

## MEDIA AS TARGET: THE HINDU EDITORIAL ON ED SEARCHES AT NEWSCLICK OFFICE

Relevant for: Security Related Matters | Topic: Role of Media and Social Networking Sites in internal security challenges

Ordinarily, searches and seizures are the legitimate starting point of an investigation, done on the basis of prior information. But the [ED's raids in the office of independent digital news platform NewsClick](#), and in the residence of its promoter and editor-in-chief, have invited justified condemnation from organisations representing the media. There is every likelihood that this operation is linked to the platform's in-depth coverage of ongoing protests as well as the various struggles of the people and the grassroots organisations that represent them. Ostensibly arising from an FIR registered by the Delhi police some months ago, the ED is said to be investigating alleged money-laundering to the tune of 30 crore. Not much is known about the nature of the police case, but the agency is empowered by the Prevention of Money-Laundering Act to investigate if the proceeds of crime related to a 'predicate offence' have been laundered. Whether such a primary offence has been established or not, and if so, whether NewsClick is in any way linked to it, is unclear. However, in the light of the manner in which the central agency is wont to enter the scene to investigate both real and imaginary allegations against anyone vocally critical of the government, it is difficult to brush aside the suspicion that the website is being targeted for its coverage of the [farmers' agitation](#) as well as last year's country-wide protests against the [Citizenship \(Amendment\) Act](#).

The present regime's record is quite dismal when it comes to the obvious use of central agencies such as the CBI, ED, IT and even the NIA, to rein in dissenting voices. It is unfortunate that specialised agencies are allowing themselves to be used as force multipliers in political battles against sections of the Opposition. Amidst claims that there are varying kinds of conspiracies against the government and India, it is no surprise that relentless journalistic focus on protests, which are basically steps taken in pursuit of redress for public grievances, is inviting repressive action. Laws that are serious in nature and ought not to be invoked lightly are being used with abandon against those seen to have invited the establishment's wrath. This may explain the frequency with which the offence of sedition is being invoked for speeches and writings, while allegations of anti-national activity peddled by those groomed to build such narratives lead to action under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act. In other instances, cases of promoting social enmity or outraging religious sentiments are also slapped selectively to 'discipline' comedians and script-writers. The Supreme Court's intervention has [protected prominent journalists from arrest](#) for defamation for tweets that turned out to be incorrect. It no more behoves a responsible and responsive government to dismiss criticism of its treatment of dissenters, including journalists who do not agree with it, as motivated or inspired by foreign elements.

You have reached your limit for free articles this month.

Already have an account ? [Sign in](#)

Start your 14 days free trial. [Sign Up](#)

Find mobile-friendly version of articles from the day's newspaper in one easy-to-read list.

Enjoy reading as many articles as you wish without any limitations.

A select list of articles that match your interests and tastes.

Move smoothly between articles as our pages load instantly.

A one-stop-shop for seeing the latest updates, and managing your preferences.

We brief you on the latest and most important developments, three times a day.

\*Our Digital Subscription plans do not currently include the e-paper, crossword and print.

Dear reader,

We have been keeping you up-to-date with information on the developments in India and the world that have a bearing on our health and wellbeing, our lives and livelihoods, during these difficult times. To enable wide dissemination of news that is in public interest, we have increased the number of articles that can be read free, and extended free trial periods. However, we have a request for those who can afford to subscribe: please do. As we fight disinformation and misinformation, and keep apace with the happenings, we need to commit greater resources to news gathering operations. We promise to deliver quality journalism that stays away from vested interest and political propaganda.

Dear subscriber,

Thank you!

Your support for our journalism is invaluable. It's a support for truth and fairness in journalism. It has helped us keep apace with events and happenings.

The Hindu has always stood for journalism that is in the public interest. At this difficult time, it becomes even more important that we have access to information that has a bearing on our health and well-being, our lives, and livelihoods. As a subscriber, you are not only a beneficiary of our work but also its enabler.

We also reiterate here the promise that our team of reporters, copy editors, fact-checkers, designers, and photographers will deliver quality journalism that stays away from vested interest and political propaganda.

Suresh Nambath

Please enter a valid email address.

From the abrogation of the special status of Jammu and Kashmir, to the landmark Ayodhya verdict, 2019 proved to be an eventful year.

Subscribe to The Hindu now and get unlimited access.

Already have an account? [Sign In](#)

Start your 14 days free trial [Sign Up](#)

You can support quality journalism by turning off ad blocker or purchase a subscription for unlimited access to The Hindu.

[Sign up for a 30 day free trial.](#)

**END**

Downloaded from **crackIAS.com**

© **Zuccess App** by crackIAS.com

CrackIAS.com