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**St. Joseph’s College (Autonomous)**

**End-Semester Examinations—April 2018**

**II Semester BA—Writing for Journalism & Creative Writing (JN 213)**

**Time allotted: 2 ½ hours Marks: 70**

**Instructions**

1. This paper is meant for II semester students of the BA-EJP course.
2. You are allowed to use a dictionary
3. Please ensure that you have proof-read your answers carefully
4. Please provide a word-count after completing each answer
5. You will lose marks for exceeding the suggested word-limits
6. This question-paper contains FIVE sections and FIVE pages
7. **Read the following passage carefully:**

On February 18, 2006, the ballroom of the JW Marriott Hotel in Juhu crackled with nervous energy. Among the broadcasting company executives in the room was a familiar presence: Harish Thawani. The bald, diamond-stud-sporting, no-nonsense CEO of Nimbus Communications stared intently at the screen, which flashed with bids for rights of international cricket played in India. The bids were being announced by none other than Lalit Modi, then a rising force within the BCCI. ESPN-Star had placed a bid for $401 million; Zee Television upped that by $129 million. And then came Nimbus’s bid: $612 million. It was an audacious move – the worth of the rights had never crossed `400 crore, and here was Thawani, ready to pay `2,775 crore.

That bid, which announced Thawani’s arrival on the sports broadcasting landscape, was characteristic of the Bandra boy’s vaulting ambition that propelled him from a job as an executive at an ad agency to Indian cricket’s biggest bankroller. That very drive also proved to be his undoing – earlier this month, the Bombay High Court ordered the liquidation of assets of Nimbus over dues it owed to banks. His slide began a couple of years after the global recession, but in the intervening half a decade, Thawani, said an executive with a leading sports broadcaster, showed the world “the real worth of Indian cricket”.

Thawani, the son of an insurance company executive, founded Nimbus in 1987. His first foray into the broadcast business started the very next year when he marketed air time for advertisements during iconic serials such as Nukkad, Wagle Ki Duniya and Sunil Gavaskar Presents. In 1990, he produced Football Fever, arguably the country’s first ever sports programme, for the 1990 World Cup in Italy. The turning point, though, came in 1993 with the music countdown show Superhit Muqabla on DD Metro. The show lived up to its name, and the programme would receive lakhs of letters.

Nimbus also produced three movies, and long before Ekta Kapoor introduced audiences to saas-bahu conflicts, Thawani produced a hugely popular daily soap in Tamil called Shakti. But nothing excited him as much as sports management and broadcast. In 1999, in as little as a week, he organised the telecast of cricket World Cup matches with studio shows for Doordarshan from London. So impressed was Prasar Bharati that it handed him exclusive production rights of live television feed for international cricket played in India between 2002 and 2004. Back in the early 2000s, he took on foreign giants such as TWI and Channel Nine and consistently outbid them for production and broadcast rights. In 2006, since he had no channel of his own, he broadcast the matches on Sahara TV, but soon launched Neo Sports and Neo Prime (originally Neo Cricket). He would go on to bag the rights for cricket telecast in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Kenya and New Zealand.

Thawani’s former employees – he had over 250 of them – say that he was an excellent boss, and would be terribly unhappy each time a staffer moved on. He still pays salaries on time but he had his flaws – one of them was impatience and the other was reportedly intellectual arrogance. His compatriots and rivals told Mirror that Thawani always clung to his view of the world and would go to great lengths to take down those who didn’t agree with him. He was known to be close to Sharad Pawar and he had the former BCCI boss to bail him out if needed, but, once Pawar departed from the scene in 2008, Thawani never bothered to cultivate a similar rapport with either Shashank Manohar or N Srinivasan.

Yet others were of the view that contracts never held any sanctity for him. “Contracts are never cast in iron for him,” a former competitor of his told Mirror. That was the reason, the high ranking executive said, Thawani ran into legal troubles with virtually every company he did business with. He was always in a hurry, said another broadcaster Thawani was close to. “He was not a builder, so to speak. If his patience had matched his drive, he could have been a real media mogul.”

Three years after the economic recession hit the world – and his US, Oman and UK-based financiers – Thawani found himself in a suite at the Delhi at the Taj Mansingh Hotel in Delhi. He was there at the invitation of the BCCI. The cricket body’s apparatchiks were set to meet in a conference hall at the hotel. Thawani expected to be called in for the meeting. But the phone call never came. An hour later he was informed that the BCCI had terminated his media rights contract for default of payment.

