May 5, 2015

World Press Freedom Day observed

World Press Freedom Day observed on Sunday in the country like other parts of the world.

The World Press Freedom Day is the day designated by the United Nations to create awareness about the importance of freedom of expression.

The Day gives people the chance to pay tribute to media professionals who risked or lost their lives in the line of duty.

The day's theme for this year was: "Let Journalism Thrive! Towards Better Reporting, Gender Equality, and Safety in the Digital Age".

In connection with the Press Freedom Day, all affiliated unions of journalists had organised different programmes in order to create awareness among the working journalists about their rights, professional responsibilities as well as countering threats of different natures.

The World Press Freedom Day was established by the General Assembly of the United Nations in December 1993 as an outgrowth of the Seminar on Promoting an Independent and Pluralistic African Press. This seminar took place in Namibia in 1991 and led to the adoption of the Windhoek Declaration on Promoting Independent and Pluralistic Media.

Although World Press Freedom Day has only been celebrated since 1993, it has much deeper roots in the United Nations. Article 19 of the 1948 Universal Declaration on Human Rights states that everyone "has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers".

Each year since 1997, the UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize is awarded to honour the work of an individual or an organization defending or promoting freedom of expression, especially if it puts the individual's life at risk.

The award is named after a journalist murdered in 1986 for denouncing drug barons. Last year it was awarded posthumously to a Russian investigative reporter, who was murdered in a contract-style killing in 2006.

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