

# Journo Murder Spreads Shock Wave in Nepali Media

(Media Monitoring from March 16-April 15, 2012)

## Information

A total of 9 incidents of press freedom violation occurred during this month from March 16-April 15, 2012 across the country.

Journalist Yadav Poudel was killed in Jhapa, a district in the southern east plain of Nepal in the night of April 3, 2012.

Journalist Yadav Poudel, 39, was the reporter with the *Rajdhani daily* and the *Avenues Television* from Jhapa, and also the executive editor of local *New Mechi Times* daily. He was found dead on road near Birtamod Bus Park at Birtamod in the district. The police recovered him dead with right hand fractured and blood coming out of head at 1:00am. It was near Panchthar Damak Sekuwa Corner. The 39-year-old, Poudel was the permanent resident of Sijuwa VDC of Morang, neighboring district of Jhapa, and working as journalist for a decade in Jhapa.

After a-week-long investigation with the arrest of 10 persons including hotel entrepreneurs on the same day, police found Yuvraj Giri main accused of the murder of journalist Yadav Poudel.

Yuvraj Giri, former chairman of hotelier's association in Jhapa district was preparing to publish a newspaper named 'Ujjyalo Purva' having journalist Poudel as chief editor from Nepali New Year (13 April, 2012)

Although police said their investigation had held Giri as the main accused, further information could also divulge after the arrest of absconding Madan Rai. Moreover, the police said investigation so far shows the murder of journalist Poudel was not premeditated.

However, due to mounting pressure by the media mission and fellow journalists, the government has formed a judicial probe commission giving a month for investigation.

Minister of State for Health, Saroj Kumar Yadav, manhandled reporter with the *Sourya daily*, Praveen Dhakal and photojournalist with the same daily, Gyanendra Karki at a hospital in the capital while making news about State Minister's misbehavior at the Hospital in the capital city on March 18, 2012.

Sub-Inspector of Police at Metropolis Police Sector, Imadol of Lalitpur, neighbouring district of the capital city Kathmandu, denied information when a journalist Tekraj Thami of the *Sourya daily* inquired about a case of domestic violence the police was investigating on March 20, 2012.

The Sub-Inspector of Police said in a threatening manner, "I don't provide you any information. I don't care what you write."

The followers and protectors of Ram Bahadur Bamjan who is claimed to be 'little Buddha' for his longtime meditation and seclusion beat up five journalists while taking photographs of Bamjan as he was being made public for sermon in Bara, a district in the southern plain in the central region of Nepal on March 21, 2012.

The journalists were also verbally abused. They are Bibhu Adhikari, reporter with the *News 24 Television*, Resham Tiwari of *Nepal Television*, Binod Pyakurel of *Tarai Television*, Basanta Khatiwada of the *Ghatana Ra Bichar weekly* and Prakash Lamsal of *Image Television*.

On March 29, 2012, Tekendra Karki, Basanta Adhikari and two others attacked Nimendra Sahi, district reporter with the *National News Agency (RSS) Nepal*, saying, "Why are you boasting with camera in the name of being journalist?" He was beaten at Bandhu VDC of Bajura, a district in the far western region of Nepal while he was returning home after reporting.

Due to the attack, Shahi received injuries on eyes and forehead. Moreover, his purse and mobile set were also looted by the assailants. After treatment, he is out of danger now.

Pranil Bhandari, news reporter and newsreader at the *Machhapuchhre FM* was attacked while returning home from office in Pokhara, a western city of Nepal, on April 4, 2012 without any apparent reason.

