

January 16, 2010

TO ALL EDITORS OF NBA

**Re: Showing Mr. Jyoti Basu former Chief Minister of
West Bengal in Comatose condition**

At the Authority meeting held yesterday, the Authority considered the following letter received from Prof. Dipankar Gupta, Member NBA Authority which is reproduced below:

“...it was very distressing to see the number of times our member TV channels repeatedly broadcast Jyoti Basu being taken around in a comatose state with tubes and masks all over him.

We had decided not to take away the dignity of dead people, but the rationale behind this was to allow those who are helpless to retain their sense of self respect on all occasions., even when it seems so tempting to put out on the air waves. Jyoti Basu was always a man who held himself with great pride throughout his long career. He inspired awe and respect. To show him prostrate with tubes through his open mouth is surely a sign of a total lack of consideration. I would like to ask those who okayed this broadcast, would they like others to see them if they are ever in the condition that Jyoti Basu is now?

Why have our Member TV channels not appreciated the thought behind the earlier decision to give dignity to the dead. We should perhaps add "to the dead and dying." When Ted Kennedy died they did not show him being wheeled around in a helpless condition.

Will the message ever go home to our fellow Members in the NBA? Are we exerting ourselves in vain? I am happy we are getting ahead with promos, etc., but the mindset has to change from within. How many injunctions are we going to issue before the thought settles in the consciousness of our TV journalists that good journalism is neither sensationalism nor pandering to base voyeuristic urges...”.

The Authority was of the unanimous view that Editors of NBA may be advised not to use the said visual henceforth. To ensure compliance please circulate the same to all concerned in the Editorial / Production teams as Mr. Jyoti Basu is in a critical condition.

Regards,

Sd/-

Annie Joseph
For & on behalf of
News Broadcasting Standards Authority

CC: All Members/Legal Heads of NBA
Chairperson and Members of the Authority