# 'Kashmir one of the most challenging places to work for a journalist'

## Kashmir Press Club holds event on how to deal with problems faced by scribes

**Srinagar, Nov 24:** Kashmir is one of the most challenging places for journalists to report from, according to senior journalist Yusuf Jameel.

He was speaking at a maiden event at Kashmir Press Club about "reporting in Kashmir: Challenges and Dealing with Harassment" on Saturday.

Sharing titbits about his journalistic work in the Valley for more than three decades, he recalled that when a parcel bomb was planted at his BBC office in 1995, it resulted in the killing of his colleague Mushtaq Ali.

In the aftermath, he was asked by J&K police to keep personal security guards for protection. "But I refused because I told the police officer who had come to me that I am a reporter not an editor who has stay in office," he said.

According to him, journalists have to face the challenges and make it part of their daily life. "I was even told to migrate after the blast, but I trusted God and whatever will be in your fate will reach to you. No security guards can't save people," he said and pointed to slain Kashmir journalist Shujaat Bukhari who was killed along with his two police guards at Press Enclave here.

Insisting that journalism demands sticking to truth, he said "when I did not change after facing multiple attacks on his life, army gave up and realised I cannot be bought."

"When you are doing factual reporting, truth will prevail," the veteran journalist told a gathering of journalists at the club.

He advised young journalists to take precautions while reporting in on the ground.

"Don't instantly rush to spot where an attack occurs," he said, "Young reporters should take precautions before going there. "But that doesn't mean I am asking you not to visit spots. You need to plan from where you can reach the site," he added.

On the occasion, advocate Syed Faisal Qadri, explained how legal challenges can be mounted to journalists to contest cases.

Pointing to challenging times and mounting attacks against journalists in India, he said "risk of life always exists in conflict zone such as Kashmir."

'Reporting annoys people in power and as a result journalists are being slapped with sedition cases," he said. But he clarified writing or saying anything doesn't amount to sedition.

"Saying zindabad and murdabad is not anti-national or seditious," Qadri said.

He said laws for citizens and journalists are same and journalists should mount legal challenge to fight for their rights.

Pointing out that no employer has right to throw out an employee without a substantial reason, he said rights of media workers are always protected even if there is written contract between employee and an employer.

"Randomly an employer can't throw out an employee. Even if there is a contract that too can be challenged in court," Qadri said and added, "an employer can't have hire and fire policy. Contract should have certain privileges attached to it".

He suggested that journalists should have a team of lawyers, who can challenge the system for any violations.

Kashmir Press Club president, Shuja ul Haq said, "throughout much of the world, the journalists' rights to expression and access to information are changing. Incidents of physical harm, abuse, threat and even financial injury are also increasing." According to the senior journalist, Kashmir being a conflict zone is no stranger to this phenomenon. "The only difference is that we tend to normalise this at times. We forget to create a discourse. That is what is required", Shuja said.

"Journalists in the valley have been facing tough times in covering daily events. While many journalists have been killed during the decades old conflict several cases where journalists have been thrashed, beaten up, abused and harassed have been reported over the period of time."

# 'Media should highlight lacunas in implementation of developmental initiatives'

## PIB organises workshop

**Srinagar, Nov 24:** Press Information Bureau, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, Government of India organized a one day Media Workshop - Vartalap at Media Complex today.

The workshop was aimed at sensitizing journalists about various centrally sponsored schemes and their vital role to create awareness among the masses.

The program was inaugurated by director Information, Tariq Ahmad Zargar and was attended by a large number of eminent media persons from Srinagar and Budgam districts along with other officials.

Tariq Ahmad Zargar in his address said that it is essential for media-persons to know about different government schemes in detail so that proper information can reach to the people at ground level. He said different departments should have training programs for capacity building so that the information about welfare initiatives is effectively communicated to the masses.

Zargar said statistics need to be collected to assess the implementation of different schemes at ground level and flaws need to be brought to the notice of concerned authorities by the media.

Deputy director, Press Information Bureau Srinagar, Ghulam Abbas said the aim of organising the program is to highlight the role of media to bring awareness among people about different government sponsored schemes and initiatives. He suggested that scheme implementation, analysis and results should also be reported properly to determine the actual outcome at ground level.

Laying stress on healthy criticism of government departments by media, he maintained that it is essential for social development.

A number of experts delivered talks during the day long programme. In his session, editor in chief, Ziraat Times, Arjimand Hussain Talib spoke about the importance of Agricultural Journalism in the state and the need to create public opinion keeping in view the bigger transformation from subsistence to commercial sector.

Senior journalist, Tariq Bhat spoke about the convergence of media in the contemporary world and the way it can drive development at the grassroots. Bureau chief, Pioneer, Khurshid Wani spoke about the role and contribution of print media in holistic development of rural areas.

RTI Activist, Raja Muzafar Bhat pointed out how RTI Act can be used as a tool to highlight the status of implementation of various government sponsored schemes.

Bureau Chief, News18 Urdu, Manoj Koul underlined the role and responsibility of Electronic media in covering people centric initiatives including Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan.

Syed Nazneen Qadri from JKEDI emphasized on the need to provide ample coverage to various entrepreneurship initiatives offered by the government for the youth of the state.

# Khonakhan residents appeal CE PDD

**Srinagar, Nov 24:** Residents of Khonakhan Dalgate have expressed resentment against unscheduled power cuts in the area during past over a week despite being a fully metered area.

A delegation from the area led by Bashir Ahmad Wani said due to unscheduled power cuts, the residents face immense problems. "We make a fervent appeal to chief engineer to direct the concerned to adhered to notified power curtailment schedule and desist from unscheduled power cuts particularly during evening hours," they added.

# HCBA organises Seerat conference

**Srinagar, Nov 24:** Jammu Kashmir High Court Bar Association (HCBA) today organized a Seerat conference in the prayer hall of the District Court Complex, Moominabad, here.

"The speakers on the occasion highlighted the purpose and relevance of the message of Islam for the mankind," a spokesman of the HBCA, in a statement today, said.

"Islam is a religion of peace. Prophet Muhammad (SAW) is the saviour of mankind. He set an example by his words and deeds as a result of which Islam spread to the farthest areas of Arab peninsula within a short span of 23 years and produced men of high caliber who dominated the world arena in all walks of life for centuries together," the spokesman quoted the speakers as having said on the occasion.

"The Muslims have to follow Islam in all spheres of life and be truthful and honest in their dealings with others and try to establish a system which is based on piety and sincerity," they said.

"The proceedings concluded after Asar Prayers with this pledge that all the members of the Bar Association will follow the tenants of Islam scrupulously and honestly and try to reach everyone irrespective of caste, creed and color with the message of Islam," the spokesman said.

# Seerat conference at Mirwaiz Manzil today

**Srinagar, Nov 24:** Jammu Kashmir Awami Action Committee (AAC) is organizing a Seerat conference on Sunday, 25 November from 10:30 am at the party headquarters Mirwaiz Manzil, Rajouri Kadal in Downtown.

"During the program, prominent Ulema and Islamic scholars would threw light on the different aspects of the life of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW)," AAC spokesperson said in a statement.

"AAC president and Hurriyat Conference (M) chairman, Mirwaiz Dr Moulvi Muhammad Umar Farooq will preside over the function and deliver presidential address," the statement said. ***(KNS)***

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