

Free Expression

Vol. 1, Issue 1, Jan. 2008



▲ Delegates of Fourth International Media Mission at a press conference organized on Jan. 17.

International Media Mission Concerned Violation

The International Press Freedom and Freedom of Expression Mission to Nepal that took place from January 13-17, 2008 has expressed its serious concerns over the violation of press freedom taking place throughout the country.

The four major issues including professional as well as personal security of journalists, capacity building, challenges of broadcast media and media laws were discussed between the international delegation and Nepalese journalists.

Wrapping up its five day visit to Nepal on January 17, the mission raised serious concerns about press freedom violations, particularly as impartial and independent media coverage will be essential for holding free and fair elections and promoting the democratic process.

Noting that journalists, media workers and media institutions continue to be harassed and threatened within a growing culture of impunity, the Mission quoted the Nepalese official source as recoding 652 incidents of press

freedom violations between April 2006 and December 2007.

The Mission condemned the murders of journalists Birendra Sah and Pushkar Bahadur Shrestha, and the disappearance of Prakash Singh Thakuri, and called for prompt and thorough investigation of these cases by the judicial authorities with full cooperation of all relevant individuals and groups, in order to bring those responsible to justice. In particular, the Mission urged the Maoist leadership to form a committee of investigation into the disappearance of Prakash Thakuri, as was done in the case of Birendra Sah. The International Mission stressed the crucial importance of the trials of those accused in these cases being fair and transparent.

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Freedom of Expression

The right to freedom of expression is a fundamental human right; fundamental both in its central importance to human life and dignity and also because it is an essential underpinning of all human rights, including the right to participate in political life.

The right to freedom of expression is recognised in all of the main international and regional human rights treaties. It was universally declared to be a right of the highest importance in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR), adopted unanimously by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948, just three years after the United Nations was first created. Article 19 of the UDHR states:

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

This right has also been enshrined in the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (ICCPR), which Nepal committed itself to respect through accession on the 14th of May 1991. Guarantees of freedom of expression are found in the vast majority of national constitutions, including Nepal's Interim Constitution (Article 12(3)(a)).

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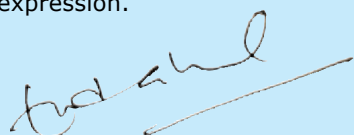


Message from President

We have initiated the publication of the monthly newsletter as a part of our campaign for the promotion of freedom of expression and media freedom. It is another additional endeavor in this connection. We come to the conclusion that the issue of the protection of right does not get materialized without the vibrant civil movement especially in the society which is stepping towards institutionalizing democracy. Though the Interim Constitution of Nepal has guaranteed people's right, citizens are still going through deprivation and denial of the rights in practice owing to the lack of strong commitment on the part of the government in this regard. Therefore, Freedom Forum dedicated itself to various pro-public campaigns to ensure a situation where democratic values could be transformed in to practice.

Freedom Forum is a non-profit-making non-government organization working for the promotion of press freedom, human rights and democracy. The organization was founded in February, 2005 immediately after the royal takeover by King Gynendra. It is the joint initiative of a group of like-minded and democratically conscious professionals belonging to media, law, human rights, development activities and academic backgrounds to protect hard-earned media freedom and democracy in the country. Freedom Forum campaigned for the cause of free media, right to information inclusive democracy electoral system, peace initiative and constituend assembly process by disseminating information to national and international media community on the situation of press freedom in Nepal through websites and publications.

Our major thrust is to actively mobilize intelligientia in various dimensions of democracy and to bring about initiatives to show right path to political parties and leadership as well as government bodies and general people through dialogue. In this context, we are set to work mainly for the promotion of freedom of expression, advocacy for open and transparent society and culture and capacity building of media persons and professional development of media. We are in a forefront in the advocacy for the protection of press freedom continuously. The publication of this newsletter is a small initiative to consolidate our commitment for freedom of expression. It is believed that this effort will prove to be substantial and effective measures for advocacy in the area of press freedom and freedom of expression.



