

News Broadcasting & Digital Standards Authority

Order No. 230 (2026)

Complainant: Mr. Talha Manan

Channel: Zee News

**Programme: “Deshhit: AMU में 'फिलिस्तीन प्रेमी गैंग'.. 'योगी स्टाइल' में होगा इलाज!”,
“Breaking News: AMU में 'फिलिस्तीन प्रेमी गैंग'.. 'योगी स्टाइल' में होगा इलाज!” and
“DNA: फीस माफी वाले आंदोलन में फिलिस्तीन जिंदाबाद कहां से आ गया? Aligarh Muslim
University”**

Date of Broadcast: 16.08.2025

Since the complainant did not receive a response from the broadcaster, the complaint was escalated to the second level of redressal, i.e., NBDSA, on 18.10.2025.

Legal Notice dated 02.09.2025 to the broadcaster

1. The complainant is a PHD research scholar at Maulana Azad National Urdu University, Hyderabad and an alumnus of Aligarh Muslim University, where he graduated in 2019.
2. He was invited to address a peaceful student protest at AMU on 12.08.2025, which was organised in response to the recent fee hike and the demand for restoration of the Students' Union. The protest was conducted peacefully and lawfully, without violence, property damage, or disruption of academic activities. The AMU administration eventually accepted the students' demands, resolving the issues that prompted the protest and leading to its peaceful conclusion. The success of the students' movement validates the legitimacy of their grievances and the peaceful manner in which they conducted the protest.
3. The complainant delivered an approximately 18-minute speech wherein he spoke on various issues, expressing solidarity with his alma mater, including the recent fee hike being arbitrary and unjust. This 18-minute speech concluded with slogan-raising, a usual practice in peaceful protests.
4. On 16.08.2025 and in the subsequent days, multiple programs were aired across Zee News's television channel, YouTube platform, and social media channels that deliberately and maliciously targeted him with false and defamatory content. The broadcast relied on a particular 10-second clip of the slogans during the protest, in which he is prominently visible at the centre of focus.
5. The broadcasts systematically misrepresented the peaceful nature of the protest and the complainant's lawful speech through deliberately inflammatory language and defamatory visual elements.

6. That the first video titled "Deshhit: AMU में 'फिलिस्तीन प्रेमी गैंग'.. 'योगी स्टाइल' में होगा इलाज, was a 4:34-minute video clip that relied merely on one brief slogan footage that was repeated time and again throughout the broadcast, containing no actual content of speech but only pure sensationalism designed to maximise outrage. The title itself was propaganda-driven, associating affinity for people of a war-torn country with illegality. Further, the title suggested that criminal action should be initiated against the speaker.
7. The broadcast began with prejudicial narration stating, "जब देश जश्न आजादी में डूबा था तब अलीगढ़ मुस्लिम यूनिवर्सिटी में छात्रों की जमात वो नारे लगा रही थी," while repeatedly showing the same footage of students raising the slogan "AMU ka matlab kya, La ilaha illallah." Then the broadcast immediately criminalised constitutionally protected speech by stating "जिस पर केस दर्ज हो सकता है। मतलब क्या है फिलिस्तीन से? गाजा से हमदर्दी दिखाने का?" thereby portraying lawful expressions of solidarity as potential criminal conduct. This statement by the narrator of the broadcast was deliberately designed to imply that mere expressions of solidarity with Palestine could be a criminal act. The introduction deliberately framed the legitimate student protest during Independence Day celebrations as inappropriate, creating a negative perception from the very beginning.
8. The broadcast continued with inflammatory statements designed to falsely associate the complainant with terrorism: "ये कौन लोग हैं जिनके सीने में हमस का दर्द पनपता है? ये कौन लोग हैं जिनका जखम बार-बार छलकता है?" while repeatedly showing the same footage of students raising slogans, "What is the relationship with Palestine, there is no god but Allah, what is the relationship with Gaza, there is no god but Allah". The inflammatory rhetoric was intended to create prejudice by falsely linking him to foreign entities, even though he was simply participating in a peaceful protest expressing solidarity with oppressed people through constitutionally protected speech. It is pertinent to note that no reference was made to any particular group or political party in the speech, and that references were confined to the suffering of the people of Palestine/Gaza in general.
9. The systematic character assassination continued with the religiously prejudiced statement: "यूनिवर्सिटी परिसर में खड़े होकर मजहबी नारे लगाते लोगों की मानसिकता उस सोच से उपजी है, जिसमें तालीम का मतलब होता है कट्टरपंथी सोच की डेवलपमेंट डिक्शनरी का पन्ना पलटना", which constituted vicious character assassination rooted in religious prejudice. It deliberately portrayed normal religious, cultural, and humanitarian expressions as evidence of extremist indoctrination, thereby targeting the complainant, as well as AMU and the Muslim community, through harmful stereotypes, while repeatedly showing footage of students' lawful slogans to reinforce negative associations.

