

Present:

Mr. Justice A.K.M. Asaduzzaman

And

Mr. Justice Muhammad Mahbub Ul Islam

Writ Petition No. 14145 of 2022

Md. Ekramul Haq

.....Petitioner.

-Versus-

Government of Bangladesh and others

.....Opposite parties.

Mr. Muhammad Tajul Islam, Advocate

.... For the petitioner

Mr. Redwan Ahmed, D.A.G.

.... For the respondents.

Heard and judgment on 5th September, 2024.

A.K.M.Asaduzzaman,J.

The rule was issued calling upon the respondent Nos. 1 and 2 to show cause as to why their inaction and/or omission in registering the online news portal, namely sheershanews.com published by the petitioner, should not be declared void and without lawful authority and is of no illegality.

The petitioner is the publisher and editor of the Weekly Sheersha Kagaj, got duly declaration authenticated on 23.09.2002

under the Printing Presses and Publication (Declaration and Registration) Act, 1973 from Additional District Magistrate, Dhaka. In the magazine, various investigative articles on important national issues are published regularly. In the year 2009, the petitioner established an online news portal named the Sheersha News using the web address sheershanews.com, which was registered on 21.04.2009 and trade license in favour of the news portal was obtained from Dhaka City Corporation in 2009. The petitioner formally informed the Ministry of Information about commencing of the operation of the website sheershanews.com as an online news portal affiliated with the existing printed newspaper on 23.07.2009. The respondent No.2 issued an accreditation card to the petitioner on 07.12.2015 as the editor of sheershanews.com and they also issued Secretariat Access Stickers in favour of its editor vide memo dated 19.05.2015. Thereafter in the month of November, 2015 the respondents called for applications for registration of online news portals. The petitioner duly submitted an application for registration of the Sheersha News online news portal on 14.12.2015 to the respondent No.2 in the prescribed form but the respondents since failed to dispose of the said application dated

14.12.2015 and omitted to register the online news portal of the petitioner till date petitioner filed this writ petition and obtained the instant Rule.

Mr. Muhammad Tajul Islam, the learned advocate appearing for the petitioner drawing my attention to the petition together with the application for direction submits that although the petitioner has complied all legal formalities for getting the registration but for unknown political reasons he was deprived to get a permission keeping his application pending for years together and the said inaction is apparently illegal and not sustainable in law. When the other applicants were given permission but the petitioner application was not been disposed of duly of no reasons and accordingly he prays for disposal of the rule and for according a permission to have a registration as well as to unblock the petitioner's online news portal named www.sheershanews.com.

Mr. Redwan Ahmed, the learned Deputy Attorney General on the other hand although opposes the rule but found it difficult to make a reply to the submission made by the learned advocate appearing for the petitioner.

In that view of the matter considering the submission of the learned advocate as well as the annexure annexed to the application, we find substance.

It appears that the petitioners online news publication has been blocked illegally as well as the application for registration of the online news portal was kept pending years together illegally.

We thus find merits in the rule.

In the result, the Rule is made absolute and the respondents are directed to give a proper approval in the online newspaper namely sheershanews.com published by the petitioner as well as directed to unblock the online news portal in the website by using the web address www.sheershanews.com forthwithly.

Communicate the judgment at once.

Muhammad Mahbub Ul Islam, J:

I agree.