত্রীর একান্ত সচিব (মন্ত্রী মহোদয়ের সদয় অবগতির জন্য), তথ্য ও সম্প্রচার মন্ত্রণালয়, বাংলাদেশ সচিবালয়, ঢাকা।
- ২। সচিব-এর একান্ত সচিব (সচিব মহোদয়ের সদয় অবগতির জন্য), তথ্য ও সম্প্রচার মন্ত্রণালয়, বাংলাদেশ সচিবালয়, ঢাকা।
- ৩। অফিস কপি।

মোঃ তৌফিকুল ইসলাম

উপপরিচালক (বিজ্ঞাপন ও নিরীক্ষা)

ফোন : ০২-৮৮৩১৩০৩৬

9.2 Appendix-B: News Ideas Provided by Prime Minister's Office

1. The most desired Padma Bridge of the country is a reality today under the visionary and strong leadership of the Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the daughter of Bangabandhu. A report based on the opinions of domestic and foreign analysts about the conspiracies, obstacles and criticism faced by Sheikh Hasina to complete the bridge in home and abroad. The country's image and Sheikh Hasina's leadership have brightened the world for the construction of the Padma Bridge with its own funding.

2. How will the GDP increase after the Padma Bridge is built? Earlier, it was said that the GDP growth will be increased by 1 percent. But it will increase by about 2 percent in reality. How is it possible? A Report based on the interviews of the country's top economists including the former chief economists of the World Bank's Bangladesh Resident Mission Dr Zahid Hossain, Mustafizur Rahman of CPD and Professor Abul Barakat.

3. Expansion of foreign trade: Report on the expansion of trade across the country including the south-western part after the Padma Bridge is opened. The use of Mongla and Payra ports will be more profitable for traders. The pressure on the Chittagong port will be reduced.

4. Expansion of local trade: If the Padma Bridge is built, the internal trade will increase. A report on the basis of the interviews of the regional leaders of FBCCI and District Level business leaders of Barisal and Khulna Division.

5. The small and medium enterprises of the southwestern part of the country will be able to sell their products in Dhaka easily. The influence of the middlemen will be reduced. The marginalised people including the farmers and fishermen will be benefited directly. A special report expressing their gratitude to the Prime Minister.

6. Padma Bridge is a proud achievement of Bangladesh in the views of civil society. A positive report interviewing prominent and leading civil society figures from Dhaka and southwestern 21 districts.

7. The Padma Bridge is going to be inaugurated. What is the feeling of the Grameen Bank founder Dr. Yunus about the Padma Bridge, what was said earlier by Shujon secretary Badiul Alam Majumdar, Debapriya Bhattacharya and The Daily Star editor Mahfuz Anam and what they are saying now?

8. Accidents will be reduced: If the Padma Bridge is opened, the pressure on the waterway will be reduced naturally, the people will not be forced to use risky vessels. Already the modern Expressway has reduced the road accidents. Reports on the current situation in the context of earlier Padma and Meghna launch tragedies and the road accidents.

9. The inauguration of Padma Bridge is the gift to the countrymen from the Prime Minister. Report in the context of the indescribable sufferings of ferry journeys during the Eid season.

10. A report with the interviews of other political parties of 21 districts of the southwestern part of the country, what are the leaders saying about the Padma Bridge? A positive one.

11. The architecture of the Padma Bridge: What challenges the engineers had to face for the construction of the bridge. They had meetings with the Prime Minister to face the challenges. There were big problems which were solved by the Hon'ble Prime Minister. There are architectural lightings for beautification which will make the Padma Bridge more attractive on national days. Special report on the main infrastructure of the Padma Bridge. (Comments of the Project Director and Chief Engineer).

12. Padma Bridge: Looking back: From the tenure of Bangabandhu to the present, even on July 4, 2001, Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina formally laid the foundation stone but the BNP government stopped the project later. Interviews of former communication minister Anwar Hossain Manju and Abul Hossain.

13. As a result of the construction of the Padma Bridge, there will be no obstacle to get connectivity with the Asian Highway. The import and export with the neighbouring countries will be easier, faster and affordable which will contribute to the overall economic development of the country.

14. Report with the interviews of leaders of Awami League's top to bottom on the occasion of the founding anniversary of Awami League about the Padma Bridge.