10. That the broadcast further mischaracterised lawful solidarity expressions through misleading narration stating "फिलिस्तीन से 4000 कि .मी . दूर अलीगढ़ यूनिवर्सिटी के कुछ भारतीय छात्रों के दिल में फिलिस्तीन को लेकर प्यार है। इसलिए यहां पर फीस बढ़ोतरी और दूसरे मुद्दों को लेकर प्रदर्शन कर रहे छात्रों की जुबान से फिलिस्तीन से रिश्ते को लेकर नारे लगाए गए". Further, the narration continued and stated, "फिलिस्तीन लव का सच जानने जब जी मीडिया की टीम यूनिवर्सिटी पहुंची तो कल जिन्होंने नारे लगाए आज पलट गए". It is pertinent to mention that pro-Palestine protests are a global phenomenon wherein many advocates of human rights and international bodies like the UN have expressed solidarity with the people of Palestine. Even the Government of India itself has expressed support for the people of Palestine at various international forums and has regularly sent financial aid to the Palestinian Authority.
11. That the broadcast culminates with the most inflammatory and malicious conspiracy theory: "कभी जिन्ना की तस्वीर, कभी होली खेलने का विवाद और अब यूनिवर्सिटी कैंपस में फिलिस्तीन के समर्थन में नारे। कौन है जो अलीगढ़ मुस्लिम यूनिवर्सिटी को बनाना चाहता है, इस्लामि ककड़रपंथ का सेंटर". This represented the culmination of their systematic defamation campaign, falsely portraying AMU as a centre of religious extremism and directly implicating him in an anti- national conspiracy when he was simply exercising constitutionally protected rights.
12. The on-screen tickers reading "AMU में 'फिलिस्तीन प्रेमी गैंग'" deliberately used the word "gang" to falsely criminalise peaceful expression and associate the complainant with criminal activities. The use of "gang" in this context is particularly malicious as it suggested organised criminal activity where none existed, thereby defaming and painting the complainant as a criminal in the eyes of millions of viewers. Similarly, the ticker "योगी स्टाइल में होगा इलाज" constitutes a direct threat of violence by referencing the strongman approach associated with the Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister, while "अराजक तत्व" falsely labelled him and his fellow students as anarchist elements threatening social order.
13. That the second and systematic defamatory broadcast titled "DNA: फीस माफी वाले आंदोलन में फिलिस्तीन जिंदाबाद कहाँ से आ गया?" constituted an elaborate 5:27-minute campaign of hate speech and character assassination conducted by the anchor. The very title of this programme constituted coded hate speech by suggesting that expressions of Palestine solidarity in fee protests are inherently suspicious and inappropriate. The YouTube description contained prejudicial and inflammatory language: "डी एनए मत्रो , एक विशेष वर्गों में फिलिस्तीन को लेकर विशेष प्रेम किसी से छपा नहीं है। कई बार बिना मौका के ये प्रेम छलक जाता है। वही अलीगढ़ यूनिवर्सिटी में हुआ". The description itself constituted hate speech by using the coded phrase "विशेष वर्गों " to target the Muslim community while suggesting that their expressions of humanitarian

solidarity are suspicious, irrational, and overflow "without reason" thereby dehumanising an entire community's capacity for legitimate moral concern, and criminalising normal humanitarian expressions and creating prejudice against an entire religious community.

14. That throughout this DNA programme, multiple inflammatory on-screen tickers deliberately designed to maximise prejudice and hatred were prominently displayed :
- "*Aligarh me filisteen zindabad kyun?*" which framed lawful expression of solidarity as requiring justification and suggested that it is inappropriate;
 - "*Fees maaf me filisteen ka kya kaam?*" which deliberately mischaracterised the context to suggest that humanitarian solidarity cannot coexist with domestic concerns; and
 - "*vaicharik pradushan ke kitne gadh?*" which constituted pure hate speech by characterising expressions of solidarity with oppressed peoples as "ideological pollution" and suggesting a systematic conspiracy across educational institutions.

