

June 21, 2020

To,

Mr. Ram Narasimhan

Dr. Malini Parthasarathy

Ms. Nirmala Lakshman

Ms. Nalini Krishnan

Mr. Murali Narasimhan

Mr. Ravi Narasimhan

Mr. Venugopal K

Ms. Aparna Ravi

Mr. Rohit Ramesh

Mr. Prithvi Arun

Ms. Divya Venugopal

Ms. Akhila Iyengar

Ms. Malavika Nataraj

Mr. Mahalingam Seturaman

Mr. Melarkode Ganesan Parameswaran

Mr. Vishal Vijay

Ms. Lakshmi Srinath

Mr. Narayan Lakshman

Other members of The Hindu Publishing Group board

Mr. Suresh Nambath, Editor, The Hindu

Mr. L.V. Navaneeth, CEO of The Hindu Publishing Group

Dear Madams/Sirs,

This is regarding our (the undersigneds') collective concern at social media posts and word-of-mouth speculation about The Hindu's Mumbai edition shutting down and the loss of several jobs at The Hindu in Chennai and other locations as well. Here is one such reference by journalist KrishnaPrasad. Another by NewsLaundry. And this one on Medium.

<https://indianjournalismreview.com/2020/06/19/the-hindu-virtually-sounds-the-death-knell-for-its-mumbai-edition-tells-25-elite-staffers-to-leave-as-covid-wreaks-havoc-to-revenue-streams/>

<https://www.newslaundry.com/2020/06/20/the-hindu-lays-off-20-employees-from-its-mumbai-bureau>

<https://medium.com/news-covid19/lay-offs-and-cutbacks-in-indian-newsrooms-2020-what-we-know-bdba9dec1644>

Reports such as these have been circulating since the morning of June 19. Several of us have also been contacted by other news organisations seeking clarification on the same. But since, we have had no official intimation of the same, none of us have commented yet.

All the undersigned have doubled-up on efforts to work to the best of our abilities during the ongoing global COVID-19 pandemic; often putting ourselves and our families at risk. The Mumbai edition, which launched on November 28, 2015, has built up a strong team across — politics, business, features, cinema, photo and design — with credibility in all the respective industries. All of us have co-dependents in our lives and are the primary breadwinners in our households – with life partners, elderly parents and young children to look after. Not to forget, we are in the midst of a global pandemic and have been frightened by the thought of losing our jobs. On April 14, we received a reassuring note from the HR department appreciating our work during lockdown times. On April 25, came the note from our CEO on salary cuts, effective from the April 2020 salary onwards.

In light of the speculation surrounding layoffs and the closure of the Mumbai edition, we request you for clarity. For all of us, what is of primary importance is our job security. Each one of us undersigned takes great pride in our work and feels that our values are aligned with 140-year-old The Hindu's sense of integrity and ethics. We seek written clarity about the future of the Mumbai edition as well as the positions we all currently hold.

All of the undersigned wanted to work at The Hindu, as it has been considered the ideal workplace for Indian journalists, in fact – where journalists are well respected and editorial freedoms are a given. The principles on which The Hindu has operated in the past is what should apply to us as a team now. For a news organisation that prides itself on reporting labour laws and violations of the same – in a robust manner – we appeal to you to clarify the situation to us in writing.

Sincerely,

20 signatories, with six names being withheld from publication for privacy issues

1. Deborah Jacob George Cornelious, Assistant Editor
2. Sharad Vyas, Deputy Editor
3. Piyush Pandey, Corporate Editor
4. Gautam S. Mengle, Special Correspondent
5. Arunangsu Roy Chowdhury, Chief Photographer
6. Sudarshan V, Senior Associate Editor
7. Namrata Joshi, Associate Editor
8. Aditya Anand, Deputy Editor
9. Gauri Vij, Associate Editor
10. Ashish Rukhaiyar, Markets Editor
11. Tanvi Deshpande, Senior Correspondent
12. Manojit Saha, Deputy Editor
13. Prashant Nakwe, Photo Editor
14. Ajeet Mahale, Reporter