

# LIGHTS, CAMERA & LAW

## MEDIA & ENTERTAINMENT LAWS UPDATES DECEMBER, 2025



### AUTHORS

**HITAKSHI CHOTALIA, PRINCIPAL ASSOCIATE**

**YASHWINI BALAKRISHNA AMIN, ASSOCIATE**

# ANM GLOBAL

Advocates & Legal Consultants

# NATIONAL

## **MADRAS HIGH COURT CLEARS RELEASE OF 'AKHANDA 2' FOLLOWING SETTLEMENT BETWEEN THE PARTIES**

The Madras High Court has lifted the restraint on the theatrical release of the film 'Akhandam 2: Thaandavam' following a settlement between the Producers and Eros International. The litigation originated from an application filed by Eros International to enforce an INR 28 Crores arbitral award against 14 Reels Entertainment Private Limited. This legal intervention resulted in the immediate suspension of the original December 5 release. Eros successfully argued that the current production arrangements constituted an indirect attempt to circumvent legally determined financial obligations and flout the enforcement of the arbitral award. The parties have since entered into a settlement agreement, effectively resolving the financial liabilities that triggered the court's interim injunction. Upon the formal discharge of the restraint order, the film was released on December 12, 2025.

Access link: Sources [here](#) and [here](#)

## **MADRAS HIGH COURT DISPOSES OF ILLAIYARAJA'S SUITS FOLLOWING SETTLEMENT FOR SONGS USAGE IN 'GOOD BAD UGLY' AND 'DUDE'**

The Madras High Court disposed of the copyright infringement suits filed by composer Ilaiyaraaja against Mythri Movie Makers after the parties entered into a settlement agreement over unauthorised use of the composer's works, the producers paid INR 50 Lakhs only for the use of the composer's works in the films 'Dude' and 'Good Bad Ugly'. While the tracks featured in 'Dude' shall remain on streaming platforms under a valid license, in compliance with the court's prior interim injunction, the producers have been ordered to remove the three disputed songs from the film 'Good Bad Ugly'.

Access Link: Source [Here](#)

## **NTR JR MOVES DELHI HIGH COURT TO SAFEGUARD PERSONALITY RIGHTS AGAINST UNAUTHORIZED DIGITAL EXPLOITATION**

Actor Nandamuri Taraka Rama Rao Junior (NTR Jr) has approached the Delhi High Court seeking protection of his personality rights, alleging unauthorised commercial use of his name, photographs and persona across social media and e-commerce platforms. The court, presided over by Justice Manmeet Pritam Singh Arora, directed social media intermediaries and online marketplaces to treat the actor's suit as a formal complaint under the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021, and mandated that the intermediaries take necessary action within three days. During the hearing scheduled for 22nd December, 2025, the court reinforced its stance against the misuse of celebrity

identities including via AI and deepfake technology, similar to orders passed for actors R. Madhavan and Ajay Devgan, further solidifying the legal framework for "Publicity Rights" in the digital age. The Court has adjourned the matter for further compliance review and final determination of broader legal questions regarding AI-generated transformative works.

Access link: Source [here](#)

## **DELHI HIGH COURT RESTRAINS DIGITAL RELEASE OF 'MASK' OVER UNAUTHORIZED SYNCHRONIZATION OF MUSICAL WORKS**

The Delhi High Court, in the case between Saregama India Limited vs Black Madras Films & Ors, has issued an interim injunction against the makers of the Tamil film 'Mask' restraining release on any broadcasting and OTT platforms pending compliance with procuring required licenses. The dispute arose over the unauthorized use of the Kannada song 'Naguva Nayana' originally featured in the film Pallavi Anu Pallavi. The Court upheld the plaintiff's claim of absolute copyright ownership, predicated on a 1980 assignment agreement with the original producers. The ruling clarifies that under the unamended Copyright Act, 1957, the copyright in a film's musical and literary works initially vests with the producer, and a composer lacks the independent standing to license such works once the rights have been legally assigned to a music label. Justice Tejas Karia directed the makers to either remove the track from the film or deposit INR 30 Lakhs as interim licence fees before releasing the film on any broadcast or OTT platforms. The court held that Saregama India Ltd owns full copyright over the song, rejecting the producers' reliance on a licence directly obtained from the composer Ilaiyaraaja. The matter has been scheduled for further hearing on 23rd March, 2026.

Access link: Source [here](#)

## **CENTRE REAFFIRMS CHILD SAFETY AND ETHICAL STANDARDS FOR OTT PLATFORMS**

In response to the Rajya Sabha on 12th December, 2025, the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting (MIB) reiterated its commitment to protecting children and promoting responsible digital media, while also safeguarding freedom of speech guaranteed under Article 19(1) of the Constitution.