Tara Nath Dahal
President



▲ Stakeholders Meeting on Agenda for Change held at Dhulikhel from Jan. 19-21.

Advocacy Begins on Freedom of Expression

The process of advocacy on agenda for change for freedom of expression has begun in Nepal on the initiative of ARTICLE 19, Freedom Forum and Federation of Nepalese Journalists (FNJ). With a view to lobbying and formulating the long-term policy of Freedom of Expression in Nepal, the process has been taken forward in the close coordination with its various stakeholders including civil society, legal sector, human rights organizations, and media organizations.

In this connection, a three-day workshop on the agenda for change for freedom of expression was organized by ARTICLE 19, in partnership with Freedom Forum and Federation of Nepalese Journalists (FNJ) at Dhulikhel of Kavrepalanchowk. The programme held from January 19-21, 2008.

The three-day programme participated in by journalists working for the promotion of freedom of expression in Nepal, civil society representatives, legal practioners including others reviewed existing international provisions in connection with freedom of expression and widely discussed its situation in Nepal and necessary measures to be taken into account.

ARTICLE 19 is an independent human rights organization that works around the world to protect and promote the right to freedom of expression. It takes its name from Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UNDHR), which guarantees freedom of expression. It has been working in the area of freedom of expression in more than 60 countries of the world.

The objective of the programme is to provide a forum for key stakeholders promoting freedom of expression in Nepal to develop consensus on key priorities and policy approaches based on international standards developed in various aspects of freedom of expression, according to Santosh Sigdel, Nepal representative of ARTICLE 19.

The programme has flared up the issues of constitutional assurance on freedom of expression, content restriction (defamation, privacy, national security, public order) false news, emergency rights and their interrelation.

Lawmaker Radheshyam Adhikari, Freedom Forum Chairman Tara Nath Dahal, Federation of Nepalese Journalists (FNJ) Chairman Bishnu Nishthuri, General Secretary Mahendra Bishta, Nepal Press Institute (NPI) Chairman Gokul Pokharel, Kanak Dixit, Dhruva Hari Adhikari, Sancharika Samuha Chairperson Babita Basnet, Bishnu Sharma including others. ■

Media Attack and Violence : Some Glimpses

The Nepali Press including media persons and media houses have not remained aloof from the brutal attacks and violence even during the month of January of 2008. The press does not witness a sigh of relief with the increased numbers of deliberate and intended assault posing serious threat to the professional and personal safety of journalists even following the restoration of democracy.

In this context, Freedom Forum has recorded one case of murder, 18 incidents of manhandle, 3 cases of threat, 3 cases of misbehavior while 9 vandalism cases, 23 cases of job termination and 4 cases of looting have been reported during the month of January. The data and information have been gathered from a wide range of sources including print and electronic media, press release, official statements, personal contacts, our loose network and other formal and informal sources.

Freedom Forum as an organization dedicated to the promotion of press freedom, human rights and democracy has continuously voiced its concerns and condemned the incidents of the violation of press freedom and freedom of expression at national and international level; drawn the attention of the sides concerned and demanded legal actions against the perpetrators. Moreover, we have been regularly updating national and international media about such violations and lobbying for the assurance of press freedom so as to garner public opinion and support from media persons and organizations around the world.

A Crime against Journalist

Journalist Pushkar Bahadur Shrestha, Editor of two local newspapers-New Highway and New Season was shot dead by the cadres of Jwala Singh led Janatantrik Tarai Mukti Morcha (JTMM) at Adarshanagar of Birgunj sub-metropolis on January 12.

