

## *From the desk of the President*



### **Combat the challenges with more determination in 2020**

Journalism in many parts of the world including India is facing tough challenges in this era of rightist tilt in many regimes across the globe. The inevitable shift of journalism from analogue to digital form, to keep pace with technological advancement has brought many new challenges along with opportunities also. Fake and paid news, plagiarism, trolling, misinformation and propaganda has put hurdles on the way of ethical journalism. The authoritarian regimes are espousing far right ideology to divide the societies and support crony capitalism.

IJU is always encouraging ethical and responsible journalism that contributes to sustainable development of the society and building a stronger nation.

Safety and security of media-persons continues to be a major issue all over the world. So far 94 Journalists have been killed and thousands suffered injury in 2019..

Internet shut down, curb on mobile telephone services, jailing Journalists and concerned citizens for their posting in digital platforms, trolling, slapping court cases with an intention to harass journalists for their journalistic works, selective issuance of government advertisement to media outlets, are a few burning media issues that has made journalism a risky profession.

Building unity among journalists and strengthening of journalists' unions only, can combat such challenges being faced by the Journalist community of the country. However factionalism, lust for power and money by a section of our journalists is weakening the organised movement of the journalists in the country.

IJU therefore strongly calls for unity and integrity amongst all journalist, for strengthening the union, at the Imphal NEC meeting of IJU. Hope this souvenir published in commemoration of the November 23 & 24, 2019 IJU NEC meeting in Imphal, will help in upholding media rights and forging unity among journalists of the country.

**Geetarth Pathak**

# GLOBAL CHARTER OF ETHICS FOR JOURNALISTS



*The IFJ Global Charter of Ethics for Journalists was adopted at the 30th IFJ World Congress in Tunis on 12 June 2019. It completes the IFJ Declaration of Principles on the Conduct of Journalists (1954), known as the "Bordeaux Declaration."*

*The right of everyone to have access to information and ideas, reiterated in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, underpins the journalist's mission. The journalist's responsibility towards the public takes precedence over any other responsibility, in particular towards their employers and the public authorities. Journalism is a profession, which requires time, resources and the means to practise – all of which are essential to its independence. This international declaration specifies the guidelines of conduct for journalists in the research, editing, transmission, dissemination and commentary of news and information, and in the description of events, in any media whatsoever.*

1. Respect for the facts and for the right of the public to truth is the first duty of the journalist.
2. In pursuance of this duty, the journalist shall at all times defend the principles of freedom in the honest collection and publication of news, and of the right of fair comment and criticism. He/she will make sure to clearly distinguish factual information from commentary and criticism.
3. The journalist shall report only in accordance with facts of which he/ she knows the origin. The journalist shall not suppress essential information or falsify any document. He/she will be careful to reproduce faithfully statements and other material that non-public persons publish in social media
4. The journalist shall use only fair methods to obtain information, images, documents and data and he/she will always report his/her status as a journalist and will refrain from using hidden recordings of images and sounds, except where it is impossible for him/her to collect information that is overwhelmingly in the public interest. He/she will demand free access to all sources of information and the right to freely investigate all facts of public interest.
5. The notion of urgency or immediacy in the dissemination of information shall not take precedence over the verification of facts, sources and/or the offer of a reply.
6. The journalist shall do the utmost to rectify any errors or published information which is found to be inaccurate in a

timely, explicit, complete and transparent manner.

7. The journalist shall observe professional secrecy regarding the source of information obtained in confidence.
8. The journalist will respect privacy. He/she shall respect the dignity of the persons named and/or represented and inform the interviewee whether the conversation and other material is intended for publication. He/she shall show particular consideration to inexperienced and vulnerable interviewees.
9. Journalists shall ensure that the dissemination of information or opinion does not contribute to hatred or prejudice and shall do their utmost to avoid facilitating the spread of discrimination on grounds such as geographical, social or ethnic origin, race, gender, sexual orientation, language, religion, disability, political and other opinions.
10. The journalist will consider serious professional misconduct to be plagiarism, distortion of facts, slander, libel, defamation, unfounded accusations
11. The journalist shall refrain from acting as an auxiliary of the police or other security services. He/she will only be required to provide information already published in a media outlet.
12. The journalist will show solidarity with his/her colleagues, without renouncing his/her freedom of investigation, duty to inform, and right to engage in criticism, commentary, satire and editorial choice.
13. The journalist shall not use the freedom of the press to serve any other interest and shall refrain from receiving any unfair advantage or personal gain because of the dissemination or non-dissemination of information. He/she will avoid - or put an end to - any situation that could lead him/her to a conflict of interest in the exercise of his/her profession. He/she will avoid any confusion between his activity and that of advertising or propaganda. He/she will refrain from any form of insider trading and market manipulation.
14. The journalist will not undertake any activity or engagement likely to put his/her independence in danger. He/she will, however, respect the methods of collection/dissemination of information that he / she has freely accepted, such as "off the record", anonymity, or embargo, provided that these commitments are clear and unquestionable.
15. Journalists worthy of the name shall deem it their duty to observe faithfully the principles stated above. They may not be compelled to perform a professional act or to express an opinion that is contrary to his/her professional conviction or conscience.
16. Within the general law of each country the journalist shall recognize in matters of professional honour, the jurisdiction of independent self-regulatory bodies open to the public, to the exclusion of every kind of interference by governments or others.



# Documentary Review

## DISPARITY

***While the rich and powerful converge at Davos amidst raging global protests & rising inequality - Disparity shows how billions of Foreign Aid goes back to donor contractors and reveals a major solution***

As the global elite network at Davos, people across the world are increasingly taking to the streets to protest in the name of inequality. Disparity, the film, featuring 9 Nobel Laureates and narration by Sir Ben Kingsley is a long overdue reckoning to help reverse the appalling gap between the rich and the poor.

The Western narrative portrays aid wastage as mainly being down to corrupt developing country leaders embezzling funds, which is a distorted stereotype, because the real scandal is the donor countries who give aid with strings attached. Disparity examines contradictions in donor aid policy whereby almost 20% of aid is given to recipient countries in order to get trade and influence in return. For example, 90% of British aid contracts flow back to UK firms, which increases project costs by 25% - a huge obstacle for developing countries who are denied access to these contracts. So, aid is 'tied' to advance the donor's own economic and political interests at the cost of prolonging merciless poverty.

Disparity, which examines the structural problems of rampant inequality and poverty that ravage more than half the world's populations, is now available on the Tiger Tim media YouTube channel, subtitled in Hindi to enable as many people as possible to watch & share the film – so united, they can be informed and empowered to take on these entrenched vested western interests. The film features a major solution to clean up Foreign aid (see addendum).

This initiative is backed by luminaries; 16 Nobel Laureates including Archbishop Tutu and HH The Dalai Lama, UN



Ambassadors including Michael Douglas and Paulo Coelho, cultural icons including Sir Ben Kingsley and Stephen Fry as well as academics, economists and World Leaders. WATCH Disparity Trailer now

One month ago Filmmaker Renu Mehta launched an appeal to the West to Take the Tiger Tim Challenge - To Swap 2 hours of Entertainment to make a stand for Equality. Mehta's plea to citizens has largely gone unheeded. She said 'Amidst all our wealth; people are hungry, thirsty, sick, homeless, desperate, isolated and ignored. So the least we can do is take 2 hours out of our comfort zone to watch Disparity, Sign the Real Aid petition calling for fairer aid policies, and to nominate someone else to take the same challenge.' Mehta believes it's now time for the global south to self-mobilise, to drive a mass movement calling for Real Aid so their voices can be heard in the North, to ultimately change the destinies of those trapped in poverty.



International Federation of Journalists Vice President Sabina Inderjit said 'Inequality in the world's largest democracy and second most populated country, India, stares one in the face. Sadly, the oft-heard promise of 'inclusive growth' by governments

turns out to be mere words as the gap between the rich and the poor is widening and worse sharper. Clearly, the policies aimed at development aren't changing lives as envisaged or for that matter aid not reaching the people it's meant for. While millions continue to live in squalor, the rich are getting richer. The opulence on one side and poverty on the other is jarring. The nation's financial capital Mumbai, houses Asia's richest man and also the largest slum in South Asia! The media duly reports shocking statistics such as a fraction of India's population, 10% holds 77% of the nation's total wealth, whereas the bottom 60% owns merely 4.8 % of the wealth or top 9 billionaires is equivalent to wealth of the bottom 50% of population. It makes headlines, like other news of farmers suicides, infant deaths, mega bungling in mid-day meals in schools, child labour etc but the media needs to do more – dig in, investigate, create greater awareness, build that public

opinion to make governments answerable. Unfortunately, that role has got somewhat blurred in today's crass competitive media. It needs to be reignited. The film 'Disparity' could well be a spark or a lead for journalists to unmask scandals and corruption which ails societies globally.'

The film also shows that Real Aid goes hand in hand with a free and vibrant media. Journalism is at the forefront of driving accountability and progressive policy reform, but journalists investigate often under terrible repressive conditions. That is why the international community should properly protect their media freedoms so they can play an even bigger role in advancing development and democracy.

CONTACTS & ADDENDUM; Disparity Film, Real Aid Campaign & MM Aid Model information

For interview requests with Real Campaign Founder Renu Mehta and HE Jose Ramos Horta or any comments:

Paul Hetherington, Real Aid Rapporteur, Email [media@real-aid.org](mailto:media@real-aid.org) + 44 207 791 1717, + 44 7732158128 (mobile) Disparity Film image & link is free to use without the copyright owner's permission under fair use act.

The film features solutions. 'Real Aid' is a global campaign to advance the MM Aid Model; a proven, working and scalable Model to untie Foreign aid and unlock billions of dollars for frontline organisations. Pioneered by Nobel Laureate Economist Sir James Mirrlees and Fortune Forum charity founder Renu Mehta the MM Model has the potential to unleash \$100bn of REAL AID annually when taken up by the richer target nations.

The Real Aid Campaign is co-chaired by HE Jose Ramos Horta, Nobel Peace Laureate. The UK Government led the way in adopting and adapting the MM Aid Model's core ideas delivering over \$300m of Real Aid funds via their flagship UK Aid Match to 'on the ground' organisations, improving over 100m lives around the globe. [www.real-aid.org](http://www.real-aid.org)

The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) supports journalists and their unions whenever they are fighting for

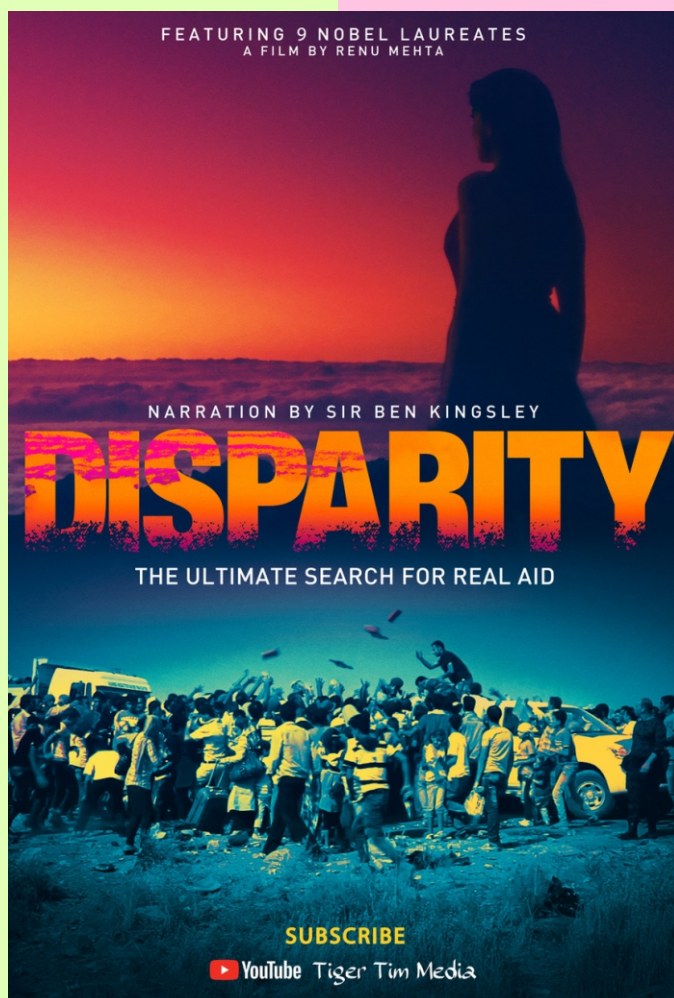
their industrial and professional rights and has established an International Safety Fund to provide humanitarian aid for journalists in need.

