

No. DM/15/2022-DM
Government of India
Ministry of Information & Broadcasting
A Wing, Shastri Bhawan
New Delhi – 110 001

20 January, 2024

ADVISORY

To,

- (i) Newspapers registered under Press and Registration of Books Act, 1867
- (ii) Private Satellite Television Channels
- (iii) Publishers of news and current affairs content on digital media
- (iv) Social Media Platforms

Subject: Advisory to refrain from publishing/telecasting any content that may be false or manipulated or has the potential to disturb communal harmony or public order - reg.

The Ministry has issued Advisories from time to time for television, print, and digital media, including social media platforms, to maintain adherence to the applicable norms and regulations applicable to the media, especially in matters related to public order, factual accuracy of information being published/broadcast, and communal harmony among various religious communities of India.

2. The Ram Lalla Pran Pratishtha at Ayodhya will be celebrated on 22nd January, 2024 across India. It is observed that certain unverified, provocative and fake messages are being spread, especially on social media, which can disturb communal harmony and public order. In this regard, attention is invited to following provisions of the Programme Code under the Cable Television Networks Regulation Act, 1995, and Norms of Journalistic Conduct laid down by the Press Council of India under the Press Council Act, 1978, a reference to which has also been made in the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021:

Norms of Journalistic Conduct

“Accuracy and Fairness: i) The Press shall eschew publication of inaccurate, baseless, graceless, misleading or distorted material.

Caste, Religion or Community References: vi) It is the duty of the newspaper to ensure that the tone, spirit and language of a write up is not objectionable, provocative, against the unity and integrity of the country, spirit of the constitution,

sedition and inflammatory in nature or designed to promote communal disharmony.

Paramount National Interest: i) Newspapers shall, as a matter of self-regulation, exercise due restraint and caution in presenting any news, comment or information which is likely to jeopardise, endanger or harm the paramount interests of the State and society, or the rights of individuals with respect to which reasonable restrictions may be imposed by law on the right to freedom of speech and expression under clause (2) of Article 19 of the Constitution of India.”

Programme Code

“Rule 6 (1) No programme should be carried in the cable service which:-

(c) Contains attack on religions or communities or visuals or words contemptuous of religious groups or which promote communal attitudes;

(d) Contains anything obscene, defamatory, deliberate, false and suggestive innuendos and half truths;

(e) is likely to encourage or incite violence or contains anything against maintenance of law and order or which promote anti-national attitudes;”

3. Having regard to the above, the newspapers, private satellite TV channels and publishers of news and current affairs on digital media are advised to refrain from publishing/telecasting any content that may be false or manipulated or has the potential to disturb communal harmony or public order in the country. Further, as part of their due diligence obligations, the social media platforms are advised to make reasonable efforts to not host, display or publish information of the nature mentioned above.

4. This issues with the approval of the Competent Authority.



(Kshitij Aggarwal)
Deputy Director (Digital Media)
Email: kshitij.aggarwal@gov.in

Copy to:-

1. Secretary, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology
2. Secretary, Press Council of India.
3. Self-Regulatory Bodies under Cable Television Network (Amendment) Rules, 2021.
4. Self-Regulatory Bodies under Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021.