Under these rules, OTT platforms are required to follow a strict Code of Ethics, including classifying content into five age-based categories Universal (U), U/A 7+, U/A 13+, U/A 16+, and Adult (A) and putting in place effective parental controls to prevent children from accessing age-inappropriate material. Platforms are also prohibited from publishing content that is illegal, misleading, false or inaccurate. Publishers of digital news and current affairs must additionally comply with the Programme Code under the Cable Television Networks

# NATIONAL

Act and the Norms of Journalistic Conduct.

The rules establish a three-tier grievance redressal mechanism involving publishers, self-regulating bodies and government oversight. The Centre also pointed to measures such as fact-checking by the PIB's Fact Check Unit and blocking powers under the IT Act to curb misinformation.

The government also showcased initiatives like WAVES 2025 and Create in India Challenges (CIC), aimed at boosting local and regional digital content while empowering creator economy.

Access link: Source [here](#)

## **DELHI HIGH COURT STEPS IN TO SAFEGUARD SALMAN KHAN'S PERSONALITY RIGHTS**

The Delhi High Court has directed social media platforms to act swiftly on Bollywood actor, Salman Khan's complaint seeking protection of his personality rights. Presiding over the matter, Justice Manmeet Pritam Singh Arora ordered social media intermediaries to take necessary action within three days under the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021. The actor approached the court alleging unauthorised use of his name, image, likeness and persona across social media platforms and e-commerce websites. Following the procedural approach established by the courts in recent cases for actors Ajay Devgan and Jr. NTR, the court clarified that such suits must first be treated as complaints under the IT Rules, with platforms required to review and act on the flagged content. It indicated that a separate interim restraining order would be passed against non-intermediary entities, including e-commerce platforms offering merchandise using the actor's image without his consent and authorisation. The matter will be heard again on May 18, 2026.

Access link: Source [here](#)

## **DELHI HIGH COURT PROTECTS SUNIL GAVASKAR'S PERSONALITY RIGHTS AGAINST DIGITAL EXPLOITATION**

The Delhi High Court, in Sunil Gavaskar v. Cricket Tak & Ors, has issued an ad-interim injunction to safeguard the personality and publicity rights of former Indian cricket team captain Sunil Gavaskar. Presiding over the matter, Justice Manmeet Pritam Singh Arora, restrained several websites and unidentified defendants from the unauthorized commercial use of the cricketer's name, image, and likeness. The Court further extended this protection to prohibit the misappropriation of his identity through Artificial Intelligence (AI) and deepfake technology, while also ordering the removal of obscene and disparaging content.

The court ordered the cricketer to provide specific URLs where the infringing content appears and the platforms must review and remove the offending material within 72 hours of being notified. The court stressed that online intermediaries have a responsibility to act promptly when notified of content that violates an individual's personal and public image. By reinforcing the "notice-and-takedown" mechanism, the Court emphasized the liability of intermediaries to act promptly against digital impersonation. The matter is currently listed for further hearing on May 22, 2026.

Access link: Source [here](#)

## **GUJARATI FILMMAKER SECURES COPYRIGHT FOR 'HEXAIMMERSIVE' LIVE PERFORMANCE FORMAT**

An Ahmedabad based Gujarati filmmaker and performer, Hhrutul Patel has secured the copyright registration for his proprietary 'hexaimmersive' live format, a new visual storytelling method aimed at transforming audience experiences in live entertainment. This innovative visual framework, designed as a response to the challenges faced by traditional venues during the COVID-19 pandemic, uses six towering interconnected screens arranged in a hexagon, with audiences seated in triangular sections and performers moving through pathways between the screens, creating an immersive 360-degree experience. An Alumni of Whistling Woods International and director of the 2019 Gujarati film 'Bau Na Vichar', recently showcased this format in a live show in Ahmedabad, which received strong audience acclaim. With legal assistance from Advocate Yash Suryawala, he secured exclusive copyright for the concept and preventing others from using the format without prior permission. He now plans to expand 'hexaimmersive' shows to major cities like Mumbai and Delhi, envisioning it as the future of live concerts, performances, and films.

