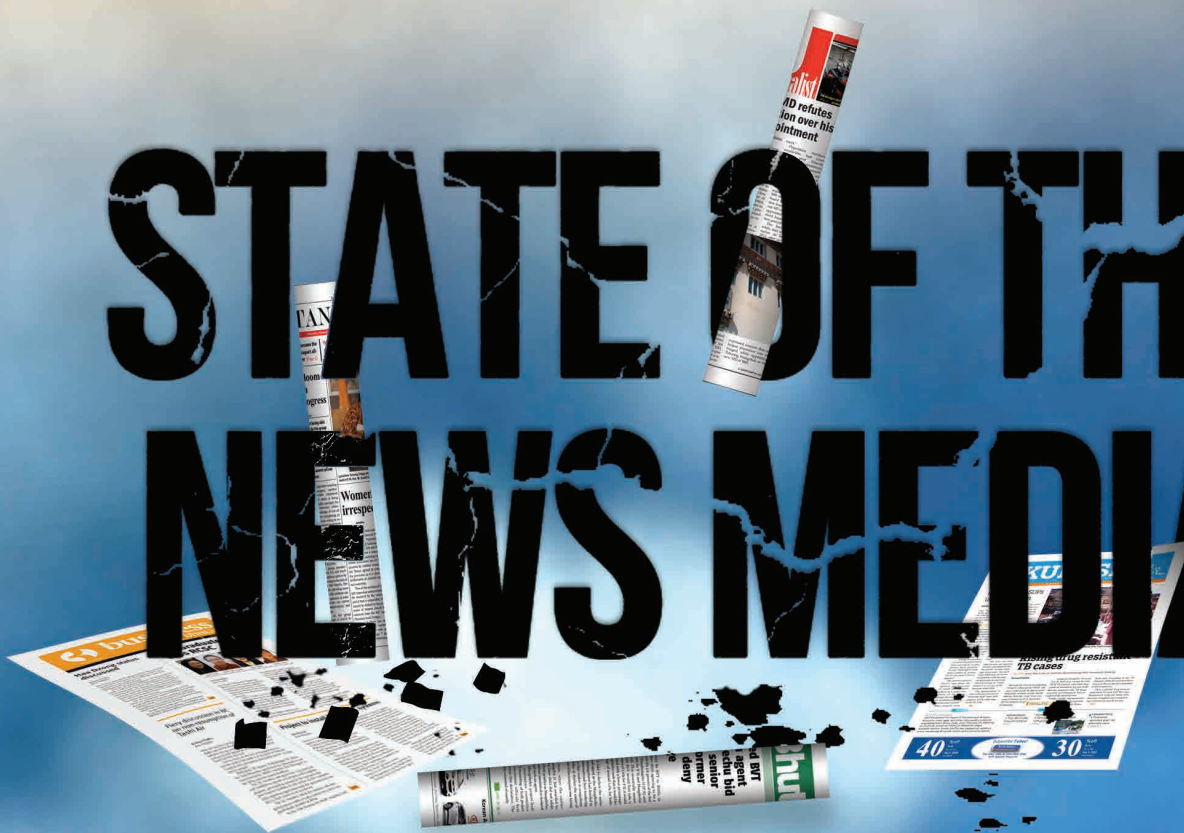


Bhutanese Journalism Review

• Tri-annual Magazine • October - December, 2014 •

STATE OF THE NEWS MEDIA





Wishes our beloved
King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck
a happy 35th birth anniversary.
May the Triple Gem bless Your Majesty
and the Nation forever.

BMF also wishes everyone a pleasant and
fulfilling female sheep year.
May the year be filled with happiness.

The Bhutan Media Foundation was established through a Royal Charter issued by His Majesty the King on 21st February, 2010. The Foundation aims to sustain democracy by developing the Bhutanese media through transformational initiatives that promote quality journalism, advance media innovation, engage communities and foster Freedom of Expression, Information and Press.

Information matters. Media matters. It makes democracy stronger. It helps communities solve problems. For all these reasons and more, Partner and Donate today in order to help realise BMF's aim. The Foundation is exempted from taxes and duties, therefore, any donation in kind or cash is tax-deductible.



FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

This publication is a realisation of an idea, discussed with some former Bhutanese journalists over several rounds of coffee, much like newspapers that were said to have been born over cups of coffee in the early 17th century English coffeehouses.

From the day the idea was conceived and agreed on, the pressure began building to make the first issue an outstanding one and flawless more so.

Bhutan Media Foundation (BMF) humbly brings you the Bhutanese Journalism Review. This is the first issue of the tri-annual magazine dedicated to Drukgyel Zhipa on his 60th birth anniversary and His Majesty the King.

As suggests the title, it will closely follow Bhutanese journalism, that being the mainstay, and other developments in the industry.

The point of the Review is not to breathe life into the popular phrase among journalists who, sometimes take perverse pleasure in calling themselves the “watched-dogs”, a sullied adaptation of the much-respected role of a “watchdog”.

Besides reminding and reinforcing existing professional norms and some basic principles

of journalism, old as they may be but relevant still to this day, the Review will carry issues facing the media. It will submit journalism and its practitioners to the same ethical norms they do others holding public offices.

The purpose of the publication is not to mock journalism in practice today. Notwithstanding the many limitations and challenges both journalism and journalists face today, even under looming threats of shutting down, the resolve to stay on for the cause of serving the people, the nation and democracy is admirable.

The intention is to help the various news media fulfill this responsibility better. A local review of the sort, we believe, might only contribute to the cause of socially responsible journalism.

Even otherwise, for readers in general, we hope the review fulfills some functions of media literacy – who the reporters are, how they cover stories and how stories get laid on pages – are some inside pictures to begin with.

Fulfilling these broad themes, the publication falls within BMF’s broad purview, spelt out in its charter, of helping media development in the country. The Review does this by studying them so as they may be reflected on.



DAWA PENJOR
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
BHUTAN MEDIA FOUNDATION

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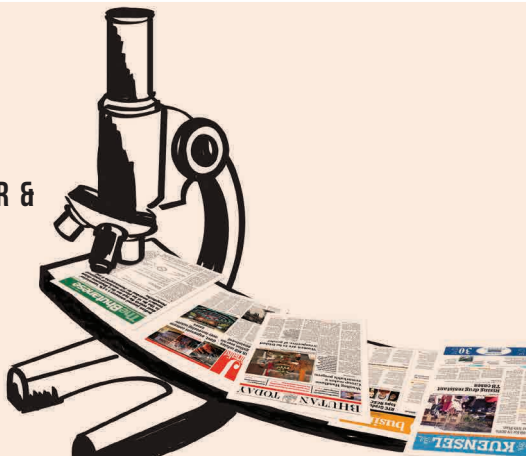


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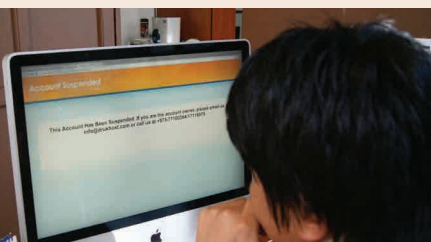


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DEAR READER

Welcome to the world of Bhutanese news media.

If you are not already a part of it, this issue, the first of a kind, will take you on a journey that reveals the facets of news media in Bhutan - of its highs and lows and of what it is today.

Breaking the bad news first, Bhutanese media is not in the best of forms today. It's a culmination of so many factors that came into play along the way. But the best way to address a problem is to understand the problem first. So this is what the first issue is about - understanding Bhutanese news media and issues confronting them.

On this opening theme, Bhutanese Journalism Review peeks at activities "behind the news", which is one of the regular features of the magazine. This time, besides being introduced to the people who are at the rear of the news you read and view, you will get an insight into how each media house decide what to publish or broadcast or not.

The issue also tries to understand where our vernacular news form fits in this sphere of Bhutanese journalism. Is it about journalism or simply another dais to foster the language?

With humble intentions to

reflect on what we consume in terms of news, another regular component of the magazine is the analysis of media content, carved up "monthly". It is through a closer look at the subjects that we can grasp the issues better for even better discourse. This issue looks at media coverage of October, November and December.

Talking about discourse, the magazine picks a couple of pertaining topics and throws a bit of analysis. This time we look at our economy and one notable outcome from Parliament's winter session - the council's resignation issue.

Before you think the magazine is going to be too serious a read for you, sections on "readers", "bloopers" and interview with relevant personalities punctuate for a great breather.

But before everything else, in this commemorative issue, we start off by paying our respect to the two beloved monarchs who provided invaluable impetus to media development in Bhutan, as in everything else. We pause to cherish and savour their initiatives in media growth. Their aspirations for Bhutanese media are what we need to reflect on to come out as a stronger fourth estate.

Happy reading!



TOWARDS FREE PRESS

At an operational level, the Bhutanese media is grappling with a host of issues.

From finding a viable business model in a tiny market to deep concerns over professionalism and ethics, media in Bhutan, which saw rapid growth in the past decade is now described by some as being in tatters, particularly print.

Yet it must be acknowledged that the media has been pushing the boundaries aided by an increasingly enabling environment to cover issues, institutions and policies that were, until recently, considered sensitive, sacred or taboo.

The fourth Druk Gyalpo,
Jigme Singyé Wangchuck

Within the media fraternity and certain sections of the populace, discussions on the role of the media in an emerging democracy and a rapidly transforming ancient Himalayan society is a regular theme.

At these discourses, in formal and informal settings, questions revolve around the traditional watchdog role and its limits, cultural sensitivities and geo-political realities. Other recurring themes are about whether to emulate media in the region and elsewhere or to seek inspiration and direction from within.

These developments are testimony to how far the Bhutanese media has come in its relatively short history as it continues to evolve and grow into the institution that serves Bhutanese people and keeps a check on government and other important institutions of the Bhutanese system.

The Bhutanese media has today reached such a stage in its evolution because of the processes set in motion almost 29 years ago by the fourth Druk Gyalpo. It has been a gradual step-by-step initiative going in tandem with developments and change in the country and the editorial capacity of the fledgling media.

While Kuensel was founded in 1967 as an internal government bulletin the National Youth Association of Bhutan (NYAB) started the first radio broadcasts in 1973.

The birth of conventional media in Bhutan began in 1986 when Kuensel was re-formatted into a weekly newspaper and "Radio NYAB" was renamed as Bhutan Broadcasting Service (BBS) under the government's department of information.

The first step toward building a professional and independent media came in 1992 when the fourth Druk Gyalpo issued an edict "delinking" BBS and Kuensel from the information department giving it autonomy to "allow for its profes-

TO THE COMMUNICATIONS MINISTER

In Bhutan, the land of medicinal plants, unprecedented developments are taking place across various ministries both in terms of economic welfare and political changes, and likewise collection and dissemination of news have increased. Moreover, the numbers of Bhutanese who are keen and experienced in composition and vocabulary have increased, and there are also lots of people who have excellent knowledge in different disciplines. Hence, recognizing the importance of developing our communication and media properly, you are hereby commanded to de-link Bhutan's national newspaper Kuensel and Bhutan Broadcasting Service and create two separate autonomous organizations which will gradually achieve full self-governance in future as per the policy of decentralization of power to our people

Issued on this 21st Day of the 7th Month of the Water-Monkey Year (18 September 1992)

Druk Gyalpo

Source: Portrait of a Leader, Through the Looking Glass of His Majesty's Decrees, Mieko Nishimizu, Centre For Bhutan Studies

sional growth".