The IFJ, the world's largest organisation of journalists, represents 600,000 media professionals from 187 trade unions and associations in more than 140 countries. Established in 1926, the IFJ is the organisation that speaks for journalists within the United Nations system and within the international trade union movement. [www.ifj.org](http://www.ifj.org)

Disparity Film features comments and interviews with-

Prof. Abhijit Banerjee, Nobel Laureate for Economics, Prof. Noam Chomsky, Prof. of Linguistics and Philosophy, MIT, Sir Paul Collier, The University of Oxford, Amir Dossal, Former UNOP Director, Global Partnerships Forum Chair, Dr. Ian Goldin, Prof. of Globalisation and Development, Oxford University, Dr. José Ramos-Horta, Nobel Peace Laureate, Dr. Mo Ibrahim, Tech Billionaire & Philanthropist, Tawakkol Karman, Nobel Peace laureate, Kerry Kennedy, President, Robert F Kennedy Human Rights Activists, Sir Ben Kingsley, Oscar winning Actor (Narration), FW de Klerk, Nobel Peace Laureate, Philippe Leruth, Former President, International Federation of Journalists, Sir James Mirrlees, Nobel Laureate for Economics, Jan Pronk, Former Minister for Development, The Netherlands, Prof. Kailash Satyarthi,

Nobel Peace Laureate, Prof. Amartya Sen, Nobel Laureate for Economics, Salil Shetty, Former Amnesty International, Secretary General, Prof. Peter Singer, Moral philosopher, Princeton University, Dame Stephanie Shirley, UK Founding Ambassador for Philanthropy, Clare Short, Former UK Secretary of State for International Development, Hernando de Soto, Economist, Institute for Liberty and Democracy, Dr. Danny Srisankarajah, CIVICUS, Former Secretary General, Prof. Lord Stern, London School of Economics, Prof. Joseph Stiglitz, Nobel Laureate for Economics, Ruby Wax, Comedian & Mental Health Campaigner, Dame Vivienne Westwood, Fashion Designer & Activist, Prof. Muhammad Yunus, Nobel Peace laureate.





Year 2019

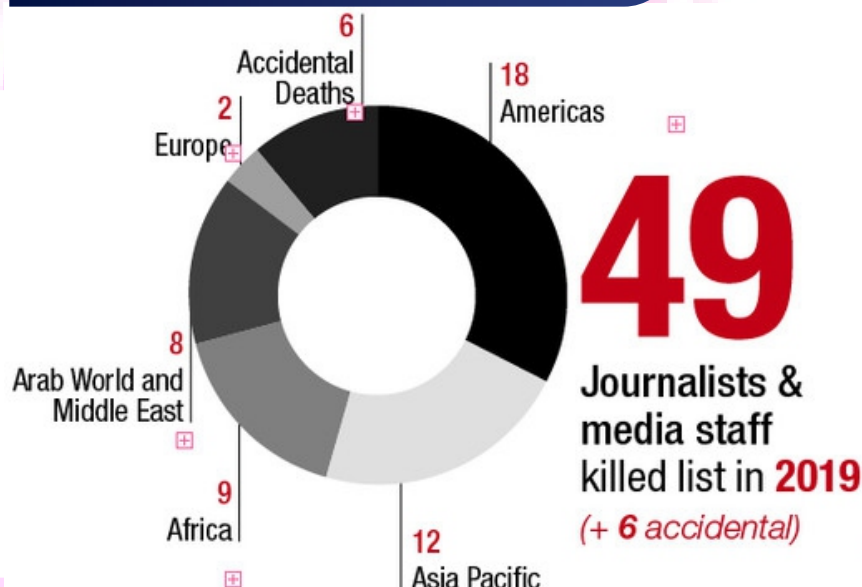
# 49 Journalists Killed



The International Federation of Journalists has recorded 49 killings of journalists and media professionals in 2019, a significant drop from 95 posted last year. The IFJ says that, while the apparent decreasing bloodbath in the journalists' community is a welcome relief, the spread of killings and the motives behind the killings are sobering reminders that violence against journalists is still rampant and the failure to combat impunity for these attacks remain a damning indictment on those in power.

The statistics on journalists and media staff killed in 2019 are as follows:

- Targeted, bomb attacks and cross-fire killings : 49
- Accidental Deaths : 6
- Total Numbers of Deaths : 55



The IFJ lists 18 countries from the four corners of the world where journalist were killed since the start of the year, including Africa (9), Asia Pacific (12), Europe (2), Latin America (18) and the Middle East and Arab world (8). The Federation also recorded six work-related accidental deaths in Tanzania (5) and the US (1).

The death toll is the lowest since 2000, when 37 journalists and media staff were killed, but the causes of the loss of life during 2019 remain largely the same.

Mexico tops the list of dangerous countries with 10 killings of journalists whose reporting crossed corrupt officials and drug barons, while targeted attacks claimed the lives of five journalists in Afghanistan and four in Pakistan.

Crossfire incidents and bomb attacks also caused deaths of journalists in Syria (5), Somalia (3) and Yemen (2). More of their colleagues died in violence from civil and political unrest or because of them reporting these events in Haiti (1), Nigeria (1) the Philippines (1) and Northern Ireland (1).

“This low figure should be a lifting moment for those who joined the campaign for the safety of journalists, which the IFJ has spearheaded over decades,” said IFJ President Younes Mjahed. “Yet, it gives little comfort when our report’s findings consistently reveal that more journalists are killed in so-called peace time for reporting corruption, crime and abuse of power in their own countries than in war zones. The failure by governments to stop the impunity for these crimes needs to be addressed through the Convention on media safety we are promoting.”

## Countries with the highest numbers of media killings are:

Mexico	: 10
Afghanistan	: 5
Syria	: 5
Pakistan	: 4
Somalia	: 3
Yemen	: 2
Philippines	: 2
Brazil	: 2
Haiti	: 2
Honduras	: 2



# SC Verdict Progressive, Weak On Press Freedom Issue: IJU

New Delhi, 10 January: The Indian Journalists Union welcomes the Supreme Court's judgement putting in place procedural safeguards to check misuse of communication shutdown and Section 144 and reinforcing that freedom of speech and expression over the Internet is a Constitutional right. However, it has failed to recognise the direct impact of the restrictions imposed in Kashmir as a violation of freedom of the Press.

The three-judge bench headed by Justice NV Ramana, while delivering its verdict on the petition of Anuradha Bhasin, Executive Editor of Kashmir Times, and others including the Indian Journalists Union, challenging the restrictions on journalists in the Valley, viewed the curbs as 'chilling effect' and not a direct violation of press freedom. The internet shutdown and restriction of movement under Section 144 in the Valley, said the IJU, has handicapped the journalists in carrying out their duties. The apex court failed to see that the blocking of all channels of communication such as landlines, mobile phones and internet services had severely hampered the journalists' ability to receive and disseminate information and therefore impinged on press freedom, their right to freedom of speech and expression as well as the citizens' right to information.

In a statement, IJU President Geetarth Pathak and Secretary General and IFJ Vice President Sabina Inderjit said that given that India is the world leader in internet shutdowns, the apex court's directive that suspension of internet services indefinitely is "impermissible" under the Temporary Telecom Suspension Rules is welcome, it failed to appreciate the restrictive effect the restrictions had on press freedom and the journalists' work to report and analyse. The Media Facilitation Centre established by the local authorities in Srinagar, they said was in no way a substitute for regular channels of communication.

Noting that the Supreme Court has laid down sound rights respecting principles and asked the J&K authorities to review all orders suspending internet services



forthwith and that orders not in consonance with the law be revoked, the IJU hoped that the judgment would be implemented in its proper spirit and telecom services will be fully restored after the review exercise. Importantly, the IJU hoped the government makes a note of the apex court's observation: "Responsible governments are required to respect the freedom at all times. Journalists are to be accommodated in reporting and there is no justification for allowing a sword of Damocles to hang over the press indefinitely."

For publication

**Sabina Inderjit**  
Secretary General







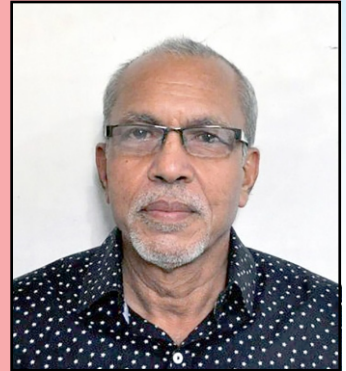
# Fight for truly free Internet Born Free but Chained Everywhere

-Geetarth Pathak

Notwithstanding freedom of expression being one of the fundamental rights in all the democratic countries, this right is increasingly being restricted or denied under the pretext of national security, fighting terrorism, greater interest of a country etc especially under rightist nationalist government. Right to privacy and freedom of press are inseparable component of the fundamental right to expression. The era of internet and digital revolution initially created a new tool for the use of citizens in boosting up their democratic activities through dissemination of views and information. However the trend shows that the internet has become less free across the globe and its impact on functioning of democracies are discouraging. Realizing the power of internet the governments led by authoritarian and rightists forces are also extensively using it for spreading misinformation, creating confusion for electoral gain and pursuing divisive agendas.

Disinformation, propaganda and fake news disseminated online have vitiated the society. Political developments last year have established that the internet can be used to disrupt democracies as well as to destabilize authoritarian regimes. Cambridge Analytica scandal involving social media giant Facebook revealed that the data of up to 87 million users were used for political exploitation. Facebook owned WhatsApp filed a lawsuit in a California court on October 29, alleging that Israeli NSO Group Pegasus gained unauthorised access to its servers and communication service Court filings allege that the Israeli company reverse-engineered the messaging app and developed a program that copied WhatsApp's network traffic to target devices over the app's servers. Targeted individuals included lawyers, journalists, human rights activists, political dissidents, diplomats and senior foreign government officials. Whatsapp has also said that the spyware was used in India during last parliamentary elections. We all know how the Russian hackers targeted US citizens to influence 2016 US Presidential elections. The digital observers have discovered further breaches of data affecting 198 million American, 93 million Mexican, 55 million Filipino, and 50 million Turkish voters. These cases were a reminder of how personal information is increasingly being utilized to influence electoral outcomes. Governments, private companies, and researchers are increasingly hungry for large amounts of personal information, using it for purposes ranging from political repression, election manipulation to the development of artificial intelligence algorithms. The European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) requires data holders to obtain more meaningful consent, increase transparency about what data are collected and why, and provide a way for users to download, transfer, or delete their information. Many countries have followed EU in enacting data protection laws. However in most of the countries the regulation does not apply to matters of national security and defense, thus failing

to curtail rampant data collection by governments. Any bona fide data protection system should give individuals the power to control their own personal information while also ensuring that the internet remains borderless. Estonia has developed a blockchain technology through which all incoming and outgoing transactions are authenticated and encrypted. Among other benefits, citizens are notified when their data files are accessed by government agencies, except in cases of ongoing investigations



The influence of internet is used by some vested interests for dividing people on communal line for electoral gain. False rumors and hateful propaganda were spread online to incite violence against ethnic and religious minorities in the last couple of years in India, Sri Lanka and Myanmar. More repressive governments use false news and hate speech as an excuse to curb dissent or independent reporting. Inflammatory lies on social media remain an urgent problem in many countries including India. Some lawmakers and ministers in India have no qualms about publicly attacking the minority communities. The latest trend in India is to cut the internet access entirely. There were 6 incidents of internet shut down in 2014. The number of such shut down in geometrically increasing with 14 in 2015, 31 in 2016, 79 in 2017, 134 in 2018 and 106 in 2019. Maximum number of shut down ordered during anti Citizenship Amendment Act stir since November last year. India has earned the dubious distinction of internet shut down capital of the worlds. Shutdown is a blunt instrument for controlling the spread of online disinformation. It is often used by the government to deny right to democratic protests against government's policies. By cutting off internet service during such agitation and social tension governments often deny entire area access to communication tools at a time when they may need them the most, whether to dispel rumors, check in with family members, or avoid dangerous areas. Apart from inconvenience the impact of Internet shutdowns cause major economic losses. According to Top10VPN, a publication focused on internet privacy, revealed on January 7 that in 2019, India lost over \$1.3 billion (Rs9,300 crore) as a result of major internet shutdowns in regions like Jammu & Kashmir, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Rajasthan, Tripura, and Uttar Pradesh. The loss is the third-highest among 21 countries where major internet shutdowns happened last year. The combined toll from all cyber blockades stood at \$8.05 billion, estimated Top10VPN.

