

Gravest Threat to Newspaper Industry is Disregard for Basics of the Business: M J Akbar

MUMBAI, March 17, 2010. Eminent Journalist and author, Mr. M J Akbar, today turned the spotlight on the grave threat to the newspaper industry arising out of scant regard for the basics of the business. The greatest threat was not profitability or balance sheets of the newspaper business but the huge ego mania that had swamped journalists, he said while addressing the session on *Content is King. But Who Dictates It – Advertising, Consumer Taste or Editorial Policy?* at FICCI FRAMES 2010.

In the media world, neither the editor nor the consumer can dictate terms. In the absence of a true measure of the importance of the role of a newspaper, there was variety in the content available, he said.

Mr. Akbar said the Indian media's credibility was much higher than that of the international media since the former had always believed in maintaining a connect and communication with the readers.

He considered insidious the transfer of real power to board rooms due to issues of financing. The inherent nature of the media business, he said, was linked to funding and the interaction between power and politics.

Mr. Akbar said that idealism was the job of editors. However, ideas have to chase practicality and not be a victim to popular taste. While nobody sniffs away from profits, the need is to live by profits and not be hit by profits, he pointed out.

Surveying the international scenario, Mr. Akbar said that the loss of jobs for journalists and fall in profitability of the international media could be attributed to the increasing bias and the pompousness of the journalists. Journalists, he said, were losing touch with their culture and morality which leads to a denial of choice to the readers and viewers, a choice that was undeniably being provided by the internet.