The next milestone that would transform the Bhutanese media came in 1999 when the country officially introduced Television and Internet to commemorate the fourth Druk Gyalpo's coronation silver jubilee celebrations.

In his Silver Jubilee address the fourth Druk Gyalpo "highlighted the responsibility of the people in choosing what was good from the media".

The fourth Druk Gyalpo said, "I would like to caution the youth of Bhutan that TV and Internet has contents that are both harmful and useful to you and your country. Therefore, you must be very careful and selective in using this new resource."

While Kuensel, the only newspaper then, quickly went online to reach global audience, BBS TV began broadcasting for the first time for an hour in the evening in the

capital. TV broadcasts went nationwide in 2006.

2006 was another watershed moment as private media was allowed for the first time, to prepare the country for its transition to a parliamentary democracy in 2008.

Bhutan Times emerged as the first private paper with Bhutan Observer coming in a few months later. Kuensel newspaper floated 49 percent of shares to the public reducing government ownership to 51 percent.

The entry of private newspapers heralded a new era for the Bhutanese media bringing in healthy competition and giving it a vibrancy of a nation in transition.

In the next few years, more newspapers, radio stations, online forums and websites were born resulting in unprecedented access to information and platforms to express and exchange views and become part of the change sweeping the nation.

But the most important initiative to create the enabling environment for media to grow and flourish is contained in the Constitution of Bhutan, the drafting of which was initiated by the fourth Druk Gyalpo in 2001.

The Constitution of Bhutan, adopted in 2008 by the new Parliament elected in the country's first general elections, guarantees and protects the independence and freedom of media.

As is the case in many parts of the world, state and commercial control will continue to pose challenges for the Bhutanese media that must also continue to strive for higher standards of professionalism and serve the people.

The process that began three decades ago will not be without challenges, but it can only move forward as Bhutan continues towards building a free press.



His Majesty King Jigme Khesar
Namgyel Wangchuck

MEDIA FOR DISCOURSE

A free media is what His Majesty King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck always insisted the country should foster, for it in turn, fostered democracy.

The King also made it clear that a free media should also fulfill the responsibility of being the space for debate and discourse among its citizens or their representatives in relation to policies crafted in the interest of the nation or its people.

The idea was simple, that when citizens or their representatives disagreed morally on issues and policies of national interest, they would continue to reason together to reach mutually acceptable decisions, the essence of democracy.

Such discourses only reflected the difference in views of different people, who reflected concerns of various sorts at multiple levels, so believed His Majesty.

The country has today newspapers, one short of a dozen, half a dozen radio stations and more than half a dozen magazines professing to offer voices to people belonging to various sections of the society – the rural, the urban, the youth, the business community, but a majority to serve a package of all that to suit all readers.

The advantage of having many news media meant, at least in principle, issues being written about, covering every imaginable angles determined by disparate points of views and a congeries of ideas from the society's many sections.

Based on that premise, recognising the important role of the media in ensuring a vibrant democracy and in the larger good of

the society, His Majesty, through the exercise of royal prerogative of *kidu*, decided to strengthen the country's media organisations.

"The rights to freedom of information, expression and of the media enshrined in the Constitution are fundamental to democracy", were the opening lines of the royal charter under which was established Bhutan Media Foundation on February 21, 2010, coinciding with His Majesty's birth anniversary.

Although not there to solve the pecuniary anxieties that each of the media organisations continue expressing to this day, the foundation is expected to support their growth through trainings to enhance manpower skills, one that would go on to strengthening both content and capacity of the news media to be eventually able to determine a niche.

His Majesty the King always believed that democracy was about building institutions and he considered media an important one among them.

As he did with most other employees of the country's many offices – government, corporate and private – so did His Majesty

the King with each journalist of every media organisations.

The King, amid a lively conversation would suddenly turn solemn and remind journalists of their one responsibility, of serving the people and the country. In a democracy, which he said was a means to an end, the end being a just and prosperous society, the media had to help steer the nation towards that goal.

The King also commended each of the media houses for pressing on, notwithstanding, the lack of resources, both financially and in terms of human capacity to fulfill its responsibility. The expression of appreciation culminated in the award of Order of Merit (gold) that still hang with pride on the walls of each of the media organisations that received it on the National Day of 2011.

Whether that takes a place among an array of other accolades or serves as a pricking reminder of the responsibility the King once trusted the media organisations with, is for each of them to mull over.

■

**"THE RIGHTS TO FREEDOM OF INFORMATION, EXPRESSION AND OF THE MEDIA
ENSHRINED IN THE CONSTITUTION ARE FUNDAMENTAL TO DEMOCRACY"**

■ ROYAL CHARTER



PRINT OUT: Much before hitting the press, stories are printed several times for proofing

State of the NEWS MEDIA

Sustainability being the biggest concern for the Bhutanese news media, newspapers in particular...

THE SETTING

Sparing the keyboard, which swift fingers have helped shine, the desktop computer wears a slim layer of dirt. A few tea-stained papers, a journalism handbook and a *doma* wrap lay carelessly strewn on the table. The air is charged with smoke.

In the front, a leather chair that cushioned more than seven rumps so far is in tatters. The walls are as shaggy as the iconic Bob Marley sketch that appears to be done on the go. Perhaps it played muse to someone who once reigned in the room that says editor's.

At one corner of the room, a white board fallen on its side still bears fading letters of blue. A closer look helps decipher the stories listed during the last general election. The adjacent room is as disorganised. Two empty chairs greet visitors and beside it, unsold copies of the newspaper and subscribed others are heaped to the ceiling.

The office of a weekly newspaper, located in one apartment along Norzin Lam, seems missing in action. Neighbours often wonder where the team of much vibrant newsroom has gone.

Same is the syndrome in other media houses. The derelict state of the offices speaks for them.

Such is the story of the fourth



IN/OUT: Office of a private newspaper editor

estate. Pointed up as being crucial in a democracy, the phrase is reduced to a mere rhetoric today. In recent times, besides a few newspapers and magazines folding for good, the fourth estate is made of the so-called watchdogs in want of finance, experience and more, struggling to stay alive.

THE PRELUDE

In 2006, when two private newspapers entered, existing media organisations – Kuensel and Bhutan Broadcasting Service were yanked to another level of competi-

tion and professionalism.

Vibrant newsrooms strategically planned story line ups, wrung each of them to bring out the best and presented readers stories with spirited headlines, all in the attempt to prevail over the other. Next morning, reporters of each newspaper with their editors would huddle up to scan rival newspapers, eyes out for any big stories missed. Apart from that, they would compare stories for depth, style and language.

Around the same time, the first private radio station also went on air.

The two new newspaper entrants gave readers the much-needed break from the usual news they were used to seeing and reading in terms of content and presentation. That bought them their loyalty and with it the means that sustained them. However, besides loyal readers and ready market, their success also invited competitors who wished to achieve the same. More newspapers and radios joined the league in 2008 and 2009. Independent Dzongkha papers and a number of magazines also surfaced.

WHAT THAT MEANT (SCENARIO TODAY)

Today, the number of news media existing in the country is still impressive, particularly considering its population and readership. A closer look, however, tells a different story.

Towards end of November 2014, private media owners and managers met in an effort to mend what ailed them. But that was not their first, including what they discussed and of course, the outcome. Media representatives claimed they lost count of such meetings and cursed the futility of having to gripe about the same issues.

Over the years, to stay afloat, media firms began to retrench. What was once a full-fledged organisation with flashy signboards was reduced to a few-room offices. Robust editorial teams were minimised to a handful. For example, The Bhutanese started as a bi-weekly with 38 people. Today, it is a weekly, with 12 employees. Even the handful that comprises the news teams were contemplating leaving to look for a job that paid on time.

Correspondents planted in selected parts of the country were either shown the door or called off. Seasoned reporters groomed in what is both an art and science of a profession bowed out, making



way for a budding lot. Newspapers reduced their pages, print copies and subsequently their sales agents in town shrank. A good number of newspapers and magazines exited in the process.

Media people attribute government's handling of advertisements against proliferation of news media as a cause of the slump. Considering the overall state of economy, advertisement budget further shrank. Media owners claim they sought loans from financial institutions to sustain. Others felt the need to diversify. What money news agencies had made were allegedly pumped elsewhere and not into newsrooms.

AN AILING WATCHDOG?

They say media should ride on quality journalism and credibility, the launch pad for great journalism. But without the means, it can only "launch" so far. As the fourth estate deteriorated, so did the quality of news. The times of each writer attempting at a masterpiece, favoured by uninhibited and aggressive journalism, has today

turned perfunctory.

In some private papers, editors change fortnightly, while others have part-time editors, who pay occasional visits to newsrooms, editing stories mostly in the 11th hour. With little or no guidance from seniors, young reporters are unable to tackle bigger issues, the kind that has impact. In others, an editor is forced to write a number of stories to fill pages.

Private papers say they cannot match up to the state-initiated news media. But does it mean the latter fares any better?

Kuensel editor claims even without direct editorial interference from the government, the newsroom is unable to tackle critical issues considering the team's capacity. The organisation saw a number of seniors leaving for reasons varying from personal to better opportunities elsewhere. This resulted in the team growing younger. Add daily grind to it and there was no way the paper could pursue in-depth analysis. Kuensel's declining financial position also led to a number of cost cutting measures, that of reporters training being one of the most convenient.

The same story is with BBS. Reporters wanting of experience, exposure and training. Considering the size of the organisation, the training budget was stretched too thin. Being treated as another government organisation didn't help either. It hopes for things to look up once they secure the public service broadcast status, the process for which has begun.

For now, those who have chosen to remain in the media are making efforts despite myriads of limitations to add meaning to the media industry and to reinstate media culture. The handful of seniors said although thoughts of quitting crossed their minds several times, they had to fall back on the resolve to play watchdog. The type that

influences policies, submits even the highest officials to ethical and judicial norms and brings about progressive democratic culture in small ways.

WAY OUT?

The media's inextricable role in a democracy and its noble duty to a society cannot be overstated. Therefore, it's about time the government, policy makers and media practitioners, including the so-called freelancers, take a step back to really understand issues facing Bhutanese journalism today.

Media owners have time and again implored the government to stop treating media like any other business entities. That was probably heartfelt, especially considering the purpose they serve in a society.

Coming to purpose, it is as relevant for the various media houses to ask themselves whether each of their motives is as heartfelt. In their variety, what different dimensions have they helped bring to journalism? If the number of media houses mean as diverse points of views to trigger a discourse that is deemed

necessary in a democracy, are they fulfilling this responsibility?

Perhaps, media owners ought to ask themselves why they got into this business in the first place. If it was in expectation of gains (monetary), they are probably in the wrong place, at least, for now. It has to first gain the trust and confidence of the people, in the case of news media, by striving to provide better contents, be they breaking news, analysis or investigation. That is the social responsibility side of the dimension. That is how it is the world over.

Since that is not happening, and the media situation touching rock bottom, it's time the government considered some bold policy initiatives. Is it really fair to overcrowd the already bursting pool and wait for the fittest to prevail?

Considering all challenges, is there a need for revision of the existing regulations to ensure enabling environment for media growth? Are the requirements like compulsory Dzongkha edition and nation-wide circulation serving the purpose?

It is also time for regulatory authorities, Bhutan InfoComm

and Media Authority in this case, to take a resilient stance to cut out a media frame that's befitting of a country that has ventured on a journey to democracy. To begin with, they need only to see whether media houses live up to the standards, agreeing to which they entered the market?

