



International  
Federation  
of Journalists

CHRISTOPHER WARREN  
President  
AIDAN WHITE  
General Secretary

January 24, 2007

To SAMSN members and friends

Welcome to the South Asia Media Solidarity Network's (SAMSN) monthly e-bulletin. The next bulletin will be sent on Monday February 19, 2007 and inputs are most welcome. We encourage contributions: to let others know what you are doing; to seek solidarity and support from other SAMSN members; and to find out what others are doing in the region. To contribute, email [ifj@ifj-asia.org](mailto:ifj@ifj-asia.org)

SAMSN is a group of journalists' trade unions, press freedom organisations and journalists in South Asia who have agreed to work together to support freedom of expression and association in the region. SAMSN was formed at a meeting of these groups in Kathmandu in September 2004. The group agreed to stand in solidarity and work together for media reform, an independent pluralist media and to build public respect for the work of journalists in the region. For further information on SAMSN, visit <http://www.ifj-asia.org/page/samsn.html>

Please distribute this bulletin widely among colleagues in the media.

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### **1. Bangladesh state of emergency declared**

Media freedoms in Bangladesh were placed under threat after the government declared a state of emergency on January 11, with reports of severe censorship imposed on news organisations. As the Bangladesh President, Iajuddin Ahmed, stepped down as interim leader after months of political tension, journalists were prevented from circulating freely in Dhaka while media agencies were shut down. Television stations were forced to broadcast news from the state television network, and newspapers were warned not to report on protests, publish critical analysis or criticise the interim government. For more information, contact [ifjsouthasia@hotmail.com](mailto:ifjsouthasia@hotmail.com).

### **2. Protest against curbs on media in Sri Lanka**

The Free Media Movement (FMM), Sri Lanka Working Journalists Association (SLWJA), Federation of Media Employees Trade Unions (FMETU), Sri Lanka Muslim Media Forum (SLMMF), and Sri Lanka Tamil Journalists Alliance (SLTJA), jointly held a public protest in Colombo on January 23, as part of a campaign for media freedom and journalist safety in Sri Lanka. They called for full and independent investigations into violence, threats and harassment of journalists and media organisations, including death threats against senior journalists, as well as protesting the circulation bans imposed on Tamil dailies and weeklies by armed groups, and unofficial censorship on media and journalists in Jaffna. Visit [www.ifj-asia.org](http://www.ifj-asia.org) for more.



### **3. International solidarity for release of Parameswaree**

The IFJ is supporting the five Sri Lankan journalists organisations in a day of action on Wednesday January 31, calling for the release of Munusamy Parameswaree, 23, a female journalist with Sinhala weekly *Mawbima*, who has been held without charge by the Terrorist Investigation Division (TID) since she was detained in Wellawatta on November 22 last year. Parameswaree is being held under the Prevention of Terrorism Act on suspicion of having links with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, however no charges have been laid and she has been denied access to lawyers, her editor and media organisations. Under emergency regulations, a person can be detained for 90 days without being brought to trial. The IFJ is calling for solidarity from affiliates all over the world in demanding the Sri Lankan government take action to ensure the immediate release of Parameswaree. Contact [pierette.james@alliance.org.au](mailto:pierette.james@alliance.org.au) for more.

### **4. Training skills for Women's Rights and Gender Reporting**

IFJ Asia program manager Laxmi Murthy will conduct a train the trainer for gender reporting in Sri Lanka from February 2-4, under the FMM-IFJ South Asia Women's Fund supported project. The participants will be a group of Sri Lankan women journalists who were trained in training techniques by the IFJ last year. The IFJ trainer will focus on refreshing their training skills, as well as introducing advanced training techniques. The participants will then practice delivering the IFJ's new one-day Women's Rights and Gender Reporting training module, which includes sessions on portrayal of women in the media, gender sensitive reporting, using gender neutral language in reporting, along with examining the thorny issue of sexual harassment in the media workplace. For more information, contact [ifjsouthasia@hotmail.com](mailto:ifjsouthasia@hotmail.com)

### **5. Investigative and corruption reporting training**

The IFJ led a train the trainer on corruption and investigative reporting training in Negombo, Sri Lanka, from January 16-19. Thirteen participants from across Sri Lanka, and representing the five journalist organisations, attended the four-day workshop. The participants spent the first two days reviewing training delivery techniques and the second two days practising delivering the IFJ's new Corruption and Investigative Reporting training module. The workshop was developed in particular response to the aid situation in Sri Lanka after the 2004 tsunami and the issues surrounding corruption and reconstruction aid. The USAID-ARD funded training was led by IFJ trainer Emma Walters, with support from the Free Media Movement (FMM). The participants will now go on to deliver two sets of five corruption and investigative reporting workshops throughout the island. For more information contact [emma.walters@ifj-asia.org](mailto:emma.walters@ifj-asia.org).

### **6. International safety and press freedom mission to Pakistan**

In response to the deteriorating safety and press freedom situation in Pakistan, the IFJ Executive Committee resolved that the IFJ should send an urgent international mission to Pakistan as a matter of priority. This mission, comprised of international and local delegates, including IFJ, National Union of Journalists (NUJ), FMM, Reporters Without Borders (RSF) and the editor (Delhi) of *The Telegraph* and being organised in collaboration with the PFUJ, will meet with important government figures to address the situation and try and find a resolution. The mission is scheduled for February 21-25, and will focus international and local attention on the terrible journalist safety and press freedom situation in Pakistan. Contact [ifjsouthasia@hotmail.com](mailto:ifjsouthasia@hotmail.com) for more.

