



PAKISTAN ELECTRONIC MEDIA
REGULATORY AUTHORITY
KARACHI REGION
GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN

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Ref: No.1(01)/PEMRA-KH/RGM/CO/2021/114
5th March, 2021

Complainant

Mr. Junaid Ahmed,
Barrister-at-Law,
Advocate, High Courts of Pakistan
JA Legal,
Address: F66/3 Park Lane, Block 5, Clifton, Karachi.
Contact No: +92 332 3732 498

Respondent

Chief Executive Officer,
M/s Independent Media Corporation (Pvt.) Ltd. (Geo News)
Karachi.

Subject: DECISION OF AUTHORITY IN PURSUANCE TO
RECOMMENDATIONS OF 74TH COC MEETING IN THE
MATTER OF COMPLAINT RECEIVED FROM MR. JUNAI
AHMED, ADVOCATE HIGH COURTS ON BEHALF OF MRS.
NALINI PRABHA W/O MR. HAMIR SINGH (MPA) AGAINST
GEO NEWS CHANNEL.

Whereas, M/s Independent Media Corporation (Pvt.) Ltd. (Geo News) hereinafter referred to as "the Channel" was awarded license to establish and operate international scale satellite TV broadcast channel station containing certain terms and conditions including but not limited to compliance with the code of conduct.

2. And Whereas, a self-explanatory complaint dated 23.11.2020 received from Mr. Junaid Ahmed, Advocate High Court, JA Legal, Barrister-at-law, Advocates & Legal Consultants on behalf of Mrs. Nalini Prabha W/o Mr. Hamir Singh (MPA) against Geo News Channel's program "Khabarnak" aired on 26.12.20219 at around 11:00PM for allegedly airing defamatory and derogatory statements.

3. And Whereas, subsequently summon letters were issued to the Complainant and Channel to appear before the Council of Complaints, Sindh and present / defend its status in the matter. Barrister Junaid Ahmed along with Mr. Kawish Naqvi on behalf of Mrs. Nalini Prabha W/o Mr. Hamir Singh (MPA) appeared before the

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Council and on behalf of M/s Independent Media Corporation (Pvt.) Ltd. (Geo News), Mr. Hasan Mustafa, Executive Director joined the meeting through What's App Call.

4. And Whereas, Complainant's Counsel Mr. Junaid stated that he stands with the detailed complaint lodged earlier. Mr. Junaid asserted that his client is a respectable woman and wife of Rana Hamir Singh, Member of the Provincial Assembly of Sindh. His client has been a housewife since her marriage and has never been a holder of any public office nor has even given any public interview to any television channel whatsoever.

5. And Whereas, Mr. Junaid added that his client's belongs to the Royal Family of the Rajput Thakur clan of Umerkot of Sodha Rajput tribe, and usually resides within the district of Umerkot. It is pertinent to mention here that the Sodha Rajput's have a long/great history, and have been living in the Sindh for the past 200 decades, and have not only sacrificed and contributed immensely towards the betterment of their tribe but have also welcomed refugees in the history. This can be substantiated from the fact that Rana Parasad of whom his client's husband is a direct descendant of gave shelter to Humayoun in 1542 when he was made a flee from Delhi by Sher Shah Suri, and in the same year Akbar the great was born in the fort of Umerkot.

6. And Whereas, Mr. Junaid claimed that on 26th December 2019 at around 11:00 PM a Programme named "Khabarnak" was broadcasted by a Geo News TV Channel wherein various defamatory and derogatory statements were made, primarily aimed to assassinate his client's character and reputation by attributing various false statements in order to injure the reputation of his client and her family. Some of the blatant false and baseless statements/representations made in the programme which were broadcasted are as follows:

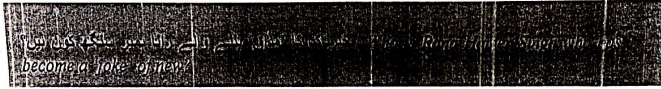
- i. At 22:07, portraying and associating an "unusual laughter" of high pitch with his client;
- ii. At 22:47, the actor portraying Mr. Rana Hamir Singh states "ye to (referring to his client) talwaarbaazi bhi karti hai";
- iii. At 22:50, the same actor says "yeh nezabaazi bhi karti hai";
- iv. At 22:52, the actor portraying Mr. Rana Hamir Singh states "yeh ishaarebaazi bhi karti hai" to which the Ayesha Jahanzeb (Host of the Programme) deliberately replies "mujhe ishaare baazi samajh nahi aayi?", and in response at 23:00 the actor depicting his client states



"samajh nahi aayi" while "winking an eye" towards her, and continues laughing in an offensive manner;