The country certainly needs a journalism that is well-packaged – clinical news to stay informed, analysis that educates and in-depth stories that provoke thoughts and questions. To be able to do that, Bhutanese news media ought to fall back on the basics of telling stories that are accurate, verified and non-partisan. Every once in a while, the country is given a sporadic taste of that through occasional story or two. This goes to show the flickering embers of a good journalism.

There is hope still to once again, fill up silent newsrooms with resounding explosions of ideas, insatiable editors demanding bigger, better stories and intrusive reporters chasing after headline news by their own standards.

■



WHERE REPORTERS TOIL: With unsold copies of their work piled in one corner

NEWS MEDIA TIMELINE

1967

KUENSEL STARTED AS AN INTERNAL GOVERNMENT BULLETIN

1986

- NYAB RENAMED AS BBS
- KUENSEL REFORMATTED AND PUBLISHED AS A WEEKLY



KUENSEL

2006

April 30

BHUTAN TIMES HITS THE STANDS



1973

November

RADIO NYAB MAKES FIRST BROADCAST

1999

June 2



- BBS TV GOES ON AIR
- INTERNET INTRODUCED

2014

January

RAVEN FOLDS



2012

October

SECOND MONTHLY NEWS MAGAZINE, THE RAVEN, HITS THE STANDS

TheBhutanese

2012

February 21

BRANDING ITSELF AS A REPORTERS' PAPER, THE BHUTANESE STARTED AS BI-WEEKLY

2013

August

BHUTAN OBSERVER PRINT ISSUE MOVES ONLINE

2012

May 20

FOURTH INDEPENDENT DZONGKHA NEWSPAPER DRUK MELONG LAUNCHES



BHUTAN TODAY

2008
October
BHUTAN TODAY STARTS
AS FIRST DAILY

2009
December 18
SPLINTER GROUP
FROM TIMES START
THE JOURNALIST



2006
June 2
BHUTAN OBSERVER
LAUNCHES FIRST EDITION



2009
September 26
BUSINESS BHUTAN LAUNCHES
AS FIRST BUSINESS PAPER



2009
December
DRUKPA A MONTHLY
NEWS MAGAZINE
ENTERS MARKET



2011
May
BHUTAN YOUTH, A PAPER
FOCUSING ON YOUTH
ISSUES LAUNCHED

2010
August
DRUK NEYTSHUL,
FIRST INDEPENDENT DZONGKHA
NEWSPAPER LAUNCHED

2011
November 11
GYALCHI SARSHOG OR
NEWS OF THE WORLD
ROLLS OUT

2011
February 19
DRUK YOEZER, A
WEEKLY TAKES OFF

DZONGKHA AND THE PRINT MEDIA

In most parts of the world where English is not native tongue, the vernacular or local language press usually have a much wider circulation and readership than the English one.

In Bhutan, it is the other way round.

The national language or Dzongkha newspapers lag behind the English editions in circulation and readership and therefore in the role of informing the Bhutanese citizenry.

For Kuensel, Bhutan's first and most widely circulated newspaper,

its Dzongkha edition averages a daily circulation of 1,000 copies, six times lower than its English edition.

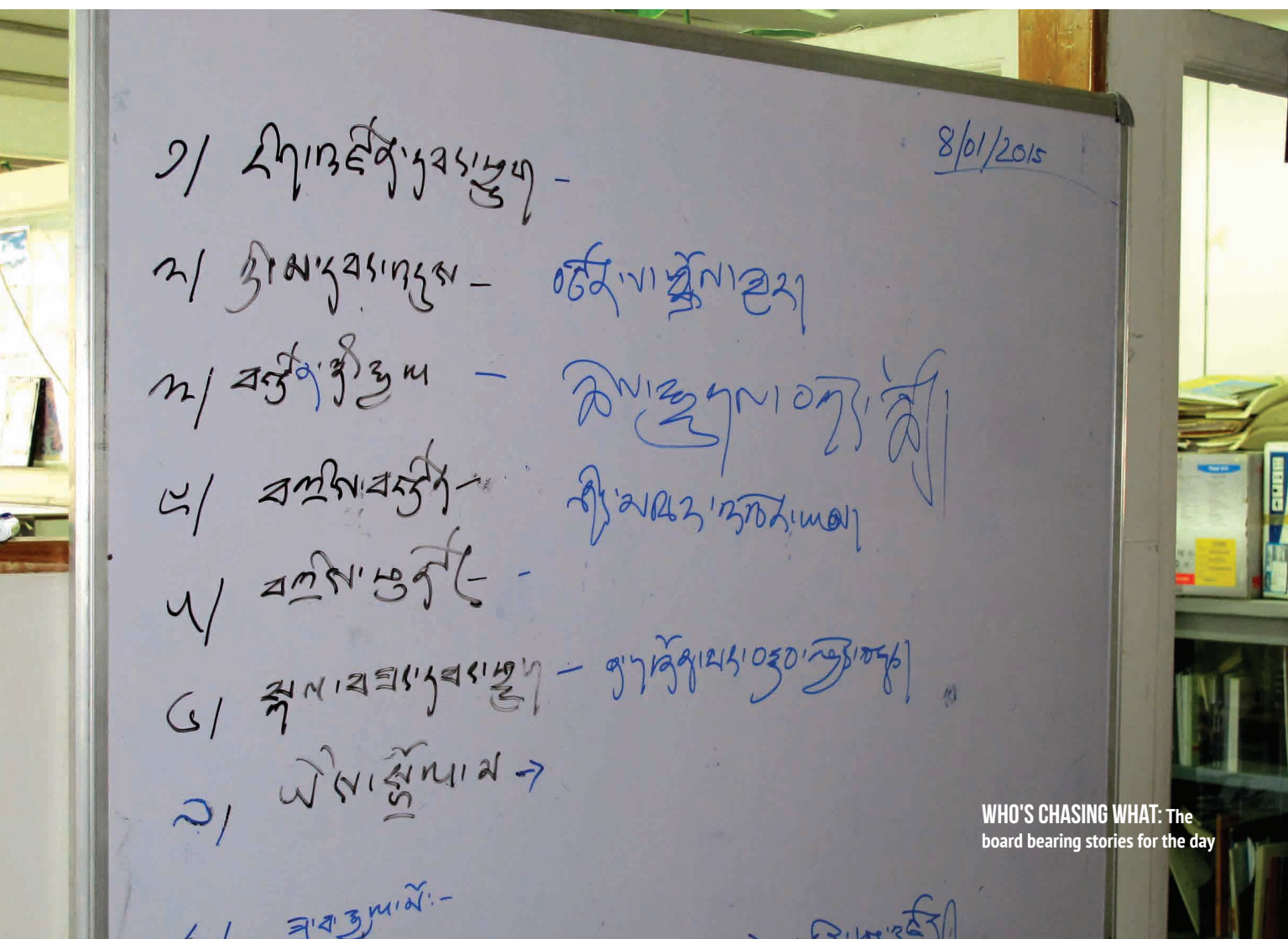
Monks of the central monastic body, armed forces personnel, local government officials and parliamentarians form the bulk of readers of the Dzongkha Kuensel, which are also circulated to schools and institutions.

For the nine other weekly newspapers, of which four are specifically Dzongkha only editions (Druk Melong, Druk Yoeser, Druk Net-suel, Gyelchi Sharchog), the num-

bers is much lower and in some cases non-existent.

All English language newspapers are required to publish a Dzongkha edition but Dzongkha newspapers need not publish an English language edition according to an existing policy directive enforced by the Bhutan Information Communication and Media Authority (BICMA).

The policy directive is based on a Cabinet decision of November 27, 2005, and a resolution of the 87th session of the National Assembly in 2007.





PROMOTING LANGUAGE?: Dzongkha newspapers face readership challenges

According to a story in Kuensel, the resolution says that, “based on past resolutions and *kashos* efforts should be made to publish notifications in our national language and the contents and quality of both the Dzongkha and English language newspapers should be same.”

This resolution came less than a year after the entry of first two private English language newspapers giving much desired competition to the Kuensel newspaper.

Kuensel, where government ownership shrunk to 51 percent in 2006, has been publishing, since 1986, separate English and Dzongkha editions after it evolved into a 12 page weekly paper from an internal government gazette. Its Dzongkha edition has made a significant contribution in the promotion of the national language.

One of the private English language newspapers agreed to meet this requirement by publishing a four-page Dzongkha insert with its English edition. The other settled to publish a full fledged Dzongkha paper with the objective of becoming the leader in the language edition.

But after a few years it eventually shrunk into an ‘insert’ the stated reasons being overheads and lack of sales and readership. All private English language papers nowadays publish the Dzongkha edition as a single page insert with poorly written reports of yesterday’s news.

At one time the private English language newspapers even lobbied for subsidies to publish the language edition to balance the overheads and lack of sales.

Such a situation has perpetuated newspapers focusing on the English editions and in the process marginalising the language edition in terms of content, resource and investment. This has led to poor quality content and compromised the primary objective of promoting Dzongkha.

DZONGKHA ONLY EDITIONS

- » DRUK MELONG
- » DRUK YOESER
- » DRUK NETSUEL
- » GYELCHI SHARCHOG

To address the quality and content, a group of former Dzongkha editors formed a committee called the Dzongkha Lekchoe Tshogpa to provide Dzongkha reporters with journalism training, improving Dzongkha news quality through committee guidance and sustain the committee. It sought funding from the government through Dzongkha Development Commission. The committee was dissolved after a year due to lack of fund.

More recently the private papers have lobbied doing away with the Dzongkha edition ‘inserts’ after the emergence of independent Dzongkha newspapers in 2011.

It is unclear whether it was the 2013 elections or a draft newspaper advertising guideline (which never came through) or both that led to the spurt of Dzongkha newspapers.

According to the draft advertising guideline, which was circulated for feedback, some of the considerations in selection of media to place advertisements are reach, circulation, content that seeks to promote GNH values and promotion of the national language.

For the weekly independent Dzongkha editions, all eight-page tabloid format papers, the going has been satisfactory up until the 2013 general elections. But readership and circulation issues still dog the independent language papers that are not sure what the immediate future holds.

As far as the private English language newspapers are concerned, the policy of promoting Dzongkha

by making it a responsibility to publish language editions has not worked because of the financials.

Lack of readership and circulation facing the language editions, Dzongkha editors say is because English is the working language for the majority and until this changes nothing else will change.

It was not always the case. In fact the first edition of Kuensel as an internal government bulletin, which came out in May 1965, was in hand written *Choeyked* with information on Bhutan and India holding talks to build the Paro airport and other information on government appointments and transfers. The first edition of the Kuensel in English came out two years later in 1967.

This gradually changed with the widespread introduction of modern schools that adopted English, replacing Hindi, as the medium of instruction. Since then promoting the use of Dzongkha has been a concern and priority.

For Dzongkha to eventually become the working language, Dzongkha editors say more and more of the school curriculum must be taught in the national language. Several years ago the education ministry did try to introduce the teaching of middle school history in Dzongkha but it did not work and the decision was reserved.

At the primary level, EVS (environmental science) is also taught in the national language besides specific periods for learning Dzongkha itself.

Dzongkha perhaps received the biggest boost in the run up to the first general elections. With all parliamentary debates and sessions in the national language, all aspiring parliamentarians are brushing up their Dzongkha skills and is the new permanent group of readers for the Dzongkha newspapers.

■

THE FIRST:
Kuensel's
hand written
internal
government
bulletin
comes out in
May, 1965



WHAT'S ON THE FRONT?

To not judge a book by its cover sounds out of place when it is about newspapers.

