

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New Delhi : August 22, 2008 - In a first-ever initiative by an Association of private news and current affairs broadcasters in India, and as a measure of self-regulation, the News Broadcasters Association ("NBA") today announces the constitution and establishment of the "News Broadcasting Standards (Disputes Redressal) Authority" to enforce NBA's Code of Ethics & Broadcasting Standards.

The NBA believes that media that is meant to expose the lapses in government and in public life cannot obviously be regulated by government, else it would lack credibility. It is a fundamental paradigm of freedom of speech that media must be free from governmental control in the matter of "content" and that censorship and free speech are sworn enemies. It therefore falls upon the journalistic profession to evolve institutional checks and safeguards, specific to the electronic media, that can define the path that would conform to the highest standards of rectitude and journalistic ethics and guide the media in the discharge of its solemn Constitutional duty. There are models of governance evolved in other countries which have seen an evolution of the electronic media, including the news media, much before it developed in India. The remarkable feature of all these models is "self-governance", and a monitoring by a "jury of peers".

The NBA also believes that the basic strength of a news channel lies in its credibility, from which flows its ability to influence public opinion. A censure emanating from a jury of its peers would indisputably affect the credibility of a channel. Besides, such a process is not without its legal ramifications. A channel acting in breach of established guidelines could hardly defend its motives or suggest that it was acting fairly, if it is censured by a jury comprising its peers. Interference by government, however well intentioned, would however imperil not just independent journalism, but the very process of investigation itself. It therefore has become imperative that news channels lay down guidelines, procedural safeguards and establish a body that would act as a watchdog and a grievance redressal forum.

The NBA had committed to the government, that as a measure of self-regulation it would put in place a Code of Ethics & Broadcasting Standards to be followed by its Members ; and a News Broadcasting Standards Disputes Redressal Authority ("AuthORITY") for enforcement of the Code. This initiative taken by the NBA was welcomed by the government.

The Nine Member Authority will be chaired by **Mr. Justice J. S. Verma , formerly Chief Justice of India and former Chairperson of the National Human Rights Commission.**

The other Members on the Authority are:

Members under "Eminent Persons" category:

- i) Mr Ramachandra Guha, Historian & Author
- ii) Mr Kiran Karnik, Former President NASSCOM
- iii) Prof Dipankar Gupta , Eminent Sociologist (JNU)
- iv) Mr Nitin Desai, Economist & former Under Secretary General, United Nations

Members under "Editors" category:

- i) Mr Vinod Kapri, Managing Editor, India TV.
- ii) Mr B. V. Rao, Group Editor, Zee News
- iii) Mr Milind Khandekar, Managing Editor, Star News
- iv) Mr Arnab Goswami, Editor-in-Chief, Times Now

The Authority will become operational from October 2, 2008.

Annie Joseph
Secretary General

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