A group of JTMM shot at him while he was returning home after collecting money from rickshaw pullers to whom he had provided the three-wheelers on rent. He died while undergoing treatment at a local hospital. He was charged of defending 'pahades' and he was killed being a journalist belonging to hilly region. The group has promised to continue committing acts of violence until one of its leaders, who is imprisoned, Tulasi Das, is released. ■

A Brutal Attack on Journalist

Manoj Sah, a freelance journalist close to CPN (Maoist) aligned Association of Revolutionary Journalist (ARJ) was assaulted on January 17 nearby Chamar Area, a southern city of Janakpur. An unidentified group of dozen people attacked him with sharp knife (Khukri) while he was returning home from his office. Journalist Sah sustained serious injuries on his head and wrists. One of his hands was cut off.

He underwent operation in Teaching Hospital in Kathmandu. Earlier, Sah was warned not to write news about Janaki temple and the attack may have been linked to an article about the Janaki temple in the local newspaper *Bishwojagaran*. ■

Journalist Threatened

A 21-year old female journalist was allegedly raped by Yadav Prasad Ghimire, Chief of Nepal Telecom, Syangja on January 1. Ghimire was taken under control by District Police Office, Kaski in connection with the charge.

According to the journalist, Ghimire's supporters are threatening the girl and asking to withdraw the case. The reporter who works for a local paper published from Syangja and Butwal said, 'He made a call in Pokhara and assured me that an appointment with regional officer of NTC would be fixed for my employment in Pokhara. He was to help me to prepare for interview in stead he misbehaved'.

Likewise Sanjaya Panthi, a journalist for The Kathmandu Post (TKP) was threatened to kill on January 15 for covering news report on the irregularity in Bandganga River contract.

Contractors called Panthi on his cell phone and threatened to kill him violating the contract signed earlier with the district development

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Publication and Jurnos Attacked

A group of youths on Jan. 12, Saturday pelted stones and bricks at the main building of Kantipur Publications at Subidanagar smashing at least three windowpanes on the first and second floors.

The youths were irritated as news of the international job fair was carried by the newspaper. They alleged that the Publications was hired in glove with what they claimed was a fraud by organizers.

The irate youths also manhandled Channel Nepal Journalist Shiva Khatiwada and cameraman Prakash Shrestha and vandalized the camera used in carrying news of the event. ■

Obituary

We would like to pay our heartfelt tribute to **Pushkar Bahadur Shrestha**, editor of two local newspapers-New Highway and New Season, a journalist at Birgunj. We also pray for the eternal peace of the departed soul and would like to express condolence to the grief-stricken family on the untimely demise of Shrestha. The murder of Shrestha has been an irreparable loss in the whole Nepali media sector.

Taranath Dahal
President
& Freedom Forum Family

Misbehaviour

A drunk army personnel thrashed journalist of National FM, Hetauda and Joint Secretary of Revolutionary Journalist Association (RJA), Giriya Adhikari. An army named Subas Lama of Hetauda-9 manhandled journalist Adhikari in the area nearby the FM station. Adhikari sustained neck injury and the guilty army personnel was arrested by the police.

Similarly, the acting chief of National Investigation Department of Lamjung misbehaved with Krishna KC, Federation of Nepalese Journalists (FNJ) Lamjung Chapter President on January 13. The inebriated Poudel verbally abused journalist KC while latter was talking to Chief District Officer (CDO), Durtga Prasad Pokharel at CDO office. District Police Office immediately took sub-Inspector Poudel under their control following the CDO's instruction. DSP Pramod Kharel said they will send a report to the regional office for departmental action.

Rajendra Gautam, sub-editor of Purbanchal Daily published from Jhapa was also misbehaved by a local group for the coverage of news on bird flu. Similarly, Prem Nepali, a camera person for Kantipur Television in Pokhara was also ill-treated and banned him to cover the news on the clash between Nepali Congress Party cadres in Kaski. ■

Journalists Looted

A group of the persons, who identified themselves as members of the Young Communist League (YCL), barged into the house of the Himalayan Times scribe Devendra Gautam and looted cash and valuable worth on January 2.

The armed group was already on the roof of his house located in Bagdole, Lalitpur Sub-metropolis-4 before he reached his place after finishing works in the wee hour, according to Gautam. They took Gautam under control at gunpoint and one of them claimed that they belonged to YCL, Kupandole branch and they wanted to search his house. They looted Rs. 20, 000 in cash from his father, Shiva Krishna Gautam, five gold rings, silver ornaments and a camera.