Like most conventions journalism breaks, so it does this old dictum too.

For any newspaper, the front or the cover page is the bait, the front door. The idea, at least, is to grab eyeballs, ambitious as it might sound, of passersby first and then of those lingering ones around newsstands and racks.

No wonder some newspapers are getting everything from simple cosmetic changes to occasional full-fledged makeovers.

Looks aside, what Bhutanese news consumers sometimes wonder when they see a newspaper front page is about the choices made to elevate a certain story above another.

What makes front-page story? Who decides?

Most editors and reporters in newsrooms of various newspapers and those of country's only broadcast station agree they hold to the "editors are the ultimate arbiters" tradition still.

The country's national newspaper, Kuensel managing editor Ugyen Penjor expresses disbelief of this being true in the case of the country's oldest newspaper, his elbows resting on the immense rectangular table of the office conference room, which he remembered once echoed with spirited discussions on issues

that would roll out on the paper.

Most reporters that made up the Kuensel newsroom today were either recent recruits, or still learning the ropes of reporting.

Being a daily edition, the newspaper usually ran important government decisions and events on the front page.

Latterly, the paper also ran more of human-interest stories on the front. The government was not making many decisions. The Bhutanese newspaper editor Tenzing Lamzang agreed. While the previous government made one too many decisions, the present one lacked the resolve to make even a few.

Running the newspaper with three young reporters, all crammed in a dingy room with accounts and finance staff, the need to discuss what made headline news was never felt.

EDITORIAL MEETINGS DECIDE

- STORIES FOR THE ISSUE
- STRENGTH OF THE STORIES
- ALLOCATE PAGES FOR STORIES
- LENGTH OF THE STORY
- ACCOMPANYING PICTURE/VISUAL
- POSTMORTEM ON LATEST ISSUE
- POST-MORTEM ON COMPETITORS

Drawing from his situation, Tenzing Lamzang, perched on the attic of a building below Bhutan Development Bank, believes editors should have the final say on what made page one news because they would be responsible for it once published.

Little wonder most front-page stories in The Bhutanese bear the editor's byline, who claims his



newspaper focuses on investigative journalism and pursues stories of officials graft to go on the front page.

With most breaking and spot news having already been covered on the social media much before they are on air or dailies serve them on the newsstands, weeklies have the challenge of giving more to the readers.

While most weekly newspaper editors admitted the need to provide more than what appeared on the social media and daily newspapers and broadcasts, in terms of analysis and in-depth news stories, they found their purpose scuttled by lack of seasoned reporters.



BRAIN STORMING: Kuensel journalists discuss story ideas at an editorial meeting

Part-time editor Namkhair Norbu, who a few weeks ago worked for *The Journalist*, a Sunday newspaper discussed issues to fill the edition earlier in the week with his three reporters.

Two to three joined tables with two computers on them at the entrance and several unsold copies of the newspaper stacked on one corner is the editorial department. A little red sign board inscribed in white above the window frame tells this.

For front-page stories, the newsroom usually waited for events to occur on the last two days of the week.

When there were no major events to write about on the day

before the publication, one stand-in editor of another weekly newspaper normally wrote their own stories of the major events that others had already written about.

Some editors who did this believed they were providing their loyal readers during the weekend, a summary of events that occurred in the week.

A weekly run down of events is what the country's national and the only broadcast station Bhutan Broadcasting Service (BBS) does as well.

With more than 20 reporters, 14 stationed in the districts and headed by about 16 editors, it only made sense to leave it to the majority to sound off the headline

news.

Meeting twice a day, once in the morning with all editors and reporters to discuss story line up for the day and another around 3pm, just among editors, to decide what made top news, BBS editor Jigme Thinley usually rolled them in first come, first served.

All editors believed they could do more with the news by making it more assertive, better researched and much better told.

The moot point is whether they can, faced with limitations aplenty and hobbled with challenges of sustainability, rise up to this shared aspiration.

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CAUGHT REPORTING: A print reporter in the field



MEET THE REPORTERS

A young reporter reluctantly rises from his seat to read out a question from his notepad to the members of the Cabinet seated amid them.

Barely audible even over a microphone, one of the ministers tells the reporter to repeat the question. The second attempt fares no better.

"It's to do with blacktopping of *gewog* connectivity roads," so rephrases a minister, who seeing the reporter's nod, begins to answer.

The reporter, it later turned out, wanted an update on the government's pledge to black top roads to every *gewog* centre.

A session or two of the monthly "Meet the Press" gives an observer a fairly accurate assessment of how materials are gathered for news.

Information reporters gather for news stories under their names can be a cause for discontent for some or it could give a sense of fulfillment to some other readers.

Who are the people behind the bylines that appear in various newspapers, or voiceovers on air? Who are our so-called reporters, who bear the responsibility of informing, educating and entertaining the public? (see illustration)

Today, the country's reporters are mostly young, fresh out of college and in need of training.

With most seasoned journalists in the country having already left the industry to either start their own businesses or for better pastures, it has forced many newspaper owners and media houses to recruit journalists straight from the market.

The new recruits too are among those waiting to gain some experience, or secure an earning until they land a more secure job either in the government or a corporation that wears a smack of it.

Save for a few whose experience

vary from two to three years, most reporters today, working with various news organisations, are new entrants having only spent a few months.

In the words of a senior journalist, Bhutanese reporters today are mostly ill equipped, underpaid and poorly trained. What is worse, reporters themselves do not have pleasant things to say about the profession.

One newspaper editor, 24-year-old Phuntsho Choden is of the opinion that journalism is a thankless job. She said, journalists faced criticisms and are less appreciated, "We are deemed annoying and a nuisance."

Lack of facilities like camera, recorders, telephone, transportation and internet, basic to the profession and one deemed necessary among reporters to elevate the profession was what ailed the industry,

NUMBER OF NEWS REPORTERS INCLUDING EDITORS

MEDIA HOUSE



GYALCHI SARSHOG	0	3
DRUK YOEDZER	1	2
DRUK NEYTSHUEL	1	4
DRUK MELONG	3	6
BHUTAN TODAY	2	4
THE BHUTANESE	1	3
THE JOURNALIST	3	1
BUSINESS BHUTAN	4	3
KUENSEL (DZONGKHA)	1	8
KUENSEL (ENGLISH)	8	10
BHUTAN TIMES	3	0
BBS	56	12



TAKING NOTE: Reporters take down information at a press conference

besides having to go without salary for months.

Reporters, a handful they are in some newspapers, pen down their stories on paper and wait for their colleagues working on a shared desktop in the office to finish theirs so they could type their stories for print.

It was their own owners, one reporter of a weekly newspaper believes, who began showing disrespect for the profession by not investing on a resource critical for what newspapers stood for.

One senior reporter, who worked for various newspaper houses saw the purpose of newspapers being compromised for busi-

ness interest.

But for reporters in the country's oldest newspaper, Kuensel, it was about the love for some action.

Kuensel's Tshering Dorji feels there were no seasoned professionals in the industry to look up to and learn from. Most media houses today, he said were laid back, a propensity that culled competition. "No competition, no improvement."

It was the editors who assigned stories to reporters in most media houses and views from some readers is that most Bhutanese reporters only did spot news. None of the many newspapers spent time analysing issues.

Although some of the journal-

ists joined the profession out of interest, they were unhappy with the current state of affairs. One Bhutan Broadcasting Service editor Tara Limbu said joining the media initially was a choice, but now it has become a necessity for her. "Nothing is favouring the industry today," she said. "If the situation continues to be the same, I might as well leave."

Failing to incite passion or prospects of a developing career, existing young reporters, like most readers of their age pick up the newspapers not to read stories but to look out for vacancies.

■

QUESTIONING ANSWERS:

A reporter throws a question at a minister during a recent meet the press session





WHAT OCTOBER WAS ABOUT

Corruption and hydropower were staples among the country's various news organisations in October.

Court cases, particularly accusations and rebuttals between the state prosecutor and former councillor Chang Ugyen saw detailed coverage in the Bhutanese news media. The case pertained to alleged illegal transfer of government land into private *thrams*.

The ensuing court case that led to the subsequent arrest and detention of former Gup Naku and the newly appointed Bhutan Telecom chief executive officer Tshewang Gyeltsen also made headlines.

National broadcaster Bhutan Broadcasting Service (BBS) aired regular updates on the developments of these alleged corruption cases and about each of the different people arrested.

Daily newspaper Kuensel also carried regular updates on the case, a chronology of events they appeared like though.

The other court case that grabbed media attention was the opposition party, Druk Phuensum Tshogpa taking National Environment Commission advisor Dasho Pal-jor J Dorji to court over his comment on social media. The latter had accused the opposition of 'robbing the nation blind' when they were in the government. The involvement of high profile Bhutanese and the element of corruption, controversy wrapped in a pinch of 'politicisation' provided enough fodder for the news media.

Corruption aside, devel-

opments in the hydropower sector also received regular coverage. The Indian government re-looking and later withdrawing support for three of the 10 mega hydropower projects, which make up the country's 10,000MW by 2020 dream was one. The other significant one was Dagachhu hydropower project facing an unexpected setback on the eve of its grand launch.

Most hydropower stories already covered by daily news media and as a weekly paper, The Bhutanese felt the pressure to provide more to its reader, which it did so by splashing on the front, what it calls an exclusive coverage of a controversial, again involving high

profile Bhutanese, in the sector. While the story was picked from an Indian journal, ENERTIA, the newspaper carried several stories of Sangay Wangchuk of Bhutan Ventures Trading (BVT) entering into an agreement with Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) to receive commission, long before tenders for Punatsangchhu II and Mangdechhu were floated.

While pursuing and writing diverse stories to cater to as diverse a taste among readers is welcome, to inject opinions of the newspaper does not sit well with some of the most basic tenets journalism subscribes to. A paper carries the responsibility of providing news in



WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2014 • Nu 10

OAG sticks to its guns in land scam case

Lashi Dema

The Office of the Attorney General yesterday insisted that the former royal advisory councillor, Chang Ugyen, manipulated his thram and increased his land holding size to 2.03 acres in Omkha, and registered even acres in Lhubding, during his tenure as a up.

UPDATE

In their rebuttal at the bench IV of the Thimphu dzongkhag court, OAG's prosecutor, Lashi Gyalpo, submitted that thrams prior to 1979 clearly state the land size in Omkha as 0.02 deci-

mal, and do not reflect any land holding in Lhubding.

The thrams then were called thaythrim, and it had thrams of land in Punakha and Thimphu together.

"But in 1982, the thaythrim was separated to different thrams for Thimphu and Punakha, and the new land holding size for the two places isn't mentioned," the OAG prosecutor

submitted before the court. "But some thrams of 1994 and onwards have the land holding size in Omkha as 3.02 acres and seven acres in Lhubding."

OAG prosecutor



Celebration: Bulls square up at the battle of Zhuls in Tenche village, Lunana (Story on pg 9)

Investigation ongoing at Tango monastery

the most unbiased form and manner without putting in opinions of the journalist or the agency. The paper also used space to protect its stand in subsequent stories in defiance of BHEL's letter that challenged the paper's earlier story.

The Bhutanese also overlooked some technical aspects newspapers subscribe to. For instance, headlines for some of its stories ran into five lines that almost always threaten to eclipse its masthead.

Human-interest stories are not as controversial but still dear to the news media, for through it emerges the satisfaction of having fulfilled the responsibility of giving voices to those unheard.

In newspapers most human-interest stories go on the inside

pages. One that stood out in October was that of abandoned elderly men and women living as a small community in Begana, Thimphu. This feature story in Kuensel carried the issue.

