

**News Broadcasting Standards Authority**  
**Order No. 75 (2020)**

**Order of NBSA on reports of apparent violation concerning viral videos on 22.11.2018 and 4.1.2019 - News 24**

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting vide letter dated 15.7.2019, forwarded reports of apparent violation concerning viral videos aired on 22.11.2018 and 4.1.2019 on News 24 channel for consideration by the NBSA.

**1. Complaint : 22.11.2018**

It is alleged that the channel aired news about a viral video from Kannauj district of Uttar Pradesh. The channel reported that two women had boarded a tempo. Two men also boarded the tempo and stole the jewellery of both the women. On realizing that the jewellery was stolen, they made a noise, the crowd grabbed both the men and beat them. The channel had shown a video related to this news in which the crowd is constantly attacking and kicking the men in such a manner that they fainted. The channel broadcast this video for about 2 minutes 49 seconds. The scenes were disturbing. The channel should ignore the transmission of such sensitive videos.

**2 Complaint : 4.1.2019**

It is alleged that the channel had broadcast the news in reference to a viral video from Basgaon in Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh. The channel reported that a mob beat up the robbers who had shot the Manager of the SBI Customer Service Center in the area and looted two lakh rupees. But before these people could run away, the crowd surrounded both of them and beat them up in a manner that they fainted. The channel had aired this video for about 6 minutes. The scenes shown were disturbing. The channel should ignore the transmission of such sensitive videos.

**Decision of NBSA on 23.9.2019**

NBSA at its meeting held on 23.9.2019 had considered the above complaints, response from the broadcaster and also viewed the CD of the alleged broadcasts. NBSA was of the view that the broadcaster had violated the Specific Guidelines Covering Reportage 3.7 which states that “*Violence must not be depicted solely for its own sake, or for its gratuitous exploitation or to pander to sadistic or other perverted tastes. Scenes with excessive violence or suffering such as close-up shots of persons being subject to brutality, torture or being killed and visual depiction of such matter should be avoided*”. In view of the above violation, NBSA decided to call the broadcaster for a hearing at the next meeting of the NBSA.

## **News 24 Broadcast India Ltd. [Channel: News 24]**

On being served with notice, the following persons were present at the hearing on 6.12.2019:

Mr. Prashant Gupta, Associate Editor

Mr. Ajay Mishra, Compliance Officer

Ms. Atmaja Tripathy, Advocate

The broadcaster submitted that the purpose of showing the videos in both the complaints was to expose the hooligans who had taken the law in their hands so that the perpetrators were punished by the law enforcement agencies and the victims got speedy justice. The broadcast was certainly in public interest. The broadcaster accepted the fact that showing such gruesome videos for long durations without blurring was not appropriate and submitted that it will in the future to restrict the duration of broadcast of such videos and also take due care in the future broadcasts. The broadcast stated that it would also take up the matter with the editorial to ensure compliance.

### **Decision of NBSA**

NBSA, upon watching the contents of the alleged broadcasts and also the submissions made by the broadcaster, was of the view that it was not proper for news channels to show brutality for a long period thereby sensationalizing the issue and create panic among viewers. NBSA was of the prima facie view that undoubtedly, it is open to a channel to show such incidents. On the one hand not only it depicts the dismal law and order position as thieves/anti-social elements have become so emboldened that they commit such day light crimes without any fear of law, on the other hand the public has also started taking law into their own hands. Having said that, NBSA was also of the view that while telecasting the programme, the broadcaster kept in mind the freedom of speech available to them and further the broadcaster which discharges a public duty was within the rights to show such a programme. However, NBSA was also of the view that television news has greater reach than print, which makes it necessary that news channels exercise restraint and ensure that any report or visual broadcast does not induce, glorify, incite, or positively depict violence/brutality or perpetrators thereof. NBSA was of the view that special care should be taken while reporting of violence and that channels should desist from glamorizing acts of violence and brutality, which will mislead and desensitize the viewers. NBSA was also of the view that news channels should ensure that such reporting did not cross boundaries of good taste and sensibility; that they should take adequate precautions while showing any visuals of pain, suffering and brutality. NBSA concluded that in this case, the footage of brutality, shown repeatedly and continuously and that too without blurring was not justified.

NBSA therefore warns the broadcaster (Channel News 24) to exercise greater care, caution and discretion in future while telecasting news stories relating to depiction of violence and that any future violations would be viewed seriously.

NBSA also stated that the video of the said broadcasts, if still available on the website of the channels, or YouTube, or any other links, should be removed immediately and the same should be confirmed to NBSA in writing within 7 days.

NBSA decided to close the complaints with the above observations and inform the MOI&B and the broadcaster accordingly.

**NBSA directs the NBA to send:**

- (a) A copy of this Order to the MoI&B and the broadcaster;
- (b) Circulate this Order to all Members, Editors & Legal Heads of NBA;
- (c) Host this Order on its website and include it in its next Annual Report and
- (d) Release the Order to media.

**Sd/-**

**Justice A. K Sikri (Retd.)  
Chairperson**

**Place: New Delhi**

**Date: 24.10.2020**