Access Link: Source [here](#)

## **PHOTOGRAPHER RONNY SEN FILES INR 18.11 CRORE COPYRIGHT INFRINGEMENT SUIT AGAINST ZEE MEDIA**

Emmy-nominated filmmaker and photographer Ronny Sen has initiated legal proceedings against Zee News and its parent company, seeking INR 18.11 crore in damages. The lawsuit, filed in the Commercial Court of Rajarhat, alleges unauthorised use of Sen's exclusive cheetah footage without his prior consent, permission or a valid licence. The media house further failed to accord the photographer with credits for the clip. The dispute centres on a 12-second clip Sen filmed in September 2022 documenting the historic intercontinental air translocation of African cheetahs to India's Kuno National Park, a rare moment in wildlife photography. The photographer claims Zee News broadcast the clip on its primetime show DNA in September 2022, labelling it 'super exclusive', and streamed it online without

# NATIONAL

acknowledging his authorship or compensating him. The suit asserts that Zee Media's actions constitute a deliberate violation of both economic and moral rights under the Copyright Act, 1957, causing losses including foregone licensing revenue, diminished artistic value, and potential future deals. The matter is listed for further hearing on 16th January, 2026.

Access Link: Source [here](#)

## **KERALA HIGH COURT OVERTURNS CBFC OBJECTIONS, CLEARS RELEASE OF MALAYALAM FILM 'HAAL'**

A Division Bench of the Kerala High Court has cleared the release of the Malayalam film 'Haal' starring Shane Nigam & Ors. The court dismissed writ appeals filed by the Union Government and the Catholic Congress that challenged a lower court's decision quashing an 'A' certificate and several compulsory cuts mandated by the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC). The Division Bench upheld the lower court's ruling, effectively overturning most of the CBFC's objections and allowing the film to move forward toward release. The case drew significant attention after the certification process became contentious, with disputes over scenes such as the depiction of beef biryani and alleged religious portrayals. The Division Bench, after screening the film during proceedings, upheld the ruling that artistic and creative expression cannot be curtailed to appease 'hypersensitive' sentiments. The Division Bench enforced the principle that the Board's role is to certify, not to censor. The film was theatrically released in India on the 25th of December, 2025.

Access Link: Source [here](#)

## **BOMBAY HIGH COURT DENIES AD-INTERIM INJUNCTION IN COPYRIGHT DISPUTE OVER "SAAT SAMUNDAR PAAR"**

The Bombay High Court in Trimurti Films Pvt. Ltd. vs Dharma Productions & Ors, has refused to grant an urgent ad-interim relief to the producers of the 1992 film 'Vishwatma'. The Plaintiff sought a permanent injunction along with damages amounting to INR 10 Crore alleging that the unauthorized remix and synchronization of the iconic track 'Saat Samundar Paar' in the upcoming film 'Tu Meri Main Tera Main Tera Tu Meri' infringed its exclusive copyright. Trimurti Films contended that its 1990 agreement with Saregama's predecessor granted only limited 'mechanical rights' for audio records and did not authorize the creation of derivative works or 'synchronization rights' for new cinematograph films.

By an order dated 23rd December 2025, the Bombay High Court declined to grant interim relief, stay the use of the song or halt the film's release. The Court observed that Trimurti failed to establish a prima facie case restricting Saregama's rights under the existing

assignment agreements and noted the balance of convenience in favour of the defendants, given the advanced stage of the film's release. The matter is scheduled for further hearing on 9 January, 2026.

Access link: Sources [here](#) and [here](#)

## **SAREGAMA INDIA'S ANNOUNCES STRATEGIC INVESTMENT IN BHANSALI PRODUCTIONS**

Saregama India Ltd. has announced a INR 325 crore strategic investment in Bhansali Productions Pvt. Ltd., the production house led by filmmaker Sanjay Leela Bhansali. The investment will be made through compulsory convertible preference shares (CCPS), giving Saregama an initial 28% stake, with the option to increase its holding to 49.9% by 2028 and up to 51% by 2030, subject to further tranches. This marks a structural shift in Saregama's business model, transitioning from an in-house film production to focusing on highly profitable IP partnerships.

Under the arrangement, Bhansali Productions will exclusively license all future film music rights to Saregama at pre-agreed commercial terms, while retaining ownership and creative control over its films. The transaction not only strengthens Saregama's long-term music IP portfolio but also signals a deeper integration of content production and music licensing in India's media and entertainment sector.

Access Link: Source [here](#)

## **KERELA COMMERCIAL COURT AWARDS RS. 30 LAKHS FOR SCREENPLAY PLAGIARISM IN 'KARMAYODHA'**

A Commercial Court in Kerala has ordered filmmaker Major Ravi and the producers of the 2012 Malayalam film 'Karmayodha' to pay INR 30 Lakh as compensation for plagiarising the screenplay authored by writer Reji Mathew. The Court held that the film's story, screenplay and dialogues were substantially copied from Mathew's original work, constituting a clear copyright infringement under the Copyright Act, 1957. The Court recognised Reji Mathew as the sole owner of copyright in the impugned material and noted that the screenplay had been shared with the defendants during the pre-production, after which the defendants proceeded to produce the film without obtaining a valid assignment or license from the writer. The court noted that the similarities between the two works were 'too substantial' to be coincidental. In addition to awarding damages, the Court restrained the defendants from further exploiting or adapting the film without the explicit consent of the copyright holder.

