

NUJ(I) demand for Journalist Protection Act receives support from South Asia region

Pramod Saini

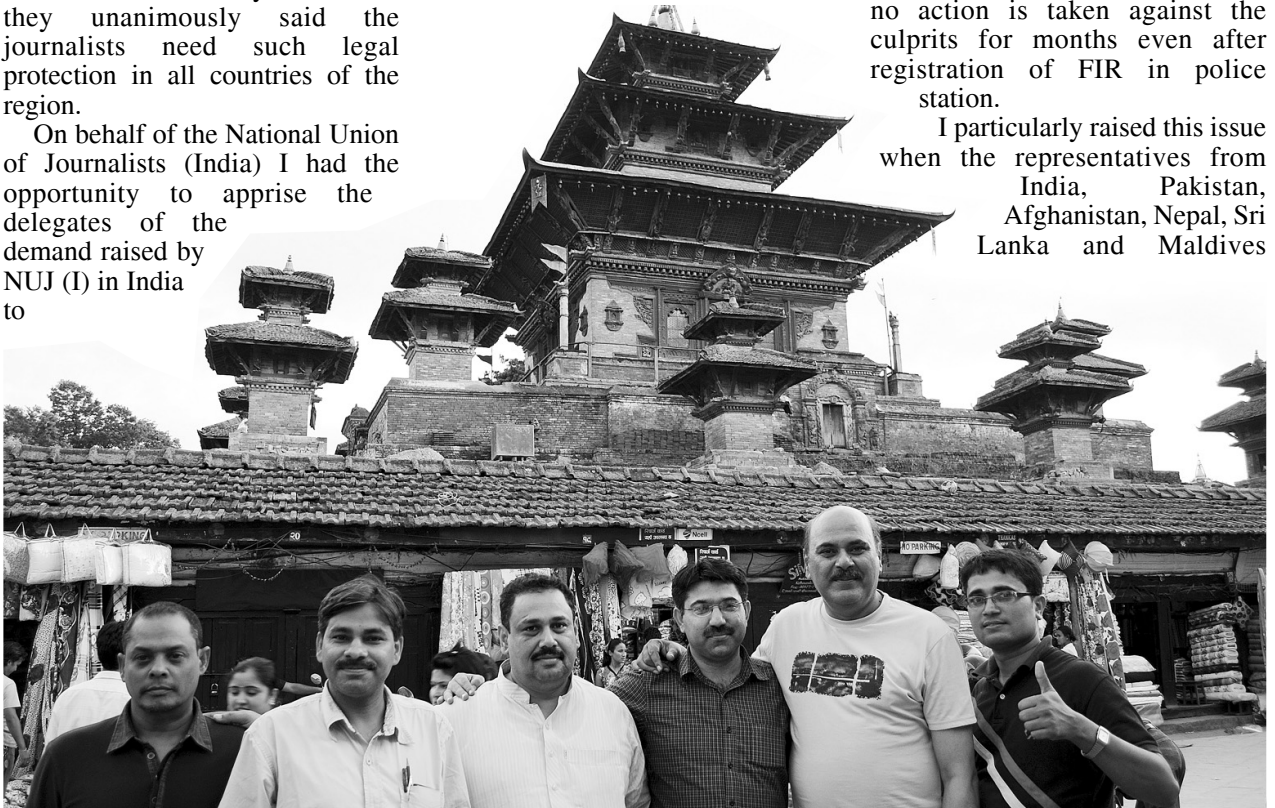
Deeply worried over the increasing threats to journalists in South Asia region, senior journalist leaders representing their unions expressed solidarity with the demand for enactment of a Journalist Protection Act by National Union of Journalists (India). Attending South Asia Media Solidarity Network workshop organised by International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) and FES in Kathmandu from July 29 to 31, they unanimously said the journalists need such legal protection in all countries of the region.

On behalf of the National Union of Journalists (India) I had the opportunity to apprise the delegates of the demand raised by NUJ (I) in India to

strengthen the security of journalists covering life-threatening events. I also apprised the participants of the countrywide dharnas and demonstrations organised by various state units affiliated to NUJ (I) all over the country on June 25 demanding immediate enactment of such an Act. Elaborating on the demand, I informed the gathering that FIR should be registered in police station on intimidation, attack or torture of journalists and all such complaints should be investigated

by a DCP level officer. It has also been suggested that the investigation of such complaints should be conducted within two days and action is ensured against the culprits. Apart from it the same action, which is taken against a person for creating obstruction in discharging official duty, should be taken against those people also who attack the mediapersons. Similarly, whenever any journalist is assassinated or attacked the case should be heard in a fast track court to ensure speedy justice. It is essential since it is witnessed that no action is taken against the culprits for months even after registration of FIR in police station.

I particularly raised this issue when the representatives from India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Maldives



From left Ahmed Zahir from Maldives, Pramod Saini from NUJ(I) India, Rana Muhammad Azeem, Tahir Rathore and Adnan Rehmat (all from Pakistan) in Kathmandu