

News Broadcasting & Digital Standards Authority

Order No. 219 (2026)

Complainant: Mr. Indrajeet Ghorpade

Channel: Zee News

Programmes: “Bangladesh Hindu Temple Attack Today: बांग्लादेश में एक और मंदिर पर हमला” and “India Big Warning to Bangladesh on Hindu: 'ठप्प कर देंगे..' भारत से बांग्लादेश को चेतावनी”

Date of Broadcast: 01.12.2024

Since the complainant did not receive a response from the broadcaster, on 15.12.2024 the complaint was escalated to the second level of redressal, i.e., NBDSA.

Complaint dated 03.12.2024

The complainant alleged that in the impugned news reports, the broadcaster, with the intention of spreading hatred against and endangering the safety of the Muslim community in India, including Bangladeshi Muslims in India, shared grossly false information that in Bangladesh, Muslim extremists, blinded by Islamic faith insulted and destroyed statues of Hindu deities, attacked a Hindu temple, killed Hindu devotees and circulated the video of the attack to send out a message that there is no place for Hindus in Bangladesh.

The broadcaster aired images and videos of Hindu goddess Kali's statue being desecrated and repeated the false claims. This misinformation was further used to make unascertained generalised statements that Hindu's in Bangladesh are extremely unsafe. In reality, the video aired was from India, specifically, Sultanpur in Bardhaman district of West Bengal, not from Bangladesh. In the video, a 600-year-old tradition, wherein every 12 years, the statue of the deity is broken down and carried with much fanfare to a local pond for immersion and a new statue is designed the next year, can be seen.

Apart from violating the Code of Ethics and Broadcasting Standards, the Guidelines for Prevention of Hate Speech, Guidelines for the telecast of news affecting Public Order, Guidelines to prevent communal colour in reporting crime, riots, rumours and such related incidents, Guidelines on Broadcast of Potentially Defamatory Content, the broadcaster had violated the principles of Accuracy, Impartiality, Neutrality & Fairness, Racial & Religious Harmony and Good Taste & Decency in the impugned broadcasts. In addition, the broadcaster had also violated the principle of Corrigendum under the Code of Ethics.

Aue

Decision of NBDA at its meeting held on 14.10.2025

NBDSA considered the complaint and viewed the footage of the broadcasts, and decided to call the parties for a hearing.

On being served with the notices, the following persons were present at the hearing on 23.02.2026:

Complainant

1. Mr. Indrajeet Ghorpade

Broadcaster

1. Ms. Ritwika Nanda, Counsel for ZMCL
2. Mr. Sarvesh Kumar Singh, Deputy Manager Legal, ZMCL

Submissions of the Parties

The complainant submitted that in the impugned broadcast, it was reported that people in Bangladesh, blinded by Islamic faith and extremism, are destroying statues of Hindu deities, Hindu temples, and killing Hindu devotees. In this regard, during the broadcasts, an unrelated visual was aired showing the statue of Goddess Kali being desecrated.

The complainant stated that the video aired was not from Bangladesh but from the Bardhaman district of West Bengal. It is a 600-year-old tradition in which, every 12 years, the statue of a deity is broken down and carried with much fanfare to a local pond for immersion, and thereafter a new statue is designed. However, in the impugned broadcasts, the complainant submitted that this video from West Bengal was used by the broadcaster to claim that the idol of Goddess Kali was being desecrated in Bangladesh and to claim that Hindus and Hindu deities were being attacked.

This video was, in fact, fact-checked by Alt News. However, despite bringing the fact check to the broadcaster's attention, not only was no action taken, but the broadcaster also failed to respond to the complaint, in scant disregard for the News Broadcasting & Digital Standards Regulations.

On behalf of the broadcaster, the Counsel submitted that, as per her instructions, the visuals were from Bangladesh and were widely circulating on social media. The impugned broadcasts covered developments and concerns related to alleged incidents involving Hindu religious sites and Hindu communities in Bangladesh.

These matters were widely reported and discussed across various media outlets, social media platforms, and in public discourse at the relevant time. The broadcast

presented publicly circulating visuals, statements, and reactions from political leaders, authorities, and stakeholders, and reported on diplomatic and political responses emerging from India in relation to concerns about the safety and security of minority communities in Bangladesh. The broadcast did not intend to target a religious community, nor did it advocate or promote hatred, hostility or disharmony. Any alleged discrepancy in the attribution of visuals, if at all, was neither deliberate nor mala fide, and there was no intention to misrepresent or mislead viewers.

However, without prejudice, the broadcaster was willing to remove the impugned broadcast. The complainant, however, objected to the same and submitted that the mere removal of the video was insufficient, as the channel had failed to take timely action upon the filing of the complaint, and the video had already garnered substantial viewership by now.

Communication dated 11.03.2026 from the Broadcaster

In compliance with the oral instructions issued by the Authority, the broadcaster submitted that the video forming the subject matter of the complaint had been removed from all digital and social media platforms operated or controlled by the channel. The removal has been affected across all official online platforms to ensure that the said content is no longer accessible to the public.

Decision

NBDSA considered the complaint, viewed the footage of the impugned broadcast, and considered the submissions advanced during the hearing.

NBDSA noted that the complainant's grievance regarding the impugned broadcasts concerned the authenticity of the visuals aired, depicting the idols of Goddess Durga being destroyed, which, in the broadcasts, were claimed to be from Bangladesh. It was also noted that the broadcaster asserted the video was from Bangladesh. The complainant, however, disputed this and had submitted that the video pertained to a 600-year-old practice in West Bengal, relying on a fact-check news report to substantiate his claim.

Furthermore, it was also noted that while the broadcaster had at the last hearing submitted that it would submit evidence in support of its assertion and would remove the video, the broadcaster had, on 12.03.2026, only confirmed its removal of the video and not submitted any written submissions despite the lapse of one week's time.

In view of the above, since the broadcaster failed to submit any material to substantiate its claim that the video was from Bangladesh and not from West Bengal,

NBDSA draws a reasonable inference that the version put forth by the complainant is correct.

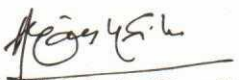
Consequently, NBDSA is of the view that the broadcaster has violated the principle of Accuracy as enshrined in the Code of Conduct by airing unrelated visuals. Since the visuals have now been removed by the broadcaster of its own accord, treating it as a mitigating factor, NBDSA considers it appropriate to caution the broadcaster against reporting inaccurate news.

NBDSA decided to close the complaint with the aforementioned observations and inform the complainant and the broadcaster accordingly.

NBDSA directs NBDA to send:

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

It is clarified that any statement made by the parties in the proceedings before NBDSA while responding to the complaint and putting forth their view points, and any finding or observation by NBDSA in regard to the broadcasts, in its proceedings or in this Order, are only in the context of an examination as to whether there are any violations of any broadcasting standards and guidelines. They are not intended to be 'admissions' by the broadcaster, nor intended to be 'findings' by NBDSA in regard to any civil/criminal liability.


Justice A.K. Sikri (Retd.)
Chairperson

Place: New Delhi

Date : 19-05-2026