15. How do the foreign ambassadors see the Padma Bridge? Special report, interviewing ambassadors of various countries including Western, European, India, China, Russia.

16. Foreign Direct Investment (FDI): Padma Bridge in the views of foreign investors. On the one hand, this bridge will increase the ability of Bangladesh as well as attract the foreign investment. Report on interviews with experts and foreign investors.

17. Construction of Mujib Convention Center at Shibchar and a satellite city like Hong Kong and Singapore. A special report on the livelihood improvement of the marginalised poor people of the both ends of the Padma Bridge.

18. The rail link to the Padma Bridge will make the transportation system of the people of the southern region more comfortable and safer. The people of Barisal division will get the railway for the first time. Special report on the development of the rail communication system. In the report, it needed to present the correct information against the rumours of China's investment

and about the joint financing of Bangladesh and China. Elaborating the future benefits and potentials of the railway bridge.

19. The Padma Bridge has become an attractive tourist destination even before the inauguration. Besides, this bridge will increase the potentiality of tourist places in the south-western region. Special report on the potentiality of the tourism sector due to the construction of the Padma Bridge.

20. Safety of the bridge: A cantonment has been built.

21. Reports on the tolerance of the bridge in earthquakes, collision with ships etc.

22. Speed will be increased, and time will be saved. Quality life, quality time, Dhaka to Bhanga within an hour. Special report on the road development. The humanitarian ground could be linked with the interviews of the family members of dead patients without getting the ferry in due time for long traffic jams.

23. The Hon'ble Prime Minister has plans to build an aviation hub by constructing a modern airport across the Padma. Due to the construction of the Padma Bridge, as per the plan by the Prime Minister, the time distance from the zero point of Dhaka to the current Shahjalal International Airport and the new airport will be almost the same. A special report on plans to build an airport.

24. The rumours about the Padma Bridge which was started by Khaleda Zia. Such as it will be needed people's skulls, pillars will be broken, etc. What is still going on social media? Report on that.

25. The rise of the land price on the banks of the Padma. In just a few years, the poor who have some land, now become billionaires.

26. Report on river training which was the major challenge in the construction of the bridge. With the effect of the river training, floods will be controlled, erosion will be prevented, the river will flow in the desired direction. New agricultural land and production will increase in many areas.

27. The cost of building the entire bridge will be recollectd very soon. (Just the calculation of tolls. This report excluded the GDP).

28. Is the toll too high compared to the time saving and money savings?

29. The experience of the engineers and labourers who worked in the Padma bridge construction. They worked for a long time, even in the pandemic situation. Humanitarian report.

30. Radical changes in road connectivity in 21 districts of the southwestern part of the country. How long did it take to come to Dhaka from those districts earlier? Now how long will it take with the Padma Bridge? Special report on the comparative study of the past and present.

31. Materials of the Padma Bridge. Which one does it take with what measurement? The weight of the main bridge. How many cement bags, lampposts, stones, etc. At-a-glance report on the bridge Padma.

32. The emotions and feelings of the expatriate Bengalis about the Padma Bridge. They are now proud of the prime minister's determination. A special report on interviews with expatriates.

33. Over the years, the traders who sell the rotten products have faced hurdles at the ferry ghat and many of them lost everything due to being unable to get the ferry. Even a few days ago, there was a hue and cry among the wholesalers as the watermelon was rotten in the truck due to not getting the ferries. And now due to the Padma Bridge, the products will reach Dhaka quickly. The farmers will get a fair price. Report on this.

34. Comparative report highlighting information on usage of local resources and resources brought from abroad in the construction of Padma Bridge.

35. Under the overall directives of the Prime Minister, the Road, Transport and Bridges Minister, secretary of the ministry and other officials visited the project place at least for several hundred days. A report about them.

36. With the inauguration of the Padma Bridge, significant changes will be brought in the road transport system across the country. For example, direct road connectivity will be created between Barishal and the different districts like Chattogram, Cox's Bazar, Sylhet and North Bengal districts. Same possibility will be created in the transportation of goods.

37. People across the country are very excited about the inauguration of the Padma Bridge. Many of them are going to visit the Padma Bridge, taking selfies. They are posting emotional statuses about the Bridge on social media. Many are planning to visit Padma bridge after the inauguration and cross the river over the Bridge. A special report on this.