Access link: Source [here](#)

# NATIONAL

## OSCAR CONTENDER 'HOMEBOUND' FACES COPYRIGHT DISPUTE AS AUTHOR ALLEGES PLAGIARISM

Just days after its selection as India's official entry to the 98th Academy Awards, the film 'Homebound', directed by Neeraj Ghaywan and produced by Dharma Productions, now faces a major legal setback. Journalist and author Puja Changoiwala has initiated legal proceedings, alleging that the film unlawfully plagiarises her 2021 novel of the same name, claiming that similarities extend beyond the shared theme of the COVID-19 migrant exodus to include substantial portions of her narrative, scenes, dialogue, structure and sequencing, particularly in the film's second half.

Changoiwala's legal team issued a detailed scene by scene infringement notice to Dharma Productions on October 15, 2025. The Production House has denied any alleged claims made by the journalist following which, Changoiwala has now filed an application with the Maharashtra State Legal Services Authority under Section 12A of the Commercial Courts Act, 2015, a mandatory pre-institution mediation step before approaching the Bombay High Court. Through the application, Changoiwala is seeking multiple reliefs including a permanent injunction on distribution, removal of allegedly infringing content, a change of title, and monetary damages for copyright infringement.

The author has also alleged a 'flagrant act of passing off' due to the film's use of the same title as her book. Dharma Productions has dismissed the allegations as 'baseless', asserting that 'Homebound' is an officially licensed adaptation of the 2020 New York Times article 'A Friendship, a Pandemic and a Death Beside the Highway' by Basharat Peer.

Access Link: Source [here](#)

## GOVERNMENT CLARIFIES THAT OTT CONTENT IN INDIA WILL REMAIN OUTSIDE CBFC JURISDICTION

The union government has clarified and confirmed that content hosted on OTT (Over-The-Top) platforms such as Netflix, Amazon Prime Video and Disney+Hotstar will continue to remain outside the jurisdiction of the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC). Addressing the Lok Sabha on 17th December, 2025, the Union Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting, Dr. L Murugan, reaffirmed that the CBFC's mandate is strictly limited to theatrical releases under the Cinematograph Act, 1952. Digital streaming services continue to be governed by the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021, which impose a Code of Ethics requiring platforms to avoid publishing content prohibited by law and to provide age-based classification.

The IT Rules also establish a three-tier grievance redressal mechanism. First: self-regulation by each publisher; Second: review by self-regulatory bodies formed by the industry; and Third: oversight by the central government to ensure compliance and address unresolved complaints. The clarification resolves the recurring industry speculation regarding the potential 'theatrical style' censorship of digital content, maintaining a distinct regulatory boundary between traditional cinema and the evolving digital media landscape.

Access Link: Source [here](#)

## DELHI HIGH COURT GRANTS PROTECTION FOR ACTOR R. MADHAVAN'S PERSONALITY RIGHTS AGAINST AI DEEPFAKES AND DIGITAL EXPLOITATION

The Delhi High Court has granted a comprehensive *ex-parte* ad-interim injunction in favour of actor R. Madhavan. The court has restrained multiple named defendants and unidentified entities from the unauthorised commercial exploitation of the actor's name, image, likeness, and voice. The dispute primarily addresses the proliferation of AI-generated deepfake videos, morphed pornographic content, and the sale of unlicensed merchandise across digital marketplaces. The Court held that the unauthorised appropriation of Madhavan's persona for commercial gain causes 'irreparable harm' to his professional goodwill and personal dignity. The ruling explicitly links personality rights to the constitutional protections of Articles 19 and 21, as well as common law principles of passing off. Notably, the Court rejected any potential defence of free speech or fair dealing, clarifying that the creation of deceptive AI-generated content for commercial purposes does not enjoy constitutional immunity. The Court issued mandatory directives requiring social media and e-commerce platforms to execute immediate takedowns of infringing content within 72 hours. Intermediaries must further disable access to offending accounts and disclose Basic Subscriber Information (BSI) and IP logs to facilitate legal recourse. Crucially, the order imposes a prohibitory injunction against any future unauthorised use of the actor's persona through generative AI or transformative technologies.