These tickers were strategically crafted to criminalise expressions of solidarity, create false narratives of systematic anti-national activities, and promote communal hatred.

15. The anchor opened the broadcast by stating: " अलीगढ़ यूनिवर्सिटी जो अक्सर विवादों में रहती है। कभी इकबाल तो कभी जिन्ना को लेकर। मगर इस बार अलीगढ़ यूनिवर्सिटी के कुछ छात्रों की निष्ठा फिलिस्तीन प्रेम के वजह से सवाल में है... यानी सिवान से लेकर अलीगढ़ तक एक विशेष तरीके की वैचारिक प्रदूषण फैलाया जा रहा है। बिहार के सिवान में जिन्दाबाद के नारे लगाए जा रहे हैं। तो यूपी के अलीगढ़ में फिलिस्तीन जिन्दाबाद के नारे लगाए जा रहे हैं। This statement constituted systematic hate speech by: (a) questioning the patriotism and loyalty of students based on their humanitarian expressions; (b) using the dehumanising term " वैचारिक प्रदूषण " to characterise normal expressions of solidarity; (c) creating false conspiracy theories ascribing criminality to specific geographical locations spanning multiple states to suggest coordinated anti-national activities; and (d) deliberately linking expressions of Palestine solidarity to controversial historical figures to create maximum prejudice.
16. The anchor then employed deliberate miscontextualisation and criminalisation tactics by repeatedly emphasising: " "और यह सब किस नाम पर हो रहा है जानते हैं? फीस बढ़ोतरी के नाम पर.... मतलब समझिये मुद्दा फीस में इजाफे का है और नारा लग रहा है क्र फिलिस्तीन का". This deliberate miscontextualisation served multiple defamatory purposes: (a) suggesting that expressions of Palestine solidarity are inappropriate in the context of fee protests,

thereby criminalising intersectional solidarity; (b) implying deception or hidden agendas where none existed; (c) creating a false binary between domestic and international humanitarian concerns; and (d) portraying normal expressions of cross-solidarity as evidence of suspicious motives. This miscontextualisation constituted defamation because it portrayed his lawful and morally commendable expressions of solidarity as evidence of duplicity or inappropriate conduct.

17. That the anchor further amplified the defamatory narrative through historical criminalisation and pattern-building by stating, “इससे पहले 14 अगस्त को भी छात्रों की एक टोली ने एमएमयू कैम्पस में नारेबाजी की, तब उन्होंने मजहबी नारे लगाए थे, नौच के आजाद लेने की धमकी दी थी। अब वहीं पर फिलिस्तीन के समर्थन में छात्र नारेबाजी कर रहे हैं” This statement systematically defamed the complainant by (a) creating false historical patterns to suggest repeated problematic behaviour; (b) mischaracterising religious, cultural and humanitarian expressions as threatening; (c) establishing false continuity between different events to create an impression of systematic anti-national activities where none exist; and (d) provoking criminal action against legitimate protest and slogans.
18. That, in such short video, the propaganda was manifest with statements such as “एक विशेष वर्गों में फिलिस्तीन को लेकर विशेष प्रेम किसी से छिपा नहीं है | कई बार बिना मौके के ये प्रेम छलक जाता है”. The broadcast also included statements like “सिवान से लेकर अलीगढ़ तक एक विशेष तरीके का वैचारिक प्रदुषण फैलाया जा रहा है”, which created false narratives of systematic anti-national activities spanning across regions. The anchor further stated “मुद्रा फीस में इजाफे का है और नारा लगा रहा है फिलिस्तीन का”.
19. It is pertinent to note that there was a four-day gap between the speech on 12.08.2025 and the first broadcast on 16.08.2025, which demonstrates that this was old news deliberately selected based on certain editorial parameters and broadcast in a manner that seriously questions the fairness and impartiality of the media coverage. This temporal gap establishes that there was ample opportunity to review the complete context of the complainant’s entire 18-minute speech, understand the peaceful and legitimate nature of the student protest, verify the actual content and intent of the demonstration, and provide all the context required to ensure neutral, ethical reporting. However, instead of responsible journalism, the broadcaster deliberately chose to use a selective 10-second slogan segment to construct an entirely inflammatory narrative around it, thereby abandoning all pretence of objective journalism in favour of agenda-driven broadcasting calculated to inflame communal tensions. This selective and delayed coverage, which in itself raised many questions about the motivation of the broadcast, demonstrated a calculated editorial decision to prioritise sensationalism over factual reporting, despite having sufficient time and resources to provide comprehensive and balanced coverage.