An armed group claimed them to be YCL cadres looted Nawaraj Gautam and Bala Ram Pandey, journalists for Star FM on January 8 at Baneshwor height while returning to own residence at Matidevi from the radio station.

Likewise, Robin Thapaliya, reporter for Gorkha FM at Maharajgunj was robbed on January 18 while he was returning home from the office Gorkha FM in the evening. ■

Scribes Vehicles Vandalized

In a blatant attack on the press, demonstrators protesting against the Nepal Oil Corporation (NOI)'s decision to hike the price of petroleum products on January 23 vandalized several vehicles belonging to media persons in different parts of the country. Reports said that ambulances were also vandalized.

Demonstrators vandalized the vehicles of Nepal Samaacharpatra, Samaya Weekly and motorcycle owned by Ananta Raj Luitel of the Himalayan Times (THT), Lamosh Joshi of Annapurna post in Koteswor whereas motorcycle belonging to Maina Dhital of Kantipur was completely damaged at New Baneshwor Chowk. Journalists Sribikram Bhandari and Madhav Nirdosh were also beaten up by the agitated youths. Agitators also snatched the identity card and wallet from Dhital. Motorcycles owned by Dewan Rai of THT, Ganesh Rai and Bikash Thapa of the Kantipur were also vandalized at New Baneshwor.

Likewise, Santosh Dhital, correspondent and Janaki Singh, cameraperson of Avenues Television, Aswini Koirala, Rishi Dhamala Anjali Subedi, photo journalist Sabin Tuladhar were also attacked by the protesters at various parts of the capital city. Altogether five women journalists were attacked on the spot in the capital city. ■

Afghan's death sentence to journalist detestable

The Freedom Forum is stunned by the capital punishment sentenced to a journalist by a court in northern Afghanistan on January 22. The court in Balkh province sentenced 23-year-old Parwez Kambakhsh in a closed-door trial without a defense attorney present, according to local press freedom advocate Rahimullah Samander.

The Balkh University journalism student and reporter for local daily *Jahan-e-Naw* was arrested for distributing anti-Islamic literature after downloading an article from the Internet and giving it to friends. The article discussed the Koran and the rights of women in Islam, according to Reuters and Agence France-Presse.

Freedom Forum strongly condemns this disgraceful act imposed upon journalist Kambakhsh and expresses firm solidarity for the protest of the tragic decision. 'It is vehemently detestable and shocking event for all journalists in the open society, and at this moment we show our deep concern on the act against freedom of expression and safety of journalist', said Freedom Forum Chairman Tara Nath Dahal. 'Right now, we remember the solidarity expressed by our colleagues in Afghanistan at various times when Nepalese media and journalists undergo difficult situation and call for all Nepalese Medias to join hands in the protest'.

We also urged the Afghan government to exert pressure for his immediate release. ■



▲ Mororbike of a journalist Maina Dhital Vandalized by a group of protestor at New Baneshwor on January 22.



▲ Concluding session of law-beat journalism training held at Ghorahi of Dang on Jan. 19.

Law-beat Reporting Training Concludes

A five-day law-beat reporting training organized by Freedom Forum concluded on January 19 in Dang. Giving away the certificates and publications to the training participants in the concluding session, Chief Guest Dang District Judge Narayan Prasad Shrestha stressed the need of such training to increase the general people's access to justice and rule of law.

He added the training will help journalist explore issues related to legal sector and will also enhance judicial performance. Some 21

journalists from various districts from mid-west and far-west regions took part in the training.

Chairman of Youth Parliament, Dang Sriman Neupane, NGO Coordination Committee, Dang District Chairman Anil Ghimire, Press Union, Dang President Sudip Gautam, participants Laxmi Acharya and Hem Raj Sharma also highlighted the implication of the training.