38. The Padma Bridge will connect 21 districts of south and southwest. A total of 21 special reports—each for every district-- talking to different classes of people, including DCs, businessmen of these districts on what kind of and socio-economic development will take place in those districts.

Every news on the Padma Bridge should have at least one byte/statement thanking the Hon'ble Prime Minister.

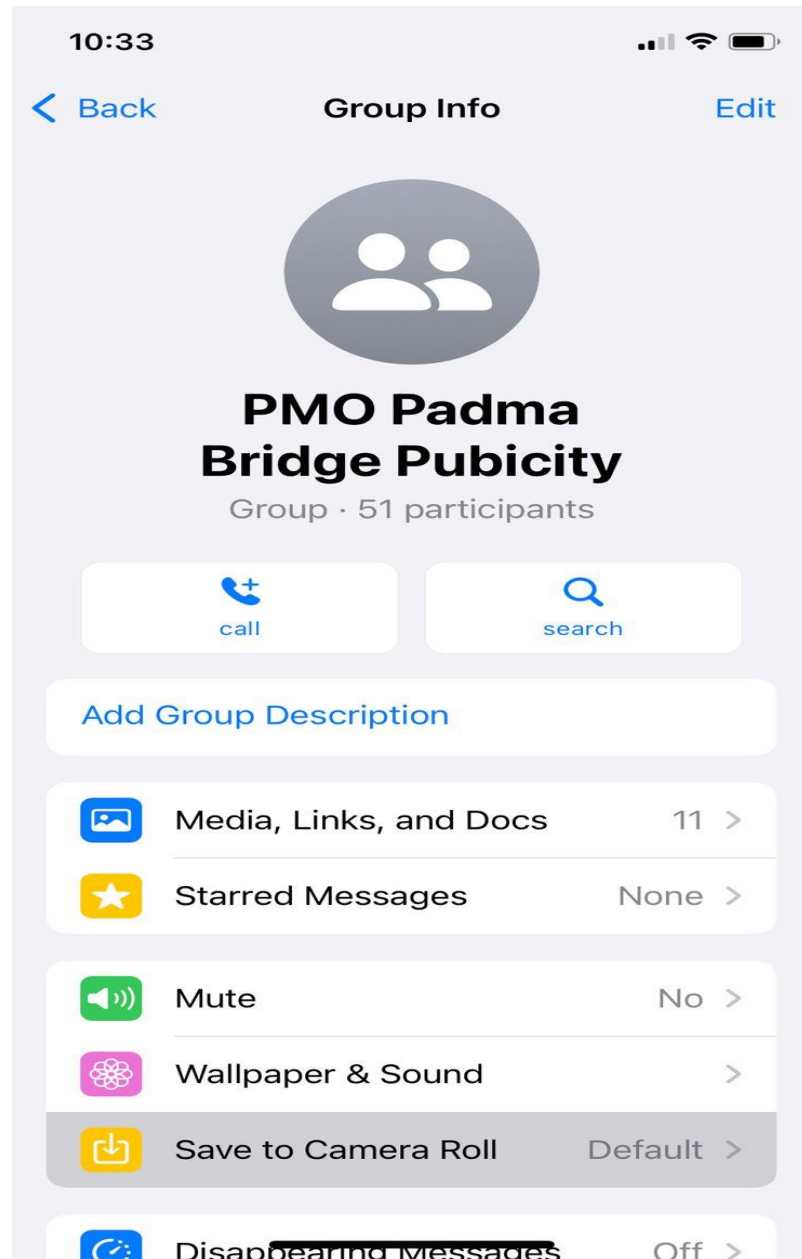
★★★ পদ্মা সেতু নিয়ে রিপোর্ট আইডিয়া ★★★

