

Journalist Mukesh Chandrakar Found Murdered in Chhattisgarh, Raising Concerns Over Media Safety



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The new year began on a tragic note for India's media fraternity, as journalist Mukesh Chandrakar (30) was found murdered in Bijapur, Chhattisgarh, on Friday. His body was discovered in a newly constructed septic tank owned by an influential contractor in Chattanpara. Mukesh, known for his fearless reporting on corruption and insurgency in central India, had been missing since January 1, 2025. His family had lodged a missing person's report shortly after his disappearance.

Mukesh, a seasoned journalist and the creator of the popular YouTube channel *Bastar Junction*, garnered millions of views for his investigative reports. Local journalists and press organizations have called his death a targeted attack on press freedom, citing his bold exposés of corruption and his advocacy for marginalized communities.

“It is deeply troubling that a journalist who spoke truth to power has been silenced. Mukesh Chandrakar is the first journalist to be killed globally this year, and we demand a thorough investigation to bring his killers to justice,” said Blaise Lempen, president of the Press Emblem Campaign (PEC). Lempen urged Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai to ensure swift justice for Mukesh’s grieving family.

PEC’s South Asia representative, Nava Thakuria, highlighted Mukesh's contributions to investigative journalism, particularly his coverage of misappropriated government funds and his stand against the activities of ultra-left insurgents in the Bastar district.

The global toll of journalist fatalities reached 179 in 2024, spanning 25 countries. India reported four journalist killings last year, all from central India, a region fraught with challenges for the press. Uttar Pradesh recorded the deaths of two journalists, Ashutosh Srivastava and Dilip Saini, while Bihar and Madhya Pradesh lost Shivshankar Jha and Salman Ali Khan, respectively.

Mukesh’s untimely death has once again spotlighted the perils faced by journalists in conflict zones and the urgent need for stronger protections for media professionals in India.

Assam Times Staff. editor@assamtimes.org

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