

**PRESS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Re: NBDA condemns attack by SFI activists and the Police search of the offices of Malayalam news channel Asianet**

**New Delhi: March 6, 2023:** News Broadcasters & Digital Association (NBDA) strongly condemns the attack by Student Federation of India (SFI) activists into the office of Malayalam news channel Asianet in Kochi and the subsequent police *search* of its office in Kozhikode, Kerala, a Member of NBDA.

The attack by SFI activists and the subsequent police search of the broadcaster's office, comes in the backdrop of the reporting by Asianet news channel on the issue of drug and sexual abuse of a young girl in Kerala. These actions are not only unacceptable but are also a direct impingement on the media's freedom of speech and expression as enshrined under Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution.

NBDA unequivocally states that there can be no possible justification for attacking and/or searching the broadcaster's premises as such attacks and searches are an obvious attempt to muzzle the media. Media is widely regarded as the fourth pillar of democracy and its function of disseminating news of public interest to the people is indispensable to the functioning of a democracy. Therefore, it is reiterated that any action which prevents the media from performing their duties is violative of the fundamental rights guaranteed by the Constitution.

NBDA urges the Chief Minister of Kerala to take immediate action against the individuals and officials who attacked and/or searched the broadcasters office premises, clearly sending a message that no individuals or officials are beyond the purview of the law.

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**Annie Joseph**  
**Secretary General**