1. মাননীয় প্রধানমন্ত্রী বঙ্গবন্ধু কন্যা জননেত্রী শেখ হাসিনার দূরদর্শী ও বলিষ্ঠ নেতৃত্বেই দেশের সবচেয়ে আকাঙ্ক্ষিত পদ্মা সেতু আজ বাস্তব। জাতীয় ও আন্তর্জাতিক পর্যায়ে কি কি ষড়যন্ত্র, বাধা-বিপত্তি, সমালোচনা মোকাবেলা করে মাননীয় প্রধানমন্ত্রী শেখ হাসিনা সেতু নির্মাণ কাজ সম্পন্ন করেছেন। দেশী-বিদেশী বিশ্লেষকদের মতামত নিয়ে প্রতিবেদন। নিজস্ব অর্থায়নে পদ্মা সেতু নির্মাণে বিশ্বের দরবারে দেশের ভাবমূর্তি ও শেখ হাসিনার নেতৃত্ব উজ্জ্বল হয়েছে।
2. পদ্মা সেতু হলে জিডিপি কিভাবে বাড়বে? আগে বলা হয়েছিল জিডিপি বাড়বে ১ শতাংশ। কিন্তু আদতে তা বাড়বে প্রায় ২ শতাংশ। কিভাবে এটি সম্ভব হচ্ছে। দেশের শীর্ষ স্থানীয় অর্থনীতিবিদদের ইন্টারভিউ নিয়ে রিপোর্ট। এতে বিশ্বব্যাংকের বাংলাদেশ আবাসিক মিশনের সাবেক মুখ্য অর্থনীতিবিদ ড. জাহিদ হোসেন, মুতাহিজুর রহমান, সিপিডি, অধ্যাপক আবুল বারাকাতের সাক্ষাতকার নেয়া যেতে পারে।
3. বৈদেশিক বাণিজ্য সম্প্রসারণ: পদ্মা সেতু হলে দেশের দক্ষিণ-পশ্চিমাঞ্চলসহ সারাদেশে বাণিজ্যিক সম্প্রসারণ নিয়ে রিপোর্ট। ব্যবসায়ীদের জন্য মংলা ও পায়রা বন্দর ব্যবহার আরো লাভজনক হবে। চাপ কমবে চট্টগ্রাম বন্দরের ওপর।
4. স্থানীয় বাণিজ্য সম্প্রসারণ: পদ্মা সেতু হলে বাড়বে অভ্যন্তরীণ বাণিজ্য। বরিশাল খুলনা বিভাগীয় পর্যায়ের এফবিসিসিআই ও জেলা পর্যায়ের ব্যবসায়ী নেতাদের সাক্ষাতকার নিয়ে রিপোর্ট।
5. ক্ষুদ্র ও মাঝারি ব্যবসা: দেশের দক্ষিণ-পশ্চিমাঞ্চলের ক্ষুদ্র ব্যবসায়ীরা এখন তাদের উৎপাদিত পণ্য সহজেই ঢাকায় এনে বিক্রি করতে পারবেন। কমবে মধ্যস্থতাভোগীদের দৌরাখ্যা। সরাসরি লাভবান হবেন কৃষক জেলেসহ প্রান্তিক খেটে খাওয়া মানুষ। প্রধানমন্ত্রীর প্রতি তাদের কৃতজ্ঞতা প্রকাশ নিয়ে বিশেষ রিপোর্ট।
6. নাগরিক সমাজের দৃষ্টিতে পদ্মা সেতু: বাংলাদেশের একটি গর্বের অর্জন পদ্মা সেতু। ঢাকা ও ঢাকার বাইরে দক্ষিণ-পশ্চিমাঞ্চলের ২১ জেলার নাগরিক সমাজের বিশিষ্ট ও নেতৃস্থানীয় ব্যক্তিদের সাক্ষাতকার নিয়ে একটি ইতিবাচক রিপোর্ট।
7. উদ্বোধন হতে যাচ্ছে পদ্মা সেতু। পদ্মা সেতু নিয়ে গ্রামীণ ব্যাংকের প্রতিষ্ঠাতা ড. ইউনুসের অনুভূতি কি, সুজন সম্পাদক বদিউল আলম মজুমদার, দেবপ্রিয় ভট্টাচার্য, দ্য ডেইলি স্টার সম্পাদক মাহফুজ আনাম আগে কি বলেছিলেন আর এখন কি বলেছেন।
