



JANASANYOG, ASSAM
CHIEF MINISTER'S PUBLIC RELATIONS CELL, DISPUR

PRESS RELEASE

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CM attends state level programme of National Press Day 2020

A vigilant media is must for a robust and healthy democracy: CM

Dispur, Nov 16: "A vigilant media is a prerequisite to keep a democratic society robust and healthy. Media must make the government accountable before the public and constructive criticism is necessary to a keep the government on track. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the media persons always stayed at the forefront and did not shy away from their duties to get news for people, even at the risk of their health."

Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal today said while speaking at the state level programme of National Press Day 2020 organised by Information and Public Relations Department, Govt of Assam at Srimanta Sankardev Kalakshetra.

Admitting that media sector has lots of problems and COVID-19 pandemic also impacted it negatively, along with other sectors, the Chief Minister said that state government has been taking various steps for the welfare of the journalist fraternity and would launch more such schemes in the future as well. The Chief Minister also referred to his visits to 36 districts during the trying times of Coronavirus induced lockdown and appreciated the role played by media personnel which he witnessed during those visits.

Along with health department, which had the most crucial responsibility during the entire pandemic situation and other agencies like police, PHED, fire brigade, power department etc, media personnel also played key part in dissemination of information among the public and acted as a bridge between the government and the public, Sonowal said. He also urged the media to curb incidences of fear mongering and fake news during crisis situations.

Referring to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's motto of *sabka sath, sabka vikash, sabka viswas*, Sonowal highlighted the visionary steps taken by Prime Minister to develop all corners of the country equally and how transparency has been brought into the government system, rooting out middlemen in implementation of government schemes. He thanked the media for its support to the state government in the crusade against corruption and urged the media to highlight the state government's initiatives to protect the natural environment of Assam and motivate the youngsters to contribute in this mission.

Media Adviser to the Chief Minister Hrishikesh Goswami also spoke on the occasion and referred to the adage of 'pen is mightier than the sword' to drive home his point that media must exercise caution while using its power as it has tremendous responsibility of guiding the society as well. He also appreciated the role played by media personnel during COVID19 pandemic and paid tributes to those journalists who laid down their lives in the line of duty.

Website: cm.assam.gov.in/assam.mygov.in



/CMOfficeAssam

E-mail: cmprcell09@gmail.com



/cmofficeassam



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Senior Professor and Head of Mass Communication and Journalism Department, Tezpur University Dr. Joya Chakraborty, in her key note address, underlined the service rendered by the media while acting as the connection between the government and the governed during Coronavirus lockdown period and stressed on the need for specific training for journalists in fields such as health reporting etc.

She pointed out slipups in communication of crucial messages by few media houses during the pandemic situation which led to unwanted situations while also throwing light on job loss, pay cuts, ad revenue loss etc. in the media sector due to the Coronavirus scare. Financial stability of journalists must be ensured by the media houses for facilitating ethical journalism, she added.

On the occasion of National Press Day 2020, the Chief Minister felicitated Padmashree Eli Ahmed, veteran sports journalist Premadhar Sarma, journalists Mahesh Chandra Medhi, Tapas Samaddar, Ranjit Kumar Sarma and Kunja Mohan Roy for their contribution to the field of journalism and literature in the state.

Commissioner and Secretary of Information and Public Relations Department Preetom Saikia gave the welcome address in the programme which was attended by Secretary of the department Neera Gogoi Sonowal, Director of Information and Public Relations Anupam Choudhury and several senior and eminent journalists of the state.

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