

INDIAN JOURNALISTS UNION (IJU)

(Regd No.4001)

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IJU Questions Govt Intent To Block Access To Information

Hyderabad/New Delhi, July 13: The Indian Journalists Union has questioned the Government's manoeuvres to block media's and in fact the public's right to access to information. This so with the Finance Ministry's recent restrictions imposed on journalists, even those who are holding PIB accreditation cards, to enter its premises to carry out their rightful duties.

The IJU President and Press Council member D Amar and Secretary General and IFJ Vice President Sabina Inderjit in a statement said that the restrictions, wherein the journalists would now need to seek appointment first to enter the Ministry's premises, makes hollow the government's commitment to a free press and even makes a mockery of its accreditation facility.

The government, said the IJU leadership, must remember that the public's right to access to information is an inherent right in any democracy and that imposing restrictions on journalists from gathering it amounts to an attack on the freedom of the press. The media, said the IJU, is well-versed with its responsibility and that the Finance Ministry's reasoning of asking journalists to wait in a room outside North Block gate No 2 till a bureaucrat agrees to meet them for its better functioning, is a sham. The intent, said the IJU is clearly to keep a close watch on the journalists and block them from doing investigative stories, which in a way makes the government answerable.

The IJU therefore has demanded that the Finance Ministry immediately takes back its order of imposing restrictions on movement of journalists by accepting that its order does amount to censorship. The government must ensure that its commitment to press freedom, vital to our democracy, is not compromised with.

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(Y Narender Reddy)
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