Important stories, in almost all news agencies revolved around happenings in the capital. News coming in from bureaus was of human-wildlife conflict, freak accidents and crime among others.

Business Bhutan, as the name suggest, was supposed to give focus to business news, Bhutan Observer to cover stories from the grassroots and The Bhutanese that insists it is an investigative newspaper, on official grafts and corruption. But they have not really stayed focused enough.

Eventually, all newspapers including the broadcast media mostly went with, current affairs, event-based news like government decisions, royalty and official promotions and observation of international days like women empowerment, youth and child rights and environment.

No harm in current affairs and covering events so long as the write-ups do not read like they are typed straight from a press release.

The sole advantage of weekly paper is time. They do not have the advantage of breaking news, but they have time to do well-researched analytical pieces, which is missing in Bhutanese journalism.

NOVEMBER SERVES THE PARLIAMENT

The winter session of the Parliament was a gold mine for the news media which otherwise depended on sources, events and press releases for news. It provided, besides news, a picture of the stark divide between the opposition and the ruling party and to a certain extent, even with National Council.

With news, controversy tagged along. The ruling and the opposition, during the course of the parliamentary session took to mudslinging, which the media presented without cold feet.

The two sides took to finger pointing when issues of growing unemployment were raised and the opposition accused the speaker of dragging the monarchs in the assembly debate to gain mileage. The Election Act went without amendment. The ruling party challenged the opposition to take the government to court if it had done anything unconstitutional.

While reflecting the divide, the accusations and finger pointing also appeared spiteful, all of which could have been avoided and members could have focused on the deliberations and discussions.

During one of the sessions, the opposition leader stood up, before the deliberation could begin, and relayed the opposition's disappointment on the speaker's act and words.

News emerging from the parliamentary sessions were, however, an account and a record of the proceedings. It did not lead to in-depth analysis. Issues discussed in the Parliament also prompted media

Speaker

opposition

60th birth anniversary

unemployment

SAARC

Jigme mining

Audit report

Pranab Mukherjee

Chief Justice

to follow up certain news that had become dormant.

The media also covered the mining sector, which incurred losses and irregularities of Nu 1.125B, and the issues in service delivery and delays in processing applications, were also covered after Royal Audit Authority (RAA) presented its performance audit report to the Parliament.

It could either indicate lazy journalism, with reporters waiting for news to be fed to them or that the information flow from sources to the media was restricted.

Outside the parliamentary discussions, it was the Indian president Pranab Mukherjee's visit, fourth King's birth anniversary, the SAARC summit in Nepal, retire-

ment of chief justice Sonam Tobgye and gross domestic product (GDP) hitting a low of 2.05 percent that made the headlines.

Newspaper covered the Indian president's visit to Bhutan, mostly focusing on the bilateral relations and provided a perspective of what the two nations seek in each other, with headlines quoting the president wishing for a "strong Bhutan", which was "in India's interest".

It was also a visit, during which the media were able to seek and confirm that only 6,476 megawatt (MW) of the 10,000 MW hydro-power production capacity would come through by 2020.

The purported Business paper, Business Bhutan ran the GDP news in an inside page and besides the

fact that it is an important story, determined by what makes news 'news' parameter, the coverage lacked analysis and was instead a mash of quotes of the prime minister.

National daily Kuensel, however, had besides stories emerging from Parliament, coverage from other districts, of which, the by-election for *tshogpa* post in Decheling, Samdrupjongkhar was

refreshing and informative.

News on substance abuse, covered by several media agencies, also lacked depth, which could be instrumental in pushing authorities to take a deeper look into the issue. The stories were basic and simply covered arrests of those abusing substances and related crime.

The want of analysis was also reflected in Kuensel's coverage of 'ease of doing business' summit

in Thimphu. In the first story that was published in October end, economic affairs minister was quoted saying the country's rank had climbed by 16 places in terms of ease of doing business. By first week of November, a clarification followed from the ministry stating that rank had actually dropped by three places.





SECRETARIES SEAL THE YEAR

By the time December's second week rolled in, news emerging from the Parliament and other issues and events of importance took a backstage.

It may have been all together forgotten stories, particularly considering the issue of the elected government seeing itself relegated to a secondary role by those in the highest level of bureaucracy.

For the media, it was a fresh story to write, one that tested their capacity, skills, professionalism and principles of journalism.

The committee of secretaries (CoS) was dissolved and the government handed over three secretaries – Cabinet's Dasho Penden Wangchuk, economic affairs ministry's Dasho Sonam Tshering and foreign ministry's Yeshey Dorji – to the Royal Civil Service Commission (RCSC) for overstepping their mandates.

This issue was an offshoot of the articles an Indian Journal ENERTIA published, which alleged that Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd. (BHEL) and Bhutan Ventures Trading (BVT) went into an illegal agreement to appoint the latter as agent for the former, and colluded to win contract for supply of hydro-mechanical equipment for Punatsangchu II and Mangdechhu hydropower projects. It was also alleged that previous Indian ambassador Pavan K Varma and Dasho Sonam Tshering, among others, colluded in favour of the two companies.

Following a few consecutive

articles of allegations, the CoS had written to the Indian Ambassador to act against the publication, which the government claimed was done without its knowledge, one it deemed a failure on the part of secretaries to carry out their responsibility.

Articles various newspapers wrote caused confusion among readers as it clubbed two issues, that of the secretaries being handed to RCSC and the allegations of corruption involving BHEL and BVT.

Kuensel editorial supported the

newspaper published four stories, all of which related to the CoS and ENERTIA allegations.

In one of the stories, the newspaper took a stand to clarify that "The Bhutanese story is based on evidences". News reports should speak for itself without the media house having to fortify its conduct. Accountability, professionalism and ethics should be seen and felt, not pointed out.

Pointing up certain aspects of the issues it covered, the newspaper also helped readers with what emotions to feel when reaching certain paragraphs or sentences that began with "surprisingly" in The Bhutanese, or "interestingly" in Kuensel.

Bhutan Today said in its headline that the secretaries were surrendered in a humiliating manner without a chance to defend. If Kuensel leaned towards the government, Bhutan Today leaned towards the secretaries. The Journalist, on the other hand, sounded like a government mouthpiece by writing that "the government

deeply regretted that a material of internal correspondence was leaked to media" which misinformed and misled the public.

The stories were based on the letter the CoS had written to the Indian ambassador and the press releases the Cabinet, opposition party Druk Phuensum Tshogpa and RCSC sent. The secretaries remained mum throughout.

The coverage on the CoS and the ENERTIA allegation overshadowed

Secretaries

RCSC

ENERTIA

BVT

BHEL

CoS

Land kidu Trashigang

government's action, which provoked a reader, who reminded media of the importance of objectivity and how a lack of that was "fanning a major rumour that is going viral in the age of social media which, if misused, can be supercharged rumour machine".

The Bhutanese, which keenly followed throughout November, the allegations that ENERTIA made, thrived on the issue until December. In one of its issue, the

other important issues of security along the southwestern borders of Gelephu in Sarpang, where cases of Bhutanese being kidnapped were growing rampant.

In crime, only The Journal-ist reported the six stabbing cases recorded by Thimphu referral hospital in two weeks. The stabbings were mostly done under the influence of alcohol, which merited

in-depth news and analysis.

The National Day celebration in Kanglung, Trashigang, was a respite from allegations, incidents of crime and corruption.

The focus shifted to His Majesty the King, his firm stance against corruption and encouragement to work together for the country's overall development.

His Majesty also granted land

kidu to more than 19,000 beneficiaries in Samdrupjongkhar and Pemagatshel.

Positivity, however, was short-lived and by the time New Year dawned. News that Class XII English II paper had leaked dampened the spirits of thousands of students and parents across the country.



8 December 2014, Tendril Thang: His Majesty The King and Her Majesty The Queen Mother attended the 12th National Reading Program launch on social media, along with a signature line to encourage reading. (Story on page 12)

Three Secretaries surrendered to RCSC and Committee of Secretaries discontinued

Tenzing Lamsang / Thimphu

The government, in a press release issued on yesterday morning, announced its decision to hand over three Government Secretaries to the Royal Civil Service Commission (RCSC), and also discontinue the Committee of Secretaries (CoS).

The Secretaries are the Cabinet Secretary, Dasho Penden Wangchuk, Ministry of

Economic Affairs Secretary, Dasho Sonam Tshering, and Ministry of Foreign Affairs Secretary, Yeshey Dorji.

The main offence of the three Secretaries, and also by extension the CoS, was to send a strongly worded letter from the Foreign Ministry to the Government of India, on the behalf of the Royal Government of Bhutan (RGoB) without either consulting the Cabinet, the Foreign Minister or even

Government hands over BVT and BHEL case to the ACC

Staff Reporter / Thimphu

In a press release issued by the Cabinet the government has decided to handover the BHEL-BVT case to the Anti Corruption Commission.

The release says, "The Royal Government has requested the ACC to undertake an investigation on allegations of corruption on the appointment of Bhutan Venture's Trading as an agent for Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited."

The case first came to light in an Indian Journal in September 2014 when

it published what was a signed letter from BVT to BHEL highlighting a 1.5% commission deal on the supply for the electro mechanical parts of Punatsangchu II and Mangdechhu by BHEL. The commission comes to around Nu 240 mn.

BHEL had been given the Nu 16 bn contracts for the two projects on a nomination basis by the Punatsangchu Hydroelectric Project Authority and the Mangdechhu Hydroelectric Project Authority.

The letter that got three secretaries to surrender

Tenzing Lamsang / Thimphu

The Bhutanese is in possession of the letter sent by the Foreign Secretary to the Indian Ambassador on 2nd December 2014. The letter was sent on the instructions of the Committee of Secretaries (CoS) to protest against some news articles in Enertia and

allegations of corruption in the hydropower sector.

The letter written as an official communications and stand of the Royal Government of Bhutan is strong in its language and content.

It starts by referring to the August 2014 editorial coverage in the Enertia Magazine and

How the CoS did itself in with four meetings in two months

Tenzing Lamsang / Thimphu

The Cabinet decision to surrender three Secretaries and discontinue the Committee of Secretaries (CoS) is mainly based on the four meetings held by the CoS between October 2 and November 27, which discussed two articles published by ENERTIA.

The issue first came up

through a letter from the Ministry of Economic Affairs Secretary, Dasho Sonam Tshering, presented to the 12th CoS meeting on October 2, 2014. The letter was attached with copies of two articles in ENERTIA published in its August 2014 issue.

The first article is on ENERTIA's 7th Hydropower Conclave in Bhutan which is a

fairly standard coverage on the hydropower cooperation event. The second article is on a the alleged harassment endured by the former Bhutan Electricity Authority (BEA) CEO, K.B. Wakhley, and his process of compulsory retirement where he makes various charges against the MoEA Secretary. The same article also has a teaser headline talking of a

1.5% percent commission being paid by BHEL to be uncovered in its upcoming September 2014 issue.

Dasho Sonam Tshering's letter to the CoS was in regard to the two August 2014 issue articles, and particularly on the second article of the August issue where various allegations had been made on the Wakhley case and also the commission

issue mentioned in the teaser.

Here, it must be mentioned that The Bhutanese had followed up on the September 2014 issue of ENERTIA that had shown the document signed between BVT and BHEL for a 1.5% commission, and not the August 2014 issue. The Bhutanese story which is based on evidences and never

JOURNALISM IS NOT JUST A JOB

The information and communications secretary Dasho Kinley Dorji shares thoughts on Bhutanese journalism and other dimensions, including social media, drawing from his almost 30 years experiences as a journalist

IS BHUTANESE JOURNALISM ON TRACK TODAY?

