

December 27, 2010

All Editors of NBA

Re: Srikrishna Committee Report

As all of you are aware the Union Government has appointed Mr Justice B N Srikrishna Committee, which among other things, is to examine the situation in Andhra Pradesh arising out of the demand for a separate State of Telangana.

It is reported that the Committee is to submit its Report on December 31, 2010.

It is imperative that the dissemination of the Report by the electronic media of this sensitive matter is done with extra care.

It is necessary to ensure that the telecast of any news relating to it should not be sensational, inflammatory or provocative. The basic guideline to be adhered to is that all news relating to this subject should conform strictly to subserving the public interest of maintaining parochial and communal harmony, of eschewing any divisive or fissiparous tendencies and of preserving the secular ethos of our plural society.

It should be remembered that the information disseminated by the media influences the formation of the public opinion.

Accordingly, the telecast of the Srikrishna Committee Report requires adherence to the Code of ethics and the Specific Guidelines issued from time to time in addition to the following Specific Guidelines in this behalf and should also ensure that no occasion arises for any speculation about the accuracy of the content.

Some additional specific guidelines to be observed in relation to the telecast of this matter are as follows:

1. All news relating to the Srikrishna Committee Report should strictly adhere to the contents of the Report, uninfluenced by any opinion, inference or interpretation.
2. No broadcast(s) should be made of any speculation about the Report before it is made fully available by the Government; and of its likely repercussions thereafter which may be sensational, inflammatory or provocative.
3. No footage of violence, agitation, self-immolation etc., if any, is to be shown in any news item relating to the subject matter of the Report.
4. No visuals should be shown depicting celebration or protest in relation to the Report.
5. Unnecessary repetition of sensitive visuals should be avoided.
6. Archival footage should clearly be labeled "file" and preferably also state date and time of initial broadcast.
7. In view of the sensitivity of news reporting on this issue extra care should be taken to ensure accuracy and balance of reportage, by vetting and clearance at the highest editorial level.
8. It is emphasized that programmes telecast in relation to this subject should not speculate about and should not have contentious debate on its contents.

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It is expected that every channel will strictly adhere to this Advisory and give no occasion for the NBSA to examine any allegation of violations by the Member channels.

This occasion is a challenge, as well as an opportunity, for Member channels to prove the efficacy of their self-regulatory mechanism. It is hoped that the opportunity would not be lost.

All Broadcasters are advised to preserve all the programmes telecast in relation to the Srikrishna Report, including scripts for examination, should it become necessary.

It is expected that strict adherence to these guidelines would be ensured by all the Editors to avoid any violation which may invite strict action.



Annie Joseph
Secretary General, NBA

CC: Members & Legal Heads of NBA