



# PRESS CLUB OF INDIA

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26<sup>th</sup> March, 2024

## **Press Statement**

The Press Club of India condemns the assault on photojournalists by Delhi police. The Working News Cameraman's Association has released photographs which showed unruly senior police officers holding some photojournalists by their throats and threatening others with dire consequences.

This happened while the photojournalists were covering the public protests by the Aam Aadmi Party workers against the arrest of their leader, Arvind Kejriwal. The Delhi Chief Minister was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate on March 21. Supporters of Mr. Kejriwal have been on the streets of Delhi demanding his release for the last six days.

It is the job of reporters and photojournalists to cover political protests. As such, photojournalists who were assaulted by Delhi Police were merely doing their job. From the pictures it's clear that senior police officers grabbed the throat of Mr. Arun Thakur from the India Today group—who has been in the profession for more than two decades—in the most threatening manner. Another photojournalist, Salman Ali of Hindustan, fractured his elbow in the melee triggered by Delhi Police. Any form of assault on journalists and photojournalists is totally unacceptable.

We would also like to remind the top brass of Delhi Police that Freedom of Press is a fundamental right, which the Supreme Court has underlined on a number of occasions in most emphatic terms. As recently as March 12, 2024, a Supreme Court bench of Justices AS Oka and Ujjal Bhuyan stated: “Now, the time has come to enlighten and educate our police machinery on the concept of freedom of speech and expression guaranteed by Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution and the extent of reasonable restraint on their free speech and expression.” From the behaviour of Delhi Police this morning, it seems even the words of caution by the highest court of the land have fallen on insensitive ears.

The Press Club of India demands a high-level inquiry by a retired judge into the highhandedness of Delhi police so that the aggrieved photojournalists get justice and are able to do their professional work without facing police brutality. Some of the assaulting police officers and personnel can be clearly identified in the images. The Press Club of India demands their immediate suspension while the inquiry is on.

**Sd/-**

**Gautam Lahiri**  
**President**  
**Press Club of India**

**Sd/-**

**Neeraj Thakur**  
**Secretary General**  
**Press Club of India**