Access Link: Source [Here](#)

Access Order: Source [Here](#)

## BOMBAY HIGH COURT QUASHES CASE AGAINST STAR TV EXECUTIVES OVER CASTE SENSITIVE DIALOGUE CASE

The Bombay High Court made a ruling clarifying the threshold for criminal liability in broadcasting, quashing a 12-year-old First Information Report (FIR) against senior executives of Star Entertainment Media Pvt. Ltd

# NATIONAL

and its Marathi channel, Star Pravah. The Division Bench, comprising Justices Manish Pitale and Manjusha Deshpande, held that the mere broadcast of a pre-recorded episode containing a caste reference does not automatically constitute an offence under the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, absent specific evidence of 'intentional insult'.

The litigation arose from a 2012 episode of the Marathi serial 'Laxmi versus Saraswati', wherein a character used the phrase 'mhara-poranchi', a reference to the Mahar community, while performing a ritual to ward off the 'evil eye'. The complainant, Rahul Gaikwad, alleged that the dialogue was a deliberate slur intended to humiliate his community. The court, however, found several fatal flaws in the prosecution's case.

The Bench emphasized that "mere use or reference to the name of a caste" cannot be criminalized unless it is intentionally used to inflict humiliation on a specific individual. While proceedings against the actor and director remain unaffected, the ruling provides a vital shield for broadcasters against "vicarious" criminal liability for creative content they do not author.

Access Link: Source [Here](#)

Access Order: Source [Here](#)

## **NETFLIX RELEASES FINAL EPISODE OF 'BAD BOY BILLIONAIRES' FOLLOWING A FIVE-YEAR LONG LEGAL BATTLE**

Netflix has officially released the fourth and final episode of its investigative docuseries, Bad Boy Billionaires: India, titled 'Riding the Tiger', following the vacation of a long-standing legal stay. The episode, which focuses on the rise and fall of Satyam Computer Services founder B. Ramalinga Raju, had been embroiled in litigation since September 2020.

The legal dispute began when a civil court in Hyderabad granted an interim stay order just days before the series originally premiered. Raju contended that the documentary contained 'half-truths' and speculative content that could prejudice his ongoing legal proceedings and irreparably damage his reputation. Netflix challenged the injunction, maintaining that the documentary was a work of investigative journalism based entirely on publicly available records and court filings regarding the ₹7,000 crore accounting fraud.

Following the resolution of these legal hurdles in late 2025, the episode was made available for global streaming on December 31, 2025. This release marks the conclusion of the series, which previously featured profiles on Vijay Mallya, Nirav Modi, and Subrata Roy, and underscores the evolving judicial approach toward balancing personality rights with the freedom of the press in investigative digital content.

Access Link: Source [Here](#)

## **BOMBAY HIGH COURT HEARS CASE AGAINST THE KAPIL SHARMA SHOW AND NETFLIX OVER COPYRIGHT INFRINGEMENT ISSUES**

The Phonographic Performance Limited (PPL) India has moved the Bombay High Court against comedian Kapil Sharma, K-9 Films and Netflix India for the unauthorised use of its sound recording repertoire. The commercial suit alleges that three popular tracks namely 'M Bole To' from the film Munna Bhai MBBS, 'Rama Re' from the film Kaante, and 'Subha Hone Na De' from the film Desi Boyz, were used across multiple episodes of 'The Great Indian Kapil Show' without a valid Public Performance License (PPL). PPL India contends that the infringement is two-fold, the audible 'communication to the public' during live studio recordings and the subsequent global digital broadcast. On December 24, 2025, Justice Sharmila Deshmukh granted the defendants two weeks to file their reply, considering PPL's 'quia-timet' plea for an injunction to restrain further usage in the ongoing Season 4 production and the appointment of a Court Receiver to seize infringing storage media.

Access Link: Source [Here](#)

## **DELHI HIGH COURT SEEKS CENTRE'S RESPONSE ON MANDATING ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS FOR TELEVISION CONTENT**

The Delhi High Court has issued a notice to the Union Government regarding the enforcement of mandatory accessibility standards across television broadcasting. Presiding over the matter on December 10, 2025, Justice Sachin Datta directed the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB) and the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) to file a status report on the implementation of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPWD) Act, 2016 within the media sector. The petition, filed by disability rights advocate Rahul Bajaj, highlights a critical regulatory gap, while the government's 2019 'Accessibility Standards for TV Programmes' proposed a 50% accessibility target by 2025, these norms remain unenforceable as they have not been formally notified under Rule 15 of the RPWD Rules. Beyond content-level features like Audio Descriptions (AD) and Indian Sign Language (ISL), the plea seeks a mandate for hardware manufacturers to ensure that set-top boxes and remotes are natively accessible for independent use. The Court has specifically instructed the Centre to address the current absence of audio-description standards for the visually impaired. The matter is listed for further hearing on January 29, 2026, to evaluate the government's roadmap for transitioning these voluntary guidelines into binding statutory obligations.

