India Press
Freedom
Report-2021
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### Abbreviation

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<th>Full Form</th>
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<tr>
<td>AAP</td>
<td>Aam Aadmi Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANI</td>
<td>Asian News International</td>
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<tr>
<td>BJP</td>
<td>Bharatiya Janata Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>CDO</td>
<td>Chief Development Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CrPC</td>
<td>Code of Criminal Procedure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNS</td>
<td>Current News Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIPR</td>
<td>Directorate of Information and Public Relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DMO</td>
<td>District Mining Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>EGI</td>
<td>Editors Guild of India</td>
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<tr>
<td>FIR</td>
<td>First Information Reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INC</td>
<td>Indian National Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IAS</td>
<td>Indian Administrative Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPC</td>
<td>Indian Penal Code</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT</td>
<td>Income Tax</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J&amp;K</td>
<td>Jammu and Kashmir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KNO</td>
<td>Kashmir News Observer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KPC</td>
<td>Kashmir Press Club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCOCA</td>
<td>Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLA</td>
<td>Member of Legislative Assembly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCI</td>
<td>Press Council of India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSA</td>
<td>Public Safety Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<td>---------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>PVM</td>
<td>Prabajan Virodhi Manch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSP</td>
<td>Senior Superintendent of Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TFM</td>
<td>The Frontier Manipur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UAPA</td>
<td>Unlawful Activities Prevention Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UT</td>
<td>Union Territory</td>
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</table>
1. Executive summary of the attacks on press freedom in India during 2021

In 2021, a total of 121 journalists and media houses/newspapers were targeted across the country including 108 journalists and 13 media houses/newspapers. Among the States/Union Territories (UTs), the highest number of journalists/media organisations targeted was in Jammu and Kashmir (25), followed by Uttar Pradesh (23); Madhya Pradesh (16); Tripura (15); Delhi (8); Bihar (6); Assam (5); Haryana and Maharashtra (4 each); Goa and Manipur (3 each); Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal (2 each); and Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Kerala (1 each). Six journalists were killed in the country while eight female journalists faced arrest, summon, first information reports (FIRs) and sexual harassment.

1.1 Targeting by the State actors

The laws that were mostly invoked against the journalists and media houses during 2021 included Section 124A (sedition), Section 153 (wantonly giving provocation with intent to cause riot), Section 153A (promoting enmity between religious groups), Section 153B (imputations, assertions prejudicial to national integration) defamation, as well under the Unlawful Atrocities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), the Information and Technology Act including Section 66A and Section 66F, the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897 etc.

In 2021, at least 17 journalists were arrested in various States/UTs. Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) reported the highest cases of arrest/detention with five journalists; followed by Delhi (3); Maharashtra, Manipur and Tripura (2 each); and Assam, Chhattisgarh and Haryana (1 each).

Journalists were arrested/detained for reasons such as publishing a video news report critical of a chief minister; publishing misleading and defamatory information; misbehaving with personnel on duty; covering the eviction drive; mentioning “incorrect place” of arrest of a suspected terrorist in a news report; getting caught with hand grenades; being an active member of an organised crime syndicate;
trying to extort money from a businessman; attempting to bring hatred/ contempt/ disaffection against government; criminal conspiracy and statements conducting to public mischief with common intention by being sympathiser of unlawful organization punishable; spreading communal disharmony for reporting on vandalism at mosque; and conspiracy to commit crime, collecting arms and concealing with intent to facilitate, designs to wage war and relating to membership to a terrorist organization.

During 2021, First Information Reports (FIR) were registered against 44 journalists and two media organisations. In some cases, multiple FIRs were lodged against some journalists in different states, for example, FIRs were registered against six prominent journalists - Rajdeep Sardesai, Mrinal Pande, Zafar Agha, Paresh Nath, Vinod K Jose and Anant Nath in Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh. Uttar Pradesh reported the highest registration of FIRs with nine; followed by six each in Delhi and Jammu and Kashmir; and three in Bihar; among others. Out of the 44 journalists, FIRs were filed against 21 journalists under Section 153 of the IPC for promoting enmity.

In 2021, at least six journalists were summoned by police of Jammu and Kashmir and Tripura for their journalistic works.

In 2021, at least 24 journalists were allegedly physically attacked, threatened, harassed and obstructed from doing their professional works by public officials including police across the country. Out of the 24 journalists, 17 were allegedly beaten by police. Physical attacks on journalists by police were mainly reported from Jammu and Kashmir.

In 2021, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) and Income Tax (IT) raided offices of media houses/newspapers and houses of journalists who were critical of policies and functioning of the Government. The media houses and their officials raided included Newsclick in February, Dainik Bhaskar and Bharat Samachar in July, Newslaundry in September.
On 25 February 2021, the Government of India notified the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules 2021. The Rules, issued under the Information Technology Act, 2000, fundamentally alter how publishers of news operate over the Internet and have the potential to seriously undermine media freedom in India. The Rules empower the Union Government to block, delete, or modify published news anywhere in the country without any judicial oversight and require all publishers to establish a grievance redressal mechanism. Various provisions in these rules can place unreasonable restrictions on digital news media, and consequently media at large. On 5 March 2021, the Editor Guild of India (EGI) expressing deep concern stated that the Government did not consult stakeholders before notifying these far-reaching rules and urged the Government to put the rules in abeyance and conduct meaningful consultation with all stakeholders. A number of writ petitions had been filed challenging the constitutional validity of the Rules.

The spotlight on the denial of media freedom continued to be on Jammu and Kashmir where journalists often found themselves summoned to police stations, accused in FIRs registered, their houses being raided, being manhandled and/or being beaten by the security forces. On 22 February 2021, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression flagged the “allegations of intimidations, searches and confiscations” faced by the human rights groups and journalists in Jammu and Kashmir. On 8 March 2021, the EGI stated that journalists in Kashmir are intimidated for merely doing their jobs and that it was “shocked by the casual manner in which the editors of Kashmir-based publications are routinely detained by security forces for reporting or for their editorials”. On 6 April 2021, Vijay Kumar, Inspector General of Police, Kashmir allegedly warned journalists against covering operations at gun-fire sites in the real-time and printing content that “promotes anti-national sentiment”.

On 24 August 2021, the Jammu and Kashmir High Court cancelled the FIR registered against journalist Asif Iqbal Naik for a news report on alleged custodial torture of a man in 2018 terming it “undoubtedly
an attack on the freedom of press”. On 29 September 2021, the Press Council of India (PCI) constituted a three-member fact finding Committee to investigate incidents of intimidation and harassment of journalists and Jammu and Kashmir based on a complaint filed by former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Ms Mehbooba Mufti. In her letter on 26 September 2021, Mehbooba Mufti had urged the PCI to send a fact-finding team to look into the “systematic harassment” of journalists in Jammu and Kashmir and take corrective measures. In her letter titled “Intimidation, snooping and harassment of journalists in Jammu and Kashmir”, she mentioned cases of police raids at the homes of journalists besides coercing them to fill forms that sought “personal and bizarre information”.

Journalists faced restrictions for access to information. On 24 July 2021, the District Magistrate of Kupwara District banned the operation of unauthorised and unregistered media persons citing the misuse of social media platforms by circulating fake and baseless news items for their own interests and directed such unauthorised/unregistered journalists to complete their registration or obtain approval before they can be allowed to perform their professional duties. In May 2021, the Chief Media Coordinator of the Delhi government removed seven journalists from the Hindustan Times from its WhatsApp group on which it shares daily updates. The reason for this was allegedly a report published on 6 May 2021 that detailed five things that the Delhi government had failed to do to avert the oxygen crisis.

1.2 Targeting by non-State actors

Journalists also faced attacks from the non-State actors, mainly political party activists, mafia and online trollers. During 2021, at least 34 journalists/media houses were attacked by the non-State actors such as mob, unidentified miscreants, members/supporters of political parties etc or harassed online across the country. Of these, six journalists were killed and at least 28 journalists/media houses were physically attacked or harassed/threatened online by the non-state actors during the year.
Of the six journalists killed, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar reported two deaths each while Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra reported death of one journalist each.

Out of 28 journalists/media houses physically attacked or harassed/threatened online by the non-state actors during the year, the maximum number of attacks took place in Tripura with attacks on 10 journalists and five media houses followed by Uttar Pradesh (3) and Tamil Nadu (2).

In July 2021, journalist Fatima Khan, who covered the 2020 riots in northeast Delhi, was among the women who were targeted by an online application called “Sulli Deals”, where photos of Muslim women were uploaded online, implying that these women were “up for sale”. ‘Sulli’ or ‘Sulla’ is a derogatory word used to refer to Muslims. On 8 July 2021, the Delhi Police registered a complaint against unknown creators of the “Sulli Deals” app. By the year end, none of the accused was arrested.

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1. Press Release of Editor Guild of India, 5 March 2021, https://editorsguild.in/statements-issued/


2. The list of journalists and media targeted during 2021

A total of 121 journalists and media houses/newspapers were targeted across the country during 2021. These included 108 journalists and 13 media houses/newspapers as given in Table 1 below.

Among the States/UTs, the highest number of journalists/media organisations targeted was in Jammu and Kashmir (25), followed by Uttar Pradesh (23); Madhya Pradesh (16); Tripura (15); Delhi (8); Bihar (6 each); Assam (5); Haryana and Maharashtra (4 each); Goa and Manipur (3 each); Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal (2 each); and Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Kerala (1 each).

