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BGD42086.E

12 January 2004

Bangladesh: Whether civilians bribe newspapers to publish fraudulent articles; frequency of this practice; which newspapers are most vulnerable to corruption; names of newspapers known to be corrupt (2001-2003)

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board, Ottawa

Specific information on whether civilians bribe newspapers to publish fraudulent articles, or the frequency of this practice in Bangladesh, could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate. However, a research report commissioned by the Florida-based Institute for Public Relations and the United Kingdom-based International Public Relations Association, that was sponsored by the Turkish newspaper, *Hurriyet*, found that, among the 66 nations surveyed, there was a high likelihood in Bangladesh of print journalists seeking or accepting money for news coverage from a variety of sources (IPR 21 July 2003, Table 1; *ibid.* n.d.).

A World Bank report on governance in Bangladesh noted that "the press's effectiveness as agents of accountability towards ensuring good governance in the country is constrained by a number of serious weaknesses" including, among other factors, "the bribing of journalists and poor training of journalists on investigative reporting" (Media Watch 23 July 2002). The report maintained that journalists are "easily tempted to accept bribes or even extort payments" in a country where corruption is widespread (*ibid.*).

Transparency International's 2002 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), which measures the extent of corruption in 102 countries based on informants' perceptions regarding the frequency and value of bribes paid and their impact on businesses, named Bangladesh as the most corrupt nation among those surveyed (27 Nov. 2002 262, 265). Furthermore, the BBC states that it was identified as such despite the existence of an anticorruption bureau in Bangladesh, which is "widely regarded as toothless and not genuinely impartial" (13 May 2003).

No information on which newspapers are most vulnerable to corruption, or the names of newspapers known to be corrupt, could be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

For information on freedom of the press in Bangladesh, please refer to the section on Bangladesh in the *2003 Asia Annual Report* by Reporters Without Borders available at <http://www.rsf.org/article.php3id_article=6372&Valider=OK>.

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is

not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please find below the list of additional sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

References

BBC News. 13 May 2003. Alistair Lawson. "Bangladesh Tackles Corruption." <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/3023181.stm> [Accessed 16 Oct. 2003]

Institute for Public Relations (IPR), Gainesville, Fla. 21 July 2003. Dean Kruckeberg and Katerina Tsetsura. "A Composite Index by Country of Variables Related to the Likelihood of the Existence of 'Cash for News Coverage'." <http://www.instituteforpr.com/pdf/bribery_index.pdf> [Accessed 17 Oct. 2003]

_____. n.d. Dean Kruckeberg and Katerina Tsetsura. "International Index of Bribery for News Coverage." <http://www.instituteforpr.com/international.phtml?article_id=bribery_index> [Accessed 17 Oct. 2003]

Media Watch. 23 July 2002. "World Bank Report Outlines Constraints on the Media's Effectiveness." Press Release. <<http://www.ifex.org>> [Accessed 26 July 2002]

Transparency International (TI). 27 November 2002. Johann Graf Lambsdorff. "2002 Corruption Perceptions Index." *Global Corruption Report 2003* . <<http://www.globalcorruptionreport.org/download.shtml>> [Accessed 8 Jan. 2004]

Additional Sources Consulted

IRB Databases

Internet sites, including:

Amnesty International

Bangladesh Human Rights Network

Human Rights Watch

Immigration and Nationality Directorate (UK)

Reporters Without Borders

South Asian Journalists Association

Transparency International

World Bank, DevNews Media Center

World News Connection

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