### **7. Indo-Pak conflict summit New Delhi February 27**

The high-level media summit under the USIP-funded project, 'Bridging the Divides: Improving Relations between India and Pakistan' has now been scheduled for February 27 in New Delhi. It will provide a forum for about 30 senior journalists from India and Pakistan to discuss media issues of mutual concern. This is an IFJ project being implemented in India and Pakistan in partnership with the All India Newspaper Employees Federation in India and the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists in Pakistan. Contact [ifjsouthasia@hotmail.com](mailto:ifjsouthasia@hotmail.com) for more information.



### 8. Conflict journalism trainings

Under the USIP-supported project "Bridging the Divides", the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ) and the All India Newspaper Employees Federation (AINEF) are holding four conflict-training workshops in Pakistan and India. One workshop was held in Srinagar on November 23-24, and another will be held in Delhi in February, followed by workshops in Islamabad and Lahore in Pakistan. Under the IFJ project, a train the trainer workshop was held in June/July in Pakistan to train a pool of Indian and Pakistani journalists in training techniques. These trainers are now delivering the two-day journalism workshops. Contact [ifjsouthasia@hotmail.com](mailto:ifjsouthasia@hotmail.com) for more information.

### 9. Roundtable meeting on press freedom in Chattisgarh

In order to further develop work on monitoring and highlighting violations of press freedom, consolidate regional networks and reach out to media in regions of conflict, the IFJ is conducting needs assessment missions in conflict areas in India. Round table meetings have already been held in Assam, Manipur and Kashmir. The fourth roundtable discussion on press freedom is scheduled to be held in Raipur, Chattisgarh on January 27. Working journalists, editors, trade unionists, human rights activists and other key players are expected to attend. This research is supported by UNESCO. For more information, contact Laxmi Murthy at [ifjsouthasia@hotmail.com](mailto:ifjsouthasia@hotmail.com).

### 10. IFJ staff changes

After more than four years, and her valuable work for the IFJ defending press freedom and journalists rights in the region, New Delhi-based program manager Laxmi Murthy will leave the IFJ at the end of February to take up the position of associate editor with the *Himal Southasian* magazine in Nepal. We wish Laxmi all the best with her future endeavours. The IFJ is now taking applications to fill the position. Applications close on February 12 and the email address to send applications to is [ifj@ifj-asia.org](mailto:ifj@ifj-asia.org). For the full job description visit [www.ifj-asia.org](http://www.ifj-asia.org).

### 11. Anupama Jayaraman Memorial Award

The Award, set up in the memory of Anupama Jayaraman, a young and promising Bangalore-based journalist who passed away in January 2006, aims to encourage and honour young women journalists who, like her, believe in meaningful journalism and have the courage and determination to write on issues relating to human rights and social justice. The 2007 Award will be for a female print journalist writing in English on the topic of human rights and women/girls. All women journalists including freelancers, under the age of 25 years and living in India, are eligible. The Network of Women in Media, India (NWMI) is cooperating with the Jayaraman family in launching and sustaining the Award, which will be presented at the NWMI's annual meetings held in different parts of the country every year. For more details on how to apply visit <http://www.ifj.org/default.asp?Index=4483&Language=EN> or contact Anita Cheria at [nwm.bangalore@gmail.com](mailto:nwm.bangalore@gmail.com).

### 12. Nieman Foundation Fellowships

The Nieman Foundation for Journalism at Harvard encourages applications for one of three Nieman Fellowship in Global Health Reporting in the 2007-08 academic year. The fellowships are on offer to one journalist from the US, one from Europe, and one from a developing country. Successful applicants will participate in weekly activities at the Nieman Foundation, study at Harvard's School of Public Health and have access to courses throughout the university. They will then undertake four months of journalistic field work in a developing country and produce work based on their experiences. For more information and an application, go to the Nieman Foundation's Website: <http://www.nieman.harvard.edu/>.

### 13. Latest South Asia protests

[Sri Lanka: IFJ demands full investigation into death threats against journalists – 18/1/2007](#)

[Sri Lanka: Mob attack has worrying implications for democracy in Sri Lanka - 11/1/2007](#)



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[Bangladesh: IFJ demands respect for media freedoms in Bangladesh after state of emergency declared – 12/1/2007](#)

[Sri Lanka: Independent voices being silenced in Sri Lanka - 9/1/2007](#)

[Pakistan: IFJ renews calls for implementation of Seventh Wage Award in Pakistan - 8/1/2007](#)

[India: IFJ urges Indian prime minister to protect media diversity - 20/12/2006](#)

[India: IFJ welcomes plan for wage standards for newspaper staff in India - 19/12/2006](#)

[India: IFJ calls for global support as journalists in India demonstrate for justice at work - 13/12/2006](#)

If SAMSUN members have any information on a press freedom violation, please make sure you immediately contact staff at IFJ Asia so action can be taken.

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**SAMSUN Members**

Afghan Independent Journalists' Union, Afghanistan  
Bangladesh Journalists' Rights Forum (BJRF), Bangladesh  
Dhaka Reporters' Unity, Bangladesh  
All India Newspapers Employees' Federation (AINEF), India  
Indian Journalists' Union (IJU), India  
National Union of Journalists India (NUJI), India  
Federation of Nepalese Journalists (FNJ), Nepal  
National Union of Journalists Nepal (NUJN), Nepal  
Nepal Press Union (NPU), Nepal  
CEHURDES, Nepal  
Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ), Pakistan  
Pakistan Press Foundation, Pakistan  
Sri Lanka Working Journalists Association (SLWJA), Sri Lanka  
Federation of Media Employees' Trade Unions (FMETU), Sri Lanka  
Free Media Movement (FMM), Sri Lanka  
Bangladesh Manobadhikar Sangbadik Forum (BMSF: Human Rights Journalists Forum of Bangladesh)  
Media Watch, Bangladesh