Table 1: List of journalists and media houses/newspapers targeted in 2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Name of journalists/media house</th>
<th>State/UT</th>
<th>Number of journalists targeted</th>
<th>Nature of attack/repression in each State/UT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Chennakesavulu</td>
<td>Andhra Pradesh</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Murder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Gautam Pratim Gogoi</td>
<td>Assam</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Arrest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Suresh Nambath</td>
<td>Assam</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>FIR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Mridusmanta Baruah</td>
<td>Assam</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Assault by mob</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Anirban Roy Chaudhury</td>
<td>Assam</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>FIR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-7</td>
<td>Two journalists (names unknown)</td>
<td>Bihar</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>FIR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>Incident Type</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Manish Kumar Singh</td>
<td>Bihar</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Murder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Ranjan Singh</td>
<td>Bihar</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>FIR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Buddhinath Jha @ Avinash Jha</td>
<td>Bihar</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Murder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Balram Kumar</td>
<td>Bihar</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Shot at by a person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Madhukar Dubey</td>
<td>Chhattisgarh</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Arrest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Fatima Khan</td>
<td>Delhi</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Online sexual harassment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14-15</td>
<td>Dharmeder Singh and Mandeep Punia</td>
<td>Delhi</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Detention/ Arrest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Srishti Jatav</td>
<td>Delhi</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Arrest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Anmol Pritam</td>
<td>Delhi</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Assault by a group of Hindutva supporters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-20</td>
<td>Three journalists (names not known)</td>
<td>Goa</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sarpanch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Sunil Brar</td>
<td>Haryana</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Arrest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Sandeep Sharma</td>
<td>Haryana</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Registration of FIR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Rajesh Kundu</td>
<td>Haryana</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>FIR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Rohit Kumar</td>
<td>Haryana</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Assault by mob</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Fahad Shah</td>
<td>Jammu &amp; Kashmir</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Summoned by Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>No. of Action</td>
<td>Action</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Aadil Farooq</td>
<td>Jammu &amp; Kashmir</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Arrest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27-30</td>
<td>Hilal Mir, Shah Abbas, Showkat Motta and Azhar Qadri</td>
<td>Jammu &amp; Kashmir</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Houses raided, digital devises confiscated and summoned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Mukhtar Zahoor</td>
<td>Jammu &amp; Kashmir</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Detention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Manan Gulzar Dar @ Muhammad Manan</td>
<td>Jammu &amp; Kashmir</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Arrest by NIA</td>
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<tr>
<td>33-34</td>
<td>Junaid Peer and Sulaiman Sath</td>
<td>Jammu &amp; Kashmir</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Detention</td>
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<tr>
<td>35-36</td>
<td>Fahad Shah and Yashraj Sharma</td>
<td>Jammu &amp; Kashmir</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Registration of FIR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Mir Junaid</td>
<td>Jammu &amp; Kashmir</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>FIR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Sajad Gul</td>
<td>Jammu &amp; Kashmir</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>FIR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Sajid Raina</td>
<td>Jammu &amp; Kashmir</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>FIR</td>
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<tr>
<td>40-41</td>
<td>Saqib Majeed and Shafat Farooq</td>
<td>Jammu &amp; Kashmir</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Assault by police</td>
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<td>42</td>
<td>Qisar Mir</td>
<td>Jammu &amp; Kashmir</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Assault by Police</td>
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<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>Aakash Hassan</td>
<td>Jammu &amp; Kashmir</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Assault by police</td>
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(15)
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Incident Description</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>FIR/Cases</th>
<th>Details</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>44-49</td>
<td>Six journalists including Sajad Hameed, Bhat Burhan, Waseem Andrabi and Imran Ali</td>
<td>Jammu &amp; Kashmir</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Assault by police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Harish</td>
<td>Karnataka</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>FIR</td>
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<td>51</td>
<td>Sukhpal Polali</td>
<td>Karnataka</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Assaulted by a lawyer</td>
</tr>
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<td>52</td>
<td>Shivaji</td>
<td>Kerala</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Assault by lawyers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53-58</td>
<td>Pradeep Gangle, Wahid Khan, Aasif Khan, Praveen Pal, Pawan Kumar Solanki and Dharmendra Chauhan</td>
<td>Madhya Pradesh</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>FIR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59</td>
<td>Arvind Tiwari</td>
<td>Madhya Pradesh</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>FIR</td>
</tr>
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<td>60</td>
<td>Samer Dwivedi</td>
<td>Madhya Pradesh</td>
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<td>FIR</td>
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<td>Tanveer Warsi</td>
<td>Madhya Pradesh</td>
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<td>FIR</td>
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<td>62</td>
<td>Rajesh Chourasiya</td>
<td>Madhya Pradesh</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>FIR</td>
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<td>63-64</td>
<td>Mahooz Khan and Shubham Shrivastava</td>
<td>Madhya Pradesh</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>FIR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65</td>
<td>Pankaj Soni</td>
<td>Madhya Pradesh</td>
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<td>FIR</td>
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<td>Name</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>Incident</td>
<td>Outcome</td>
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<tr>
<td>66</td>
<td>Umesh Pandey</td>
<td>Madhya Pradesh</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>FIR</td>
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<tr>
<td>67</td>
<td>Nishant Rajput</td>
<td>Madhya Pradesh</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Assault by miscreants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68</td>
<td>Devendra Jain</td>
<td>Maharashtra</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Arrest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69</td>
<td>Arjun Shirsath</td>
<td>Maharashtra</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Arrest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>Girish Kuber</td>
<td>Maharashtra</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Assault by mob</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71</td>
<td>Rohidas Datir</td>
<td>Maharashtra</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Murder</td>
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<tr>
<td>72-73</td>
<td>Paojel Chaoba and Dhiren A Sadokpam</td>
<td>Manipur</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Arrest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74</td>
<td>Elangbam Rameshwar</td>
<td>Manipur</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Assault by political party workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75</td>
<td>Mannan Haque</td>
<td>Tripura</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Assaulted by miscreants</td>
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<td>76</td>
<td>Arti Ghargi</td>
<td>Tripura</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Summon</td>
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<tr>
<td>77-78</td>
<td>Samriddhi K Sakunia and Swarna Jha</td>
<td>Tripura</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Detention and Arrest</td>
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<tr>
<td>79-82</td>
<td>Four journalist including Prasenjit Saha</td>
<td>Tripura</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Assault by political party workers</td>
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<tr>
<td>83</td>
<td>Shyam Meera Singh</td>
<td>Tripura</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Registration of FIR</td>
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<tr>
<td>84-85</td>
<td>S Kumaravelu and Prem Kumar J</td>
<td>Tamil Nadu</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Assault by supporters of political leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Name(s)</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Registration of FIR</td>
<td>Details</td>
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<td>-----</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>86-91</td>
<td>Rajdeep Sardesai, Mrinal Pande, Zafar Agha, Paresh Nath, Vinod K Jose and Anant Nath</td>
<td>Uttar Pradesh (also in Delhi, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Registration of FIR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>92-94</td>
<td>Mohit Kashyap, Amit Singh, and Yasin Ali</td>
<td>Uttar Pradesh</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Registration of FIR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95</td>
<td>Siddharth Varadarajan</td>
<td>Uttar Pradesh</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Registration of FIR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>96-97</td>
<td>Mohammad Zubair and Rana Ayub</td>
<td>Uttar Pradesh</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>FIR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>98</td>
<td>Nidhi Suresh</td>
<td>Uttar Pradesh</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>FIR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>99-100</td>
<td>Seraj Ali and Mukul S Chauhan</td>
<td>Uttar Pradesh</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>FIR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101</td>
<td>ANI Cameraman (name unknown)</td>
<td>Uttar Pradesh</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Use of abusive slanguage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>102</td>
<td>Krishna Tiwari</td>
<td>Uttar Pradesh</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Assault by IAS officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>103</td>
<td>Sulabhb Srivastava</td>
<td>Uttar Pradesh</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Murder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>104</td>
<td>Raman Kashyap</td>
<td>Uttar Pradesh</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Murder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>105</td>
<td>Awadhesh Parashar</td>
<td>Uttar Pradesh</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Assault by political party workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Name of the Incident</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>FIR Registration</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>106</td>
<td>Pateshwari Singh</td>
<td>Uttar Pradesh</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Assault allegedly political party workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>107</td>
<td>Ali Akbar Lashkar</td>
<td>West Bengal</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Assaulted by mob</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>108</td>
<td>A female journalist</td>
<td>West Bengal</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Molestation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Name of the media houses</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>109</td>
<td>thecrosscurrent.in</td>
<td>Assam</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Registration of FIR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>110</td>
<td>Newspaper (name unknown)</td>
<td>Madhya Pradesh</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Registration of FIR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>111</td>
<td>Theo Connect Pvt Ltd</td>
<td>Tripura</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Registration of FIR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>112-116</td>
<td>Pratibadi Kalam, PB24, Kalmer Shakti Daily, Desharkatha and Duranta TV</td>
<td>Tripura</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Set ablaze</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>117</td>
<td>The Wire</td>
<td>Uttar Pradesh</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Registration of FIRs (separate cases)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>118</td>
<td>Newsclick</td>
<td>Delhi</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Raids by ED/IT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>119</td>
<td>Newslaundry</td>
<td>Delhi</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Raid by IT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>120</td>
<td>Dainik Bhaskar</td>
<td>Delhi (also in Uttar Pradesh and other states)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Raid by IT</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.1. Women journalists targeted during 2021

Out of the 108 journalists targeted across the country in 2021, eight were female journalists. They faced arrest, summon, FIRs and sexual harassment as shown in the table below.

Table 2: List of female journalists targeted

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>State/UT</th>
<th>Nature of attack</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Mrinal Pande</td>
<td>Delhi (also in Haryana, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh)</td>
<td>Registration of FIR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Fatima Khan</td>
<td>Delhi</td>
<td>Online sexual harassment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Srishti Jatav</td>
<td>Delhi</td>
<td>Arrest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Arti Ghargi</td>
<td>Tripura</td>
<td>Summon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-6</td>
<td>Samriddhi K Sakunia and Swarna Jha</td>
<td>Tripura</td>
<td>Detention and Arrest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Nidhi Suresh</td>
<td>Uttar Pradesh</td>
<td>FIR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>A female journalist</td>
<td>West Bengal</td>
<td>Molestation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Crackdown by the State actors

The Central and State governments invoked the following laws against the journalists and media houses during 2021:

- The Indian Penal Code, 1860
  - Section 34 (acts done by several persons in furtherance of common intention)
  - Section 120B (criminal conspiracy)
  - Section 124A (sedition)
  - Section 147 (punishment for rioting)
  - Section 153 (wantonly giving provocation with intent to cause riot)
  - Section 153A (promoting enmity between religious groups)
  - Section 153B (imputations, assertions prejudicial to national integration)
  - Section 188 (Disobedience to order duly promulgated by public servant)
  - Section 189 (threat of injury to public servant)
  - Section 228(A) (Disclosure of identity of the victim of certain offences etc)
  - Section 294 (singing, reciting or uttering of any obscene song, ballad or words, in or near any public place)
  - Section 295A (Acts intended to outrage religious feelings)
  - Section 353 (Assault or criminal force to deter public servant from discharge of his duty)
  - Section 384 (punishment for extortion)
  - Section 447 (punishment for criminal trespassing)
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- Sections 500 (punishment for defamation)
- Section 501(1)(B) (printing or engraving matter known to be defamatory)
- Section 503 (criminal intimidation)
- Section 504 (intentional insult with intent to provoke breach of the peace)
- Section 505 (statements conducing to public mischief)
- Section 505(1)(b) (whoever makes, publishes or circulates any statement, rumour or report, with intent to cause, or which is likely to cause, fear or alarm to the public, or to any section of the public whereby any person may be induced to commit an offence against the State or against the public tranquillity)
- Section 505(2) (statements creating or promoting enmity between classes)
- Section 506 (punishment for criminal intimidation)
- Unlawful Atrocities (Prevention) Act (UAPA)
- The Information and Technology Act including Section 66A and Section 66F
- The Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act, 1999
- The Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989
- The Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897

3.1. Arrest and detention

In 2021, at least 17 journalists including female journalists were arrested in various States/UTs. Jammu and Kashmir (J & K) reported the highest number of arrest/detention with five journalists; followed
by Delhi (3); Maharashtra, Manipur and Tripura (2 each); and Assam, Chhattisgarh and Haryana (1 each).

