


PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New Delhi: April 16, 2020..... Mr. Rajat Sharma, President, News Broadcasters Association (NBA), has addressed a letter dated 16.4.2020 to Shri Uddhav Thakrey, Hon'ble Chief Minister for Maharashtra, which is attached, requesting for dropping of charges and release of Senior Journalist Mr. Rahul Gurunath Kulkarni and to adopt the recourse of filing complaint before the News Broadcasting Standards Authority (NBSA).



**Annie Joseph
Secretary General**

Encl: As above

Only by Email <cm@maharashtra.gov.in>

April 16, 2020

Shri Uddhav Thakrey
Hon'ble Chief Minister of Maharashtra
Chief Ministers Office
6th Floor, Mantralaya,
Mumbai 400 032.

Dear Udhav Ji,

Re: Request for Dropping of Charges and Release of Senior Journalist Mr. Rahul Gurunath Kulkarni and to adopt the recourse of filing complaint before the News Broadcasting Standards Authority (NBSA)

We write on behalf of the News Broadcasters Association (NBA), which is the apex body of news broadcasters and represents the private television news & current affairs broadcasters. It is the collective voice of the news & current affairs broadcasters in India.

The fraternity is in an extreme state of shock and anguish with respect to the recent unreasonable arrest of a senior journalist Shri Rahul Gurunath Kulkarni of ABP Majha Channel. The FIR is based upon some reports which purported to draw the connection between the gathering at Mumbai Bandra West station and a news story by him.

Shri Rahul Gurunath Kulkarni is a person with impeccable record and known for his upright journalism and would always make himself available to the investigating agency/ies for any purpose and thus there is no question of him fleeing from or evading the investigating agency/ies which necessitated an arrest in the current pandemic situation exposing him to the risk of contracting the virus.

NBA condemns the said unreasonable arrest. The arrest is a serious infringement on the right of freedom of speech and is a frontal assault on the freedom of press. The fundamental right of freedom of speech is sought to be gagged and any further custody and incarceration of him would be a serious infraction of the constitutional mandate and would also threaten his life.

As an association we believe in promoting excellence in broadcasting standards and all the members are governed by a Code of Ethics, Broadcasting Standards and Self-Regulation.

NBA has constituted an Adjudicatory Body namely the “News Broadcasting Standards Authority” which is an independent body headed by a retired Supreme Court Judge Justice Arjan Sikri. Its task is to consider and adjudicate upon complaints about broadcasts. The Authority comprises of apart from Chairperson, who is a Retired Judge of the Hon’ble Supreme Court of India; four eminent persons and four eminent editors employed with the broadcasters. All cases are adjudicated in a fair and impartial manner and it is empowered to regulate its own procedure.

The Authority is empowered to pass various orders and they can warn, admonish, censure, express disapproval against and/or impose a fine upon the broadcaster and/or recommend to the concerned authority for suspension / revocation of license of such broadcaster. It has the power to impose a fine to the tune of Rs.1,00,000/- which can be recovered from the concerned Broadcaster. All such complaints can be made to:-

**“News Broadcasting Standards Authority
C/o News Broadcasters Association
Mantec House, C-56/5 , 2nd Floor, Sector 62 – Noida – 201 301”**

It would be therefore in the larger interest of press freedom that a journalist and reporter of the standing of Mr. Rahul Gurunath Kulkarni is freed from all charges so that the sanctity of press freedom is restored. Any complaints with respect to the said or any content may kindly be made to the NBSA at the above stated address and we assure you that justice would be done and in case of any violation appropriate Orders would be passed in accordance with the NBSA regulations.

We request for your kind intervention.

Thanking you,

Yours faithfully,



**Rajat Sharma
President**