Local Coordinator Bipul Pokharel presided over the sum-up programme. ■

Supreme Court's Show Cause To EC

The Supreme Court (SC) issued a show cause notice against the Election Commission (EC) on January 23, 2008 in response to a writ petition related to the right to information. A single bench of Justice Damodar Sharma issued this order responding to a writ petition filed by Freedom Forum.

Freedom Forum had filed a writ petition at the SC on January 11 claiming that the EC had not provided proper information regarding donor aid to the government and non-government organizations for the purpose of Constituent Assembly elections. The Forum moved to the court accusing the EC of violating the right to information by not furnishing details about donor aid. In the petition, the Forum also wanted to know about the signatures of 10,000 supporters required for the registration of party in the EC.

This action of EC contravened with the Interim Constitution 2006, Right to Information Act 2007 and International Covenant on Civil and Political right (ICCPR). The EC, as a public institution, should be obliged to provide the document when demanded by any individual since it is the subject of public interest.

Advocates Shambhu Thapa, Sher Bahadur KC, Bhimarjun Acharya, Tikaram Bhattarai, Subas Sharma and Rishi Ram Ghimire pleaded on behalf of the petitioner. ■

District Court Verdict on Journalist's Case Nullified

The Appellate Court, Patan has nullified the verdict of Kathmandu District Court on compensation for torture case filed by a journalist Dhan Bahadur Magar, Office Secretary of Federation of Nepalese Journalist (FNJ). A joint bench of justices of Appellate Court, Patan, Krishna Prasad Basyal and Mira Khadka on January 8 took this decision.

The bench also issued order to the District Court to reopen the case and to rule proceeding regarding compensation to journalist Magar. Advocates of Freedom Forum, Rishi Ram Ghimire and Subash Sharma had advocated over the case on behalf of Magar. Journalist Magar had appealed the Appellate Court, Patan with the support of Freedom Forum, Legal Desk after District Court's decision came against his claim on ground of time limitation.

A case was registered in Kathmandu District Court on November, 2003 from the side of journalist Magar demanding compensation for physical and mental torture imposed to him during 19 days in Military detention and in Prison Division, Jagannath Dewal, Kathmandu from July to November 2003 against rule of law as per the order of District Administration Office, Kathmandu. ■

Congratulation

We would like to congratulate **Mr. Krishna Pokharel** and **Mr. Krishna Sapkota** for their appointment as Project Coordinator and Media Officer from January 1, 2008 in Freedom Forum respectively. We expect they will carry out their job responsibility with diligence, dynamism and innovation to enhance further the good image of the organization in the days to come. We wish for their success tenure in this office.

– Freedom Forum

▼ An interaction programme on Challenges of Constituent Assembly Election and Peace Process held in Kathmandu on January 31, 2008.



Challenges of Constituent Assembly

Intellectuals have pointed out that the crisis of confidence among the ruling partners, impunity and the non-implementation of the agreement signed between the Government of Nepal and the CPN-Maoist are the major challenges of the Constituent Assembly election and the ongoing peace process.

Speakers participating in an interaction on December 31, 2008. Constituent Assembly Election and Challenges of Peace Process' organized by the Freedom Forum today said the impediments which led to the deferral of the Constituent Assembly election

twice before are still there and suggested that the seven political parties should be united in removing the impediments before the election.

Former Minister Nilambar Acharya called on the seven political parties and the government to move forward without underestimating the capability of the anti-election camp and their conspiracies. Former Speaker Daman Nath Dhungana said there is skepticism among the general public that the April election might also be postponed looking at the working style of the partners of the ruling coalition. He said that the voices raised in the Madhes

should be taken in a liberal manner and reliable ways of resolving the problems should be found out.

Journalist Shyam Shrestha suggested the seven parties to fulfill the demands of the Madhesi and indigenous nationalities and to work as per the spirit of the federal republic by removing the king from the Narayanhity Palace.

