



Date: October 17, 2019

To,

Dr. Puneet Jain

Group Chief Corporate Affairs Officer
Group Chief Law & Compliance Officer
TV Today Network Ltd.
India Today Mediaplex
FC 8, Sec. 16 A, Film City
Noida 201301

Subject: Complaint with regards to content published by Aaj Tak

Ref: 1. Aaj Tak show aired and published on October 16, 2019 Youtube channel
2. A tweet posted by verified Aaj Tak account

Dear Sir,

This is in reference to the content published /aired by your news channel "Aaj Tak" via social media as also via broadcast medium on television.

The first reference is being made to the show aired on your news channel, Aaj Tak, and which has also been uploaded on your Youtube Channel named "Aaj Tak". This video was uploaded on your YouTube channel on October 16, 2019 and had more than 3 lakh views at the time of writing this letter. The video can be viewed here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A8lXFnrqWXs&feature=youtu.be>

The title of the show is: Ayodhya Dispute: **देश के सबसे बड़े फैसले पर सबसे बड़ी बहस अयोध्या से Rohit Sardana के साथ**

In this show, an individual who was addressed as "Swami Karpatri Ji Maharaj" has expressed some controversial and abhorrent views with respect to the Ayodhya case and declared "18 November se ayodhya me ShriRam Janmabhoomi ka nirman hoga" and "faisla nischittaur se hai, mere paksh me hai"

(On November 18, the formation/birth of Ram Janmabhoomi will begin; the Judgement will undoubtedly be in our favour.)

This is not just a provocative statement made without a disclaimer by your channel especially when the verdict, in such a sensitive and crucial matter, from the Hon'ble Supreme Court is still awaited. Such statements tend to incite public disharmony and could lead to disruption of public order.

Such content has been aired despite of the NBSA issuing a special advisory, dated October 16, 2019, to all news channels to be extra cautious while conducting debates. The NBSA advisory, inter alia, states as follows:

“8. Care should be taken to ensure that no opportunity is given to anyone to express any extreme view, including in debates in order to influence the viewers.

9. Debates which are provocative and inflammatory and likely to create tension in the public should be avoided.”

It is observed that the guidelines of the NBSA have not been followed in broadcasting this content.

The second reference is being made to the tweet that was posted through the verified Twitter account of Aaj Tak, which can be found at the following link:

<https://twitter.com/aajtak/status/1184075792533225472>. Following is a screenshot of the tweet for your ready reference:



This particular tweet, unquestionably, has been put out to provoke negative sentiments against one community and is an attempt to sensationalize the Ayodhya case news coverage. This violates the NBSA guideline, of which, we believe, Aaj Tak must be apprised of.

The advisory highlighted some very key tactics that news channels commonly resort to which could lead to the disturbing of public harmony. The NBSA asked news channels not to speculate, to ascertain facts of the hearing before reporting, to refrain from showing mosque demolition footage, to not broadcast any celebrations of any community with regards to the Ayodhya case and to ensure that no extreme views are aired in the debates. NBSA advised news channels to follow this advisory.



It was expected that after having received such advisory, Aaj Tak would retract and delete their hate-filled tweet and post. So far that has not happened.

A news channel ought to be aware of the potent influence it has on public opinion and hence be cautious while putting out content which could even slightly tend to disturb public order and communal harmony. Aaj Tak appears to have put into jeopardy the secular ethos of the country.

In view of this, it is in best interest, that you remove the above-mentioned content from the Youtube channel and the Twitter account. In the event we do not receive a satisfactory response from you, we will be compelled to submit a complaint to the News Broadcasting Standards Authority.

Yours faithfully,

Anil Dharker, President

Teesta Setalvad, Secretary