The Kashmir valley has been under communication curbs for the last 160 days since the abrogation of Article 370 of the



## Fight for truly free Internet Born Free but Chained Everywhere

-Geetarth Pathak

Constitution. The right to access Internet is a fundamental right under Article 19 of the Constitution, and total shutdowns are "drastic" measures that should be considered only when "absolutely necessary", the Supreme Court said on January 10. Editor of Kashmir Times newspaper Anuradha Bhasin, Congress leader Ghulam Nabi Azad, Indian Journalists Union among others filed petitions against the move of the centre in the apex court.

Internet controls within China reached new extremes with the implementation of the sweeping Cybersecurity Law and upgrades to surveillance technology. The Cybersecurity Law has been followed by hundreds of new directives to fine-tune what netizens can and cannot do online. The most alarming development in China is that the country has introduced Social Credit System, which rates citizens' "trustworthiness" by combining data on their online and offline behavior. Local activists have already reported having their freedom of movement curtailed after being blacklisted for their criticism of government policies, and the Social Credit System may lead to many more restrictions on Chinese citizens. A comprehensive study of internet freedom in 65 countries around the globe to track improvements and declines in internet freedom conditions each year done by Freedom on the Net covering 87 percent of the world's internet users expresses concern over

China's ambitious anti freedom of speech and human right cyber policy. It has also said that Beijing is cultivating media elites and government ministers around the world to create a network of countries that will follow its lead on internet policy. Freedom of the Net report also said that Chinese officials held trainings and seminars on new media or information

management with representatives from 36 out of the 65 countries covered in this survey. Chinese companies are playing a prominent role in the country's push for telecommunications dominance, having installed internet and mobile network equipment in at least 38 countries. Chinese firms have also provided high-tech tools of surveillance to governments that lack respect for human rights. As more of the world's critical telecommunications infrastructure is built by China, global data may become more accessible to Chinese intelligence agencies through both legal and extralegal methods.

Many governments are enforcing criminal penalties for the publication of what they deem false news. In 2018, 13 countries prosecuted citizens for spreading false information.

Authoritarian leaders have targeted entire news organizations under the guise of combating fake news. Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte has attacked the investigative media site Rappler as a "fake news outlet" and sought to shut it down in January over alleged foreign funding violations.

It is therefore a herculean task to free internet and cyberspace from the hands of the anti democratic and authoritarian forces. However collaboration among civil society groups, the democratic governments and IT companies may show us a way for effective solution to the problem. Italian lawmakers have partnered with journalists and tech firms to pilot a nationwide curriculum on spotting online manipulation. Several US states have passed or proposed laws to increase media literacy programs in local schools.

It is encouraging that the social media companies are also working with civil society to identify disinformation on their platforms. Fake accounts controlled by entities in Russia and Iran was discovered as a result of Facebook's collaboration with DFRLab at the Atlantic Council in the United States. Comprova, an initiative by the nonprofit First Draft and the Brazilian Association of Investigative Journalists (ABRAJI), brings together 24 Brazilian news outlets to identify and counter disinformation ahead of the country's elections. The project marks the first time a journalists' association has been granted access to WhatsApp's business API (application programming interface), which will improve the group's ability to reach audiences on the platform.

To fight the digital abuse the civil societies should engage with private companies, human right organizations, freedom of speech groups and other stakeholders. Technological



innovation to evade unethical intervention on civil rights, freedom of speech and right to privacy is an advance tool for the users. For example, leading international companies could develop mobile-phone applications that enhance digital security, enable sharing of images in a way that evades AI-

driven censorship, and incorporate circumvention capabilities into apps focused on other services. A rapid-response fund should be created to address internet shutdowns, blocking of independent news sites, or the introduction of draconian censorship laws. Advocacy for Imposition of sanctions—such as freezing of assets—on foreign tech companies involved in human rights abuses, adhering to the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, ensuring that all internet-related laws and practices adhere to international human rights law and standards and strong data protection laws are among the few remedies for ensuring internet freedom.





# AMWJU

## successfully hosted IJU - NEC meeting in Manipur for the second time



**A** two-day National Executive Committee (NEC) meeting of the Indian Journalists' Union (IJU) was held in Imphal, the capital city of Manipur on November 23 & 24, 2019 at the conference hall of MIMS of Manipur University. AMWJU is hosting the NEC meeting of IJU for the second time. AMWJU earlier hosted the IJU NEC meeting in November 22 - 23, 2014. In both the occasion the IJU-NEC coincided with the Sangai festival- a national festival of Manipur. The participants had an opportunity to know about this colorful festival showcasing the art and culture of the state.

Inaugurating the two day meeting Information and Public Relations Minister of Manipur Th Biswajit Singh said the media fraternity has a key role to play towards bringing vibrant democratic society. He encouraged the journalists to work with a vision for a better society. As journalists are the voice to the voiceless people, reporters should maintain clarity and balance in their report, he said. He said that journalists should perform their duties with dynamic outlook as they have to perform multiple tasks.

Highlighting the initiatives taken up by the government for the welfare of the journalists, he informed that Manipur State Journalist Welfare Scheme was first implemented in 2017 after the formation of new government. Singh also informed that a site for constructing Press Park and press Academy has been selected. He further appealed to members of IJU present from across the country, to visit Manipur Sangai Festival and write about Manipur and its rich cultural heritage. Vice President of International Federation of Journalists Sabina Indrajit highlighted the frequent attack on journalists carried out in the country. President of AMWJU Bijoy Kakchingtabam also spoke on various welfare schemes of the journalists in the state. The programme is being hosted by the All Manipur Working Journalists' Union (AMWJU) with assistance of Mass Communication department, Manipur University. In the second session, important issues of the journalists in the country especially the Northeast in particular were discussed. Implementation of wage board for journalists, safety and security of journalists, pension, insurance coverage were some of the issues discussed in the meeting.

Senior journalists and retired journalists from Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Tamilnadu, Sikkim, Gorkhaland Territorial







Council, Odisha Tripura, Uttarakhand, Delhi and Manipur besides the key functionaries of the IJU shared their views. Kelzang Wangchuk of Journalists Association of Bhutan and senior journalists of Kuensel, a national newspaper of Bhutan attended the meeting as overseas delegate. He emphasized the need of cooperation between the journalists organizations of South Asia.

On November 24 the delegates discussed organizational matters. Some of the delegates expressed concern over role of a section of leaders which harmed the organization

immensely. IJU leaders called for unity and integrity. Sabina Inderjit, the Secretary General appealed women to join the field of journalism to bring gender parity in the profession of journalism. Delegates from different states urged that the governments in the states and at the centre should enact journalist safety act to protect the journalists. The meeting condoled the deaths of some prominent and senior journalists and activists across the country.

IJU during NEC meeting unanimously appointed Geetarth Pathak as President of the IJU, following the resignation of the former president, till the next plenary session. NEC was organised

by AMWJU with Masscom Department of Manipur University.

Manipur chief minister N Biren Singh also felicitated newly-appointed IJU president Geetarth Pathak and IJU Secretary General Sabina Inderjit at the inaugural function of Sangai Festival on November 24, 2019 in Imphal. The IJU delegates visited the border town of Moreh bordering Myanmar and interacted with local traders, social activists and journalists.

-Asem Bhakta Singh





# Media and ethics

**M**uch has been written, debated on the role and responsible of media. The media, both print and electronic in recent time have been subject of criticism of sensational reporting. There is no doubt that the mass media in its different forms have influenced human life in the present century. They have primarily provided information and entertainment to people across countries. Print media, being the leader over a considerable period of time has now got competition from Television, which is reshaping many of the social responses. Radio apart from providing news and views has also developed a flair for entertainment, thereby getting a lot of acceptance. There is also the new media with internet being its flag bearer. Internet has indeed made it possible to disseminate information and ideas in real time across the globe. However, among all these developments there is a cause of concern. Is media really fulfilling its social responsibility? Is a booming global mass media posing threats to the democratic way of thinking? In it posing challenges to a country like India where media has a greater role to play rather than merely providing information and entertainment?

Dangerous business practices in the field of media have affected the fabric of Indian democracy. Big industrial conglomerates in the business of media have threatened the existence of pluralistic viewpoints.

- Preetam Brahma Choudhury



Media freedom is generally accepted as a corner stone of modern democratic society. Though media has at times successfully played the role of a watchdog and has also aided in participatory communication, a lot still needs to be done. In the days of Citizen Journalism when the world has shrunk to wavelengths and information-sharing through the social media has already proved its mettle in bringing about major changes, it is essential to take a critical look at the role and the responsibilities of the media. However, there is also considerable awareness that the media should be responsible in what and how it reports, and how it ought to distinguish between giving information and editorialising. There is also an acute awareness that the media should be responsible in what and how it reports and also clearly distinguish disseminating information from analysis and opinions. The present scenario is not quite encouraging and certain areas need to be addressed. In recent times Indian media, more so in Assam, has been subject to a lot of criticism for the manner in which they have disregarded their obligation to social responsibility.

Coming to Assam, the media, both print and electronic, in recent time, were being accused of playing more destructive role creating chaos, confusion, hatred in the society, even flaring up the situation during volatile period.

## Media and ethics

What will one expect when one of the oldest newspaper not only in Assam but in the entire Northeast, "The Assam Tribune", whose Platinum Jubilee inauguration celebrations was attended by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi himself carries headline "Bodos kill 65 in Assam".

*Another such mindless headline was also carried out by one of the most read national newspaper 'The Hindu' which carried headline in the front page '14 dead as Bodo men target Assam market'. (The paper later apologized after protest and criticism from various quarters). These headlines reflect the mindset -- mindless and communal, seems intentional of creating hatred against a single community.*

*Such mindless and communal headlines or news items is not only confine to Assam Tribune or The Hindu; this is about the common psyche of the media house/media persons in the state. There are many such examples where the media both electronic and print knowingly and intentionally give such mindless headlines mishandling the news by trying to give communal colour, targeting a community, especially belonging to indigenous tribals community, writing words like Bodo militants, Karbi militants, Naga militants etc. instead of naming the militant outfit.*

*What is more ironic is that most of the editor or the journalist who reports/write these news or experts and news anchors invited in many of these television channels during talk hours are local people from Assam. This is a matter of serious concern. There is need for the media people to change the mindset.*

*Media organisations, whether in print, audio visual, radio or web have to be more accountable to the general public. It should be monitored that professional integrity and ethical standards are not sacrificed for sensational practices. The freedom of press in the country is a blessing for the people. However, this blessing can go terribly wrong when manipulations set in. The self regulatory mechanism across media organisations need to be strong enough to stop anomalies whenever they occur. Agencies like Press Council of India need to be vigilant to stem the rot.*

*Michael Moller, director general at the United Nations Office at Geneva has rightly said: "The responsibility of the media, to me, is to inform, educate and to hold power to account. I think that on the educational part, a lot of media around the world has abdicated its responsibility. It needs to find its responsibility again."*

**(Preetam Brahma Choudhury is a Kokrajhar, Assam based journalist).**



# HISTORIC & RENEWED COMMITMENT

IJU Imphal NEC Meeting



A free and independent press, ethical journalism, safety of journalists, decent working conditions, gender equity are indeed critical issues amongst many others the media fraternity needs to keep a sharp focus on like never before. In fact, it's like flogging a story to make that impact it deserves. And that is precisely journalists from across the country made a part of their agenda at the National Executive Committee meeting of the Indian Journalists Union in Imphal.

The All Manipur Working Journalists Union (AMWJU) played the gracious host in stirring what should be termed as a historic meeting of the IJU in the North East. In the 30 years of its existence, the IJU had its first President from the region. Assam's Geetarth Pathak took over charge as its fourth President in the true spirit of national integration and diversity. The union stepped into an era of democratic functioning or better began a new chapter wherein the feudal mindset or the big brother syndrome that had prevailed had become passé and all States, big or small, would stand on an equal footing and speak in one voice in the organisation to carry forward the mandate of protecting freedom of press and the journalists' rights. A robust foundation was indeed laid in Imphal.

The press must be a 'voice of the voiceless', should play an effective role as the fourth estate, a mediator between the people and government and be part and parcel of taking the country forward and towards a developed society, is how the young and dynamic minister saw the media's role. More so, at a time when challenges that social media, fake news and hate speech have thrown up globally and need to be addressed. Thus, there was a word of caution. The media must report only facts, maintain a balance in its reportage and desist from sensationalising and creating divisions within the society. Journalism, said the minister is all about dynamism and responsibility and journalists needed to do justice in the various fields they were assigned. Yes, there cannot and shouldn't be half-hearted attempts as there was no room for complacency.