Professor duo Birendra Prasad Mishra and Yagya Adhikari stressed the need for finding a long-term solution to all the problems surfaced in different parts of the country by abiding by all the past agreements and understandings reached between the seven-party alliance and the Maoist, including the 12-point agreement.

Forum president Taranath Dahal, president of Nepal Bar Association Bishwakanta Mainali, journalist Gopal Thapaliya, former General CB Gurung, political analyst Krishna Pokharel, advocate Sher Bahadur K.C, among others, suggested the government and the seven political parties to work with a focused mind for holding the Constituent Assembly election by mid-April.

The other speakers at the programme stressed the need for immediate resolution of the problems seen in the Terai, for taking action against the people responsible for suppressing the people's movement and put to an end the state of impunity in the country, for the six parties to detach themselves from their attachment to the king and for the Maoists their attachment to arms and for the sincere adherence to all the agreements and understandings reached so far. ■

Civic Discussion for CA Elections

Freedom Forum coordinated civic discussion programme on assurance of Constituent Assembly (CA) elections in four eastern and central districts and central region districts including Ilam, Morang, Nuwakot and Sindhupalchowk as a co-convenor of National Election Monitoring Alliance (NEMA) in January 4, 2008.

The civic discussion was held in all 75 districts of the country on the same day on the initiative of NEMA with the objective of exerting pressure on the concerned sector and garnering the massive support of citizens for the assurance of CA elections. The major focus of the programme was to assess the prevailing situation

and problems surfaced in the district regarding the CA elections and to explore necessary resolving measures at district level.

The programme was participated in by representatives of district administration, security bodies, political parties, election office, civil society, media house including journalists.



Federalism and Its Appropriate Model In Nepal

The Interim Constitution of Nepal-2006 has specified the provision of federal governance system, however it has not ascertained the concrete implementation process of the system amid various challenges posed by the existing ethnic and geographic diversities of the country.

Likewise, the constitution has made an arrangement of constituting state restructure commission and undertaking comprehensive study in this connection, yet it has not been widely discussed as a political agenda among the political parties. The political leaders including party activists and general public have also not come up with any specific model of federalism compatible to Nepal. Ample discussions and debates have not been held regarding the model of federal

system appropriate in the Nepalese context.

The federal system in Nepal is said essential with a view to addressing voices of all voiceless people, who are underprivileged and oppressed from the centralized governance system, across the country.

Participating media persons at a programme organized by Freedom Forum on January 12, 2008 stressed the need that wide discussions and study regarding the models of federal system was imperative at local to central level throughout the country. They noted that the political parties are moving forwards the agenda of federalism though common people are still beyond the notion of this system. Chairman Freedom Forum and Former Chairman of Federation of Nepalese Journalists (FNJ) Taranath

Dahal, senior journalists Gokul Pokhrel and Dhruva Hari Adhikari among others pointed out the need of providing informative and awareness creating resource materials on federal system and underscored that media should disseminate objective information about it. On the occasion, Forum for Federalism, Asia Pacific Director, David Alexander McDonald expressed commitment to help to the issues regarding federal system in Nepal. ■

International Media Mission...

The International Mission spoke with government ministers, political party leaders, community leaders and the security forces about the importance of the elections proceeding as scheduled and supporting an independent and unobstructed media to ensure a free and fair vote.

"Attacks, threats and interference in the media are unacceptable and deny the public's rights to access independent and diverse information," the Mission stated, calling for the government and the political parties to undertake and publicize measures to ensure the safety of journalists and media workers. The Mission announced that it will send a short-term observation team during the elections to focus on the media situation.

The Mission urged the national and local media to provide independent and impartial coverage of the elections, avoiding biased content. In this regard, the Mission called on the media to abide by the professional standards in accordance with international principles, and to engage in an open and constructive dialogue with The Election Commission and other

relevant groups for delivering fair and impartial content.