Access Link: Source [Here](#)

# INTERNATIONAL

## **NEW YORK TIMES SUES PERPLEXITY AI OVER UNLICENSED CONTENT SCRAPING**

The New York Times has filed a lawsuit in a New York federal court against AI startup Perplexity AI, alleging unauthorised copying, distribution and display of millions of its articles to power Perplexity's generative AI search tools. The complaint alleges that the AI start-up reproduces Times content, including paywalled material without permission, allowing users to access AI-generated answers that compete with the newspaper's digital offerings. The Times also claims that Perplexity's generative outputs can contain fabricated information also termed as 'hallucinations' wrongly attributed to the newspaper by displaying them alongside the Times's trademarks, which could mislead users and cause brand harm. The suit seeks damages, injunctive relief and equitable remedies to halt the alleged unauthorised use of content. Perplexity, which faces similar legal challenges from other publishers, has dismissed the lawsuit as an unsuccessful tactic by legacy media, arguing that it indexes publicly available web content and provides factual citations. The legal action follows a cease-and-desist notice sent in late 2024 and places Perplexity at the centre of a mounting industry-wide pushback, following similar suits from News Corp (Dow Jones/NY Post), The Chicago Tribune, and Reddit. The Times is seeking statutory damages, a permanent injunction against further scraping, and the removal of all its copyrighted works from the startup's database.

Access Link: Source [here](#)

## **NETFLIX TO ACQUIRE WARNER BROS STUDIOS & STREAMING DIVISION IN BILLION DOLLAR LANDMARK DEAL**

Netflix has entered into a definitive agreement to acquire the film and television studios and streaming division of Warner Bros. Discovery (WBD). The deal, announced on December 5, 2025, is valued at \$72 billion in equity (\$82.7 billion enterprise value). To facilitate the merger, WBD will first execute a strategic 'split', carving out its linear and cable networks, including CNN, TNT, and Discovery, into a new publicly traded entity, Discovery Global, prior to the deal's closing in late 2026.

Under the terms of the agreement, WBD shareholders will receive \$27.75 per share, comprised of \$23.25 in cash and \$4.50 in Netflix stock (subject to a collar mechanism). For Netflix, the acquisition marks a historic transition from a digital disruptor to the owner of a 'Big Five' legacy studio. The combined entity will unite Netflix's 300 million+ global subscribers with HBO's prestige library and iconic franchises such as Harry Potter, the DC Universe, and Game of Thrones. To mitigate industry pushback, Netflix has committed to maintaining Warner's traditional theatrical release windows and honouring existing third-party production contracts through 2029.

The merger now enters a period of intense antitrust review by the Department of Justice (DOJ) and international regulators. Critics, including rival Paramount Skydance, which launched a \$108 billion hostile counter-bid for the entire WBD entity, argue the deal creates a 'streaming Goliath' with a potentially anticompetitive market share. The acquisition is estimated to be finalised within a 12 to 18 month closing window, subject to customary regulatory approvals, shareholder consent and completion of the corporate separation.

Access Link: Sources [here](#) and [here](#)

## **DISNEY AND JAMES CAMERON SUED FOR COPYRIGHT INFRINGEMENT OVER 'AVATAR: THE WAY OF WATER'**

On 15th December, 2025, 3D animator Eric Ryder has initiated a copyright infringement lawsuit against Disney and acclaimed director James Cameron in U.S. federal court in California over the 2022 blockbuster Avatar: The Way of Water. The 3-D animator claims he worked with Cameron's Lightstorm Entertainment in the late 1990s on a science-fiction story called KRZ, and that key elements of that work were later used without his knowledge or permission in Avatar: The Way of Water. According to the complaint, Ryder alleges that Cameron and Disney copied distinctive creative elements, including an oceanic setting, themes of exploitation by an Earth-based corporation, and a life-extending substance derived from a creature, which first appear in the sequel rather than the original Avatar. Ryder is seeking damages amounting to \$500 million and a court order to block the release of the third film in the franchise, Avatar: Fire and Ash. A similar lawsuit over the first Avatar film was previously dismissed after a court found Cameron had developed the story independently. Disney and Lightstorm have yet to file a formal response, to the new complaint.

Access Link: Source [here](#)

## **DIRECTV WINS APPEAL TO REINSTATE PRICE-FIXING SUIT LAWSUIT AGAINST NEXSTAR**

In a landmark judgement for the media distribution sector, the 2nd U.S Circuit Court of Appeals has revived DirecTV's antitrust lawsuit against Nexstar Media Group and its affiliated broadcasters. The ruling delivered on 16th December, 2025 reverses a lower court's dismissal and establishes that a distributor can claim 'antitrust injury' even if it refuses to pay competitive prices, provided it suffers lost profits from the resulting outputs reductions.