Journalists were arrested/detained for performing their professional duties of reporting and exercising their freedom of opinion and expression. The arrests and detention of journalists were carried out for publishing a video news report critical of a chief minister; publishing misleading and defamatory information; misbehaving with personnel on duty; covering eviction drive; mentioning “incorrect place” of arrest of a suspected terrorist in a news report; getting caught with hand grenades; being an active member of an organised crime syndicate; trying to extort money from a businessman; attempting to bring hatred/contempt/disaffection against government; criminal conspiracy and statements conducting to public mischief with common intention by being sympathiser of unlawful organization punishable; spreading communal disharmony for reporting on vandalism at mosque; and conspiracy to commit crime, collecting arms and concealing with intent to facilitate, designs to wage war and relating to membership to a terrorist organization.

Table 3: List of journalists arrested/detained

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of journalists</th>
<th>State/UT</th>
<th>Charges for arrest/detention</th>
<th>Number of journalists</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gautam Pratim Gogoi</td>
<td>Assam</td>
<td>Section 66A of the IT Act, Section 500 IPC</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madhukar Dubey</td>
<td>Chhattisgarh</td>
<td>Sections 384, 189, 504, 506, 501(1) (B) IPC</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dharmender Singh and Mandeep Punia</td>
<td>Delhi</td>
<td>Sections 186, 353, 332 and 34 IPC</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Srishti Jatav</td>
<td>Delhi</td>
<td>Detained while covering eviction drive</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>Charges/Sections</td>
<td>Count</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunil Brar</td>
<td>Haryana</td>
<td>Sections 177, 504, 505(2) and 153 IPC</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aadil Farooq</td>
<td>J&amp;K</td>
<td>Charges not known</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manan Gulzar</td>
<td>J&amp;K</td>
<td>IPC Sections</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dar @ Muhammad Manan</td>
<td>J&amp;K</td>
<td>120(B), 121(A), 122 and 123 and UAPA Sections 18, 18A, 18B, 20, 38 &amp; 39</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junaid Peer and Manan</td>
<td>J&amp;K</td>
<td>Charges not known</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mukhtar Zahoor</td>
<td>J&amp;K</td>
<td>Charges not known</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Devendra Jain</td>
<td>Maharashtra</td>
<td>Provisions under MCOCA</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arjun Shirsath</td>
<td>Maharashtra</td>
<td>Attempt to extortion</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paojel Chaoba and Dhiren ASadokpam</td>
<td>Manipur</td>
<td>Section 124A (Sedition) IPC and UAPA</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samriddhi K x ASadokpam</td>
<td>Tripura</td>
<td>120B, 153A and 504 IPC</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The details of the cases are given below:

**Case 1: Paojel Chaoba and Dhiren ASadokpam, Manipur**

On 17 January 2021, Paojel Chaoba and Dhiren ASadokpam, respectively Executive Editor and Editor-in-Chief of The Frontier Manipur (TFM), were detained and arrested by police in Singjamei
in Imphal West district, Manipur in connection with the publication of an article headlined “Revolutionary journey in a mess” authored by one M Joy Luwang, Singhjamei on the TFM web portal. The police also booked the author of the article, M Joy Luwang on the same charges. The two were arrested based on an FIR filed by Officer Commanding P. Sanjoy Singh of Singjamei police station for “attempting to bring hatred/contempt/disaffection against government; criminal conspiracy and statements conducting to public mischief with common intention by being sympathiser of unlawful organization punishable under 124A/120B/505B/34 of the IPC and section 39 of the UAPA Act”.

Case 2: Dharmender Singh and Mandeep Punia, Delhi

On 30 January 2021, journalist Dharmender Singh with Online News India and freelance journalist Mandeep Punia were picked up by Delhi Police from the Singhu border, Delhi for allegedly misbehaving with personnel on duty. They were reporting on the farmers’ agitation. Dharmendra Singh was later released but Mandeep Punia, who contributes to The Caravan and Junputh, was arrested. An FIR was registered at Alipur police station against Mandeep Punia, under IPC Sections 186 (obstructing a public servant in discharge of public functions), 353 (assaulting a public servant in execution of duty), 332 and 34. A local court rejected his bail application and sent him to 14 days of judicial custody.

Case 3: Devendra Jain, Maharashtra

On 13 July 2021, journalist Devendra Jain was arrested by police under the Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (M COCA) in Pune, Maharashtra. He was arrested on the charge of being an active member of an organised crime syndicate.

Case 4: Gautam Pratim Gogoi, Assam

On 6 August 2021, Gautam Pratim Gogoi, reporter of the news portal thecrosscurrent.in, was allegedly illegally detained, harassed and intimidated at Dispur police station, Guwahati, Assam. An FIR was registered against him under Section 66A of the Information Technology Act.
Technology Act read with Section 500 IPC and the news portal for publishing a video news report critical of Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, Minister of Information/Public Relations Pijush Hazarika and the Directorate of Information and Public Relations (DIPR), Assam. On 6 August 2021, Mr. Gogoi was summoned and illegally detained at Dispur police station for a night and his pen drive was seized. The news portal removed the video news report from its website.19

Case 5: Aadil Farooq, Jammu and Kashmir

On 10 August 2021, journalist Aadil Farooq was arrested by police with two hand grenades near Lalchowk in Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir. Aadil Farooq was working with CNS News Agency. Police claimed that he was suspected of using cover of being a journalist for propaganda, being a courier for terror groups and participating directly in terror activities himself. In 2019, Farooq was arrested for terror links and Public Safety Act (PSA) was slapped against him. The journalist was arrested following a grenade attack in Srinagar, in which some civilians were injured.20

Case 6: Srishti Jatav, Delhi

On 25 August 2021, female journalist Srishti Jatav with Dalit Times was detained for about three hours at Jamia Nagar police station, Delhi while she was covering the demolition of the Dhobi Ghat slum near Batla House. Srishti Jatav stated that the police snatched away her phone and deleted the videos she had made.21 She was released after social media outrage in Delhi.22

Case 7: Sunil Brar, Haryana

On 16 September 2021, a case was registered against reporter Sunil Brar and news editor Sandeep Sharma of Dainik Bhaskar in Ambala, Haryana for allegedly mentioning “incorrect place” of arrest of a suspected terrorist in a news report. Brar was arrested on 17 September 2021. Police said the case against the journalists was registered as they published the news without any authentication and they had created fear among the masses by publishing false news.23
The FIR was registered under Sections 177 (furnishing false information), 504 (intentional insult with intent to provoke breach of the peace), 505 (2) (statements creating or promoting enmity, hatred or ill-will) and 153 (wantonly giving provocation with intent to cause riot) of the IPC. The police produced Brar before a court, which granted him bail. The Court said “After perusal of the remand paper and the copy of the newspaper produced by the Investigating Officer, this court is of the view that there was nothing (of the sort) which can create enmity between classes.”

Case 8: Manan Gulzar Dar @ Muhammad Manan, Jammu and Kashmir

On 10 October 2021, Manan Gulzar Dar @ Muhammad Manan (24), a freelance journalist whose work had featured in international publications like The Guardian, was arrested by the National Investigations Agency (NIA) in connection with a militant conspiracy case in Jammu and Kashmir. Manan Gulzar Dar was summoned to a police station in Srinagar and later arrested by the NIA. The NIA filed the militant conspiracy case (R 0-20/2021/NIA/D LI) under IPC Sections 120(B), 121(A), 122 and 123 (which deal with criminal conspiracy, conspiracy to commit crime, collecting arms and concealing, with intent to facilitate, designs to wage war) and UAPA Sections 18, 18A, 18B, 20, 38 & 39 (which detail punishments for conspiracy and various punishments relating to membership to a terrorist organisation) at a police station in New Delhi. The FIR was filed after a spate of targeted attacks that left five people in J & K.

Case 9: Mukhtar Zahoor, Jammu and Kashmir

On 13 October 2021, photojournalist Mukhtar Zahoor was allegedly detained after a midnight raid in his residence in Dalgate area in Srinagar, Jammu & Kashmir. Zahoor worked as a stringer with the BBC and his work were published in Al Jazeera, the Caravan, Bloomberg, and Wall Street Journal. According to Saima Zahoor, sister of Mukhtar Zahoor, they had received a phone call at around 12.30 am from someone who asked Mukhtar to come downstairs to the main gate of his house. When he opened the gate, a group of
armed personnel and the police force was there. The security forces also took his camera and phone along with them. The police informed the family that he was being taken for questioning and that they should come to Ram Munshi Bagh station in the morning.

**Case 10: Junaid Peer and Sulaiman Sath, Jammu and Kashmir**

On 17 October 2021, two journalists identified as Junaid Peer and Sulaiman Sath were picked up by the police in Kashmir. Junaid Peer was a resident of Sopore district and Sulaiman Sath from Ganderbal district. Junaid Peer works with Urdu newspaper Tameel-i-Irshad and Sulaiman Sath works with Urdu newspaper Daily Gadyal as a freelancer. Family members were not aware about the reason for their detention.

**Case 11: Madhukar Dubey and technical assistant Avinash Palliwar, Chhattisgarh**

On 25 October 2021, journalist Madhukar Dubey and technical assistant Avinash Palliwar were arrested in Raipur, Chhattisgarh after two Congress Members of Legislative Assembly (MLAs) filed a complaint alleging that they had published misleading information about them. In their complaint, the MLAs alleged that the web portal zeroparty.in had published misleading and baseless information about them on 24 October 2021. Two separate FIRs were registered on complaints from the MLAs. Dubey and Palliwar were booked under IPC sections 384 (punishment for extortion), 189 (threat of injury to public servant), 504 (intentional insult with intent to provoke breach of the peace), 506 (punishment for criminal intimidation), 501 (1) (B) (printing or engraving matter known to be defamatory). They were sent to judicial custody for 14 days after they were produced in court.

**Case 12: Arjun Shirsath, Maharashtra**

On 16 September 2021, Arjun Shirsath (41), a journalist, was arrested by police in Pune, Maharashtra. Police claimed the journalist was allegedly trying to extort money from a businessman in Hadapsar.

**Case 13: Samriddhi K Sukunia and Swarna Jha, Tripura**
On 15 November 2021, two women journalists identified as Samriddhi K. Sakunia and Swarna Jha of HW News Network were arrested by Tripura Police for their reporting on alleged religious vandalism in Tripura. A day earlier, they were detained by Assam Police at Nilambazaar in Karimganj district, Assam. They were arrested after an FIR was registered against them based on a complaint lodged by a VHP supporter at Fatikroy police station in Unakoti district, Tripura on 14 November 2021 alleging that they had maligned the image of the Tripura government with their reporting. They were released on bail on 15 November by a local court in Tripura. Another FIR was lodged against the two journalists by the police for their social media posts on the alleged communal violence. The two journalists were booked under IPC Sections 120B (criminal conspiracy), 153A (promoting enmity between religious groups) and 504 (intentional insult with intent to provoke breach of peace). On 8 December 2021, the Supreme Court stayed the criminal proceedings against two journalists and media house, Theo Connect Pvt Ltd (parent organization of HW News Network) booked by the Tripura police for their reporting on alleged communal violence in the State.