The Mission welcomed the amendment of the Working Journalists Act and the enactment of the Right to Information Act, noting the need to ensure their prompt and proper implementation. It also stressed the need for strong constitutional protection of freedom of expression and press freedom, as well as the reform of the broadcast law and transformation of the state media into public service media, offering diverse programming serving the needs of all in society. The Mission also called for the recommendations of the High Level Media Advisory Commission to be implemented, bringing clarity to the management of broadcasting frequencies, creating a three-tier broadcasting system, administration of licenses, allocation of public advertising and governance of public service media.

The Mission stated that together with the national media actors, the International Mission will work towards the creation of a comprehensive coordinated roadmap for media development.

The five-day mission was led by Executive Director of International Media Support (IMS) Jesper Hojberg.

Fellowship Granted

Freedom Forum has awarded writing fellowship to five mid-career working journalists on court reporting. The selection is based on the merits of proposals submitted by applicants among 19 media professionals who took part in the training on 'Legal Issue Reporting' held in Pokhara from November 30 to December 4, 2008.

The recipients of fellowship include Roshan Thapa (Abhyas Daily, Hetauda), Bikram Khadka (Lumbani Daily, Butwal), Purswottam Subedi (RSS, Nawalparasi), Ritesh Tripathi (New Birgunj Daily, Birgunj) and Iswori Neupane (Kantipur Publication, Pokhara). The deadline to submit the assignment is two months from the beginning of the project.

Earlier, Freedom Forum has provided writing fellowship to 10 journalists among the participants who took part in the training held in Kathmandu and Dhankuta.

Journalist Threatened ...

committee. The contracts have exported nearly 1,000 truckloads of stones and pebbles illegally to India.

Panthi along with other local journalists visited the site earlier and a field report after learning from locals about the irregularities.

A Consolidated Brief Report - 2007

on murder of journalists and media workers in the world

According to the World Association of Newspapers (WAN) Report of 2007 ninety-five journalists and media workers (including 3 Nepali) were killed. Iraq and other conflict zones accounted for more than two-thirds of the deaths.

Likewise, ninety-one journalists and media staffs were killed in 2007 according to International Press Institute (IPI) Death Watch.

Reporters without Borders/RSF has released its report on press freedom 2007:

- ▶▶ 86 Journalists killed in 2007 - up 244% over five years
- ▶▶ Iraq, Somalia and Pakistan the most deadly countries
- ▶▶ At least two journalists arrested each day in 2007
- ▶▶ More than 2,600 websites and blogs shut down in a year.
- ▶▶ Around 527 Press matters were censored.
- ▶▶ At least 887 journalists held while 1511 were subjected to physical attack.

The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), too, has issued its report for 2007 about media deaths.

Sixty-five journalists were killed in direct relation to their work in 2007, the highest death toll in more than a decade, the committee to Protect Journalists said in a year-end report.

Total confirmed cases for 2007:	65
Total unconfirmed cases :	23
Media workers killed in 2007 :	20
The highest figure for 13 years.	
Half of them died in Iraq.	

Nepal : Birendra Sah, Nepal FM, Dristi weekly and Avenues TV October 4, 2007, Bara District.
Shankar Panthi, Naya Satta, September 15, 2007, Sunawal.

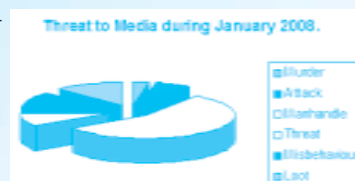
International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), 171 journalists and media workers were killed this year.

According to the report, 21 journalists and four media workers were killed in 2007. Of the 25 deaths, Pakistan topped the list with seven journalists being killed. Sri Lanka came a close second with six death, Afghanistan third with a death toll of five journalists, and Nepal fourth with a tally of three. Besides, one media worker was killed in Afghanistan and three media workers lost their lives in India.

The abduction and killing of three journalists – Prakash Thakuri (Ex-vice-president of FNJ Kanchanpur), Birendra Shah (Nepal FM), Shankar Panthi (Naya Satta) – is also mentioned in the report.

Threat to Media in Nepal during January 2008

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