As it takes two to tango, it was heartening to hear the minister acknowledging the fact that his government too had a responsibility for ensuring the press remains free and that its workforce is given a healthy environment to carry out its duties without fear or favour. Music to the ears, as the IJU and its State affiliates are having to prod governments to see the challenging conditions that journalists have to work, rather struggle under. The Manipur government, he said had



And there couldn't have been a better beginning of the two-day meeting in the winter of 23-24th November, with Manipur's Information and Public Relations Minister Biswajit Singh reinforcing the basic ingredient for a healthy democracy-- a free and independent press. In these trying times, when this very independence is under grave threat, the commitment voiced was more than welcome. At the same time, it would continue to be under watch and guarded, as the job entails.

already taken measures such as welfare schemes, medical coverage, pension etc, and was now working on proposals of AMWJU and Editors' Guild Manipur for a Press Park and Press Academy.

Sharing and reiterating the objectives of the IJU, both President Geetarth Pathak and Secretary General Sabina Inderjit said the Union was committed to protect press freedom for only when the media is free and vibrant will democracy thrive. However, there were no two opinions that

# HISTORIC & RENEWD COMMITMENT

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journalists were facing grave threats from both State and non-state actors. The emergence of right wing and nationalist governments across the globe was a cause of concern and journalists' safety has become part of a serious debate or rather a top priority. Sadly, India is gaining a notorious reputation as last year the International Federation of Journalists declared it as one of the most dangerous countries in the world for journalists in the backdrop of the rising number of media persons being either killed or attacked both physically and morally. The IJU has been demanding that both the Centre and State governments enact a Safety law and the Imphal meeting gave it a greater push given that impunity against attacks on journalists is becoming a rule rather than an exception.

The National Executive Committee also expressed serious concern over the Central government's manoeuvre to cut into the roots of press freedom in the country by repealing two vital legislations, Working Journalists and other Newspaper Employees (Conditions of Service) and Miscellaneous Provisions Act of 1955, and the Working Journalist (Fixation of rates of Wages) Act, 1958 that protect the unique character of the profession of journalism. A perusal of The Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2019 and The Code on Wages has not only sought to equate the 'fourth estate' with any other industry, but done away with basic protections of the Act and the Wage Board which provided confidence to journalists to carry out their responsibilities without fear or favour. It is unfortunate that the government was favouring the employers rather than the employees and that IJU and its affiliates would need to keep the pressure on to resist attempts to weaken press.

At the same time, realising the adverse affect that crass commercialisation and competition on the one hand and the growth of media manifold from print to digital was having on the core values of ethical journalism, the IJU felt strongly that it was time for introspection within. While the media is proactive in investigating and highlighting the the shortcomings and corruption within governments and other institutions, it needs to look within whether it is doing its own job honestly. More so, as it is a given fact that the advent and spread of contractual system of employment in the media, has virtually made Wage Board implementations instinct, and forced many a journalist to compromise professionally.

And therefore aptly a special session was held to take into account how to salvage the situation and bring back the glory of the profession as a public service. The journalist today must go back to the basic core values and that every State affiliate must contemplate reviving or setting up a code of ethics for its members to follow. Many a speaker said that the concept 'there is no free lunch' was a more sharpened reality but personal aggrandisement was reaching higher levels surpassing earlier trends of distribution of suit lengths,

goodies and even envelopes with cash at Press Conferences by organisers for better coverage. It was therefore, all the more critical that to have a code of ethics in every organisation and that if need be there should be naming and shaming of the 'black sheep.' There can be no two opinions that the credibility of the media, which has taken a beating, needs to be won back

The meeting also made a note of the disturbing trend of mass layoffs the media industry is experiencing on the one hand and the challenges that the digital media and working conditions set out. The workforce is no longer permanent, the young are sceptical of unions and therefore the unions would need to think out of the box or adopt policies to get cracking on retaining their relevance and their numbers. A tall order alright but with a dedicated and united team, success by innovation is certain.

The largely male-dominated meeting did once again reiterate its commitment to towards gender equality, which unfortunately continues to be ignored at both the State and national level. While the number of women in the profession has grown manifold, their involvement in unions is bare minimum, or rather dismal particularly in small cities and towns and that leadership of unions need to do more than pay mere lip service. Sate unions must encourage and gain their confidence and one way of doing so would be to set up gender cells, which would provide them a platform to steer their own decisions to meet their needs and requirements.

Organisational matters were a critical part of the deliberations of the NEC, with members and State leadership dwelling at length over unfortunate developments within the Union. But as rightly agreed these had to be dealt internally and not be made a public spectacle. There was no looking back and the key to success of overcoming the numerous hurdles was to deal with them unitedly, not just on the home front but globally too. Imphal reaffirmed the belief 'united we stand, divided we fall,' and the foundation that was laid bore optimism all the way. It wrapped up with a big hurrah and thank you to AMWJU team under the leadership of its President B i j o y Kakchingtab am, General Secretary Khwairakpa m Naoba Singh and IJU NEC member Asem Bhakta Singh. In Solidarity!



**Geetarth Pathak**  
*elected new President of IJU*





## PCI chairman's speech on National Press Day 2019



**'Reporting to Interpretation – A Journey'.**  
(Speech by Press Council of India Chairman Justice (Retd) C K Prasad on National Press Day 2019)

Journalists in their curriculum and during training are taught to keep their personal feelings out of their reporting, they are told to write what they know, not what they think, to play it straight and give all sides a chance to be heard. Reporting of news is often described as coldly impersonal job. It is an art of storytelling through a process that involves the gathering of facts, selecting the vital points in relevance of the story, verifying the facts and background and merging the facts to present the story in an objective truthful manner without lacing it with personal opinion or subjective comments. Five 'Ws', 'Who, What, When, Where, and Why' are the golden words which guide them. A good reporter is one who always adheres to fair and impartial reporting of the story leaving the rest to its readers to decide.

Gandhi an ardent believer in the power of the word wrote in 'Young India' in the year 1925, "I have taken up journalism not for its sake but merely as an aid to what I have conceived to be my mission in life. My mission is to teach by example and precept under severe restraint the use of the matchless weapon of satyagraha... therefore, I may not write in anger or malice. I may not write idly. I may not write merely to excite passion."

The press has covered a long journey since then from reporting facts to analysing and interpreting it but Gandhi's philosophy has not lost its relevance even in today's era when fake news, paid news, morphed news, embedded news and baked news have overshadowed the real news. We read newspapers, listen to radios, watch news channels or navigate through our social media pages to get information about things happening around us. Any unusual event falls under the purview of news. Today, people are being constantly bombarded with information through various news platforms including social media that the line between the real and fake news, truth and false news has blurred. 'Deep-fake' has become the new reality. In this fast-paced world, where people have more virtual friends than in flesh and blood, readers or consumers of news do not have the time to verify the sources of news. When the edifice of public opinion is built on the foundation of fake and half-baked news, the reality becomes trickier and even dangerous at times, especially when public resort to violence in response to fake news or misinformation. This has axed down the media credibility and human dependability on the news media. Gone are the days when people looked to the media to confirm a gossip, many a times they create gossips themselves.

In the initial days of development of the press in India, it was considered to be the vehicle of social and religious reforms and political independence. With the introduction of the Constitution, people were given a pluralist liberal democratic polity along with which came into focus the free press. Over the period, the press as a mass communicator, as a representative of the people, as a voice of voiceless and as their regular and constant spokesperson has achieved the position of almost a natural ally of the society for its existence, projection and well being. Since then, the press enjoys an enormous power of supplying information to people that condition their mind. This has elevated the media to a most privileged and powerful position in society.

Reporters have a lot of facts in their head when they turn to report, it is their legitimate right to interpret facts. Readers, in turn, look for perspective, purposive interpretation and serious thinking. Interpretative reporting goes behind the news,

## PCI chairman's speech on National Press Day 2019

brings out the hidden significance of an event and separates the truth from falsehood. It is a combination of facts with interpretation. A reporter delves into reason and meaning of development of a story and by using the knowledge and experience, he presents an event with explanation of the consequences it could lead to. But in the garb of interpretative reporting, journalists cannot change the very essence of the news or distort or concoct facts and enter into surmises and conjectures. Before doing that they must look to all sides and shades, and do not rush with story. It is difficult to imagine that reporter can add meaningful perspective within hours of an event. Bob Woodward, a highly renowned investigative reporter of 'the Washington Post' observes that most of the high flying interpretative reporting is generally impulsive, often silly and mostly wrong. It breeds public cynicism.

Ms Janet Cooke won the most prestigious 'Pulitzer Prize' in journalism for a story published in the 'The Washington Post' on drugs abuse involving an eight year-old boy 'jimmy' injected with heroin supplied by his mother's boyfriend. A story found later on to be fictitious conceived in fraud and delivered in deceit resulting in withdrawal of the prize.

Nearer home, the glaring cases of obnoxious interpretation by the media which come to mind are the Prime Minister of India comparing the Muslims who suffered during the riots as 'kutte ka Pilla', the 'Chehra' becoming 'Mukhauta' for one of the most charismatic leaders of India and 'Dalit' equivalent to 'street dog'. All these have been attributed to

members of one political party and honestly speaking I do not know whether these are just a coincidence done inadvertently or with malice or a calculated design.

These forms of misinterpretation of facts, where 'spoken words' are given connotation which the speaker never dreamt of leads to loss of media credibility and are toxic for the society and ultimately lethal to the Media Industry. One interesting fact which I notice is if one newspaper misinterprets facts related to an incident, it is often followed by others. Thriving on sensational news

or headlines could be a short term survival strategy for the press but comes at a very high price in the long term. Given the distinct stature that media enjoys in our society fading media credibility is a matter of concern, nationwide and globally.

To address this issue of waning media credibility and accountability, the Press Council of India has this year made the deliberate choice to navigate the journey of Indian Press

from its days of reporting of facts to its complex interpretation. Print journalism is already uncertain about its future and in the garb of interpretation, if journalists deviate from the path of ethical journalism, no force on earth can keep newspapers from sinking in the rising sea of 24/7 television and social media.

I earnestly hope that today's discussion on the subject "Reporting to Interpretation- A Journey" by media may open a course for further deliberations and actions leading to the rise in media credibility. I am a rank optimist and believe that talking the flaws is also a path for remedying it. Indian media which is the backbone of our nation may strive better every day to stand upright with dignity and integrity.







## PWF – a Quest for Independent Media



**Sunzu Bachaspatimayum**  
Founding Secretary, PWF.

*Media, often termed as the fourth pillar of democracy, plays a pivotal role in influencing mindsets is undisputable. This makes it crucial for the media to be independent of any influence or biased in its reporting, in order to give out verifiable information with which the citizens can then discuss and debate issues, challenge their governments and make informed decisions.*

**S**adly, both in the Indian context and in the context of Manipur, the buzzword amongst discerning public is 'which of the media outlets are reporting independently?' and by virtue of doing so, aid in maintaining good governance.

### Independent media

Independent Media is that media which operates free of any influence from both the government and the non-government. When people get information from independent sources, they are encouraged to think critically and form their own opinions. This makes independent media vital for any democracy or society.

### Challenges of Independent Media

True financial independence in the media is nearly impossible to find. The influence of money in the media can be gouged from the trending conception of what constitute a news these days. More often than not, it is the unspoken self-censorship that causes an editor to turn down a story not because it is bad or wrong but because it's just 'not what we do'. Whether the basis of this self-censorship is the fear of losing advertisers, or the fear of pissing off the bosses, or even the fear of offending someone, the effect is the same. The near-impossibility of true independence in journalism is expressed not by what is published, but by what is not published. Genesis of PWF.

All Manipur Working Journalists' Union, AMWJU, being an apex body of working journalists in the State has been defending the 'freedom of the

Press' whenever and from whomever the curtailment of that freedom occurs. So far the unity of the fraternity has been its strength. The mode of protest includes sit-in protest, protest march, black badge, media boycott and even in extreme cases, indefinite stoppage of daily publications.

Deeper introspection reveals that lack of financial security of journalists in the State has always acted as the overwhelming stumbling block towards the growth of responsible and creditable journalism or independent media in the State. Towards addressing this gap, an initiative towards building an ecosystem for the growth of independent media in the State was initiated by AMWJU under the president-ship of Wangkhemcha Shamjai, when his team of 2015-17, actively supported by all members of the Union, decided to raise a "Journalists' Corpus Fund". People from every walks of life – be it the judiciaries, legislators, bureaucrats, Manipur Police and other law enforcing agencies, non - government organizations, civil societies and individual citizens, generously contributed in the success of the mega lottery, drawn on 20th November 2016 that ultimately helped raise a whopping corpus fund of Rs 8,527,783/- for AMWJU.