8. কমে আসবে দুর্ঘটনা: পদ্মা সেতু চালু হলে স্বভাবতই নৌপথে চাপ কমবে ঝুঁকিপূর্ণ নৌযানে উঠতে মানুষ বাধা হবেন না। আধুনিক 'এক্সপ্রেস ওয়ের' কারণে এরই মধ্যে সড়ক দুর্ঘটনাও অনেক কমেছে। অতীতে পদ্মা ও মেঘনা লঞ্চ ডুবি এবং সড়ক দুর্ঘটনা প্রেক্ষাপটে ও বর্তমান অবস্থার রিপোর্ট।
9. ঈদের আগে দেশবাসীকে প্রধানমন্ত্রীর ঈদ উপহার পদ্মা সেতু। ঈদের সময়ে ফেরি পারাপারের অবর্ণনীয় ভোগান্তির প্রেক্ষাপটে রিপোর্ট।
10. পদ্মা সেতু নিয়ে কি বলেছেন দেশের দক্ষিণ-পশ্চিমাঞ্চলের ২১ জেলার তৃণমূল অন্য দলের নেতারা। তাদের সাক্ষাতকার নিয়ে একটি ইতিবাচক প্রতিবেদন।
11. পদ্মা সেতুর আর্কিটেকচার: প্রকৌশলীদের কি কি চ্যালেঞ্জ মোকাবেলা করতে হয়েছে এই সেতু নির্মাণের জন্য। চ্যালেঞ্জ নিতে প্রধানমন্ত্রীর সঙ্গে বৈঠক হয়েছে। বড় বড় সমস্যা ছিল মাননীয় প্রধানমন্ত্রী সমাধান করে দিয়েছেন। সৌন্দর্যবর্ধনে আছে আর্কিস্ট্রাকচারাল লাইটিং। যা রাষ্ট্রীয় দিবসগুলোতে পদ্মা সেতু কে আরও আকর্ষণীয় করে তুলবে। পদ্মা সেতুর মূল অবকাঠামো নিয়ে বিশেষ প্রতিবেদন। (প্রকল্প পরিচালক এবং চিফ ইঞ্জিনিয়ারের বক্তব্য)।
12. ফিরে দেখা পদ্মা সেতু: বঙ্গবন্ধুর সময় থেকে বর্তমান পর্যন্ত, ২০০১ সালের ৪ জুলাই মাননীয় প্রধানমন্ত্রী শেখ হাসিনা আনুষ্ঠানিক ভাবে ভিত্তি প্রস্তরও স্থাপন করেছিলেন। বিএনপি এসে প্রকল্প বন্ধ করে দেয়। সাবেক যোগাযোগ মন্ত্রী আনোয়ার হোসেন মঞ্জু এবং আবুল হোসেনের ইন্টারভিউ নেওয়া যেতে পারে।
13. পদ্মা সেতু নির্মাণ হওয়ায় এশিয়ান হাইওয়ে র সঙ্গে যুক্ত হতে আর বাঁধা থাকলো না। এর ফলে পাশ্চাত্য দেশগুলোর সঙ্গে আমদানি রপ্তানি সহজ, দ্রুত এবং সশস্ত্রী হবে। যা দেশের সামগ্রিক অর্থনৈতিক উন্নয়নে অবদান রাখবে।
14. আওয়ামী লীগের প্রতিষ্ঠাবার্ষিকীর দিনে পদ্মা সেতুকে বিষয়ে করে ওয়ার্ড থেকে কেন্দ্র পর্যন্ত নেতাদের ইন্টারভিউ নিয়ে প্রতিবেদন।
15. বিদেশি রাষ্ট্রদূতরা পদ্মা সেতু কিভাবে দেখছে? পশ্চিমা, ইউরোপিয়ান, ভারত, চীন, রাশিয়াসহ বিভিন্ন দেশের রাষ্ট্রদূতদের সাক্ষাতকার নিয়ে বিশেষ প্রতিবেদন।
16. ফরেন ইন ডাইরেক্ট ইনভেস্টমেন্ট (এফডিআই): বিদেশী বিনিয়োগকারীদের চোখে পদ্মা সেতু। এই সেতু একদিকে যেমন বাংলাদেশের সক্ষমতা বহুগুণ বাড়াবে, তেমনি বিদেশি বিনিয়োগ আকৃষ্ট করবে। বিশেষজ্ঞ এবং বিদেশী বিনিয়োগকারীদের সাক্ষাতকার নিয়ে প্রতিবেদন।
17. পদ্মা সেতুর দুই প্রান্তে হংকং সিঙ্গাপুরের মতো স্যাটেলাইট সিটি, শিবচরে মুজিব কনভেনশন সেন্টার নির্মাণ। দুই পাড়ের এক সময়কার প্রান্তিক দরিদ্র জনগোষ্ঠীর জীবন যাত্রার মান উন্নয়ন নিয়ে বিশেষ প্রতিবেদন।