Several people were surprised that the street-smart Thawani failed to anticipate the N Srinivasan-led BCCI’s ruthless move. A week prior to the meeting, this newspaper had written about that very possibility. Thawani had been defaulting on payments for media rights – his contract had been renewed the previous year, and he was expected to pay `2,000 crore for four years – and there were regular reminders from the BCCI’s Chennai office. The 59-year-old, long used to staving off creditors and associates, never held Srinivasan in high regard, and his opinion hasn’t changed one bit in the last seven years.

“My company became a victim of Srinivasan’s vengeful methods and political intrigue that surrounds the management of the BCCI,” Thawani, told us.

Seven years after that snub in Delhi, comes the Bombay HC’s order. The company, disappointed by the order, fully intends to file an appeal for two reasons. “One, it does not owe banks any money and secondly, the cash and assets of the company are in far excess of its liabilities,” a company official said.

Whatever the outcome of the case, though, it appears that the man who once soared above his rivals has now been grounded.

**I.A. Answer the following questions in a paragraph each: (4x5=20)**

1. Would you consider this piece an example of journalistic writing? Would you classify it as reporting or feature-writing? Why?
2. Consider the opening paragraph of the piece. What does it achieve? Are there elements within this paragraph that the author could have returned to later in the piece?
3. Comment on the way the piece ends. What would you change about it?
4. Come up with two headlines for the piece. Explain why you think they are appropriate.
5. **Edit this piece for a more focused news item of about 200 words. Remember to modify the lead and the headline. (15 marks)**

**Man catches mechanic stealing fuel, assaulted**

A used car dealer who spotted a neighbourhood mechanic stealing fuel and made a video of the theft was assaulted by the mechanic on multiple occasions. The mechanic was arrested after the dealer approached the police asking them to take action against him.

Hemanth, a resident of KK Road in T Dasarahalli, was beaten up with a jack rod by mechanic Aslam who runs a car garage in T Dasarahalli. Based on Hemanth’s complaint, police arrested Aslam for attempt to murder and are investigating further.

According to the complaint filed by Hemanth, he was attacked by Aslam on March 16 when he was in his garage which is next to Aslam’s garage.

Hemanth said, “I noticed Aslam stealing fuel from lorries that are parked on the highway. He was stealing fuel from the cement mixture lorries one after the other. I took my mobile and made a video of the theft. Not just the lorries, Aslam was also stealing fuel from vehicles that were left for service or repair at neighbouring garages.”

According to Hemanth, a week before he was caught, Hemanth’s friend left his SUV for repair at a garage next to Aslam’s garage. The fuel tank was almost full when Hemanth’s friend had left his SUV. But when he was got the vehicle back, he found that the fuel was empty.

Hence, Hemanth thought of gathering evidence and started recording the theft. But Aslam saw Hemanth recording him and demanded that Hemanth delete the video. “I refused to delete the video as it is him who was stealing fuel for many days,” Hemanth said. Aslam started beating Hemanth but a few local people intervened and the two were sent away from the spot.

Aslam is said to have been waiting for Hemanth to come near his garage to take revenge and make sure the video is deleted and not given to police. So, when he found Hemanth near his garage at around 5.10 pm on March 16, Aslam caught Hemanth and asked him to delete the video. Hemanth refused to do and Aslam took a jack rod and hit Hemanth multiple times on his head and body. People who saw the attack stopped Aslam and took Hemanth to the hospital where he underwent treatment.

Police said that Aslam has been booked for attempt to murder. “We have arrested him and sent him to jail. He was stealing fuel from cement lorries belonging to a private firm in Kumbalagudu on Mysore Road. Aslam claimed that drivers of the lorries knew he was stealing fuel and that they were also paid commission.”

1. **Write short notes on any two of the following topics in about five sentences each:(2x5=10)**
2. Robert Mueller
3. Lingayat religion
4. Aadhar Linking.
5. **Read this article by Ben Frampton of the BBC:**

It is a golden rule of journalism, taught to any news reporter at the beginning of their career - your introduction should grab the reader straight away. If you cannot hold someone's attention for a sentence, you have no hope of getting them to read the rest of your article.

The same is true for headlines; stark, witty or intriguing ones can draw the reader's eye to a story. Headline writing has long been considered a skill but, in the digital age, a new word has become synonymous with online journalism - clickbait.

Put simply, it is a headline which tempts the reader to click on the link to the story. But the name is used pejoratively to describe headlines which are sensationalised, turn out to be adverts or are simply misleading. Publishers increasingly use it for simple economics; the more clicks you get, the more people on your site, the more you can charge for advertising. A report by the Columbia Journalism Review highlighted the case of online magazine Slant, which pays writers $100 per month, plus $5 for every 500 clicks on their stories.