20. This deliberate visual targeting, combined with an inflammatory narrative framework, created an unmistakable and direct association between the complainant's face and identity and the fabricated criminal conspiracy that was constructed throughout the programmes.
21. The slogans expressed during the protest, including "La ilaha ilia Allah," are normal cultural and religious expressions which are connected to the historical and constitutional status of AMU as a minority institution. No law in India prohibits expressions of solidarity with Palestine or support for Palestinian people and the broadcaster's characterization of such expressions as unlawful is factually incorrect and deliberately misleading.
22. That as a direct and foreseeable consequence of defamatory, provocative and inflammatory broadcasts, an FIR has been registered against him at Civil Lines Police Station, Aligarh on 19.08 2025 under Sections 223 (Disobedience of Order) and 353(2) (Public Mischief) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita.
23. That the broadcaster has violated multiple specific guidelines that are mandatory for all broadcasting members, including serious breaches of the Guidelines for Prevention of Hate Speech dated 30.01.2023, and the Specific Guidelines for Anchors dated 28.10.2022.

Application dated 05.11.2025 seeking condonation of delay

Reasons For The Delay At First Level

1. The broadcast was extremely shocking. It was not just a factual inaccuracy but a systematic attempt to defame him and incite communal hatred. He was emotionally distressed and traumatised by the content and needed time to process what had happened and to understand the full scope of the harm caused.
2. As a Ph.D. research scholar, he had no prior experience with media grievance systems or the NBDSA framework. He had to spend time learning the correct procedure, what documents were required, and how to formulate a proper complaint.
3. Further, the broadcasts were scattered across multiple platforms - YouTube, Facebook, Zee News website, and other social media channels. He had to identify each instance, verify the content, and document the material carefully. As a student without professional support, this was time-consuming. He had to take screenshots, record evidence, and compile everything systematically.

4. On 19.08.2025, three days after the broadcast, an FIR was filed against him. He was handling legal consultations related to the criminal case and its immediate legal risks.
5. He consulted legal advisors to understand his options under media law and NBDSA regulations. These consultations took time but were necessary.
6. As a student with limited resources, he had to carefully plan his approach before taking formal legal action and could not afford to file multiple complaints or take missteps.

Despite these challenges, he served the legal notice on the broadcaster within 17 days, demonstrating his diligence and urgency in addressing this matter.

Reasons For the 16-Day Delay At Second Level

The delay of 16 days between filing the complaint at the first level (02.09.2025) and escalating it to the second level (18.10.2025), was due to the following reasons:

1. The legal notice was served on 2.09.2025, formally lodging the complaint at the first level. He was required to wait for their response. However, the broadcaster remained completely silent and unresponsive. He had waited in the hope that they would take action or provide a satisfactory response addressing his concerns.
2. Given the gravity of the violations and the fact that he was simultaneously facing criminal proceedings, the matter was escalated to the Hon'ble Minister of Information and Broadcasting on 5.09.2025. The Ministry's intervention and review process took time.
3. The Ministry's response redirected him back to the broadcaster-level complaint process. This meant that after waiting and pursuing the Ministry route, he had to follow the first level of redressal again. Only after receiving this response and confirming that the broadcaster had remained unresponsive was the complaint escalated to the NBDSA.
4. Throughout this period, the videos remained on YouTube, Facebook, and other platforms - the harm was not stopping. In fact, it was continuing to grow as more people viewed, shared, and engaged with the defamatory content.

In view of the above, the complainant respectfully and earnestly requested the Authority to condone the 2-day delay in filing the complaint at the first level and the 16-day delay in escalating the complaint to the second level, and to proceed with the substantive examination of the complaint on its merits.

Reply dated 13.11.2025 from broadcaster on condonation of delay

The broadcaster respectfully submitted that the application dated 05.11.2025, seeking condonation of delay, was wholly misconceived and unsustainable in law. The complaint is ex facie barred by limitation at both the first and second levels of redressal, as prescribed under Regulation 8.1 & 9.1, read with its proviso, of the News Broadcasting & Digital Standards Regulations.