Following the General Body resolution adopted on 18th of March, 2017, the 'Paomee Welfare Foundation' (PWF) came into being as a Public Charitable Trust of AMWJU under the Indian Trust Act on 26th April 2017. Its primary mandate being



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## – a Quest for Independent Media

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the safe-keep of the corpus fund and to use the revenue gathered by way of the interest earned from its deposit in a nationalized bank to provide financial (medical) assistance to needy bona fide, retired and present, journalists of Manipur, affiliated to AMWJU. Considering the economic background of journalists in the State, even a nominee of a bon fide member's family is to be covered as one-time relief offer.

### Composition of PWF

The Foundation is composed of a 'Board of Trustees', comprising 17 Trustees with a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Managing Trustee, Secretary, Joint Secretary, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, Publicity Secretary and the rest designated as executive Trustees. Of these, seven Trustees are classified as Lifetime Trustees; seven others are nominated and elected as Trustees via voice-vote for a 5-year term from the media fraternity who have distinguished themselves in the field of journalism and have credible reputation, and three of the Trustees are co-opted from amongst the serving office-bearers of AMWJU, namely, President of AMWJU, who officiates as the Managing Trustee of the Trust; Secretary General of AMWJU takes charge as the Joint Secretary while the Treasurer of AMWJU is the Trust's Assistant Treasurer of the Trust.

Following adverse debate on the presence of 'Lifetime Trustees' in the Board of Trustees, a rectification process of the DEED is currently underway to do away with this classification of Trustees. Efforts are being directed to undergird the 'Board of Trustees' from dissolution to safeguard continuity of the spirit and mandate of the Foundation which gave the birth of 'Lifetime Trustees' in the first place. After the rectification process is adopted by AMWJU through its GB, the Board of Trustees would become a permanent body with only a group of Trustees retiring to be replaced by newly elected members. Each

Trustee would be elected for a given term of years other than the co-opted Trustees.

### Functioning of PWF

While it is true that Paomee Welfare Foundation is a Trust set up by AMWJU, its operation is autonomous and remains outside the ambit of AMWJ in accordance to the Indian Trust Act which, clearly states that the Board of Trustees is the highest decision-making body of the Trust. As per the DEED of the Trust, all major decisions, particularly financial ones of the Foundation are to be taken by a 2/3rd majority vote of all 17 (seventeen) Board of Trustees.

### Medical Board

As per the DEED of the Trust, a high powered Medical Board is mandatory for deciding the amount of financial assistance for expenses incurred on the medical needs of beneficiaries. While considering applications, relating to claims of assistance, the Board of Trustees is mandated to put forward the same before the duly constituted Medical Board. The recommendation of the Medical Board is considered by the Board of Trustees for appropriate Medical Assistance. Currently the Medical Board is officiated by Dr. ASanta Singh, Director RIMS, Dr Kh. Lokeshwar Singh and Dr. O. Guneshwar Singh representative of JNIMS and Managing Director of Shija Hospital & Research Institute, Dr. Kh. Palin.

### Current Schemes of PWF

- Reimbursement of Immediate Medical Relief Assistance, (RIMRA) is a scheme that primarily reimburses wholly or in parts the amount of expenses incurred by AMWJU in offering financial assistance to its members who falls sick or sustain injury in an accident under the Immediate Medical Relief Assistance. PWF allots a fixed amount of Rs 1,500,00/- for this reimbursement scheme annually. So far PWF has disbursed to AMWJU, between 2018-2019, an amount of Rs 2,020,00/-
- Medical Financial Assistance, (MFA) is a scheme currently undertaken and disbursed





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directly by PWF. This scheme is awarded to eligible beneficiaries for critical and life-threatening illness every six months annually.

All eligible applications for MFA are forwarded to the Medical Board, comprising representatives of the heads of RIMS, JNIMS and Shija hospitals. After detailed deliberations based on supporting treatment and expense documents submitted by the beneficiaries, the Medical Board makes its recommendations for each beneficiary. The Board of Trustees then deliberates on the recommendations of the Medical Board and after considering the current financial position of PWF, approves the recommendations and disburses the schemes. PWF has successfully doled out in three phases between 2018-19, Medical Financial Assistance to 28 beneficiaries, amounting to Rs 9.60 lakhs.

*(List of MFA beneficiaries is provided below.)*

### Vision for the Future

Beside carrying out welfare programs for journalists, it is fundamental that the Corpus Fund grows exceedingly in order to objectify future vision that the Foundation envisages to put in play for independent media to thrive in Manipur in the long run. Hopefully, with the corpus fund growing, PWF would also dabble in areas such as these in the future: -

- i) Supporting initiatives that fosters and accelerates excellence in public-interest journalism.
- ii) Builds networks, commission research reports and hold events to highlight the indispensable role independent media play in sustaining vibrancy of democracy.
- iii) Support media development by organizing professional training and business management and media law programs, especially for Digital Media.

iv) Continuously create awareness to educate the masses by organizing capacity building programs for Citizens to equip them with the basics of finding and verifying information, balancing sources and processing news report. After all citizens, armed with digital tools are rapidly turning into a powerful force to document government abuses, natural disasters, election fraud and other critical events. The onus is to impart the knowhow of how to validate information to curb the menace of fake news.

v) Support Investigative journalism that plays a frontal role in enforcing accountability, battling corruption, and raising media standards.

vi) Address sustainability issues of independent media, constrained by economic and market conditions than by censorship, by creating an ecosystem to engage them in a range of business activities such as advertising, sales, marketing and audience research.

Camaraderie is the core concept with which the Paomee Welfare Foundation became a reality. This is for the collective welfare and it wouldn't be wrong to say that this endeavour is revolutionary not only for the state of Manipur but as an example to the fraternity as a whole. The hope is, it would be carried forward and the next generation of journalist would be reaping its fruits. All will depend on the Board of Trustees and the future leadership on whose shoulder the responsibility and the Trust is entrusted by the DEED of Trust. Empowering the journalists should assume prominence in the scheme of things of the Foundation in the long run. Danger of not having an independent media is a media that speaks only to a specific constituency on whom the media is dependent. If the media speaks in the same voice, the voice of those who own and control it, it undermines media diversity and plurality. To have an independent mindset, we should make our 'tribe' fearless. Like Tagore said, "When the mind is without fear."



# PWF

## – a Quest for Independent Media

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Founding Secretary, PWF.

Listed of MFA beneficiaries so far: -

### MFA FIRST PHASE 2018-19

SL No.	Name	Amount (Rs)
1	Ph. Santosh (Liver/Lung)	50,000:00
2	A.K. Sanaton (Tumor)	75,000:00
3	Ch. Netraj (Stroke)	75,000:00
4	Akoijam Rajen Meitei (Cancer)	50,000:00
5	Jit Ningomba (Wife:SLE)	70,000:00
6	Ksh. Meghajit (Daughter:Hernia)	10,000:00
7	K. Bipin Sharma (Liver-Kidney)	75,000:00

### MFA SECOND PHASE 2018-19

SL No.	Name	Amount (Rs)
8	Yumlembam Okendrajit (Collar Bone)	25,000:00
9	Imocha Elangbam (Head Injury)	15,000:00
10	Naorem Gyanand (Choleslithiasis)	20,000:00
11	Thongam Rupa (TIA)	20,000:00
12	Ranjana Elangbam (Son:Austim)	30,000:00
13	Yensemam Samarjit (Chornic Kidney)	30,000:00
14	Oinam Ibochouba (Imo) (Wife: Typhoia)	20,000:00
15	Kh. Shanker (Wife:Choleslithiasis)	25,000:00
16	Urikhimbam Indraraj (Mother:Cancer)	50,000:00
17	Ch. Bilanta Singh (Prostrate gland)	20,000:00

### MFA FIRST PHASE 2019-20

SL No.	Name	Amount (Rs)
18	N Deven Singh (Chronic kidney)	40,000:00
19	Chongtham Meghabarna (Mother:Cardiac)	40,000:00
20	Rakesh Lourembam (Father: Cardiac)	40,000:00
21	Manglem Pechimayum (Cancer) patient was	35,000:00
22	Nongmaithem Jonish (Father: Chronic Liver)	35,000:00
23	Nongthombam Arun (Wife:Myocraditis)	30,000:00
24	Sukham Nanda, (Wife: Subserosal Fibroid) &	25,000:00
25	Leihendro Loukham (Daughter: Motor Nerve)	20,000:00
26	Okram Brajamani Singh (Wife: Glaucoma)	15,000:00
27	Raj Nongthombam (Gall Bladder Surgery)	10,000:00
28	Md. Ayub Khan (Father: Pneumonia)	10,000:00



# Need of Gender Parity in the field of Journalism

**SAMIM SULTANA AHMED**  
President, Gender Council, JUA  
Steering Committee Member,  
Gender Council, IFJ

**F**or a woman journalist the challenges are vast. She faces society's ingrained biases and encounters additional challenges due to her being a woman. We have to accept the fact that the field of media has always been dominated by male like many other fields. Albeit the situation has changed over the years and women in media have been able to prove that she can make it and also overcome the challenges. But still there are more miles to go to make it a free and unbiased profession for women. The number of women as media administrators or journalists is still lesser than that of their male counterpart. Like in many other professions, the underrepresentation of



women in media is still an issue much talked about.

In spite of all odds women journalists in Assam have been able to make their own mark with firmness, dedication and of course, hard work. The GENDER COUNCIL OF JOURNALIST'S UNION



OF ASSAM (JUA) formed three years ago in its informal and open discussions found these unanimous views. Veteran journalists with over three decades of experience have expressed concern that the challenges have mostly remained unchanged.

In one of such discussions organized by the Gender Council of JUA, the participating women journalists opined that social challenges were manifold, in many cases right from the family, the neighborhood and society at large. According to some women journalists, challenges also are multiple in the profession itself, right from convincing the management that she is equivalent to her male colleagues for the hardcore reporting such as politics, law and order, insurgency etc. Many are of the view that they had to fight at every step to getting equal pay for equal work. 'Many times we were being denied outstation news coverage and important events on the ground of gender. At times, women journalists are given the task of soft reporting only. But in my case, I have always raised my point and went ahead,' said one woman scribe of the city. According to many women scribes in the state, being assertive is the Mantra. One woman reporter from a rural area of Assam said, 'In many cases we have to fight for equal pay. Many of my fellow women colleagues had expressed that they faced the same discrimination in their respective organizations, and they had to take up the matter with their employers.'

Despite all the problems and discrimination, women journalists of Assam are assertive in



overcoming these hurdles through their work. In this regard a senior journalist of the state pointed that the women journalists have to be very firm in their approach whenever their rights are denied and do extremely well in their work so that the authorities in respective organizations are bound to give them due respect and credibility. 'I feel compared to other parts of the country, Assam and Northeast as a whole bears a society that respects women. The status of women in north-eastern region of India is somewhat different in comparison to women of the rest of the country. In Assam, the status of women is higher than women of other States of India. Although now not all is well with them yet the situation is not so grim to get disheartened.'

The greatest challenge today is to improve the status of women who constitute almost half the population of the country. The representation of women in Parliament and State Legislatures is very disheartening. The scenario is same with the women participation in Media in Assam. We need to encourage more and more women to get engaged in the profession to increase women representation in media. Journalists Union should undertake a special drive for that purpose. Such an initiative will encourage all and enhance the sustainability of gender movement. The biggest challenge remains that many women join the profession but could not sustain and have to leave the field unwillingly. There many reason behind it. Many leave the profession after they were married, and in many cases they did not get the family support due to

the 'bit erratic' time schedule. Working late at night is not 'permissible'. In such hostile environment, many cannot deal with it and finally get frustrated and leave the profession. We have arranged closed door discussion to get the real feedback where many of our fellow colleagues had divulged their agony. JUA Gender Council, Assam is working for equality in media and fighting against gender bias and discriminations. I strongly feel that different state unions form gender councils to deal with the problem.

Moreover the International Federation of Journalists' (IFJ) Gender Council puts the fight for gender equality at the heart of its work and campaigns. The campaign waged by the IFJ and its affiliates to fight against gender discrimination has achieved considerable progress. But women are still suffering from an unequal access to employment in the media industry. Women journalists face a wide range of gender-specific obstacles and human rights violations, including discrimination, sexual harassment and assaults. There also remains the challenge of reducing the pay gap between men and women at the workplace. Furthermore, women are more likely to be victims of serious forms of violence such as sexual harassment and rape. It is to be mentioned here I have been elected as one of the members of Steering Committee of IFJ Gender Council in the recently held elections just before the Tunis Congress of IFJ.

Whatever may be the obstacles, we have to fight, we have to work hard by breaking the taboo and show that we are the winner. We must win the situation and march ahead.



