

**PRESS RELEASE****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**New Delhi: July 23, 2018** ..... Mr. Rajat Sharma, President, News Broadcasters Association (NBA), has addressed a letter dated 23.7.2018 to the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Kerala, which is reproduced below, on the issue of an FIR filed against Deputy Editor & News Anchor of Mathrubhumi News:

Annie Joseph  
Secretary General

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Speed Post / Email <chiefminister@kerala.gov.in> Fax: 0471 2333489

July 23, 2018

Shri Pinarayi Vijayan  
Hon'ble Chief Minister of Kerala  
3rd Floor, North Block, Secretariat,  
Thiruvananthapuram – 695 001

Dear Pinarayi Vijayan ji,

Mathrubhumi News Television, a member of the News Broadcasters Association (NBA), has brought to our notice that the Kollam Police in Kerala has registered an FIR against Mr. Venu Balakrishnan, Deputy Editor and anchor of Mathrubhumi News television channel. The FIR was filed following a complaint filed by local leaders of DYFI, the youth wing of the ruling CPI (M), under Section 153 A of IPC for initiating a discussion on the channel on 7<sup>th</sup> June, 2018 in the Super Prime Time on an incident involving the torture of a young Muslim by the Police and the ruckus in the State Assembly following Police atrocities. It is understood that the opening sentences of the anchor's comment was taken out of context and a case foisted against him.

While the NBA maintains that no individual or institution is above the law, it condemns any attempt to muzzle the media and causing any interference in the free functioning of news operations. Such a move also undermines the basic tenets of free speech enshrined in the Constitution of India. Media is providing a service that is essential for any democratic society and keeps the public informed and hence must be protected by the law enforcing agencies. NBA considers the police action against the anchor, based on the FIR, unacceptable and an attack on the freedom of the press.

We request you and the State administration to ensure that journalists and media persons are allowed to perform their duties in a free and fearless manner.

Thanking you,

Yours faithfully,  
Sd/-  
Rajat Sharma  
President