A number of journalists who were arrested in the previous years continued to be in jails at the end of 2021. They included Aasif Sultan, arrested under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) in August 2018 in Jammu and Kashmir and journalist Siddique Kappan, arrested in October 2020 when he was on the way to Hathras, Uttar Pradesh to report the gangrape and murder of a Dalit woman.

3.2. Registration of FIRs

Apart from the arrested journalists, First Information Reports were registered against 44 journalists and two media organisations across the country during 2021. In some cases, multiple FIRs were lodged against some journalists in different states such as the FIRs against six prominent journalists - Rajdeep Sardesai, Mrinal Pande, Zafar Agha, Paresh Nath, Vinod K Jose and Anant Nath registered in Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh.
Uttar Pradesh reported the highest registration of FIRs with nine followed by six each in Jammu and Kashmir and Delhi and three in Bihar, among others. Out of the 44 journalists, FIRs were filed against 21 journalists under Section 153 of the IPC relating to promoting enmity, in an overwhelming number of cases against journalists known for impartial reporting.

Table 4: List of journalists/media organisations against whom FIRs filed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of journalists</th>
<th>State/UT</th>
<th>Charges</th>
<th>No. of journalists</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mohit Kashyap, Amit Singh, and Yasin Ali</td>
<td>Uttar Pradesh</td>
<td>Sections 505, 506 IPC</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vinod K Jose and Anant Nath</td>
<td>(also in Delhi, Haryana, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh)</td>
<td>298 IPC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siddharth Varadarajan</td>
<td>Uttar Pradesh</td>
<td>Sections 153B and 505(2) IPC</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fahad Shah, Yashraj Sharma and Mir Junaid</td>
<td>Jammu and Kashmir</td>
<td>Sections 153 and 505 IPC</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sajad Gul</td>
<td>Jammu and Kashmir</td>
<td>Sections 147, 447 and 353 IPC</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two journalists (name not known)</td>
<td>Bihar</td>
<td>Tweeting about an alleged leak of the English examination paper during</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>board examinations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Section(s)</td>
<td>Count</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mohammad Zubair and Rana Ayub</td>
<td>Uttar Pradesh</td>
<td>Section 153, 153A, 295A, 505, 120B and 34 IPC</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pradeep Gangle, Wahid Khan, Aasif Khan, Praveen Pal, Pawan Kumar Solanki and Dharmendra Chauhan</td>
<td>Madhya Pradesh</td>
<td>Section 147, 294, 353 and 506 IPC and SC/ST (POA) Act</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nidhi Suresh</td>
<td>Uttar Pradesh</td>
<td>Sections 500 and 501 IPC</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rajesh Kundu</td>
<td>Haryana</td>
<td>Sections 153A and 153B IPC and Section 66F IT Act</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper (name not known)</td>
<td>Madhya Pradesh</td>
<td>For a report on dearth of oxygen beds</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arvind Tiwari</td>
<td>Madhya Pradesh</td>
<td>For criticising a minister</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samer Dwivedi</td>
<td>Madhya Pradesh</td>
<td>For a news report on COVID-19</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanveer Warsi</td>
<td>Madhya Pradesh</td>
<td>Alleged for exposing COVID mismanagement</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>State/Region</td>
<td>Charges/Offences</td>
<td>Count</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Umesh Pandey</td>
<td>Bihar</td>
<td>Defamation, criminal intimidation, public nuisance and cheating</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ranjan Sinha</td>
<td>Bihar</td>
<td>Epidemic Diseases Act</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sajid Raina</td>
<td>Jammu and Kashmir</td>
<td>Section 153 and 505(1)(b) IPC</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rajesh Chourasiya</td>
<td>Madhya Pradesh</td>
<td>Section 228(A) IPC</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mahooz Khan and Shubham Shrivastava</td>
<td>Madhya Pradesh</td>
<td>Section 188 IPC for reporting COVID-19 irregularities</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pankaj Soni</td>
<td>Madhya Pradesh</td>
<td>For exposing a scam</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seraj Ali and Mukul S Chauhan</td>
<td>Uttar Pradesh</td>
<td>153, 153-A, 505(1)(b), 120-B and 34 IPC</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Wire</td>
<td>Uttar Pradesh</td>
<td>153, 153-A, 505(1)(b), 120-B and 34 IPC</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Suresh Nambath</td>
<td>Assam</td>
<td>153A and disturbing public tranquillity of IPC</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shyam Meera Singh</td>
<td>Tripura</td>
<td>UAPA</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harish</td>
<td>Karnataka</td>
<td>Sections 34 and 153 IPC</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Case 1: FIR against three journalists, Uttar Pradesh

On 25 January 2021, three journalists identified as Mohit Kashyap, Amit Singh, and Yasin Ali were booked for publishing a ‘wrong’ story about children being made to perform in the cold without warm clothes. The case was registered against them on a complaint by Basic Siksha Adhikari, Sunit Dutt at Akbarpur police station under IPC Section 505 (statements conducing to public mischief) and Section 506 (criminal intimidation). Mohit works with TV news channel, K News, Amit works for News Nation and Yasin work with a Hindi channel JMD News.³⁴

Case 2: FIR against six journalists, Uttar Pradesh

On 28 January 2021, police in Uttar Pradesh registered an FIR against six prominent journalists - Rajdeep Sardesai, Mrinal Pande, Zafar Agha, Paresh Nath, Vinod K Jose and Anant Nath under various charges including sedition, for allegedly spreading misinformation on the death of a farmer during farmers’ tractor rally in Delhi on 26 January 2021. The FIR, lodged at Noida Sector 20 police station, invoked 11 IPC sections, including Section 124A (sedition), 153-A (promoting enmity between groups), section 295A (deliberate and malicious act intended to outrage religious feelings), Section 504 (intentional insult), Section 506 (criminal intimidation) and Section 120B (criminal conspiracy to commit offence punishable by death).³⁵

FIRs were also filed in other states including Delhi, Haryana (Gurgaon), Karnataka (Bengaluru) and Madhya Pradesh. In Delhi, FIR was lodged on complaint of advocate Chiranjiv Kumar. The complainant stated that the accused spread fake news about farmer’s death in Delhi on 26 January by blaming Delhi Police to “instigate violence”. In Gurgaon, a case was registered at Cyber Crime police station on a complaint by Pankaj Singh, a resident of Jharsa village. In Bengaluru, a social activist named Rakesh Shetty alias Rakesh B S, filed a complaint of sedition, criminal conspiracy and other charges
against the seven at Parappana Agrahara police station. In Madhya Pradesh, four separate FIRs were registered in Bhopal, Hoshangabad and Betul districts naming Tharoor and the six journalists for allegedly instigating farmers with unverified and unauthentic information for “personal and professional advantage” based on written applications by complainants who have submitted almost similar applications. In Noida, the FIR was registered at Sector 20 Police Station on a complaint by local resident Arpit Mishra for “riots and damage”.36

On 9 February 2021, the Supreme Court stayed the arrest of the six prominent journalists - journalists Rajdeep Sardesai, Mrinal Pande, Zafar Agha, Paresh Nath, Vinod K Jose and Anant Nath along with others in the case.37

Case 3: FIR against senior journalist Siddharth Varadarajan, Uttar Pradesh

On 30 January 2021, an FIR was lodged against Siddharth Varadarajan, editor of news website The Wire, at Civil Lines police station in Rampur, Uttar Pradesh for posting on Twitter a report on the death of a protester in New Delhi during the Republic Day incidents. The FIR was registered on the complaint by one Sanju Turaiha under IPC sections 153B (imputations, assertions prejudicial to national integration) and 505(2) (statements creating or promoting enmity between classes).38

Case 4: FIR against three journalists, Jammu and Kashmir

On 31 January 2021, an FIR was lodged against Fahad Shah, Editor-in-Chief and reporter Yashraj Sharma of The Kashmir Wala for reporting that a school in Shopian district in Jammu and Kashmir had been forced by the Army to hold a Republic Day function on 26 January 2021. The FIR against the journalists was registered based on a complaint from the Indian Army, which accused them of spreading fake news. Besides them, the police also named the website, The Kashmiriyat, for publishing the same report. The FIR was filed under Sections 153 (wantonly giving provocation with intent to cause riot) and 505 (statements conducing to public mischief) of the Indian Penal Code.39 The police also booked journalist Mir Junaid of The
Kashmiriyat for publishing the same report. On 12 February 2021, the anticipatory bail plea of Yashraj Sharma and Fahad Shah was rejected by a court. A few days later, an official made a call on Junaid’s mobile phone, advising him to either apply for bail or be prepared for jail.\textsuperscript{40}

**Case 5: FIR against freelance journalist Sajad Gul, Jammu and Kashmir**

On 12 February 2021, freelance journalist Sajad Gul was booked by police for rioting, trespassing and assault in Bandipora, Jammu and Kashmir. Sajad Gul alleged that he was being harassed and falsely implicated by the authorities for doing a story about the demolition drive at a village in Hajin area in Bandipora. After the article was published in The Kashmir Wala on 9 February 2021, the Tehsildar filed a complaint against Gul at the Hajin Bandipora Police Station. Gul said he had not been provided the copy of the FIR by the police despite repeated requests.\textsuperscript{41} Police booked him under Sections 147 (punishment for rioting), 447 (punishment for criminal trespassing), and 353 (assaulting public servant) of the IPC.\textsuperscript{42}

**Case 6: FIR against two journalists, Bihar**

On 20 February 2021, an FIR was lodged against two journalists by the Education Department, Bihar for tweeting about an alleged leak of the English exam paper during the board examinations. The FIR was lodged at the Kotwali Police station in Patna.\textsuperscript{43}

**Case 8: FIR against Mohammad Zubair, Rana Ayub, The Wire, Twitter, Uttar Pradesh**

On 15 June 2021, the Uttar Pradesh police filed an FIR against AltNews journalist Mohammad Zubair, journalist Rana Ayub, media organisation The Wire, Congress’s Salman Nizami, Maskoor Usmani and Shama Mohamed, writer Saba Naqvi and social media giant Twitter INC (Indian National Congress) and Twitter Communications India at the Loni Border police station. The FIR was filed at late night at 11.20 pm based on a complaint by police Sub-Inspector Naresh Singh after a video of an elderly Muslim man alleging assault in Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh went viral on social media. The police
booked the journalists and others in connection with tweets on the case. The police invoked Section 153 (provocation for rioting), 153A (promoting enmity between different groups), 295A (acts intended to outrage religious feelings), 505 (mischief), 120B (criminal conspiracy) and 34 (common intention) of the IPC against them. The elderly Muslim man identified as Abdul Samad (72 years) was attacked in Loni on 5 June 2021. The attackers also cut off his beard as seen in the viral video. Samad lodged an FIR against unidentified persons on 7 June 2021. In his viral video, the man alleged that he was forced to chant Jai Shri Ram by the assailants, and that he was attacked because of his religion. However, the police later in their clarification said that it was an interpersonal matter and the attackers had beaten him up because he had given them a taveez (amulet) that they believe caused their family member’s miscarriage. In the FIR, it was stated that despite this clarification by the police, the accused did not delete their tweets, nor did Twitter make any efforts to delete them. On 21 June 2021, the Bombay High Court granted protection from arrest to journalist Rana Ayyub for four weeks.

