



May 15, 2018

*Secretariat*

**All Accredited Advertising Agencies/MBHs  
Pakistan Broadcasters Association**

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Subject: **AXACT/BOL – Fake Degrees to News Channel**

Dear All,

As the sole elected representative body for the entire electronic media industry of Pakistan, Pakistan Broadcasters' Association (PBA) has a duty as per its Memorandum of Association to safeguard repute and standing of Pakistan's electronic media and to protect it from any allegations of corruption and criminal wrongdoings.

It is as part of the above duty that PBA has been concerned by the sinister way in which BOL News Channel was launched, its 100 percent financial dependence on a company AXACT that has been facing serious criminal charges both in Pakistan and United States of America. FBI letter marked File No: IS-C163-A, NY-6434502 dated 8 Feb, 2016 says Axact is involved in selling fictitious college and high school diplomas. One of their senior executives, Umair Hamid, has just been convicted in USA for his role in the crime of selling fake degrees. The US Department of Justice while sentencing Umair Hamid said the fake degree operation he was running was on behalf of Axact (<https://www.justice.gov/usao-sdny/pr/pakistani-man-sentenced-21-months-prison-axact-diploma-mill-scam>).

In addition to above, prestigious news organizations like BBC, New York Times and Gulf News have each done detailed stories on the international syndicate of fraud and forgery run by Mr. Shoaib Shaikh and his company AXACT.

It is sad that despite passage of several years, Mr. Shoaib Shaikh and AXACT have yet to file a damages case against any of these organizations before American or British courts.

All this has been most embarrassing for the electronic media industry of Pakistan. For its part, PBA members, acting through PBA, have raised these questions at the highest judicial and executive fora in Pakistan. PBA has also been writing to PEMRA repeatedly to look into the financial sources of BOL News/Labbaik and its financial dependence on the criminal syndicate of AXACT.

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PBA even filed a petition with Islamabad High Court based on its serious concerns. Upon this the Honourable Court directed PEMRA to examine the questions raised. As a result, after a long process, PEMRA, after obtaining no information from BOL/Labbaik for its source of funding and on other grounds, revoked BOL News's License. Since the revocation of its license from PEMRA, BOL News is being broadcast on the basis of a stay order granted by the Honourable Sindh High Court.

Recently, the Islamabad High Court removed a judge from service for taking a Rs. 5 million bribe to acquit Shoaib Ahmad Shaikh and others in a case relating to the AXACT fake degree scam.

BOL has also aired multiple campaigns of hate speech/incitement of violence based on religion in the most unprecedented fashion in terms of quantity, number of people targeted and intensity that has been unprecedented in media history of the country.

The purpose of this letter is to convey to you the unfortunate facts regarding BOL News and its relation with AXACT and Mr. Shoaib Shaikh and mysterious sources of their funding so that as an industry stakeholder, you may take an informed decision on this matter. As the situation stands, while PEMRA has revoked BOL News License, the Government of Pakistan is prosecuting Mr. Shoaib Shaikh and other executives of AXACT for various criminal offenses involved in selling fake and forged degrees as well as money laundering.

As representative body of the electronic media of Pakistan, it is our obligation to keep safeguarding the reputation of the entire industry and to keep making an effort to prevent induction of proceeds of crime into the media industry of Pakistan. The Board of Directors of PBA has unanimously resolved vide their meeting dated May 14, 2018 to intimate all stakeholders in the industry to be extremely careful when dealing with any such operator for any commercial or non-commercial relationship.

This letter is being written for your information only. In case you need any further information or clarification, please feel free to contact us.

Thanks and regards,

*Sincerely for,*  
**Pakistan Broadcasters Association**



**Muhammad Ali Butt**  
Executive Director