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Media Advisory

PR/ 41/2020 -PCI

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Press Council of India advises the media to adhere to the Norms of Journalistic conduct in covering cases under Investigation

The Council has noted with distress that coverage of the alleged suicide by a Film actor by many media outlets is in violation of the Norms of Journalistic Conduct and, therefore, advises the Media to adhere to the Norms framed by the Press Council of India.

The Media should not narrate the story in a manner so as to induce the general public to believe in the complicity of the person indicted. Publishing information based on gossip about the line of investigation by the official agencies on the crime committed is not desirable. It is not advisable to vigorously report crime related issues on a day to day basis and comment on the evidence without ascertaining the factual matrix. Such reporting brings undue pressure in the course of fair investigation and trial.

The Media is advised to refrain from giving excessive publicity to the victim, witnesses, suspects and accused as it will amount to invasion of their privacy rights. Identification of witnesses by the Media needs to be avoided as it endangers them to come under pressure from the accused or his associates as well as investigating agencies.

The Media is advised not to conduct its own parallel trial or foretell the decision to avoid pressure during investigation and trial.

Further, the reporting of the alleged suicide by the actor by some of the newspapers is also in violation of the norms formulated by the Council for reporting on suicide. The norm prohibits publishing stories about suicide prominently and advises the media not to unduly repeat such stories. The media is expected not to use language which sensationalise or normalises suicides or presents it as a constructive solution to the problems. The Media is advised not to use sensational headlines or use photographs, video-footage or social media links while reporting on suicide cases.

The media shall be well advised to visit the website of the Press Council of India (<http://presscouncil.nic.in/>) to see the Norms in detail and adhere to those scrupulously.