

JFA urges PCI to intervene on Guwahati newspaper-distribution impasse



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Nava Thakuria 22 February 2014 7963 views

Journalists' Forum Assam (JFA) has expressed utter dismay at the prolonged strike of newspaper hawkers in Guwahati since February 16 and urged the Press Council of India (PCI) to intervene on the matter as the agitators have directly implicated on people's right to get essential information.

Taking queue from the PCI chairman Justice Markandey Katju's comment on Arunachal's recent media-deadlock, following the conflict between the Itanagar authority and media persons, that the suspension of newspapers is 'not in public interest', the JFA pointed out that similar situation is now prevailing in Assam as the hawkers have neither distributed nor allowed others to do the same inside Guwahati city for consecutive six days.

"The newspaper agents and hawkers in the city can resolve their differences on financial shares of earnings even without affecting the distribution of newspapers to the households. Without insisting on continuous strike any more, the newspaper hawkers should pursue their demands through other peaceful democratic means," said a JFA statement.

The conflict between the newspaper agents and hawkers in the city turned worse as the latter had engaged in physical assaults with some youths who were employed by the agents to distribute morning newspapers to the city dwellers. The statement, issued today by JFA president Rupam Barua and secretary Nava Thakuria, also appealed to the owners of Guwahati based newspaper houses to look into the matter critically and help the conflict resolved at the earliest. Otherwise, the unavailability of morning dailies for day after day might result in a serious negative implication on the local media enterprise.

The Assam based scribe body also got astonished that the unavailability of morning newspapers for almost a week has not instigated the city based readers to raise voices against the deadlock. Shockingly few people have talked about the matter in public that too with little worries only indicates that the Guwahatians might have fulfilled their need of daily news inputs from the local news channels and portals.

Insisting on due benefits to the newspaper hawkers, the JFA has also maintained its old demands for implementing the statutory wage boards in all newspaper houses of the State which recommend due salary and other facilities to the journalists and non-journalist media employees.

"Offering due financial benefits to the employees under the wage board recommendations should inspire the media workers to perform their duties in a better way," said the JFA statement adding, "It would also help the media group owners to earn enormous goodwill from the esteem readers, which is seemingly decreasing in the recent past, for a sustained growth of the media enterprises in Assam."

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