Case 9: FIR against six journalists, Madhya Pradesh

On 2 July 2021, six journalists identified as Pradeep Gangle, Wahid Khan, Aasif Khan, Praveen Pal, Pawan Kumar Solanki and Dharmendra Chauhan were booked by police for alleged rioting and abusing District Mining Officer (DMO), Sawan Chouhan in Khargone district, Madhya Pradesh. The police initiated the action on the complaint of the DMO, Khargone. The journalists reportedly had gone to meet the DMO on the same evening seeking his comment on the issue of rampant illegal mining and storage of sand in the district. According to the FIR, the six journalists were booked for misbehaving, abusing DMO Sawan Chouhan and making casteist remarks against him who belongs to the Scheduled Caste. The charges invoked against the journalists were Section 147 (Punishment for rioting), 294 (singing, reciting or uttering of any obscene song, ballad or words, in or near any public place), 353 (Assault or criminal force to deter public servant from discharge of his duty) and 506 (Punishment for criminal intimidation) of the IPC and Sections of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989. The
journalists were associated with NDTV, ABP, News Nation, Nation Today (a web portal) and local dailies. Prior to the FIR, a written complaint was lodged by one of the journalists Pradeep Gangle at a police station against the DMO and Mining Inspector Reena Pathak.46

Case 10: FIR against Nidhi Suresh, Uttar Pradesh

In July 2021, Nidhi Suresh, a journalist with Newslaundry, was booked for defamation by the Uttar Pradesh police based on a complaint by News18 journalist Deep Srivatsava. According to Newslaundry, the FIR was registered by Sadar Bazar police in Shahjahanpur district for a tweet put out by Nidhi. However, the FIR did not mention which tweet of Nidhi was allegedly defamatory. The FIR was registered under Sections 500 (punishment for defamation) and 501 (printing or engraving matter known to be defamatory) of the IPC. However, criminal defamation is a non-cognizable offence as per the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC). This means that the police cannot register an FIR based on a criminal defamation complaint made directly by the complainant. The police is authorised to register an FIR only based on the direction of a judicial magistrate under section 200 of the CrPC. In other words, a complainant must approach a magistrate for criminal defamation complaints. According to Newslaundry, Nidhi had received a call on the morning of 5 July 2021 from the Investigating Officer asking her to record her statement in Shahjahanpur. Later in the day, she received another call asking her to make an in-person oral and written statement despite Nidhi saying she was in Delhi. Pertinently, the FIR was registered after Nidhi had reported on the case of Ayesha Alvi, a Hindu woman who had recently converted to Islam. Ayesha had moved the Delhi High Court alleging that she had been harassed by the media for her conversion to Islam. In her petition, Ayesha had listed one mobile number alleging that she had received a threat call from the individual, who extorted Rs 20,000 from her. When Nidhi had contacted the number, the caller identified himself as Deep Srivastava, a reporter with News18. However, Deep denied the allegations that he had extorted money from Ayesha.47
Case 11: FIR against journalist Rajesh Kundu, Haryana

On 9 April 2021, a case was registered by the police against Rajesh Kundu, a Hisar-based journalist, for cyber-terrorism and promoting enmity between classes for one of his alleged social media posts. The case was registered by the police against Rajesh Kundu, who runs a news portal, under various sections of the IPC and the Information Technology (IT) Act. According to the FIR, in the social media post, Kundu had said Hisar would witness caste-based violence in a week and this will be a blueprint for an experiment in the state and then in the country. The FIR, under Sections 153A and 153B of the IPC and Section 66F of the Information and Technology Act, was registered on a complaint filed by a Hisar police official. The journalist extensively covered the farmers’ agitation against three new farms laws.

Case 12: FIR against newspaper, Madhya Pradesh

On 19 April 2021, an FIR was lodged against a reputed newspaper (unidentified) by the Collector of Khandwa district, Madhya Pradesh for a report highlighting the dearth of oxygen beds.

Case 13: FIR against Arvind Tiwari, Madhya Pradesh

On 29 April 2021, Arvind Tiwari, President of Indore Press Club was booked for criticising Mahendra Singh Sisodia, a minister of the State Government of Madhya Pradesh.

Case 14: FIR against TV journalist Samer Dwivedi, Madhya Pradesh

In April 2021, TV journalist Samer Dwivedi was booked on a complaint by a civil surgeon relating to a news report on COVID-19 in Ashoknagar, Madhya Pradesh.

Case 15: FIR against senior journalist Tanveer Warsi, Madhya Pradesh

On 21 May 2021, Tanveer Warsi, a senior journalist associated with NDTV and who also runs a local Hindi daily ‘Prabhat Sanket’ was booked by police in Rajgarh district, Madhya Pradesh. Three days before the FIR, the senior journalist had uploaded a video of leaking
roof at a COVID-19 Intensive Care Unit ward in the district which subsequently went viral on the social media. According to the FIR, Tanveer Warsi was a partner in a nursing home where patients were being treated without having a proper license. The FIR was registered against Tanveer Warsi on the basis of a report submitted to the District Collector over a complaint of running the nursing home without license upon which the collector has formed a team of experts to look into the matter. Tanveer Warsi alleged that he was being targeted because he had been exposing COVID mismanagement.52

Case 16: FIR against journalist Umesh Pandey, Bihar

On 23 May 2021, an FIR was registered against journalist Umesh Pandey (40) for publishing a news report on Union Minister Ashwini Choubey in Buxar, Bihar. The news reports had stated that the Union Minister had relaunched old ambulances with new posters. Since publishing of the reports, Umesh Pandey was facing threats and a police case was filed against him at Buxar town police station by Parshuram Chaturvedi, a Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader. The journalist alleged that a BJP leader had threatened his family, warning him against publishing such news reports in the future. The FIR was registered under various sections of the Indian Penal Code, including defamation, criminal intimidation, public nuisance and cheating. Umesh Pandey works as a correspondent in Buxar for the news portal ETV Bharat.53

Case 17: FIR against Ranjan Sinha, Bihar

On 25 May 2021, an FIR was lodged against Ranjan Sinha, a journalist with Dainik Bhaskar, and his associate by the Superintendent of the Magadh Medical College and Hospital in Gaya, Bihar. The FIR, registered under the Epidemic Diseases Act, accused him of entering a COVID-19 ward.54

Case 18: FIR against journalist Sajid Raina, Jammu and Kashmir

On 30 May 2021, journalist Sajid Raina (23) of Kashmir News Observer (KNO) was booked by the Jammu and Kashmir police for a WhatsApp status on a boat tragedy in which 21 children were killed in 2006. On 30 May 2021, Sajid Raina had uploaded a WhatsApp
status on the 15th anniversary of the Wular Lake boat tragedy. Raina was booked under different provisions of the Indian Penal Code. In the FIR registered against him, police accused Raina of uploading a provocative post on social media and said that it had hurt the sentiments of the public in the area and could disrupt peace in the area. The FIR was registered against him under Section 153 (wantonly giving provocation with intent to cause riot) and 505(1)(b) (whoever makes, publishes or circulates any statement, rumour or report, with intent to cause, or which is likely to cause, fear or alarm to the public, or to any section of the public whereby any person may be induced to commit an offence against the State or against the public tranquillity) of the IPC.  

Case 19: FIR against journalist Rajesh Chourasiya, Madhya Pradesh

On 4 June 2021, journalist Rajesh Chourasiya, who reports for News24 and other media outlets, was booked for circulating the video of a Dalit woman who was allegedly beaten and molested by upper caste men after her husband refused to work for them in Chhattarpur, district, Madhya Pradesh. The FIR was registered against Rajesh Chourasiya and 10 unknown others under Section 228(A) of the IPC at Raj Nagar Police station in the district. Police claimed that the journalist revealed the identity of the victim of molestation. The journalist claimed to be unaware of the case filed against him and alleged that he was being framed because he brought a gruesome case of Dalit oppression to light.

Case 20: FIR against journalists Mahooz Khan and Shubham Shrivastava, Madhya Pradesh

In June 2021, two FIRs were registered against Mahooz Khan, who runs a weekly newspaper from Shahdol and Shubham Shrivastava from Sagar, who runs an online web portal for reporting the irregularities of COVID-19 dedicated hospitals in their respective districts in Madhya Pradesh. Mahooz Khan was booked for trespassing and disobedience to order duly promulgated by public servant at the Shahdol Medical College on the complaint filed by the Dean of the medical college. While Shubham Shrivastava was booked under
Section 188 of the IPC for reporting on COVID-19 ward by an advocate associated with the ruling party.\(^5\)

**Case 21: FIR against journalist Pankaj Soni, Madhya Pradesh**

On 12 June 2021, an FIR was registered against journalist Pankaj Soni on the complaint of an engineer after he exposed a scam in Madhya Pradesh.\(^5\)

**Case 22: FIR against The Wire and two journalists, Uttar Pradesh**

In June 2021, an FIR was registered against online news portal, The Wire and two of its journalists identified as Seraj Ali and Mukul S Chauhan in Barabanki, Uttar Pradesh. The FIR was registered for allegedly spreading animosity in society and disturbing communal harmony over its video documentary on the demolition of a “mosque” by district administration, Barabanki in May 2021. Two others identified as Mohammad Naeem and Mohammad Anees were also named in the FIR. The Wire called charges “baseless” and accused the BJP government of “criminalising the work of journalists who are reporting what is happening in the state” The complaint was lodged by a police officer based on which the FIR was registered under IPC sections 153 (wantonly giving provocation with intent to cause riot), 153-A (promoting enmity between different groups), 505 (1) (b) (with intent to cause, or which is likely to cause, fear or alarm to the public), 120-B (criminal conspiracy) and 34 (acts done by several persons in furtherance of common intention).\(^5\)

**Case 23: FIR against Suresh Nambath, Assam**

On 6 October 2021, the police registered an FIR against Suresh Nambath, editor of The Hindu at Latasil police station in Guwahati, Assam for publishing an article about the eviction drive at Sipajhar on 23 September 2021. The FIR was filed by Prabajan Virodhi Manch (PVM), led by advocate Upamanyu Hazarika. The FIR also named two other persons. The PVM stated that the accused persons by their publication had intended to promote enmity among different groups on the grounds of religion, race, place of birth, residence, language, etc, and disturb public tranquillity.\(^6\)
Case 24: FIR against journalist Shyam Meera Singh, Tripura

In November 2021, journalist Shyam Meera Singh of Newsclick was booked under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) for his tweet on communal violence in Tripura. The journalist had written “Tripura is burning” in his Twitter handle following the October 2021 incident when mosques in the state were vandalised allegedly by the activists of a Hindu religious organisation amid protests over violence against Hindus in Bangladesh. Apart from Shyam Meera Singh, several activists, lawyers and others were charged under the stringent Act for reporting, writing, and speaking about the incident. On 17 November 2021, the Supreme Court directed the Tripura Government to not take any coercive action against Shyam Meera Singh and two lawyers after the approached the court.