The litigation centres on allegations that Nexstar, the largest station owner in the U.S., conspired with Mission Broadcasting and White Knight Broadcasting to manipulate retransmission consent negotiations.

# INTERNATIONAL

DirecTV contends that the defendants used a common negotiator to share confidential financial data and issue "radically disproportionate" fee demands. When DirecTV refused to capitulate to these allegedly fixed prices, the broadcasters withdrew their signals, leading to prolonged blackouts that caused nearly a million subscribers to cancel their service.

The appellate majority held that DirecTV is an "efficient enforcer" of antitrust laws, noting that the satellite provider was the direct target of the purported scheme. Judge Steven Menashi, writing for the majority, clarified that "lost profits from a reduction in output represent a cognizable antitrust injury." However, a dissenting opinion argued that the harm was too indirect, characterizing the subscriber losses as a result of DirecTV's "unilateral decision" to exit negotiations rather than the defendants' pricing. The case now returns to the Southern District of New York for discovery and trial.

Access Link: Source [here](#)

# FIRM HIGHLIGHTS

**Chambers AND PARTNERS** **ANM GLOBAL**  
Advocates & Legal Consultants

**ASIA-PACIFIC 2026 RANKINGS**

**RANKED PRACTICE AREAS** **RANKED PRACTITIONERS**

**TMT : MEDIA & ENTERTAINMENT** **BAND 1** **ANUSHREE RAUTA**  
TMT : MEDIA & ENTERTAINMENT

The graphic features a dark blue background with white and gold text. At the bottom, there is a decorative border with icons of film reels, a clapperboard, and 'ADMIT ONE' signs.

ANM Global has been recognised in the Chambers and Partners Asia-Pacific Rankings 2026 for our Intellectual Property and Media & Entertainment practice areas, along with individual rankings.

**Chambers AND PARTNERS** **ANM GLOBAL**  
Advocates & Legal Consultants

**ASIA-PACIFIC 2026 RANKINGS**

**RANKED PRACTICE AREAS** **RANKED PRACTITIONERS**

**INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY** **RAHUL DHOTE**  
INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

The graphic features a dark blue background with white and gold text. At the bottom, there is a decorative border with icons of film reels, a clapperboard, and 'ADMIT ONE' signs.