# Brave New World or else Grave New Challenge awaits Manipur Media in the days ahead

- By Pradip Phanjoubam



**M**edia in Manipur is vibrant in many ways, at least as of now. But there are signs that decay is setting in. But before I come to this disturbing trend, a little more thought on why and where the state media draws its strength from will be relevant. Probably this strength is inherited from the history and nature of the birth of mass media in the state. Like in so many other postcolonial nations, India prominently, the inner urges of the society that caused the birth of a mass media here was the commitment of an enlightened and conscientious section of its elite to cater to an urgent need of the time – namely to educate the larger masses of the exploitative socio-political circumstances they were all immersed in. In other words, the mass media here began as an instrument for fostering public awareness aimed at enabling the general public to rise and assert their collective will, and thus hold the governance process of the time answerable to them.

On the Indian canvas, we Gangadhar Tilak's "Kesari" 19th Century, and later Mahatma 20th Century, both urging the conscious of the colonial and to unite to break the circumstances. Manipur's own much different. It is well known Hijam Irabot gave life to this was in awakening the masses so predicament they were in, and which would bring changes for society. Indeed, especially in the has always had a social activist Manipur shares this history, activist role the media here has a long time, the state media has and interrogate power, or in the "speak truth to power".



saw this in the shape of Bal launched in the late 19th Gandhi's "Harijan" in the mid-Indian masses to be circumstances they were in shackles of these media story has not been how towering pioneers like as medium realising how vital it that they may see the unfair thus prepare for a revolution the better for the whole colonised world, the media role at their inception, and therefore the pronounced been and still is known for. For not been afraid to question currently popular parlance,

Given this history, most media organisations in Manipur began purely journalistic enterprises. It has almost always been about a few self-taught but committed writers, journalists and more from all walks of life, coming together to pool in resources to launch a newspaper or journal. This being so, except for a few which were owned by political parties as their propaganda tool, or else well-known social organisations such as Pan Manipuri Youth League, till only a few decades ago, journalists were owners of newspapers and journals, and indeed "proprietor-editors" were not uncommon at all once. Predictably, these newspapers and journals had very limited circulations, and consequently their revenues were also proportionately meagre, with the result that the working conditions of those running them, or employed by them, were far from good. Indeed, most of the early journalists were in the profession for the passion of it, often barely managing to make ends meet. Thankfully for the present generation of journalists in the state, these pioneers hung on bravely and continued advancing the profession of their passion forward relentlessly. If the profession did not have much money as reward for them, their dedicated services to society gave the best among them reputations and legacies no amount of money can ever hope to buy.

Things have changed considerably ever since. The harbingers of this new age change are many. One of the foremost among them is technology. Till the mid-1990s, most of the newspapers in Manipur were printed using the archaic Treadle Machine, some motorised and others still driven manually by foot pedals. This technology is fundamentally the same as that invented by Johan Guttenberg in 1440, and basically



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employs moveable cold metal fonts and flatbed stone composing. Such machines are capable of printing only one side of a page at time at speed less than 1000 copies an hour. This meant less than 1000 copies of a two-sided newspaper in two hours since both sides of the newspaper page had to be printed separately. No prizes for guessing that two and half decades ago, newspapers in Manipur had only a single sheet.

Probably inhibited by the diminutive scale of the newspaper economy of the time, Manipur totally missed out on the linotype instant font making machine, and the hot metal flatbed stone composing, complemented by the flexible flong relief mould technology used for making solid-state rotary casts to be fitted to rotary printing machines, a process known as stereotyping, which was the high points of printing technology in India till the late 1980s before the arrival of offset technology. The state also missed out on the photo-typesetting technology phase which was also the latest in pre-press composing in the late 1980s.

With the onset of digital age in the early 1990s, technology not only continued to transform but also became affordable, and in the mid-1990s offset printing technology made its appearance in the state media scenario. For Manipur then, it was a long jump from a Guttenberg era technology to the latest in the latest in the digital age. With further advancement in the digital technology, alongside also came cable TV channels. Not long after, from sheet-feeder offset machines, media houses began acquiring the web offset machines capable of printing from newsprint spools, lifting not just print quality, but also introducing simultaneous multi-pages printing at exponentially increased speed. In quick successions, colour offset printing technology started entering the scenario and this rapid modernisation continued. Today, Manipur has several presses with state-of-the-art offset printing machines as well as prepress composing facilities, the latest of which is the computer to plate, CTP, image transfer machines. The state also now has a satellite television channel besides several cable TV networks.

Once upon a time, it was paucity of funds that was the biggest hurdle before the media in Manipur. This also led a fringe section of it to resort to unscrupulous means to make extra earnings. The infamous "Black Tender" as they were referred to, is one of these. In this, this section of the print media, partnered with the infamous contractor-bureaucrat-politician nexus, and for a price, published limited copies of government tender notices under their banners. These copies were also not circulated in the market. The whole purpose was to facilitate completion of the mandatory official formalities for award of tenders to contractors, and hand-picked contractors to win government tenders without competition, therefore at inflated costs, leaving them huge unwarranted profits.

Other than a few who chose to play this dirty game, by and large, the media remained committed to the public cause. However, in the present times, the changing market reality is again shaking up the media scenario in the state radically. In the hi-tech, high-investment media world of today, the activist journalists of yesteryears are witnessing their space shrink. There can be no doubt that the days of the journalist-ruled media, so prominent once, are numbered. Media houses now have slowly but surely transformed into business enterprises, relegating its news dissemination responsibility to a secondary position. The well-known paradox and friction associated with media business in advanced markets in the West in maintaining a balance in the partnership between the business management sections of a media house and its editorial division, is also increasingly becoming the reality here as well. True, the two have to move along for they need each other, but this has to be only as parallel but autonomous units. For the editorial division to sustain, the newspaper's business must prosper, and for the newspaper business to prosper, a good editorial team is vital. The same is true for the electronic media.

The tendencies in the modern times however has been for the business section to come to not just control, but dominate and dwarf the editorial division. The words of media tycoon, Rupert Murdoch, when he was asked what he considered news to be, still rings loud. He infamously said: "news is the stuff that fill the spaces between advertisements." The same arrogance is reflected by Vineet Kumar Jain, the managing director of India's biggest and richest media house, Bennet Coleman and Co., the publisher of The Times of India among many others. When he was asked by the reputed American journal what it was like to run a very



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successful media business, his reply was indicative of the new direction the media industry was heading in India. He said: "We are not in the newspaper business; We are in the advertising business."

As media scholar Tony Harcup has shown, this control of newspaper editors by proprietors does not have to be overt. The editors do not necessarily have to be told to tow the proprietorial line, but the editors consciously or subconsciously are aware of what would please their business bosses, and without being told,

almost always end up trying not to transgress the line that would displease the former. In 2001, when the George Bush administration invaded Iraq to depose Saddam Hussein, Harcup points out in "Principles and Practice of Journalism", that all 153 print and television channels that media tycoon Rupert Murdoch owned all over the world, were unanimous in supporting the invasion, a stand that was also very strongly of Murdoch's as well. In such a controversial event as the invasion and destruction of a sovereign nation that shook up the whole world, would 153 so called fiercely independent editors not have differed even a little in their opinions? None of them were personally told to hold the opinion they did, but nonetheless they all ended up writing or saying what would not displease their employer.

This is the danger that Manipur's media must now also be wary of. It goes without saying that there are always some among the journalist fraternity everywhere, including in the Manipur, who act as power brokers for their business bosses and thereby hasten the blurring of the dividing line that should remain distinct between the management and editorial divisions. These compradors take pride in the borrowed halos and clouts of their employers within their respective organisations, drawing a sense of power from their subservient relationships with their business bosses, and are known for breaking the old and sacred taboo of journalism – the need for the management and journalists to remain at a distance for the sake of editorial independence.

This trend is unfortunate, and in the long run will threaten to rob journalism in the state of the vibrancy it has been known for in the decades that have gone by. But the bright side is, the phasing out of the "proprietor-editors", and the entry of businessmen owners and professional non-businessmen editors in the field, can infuse a greater degree of professionalism in the media. Growth in business is vital for the uplift of working condition and compensation for journalists, and editors now free from the onerous burden of business management can concentrate and strive to excel in the writing profession they are made for. If the line between the management and editorial divisions can remain sacrosanct and is not allowed to be breached, journalism in the state can grow in health and strength. However, the comprador class in the profession who are part journalist and part manager, have a greater vested interest in defusing this line, if not making it disappear altogether, for they derive their borrowed sense of power in this merged territory.

There are other very grave challenges before the Manipur media other than this gradual fusion of editorial and management territories. One of these is the lure of bonhomie opportunities with State power corridors that editors generally are given by virtue of the unwritten mandate they enjoy as the interlocutors between the masses and those at the helm of State power. There is no gainsaying that the Manipur media is no longer entirely innocent of giving in to this temptation. As a small fraternity, happenings within the media community become known even if they have not been made public. It is hence an open secret as to what kind



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of expensive gifts or favours several journalists have received or continue to receive from the powers that be. The consequences are also often loudly visible in the very obvious failures to interrogate very prominent wrongs done by those in power.

A few examples will illustrate. A cabinet minister once, probably in an inebriated state, went berserk in the lobby of a high-profile hotel in Imphal, rampaging the hotel wall hangings and flowerpots before all present, which included foreigner hotel guests. This unruly behaviour by a very important functionary of the government could not have missed screaming front page headline spaces or prime time news slots anywhere in a free media environment. However, in this particular case, an unwarranted self-censorship, preceded most likely by phone calls from those who wanted the news buried, resulted in a deafening silence of the media, except for one or two which chose not to bite the bait.

There is also the cases of a scandalous arrest of a news anchor for a Facebook post critical of the ruling party and the State chief minister. The state media again largely remained silent on this episode too. It is quite likely the arrested man was disliked for his irreverence and impudence by the state media fraternity, but journalism is not about likes and dislikes. It is about interpreting and reporting truth. Or to repeat the cliché again “speak truth to power”. The man was first arrested on sedition charges. A court of law however did not see sedition in his offence and released him. The government then re-arrested him under the draconian National Security Act, NSA. Can a Facebook post threaten national security? This was a question the state media chose not to ask. The arrogant overkill of the government was obvious, yet the media remained tame if not deaf and dumb. That a court of law again found no NSA offence in the anchor's affront and released him should have been a matter of great shame for those at the helm of the media fraternity, but again, as any defanged hound would have done, this was also treated as nothing more than just another run-of-the-mill affair which deserved to be relegated to oblivion at the soonest.



Police arrested Kishorechandra Wangkhem

Here, the media fraternity has to remind itself that the profession is considered the fourth autonomous pillar of democracy precisely because of the role expected of it as an important institution to ensure the checks and balances in the democratic polity remain sharp and effective. True the media should never be partisan to any political party, but without being bitter, it must be ever ready to be the interrogator of power, and not its cheerleader. Its most important role, to reiterate yet again, is to hold power to account.

The last danger I want to highlight is much more fundamental. It has to do with another paradigm shift in the news dissemination technology, namely the advent of the internet. We all know how much this new technology has influenced the profession. The arrival of the social media has actually redefined the role and profile of journalism in a big way. Practically everybody with a smart phone today is a citizen journalist, although this too has its pitfalls, for instance in causing the rise of fake news. Established traditional media organisations have several layers of filters for reportage of news events, starting from the discretion of reporters and then scrutiny of sub-editors, news editors and finally the editors. This is quite unlike in the social media, which is virtually a free for all space. A majority of what the “citizen journalists” post is



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unfiltered raw information, often misinformation, which need to be taken with a pinch of salt. All conscientious readers need to be reminded that they must crosscheck before accepting these as facts.

The internet medium, like a huge juggernaut, is taking the world of journalism by storm. Especially in the advanced West, the threat to the traditional media's existence, both print and electronic, is already felt in a tangible way. Circulation and viewership are dropping across the board, but much more alarming than the depleting circulation is the rate at which advertisements are migrating to the internet, away from the domain of traditional media. The fact is, on the internet medium, even the advertisements are interactive. Advertisers who advertise their products for instance on Google or Facebook, know how many have seen their advertisements. They also pay per click on their advertisements and not a fixed amount as in the traditional media, so advertising on internet has become much more cost effective for them. Not only this, purchases resulting out of advertisements on the internet is coming to be significantly higher than those resulting out of advertisements placed in the traditional media.