Slant is far from unique in this respect and this business model is becoming increasingly common, but opponents argue it means journalists will dumb down stories in order to get more clicks in order to earn a living.Last week, the NUJ expressed concerns after Trinity Mirror, one of the UK's biggest newspaper publishers, announced plans to introduce individual website "click targets" for journalists. The group's editorial director, Neil Benson, said the aim was to focus on providing content that is "relevant to our audiences".

Damian Radcliffe, honorary research fellow at Cardiff University's School of Journalism said: "It's part of the world in which we now operate - there's a lot to be said for journalists to be able to write better or snappier headlines."There are fears it could curtail a cornerstone of journalism - holding those in office and power to account - in favour of appealing to the lowest common denominator. But Mr Radcliffe said this may not be the case. "I think those stories will still be covered, but they may well cover them in new and different ways; not dumbing-down but being creative in how you tell these stories through infographics, explainers and video.

Peter Preston, former editor of the Guardian and a columnist for the Observer, said: "You certainly want your journalists to be thinking how they get the maximum level of interest... it seems on one hand it's pretty stupid to not make sure your journalists are doing their best to serve their readers. "It's a means of getting journalists to concentrate on [ensuring] whatever story they are doing is presented in the best way."

But Ken Smith, chairman of the Welsh executive council of the National Union of Journalists, has concerns. "Without a doubt, there is a dumbing down in terms of content going on websites which does not bode well," he said. "Inevitably, if the criterion for including the story on the website is determined by the number of clicks, then we're going down a very dangerous path. There's going to be an emphasis on the trivial, rather than stories which require more considered reading. "If you're setting individual targets about how many clicks they should be getting, they will be more inclined to do this instant gratification journalism rather than look into issues of concern about how the local council is performing because they take time to research."

A by-product of this style of journalism - the frustration of readers clicking on a story which promised more than it delivered - has led to new ways to offer content. Netherlands-based Blendle allows people to read stories from a host of newspapers and magazines, and offers a pay per story set up with a money back guarantee if readers feel short-changed or dissatisfied.Sensationalising news is hardly new and, in the days of print journalism, there was no guarantee the stories scrutinising the elected and the powerful were being read any more than the titillating content. "In days of yore, you had no idea if people were reading stories about parliament in the Sunday Times or from the local council or just skipping to the sport section, so I don't think it's a new question," said Mr Radcliffe."We've always had sensationalist content, I think it's easy to look back with rose-tinted spectacles. You can say we're living in the golden era of journalism in the access to the breadth and quality of journalism that we have now."

Mr Preston said the changing needs of online audiences means a healthy balance needs to be struck. "There is a potential problem where a lot of less tractable material happening in your local parliament or more complex foreign affairs gets put to one side because reporters get concerned about pay and standards begin to fall," he said. "These websites and newspapers are beginning to realise you need a bit of both to what you're putting out as opposed to just lists and fluff - there is a bit of a swing back."

Headlines are as old as journalism itself, so are those teasing lines on social media just a progression of an age-old skill? "Headline writing is an art, to write something that draws somebody in. Clickbait seems to be a catch-all for that skill and has very negative connotations, but the reality is more nuanced and the ability to write something enticing on Twitter to pique someone's interest is a real art," said Mr Radcliffe.

"Some people see it [pay per click] as a slightly dirty business model. I don't share that view, it's just a digital reality. If that's how you get your foot in the door and develop a good story sense and how to write a good headline, I don't see anything wrong with that."But what works for one website will not necessarily work for another, so every organisation has to decide what balance works best. "There's no doubt there's a swell of stories and the way they attract attention. There's a danger of shouting and tarting things up, almost across the board," said Mr Preston. "[Click bait stories] have somewhat diminished the value of news - they sell on stars in and out of bed... and that's one way of getting the clicks.

"People are beginning to say 'we need more stories, we need actual things happening' because that brings back readers and encourages engagement." One perennial frustration for the online reader is the "look at me" headline, which can have negative consequences. "If you look at news websites, increasingly stories are being headlined 'You will not believe what you're going to read'. It's all very well to do that occasionally when you've got something to interest the reader, but if you overplay your hand, people will find out what you're offering will not match your headline," said Mr Smith. "This is a dangerous route to follow and sooner or later they're going to wake up to what you're offering them with these teasing headlines is not matched by the writing."

**IV.A. Answer ANY ONE of the following in about 200 words: (1x15=15)**

1. Have you ever found yourself taken in by click bait while using the Web? What was the experience like? Does this allow you to agree or disagree with the author’s stance on the subject?
2. Frampton mentions a move away from the click bait model to more responsible ways of offering content. Have you come across such a website? What was the experience like?

**V. Write a short account (of about 200 words) of an open space that you enjoy going to. You must write this account in the third person, and must avoid referring to yourself directly. (10 marks)**