It depends on what you mean by “track”. Journalism – the role, the quality, the problems - is always under discussion in every society. Your so-called track keeps changing, driven by development, politics, technology, and other factors. I hope our journalists are trying to identify their calling in terms of the role of Bhutanese journalism in Bhutan’s future.

I do not think Bhutanese journalism is fulfilling the role of journalism in its noblest sense but that is understandable because ours is a very young media industry with very few well trained professionals. Whether we head in the right direction, we are yet to see. But I think talking about it is a good start. And thinking about it is even more important.

IS IT POSSIBLE FOR BHUTANESE JOURNALISM TO BE ANY DIFFERENT FROM JOURNALISM ELSEWHERE?

It should be. Journalism, and journalists, have an important role to their societies. While the concept of quality journalism is broadly the same everywhere, journalism adapts differently to societies at different stages of development - countries that are at war, countries facing regular natural and manmade disasters, countries with other problems. We have to brainstorm the role of journalism in a society which is trying to be different, trying to be a small country with

big dreams. If Gross National Happiness is the inspiration and goal for Bhutan’s development what is the role of journalism in helping to fulfill such a goal?

WHAT WERE SOME OF THE MAJOR CHALLENGES YOU FACED AS A JOURNALIST DURING ITS INITIAL STAGES? HOW HAS IT CHANGED?

I’d say the main difficulty was working in a very small society where we not only know each other but are often related to each other. Journalism requires that we are objective and honest, often having to be critical. How do you deal with a friend or relative who comes to complain about nearly every story?

It was much easier to face an angry newsmaker who did not like your story. But when a senior official said “I grew up with your father. Why do you want to get me into trouble?” that’s difficult. I know a Bhutanese journalist whose son did not get invited to his best friend’s birthday party because of a story he had written that affected the other parents. That is painful.

But our society has become larger and we “enjoy” a little more anonymity. The democratisation initiative has also opened up debate although not without its stressful moments.

Also, those days, with poor power connectivity and frequent technical breakdowns, sometimes it was a challenge just to print the newspaper. We had to rush to Bangkok, Singapore, to fix com-

puters, printing machines and to update software. It is amazing that we did not miss a single issue of Kuensel.

YOUR THOUGHTS ON USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN BHUTAN?

Let’s start with the two questions I’m always asked:

1. Is social media good or bad?

The premise is that this powerful force called social media is influencing and changing us and our societies. Already unnerved – or impressed - by Arab Spring, this question infers the trends emerging in our own society – like hate speech, gossip, and defamatory sites – and the risks that young people are particularly exposed to - cyber bullying.

My first reaction is that social media are just tools, a digital space. The real question should be how do people use them, for good or bad? Don’t forget that ICT is about people, not technology.

The concept that social media has encouraged gossip and rumour is wrong. Just think about what were we saying about each other before social media came? Were we saying nice things about each other? We were saying exactly the same things that we are writing in the social media. Its just that we now have a much larger audience.

2. What are you doing about social media?

What we do know is that we

should use social media for governance and for development. The problem is that we do not know how to do that. That is why we do not even allow the use of social media in office hours.

We are currently drafting a social media policy. We know how to use social media in politics but not in governance. We are using it effectively to criticise but not to reconcile. We use social media for entertainment but this powerful tool is under-utilised in education.

What we do know is that the government should encourage and promote, not control or ban. So we need a policy and framework that acts as a guideline for the use of social media with our overall media policy.

Again, ICT is about changing the way we do things. It is about respecting youth who are now our teachers in social media and ICT.

In and of themselves, ICTs are simply tools, but when people know how to effectively utilize them, ICTs become transformative drivers to hasten the pace of development and bring about positive changes.

In dealing with the negative effects of social media it is important to remember that some of the problems associated with social media (rumours/gossips and cyber bullying) are also problems in the real world.

We need privacy legislation, laws against cyber stalking, identity theft, and other risks. But the most effective response to the challenges

created by the misuse of social media is education – once we understand social media we will know how to deal with the problems.

WHAT SHOULD JOURNALISTS TODAY ASPIRE FOR?

First of all, journalists should accept that journalism is not just a job, it is a calling. It is not activism. It is public service. The media are not political opposition. They are analysts of politics. It is not the job of journalists to chase wrong doers. It is their responsibility to expose wrongdoing.

Bhutanese journalists, therefore, need a vision - a higher goal that makes journalism not a nine-to-five job but a purpose in life. Journalists, who live by asking other people questions, need to ask themselves, “What is the purpose of journalism? Why am I a journalist? Who am I serving?”

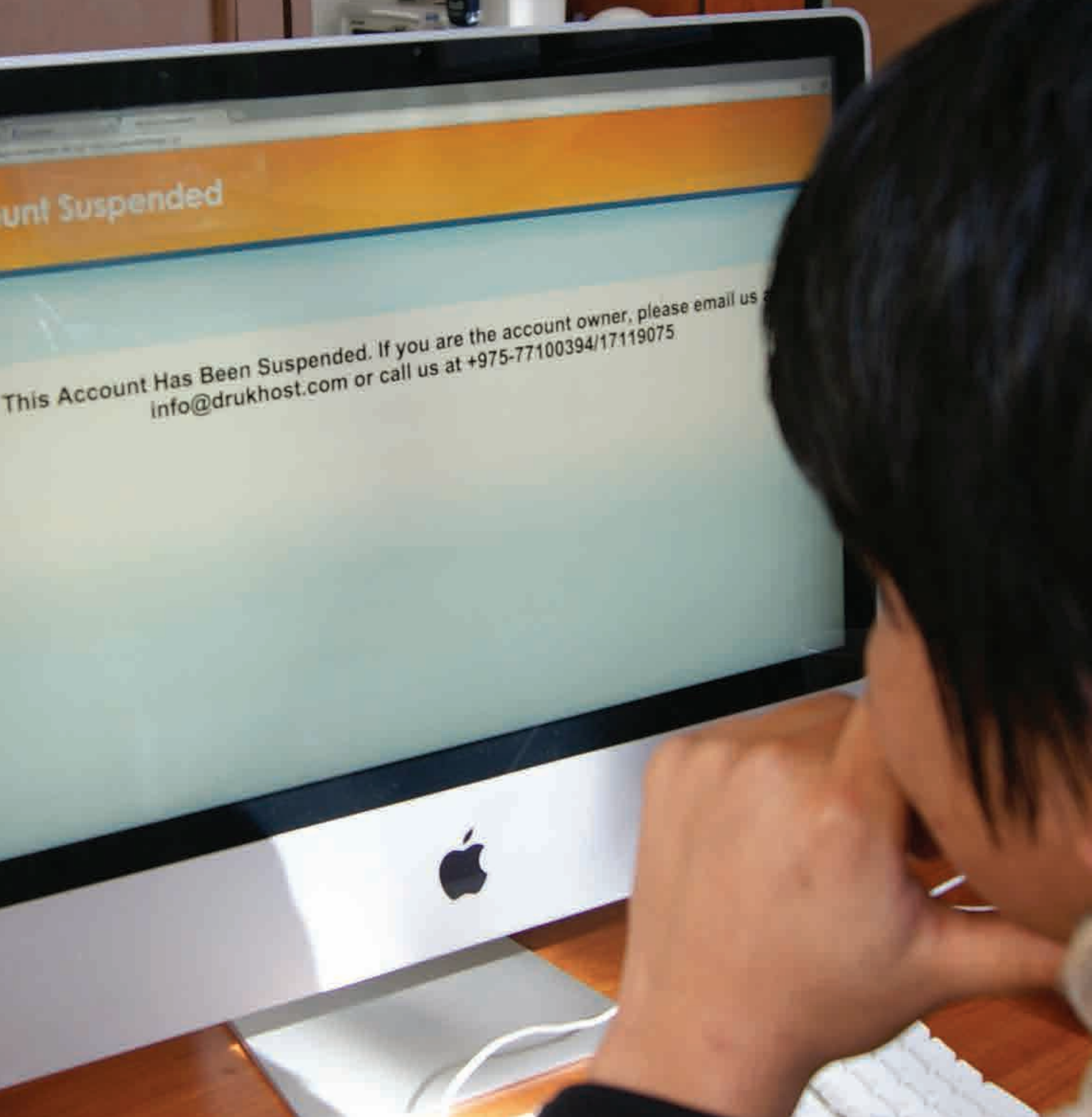
The answer lies in Bhutan’s greater narrative, drawn from the concept of Gross National Happiness (GNH) which provides a goal for human existence. The GNH narrative must not be a declaration or a manifesto or a speech, but clearly defined social, economic, political goals that are based on a coherent vision. Journalists must help define this narrative by asking questions and questioning answers.

The most relevant question that Bhutanese journalists themselves must ask, and answer, is “What is the role of the media in a GNH society?” To define the role of media in a GNH society, the media must first understand and help citizens understand the aspirations of a society that pursues happiness as its basic quest, a society that sees the contentment of the people as the goal of economic, political, social development.

■



LOGGED OFF: A reader is
unable to access a news
website



ONLINE, OFFLINE?

To say that in this day and age of technology, everything has moved online would be an exaggeration, at least, in the case of news media in Bhutan.

Click through each of the country's news websites, that is if you can find one, and you will have a fair sense of where the Bhutanese media stand today.

Like the trend the world over, Bhutanese media also attempted to stay noticed by creating a space in the pervasive social media, which is grabbing the limelight off news websites. But that too has not helped.

As expected, it is only Kuensel and Bhutan Broadcasting Service (BBS) websites that give daily updates of stories they write about or air. The Bhutanese, one of the weeklies, makes sure their hard copy publications go online too. The practice is, stories that are already published are posted online without altering a letter. It is not necessarily re-written to suit the online readers, which is probably why there is a deluge of posts at one time and remains lifeless until the next publication.

At least for the BBS website, stories, particularly interviews, are refined when put in word for online news consumers. Once in a while, some media houses use websites to post breaking news like civil service examination results and other government decisions.

Bhutan Observer, which is supposed to have gone online after shrugging off the print version, is staying afloat by posting press

releases government agencies issue, although spaced out and slow.

Bhutan Times has no web presence and the paper's "official" Facebook page was last updated in July 2012. The same story is with Bhutan Today, which started as the country's first daily some years ago. Business Bhutan's web account is suspended, while the Facebook account has not budged from election coverage of 2013. None of the private Dzongkha papers have an online version of their publications. Their Facebook pages are as good as lifeless.

The Journalist has a webpage,

today is quite contradictory to the glory days some news websites enjoyed in the past. "Kuenselonline" was almost of a buzzword. Kuenselonline forum accommodated almost every imaginable issue that were on the minds and lips of people. Under fake identity, views were posted on subjects that ranged from government policies to personal issues and everything in between. On a few occasions, the altercations on the forum led to libel suits.

Discussions have, however, slackened drastically over the years. While there are a few regulars, frequency of response has dropped

to a pitiful once a week. Some say the debates have moved to social media, but this could also mean the forum moderators are not very generous with posts. For now, the subjects range from vehicle quota to Parliament discussions to corruption in mining industry.

Kuensel website also runs polls, which is changed at least once a month. Responses vary from 600 to 1,200 votes.

The Bhutanese has provisions for people to comment on stories, which lead to a section on website that reveals the top stories based on the number.