The Regulations clearly mandate that a person aggrieved by any broadcast or publication must first approach the concerned broadcaster within fifteen days of the first broadcast/publication, and thereafter, in case of dissatisfaction, may approach the Authority within fifteen days of receiving the broadcaster's response or upon expiry of the said period. These timelines are neither directory nor flexible, and they form the very backbone of the self-regulatory mechanism intended to ensure expeditious and fair adjudication in matters concerning broadcast content.

It is an admitted and undisputed position on record that the impugned broadcast was aired on 16.08.2025. The complainant, however, preferred the first-level complaint only on 02.09.2025, i.e., after a lapse of (17) days from the date of the broadcast, thereby clearly exceeding the prescribed period. Furthermore, the complainant approached the Hon'ble Authority at the second level only on 18.10.2025, which is patently beyond the period of limitation prescribed for filing a second-level complaint under Regulation 9.1 of the News Broadcasting & Digital Standards Regulations.

The reasons pleaded, such as emotional distress, lack of legal knowledge, pendency of criminal proceedings, and time spent consulting advisors or approaching the Ministry, are personal explanations, not legal justifications. The complainant's own narrative shows that he actively engaged legal advisors, issued notices, and corresponded with authorities. Having chosen to pursue alternate remedies and to engage with the Ministry rather than follow the prescribed mechanism, he cannot now seek to shift responsibility for his own inaction. It is trite law that ignorance of procedure or parallel pursuit of other forums cannot constitute "sufficient cause" under a limitation provision.

The plea of "continuing violation" is equally misplaced. The cause of action arises on the date of first broadcast, not from the continued online availability of archived content. If such an argument were to be accepted, the limitation period would be rendered meaningless, allowing indefinite reopening of settled broadcasts, a proposition contrary to the very object of Regulation 8.1 & 9.1 and past NBDSA precedents.

The power to condone delay is discretionary and can be exercised only upon demonstration of bona fide diligence and circumstances genuinely beyond one's control. The complainant has not provided any such explanation to establish sufficient cause. The complainant was neither prevented by any external impediment nor diligent in pursuing his remedy within time. The delay, being deliberate and self-created, cannot be excused in equity or in law.

Further, condoning such belated complaints would seriously prejudice the broadcaster, which deals with hundreds of time-bound telecasts daily. The regulatory framework's object would be defeated if stale and time-barred grievances were entertained long after the event.

In view of the above, the broadcaster respectfully submitted that the complainant had failed to demonstrate either diligence or any sufficient cause for condonation. The delay was entirely attributable to the complainant's own conduct. Accordingly, the application for condonation of delay deserves dismissal, and consequently, the underlying complaint should be rejected as barred by limitation.

Decision of NBDA at its meeting held on 11.02.2026

NBDSA considered the complaint and viewed the footage of the broadcast. In view of the broadcaster's failure to respond to the complaint at the first level of redressal, the Authority decided to call the complainant and the broadcaster for a hearing.

Further, since there was a delay of two days at the first level of redressal, i.e., at the time of filing the complaint with the broadcaster, and a delay of sixteen days at the time of escalating the complaint to NBDSA, NBDSA decided that at the hearing, the application for condonation of delay would be considered first.

On being served with the notices, the following persons were present at the hearing on 01.05.2026:

Complainant

1. Mr. Talha Mannan
2. Mr. Fawaz Shaheen, Advocate

Broadcaster

1. Ms. Ritwika Nanda, Advocate
2. Ms. Annie, Legal
3. Mr. Sanjeev Sharma

Submissions of the Parties

A. Condonation of Delay

Submissions of the Complainant

The complainant submitted that the incident occurred on 12.08.2025 and the broadcast was aired on 16.08.2026. Three days later, an FIR was lodged against him in Aligarh, citing the impugned broadcast as the basis. The two-day delay at the first level of redressal occurred because the complainant was initially focused on getting the FIR quashed.

The delay at the second level of redressal occurred because the complainant, at that time, preferred to lodge a complaint with the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting and was under the impression that the Ministry would take action. However, the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting subsequently directed the complainant to approach the broadcaster. In any event, because the broadcast remained available on the broadcaster's social media platforms, it constituted a continuous cause of action.

