

INDIAN JOURNALISTS UNION (IJU)

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IJU Condemns UP Govt For Case Against Journo

New Delhi/Hyderabad, September 3: The Indian Journalists Union strongly condemns the Uttar Pradesh government for filing an FIR against a journalist in Mirzapur district for reporting the truth and demands that it be withdrawn forthwith.

Pawan Jaiswal, with Hindi publication *Jansandesh*, had shot a video, showing children sitting on the floor and eating *rotis* with salt at the district's primary government school, which went viral a week ago, and blowing the lid over the State government's flagship mid-day meal scheme. The Block Education Officer filed a complaint against, Pawan, and two others, including a representative of the local village head accusing them of 'criminal conspiracy to defame the UP government.'

In a statement, IJU Acting President Geetartha Pathak and Secretary General and IFJ Vice President Sabina Inderjit demanded the Yogi Adityanath government withdraw the case immediately as Pawan was doing his duty, reported the truth and in fact drew the attention of the authorities to the irregularities in the scheme, which boasted of an elaborate menu.

The IJU also drew the Government's attention to the fact that the video of children being given roti and salt was confirmed by none other than the Mirzapur DM Anurag Patel, who is quoted by news channels saying, "As soon as the issue came to my notice, I ordered an inquiry. After the allegations of serving roti and salt were found true, two people Murari and Arvind Tripathi have been suspended and strict action will be taken further," he had added.

The IJU said that media's freedom to report and carry out its responsibility was heavily curtailed in Uttar Pradesh and this is not the first instance when an FIR has been lodged against a journalist. It cautioned the government, saying instead of harassing journalists and attacking the freedom of the press in the State, it must put its house in order and not mislead the people.

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(Y.Narender Reddy)

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