১৪. পদ্মা সেতুতে রেল সংযোগ দক্ষিণাঞ্চলের মানুষের যাতায়াত ব্যবস্থা আরো স্বাচ্ছন্দ ও নিরাপদ হবে। প্রথম রেল দেখবে বরিশাল বিভাগের মানুষ। রেল যোগাযোগ ব্যবস্থার উন্নয়ন নিয়ে বিশেষ প্রতিবেদন। এতে বাংলাদেশ ও চায়নার যৌথ অর্থায়ন, চীনের ঋণ গুজবের বিরুদ্ধে সঠিক তথ্য তুলে ধরা। ভবিষ্যতে রেল সেতুর সুবিধা ও সম্ভাবনা বিস্তারিত তুলে ধরা।
১৫. উদ্বোধন হওয়ার আগেই পদ্মা সেতু হয়ে উঠেছে সারাদেশের মানুষের জন্য পর্যটনের এক আকর্ষণীয় স্থান। সেইসঙ্গে এই সেতু দক্ষিণ-পশ্চিমাঞ্চলের পর্যটন স্থানগুলো সম্ভাবনা আরও বাড়াবে। পদ্মা সেতু নির্মাণ হওয়ায় পর্যটন খাতের সম্ভাবনা নিয়ে বিশেষ প্রতিবেদন।
১৬. সেতুর নিরাপত্তা। সেনানিবাস করা হয়েছে। ভূমিকম্প ও জলযানের ধাক্কার সহনশীলতা ইত্যাদি নিয়ে প্রতিবেদন।
১৭. গতি বাড়বে, সময় বাঁচবে। কোয়ালিটি লাইফ, কোয়ালিটি টাইম, এক ঘণ্টায় ঢাকা থেকে ভাঙা। সড়ক ব্যবস্থার উন্নয়ন নিয়ে বিশেষ প্রতিবেদন।
১৮. মানবিক স্টরি হতে পারে দীর্ঘ যানজটে ফেরি না পেয়ে রোগীর মৃত্যু, ভুক্তভোগী পরিবারের সাক্ষাৎকারসহ।
১৯. পদ্মার ওপারে আধুনিক বিমানবন্দর নির্মাণ করে আন্তর্জাতিক বিমান চলাচলের হাব গড়ে তুলার পরিকল্পনা মাননীয় প্রধানমন্ত্রীর। পদ্মা সেতু নির্মাণের কারণে ঢাকার জিরো পয়েন্ট থেকে বর্তমান শাহজালাল আন্তর্জাতিক বিমানবন্দর এবং প্রধানমন্ত্রীর পরিকল্পনায় নতুন বিমানবন্দরটির সময়ের দূরত্ব প্রায় একই হবে। বিমান বন্দর নির্মাণের পরিকল্পনা নিয়ে একটি বিশেষ প্রতিবেদন।
২০. পদ্মা সেতু নিয়ে যত গুজব। যার শুরু করছিলেন খালেদা জিয়া। মানুষের মাথা লাগবে, পিলার ভেঙ্গে গিয়েছে ইত্যাদি। সোসাল মিডিয়ায় এখনও কি চলেছে। তাই নিয়ে রিপোর্ট।
২১. পদ্মার পাড়ের ভূমির মূল্য বৃদ্ধি। মাত্র কয়েক বছরে সাধারণ দরিদ্র ভূমির মালিক হয়েছেন এখন কোটি টাকার সম্পদের মালিক।
২২. নদী শাসন নিয়ে রিপোর্ট। মূল সেতু নির্মাণে নদীশাসনটাই ছিল বড় চ্যালেঞ্জ। নদীর শাসনের প্রভাবে বন্যা নিয়ন্ত্রণ হবে, ভাঙণ রোধ হবে, নদীর প্রবাহ ঠিক থাকবে। অনেক এলাকায় নতুন কৃষি জমি এবং ফলন বৃদ্ধি পাবে।
২৩. খুব দ্রুতই উঠা আসবে পুরো সেতু নির্মাণের খরচ। (শুধু টোল হিসেব করে। জিডিপির বাইরে এই রিপোর্ট)
২৪. টোল নিয়ে রিপোর্ট। সময় ও অর্থের সশ্রয় তুলনায় টোল কি খুব বেশি?
