

INDIAN JOURNALISTS UNION (IJU)

(Regd No.4001)

President

Geetartha Pathak

Mobile: +91 9435048484

Email: pathakgeetartha@gmail.com

Secretary-General

Sabina Inderjit

Mobile: +91 98100 05349

Email: sabinaiju2018@gmail.com

Restore Internet Facility to Kashmir Media: IJU

New Delhi, 29 January: The Indian Journalists Union expresses grave concern over the step-motherly treatment being meted out to the media in Kashmir, wherein the government has selectively failed to restore their limited internet access, but provided the facility to hoteliers and travel operators, among others since January 14. Viewing this internet blockade to media organisations and journalists in Kashmir for past 118 days as a deliberate attempt to gag the press, the IJU demanded the administration restore this basic facility immediately.

Revisiting the Supreme Court's verdict on the Anuradha Bhasin petition on the communication shutdown violating press freedom, in which IJU intervened amongst others, the Union said that while access to internet has been upheld as a constitutionally guaranteed right, the authorities were violating the letter and spirit of the order by singly denying this right to the media and journalists and harming democratic functioning.

Expressing solidarity with the Kashmir Press Club anguish over the administration's bias against the media and issuing no directions to Internet Service Providers for restoring the facility to media houses, IJU President Geetartha Pathak and Secretary General and IFJ Vice President Sabina Inderjit said the intent smacks of ill-motives as well as amounts to denial of the citizens' right to access information.

The IJU also said the attempt to prolong information blockade was also evident by reports suggesting that majority of local news websites, national and international news websites are not among the 300-odd whitelisted websites so far. It again reminded the administration of the Supreme Court observation: "Responsible governments are required to respect the freedom at all times. Journalists are to be accommodated in reporting and there is no justification for allowing a sword of Damocles to hang over the press indefinitely."

For Publication

Sabina Inderjit

Sabina Inderjit

Secretary General