BBS website has further links to television and radio, which has more sections on news, current affairs and other programs. Videos accompany the text in most cases.

Kuensel also attempted to introduce videos online. The last video it posted was of a DANTAK event of March 2014.

Both websites have Dzongkha versions too.



LONG AGO: Kuensel posted its last video in March, 2014

which is taken straight off the paper, including the masthead that reflects the issue and volume numbers and even the price of the paper. It has hardly tuned to the web requirements. Updates are rare or non-existent.

But the situation of websites



**KINZANG DORJI
GUP, KANGLUNG**

I PREFER TO GET MY NEWS FROM BBS RADIO AND TV. AT TIMES, I ALSO GET TO KNOW ABOUT CERTAIN INCIDENTS FROM SOCIAL MEDIA, PARTICULARLY FACEBOOK.

**CHOEJEY JAMTSHO
MONK, BUMTHANG**

I GATHER INFORMATION FROM RADIO, TELEVISION AND NEWSPAPER. I TRY TO GET HOLD OF NEWSPAPERS THAT COME TO TOWN BUT IT'S RARE.

**TASHI DORJI
URA, BUMTHANG**

I WATCH TELEVISION BUT PREFER NEWSPAPERS FOR CLEARER DETAILS. BUT WHILE I AM ON THE MOVE, I PREFER RADIO.



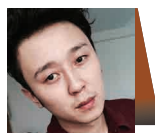
**PEMA NORBU
STUDENT, SHERUBTSE
COLLEGE**

I GET MY NEWS FROM INTERNET MAINLY FACEBOOK AND INSTAGRAM, THEN COMES NEWSPAPERS AND THEN RADIO. THERE IS NO TV IN OUR HOSTEL.



**PEMA WANGCHUK
CIVIL SERVICE**

I GET MY NEWS FROM TV AND INTERNET. I ALSO SUBSCRIBE TO THE ECONOMIST.



**PHUNTSHO DORJI
STUDENT**

IPHONE NEWS APP (BBS)
KUENSELONLINE, NEWSPAPER
AND TV PROGRAM

**CHIMI
FREELANCE
CONSULTANT**

THE GUARDIAN,
ECONOMIST, TIME,
KUENSEL AND TWITTER
FEEDS



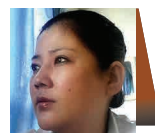
**PEMA TENZIN
CHHUKHA NC MEMBER**

I FOLLOW CNN FOR GLOBAL NEWS, NDTV TO STAY UP TO SPEED ON REGIONAL ISSUES AND BBS FOR QUICK UPDATES ON HAPPENINGS WITHIN THE COUNTRY. I READ KUENSEL FOR DETAILS AND ANALYSIS, ALTHOUGH THEY ARE RARE AND TO VERIFY INFORMATION THAT ARE APLENTY ON FACEBOOK NOWADAYS. SINCE NONE OF THE BHUTANESE NEWS MEDIA BRING OUT ISSUES FACING PEOPLE IN THE REMOTE PARTS OF THE COUNTRY, I, LIKE MANY OF MY COLLEAGUES REPRESENTING VARIOUS DISTRICTS, TRAVEL TO THESE FAR-FLUNG AREAS TO GAIN A FIRST-HAND INFORMATION OF THEIR PROBLEMS. THAT IS ALSO WHERE WE GATHER ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION AT THE PARLIAMENT, WHILE ALSO EDUCATING THEM OF THE CHANGES IN POLICIES AND DECISIONS REACHED.



**DEEPIKA ADHIKARI
CIVIL SERVANT**

I GET MY NEWS FROM THE DAILY NEWSPAPERS AND FROM MY PHONE APPLICATIONS



**THINLEY CHODEN
NURSE**

BBS, KUENSEL,
ALJAZEERA, CNN, BBC,
NDTV AND INTERNET

YOUR NEWS SOURCE?



TASHI WANGMO
EMINENT MEMBER
NATIONAL COUNCIL

BBS BECAUSE IT IS AIRED DAILY, AND KUENSEL BECAUSE I HAVE E-KUENSEL DELIVERED VIA EMAIL. I ALSO GET NEWS THROUGH WORD OF MOUTH. I GET TO READ "THE BHUTANESE" BECAUSE IT IS ON FB PAGE AND USUALLY IT GIVES THE UPDATE ON THE PAGE WHENEVER THERE IS SOME CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES.



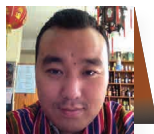
PEMA VAJRA
CIVIL SERVICE

INTERNET, ESPECIALLY BBC, ESPN AND KUENSELONLINE AND TV PROGRAMS LIKE BBS, NDTV AND BBC



DAWA GYELMO
BUREAU CORRESPONDENT,
KUENSEL

AS A REPORTER, WE GO LOOKING FOR NEWS AND DEPEND ON SOURCES COMPRISING LOCAL LEADERS, GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, VILLAGES, POLICE, COURT AND MORE. WHAT I DO IS SEEK INFORMATION AND AUTHENTICATE THROUGH MULTIPLE SOURCES. WE GET TIP OFFS ON SOCIAL MEDIA OFTEN BUT MOST INFORMATION ARE HARDLY ACCURATE.



DENDUP CHOPHEL
FREELANCE

BBS TV NEWS AND ONLINE NEWS WEBSITES ON PHONE



DORJI PAVO,
DIRECTOR, DGPC

BBS AND KUENSEL FOR LACK OF CHOICE; CNN AND BBC FOR THEIR CREDIBILITY AND GLOBAL COVERAGE; NDTV FOR NEWS ON INDIA AND YAHOO FOR INTERNATIONAL NEWS ON THE INTERNET

KEZANG DORJI
STUDENT, SARPANG

WITH THE VISUALS ON, I CAN GRASP THE NEWS ON TELEVISION MORE. BUT I USE MY CELLPHONE TO CHECK WHAT'S ON FACEBOOK.



TENZIN LEKPHELL
CEO, INSTITUTE FOR
MANAGEMENT STUDIES

FOR DAILY LOCAL NEWS, I GO FOR KUENSEL AND BBS. FOR INTERNATIONAL NEWS, I PREFER BBC, NDTV AND CNN. I CHOOSE TO STAY INFORMED BECAUSE ONE CANNOT LIVE WITHOUT INFORMATION NOW. INFORMATION, IN TODAY'S WORLD, IS A VERY IMPORTANT RESOURCE.

KARMA WANGDI
MANGMI, URA

SINCE THE COMING IN OF CABLE TELEVISION, ALL OF US RELY ON BBS TELEVISION FOR NEWS.



PARLIAMENT

STAND FOR ELECTION, SEATED IN OFFICE

National Council members can run for a re-election while still maintaining office, a significant decision that came out of the fourth parliamentary session in December, 2014.

This was in keeping with the electoral law that required National Council to be instated at the conclusion of term of the previous. It was a continuous house.

The issue was eventually straightened. The subject caused contention among institutions when the first batch of council members finished their term in April 2013.

Back then, the council had to seek Supreme Court's intervention through His Majesty to settle the difference in interpretation between National Council and Election Commission of Bhutan. By the time Supreme Court responded, endorsing council's version, election had already begun. Council members who wanted to contest the 2013 National Council election had resigned to re-contest. Election commission's grasp of the matter prevailed.

Today, a new section enters the National Council Act. Council members need not resign to compete for another term. For the country where aspiring candidates to the elections are required to hang up their jobs or businesses, the arrangement is the first and only.

This means in the next council election, there will be an incumbent lot, still holding office on one side and a fresh set of candidates on the other, contesting for seats in National Council.

Off the cuff, the imagery is of

a flashy person with a blue scarf (*kabney*) flowing down the shoulder, brandishing his sword and being chauffeured in a SUV bearing a member of Parliament logo, who will go on to challenge a completely unequipped person, new to the field. However, Election Act ensures that it stays an imagery.

Provisions in the Act dissuade any person from taking undue advantage of privilege the office accords them. Besides an explicit prohibition on wearing *kabney* during electoral campaign, section 300 also disallows elected representative from combining official visits with electioneering work or making use of official machinery or government transport for such motives.

In the eyes of voters, members have secured a cushion to fall back on. While they have a consistent source of income, new members will have to enter the battle by shedding whatever earnings they have had. Of course, for campaign purposes, state provides substantial amount to all contesting candidates. But it is important to see whether those in office should receive the same amount. During the course of discussion in the Parliament, recommendations that members should be stripped of their entitlements and privileges during election were made, although they did not meet members' endorsement.

"How can you ask someone to do the work but not pay," one council member argued. He said it was mandated that the office be a continuous one, for which, members

had to be there. "The incumbents would have to carry out parliamentary work, while at the same time being an alternative for people during the election."

But why should others resign?

One reason, although inadequate, is to draw clear line from politics. But would that apply to civil servants wanting to hop over to National Council, an "apolitical" institution? Serving members argue that civil servants could control electoral outcome since they control budget, while council members don't, having to provide recommendations on budget and nothing more. Council members say they cannot influence local governments and other state functionaries, as they do not possess any executive power.

Do civil servants possess executive power? The argument holds no water unless every civil servant has the power to alter budget, which in reality, needs endorsement from the Parliament.

Even private sector people, once they decide to contest for the council seats, would have to let go of their business ventures. But what is convenient for them is they could simply transfer the business licenses to spouses or in their children's names. That way they don't lose their source of income. If so, why should civil servants give up theirs?

The council conundrum with regard to resignation now cleared, it is time to look beyond and consider if it is worth having other council aspirants quitting their jobs too.

■

SEATS SECURED: Council members do not have to resign to re-contest NC elections





ECONOMY

CREDIT SQUEEZE?

Three years ago, the domestic economy went through a credit squeeze in the wake of a ballooning demand for the Indian Rupee (INR), the currency Bhutan needs to pay for imports from India, its primary and most important trading partner.

This was largely fueled by the easy credit dished out by the banks, which to an extent was spurred by two new commercial banks entering the financial system.

But with too much gultrum

chasing too few rupees the country had to resort borrowing INR from Indian commercial banks at a 10 percent interest rate to meet domestic demand. The economy's INR earnings through hydropower export and steel and ferro industries in the south fell far short of the demand.

At the same time some of the banks had dished out so much credit it did not have enough deposits to lend out more.

As a measure to contain the outflow and demand for Indian Rupee the central bank froze lending on construction and vehicles in March 2012 besides restricting imports on a number of non-essential goods like alcohol and furniture.

Towards the end of 2013 the central bank lowered the cash reserve ratio requirement (the minimum reserve a bank must maintain against total deposit) to free up some money for the banks to lend.

FEW TAKERS: The cost of borrowing, particularly for housing, has gone up by 30 percent post 2012



The new government elected in 2013 also intervened by injecting money to the tune of Nu 2.1B in the form of economic stimulus fund.

Today, the banks have enough funds to dish out credit again. The Bhutan national bank has Nu 3.4B available for lending. Druk Punjab National bank has Nu 2.5B.

One indicator to measure cash position of banks is the statutory liquidity ratio, which is also a minimum reserve requirement, and can be maintained in quick assets like gold or as bonds and government treasury bills.

While 20 percent is the minimum SLR requirement from its total deposits, all the banks recorded their SLR above 30 percent. Bhutan national bank's SLR as of

December 2014 was 42 percent; it was 46 percent, for Druk PNB and 35 percent for T-bank.

Bankers said that there was not much economic activity that would get people to make substantial borrowings. There were no new projects coming up which banks could finance. A number of industrial projects are on hold waiting for the country's hydropower generation to increase and the 11th Plan development projects and programmes are yet to gain momentum.