Case 25: FIR against journalist Harish, Karnataka

On 20 November 2021, a journalist identified as Harish was booked by the police in Kodagu district, Karnataka for allegedly morphing a video to show that Muslim women were shouting “Pakistan zindabad [Long live Pakistan]” slogan. The accused was booked under Sections 34 (criminal acts done by several persons in furtherance of common intention) and 153 (wantonly giving provocation with intent to cause riot) of the IPC.

Case 26: FIR against Anirban Roy Chaudhury, Assam

On 1 December 2021, Anirban Roy Chaudhury, Editor of digital outlet BarakBulletin, was booked on charges of sedition in Silchar, Assam over an editorial. The journalist was summoned at SilcharSadar police station on 6 December 2021 after an FIR was filed by Santanu Sutradhar of All Assam Bengali Hindu Association. The complaint claimed that the editorial comprised elements to hamper the cordial relationship between the Bengali speaking residents of Barak valley and the Assamese community in Brahmaputra valley of Assam.
3.3. Summons/show cause notices

In 2021, at least six journalists were issued summoned by police of Jammu and Kashmir and Tripura for their journalistic works. The cases are given below:

On 5 March 2021, Fahad Shah of Kashmir Walla was summoned to a police station in Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir for publishing a video of protesters clashing with police. He said the police questioned him for three hours about the video before releasing him.65 Earlier on 31 January 2021, an FIR was lodged against Fahad Shah for reporting that a school in Shopian district had been forced by the Army to hold a Republic Day function on 26 January 2021.66

On 8 September 2021 morning, the police simultaneously raided the homes of four Kashmiri journalists identified as Hilal Mir, Shah Abbas, Showkat Motta and Azhar Qadri and confiscated their digital devices and travel documents during searches that lasted hours. Hilal Mir and Azhar Qadri were freelance reporters while Shah Abbas was the online editor at the Urdu daily Kashmir Uzma and Showkat Motta was an editor and writer for several leading newspapers and news magazines in Kashmir. None of the four journalists was arrested during the raids but they were summoned to the Kothi Bagh police station in Srinagar, where they were detained until late in the evening. On the next day, they were summoned to the police station and held until evening.67

On 19 November 2021, Arti Ghargi, Associate Editor of HW News Network, received summon from Kakraban police station, Tripura. The police had asked her to appear before them on the same day at 11 am. However, she submitted an application seeking an extension on the basis of her medical condition. The police summons was in connection with the two FIRs registered against two journalists of the news organisation for their reporting on communal violence in Tripura, for which they were arrested.68
3.4. Physical attacks and intimidation by security forces and other public officials

In 2021, at least 24 journalists were allegedly physically attacked, threatened, harassed and obstructed from doing their professional works by public officials including police across the country. Out of the 24 journalists, 17 were allegedly beaten by police. Physical attacks on journalists by police were mainly reported from Jammu and Kashmir.

Table 5: List of physical attacks and intimidation on journalists by security forces and other public officials

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of journalists</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Perpetrators</th>
<th>No. of journalists</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Saqib Majeed and Shafat Farooq</td>
<td>Jammu and Kashmir</td>
<td>Police</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Qisar Mir</td>
<td>Jammu and Kashmir</td>
<td>Police</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aakash Hassan</td>
<td>Jammu and Kashmir</td>
<td>Police</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>ANI Cameraman</td>
<td>Uttar Pradesh</td>
<td>Chief Minister</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Krishna Tiwari</td>
<td>Uttar Pradesh</td>
<td>IAS Officer</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three journalists</td>
<td>Goa</td>
<td>Sarpanch</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naveen Awasthi and another reporter</td>
<td>Uttar Pradesh</td>
<td>Union Minister of State</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total 17
The details of the cases are given below:

i. Assault by police

On 5 March 2021, photojournalist Saqib Majeed and Shafat Farooq, cameraman of BBC Urdu, were allegedly beaten by police while they were covering the protests that broke out after Friday prayers at the Jamia mosque in Nowhatta, Srinagar in Jammu and Kashmir. Majid alleged that the police official held him by the neck under his arm and slapped him twice. Shaft was hit with a gun butt on his back by a policeman, which left him in severe pain. In May 2021, photojournalist Saqib Majeed was again allegedly beaten up by police while he was doing his professional duty along Dal Lake in Srinagar. According to Saqib, police personnel of a police patrolling party that was enforcing a lockdown pounced on him and started beating him with punches, kicks and sticks despite showing his identity card. He was dragged across the road and they forcefully tried to arrest him. A policeman also tried to snatch his camera.

On 2 April 2021, photojournalist Qisar Mir was assaulted by security forces while he was covering a gunfight near Pulwama in Jammu and Kashmir. He was kicked from behind by a police constable.

On 18 July 2021, Aakash Hassan (23), an independent journalist, was allegedly assaulted by the police at the Sangam checkpoint in Anantnag district of Jammu and Kashmir while he was on way home. Aakash Hassan confirmed the incident through his Twitter handle. He also shared pictures showing bruises and cuts on his face and hand. According to the journalist, the police grabbed his collar and hit him in the face without any reason.

On 17 August 2021, at least six journalists, mostly photojournalists, were beaten up by police at central Jehangir Chowk in Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir. The journalists were covering the annual Muharram processions by Shia Muslims. The videos shot by several journalists show the police official leading the assault on the journalists as other policemen carrying sticks and assault rifles also join the assault. Some of the journalists were identified as photojournalist Sajad Hameed, photojournalist Bhat Burhan, Waseem Andrabi, a photojournalist with
the Hindustan Times, and Imran Ali, an independent multimedia journalist.\textsuperscript{73}

\textbf{ii. Assault by other public officials}

In April 2021, Yogi Adityanath, Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh used abusive language against an Asian News International (ANI) cameraman during a bite on COVID vaccination. The video of the same was widely shared in public domain.\textsuperscript{74}

On 10 July 2021, journalist Krishna Tiwari was allegedly beaten up by Chief Development Officer (CDO) Divyanshu Patel and some workers of Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP) in the Bangarmau area in Miyaganj in Unnao district, Uttar Pradesh. Tiwari had gone to report from a polling centre in the Bangarmau area for the block panchayat chief polls being held across the State. Tiwari alleged that the CDO continued to beat him despite knowing him. He also alleged beaten up by a local BJP leader and workers.\textsuperscript{75} In a video widely circulated on social media, the CDO was seen chasing down the journalist in public and beating him viciously. The CDO, who is an Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer, was accused of attacking the journalist because “he was filmed by the latter allegedly helping kidnap local council members to stop them from voting”.\textsuperscript{76}

On 23 October 2021, three journalists were allegedly attacked by a sarpanch identified as Ulhas Morajkar and his supporters during the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) rozgar yatra at a roadside at Sangolda in North Goa. The incident took place when the journalists were taking video bites of AAP functionaries during the yatra. The sarpanch stopped his car and shouted at the journalists for blocking the road. His supporters allegedly even tried to confiscate the video camera.\textsuperscript{77}

On 15 December 2021, Union Minister of State for Home Ajay Mishra allegedly used abusive language against journalists by calling them “thieves” and pushed one of them identified as Naveen Awasthi, TV journalist with ABP News when they sought his comment on the Uttar Pradesh Police Special Investigation Team (SIT) charging his jailed son Ashish under additional IPC sections in connection with the 3 October 2021 violence in Lakhimpur Kheri. Naveen Awasthi
was allegedly pushed by the Union Minister and another TV reporter’s mobile phone was snatched by him and not returned. The journalist speaking to media said “There was inauguration by minister Ajay Mishra Teni today. Several journalists were there. I asked him about the oxygen plant, which he inaugurated, and after that, I asked him about the additional charges against his son. When I asked him about it, he got angry and started using abusive language. He snatched my microphone and tried to take my mobile phone. He took the mobile phone of a fellow TV reporter, which has not been returned. He chased the journalist to beat him up. We left the venue from a side exit.”

3.5. Censorship and raids on offices and houses of media organizations and journalists

On 25 February 2021, the Government of India notified the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules 2021. The Rules, issued under the Information Technology Act, 2000, fundamentally alter how publishers of news operate over the Internet and have the potential to seriously undermine media freedom in India. The Rules empower the Union Government to block, delete, or modify published news anywhere in the country without any judicial oversight and require all publishers to establish a grievance redressal mechanism. Various provisions in these rules can place unreasonable restrictions on digital news media, and consequently media at large. On 5 March 2021, the Editor Guild of India (EGI) expressing deep concern stated that the Government did not consult stakeholders before notifying these far-reaching rules. The EGI urged the Government to put the rules in abeyance and conduct meaningful consultation with all stakeholders. A number of writ petitions were filed challenging the constitutional validity of the Rules.

In Jammu and Kashmir, media persons faced restrictions. On 6 April 2021, Vijay Kumar, Inspector General of Police, Kashmir allegedly warned journalists against covering operations at gun-firesites in the real-time and printing content that “promotes anti-national sentiment”. On 7 April 2021, Vijay Kumar said he had issued written directions to all district Senior Superintendents of Police (SSPs) to
take legal action “based on facts” against media professionals who come close to gun battle sites or near scenes of “law and order” situations.80

On 24 July 2021, the District Magistrate of Kupwara District banned the operation of unauthorised and unregistered media persons citing the misuse of social media platforms by circulating fake and baseless news items for their own interests. The order addressed to the district’s SSP said the misuse had become a nuisance and needs to be curbed and regulated. It directed such unauthorised/unregistered journalists to complete their registration or obtain approval before they can be allowed to perform their professional duties.81

In May 2021, the Chief Media Coordinator of the Delhi government removed seven journalists from the Hindustan Times from its WhatsApp group on which it shares daily updates. The reason for this was allegedly a report published on 6 May 2021 that detailed five things that the Delhi government had failed to do to avert the oxygen crisis.82 On 18 May 2021, the Press Council of India (PCI) sought a report from the Delhi government about the matter. The PCI stated “Their Right to report was interfered with and curtailed by removing them from the WhatsApp group of the Delhi Government.”83

In 2021, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) and Income Tax (IT) raided offices of media houses/newspapers and houses of journalists who were critical of policies and functioning of the Government.

