

MASSIVE DHARNA AT JANTAR-MANTAR BY JOURNALISTS

Time to enact a Journalists Protection Act



NUJ (I) Secretary General Ras Bihari addressing the journalists assembled at the dharna.

Condemning the brutal attacks on journalists in different parts of the country including the killing of senior journalist J. Day of Mumbai daily *Mid Day* in strong words, hundreds of journalists under the banner of National Union of Journalists (India) and Delhi Journalists Association on June 25, 2011 staged a dharna at Jantar Mantar and demanded immediate enactment of a Journalists Protection Act.

The agitated journalists also demanded that investigation into the attacks on journalists should be carried out by senior police officers equal to SP or ACP and the culprits must be sternly punished by setting up fast track courts. After the dharna, a memorandum was presented to President of India Smt. Pratibha Patil.

The dharna was attended by senior journalists including NUJ (I) Secretary General *Ras Bihari*, Delhi Journalists Association President *Manoj Verma*, NUJ Treasurer *Manohar Singh*, Vice President *Subhash Nigam*, former NUJ (I) President *Dr. NK Trikha*, veteran journalist *Rajendra Prabhu*, *Aurabindo Ghose*, *M.D. Gangwar*, *Vinay Rai* (Zee News), *Dinesh Sharma* (Punjab Kesari), *Ravindra Singh* (ETV), *Anshuman Tewari*, *Ramnarayan Srivastava*, *Rajkishore*, *Rajsekhar Singh*, *Nitin Pradhan* (all from Dainik Jagran), *Kumar Gajendra Chauhan* (President, Crime Reporter Association), *Satendra*

Tripathi, *Kewal Tiwari*, *Ajay Pandey* (all from NaiDunia), *Pramod Saini* (DJA secretary) and many others.

NUJ (I) Secretary General *Ras Bihari* urged the Union Home Minister P. Chidambaram to ensure an adequate security cover to all the journalists covering the life-threatening events by demanding the enactment of a Journalists Protection Act, he said the proposed Act should ensure that the attack on journalists should be registered as non-bailable offence and at least a Magisterial enquiry is conducted in every case. "Such an Act would go a long way to improve security of the working journalists. It would also ensure that no attack on a working journalist who is discharging his duty as a recognised representative of the Press, is suppressed or allowed to be ignored," he said.

Delhi Journalist Association President *Manoj Verma* said the broad daylight killing of investigative journalist J. Day in Mumbai on June 11, 2011 highlighted the continuing threat to working journalists. "This is not an isolated instance either. In Maharashtra alone, over 180 attacks on working journalists have been reported in recent years. There are instances of even harassing and killing the family members of the journalists, which must stop forthwith," he said demanding crackdown of the unholy nexus of some politicians and the mafias.