- v. At 23:10, one actor deliberately states "hisaab laga lo, jo (referring to his client) akh maar sakti hai, wo Rana di ki mat mar di hogi";
- vi. At 23:20, the anchor asked the actor depicting his client that "raani sahiba hum ne suna hai aap ghora bhi acha bhaga leti hain?" to which actor depicting her husband says "aesa wesa yeh dekhen"... while at 23:19 actor depicting his client appreciates by gesture "...yeh dekhen (pointing to himself) yeh jo ghora bhaga ke lae hain, wo nazar nahi aata aapko";
- vii. At 28.34 actor depicting the husband said "wo waha par humein patloon bhi nazar aai to phaar doonga" to which the anchor said "kya baat kat rahe hain, aapki raani sahiba bhi to churri daar pajama pehn ke bethi howi hai" to which the actor (portraying as his client) replied "chadar se chupai bhi to hai"

7. And Whereas, Mr. Junaid also claimed that after the protest an article was published in Independent Urdu on dated 02.01.2020 by the name of:



8. And Whereas, Mr. Junaid also added that in the aforesaid article, the executive producer of the programme confessed that there was an ABUSE, and assured the journalist friends that this type of incident will not happen again and allegedly apologize unconditionally to Rana Hamir Singh and his loved ones.

9. And Whereas, Mr. Junaid also stated that subsequent to the broadcast of the programme, his client's son had approached the GEO's concerned officers to air an apology in the same programme but despite the humble request no heed was paid by GEO. Consequently, his client was constrained to serve a Leal Notice/Notice of Action under section 8 of the Defamation Ordinance, 2002 to GEO dated 03.01.2020 pertaining to the defamatory and derogatory depiction of his client aired by the TV channel.

R. Junaid

10. And Whereas, Mr. Junaid informed to the Council that on behalf of his client a Suit No. 416/2020 filed before the High Court of Sindh to claim damages under defamation ordinance on same issue/ programme aired on 26-12-2019.

11. And Whereas, the Council asked from the Complainant's counsel what complainant wants from the Channel now? Mr. Junaid replied that apology may be aired in the same program then the complainant will wave off the damages for which Suit has already been filed in the Court of Law.


12. And Whereas, Channel's representative, Mr. Mustafa stated that channel stands with its detailed written reply submitted earlier in the matter. Mr. Mustafa apprised to the Council that Geo News is the most reliable and popular channel of Pakistan and it has always relied upon the true and fair reporting by its well-recognized journalists and TV anchors particularly in talk shows and infotainment shows. It is further submitted that the programme "Khabarnak" by virtue of its genre aimed to disseminate awareness and educate general masses on social and political issues of society in satirical and humorous style. The program management never again played the character of 'Rana Sb' in 'Khabarnak' in an honest consideration of reservations came to our knowledge. Independent Media Corporation (Pvt.) Ltd (Geo News), firmly believes that Media plays vital role in shaping up the opinion of general masses, as well as providing them some humor and due care is taken that law, rules, code of conduct are not violated.

13. And Whereas, the Council apprised to the Channel's representative that in humorous programme the channel should do take care of general decency. The Council asked from the Channel's representative that the complainant's counsel has prayed to air apology in the same programme as his client has been a housewife since her marriage and has never been a holder of any public office nor has even given any public interview to any television channel? Mr. Mustafa replied that he will take up the matter with the Chief Executive Officer of the Geo News Channel and he ensured to the Council that apology will be aired in the same programme under intimation to the Authority.

14. And Whereas, the Council of Complaints, Sindh in its 74th meeting held on 10th February, 2021 heard both the representatives of the complainant and respondent Channel, reviewed the relevant record at length besides perusing the video footages of referred programme "Khabarnak" aired on 26.12.2019 by the Geo News Channel. The Council perused the matter, after detailed deliberation unanimously recommended the following in exercise of its powers conferred under PEMRA Ordinance, 2002 as amended by PEMRA (Amendment) Act 2007 read with Rule 8(4)

& 8(5) of the PEMRA (Council of Complaints) Rules 2010, which has also been approved by the Competent Authority:

CoC discussed the complaint at length. The CoC heard both the representatives of the complainant and the respondent Channel, reviewed the relevant record at length besides perusing the video footage of referred program "Khabarnak". As the Channel's representative ensured to the Council that the Geo News Channel will air apology in the programme "Khabarnak" as prayed by the complainant. Therefore, the complaint dated 23.11.2020 against Geo News Channel has been disposed off.


Shiraz Asghar Shaikh

DGM / In-Charge / Secretary to the Council
PEMRA, Karachi Region

Enclosure:

- CD containing video footage of apology aired by the Geo News.

Copy for Information:

1. Chairperson, COC Sindh.
2. Director General / Secretary to the Authority, PEMRA Headquarter, Islamabad.
3. Director General (Operations-Broadcast), PEMRA Headquarter, Islamabad.
4. Director General (Operations-Distribution), PEMRA Headquarter, Islamabad