Submissions of the Broadcaster

The broadcaster submitted that the impugned broadcasts were aired on 16.08.2025, and the 15-day time period expired on 31.08.2025, which was a Sunday; therefore, the time frame was extended to 01.09.2025. The complaint was filed at the first level on 02.09.2025, and the 15-day period for the broadcaster to respond expired on 17.09.2025. The complaint could thereafter be escalated within 15 days from 17.09.2025; the complaint was escalated on 18.10.2025. Therefore, there was a substantial delay at the second level of redressal, which the complainant had not satisfactorily explained. He had not provided details of when the Ministry advised the complainant to pursue the matter before this Authority, or when the complainant became aware of the same. In response, the complainant submitted that the Ministry advised him on 16.10.2025, and the complaint was escalated to NBDSA soon thereafter, on 18.10.2025.

B. Merits**Submission of the Complainant**

The complainant submitted that a protest took place at AMU during which he had delivered an 18-minute speech. During the speech, certain slogans were raised. These slogans, expressed in solidarity with Palestine, were excerpted and portrayed as constituting criminal activity. The broadcaster, in the impugned broadcasts, equated solidarity with Palestine with communal or anti-national activity and called for criminal action to be taken. The broadcaster constructed this narrative based solely on 10–15 seconds of slogans raised after an 18-minute speech about a fee hike. These slogans were not raised by him; they were raised during the protest.

The broadcast titled “AMU में 'फिलिस्तीन प्रेमी गैंग'.. 'योगी स्टाइल' में होगा इलाज.” was a four-minute clip that began with prejudicial narration. The broadcast opened with the

statement, “जब देश पूरा आजादी में डूबा था तब अलीगढ़ मुस्लिम यूनिवर्सिटी से छात्रों की जमात ये नारे लगा रही थी”, and questioned who was this “फिलिस्तीन प्रेमी गैंग”, while equating Palestine with Hamas. An inflammatory question was posed “ये कौन लोग हैं जिनके सीने में हमस का दर्द पनपता है? ये कौन लोग हैं जिनका जख्म बार-बार छलकता है?”, thereby equating pro-Palestine slogans with support for Hamas and as anti-national activity, which was misleading.

The broadcast further stated, “फिलिस्तीन से 4000 कि.मी. दूर अलीगढ़ यूनिवर्सिटी के कुछ भारतीय छात्रों के दिल में फिलिस्तीन को लेकर प्यार है”, and added that “‘योगी स्टाइल’ में होगा इलाज.” While the broadcast did not clarify what was meant by “Yogi Style,” the complainant submitted that the implication was evident from the comments section of the video. In the same broadcast, the broadcaster also equated solidarity with Palestine with support for Jinnah, stating: “कभी जिन्ना की तस्वीर, कभी होली खेलने का विवाद और अब यूनिवर्सिटी कैम्पस में फिलिस्तीन के समर्थन में नारे। कौन है जो अलीगढ़ मुस्लिम यूनिवर्सिटी को बनाना चाहता है, इस्लामिक कट्टरपंथ का सेंटर।” Throughout the broadcast, prejudicial tickers such as “AMU में ‘फिलिस्तीन प्रेमी गैंग’” and “‘योगी स्टाइल’ में होगा इलाज” were aired. Similar content was also aired in the other impugned broadcasts.

The complainant submitted that, essentially, on the basis of 10–15 seconds of pro-Palestine slogans, expressions such as “विशेष वर्ग में ‘फिलिस्तीन प्रेम’” were used as a form of dog-whistle messaging, implying that Muslims have excessive sympathy for Palestine and portraying such sympathy as anti-national activity.

Submissions of the Broadcaster

The broadcaster submitted that while the complainant impugned three broadcasts, the content was similar across all three, and each lasted four minutes. The impugned broadcasts were telecast in accordance with the Code of Conduct. While the complainant alleged that the broadcasts were divisive, the broadcaster submitted that this was due to the nature of the clip, which was aired on the channel itself and taken from the protest at Aligarh Muslim University against the fee hike. It was relevant to mention that, in fact, an FIR had been filed against the complainant in respect of the speech delivered on 19.08.2025.

The broadcaster further submitted that it was an exaggeration for the complainant to allege that this FIR was lodged against him because of the broadcast, particularly when the video clip was widely circulating on social media. The complainant rebutted this submission and stated that the video clip had gone viral on social media because of the impugned broadcasts, resulting in one person from Hindu Raksha Dal filing an FIR.