Case 1: ED and IT raids on the office of NewsClick and homes of its senior journalists and staff

In February 2021, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) officials searched the office premises associated with NewsClick, a digital news portal in Delhi for five days. On 9 February 2021, the ED launched simultaneous raids at eight locations associated with the digital news portal. The premises searched included the portal’s office in South Delhi’s Said-ul-Ajaib locality, and the residences of the Editor-in-Chief and founder Prabir Purkayastha, another editor, Pranjal Pandey and five staff members from the editorial and accounts teams. The raids at six staff members’ residences wrapped up on the same night, while
the raid at the portal’s office continued for over 38 hours and ended on the night of 10 February. But the raid at Purkayastha’s house lasted 113 hours and ended at 1.30 am on 14 February. Neither Purkayastha, nor his partner Gita Hariharan, an author was allowed to leave the house for the entire duration.84

Quoting ED sources a section of the media reported that the ED raids at the premises associated with Newsclick were linked to foreign direct investments allegedly totaling Rs 30.51 crore.85 Prabir Purkayastha clarified that the amount in question was legally received by his company PPK Newsclick Studio as FDI through the Reserve Bank of India and there was no bar to receive FDI by digital platform.86

On 26 June 2021, the Delhi High Court ordered the ED not to take any coercive action against news portal Newsclick and its editor Prabir Purkayastha until 5 July in the alleged money-laundering case.87 On 5 July, the Delhi high court extended the interim protection from coercive action granted to news portal Newsclick and its Editor-in-Chief Purkayastha.88 On 7 July, the Delhi High Court also granted interim protection from arrest to Purkayashta in connection with an FIR registered by the Delhi Police that alleged that FDI investment was made by greatly overvaluing the shares of the company to avoid the alleged cap of 26 per cent of FDI in a digital news website. It further alleged that over 45 per cent of this investment was diverted/siphoned off for the payment of salary/consultancy, rent and other expenses, which payments are alleged to have been made for ulterior motives.89

On 10 September 2021, the Income Tax Department conducted further raid on Newsclick’s office in Delhi.90

Case 2: IT raids at offices of Dainik Bhaskar and Bharat Samachar

On 22 July 2021, the Income Tax Department conducted raids at the offices of leading newspaper Dainik Bhaskar as well as a Lucknow based news channel, Bharat Samachar. The raids were conducted at over 30 locations of Dainik Bhaskar in Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Maharashtra. The homes and offices of the group’s promoters were also raided. Bharat Samachar’s offices in
Lucknow and the home of its editor were also searched. The raids were conducted for alleged tax evasion. However, Dainik Bhaskar Editor Om Gaur stated that raids were a surprise and an attempt to suppress independent journalism. The raids were conducted against the backdrop of some very critical coverage by both the news organisations on government’s handling of the pandemic.91

Case 3: IT raids at the office Newslaundry

On 10 September 2021, the Income Tax Department conducted a raid on office of the Newslaundry in Delhi. The Income Tax officials stated that the raid was aimed at verifying tax payment details and remittances made by the organisation.92 The raid was officially termed as ‘survey’. The team made clones of co-founder AbhinandanSekhri’s mobile and laptop, as well as some other office machines, and no cash value was given to them. This was the second visit by an Income Tax team at the office of Newslaundry. Earlier one was in June 2021. In a statement, the Editor Guild of India said “This is clearly beyond the mandate of surveys as defined under section 133A of the Income Tax Act, which only allows data pertaining to the investigation to be copied, and certainly not personal and professional data of journalists. It is also in violation of procedures laid out in the Information Technology Act, 2000.”93

On 21 September 2021, the Income Tax Department told the Delhi High Court that the seized material will be used only for the investigation and the principle of confidentiality in the Income Tax Act will be followed. The Delhi High Court was hearing a petition of the news outlet which sought directions to the Department not to leak any material to a third party, including the media.94


50. Ibid

51. Ibid


54. Ibid


63. **Karnataka: Journalist booked for morphing video to show Muslim women shouting pro-Pakistan slogan**, The Scroll, 23 November 2021, https://scroll.in/latest/1011063/karnataka-journalist-booked-for-morphing-video-to-show-muslim-women-shouting-pro-pakistan-slogan


69. Two journalists assaulted by police, Kashmir Reader, 6 March 2021, available at: https://kashmirreader.com/2021/03/06/two-journalists-assaulted-by-police/


73. ‘We were threatened of FIRs’: Police beat up journalists in Srinagar, The Kashmir Walla, 17 August 2021, https://thekashmirwalla.com/we-were-threatened-of-firs-police-beat-up-journalists-in-srinagar/


79. Press Release of Editor Guild of India, 5 March 2021, https://editorsguild.in/statements-issued/


82. ‘Access denied’: How the Delhi government has stonewalled reporters in the capital, Scroll.in, 6 August 2021, https://scroll.in/article/1001795/access-denied-how-the-delhi-government-has-stonewalled-reporters-in-the-capital


84. The process becomes the punishment: NewsClick’s Prabir Purkayastha on the ED raids, The Caravan, 16 February 2021; available at: https://caravanmagazine.in/media/newsclick-prabir-purkayastha-ed-raids-process-becomes-punishment


86. The process becomes the punishment: NewsClick’s Prabir Purkayastha on the ED raids, The Caravan, 16 February 2021; available at: https://caravanmagazine.in/media/newsclick-prabir-purkayastha-ed-raids-process-becomes-punishment


89. Delhi HC grants interim protection to NewsClick founder, editor in foreign funding case, Print, 7 July 2021, available at: https://theprint.in/judiciary/delhi-hc-grants-interim-protection-to-newsclik-founder-editor-in-foreign-funding-case/691313/

90. Press Statement of Editor Guild of India, 11 September 2021, https://editorsguild.in/statements-issued/


92. Material seized from ‘Newslaundry’ will not be leaked, IT department tells Delhi High Court, Scroll.in, 21 September 2021, https://scroll.in/latest/1005911/material-seized-from-newslaundry-will-not-be-leaked-it-department-tells-delhi-high-court

94. Material seized from ‘NewsLaundry’ will not be leaked, IT department tells Delhi High Court, Scroll.in, 21 September 2021, https://scroll.in/latest/1005911/material-seized-from-newslaundry-will-not-be-leaked-it-department-tells-delhi-high-court
4. Attacks on journalists by the non-State actors

During 2021, at least 34 media houses journalists were attacked by the non-State actors such as mob, unidentified miscreants, members/supporters of political parties etc or harassed online across the country. Of these, six journalists were killed with Uttar Pradesh and Bihar reporting two deaths each, and Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra reporting death of one each.

At least 28 media houses journalists were physically attacked or harassed/threatened online by the non-state actors during the year. The maximum number of attacks on the journalists by the non-State actors took place in Tripura with attacks on 10 journalists and five houses followed by Uttar Pradesh (3) and Tamil Nadu (2).

4.1. Killing of journalists

During 2021, at least six journalists were murdered in the country. Uttar Pradesh and Bihar reported two deaths each, and Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra reported one each. Four of the deceased journalists were allegedly killed for their works including one journalist who had sought police protection from liquor mafia a day he was found dead. Out of the two remaining deceased journalists – one was killed while covering a protest during a farmers’ protest and another was reportedly killed over property dispute.

Table 6: List of journalists killed during 2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl No</th>
<th>Name of journalists killed</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Perpetrators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Rohidas Datir</td>
<td>Maharashtra</td>
<td>Kanhu Gangaram More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sulabh Srivastava</td>
<td>Uttar Pradesh</td>
<td>Suspected liquor mafia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Case 1: Killing of journalist Rohidas Datir, Maharashtra

On 6 April 2021, Rohidas Datir (49), a journalist of a local weekly was allegedly kidnapped and killed in Rahuri town in Ahmednagar district of Maharashtra. Rohidas Datir was allegedly abducted from the College Road area where he was travelling on his two-wheeler and his body bearing multiple injury marks was found in the same locality. The victim used to run a weekly in Rahuri and was also a Right to Information activist. According to the complaint lodged by his wife, Datir had received threats and even been attacked in the past. Police claimed that Rohidas Datir was killed by accused Kanhu Gangaram More over an ongoing dispute over a property.

Case 2: Alleged murder of TV journalist Sulabh Srivastava, Uttar Pradesh

On the night of 13 June 2021, Sulabh Srivastava, a TV journalist for ABP News and ABP Ganga, was found dead under mysterious circumstances in Pratapgarh district, Uttar Pradesh. Just a day before his death, Sulabh Srivastava wrote to the Uttar Pradesh Police saying he felt threatened following his recent reportage of liquor mafias in
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the district. Seeking protection, Srivastava had said he had been informed by sources that the liquor mafia was angry with him after the publication of his report and wanted to harm him or his family. However, the police said that the journalist died in a “motorcycle accident.” Demanding a high-level investigation, opposition political parties alleged that the journalist was killed by the liquor mafias for his reportage.97

Case 3: Murder of Manish Kumar Singh, Bihar

On 7 August 2021, Manish Kumar Singh (26), journalist with Sudarshan News television, had gone missing at Mathlohiyar village in East Champaran district, Bihar. On 10 August, the dead body of Manish Kumar was recovered from a lake in the village. Police stated that the journalist was allegedly kidnapped and murdered by people known to him. Family members and friends alleged that he was targeted by people against whom he wrote. The family also accused the police of delay in investigation despite filing a complaint.98 Police registered a case against 13 persons of which two accused identified as Amrendra Kumar and Asjad Alam were arrested.99

Case 4: Killing of journalist Chennakesavulu, Andhra Pradesh

On 8 August 2021, Chennakesavulu (35), a journalist with news channel EV-5 was stabbed to death with a screwdriver by a suspended police constable identified as Venkatasubbaiah and his brother at Nandyal town in Kurnool district, Andhra Pradesh. He was allegedly killed for exposing the constable’s illegal activities on a show aired on the news channel. The police constable was suspended following the exposure.100

Case 5: Killing of journalist Raman Kashyap, Uttar Pradesh

On 3 October 2021, journalist Raman Kashyap of Sadhna News died after being allegedly crushed by a speeding car while covering the farmers’ protest at a village in Lakhimpur Kheri district, Uttar Pradesh. Initially, it was claimed that the journalist was beaten by the farmers. However, the family of the deceased’s journalist alleged that they were under immense pressure from the police and sections of the media to say that the journalist had been beaten up by farmers.101 On
8 November 2021, State government of Uttar Pradesh informed the Supreme Court that journalist Raman Kashyap died of the impact of the car owned by Union Minister Ajay Mishra’s son and not by lynching by farmers. On 14 December 2021, the Special Investigation Team (SIT) of the Uttar Pradesh Police probing the incident said that the incident was a pre-planned and a deliberate act, and not of negligence or callousness.