২৫. পদ্মা সেতু নির্মাণ প্রকৌশলী ও শ্রমিকদের অভিজ্ঞতা। দিনের-পর-দিন, করোনায় মধ্যেও কাজ করেছেন। মানবিক রিপোর্ট।
২৬. দেশের দক্ষিণ-পশ্চিমাঞ্চলের ২১ জেলার সড়ক যোগাযোগে আমূল পরিবর্তন। কোন জেলা থেকে ঢাকায় আসতে আগে কতক্ষণ লাগতো। এখন পদ্মা সেতু দিয়ে কতক্ষণ লাগবে। অতীত ও বর্তমানের তুলনামূলক চিত্র নিয়ে বিশেষ প্রতিবেদন।
২৭. পদ্মা সেতুর উপকরণ। কোনটা কি পরিমাণ লেগেছে। মূল সেতুর ওজন। কি পরিমাণ সিমেন্টের ব্যাগ, ল্যাম্পপোস্ট, পাথর ইত্যাদি। এক নজরে পদ্মা সেতু নিয়ে প্রতিবেদন।
২৮. পদ্মা সেতু নিয়ে প্রবাসী বাঙ্গালীদের আবেগ-অনুভূতি। প্রধানমন্ত্রীর দৃঢ়তায় এখন তারা গর্বিত। প্রবাসীদের সাক্ষাৎকার নিয়ে একটি বিশেষ প্রতিবেদন।
২৯. ফেরি পারাপার দুর্ভোগের কারণে বছরের পর বছর ধরে কাঁচামালের ব্যবসায়ীরা ফেরি ঘাটেই সর্বশান্ত হয়েছেন। কিছুদিন আগেও ফেরিঘাটে আটকে থেকে তরমুজ পঁচে যাওয়া হাহাকার ছিল পাইকারদের মধ্যে। আর এখন পদ্মা সেতুর কারণে দ্রুত কাঁচামাল ঢাকায় পৌঁছাবে। কৃষক তার উৎপাদিত পণ্যের ন্যায্য মূল্য পাবেন। এই নিয়ে প্রতিবেদন।
৩০. পদ্মা সেতু নির্মাণে স্থানীয় সম্পদ এবং বিদেশ থেকে আনা সম্পদের তথ্য তুলে ধরে তুলনামূলক প্রতিবেদন।
৩১. প্রধানমন্ত্রীর সার্বিক দিক নির্দেশনায় কয়েক শত দিন প্রকল্পের কাজ পরিদর্শন করেন সড়ক পরিবহন ও সেতু মন্ত্রী, সচিব সহ সংশ্লিষ্ট কর্মকর্তারা। তাদের নিয়ে একটা প্রতিবেদন।
৩২. পদ্মা সেতু উদ্বোধনের মধ্যে দিয়ে সারা দেশের সড়ক পরিবহন ব্যবস্থায় গুরুত্বপূর্ণ পরিবর্তন আসবে। যেমন বরিশালের সাথে চট্টগ্রাম, কক্সবাজার, সিলেট, উত্তরবঙ্গের বিভিন্ন জেলায় সরাসরি সড়ক যোগাযোগ নতুন করে শুরু হবে। পণ্য পরিবহনেও একই সম্ভাবনা তৈরি হবে।
৩৩. পদ্মা সেতু উদ্বোধন নিয়ে সারা দেশের মানুষ ব্যাপক উচ্ছ্বসিত। অনেকে পদ্মা সেতু দেখতে যাচ্ছেন, সেলফি-ছবি তুলছেন। সামাজিক যোগাযোগ মাধ্যমে পদ্মা সেতু নিয়ে অনেকে তাদের আবেগঘন স্ট্যাটাস দিচ্ছেন। উদ্বোধনের পর অনেকে পদ্মা সেতু দেখার এবং পদ্মা সেতুর ওপর দিয়ে পার হওয়ার পরিকল্পনা করছেন। এ নিয়ে বিশেষ প্রতিবেদন।
৩৪. পদ্মা সেতু দক্ষিণ, দক্ষিণ পশ্চিমের ২১ জেলাকে সংযুক্ত করবে। এসব জেলার ডিসি, ব্যবসায়ীসহ বিভিন্ন শ্রেণির মানুষের সঙ্গে কথা বলে সেসব জেলায় কি ধরনের অর্থনৈতিক ও আর্থ-সামাজিক উন্নয়ন ঘটবে তা নিয়ে প্রতিটি জেলা থেকে একটি করে ২১টি বিশেষ প্রতিবেদন করা।

