



**Commonwealth
Journalists
Association**

Press Statement

The Commonwealth Journalists Association (CJA) is concerned about the safety and liberty of one of its Vice Presidents and Bangladesh chapter General Secretary Shyamal Dutta against whom an arrest warrant has been issued on account of an article in his newspaper.

Mr. Dutta is Editor of *Bhorer Kagaj*, a Bengali language daily published from Dhaka. A warrant has been issued against him on account of a report carried by the newspaper about alleged 'vulgarity' contained in a book on Hadith published by the Madrassah Education Board, an official body of the Bangladesh Government.

This has been misinterpreted as if the newspaper report has termed the Hadith as vulgar, which is far from the truth. Processions and a demonstration in front of the Press Club in Dhaka took place on December 23, 2017. The protestors demanded punishment for Mr. Dutta and the concerned reporter. A string of legal notices have been served on him and an apology has been demanded.

The newspaper has issued a clarification that it merely reported on the contents of the book, quoting sources, and had not passed any comment on Hadith.

Given incidents over the past many months where bloggers and journalists have faced attacks, the CJA is extremely worried about the liberty and safety of Mr. Dutta, his team and the newspaper establishment.

Bangladesh is a secular democracy and CJA expects the Government of Bangladesh to ensure adequate protection to the life and liberty of Mr. Dutta and other journalists concerned.

The CJA, is a voluntary, non-government organization of media practitioners, accredited to the Commonwealth Secretariat. It has branches in about 25 Commonwealth countries, besides related professional associations function in a dozen others.

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