Again, in this age of data mining, personal data collected from social media are bought and sold in the internet marketplace. From the browsing history of every individual internet user, say again on Google or Facebook, online retailers such as Amazon get to know the likes and inclinations of each of their potential buyer. Hence, if somebody has shown an interest in shoes, the next time he or she opens another web page, in all likelihood advertisements of related products and accessories will begin to be targeted at her, raising the likelihood she will click one of them or even purchase the product thus advertised. Against this background, newspapers like the The Guardian London and The New York Times have in fact set themselves timelines for winding up their print editions to find their spaces in the internet marketplace, unfortunately already dominated by the likes of Google and Facebook. Likewise, iconic newspaper Washington Post has sold off, and the once omnipresent Newsweek Magazine has shut down. In the days ahead, there will probably be many more casualties of this new era technological shift.

In India too, we are witnessing the manner many well-known TV channels are in the doldrums because their viewers and advertisers are now preferring the YouTube and other similar mediums. Even the world of cinema is beginning to be influenced in a profound way by the new internet paradigm. Reports from the film industry are evidence that in deciding cinematic formats when a new cinematic project is launched, the trends in smartphone dimensions is beginning to be a factor, acknowledging the fact that more and more cinema fans now watch their movies on their smartphones. This is also why, as all of us would have noticed, new models of high-end TV sets are uncannily beginning to resemble the dimension of the smartphone.

The existential threats posed by these waves in the new internet paradigm will probably be delayed for backwater places like Manipur, but let there be no doubt they will arrive without fail sooner than later. The media here must therefore be prepared for this tsunami. Someday soon it will be here to either devastate or else lift the profession to newer heights, depending on how ready and well-prepared those behind the media enterprise in the state as a collective, journalists and owners alike, are to meet the challenge as and when it confronts them. To borrow an idea from author Aldus Huxley, what is in store for the state media can either turn out to be a brave new world or a grave new challenge.

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Labour Codes

## IJU VOICES GRAVE CONCERN

Committed to protect press freedom and journalists' rights, the Indian Journalists Union has been using every occasion to safeguard the fourth estate and its independence, which is increasingly facing numerous threats. In November, the Union submitted a memorandum to the Parliamentary Standing Committee of Labour, under the Chairmanship of Bhartruhari Mahtab and had its Secretary General Sabina Inderjit make a presentation before the Committee on 'The Occupational Safety, health and working conditions code, 2019', the government proposes to enact.

While the IJU refrains from sharing the submission made respecting the rules of the committee of these being treated as 'confidential', it is pertinent to share that the Union has been vociferous against manoeuvres of the government to stifle press freedom and its various institutions. Be it the Labour code bills, attacks on journalists, issue of accreditation, restricting entry into Ministries, non-implementation of Wage Board recommendations, communication clampdown in Kashmir impacting press freedom etc, the IJU through its State unions has consistently raised its voice.

Importantly, soon after the government introduced the labour Codes in July, the IJU lodged its protest one, by asking its State unions to join the Central trade union organisations' protest on August 2 across the country and two, by writing to Union Labour Minister Santosh Gangwar to express grave concern over the Ministry's manoeuvre to cut into the roots of democracy by seeking to encompass the two vital legislations, Working Journalists and other Newspaper Employees (Conditions of Service) and Miscellaneous Provisions Act of 1955, and the Working Journalist (Fixation of rates of Wages) Act, 1958 which protect a free media and distinctive character of journalism, into the labour codes.

The IJU cautioned the Minister against equating the 'fourth estate' with any other industry, which the bills

clearly do and that doing away with the security that Wage Boards provide the journalists to do their job would be detrimental to India's young democracy. The union regretted that the Minister under the garb of ushering in 'ease of doing business,' was favouring the employers in corporate world and media barons, who have so far unsuccessfully been seeking to abolish the Wage Board and Working Journalists Act.

The IJU reminded the Minister of the basic foundation

for the WJA by the First Press Commission in 1954, which unambiguously noted that the journalists' work "cannot be measured as in other industries." Thus any attempt to undermine the functioning and freedom of the media was unacceptable, said the IJU and had demanded that the said two Acts of critical importance not be repealed and

rather the WJA include both electronic and digital media and extend all entitled protections to working journalists.

IJU President Geetarth Pathak attended the Confederation of Newspaper and News Agency Employees Organisations meeting held in Chennai on 21 September to prepare an action plan against the Code bills. On October 4, IJU was part of its delegation which met Minister Gangwar at Shram Shakti Bhavan and submitted a memorandum requesting that the WJA be strengthened and the next Wage Board to set up, wage boards' recommendations be implemented by the Media establishments and those who violate these are held accountable. Two days later, the IJU joined the demonstration called by the Confederation on 10 October at Jantar Mantar in Delhi, wherein it was decided that efforts be made to reach out to the Standing Committee members to share the journalists concern. The Confederation members appeared before the Committee and now await its recommendations.





## Prabhat Kumar Dash YOU WILL BE MISSED



Prabhat Dash

It's difficult for the IJU family to come to terms that he is no more. Comrade Prabhat Kumar Dash had a dynamic personality, always on the move and ever so optimistic even in the most difficult of times. Prabhat bhai, or dada as he was known to many comrades, was till the end involved in the developments in the IJU despite not keeping good health and so very keen to attend the NEC in Imphal in November-end. The doctors didn't allow his travel, but his heart was there and he worked behind the scenes to add to its success.

I still remember the day in the Press Club when I first met him after a fellow journalist said that the President of the Odisha Journalists Union was keen his union affiliate with the IJU. In our discussion Prabhat was forthright, candid about his trade union background and came across as a doer. He had been Political Secretary to Chief Minister JB Patnaik in mid-90s, was Secretary, Odisha Union of Journalists, affiliated to the NUJ(I) and later set up the Odisha Journalists Union in 2011 and tirelessly worked to build it around every district.

It didn't take much time for the IJU to give affiliation and in a short time he was made one of its Secretaries, in May 2014. In fact, he would always come to the rescue of the leadership when the Union found it difficult to hold its meetings of the NEC and even the Plenary. Prabhat enthusiastically would confidently come forward and graciously host these. In fact, he seemed to have set a trend that universities could be hopeful venues for IJU meetings, as after the Plenary he hosted at KIT University, other unions have followed suit tapping universities in their States.

The IJU saw him as a deserving candidate for membership of the Press Council of India, following a successful hosting of the union's Plenary in Odisha. And he was nominated for a second term to the PCI, where he continued to be one of its active members. Unfortunately, some developments led to an unsavoury episode both for him and the IJU, which caused him great anguish. Given his fighting spirit and popularity

amongst many a comrade, Prabhat bounced back and joined our battle against the feudal mentality of opportunist leaders to break the unity. He would, in his usual confident style, say don't worry everything will be alright. He was right there, but wrong when it came to his health. It suddenly deteriorated and he breathed his last on 26 December 2019.

The tragic news came as a shock to all of us in the IJU. Condolences poured in our whatsapp group—unbelievable, he was a great organiser, a big loss to IJU and trade union movement, his friendly nature would draw many of us to him, he will be missed terribly...Some State unions also held condolence meetings for him. His wife Kalpana and OJU colleagues said he eager to get well soon as he said there was a lot of work to be done. But the almighty had planned otherwise.

The IJU asked me to rush to Bhubaneswar to pay our last respects to him and offer personal condolences to both his family and that of OJU. It was a difficult task as it was a farewell no one would wish to bid. The IJU shares the family's grief and prays that with time and courage his wife, daughters Aunshruti and Priyanka and OJU

colleagues sail through the difficult times. At the same time, the IJU assures them of resolute support. Surely he will not be forgotten.

The Press Council of India records its deep sorrow on the sad demise of Shri Prabhat Kumar Dash, member, Press Council of India with whom the Press Council of India had a special relationship. His valuable inputs in opinion making during his two terms with the Council (including present one) had greatly contributed to its working.

Chairman, Press Council of India, Justice C K Prasad has on behalf of the Council conveys heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family with prayer to God to give his entire family the strength to bear the irreparable loss.





## Sangai Festival NATIONAL FESTIVAL OF MANIPUR

'Manipur Sangai Festival' provide a stimulating insight to this north-eastern State's rich tradition and culture on the one hand and on the other the strides it's taking from its soils to join the world community in healthy and sustainable food.

Members of IJU's National Executive Committee and leaders of State unions couldn't have asked for more opportune time to hold their meeting in Imphal to coincide with the world famous festival. Journalists from across the country got a taste of the uniqueness and varied flavours of Manipur as well as the warm hospitality of its people. After a long day of brain storming at the meeting, the inauguration ceremony in the evening and the city and venue lit up like a bride was a refreshing change, rather invigorating, upping the energy levels.

The opening ceremony of the Sangai Festival on November 24 was not only a grand cultural extravaganza but much more. It literally took forward the 'Look East' policy we had read about, with ambassadors of South East Asian countries not just partaking in the festivity but also having their companies and traders and cultural troupes participate in the week-long Festival. Additionally, the Festival seeks to promote the State as a world class tourism destination and the journalists were lucky to get a taste of what the State has to offer.

The Festival, which runs into its 10th year, having started in 2010 by the Tourism Department, is named after the State animal, Sangai, an endemic and endangered subspecies of brow-antlered deer found only in Manipur. And over the years, the festival is labelled as the 'grandest' as it showcases the State's contributions to art in various ethnic dance forms of Ras leela, Pung Cholom (drum dance), culture, handloom, handicrafts, fine arts, indigenous sports such as polo, which originated from here, local cuisine, music, adventure sports as well as the scenic natural beauty of



Manipur Chief Minister felicitating IJU President Geetarth Pathak & Secretary General Sabina Inderjit at Sangai Festival 2019

the land.

This year, though uncertainty loomed large over the hosting of the festival given a boycott call by the Coordinating Committee on Manipur Integrity (COCOMI) over Naga peace talks, Chief Minister Biren Singh was able to pull it through by prevailing over it. The opening was grand, to say the least, with Ambassadors and High Commissioners of Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao DPR, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam attending it and sharing their good wishes. In fact, it sent a strong message that this north-eastern State was forward looking and meant business. The Chief Minister was magnanimous by not only presenting the dignitaries with traditional gifts, but chose also to honour the IJU leadership and the Bhutanese journalist delegate thereby underlining the importance the State accords to the media.

Perhaps, echoing the sentiments of the people, Biren Singh said the Festival "is no more a simple festival but a pride of Manipur and also a platform to promote the identity of the State to the world". At the same time, while noting that 'there was no State or country which does not have issues,' he was firmly hopeful that Manipur would triumph over all issues besieging the State and called for 'a collective effort to fight these issues instead of remaining divided and blaming each other.' The





## Sangai Festival & Organic Manipur' ENCHANTING & GROWING HEALTHY



extravagant opening, the cheerful setting at the ..... and the holding of the Festival gave an added impetus to that optimism. The inauguration was followed by the famous traditional dance performance of ... and the various stalls .....at the venue were indeed inviting.

Another attraction that Manipur can boast of is its handloom and handicrafts. We were told that weaving is a time-honoured occupation and has been fine-tuned to an art form with its intricate designs most popularly the Wangkhei Phee, Haophee, Leirung Phee. The State, is said to enjoy a distinct place amongst the Handloom zones in the country as it is the largest cottage industry in the State and that women are the only weavers since time immemorial. The journalists heard an interesting story wherein it is believed that goddess Chitnu Tamitnu, discovered the cotton and produced the yarn. When the threads were ready for weaving, she arranged the required equipments and constructed the 'Sinnaishang' (work shed). Besides, it is said that goddess Panthoibee once saw a spider producing fine threads and making cobwebs and from it she found the idea and started weaving.

Be that as it may, the fine handloom is a pleasant change from the machine-produced material flooding the markets. The Manipuri weavers thus must value

their skill and intricate designing and pass it on to the next generation. Wangkhei, Bamon Kampu, Kongba, Khongman, Utlou particularly are famous in respect of fine silk items, whereas rest of the villages are producing all varieties of fabrics. The fabric and Tribal shawls are doing well in both national and international markets and some journalists obviously took back a few products.

This apart, in local handicrafts, basketry has been a popular occupation as cane and bamboo are abundantly available in the State. Different shapes and sizes with different designs are manufactured for domestic and ritualistic purposes and we were told that Maring tribe, inhabiting the Chandel district, are the main manufacturers of these types of basket. The baskets presented to the journalists were beautiful and carrying them back home had to done with much care.

Indeed, Manipur has a lot of flavours to offer. The Sangai Festival is now marked in the diary and come November next it would be time to head to the enchanting land –to relish both the festivity and healthy cuisine, and of course the generous and warm hospitality of its people.



## World Day for Decent Work IJU Call to Join & Strengthen Trade Unions



The Indian Journalists Union observed 12th World Day for Decent Work on 7 October last year by expressing grave concern over the rising layoffs in the media sector, which are being justified by owners and managements as an offshoot of the economic slowdown. The trend is across the board in print, television and digital media with labour laws being thrown to the winds and an independent press too becoming a victim.

