

Jurnos upset with court diktat on bandh



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Journalists Forum Assam (JFA) has expressed dissatisfactions [over](#) a higher court order preventing media coverage relating to any Bandh-call in Meghalaya and opined that in the days of robust alternate media in northeast India banning the newspaper and news channels for a particular cause makes little sense.

According to media reports from Shillong, the Meghalaya High Court in an order issued on 27 May 2015 has banned the media from publishing statements by organizations calling for Bandhs (shutdown/general strike) in the State which results in disruption of [normal](#) life.

The order came following Meghalaya police [chief](#) Rajiv Mehta recently requested the court to restrain the media from carrying statements by the Hynniewtrep [National](#) Liberation Council as well as other organizations calling for shutdowns and other forms of agitations.

The court directed that 'the statements of HNLC or any organization which may disturb the even tempo of day-to-day public life and cause violation of fundamental [rights](#) of citizens in particular under Article 19 and 21 of the [Constitution of India](#) relating to strike, [bandh](#), hartal, road blockade and holding of rallies with unlawful design shall not be issued by any of the print and electronic media'.

Earlier the Gauhati High Court in January 2010 declared all Bandhs illegal as it violates the fundamental [rights](#) of the citizens. The court also directed the government to take steps for preventing infringement of fundamental [rights](#) of the citizens on account of Bandhs. Prior to it, the Kerala High Court in 1997 also banned Bandhs and it was later upheld by the [Supreme Court of India](#).

“On principle, we do not support the culture of Bandh, but the media’s right to report about a call for general strikes by any organisation in a democracy like India should not be curtailed,” said a statement issued by JFA president Rupam Barua and secretary Nava Thakuria. The JFA however pointed out that the media should not glorify any disruptive activities in the name of freedom of the press.

The JFA questioned that if the mainstream media was restrained from reporting the Bandh-call, who would prevent the social media-users from spreading the same. Rather in case of Bandhs, JFA argued, the authority should (must) take appropriate actions to maintain the civic amenities. The forum also demanded strong actions [against](#) those individuals, who adopt vandalism to impose Bandhs [over](#) the fellow citizens.

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