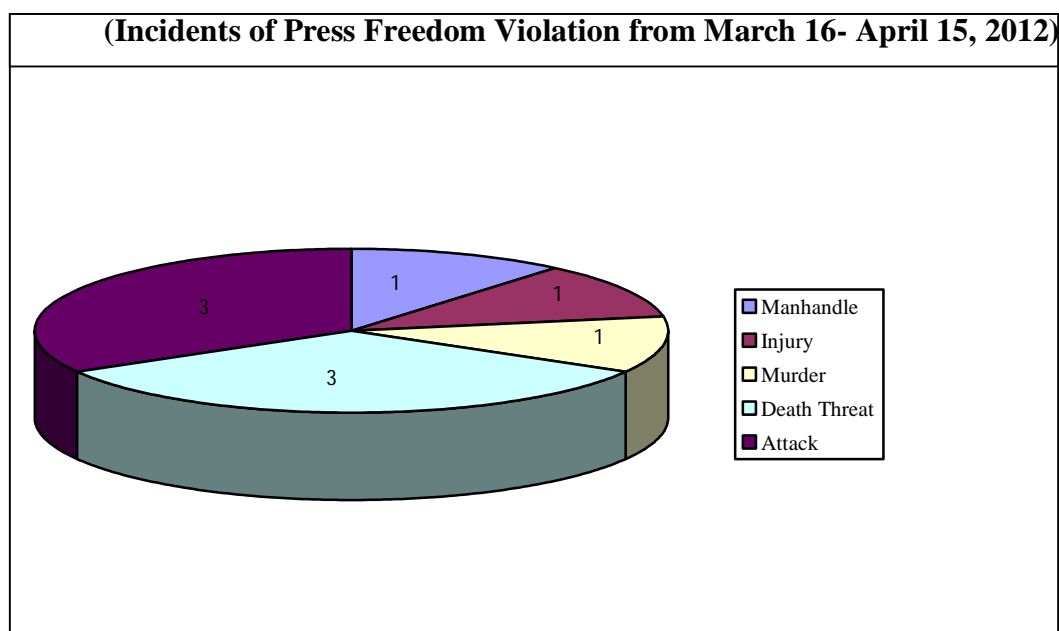
Similarly, Chief Editor of the *New Highway weekly*, Sashi Bichitra in Parsa, a district in the central region of Nepal's southern plain, was issued death threat by an unknown person by telephone on March 22, 2012. The phone call was made twice by a person claiming himself Chaurasiya. The person told journalist Bichitra that he would be killed within 27 March as he had spoken foul word on Chaurasiya three months ago while drinking. But journalist Bichitra said the threats may be the repercussion of the news he made about the organized smuggling in the neighbouring Sarlahi district. Chaurasiya made the call by the phone number 9844093100.

On April 2, 2012, death threat was issued against journalist, Umesh Mehta with the *Popular FM* at Itahari, an eastern city of Nepal on April 2, 2012 over the news reporting about unfair election in a local school management committee.

Publisher and editor of the local *Dawn News daily*, Rajendra Adhikari and its photo journalist Bandu Raj Parajuli were issued death threat on April 10, 2012 by Gunda Raj Shrestha, a cadre of workers' union affiliated to the Maoists party for publishing news about syndicate in the transportation a month back.

Moreover, the editor of the online media, [www.onlinepatrika.com](http://www.onlinepatrika.com), Subin Shrestha had his left eye injured while taking photograph of a police clash with the protestors during a torch rally organized by a faction of the ruling Maoists party in the evening of April 11, 2012.

Editor Shrestha had to be admitted in the Tilaganga Eye Hospital for treatment. He is normal now.



## Analysis

The number of the incidents of press freedom violation increased by 3 thereby reaching 9 this month as compared to the last month.

The most appalling in the Nepali media is the murder of journalist Poudel in Jhapa district on the eve of Nepali New Year. It has spread shock wave to all journalists across the country.

It clearly shows that the journalism is always at risk- be it because of the incompetence of journalists or because of the state's failure to provide safety to them.

Although the police investigation so far has said the murder of journalist Poudel is not premeditated, it is continuing further investigation into the murder. Therefore, a fair probe is essential.

Anyway, it must be taken positively that government has formed judicial probe commission to investigate into the murder.

With the murder of Poudel, all journalists across the country have again been worried over their profession. Some in the eastern part of Nepal have even said they are not sure whether they continue journalism. So, all journalists are wearing a veil of fear.

It is shameful that even the ministers are violating press freedom by terrorizing journalists with manhandle and threats. It is the manifestation of sheer irresponsibility and undemocratic culture the government and its ministers promoting. Similar is in the case of a police person denying information to the journalists in Lalitpur district.

People, if dissatisfied with the news, need to take legal recourse rather than attacking journalists or vandalizing media house.

### **Projection**

With the murder of journalist Yadav, self-censorship among journalist is likely to grow more in the days ahead. It would obviously contribute negatively to the fair journalism.

In order to make journalism a safe and respected profession, the journalists too will have to focus on skill development and improve behavior.

Similarly, the concerned bodies will need more efforts to ensure security to journalists.

However, with the political parties making consensus on drafting of new constitution, the elections are imminent. When there are elections, the role of media will be important, and also journalists may face challenges.