The IJU drew the attention of the Union government to the contractual system of employment in the media sector, which was playing havoc with security of jobs, which the Wage Board provided. Over a 1000 jobs are said to have been lost since last year and while some journalists take recourse to the courts to get justice, others are left at the mercy of their employers with no retrenchment package coming their way.

The layoffs have a direct impact on good and independent journalism as without a secure job, the work force would be compelled by sheer economics to make compromises. The IJU urged the Government to ensure that the proposed labour codes do not subsume the Working Journalists Act, as the media cannot be compared to any other industry and that both electronic and digital media be brought under the Act's ambit.

At the same time, the IJU called upon journalists to strengthen the media trade union movement to put a halt to the anti-labour policies of the managements and join these to fight for their rights. It joined the IFJ in its campaign: Precarious work is not inevitable, so join unions and prove them wrong!





## DEMISE OF PRABHAT DASH an Irreparable loss of IJU



When I picked up the mobile phone as it rang, Munna Bhai's choked voice said "Nizami Bhai Prabhat Bhaiya has gone, leaving us all alone... Just a short time ago he died in Apollo Hospital." I couldn't believe the words in the first instance, but within next 20 minutes, it became clear that something untoward had happened.

It was a wretched evening of 26 December 2019 when Prabhat Dash, National Secretary of Indian Journalists Union and a member of the Press Council of India, left us. The news of his demise shocked not only Odisha but all the journalists from around 22 States associated with IJU, who had a very warm close relation with him.

### Popular leader with dazzling personality

As State President of Orissa Journalists Union he was such a towering and popular leader with a dazzling personality, that no other person around of his level could be found. Perhaps that is why the search for his successor is taking time.

### Well versed with labour laws

Apart from being a journalist and union leader, he was also well-versed with labour laws. Before speaking on any topic, he used to do his homework well. It was because of his knowledge of the labour laws and his proactive nature, that the IJU nominated him to the Press Council of India for the second consecutive term.

### Soft spoken and friendly nature

Prabhat Dash was quite affable, and whomever he met he left an indelible mark. His mode of conversation and style set him apart from the others. The natural quality of expressing intimacy during conversation was a god given gift to him.

### Candid with sharp memory

People often hesitate to speak upfront under the fear of annoying the person, but Prabhat Dash was not

one of them, he was very outspoken. It was because of his candid approach that his relations with few individuals in the IJU deteriorated and he suffered the pain of suspension for almost four months.

### Special attachment to Chhattisgarh

It was in 26 April 2015, when I first met Prabhat Dash ji in Bhubaneswar through Kalyan Sangh's tall leader K. K. Vasudevan ji, and it was due to his efforts that Chhattisgarh union got affiliation with IJU. And just six months later after the IJU fixed its NEC meeting in Bhilai Durg, Prabhat Dash stationed himself there for a whole week and it was thanks to his guidance and supervision that we were able to pull it off successfully.

### Return of Prabhat Dash

It was in the NEC meeting of Imphal in November 2019, where representatives of 14 States acknowledged his value and restored him back as National Secretary with full respect. Some members also suggested that Prabhat Dash ji be made Vice President in the near future. Other than Chhattisgarh, States of Kerala, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Tripura and North East were instrumental in his return to the IJU fold.

Even though Prabhat Dash ji is no longer with us, his presence will always remain in our hearts. The time and moments spent with him will always be remembered fondly and shall keep his legacy alive.

Goodbye Prabhat Dash

**BD Nizami,**  
Member NEC  
President, Chhattisgarh  
Shramjivi Journalists Welfare  
Union



## Journalist Union of Sikkim held it's AGM

Journalist Union of Sikkim (JUS) held its annual meeting at Pangthang, near Gangtok on January 16.

Addressing the meeting, JUS President Bhim Rawat underlined the role of JUS as a representative organisation of working journalists and how the organisation can work for the welfare of the journalists working in Sikkim. The meeting dissolved the existing executive body and formed a new body with Bhim Rawat unanimously elected as the president and Sujal Pradhan as the new general

secretary. The meeting also elected Shekher Khawas as working president, Amber Gurung and Honmath Dawadi as vice presidents, Samir Nugo as joint secretary. Prakash Adhikari as treasurer, Arpan Pradhan as assistant treasurer, Kabita Sharma and Dichen Ongmu Bhutia as publicity secretaries. and Vishnu Neopanay as legal secretary. Likewise, Prabin Khaling, Bishal Gurung. Wangchen Lama, Prabal Rai, Sagar Chettri. Bijoy Gurung, Deepak Gurung and Jagan Dahal were named the executive members.

Following the election of new executive body, the meeting launched the membership drive as well.

Among the future programme, the meeting decided to hold a national-level seminar on Journalism in the state shortly



## A brief report from Kerala Journalists Union

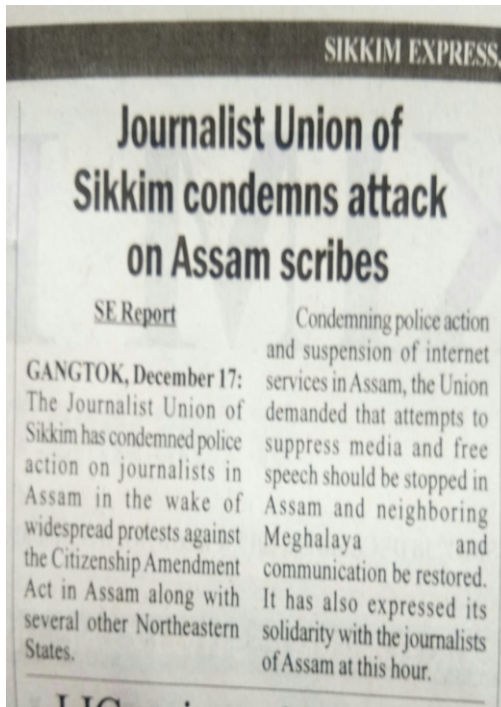


in the last few months, Kerala Journalists' Union has been facing some problems on organisational issues. However our union has overcome this issue. All fourteen district committees along with the state leadershipss decided to conduct various programmes, all over the state. The district committee of Malappuram

, has decided to organise a state level meet and a National Media seminar on Dec. 14 at the teakwood town of Nilambur. Large number of media students attended the seminar, before that the union district committee meeting was inaugurated by Mr.K.Krishnan kutty state water resource minister and number of eminent personalities attended the function. The National media seminar discussed ethics in journalism. Mr. Geethartha Pathak, IJU President inaugurated the seminar. Press Council Member Mr. M.A. Majid, Ex. M.P. Dr. Sebastian Paul, Dr. K. Yasar Arafath, Mr. N. Padmanabhan, Dr. Azeez Tharuvana, and Mrs. Ambica also spoke on occasion. The Malappuram district committee has decided in conducting local meetings. After this programme the district committees of Palakkad, Wynad arranged a very good gathering of journalists along with different programmes.

Last week we conducted a protest March in connection with the implementation of NRC and CAA. State president and Secretary attended all district committee meetings. We are going to unite and planning state conventions and new activities.





## हिमालय दर्पण

### असममा प्रेसमाथिको व्यवहारप्रति देशव्यापी विरोध

काले बुध, १५ दिसम्बर (निर्स): नागरिक संशोधन विधेयक (क्याब)-ले वर्तमानमा उत्तरपूर्वी भारतमा विभिन्न राज्यहरूमा अशान्तिको लहर छाएको छ। उत्तरपूर्व भारतको मुख्य राज्य असममा त कस्तु समेत लगाउनु पर्नेछ। यस अवधि ल्याइएका मिडिया कर्मीहरूले निष्पक्ष रूपमा दैनिक घटनाका समाचारहरू आम-मानिसहरूसम्म पुर्‍याइरहेका छन्। यस्तो विषम परिस्थितिमा पनि आफ्नो ज्यानको बास्ता नगरी पत्रकारहरूले रात-दिन एक गरेर आममानिस अनि निकायहरूसम्म पनि समाचार पुर्‍याइरहेका छन्। तर आसामबाट प्रकाशित हुने प्रतिदिन टाइम्समाथि सरकारले सेसरसिप गरेको अनि यहाँको अधिक दर्शनहरूले हेर्ने सेटलाइट प्राग नुज च्यानलमाथि निर्दयतापूर्वक दबाउने चेष्टा गरेको प्रतिवाद अहिले देशभरि विभिन्न पत्रकार सङ्गठनहरूले गरिरहेका छन्। देशमा नै पत्रकारहरूको बृहत



छ रीसङ्घ बर्किङ जर्नलिस्ट युनियनलगायत देशभरिका विभिन्न राज्यहरूमा रहेका पत्रकारहरूको त दर्जनौं बाहनहरू अनि रेरुबे सङ्गठनहरूले यस घटनाको विरोध गरेका छन्। नागरिकता संशोधन विधेयक पारित भएपछि देशका विभिन्न राज्यहरूमा नै विरोध भइरहेका छन्। राजधानी दिल्लीमा पनि यसको जोड विरोध भइरहेको छ। शुक्रबार दिउँवाँ जाँमिया मिलिया विश्वविद्यालय त रणक्षेत्रमा नै परिवर्तन भयो। आसाम, मेघालय,

त्रिपुरा, महाराष्ट्रमा समेत यसको विरोध भइरहेको छ भने पश्चिम बङ्गालमा त दर्जनौं बाहनहरू अनि रेरुबे सङ्गठनहरूमा आगो समेत लगाए विरोध प्रदर्शनकारीहरूले। तर देशका अन्य क्षेत्रहरूमा कहींकतै इन्टरनेट सेवा बन्द नगरे पनि उत्तरपूर्वी राज्यलाई मात्र तरो बनाएर इन्टरनेट सेवा ठप्प गरेको अनि प्रेसमाथि दबाव गरेको आरोप लगाउँदै उत्तर पूर्वी राज्यका पत्रकार सङ्गठनहरूले विरोध जनाइरहेको स्थाइनाले बताए।

सङ्गठनको रूपमा मानिने आइजेवुले विभिन्न राज्यहरूमा रहेका आफ्ना अग्रिम सङ्गठनहरूसित मिलेर यस्तो कार्यको विरोध गरिरहेका छन्। उक्त घटनाको विरोध अरुणाचल प्रदेशमा पनि क्रोताका साथ पत्रकारहरूले गरे। अरुणाचल प्रदेश युनियन अफ बर्किङ जर्नलिस्ट, अरुणाचल प्रेस क्लब, अरुणाचल इलेक्ट्रोनिक एन्ड डिजिटल मिडिया एसोसिएसनले एउटा

विगत विरोध न्याली आयोजना गरेको एपीयुडब्ल्यूजेका अध्यक्ष अमर स्थाइनाले प्रेस विज्ञप्ति जारी गरेर जानकारी दिएका छन्। यसरी नै उपरोक्त दुवै घटना अनि आसाम अनि त्रिपुरामा सरकारले इन्टरनेट बन्द गरेको घटनाको विरोध गर्दै आइजेवुकी महासचिव सबिना इन्द्रजीतले विश्वमिडियालगायत विभिन्न पत्रकार सङ्गठनहरूले विरोध जनाइरहेको स्थाइनाले बताए।

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Affiliates of IJU raised voices in solidarity against internet shut down in KASHMIR, ASSAM, TRIPURA and other parts of the country



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(ཤེལ་ཤེལ་ཤེལ་ཤེལ་) མཆིང་, ལོ་ལོ་



## 1<sup>ST</sup> CHIEF MINISTER'S INDIGENOUS MARTIAL ARTS ( THANG -TA/CHEIBI ) MEET, 2020

From 18<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> January, 2020

Venue: Indoor Stadium, Khuman Lampak, Imphal

**Ta Khousaba  
Leiteng Haiba  
Sarit Sarak  
Sajen Kanglon  
Cheibi Yendamnaba  
Thang Chungoi Yannaba  
Thang-Ta Chainaba  
Thang Chungoi-Mario**



ORGANISED BY: DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS, MANIPUR





Government of Assam



সৰ্বানন্দ সোণোৱাল  
মুখ্যমন্ত্ৰী, অসম

আহক, আমি সকলোৰে একেলগে  
এখন সমৃদ্ধিশালী অসম গঢ়োঁ  
কঠোৰ পৰিশ্ৰমৰ জৰিয়তে  
আমাৰ সপোন সাৰ্থক কৰোঁ

তথ্য আৰু জনসংযোগ সঞ্চালকালয়, অসমৰ দ্বাৰা প্ৰচাৰিত

Janasanyog/972/19