

Report on the visit of the Hon'ble Chairman Press Council of India to Bangladesh on an invitation from the Bangladesh Press Council from 17th to 20th February 2018

The Bangladesh Press Council, a statutory authority and an internal self-regulatory mechanism of Press in Bangladesh, invited Hon'ble Chairman, Press Council of India, to represent the Council in the 'Bangladesh Press Council Day' celebration. It was followed by deliberations on the formation of South Asian Alliance of Press Councils (SAAPC)¹ at Dhaka, Bangladesh from 18th to 20th February 2018.

The Chairman, Press Council of India participated in Bangladesh Press Council Day celebrations followed by distribution of awards to journalists, who excelled in the field of journalism in Bangladesh. The ceremony was observed on 18th February 2018 and was graced by the Hon'ble President of Bangladesh as the Chief Guest, the Hon'ble Minister of Information of Govt. of Bangladesh and State Minister of Information, Govt. of Bangladesh and members of Bangladesh Press Council and delegates from Press Council Nepal, Sri Lanka Press Council, representatives from Myanmar Press Council and President of World Associations of Press Councils (WAPC).

Representatives from respective Press Councils of South Asian countries including Myanmar, met on 19th February 2018, in Dhaka to deliberate on the issue of formation of South Asian Alliance of Press Councils. The meeting was attended by the Chairman, Bangladesh Press Council and its Members, Chairman of Press Council Nepal, Chairman Sri Lanka Press Council and representatives from Myanmar Press Council, and other delegates and President of WAPC. In the meeting, the Chairman, Press Council of India, besides emphasizing on the importance of physical safety of

¹ A proposed structure comprised of South Asian countries inclusive of Myanmar. The Alliance is to have its Headquarter in Delhi, India with the Indian Press Council Secretariat the permanent Secretariat of the Alliance and its Secretary, the permanent Secretary General of the Alliance. The Chairman Press Council of India is appointed as the interim President of the Alliance until the Alliance is formalised in keeping with the provisions of the proposed Constitution of the Alliance. It is also pertinent to mention that the proposal has the endorsement of the Govt of India.

journalists in the sub-continent, deliberated on the significance of extending financial security to the Journalists in the South Asian region. The Chairman, highlighted until journalists are secured financially, the freedom of Press will continue to be under stress as only a financially secured journalist can function objectively, effectively and independently. He further added, financial independence of journalist is a condition precedent for the sustenance of free press. Steps necessary for formalising the establishment of SAAPC, was discussed by the participating countries. However, the Governmental approval of few South Asian Countries for their respective SAAPC membership, is under process.