

World press body condemns ULFA threat to TV channel

The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) Wednesday condemned threats from the United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) to a private satellite channel in northeast India after it reported that the Assam government had paid the outlawed group to buy peace.

North East Television (NETV), a Guwahati-based TV channel, last week reported that the state government had paid money to buy peace with ULFA for the smooth conduct of the National Games Feb 9-18.

According to NETV, the ULFA told its station director Manoranjana Singh to prove allegations that the group was working with the government or stop broadcasting and leave Assam or 'face dire consequences'.

'It is shocking that NETV has been threatened by a militant group for its stories and the government has done nothing about it except criticise the station as well,' IFJ general secretary Aidan White said in the statement.

INEP quoted the IFJ as stating that there were legal procedures for libel if the government believed that NETV had been untruthful, but it should not allow militant groups to threaten media over stories they do not like.

The threats from the terrorist outfit came Tuesday, a day after Assam Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi publicly criticised NETV and said in general the media were producing anti-establishment news.

IFJ has called upon the Assam government to intervene to stop the harassment of and threats against NETV and its staff and to ensure that all media in the region are able to report independently.

Based in this capital of Belgium, IFJ represents over 500,000 journalists from more than 100 countries and is considered to be the world's biggest journalists' group.

(© IANS / India eNews)