The broadcaster submitted that the complainant is not currently a student at the University. Further, the issue was not merely the raising of pro-Palestine slogans, but the religious link in them.

It reiterated that the clip circulating on social media formed the primary basis for the broadcast. There was a protest in AMU against the fee hike, and the complainant had arrived to deliver a speech on the same, which should ostensibly have been the main crux of the speech. However, at the end of the speech, slogans were raised alluding to there being no god but Allah. Therefore, the slogans were not merely raised in support for Palestine or Gaza, which can be done in a neutral manner by anybody, irrespective of their religious sentiments. However, linking the slogans to Allah gave the university protest a religious sentiment or fervour. Further, the impugned broadcasts featured the interview conducted by the broadcaster the next day.

During interviews, the students strongly refused to acknowledge that slogans of this nature were made. They specifically said that while the broadcaster could ask questions regarding the fee hike, what is between him and his religion is a matter between them alone. As the protest ended, the slogan "जिंदाबाद जिंदाबाद...". AMU से संघर्ष करो हम तुम्हारे साथ हैं", was made clearly showing that the complainant was not part of the University.

Decision

At the outset, NBDSA noted a delay of two days at the first level of redressal and sixteen days at the second level of redressal.

With regard to the first level, it was noted that the period for filing the complaint under the News Broadcasting & Digital Standards Regulations expired on 31.08.2025, which fell on a Sunday. Consequently, under Proviso 1 to Regulation 9.1, the delay was, in effect, only of one day.

Insofar as the second level is concerned, NBDSA noted that it appeared that after filing the initial complaint with the broadcaster, the complainant escalated the matter to the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting (Ministry) on 16.09.2025, i.e., within fifteen days from the date of filing the complaint. The Ministry responded only on 16.10.2025, directing that the complaint be filed with the broadcaster, whereafter, on 18.10.2025, the matter was escalated to NBDSA. In these circumstances, the delay at the second level did not appear to be directly attributable to complainant.

In view of the foregoing, since the complainant appeared to have acted diligently throughout and the delay was sufficiently explained, NBDSA deemed it appropriate

to condone the delay of one day at the first level and sixteen days at the second level of redressal.

Having condoned the delay, NBDSA considered the complaint, the footage of the broadcasts, and the submissions made by both parties during the hearing.

At the outset, NBDSA stated that it cannot adjudge the propriety of the speech and slogans raised during the protest at Aligarh Muslim University (AMU), as its jurisdiction was confined only to adjudicating violations of the Code of Conduct by broadcasters.

It was noted that there was agitation at AMU over a fee hike, and during the protests, participants raised slogans supporting Palestine. The broadcaster, while covering this news, has distorted the aforesaid event by completely omitting the principal purpose of the agitation, namely, the fee hike, and has picked only that part of the agitation in which some persons raised such slogans. The event covered in the broadcast gives the impression that the agitation itself was in respect of the Palestinian war. Even here, a totally different twist is sought to be given, which is evident from the tickers and statements made during the broadcast, stating that “AMU में ‘फिलिस्तीन प्रेमी गैंग’” and “‘योगी स्टाइल’ में होगा इलाज”. This amounted to a clear violation of the Code of Conduct. While it was the submission of the broadcaster that it had in the impugned broadcasts, only sought to question the religious link drawn to slogans being raised in solidarity with Palestine and Gaza, this intention was not clearly evident from the footage of the broadcasts. Instead, in the impugned broadcasts, the broadcaster primarily questioned why solidarity with Palestine was being expressed in a protest against a fee hike. Furthermore, the phrase “‘योगी स्टाइल’ में होगा इलाज” was inflammatory and appeared to advocate for the initiation of criminal action, rather than neutral reporting.

Consequently, NBDSA decided to levy a fine of Rs. 2 lakhs on the broadcaster. NBDSA further directed the broadcaster to remove the footage of the impugned broadcasts, if still available, from the website of the channel (s), YouTube, and remove all hyperlinks, including access, which should be confirmed to NBDSA in writing within 7 days of the Order.

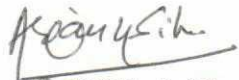
NBDSA decided to close the complaint with the above observations and inform the complainant and the broadcaster accordingly.

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 : 11.09.2026