The economy recorded its slowest growth in decades in 2013 at 2.05 percent. The deputy chief executive officer of Bhutan national bank, Sonam Tobgay, said savings in the corporate and retail sector had improved, therefore, total

deposits increased while lending slowed down.

Although restrictions on housing and vehicle loans have been lifted, the cost of borrowing has now gone up because of hiked interest rates, taxes and prices. Interest on housing loans have gone up to 13 -15 percent from 10 percent. Vehicles have become more expensive because of new taxes. The debt equity ratio had also been revised which basically means borrowers have to put in more capital than before to avail the same amount of loan.

All this has made credit out of reach for many.

■





Some of the more common and glaring errors readers helped point out.

Picture story: His Royal Highness Prince Jigyel Ugyen Wangchuck and Indian Ambassador Gautam Gambhale hand over a Nu 25,000 cheque to the winner of the essay competition, Ngawang Gyeltshen of Motithang HSS. The Nehru Wangchuck Cultural Centre conducted the essay competition as a part of celebrations of the 60th birth anniversary of His Majesty the Fourth Druk Gyalpo. The second prize, Nu 15,000 went to Kinga Tashi Wangmo, of the same school. Yangchenphug Tshering Yangzom came third. A total of 143 students from 12 schools in Thimphu participated in the competition conducted last month.

IN BRIEF
Strengthening health workforce in SE Asia
» A three-day regional meeting on "strengthening human resource for health in South-East Asia region - time for action & commitment," beings today at the Taj Tashi. WHO country office and the health ministry organised the meeting that aims to create a common vision in strengthening health workforce in the region.

HOME
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NC
| PG.5

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Trongsa tightens its budgetary belt
Among other cost cutting measures, the district has curtailed pony entitlements

Tempa Wangdi Trongsa

Trongsa dzongkhag administration unanimously decided to forgo pony entitlement, with effect from September this year, that the Nu 19,84M budget travel allowances is used frugally.

TA/DSA

As decided, in a meeting last 26, that the budget allowance (TA) and subsistence allowance could be spread out over the pony entitlement, officials said.

"The budget is going short because, while the budget was calculated on the old rates, payments are now made on the revised rates are doubly higher"

Dechen, said. An official Dzongkhag adm. Trongsa

loads too heavy to be transported manually will be entitled to pony," Tshewang Rinzin said.

The shortage is attributed to the ill-timed budget proposal in February-March and pay raise in July. As the government was still reviewing pay revision when the TA/DA budget was proposed. Its rates were based on previous entitlement ranging from Nu 150, 300, 500 and 800 for civil servants of levels, operational, supervisory support, professional and executive.

By the time the pay revision was announced in July budget, for TA/DA was already released for 2014-2015. Thus, the late pay

Business Opportunity & Livestock
The Business Opportunity & Livestock public that the following products guidance from Department of funding under the Revolving Government of Bhutan.

1. Dairy projects (milk, cheese)
2. Poultry projects (broiler, layer)
3. Piggery (breeding and farrowing)

The above project activities, with general public of the 20 Dzongkhags, will be funded up to Nu 100,000 upto Nu 8 million. The f

than three acres of land to the Kurichu project.

The dzongkhag court in 2013 asked more than 70 land recipients, including the speaker, to restitute the land they acquired through illegal allotment by the former speaker Jigme Tshultim, who was then the Mongar dzongda. The lower court stated that the speaker, Jigme Zangmo, was ineligible for land replacement, as he has neither a business license in his name nor constructed a house. Moreover, he was also not there during the land allotment done through

it and the perpetrator should be brought before the law. All the more so in this case because it involves a person who is the protector of the law.

The Royal Bhutan Police has taken a right stand. We are reassured by its bold and immediate actions.

We also hear that the wife and the sex-month-old child of the policeman have been asked to vacate their quarters. Brigadier Kipchu Namgyel, the chief of police, said that once the suspension order is issued, the implicated serviceman will not be entitled his pay, house and ration. This is according to the new Royal Bhutan Police Service Rule.

"We had to implement this rule strictly to deter other policemen from committing crimes or getting involved in criminal activities," said Kipchu Namgyel. This makes sense, but rules and laws should make more than just sense.

g Wangchuk

I don't to do it, some to do it. At the end of as long as your cons clear, when you go and know that you've right thing then all is



the Eusakha
r's diary col-
two months

From Pg.1
BSB's chief engineer, Tashi Wangchuk, said, "Further adjustment in the new brass can't be tolerated, because that would lead to further tolerance rate from the international standard."

He said that the pump would alter the mea "Since the pumps a but just a machine, it to wear and tear and wouldn't be as effici period of time," he sa that was why every pu now be re-calibrate

For 55-year-old widow, Lami Yuden, from Lephu village in Trashigang, life has been hard for the last few weeks.

nobody was nearby, "I'm left all by myself now. I don't know how I'll be able to manage my responsibilities."

Police said Lephu's husband, 51, had informed forestry

CRIME

Jaigaon's grey currency exchange market
Paan shops on NS road have become transactions points for ngultrum sand rupee

Rajesh Rai, Phuntsholing

him. "I want to exchange ngultrum for rupee (Indian currency or commonly called IC)," Jigme casually asks the standing man. "What rate are they giving?"

Jaigaon is as busy as ever. The streets are crowded and the sound of traffic pierces the eardrums. Amid the hustle and bustle, as usual, people from India and Bhutan enter and exit the two gates that divide the border.

The monk had Nu 80,000 to exchange, but was not happy with the four percent charge. At

RESOURCES FOR REPORTERS

BOOKS

"ALL THE PRESIDENT'S MEN"



by Carl Bernstein and Bob Woodward — A gripping tale of politics, scandal, conspiracies, lies

and the dogged determination of two heroic reporters. Watching Woodward and Bernstein unravel the threads that lead to Nixon's downfall is exhilarating. The world needs more gutsy reporters like these guys.

"THE ELEMENTS OF STYLE"

by Strunk and White — Lots of books tell you how to write. Most of them make it painful. But this one is

2011 REVISED EDITION

THE ELEMENTS OF STYLE

THE WORLDWIDE BESTSELLER BY
WILLIAM STRUNK

full of savvy advice that will stick with you for years, like something as basic as using active voice and omitting needless words. Studying this 100-page mini-manual helps make your prose crisp.

"WRITING FOR STORY" by Jon Franklin — If you stay in this business long

enough, you'll eventually wonder: How do I write a gripping, Pulitzer Prize-winning epic? Franklin's popular feature-writing guide teaches you all the techniques: structure, flashbacks, foreshadowing, pacing. And it's loaded with inspiring examples.

"THE ELEMENTS OF JOURNALISM"

by Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel — The Elements of Journalism sets out the fundamental questions that all journalists face as they compile their stories, starting with what journalism is for. Based on exhaustive research, surveys, interviews and

public forums, the book identifies the essential elements that define journalism and its role in the society.

"THE BULLY PULPIT:"

Theodore Roosevelt, William Howard Taft and the Golden Age of Journalism" by Doris Kearns Goodwin - The book is built around two relationships - one between Roosevelt and Taft, lifelong friends and reformist comrades, until the partnership ruptured; the other between power and the press. The title suggests three books in one, two biographies and a press history.

MOVIES

"ALL THE PRESIDENT'S MEN"

- At times it looked like it might cost them their jobs, their reputations and maybe even their lives. Part detective story, part political thriller, "ALL THE PRESIDENT'S MEN" is both inspiring and entertaining. Starring Robert Redford as Woodward



and Dustin Hoffman as Bernstein, the 1976 film captures the tireless tenacity that turned these reporters into heroes.

"CITIZEN KANE"

— We all know how crazy reporters can be. This 1941 Orson Welles masterpiece shows you how rich, powerful and loony publishers can be. Watching this film transports you back to a golden age of journalism. Critics agree that "Citizen Kane" showcases some of the most brilliant moviemaking of all time; luckily for us, it's about newspapers, too.

"HIS GIRL FRIDAY"

— One of the best of the 1940s screwball comedies: a fast-paced classic starring Cary Grant as a charming newspaper editor matching wits and wisecracks with Rosalind Russell, his star reporter (and ex-wife). Some viewers prefer the 1974 Jack Lemmon/Walter Matthau remake, "The Front Page."

"BROADCAST NEWS"

— A smart, comedic look at the personalities in front of AND behind the cameras in a network newsroom. William

Hurt plays an airheaded anchor who represents the brainless artificiality of television news. Holly Hunter plays a producer grappling with her values, her workload and her love life.

"GOOD NIGHT, AND GOOD LUCK"

— McCarthy vs. Murrow. Politicians vs. the press. This 2005 drama, set in the early days of television news, provides an absorbing introduction to the courage and eloquence of Edward R. Murrow — and a sobering reminder of why democracy requires a free and aggressive press.



YOUR SPACE

Any comment or feedback on the Review will be carried on this page starting from the second edition of the publication.

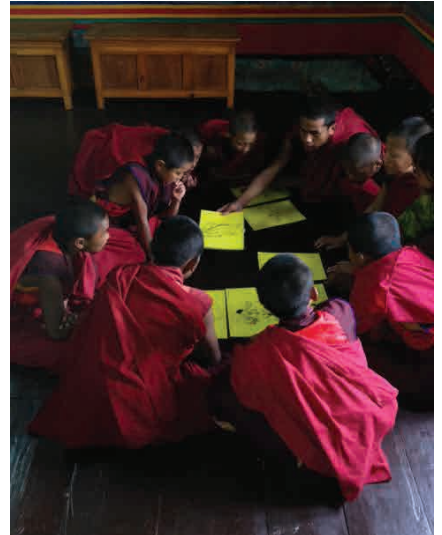
Journalism practitioners, academics, students and regular consumers of news can use the space to write about issues relating to the Bhutanese news media.

*Please email them to bmf@bmf.bt
Proper names and address should accompany.*

NEWS PHOTOS THAT CAUGHT THE EYE



Men at work at a precarious section of the Gyalpoizhing-Nganglam highway construction site
Kuensel, December 25, 2014



Dechenphodrang monks learn sanitation practices as Bhutan observe World toilet day
Kuensel, November 20, 2014



A student in Mongar sells sugarcane to commuters as bus stops near Gangula
Kuensel, December 23



The three secretaries government surrendered to RCSC leave the secretariat after a meeting
Kuensel, December 13



Officials cover their ears as economic affairs secretary presses button to blow the final segment of the tunnel connecting de-silting chamber and head race tunnel of Punatshangchu II project
Kuensel, October 10, 2014



Farmers wait at the Samdrupjongkhar auction yard to sell their potatoes
Kuensel, November 6, 2014



CODE OF ETHICS

Section 2: Responsibility

Journalists must have one allegiance, a commitment and loyalty to citizen.

2.1. Journalists have an obligation to report stories of significance to their audiences.

2.2. Journalists should be rigorous in establishing the truth of a story.

2.3. Journalists will ask searching questions of those who hold public office and those who are accountable to provide a comprehensive forum for public debate.

2.4. Journalists will provide independent and accurate news and information with integrity, remaining neutral, accountable for their actions and bearing public interest in mind at all times.

Source: JAB

Note: Every edition of the Bhutanese Journalism Review will carry a section from the Code of Ethics, which Journalists Association of Bhutan adopted in September 2014, following a thorough discussion with Bhutanese journalists.

The page is intended to serve as a speed breaker for media practitioners, who run after big stories.





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