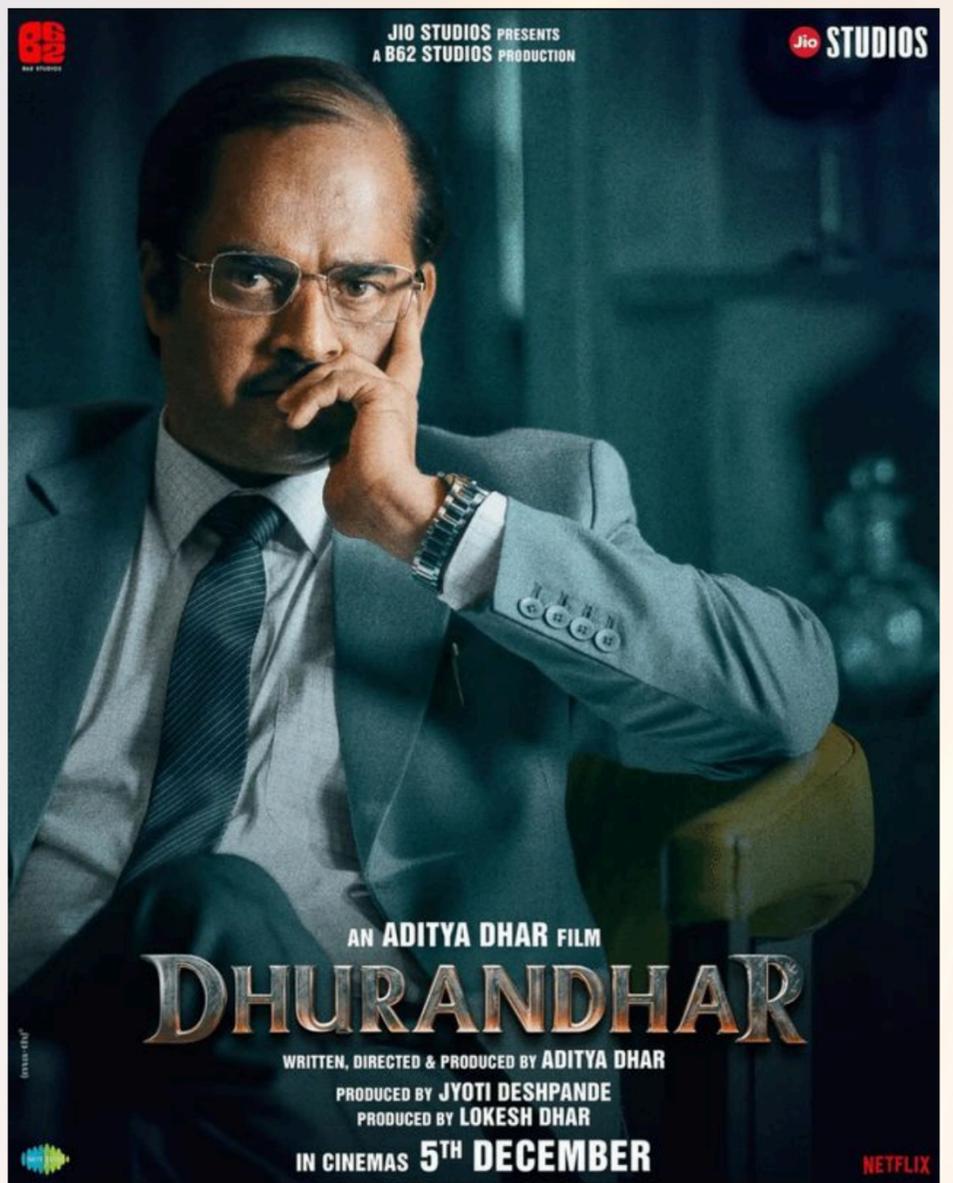
# FIRM HIGHLIGHTS



Saali Mohabbat, a gripping Hindi film, released on 12th December, 2025, on Zee5.

ANM Global is proud to have successfully represented Stage5 Production, providing end-to-end legal assistance and advisory support for the film comprehensively, including towards the development, production and execution of the project, as well as agreements with the platform and the cast and crew of the project.

ANM Global is proud to have represented actor R. Madhavan in connection with negotiating and finalizing the artist agreement for the upcoming project “Dhurandhar”, produced by B62 Studios Private Limited in association with Jio Studios.



# FIRM HIGHLIGHTS

Vrusshabha, released on 25 December 2025.

ANM Global is proud to have advised Balaji Telefilms Ltd. and Connekt Media Network Pvt. Ltd., providing end-to-end legal support on the project, including advisory on the principal co-production agreement, all production agreements, and revenue arrangements.



Mrs. Deshpande, a gripping Hindi thriller series, premiered on 19th December 2025 on JioHotstar.

ANM Global is proud to have advised Applause Entertainment Private Limited, providing comprehensive legal support on the project, including advisory, transactional assistance, format acquisition, revenue agreements as well as conducting script and content S&P for the project.

# FIRM HIGHLIGHTS



**ANM ThinkPod**

## DISCLAIMER

The information provided in this newsletter is for general informational purposes only and should not be considered professional advice. We will not be liable for any harm incurred by you as a result of placing reliance on such information. Through this newsletter, you may be able to link to other websites and content that are not under our control. The inclusion of any links does not necessarily imply a recommendation or endorse the views expressed within them. Before making any decisions based on the information provided in this newsletter, we recommend consulting with a qualified professional for advice tailored to your specific situation.



[contact@anmglobal.net](mailto:contact@anmglobal.net)



[ANM Global](#)



[+91 22 2287 3499](tel:+912222873499); [+91 22 4971 1084](tel:+912249711084)

## OFFICES

### MUMBAI

1. 7, floor 2nd, Nagin Mahal, Plot-82, Veer Nariman Road, Churchgate, Mumbai 400020.  
Ph: [022-2287 3499](tel:022-22873499)
2. 411/413, Dilkap Chambers, Off. Veera Desai Road, Fun Republic Lane, Andheri West, Mumbai - 400053  
Ph: [022-4971 1084](tel:022-49711084)

### NEW DELHI

Awfis L29 - L34, 1st Floor, Connaught Place New Delhi, 110001  
Ph: [011-4054 1860](tel:011-40541860)

### BENGALURU

21/2, 1st Main Road, Opp Indian Overseas Bank, Gandhinagar, Bengaluru - 560009  
Ph: [080-2350 9909](tel:080-23509909)

### CHENNAI

715-A, 7th Floor, Spencer Plaza Suit No.1056, Mount Road, Anna Salai, Chennai - 600002

RECOMMENDED FIRM FOR MEDIA AND ENTERTAINMENT BY **ASIALAW PROFILES**