Case 6: Murder of journalist Buddhinath Jha, Bihar

In November 2021, Buddhinath Jha @ Avinash Jha (22), a journalist with an online news portal ‘BNN News Benipatti’, had gone missing in Madhubani district, Bihar. On 12 November 2021, his body, which was half-burnt, was found dumped on the outskirts of Udan village in the district. The police arrested six persons identified as Roshan Kumar, Bittu Kumar, Deepak Kumar, Pawan Kumar, Manish Kumar and Purna Kala Devi for the murder of the journalist. Family members of the journalist alleged that he was killed for exposing several fake nursing homes and hospitals in the area in his online news reports.

4.2. Physical attacks or threats

i. Political parties

At least nine journalists and five media houses were targeted by alleged members/supporters of political parties during 2021 with maximum number of attacks in Tripura with attacks on four journalists and five media houses, followed by Uttar Pradesh (2), Tamil Nadu (2) and Manipur (1).

Table 7: List of journalists targeted by political party activists/supporters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of journalists</th>
<th>State/UT</th>
<th>Perpetrators</th>
<th>No. of journalists</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Awadhesh Parashar</td>
<td>Uttar Pradesh</td>
<td>Alleged supporters of political party</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The details of cases of physical attacks by alleged members/supporters of political parties are given below:

**Case 1: Beating of journalist Awadhesh Parashar, Uttar Pradesh**

On 12 March 2021, journalist Awadhesh Parashar was allegedly thrashed by party workers of Samajwadi party during a press conference in Moradabad, Uttar Pradesh. On the complaint of the journalist, an FIR was registered at Pakhwara police station against several workers of Samajwadi Party including the chief of the party Akhilesh Yadav. The alleged assault took place when the journalist asked questions about Azam Khan to the former Uttar Pradesh chief minister.

**Case 2: Brutal beating of journalist Pateshwari Singh, Uttar Pradesh**

On 29 June 2021, Pateshwari Singh, a freelance journalist from Uttar Pradesh, was knocked off his motorcycle by a vehicle and hit on the head with iron rods by five men after he had written about lack of...
development in the Ayodhya constituency of a BJP legislator. Singh, who writes for newspapers and web portals, was admitted to the district hospital in Ayodhya with serious injuries to the back of his skull. The injured journalist said he had written some articles about the alleged lack of development in the constituency of Gosainganj MLA Indra Pratap Tiwari alias Kahbbo Tiwari, and he had alleged that Tiwari’s henchmen had been threatening him with dire consequences for his articles. However, the MLA denied any involvement in the attack on the journalist. Police registered a case against unidentified persons for attacking the journalist and started an investigation.106

Case 3: Attack on four journalists and five media houses, Tripura

On 8 September 2021, at least four journalists of Pratibadi Kalam, a vernacular daily, were injured after they were attacked allegedly by BJP activists in Agartala, Tripura. The office of the vernacular daily was ransacked, equipment, documents, computers and Closed-Circuit Television cameras destroyed, and cars and bikes were set ablaze. As per FIR filed, a huge contingent of police remained as silent spectators during the attack. The attackers were armed with lathis and sharp cutting deadly weapons. One of the journalists identified as Prasenjit Saha was hit on the back of his head by a sharp cutting weapon injuring him seriously.107

Apart from Pratibadi Kalam, four other media houses - PB24, Kalmer Shakti, Daily Desharkatha and Duranta TV were ransacked and torched during a BJP rally in Agartala.108 On 28 September 2021, the PCI expressed concern on the attacks on media houses and directed the Chief Secretary and Director General of Police of Tripura to submit report.109

Case 4: Attack on S Kumaravelu and PuthiyaThalaimurai, Tamil Nadu

On 6 October 2021, S Kumaravelu, a reporter with news channel PuthiyaThalaimurai and its cameraman, Prem Kumar J, were allegedly beaten by Kumaravelu V, son of independent candidate V Parvathy and his friends while they were reporting on the local body polls at an
electoral booth in Ramalai village in Vellore district, Tamil Nadu. According to Kumaravelu, they pushed them and hit on their backs. The two police constables present there were mere spectators. They escaped by running away.\textsuperscript{110}

Case 5: Beating of journalist Elangbam Rameshwar, Manipur

On 24 October 2021, Elangbam Rameshwar, a correspondent with Imphal vernacular newspaper ‘NaharolgiThoudang’, was allegedly beaten up by 20 persons inside his house in Thoubal district, Manipur. The attackers were allegedly the members of the Congress Block Committee of the Heirok constituency. Elangbam Rameshwar was beaten in front of his family members. The journalist had to be hospitalised as he sustained injuries from the attack.\textsuperscript{111}

ii. Attacks by vigilantes, unidentified persons or mob

At least 12 journalists were physically attacked in the line of duty by vigilantes/mob and unidentified miscreants during 2021. The maximum number of attacks on journalists were reported from Tripura with attacks on five journalists followed by one each in Delhi, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh as given below:

Table 8: Journalists targeted by vigilantes, unidentified persons and mob

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of journalists</th>
<th>State/UT</th>
<th>No. of journalists</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anmol Pritam</td>
<td>Delhi</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shvaji</td>
<td>Kerala</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nishant Rajput</td>
<td>Madhya Pradesh</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ali Akbar Lashkar, Miltan Dhar and Bapan Das</td>
<td>Tripura</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balram Kumar</td>
<td>Bihar</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SukhpalPolali</td>
<td>Karnataka</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mannan Haque</td>
<td>Tripura</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The details of the cases of physical attacks on journalists by the non-state actors are given below.

On 8 August 2021, Anmol Pritam, a journalist with the online news organisation National Dastak, alleged that a group of Hindutva supporters tried to force him to chant “Jai Shri Ram” at an event at Jantar Mantar in Delhi. A member of the group also called him a “jihadi” when he refused to chant the slogan.\(^{112}\)

On 9 August 2021, Shvaji, photographer of Siraj Daily, was beaten up by lawyers in court premises at Vanchiyoor in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala. The incident took place after the photographer tried to take pictures of two accused persons in the killing of journalist KM Basheer in a car crash in February 2020. The Working Journalists’ Union President, Suresh Velliangalam, too was manhandled in the incident. The attackers also snatched away their camera, mobiles and identity cards.\(^{113}\)

On the intervening night of 12 and 13 November 2021, Nishant Rajput, an electronic media journalist was beaten by three persons in Seoni district, Madhya Pradesh. The journalist was covering a cultural programme when the attackers who were gambling attacked him. Police registered an FIR in the case and all three accused identified as Anand Dongre, Kanhaiya Dongre and Golu Kandiya were arrested. He sustained injuries and had to be hospitalised.\(^{114}\)

On 21 November 2021, Ali Akbar Lashkar (27), a journalist working with Kolkata-based Bengali news portal Ab Tak Khabar, was beaten by a mob outside the East Agartala Women’s Police Station in West District, Tripura. The journalist, who had gone to the police station for reporting about the arrest of leader of Trinamool Congress, suffered multiple injuries in his body including head and eye. The mob called...
him a dalal (broker) and started beating him. Three other journalists, two identified as Miltan Dhar and Bapan Das, working for news portals NewsVanguard and Times24 respectively, were also allegedly assaulted outside the police station. A woman journalist was also heckled by the mob.115

On 21 November 2021, journalist Balram Kumar (30) was critically injured after being shot at by a person identified as Suman Kumar Varnwal at Geetwas market under Raniganj police station in Araria district of Bihar. The victim, a small businessman working in a news portal in Araria, is battling for his life at a private hospital in Purnia.116

On 23 November 2021, Sukhpal Polali, a Kannada news TV channel journalist, suffered injuries after he was hit on his head with a rod by a lawyer identified as Yadunandan at Ashoknagar in Mangaluru, Karnataka.117

On 25 November 2021, Mannan Haque, a journalist reporting for a Bengali daily, was critically injured after he was attacked by miscreants at Bishalgarh in Sepahijala district, Tripura. He sustained several injuries in the body including in the head.118

On 29 November 2021, Mridusmanta Baruah, a journalist with a private TV Channel, was injured when an unruly mob attacked him and two other persons in Jorhat town, Assam. The incident reportedly took place after a man was injured in a road accident.119

On 5 December 2021, senior journalist Girish Kuber, editor of Marathi daily Loksatta and writer, was attacked with ink by suspected activists of a Maratha group, Sambhaji Brigade at a literary meet in Nashik district, Maharashtra. The attackers were irked by certain references Kuber made about Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj, the son of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj in his book.120

On 8 December 2021, Rohit Kumar, a journalist from Uttar Pradesh, was beaten by a group of youths near Hero Honda Chowk flyover on the Delhi-Gurgaon expressway in Gurgaon, Haryana. The journalist was returning home on his vehicle from Jaipur with his friend. He was allegedly dragged out of the vehicle, pushed on the ground and
beaten by the youth. The medical report of the victim noted injuries on his head, eyes and other body parts.\textsuperscript{121}

iii. Online threats/harassment

In July 2021, journalist Fatima Khan, who covered the 2020 riots in northeast Delhi, was among the women who were targeted by an online application called “Sulli Deals”, where photos of Muslim women were uploaded online, implying that these women were “up for sale”. ‘Sulli’ or ‘Sulla’ is a derogatory word used to refer to Muslims.\textsuperscript{122} On 8 July 2021, the Delhi Police registered a complaint against unknown creators of the “Sulli Deals” app. The Delhi Police stated that a case of sexual harassment under Section 354-A of the IPC was registered following a complaint received on National Cybercrime Reporting Portal regarding “Sulli Deals Mobile Application”.\textsuperscript{123} By the year end, the accused were not arrested.

On 11 November 2021, a woman journalist was allegedly molested and her friend assaulted by the driver of an app-based cab at Behala, Kolkata in West Bengal. The woman journalist, who works at TV news channel, was returning home from her office in Salt Lake Sector 5 with the friend on a scooter when the incident happened at Satyen Roy Road-James Long Road crossing. The cab driver was arrested after she lodged a complaint at Behala police station.\textsuperscript{124}

\textsuperscript{95} Local Journalist Kidnapped, Killed in Maharashtra’s Ahmednagar, The Wire, 7 April 2021, https://thewire.in/media/local-journalist-kidnapped-killed-in-maharashtras-ahmednagar


\textsuperscript{97} UP: Journalist dies after flagging liquor mafia’s threat, police call it accident. The Indian Express, 14 June 2021, https://indianexpress.com/article/india/up-journalist-found-dead-day-after-his-complaint-on-mafia-threat-7357989/


103. Lakhimpur Kheri incident was ‘pre-planned conspiracy’: SIT, The Times of India, 14 December 2021, https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/lakhimpur-kheri-incident-was-well-planned-conspiracy-sit/articleshow/88271947.cms