পদ্মা সেতু নিয়ে প্রতিটি নিউজে মাননীয় প্রধানমন্ত্রীকে ধন্যবাদ জানিয়ে কমপক্ষে একটি বাইট/বক্তব্য থাকতে হবে।

9.3 Appendix- C: WhatsApp Group



9.4 Appendix-D: Directive through WhatsApp Group

Example of Prime Minister's Office Instruction Through Whats App, which was sent on May 30, 2022 by one of the deputy press secretary :

Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will inaugurate the most awaited Padma Bridge on June 25. In view of the inauguration of this bridge, all the media (electronic, print and online) will display the logo of padma bridge and Hon'ble Prime Minister's photo on television screens and newspapers round the clock from 12:00 PM on 31 May 2022 (12:01 PM on June 1) till the inauguration of the bridge. And it is requested to promote it in a visible place with importance on the first page of the online page.

It is also requested to run small promos on Padma Bridge during peak/important times on television media.

Press Wing
Prime Minister's Office

মাননীয় প্রধানমন্ত্রী শেখ হাসিনা আগামী ২৫ জুন দেশের সবচেয়ে প্রতিক্ষীত পদ্মা সেতু উদ্বোধন করবেন। এই সেতু উদ্বোধনকে সামনে রেখে সকল গণমাধ্যমে (ইলেক্ট্রনিক, প্রিন্ট ও অনলাইন) স্ব স্ব উদ্যোগে পদ্মা সেতু এবং মাননীয় প্রধানমন্ত্রীর ছবি সম্বলিত ক্ষণগণনার লোগো ৩১ মে ২০২২ রাত ১২টার পর থেকে (১লা জুন রাত ১২.০১ মিনিট) সেতু উদ্বোধন পর্যন্ত সার্বক্ষণিক টেলিভিশন স্ক্রিনে এবং পত্রিকা ও অনলাইন পেইজে প্রথম পাতায় গুরুত্ব দিয়ে দৃশ্যমান স্থানে প্রচারের অনুরোধ করা হলো।

পদ্মা সেতু নিয়ে টেলিভিশন মিডিয়ায় পিক/ গুরুত্বপূর্ণ সময়ে ছোট ছোট প্রোমো চালানোরও অনুরোধ করা হলো।

প্রেস উইং
প্রধানমন্ত্রীর কার্যালয়

10:18

9.5 Appendix-D: Interview Questionnaire

1. As a journalist do you think the coverage of Padma Bridge by your media house was appropriate? If yes, why? If not, why?
2. Was there any instruction from the news managers in covering Padma Bridge? If yes, what were those?
3. Do you think those instructions guided you to think in a specific way while you were out to cover the issue?
4. Did any personnel from the Prime minister's office media wing direct you to what to write?
5. Did your sources related to the Padma Bridge refuse to provide information that could criticize the bridge in some point?
6. Did you get instructions from the media owners on how to cover the bridge?
7. Did you get instructions from any government agency on how to cover the bridge?
8. Was there any impact on news selection after you got news ideas from the prime minister's office? Did you incorporate any of the ideas?
9. How did the directive from the Ministry of Information and Broadcast impact news content?
10. Do you feel self-censorship in doing your job?
11. Do you believe excessive advertising related to the bridge influenced your news organization's decisions about how to cover the bridge?
12. Why do you believe all the stories about the bridge are positive?
13. Did you bring any information or news idea criticizing the bridge but could not do the story because of any influence or instruction from the news managers?

14. Did you feel at any point that, as a journalist, you were incapable of doing what you were supposed to do?
15. How important is it to you that you have the autonomy to choose how to write your stories and how to choose your sources?
16. Do you feel that the government's influence on your work makes it difficult for you to practice journalism as you see best fit?