

LIGHTS, CAMERA & LAW

MEDIA & ENTERTAINMENT LAWS UPDATES APRIL, 2026



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DELHI HC REFERS DISPUTE OVER USE OF 'TRIDEV' SONG IN 'DHURANDHAR 2' TO MEDIATION AND DECLINES THE PLEA FOR IMMEDIATE INJUNCTION

The Hon'ble Delhi High Court referred a copyright dispute related to the film Dhurandhar 2 for mediation. The case arose from a suit filed by Trimurti Films Private Limited against filmmaker Aditya Dhar's production house, alleging that the song "Rang De Lal (Oye Oye)" in Dhurandhar 2 used elements from the original track "Tirchi Topiwala" without authorisation. The matter was heard by Justice Tushar Rao Gedela, who observed that the dispute appeared largely financial in nature, particularly concerning licensing, royalties, and compensation. Taking note of the parties' willingness to resolve the issue amicably, the court referred the matter to the Delhi High Court Mediation and Conciliation Centre and directed them to appear before the mediator. The court also directed the defendants to maintain records of revenues generated from the film's exploitation, ensuring that financial interests are safeguarded pending resolution of the dispute. This development highlights ongoing challenges in the reuse of legacy film content, particularly music rights, where disputes often centre on licensing arrangements and ownership claims.

Further, the Hon'ble Delhi High Court declined to grant an immediate interim injunction in a dispute over the proposed OTT release of the film Dhurandhar 2, instead directing the defendants to maintain detailed accounts of revenues generated from the film's exploitation. A key factor in the court's decision was a statement by B62 Studios that no OTT release of Dhurandhar 2 was planned before mid-May 2026. Taking this assurance into account, the court held that no urgent restraint was necessary at this stage.

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BOMBAY HIGH COURT DISPOSES-OFF ADITYA DHAR'S DEFAMATION CASE AGAINST SANTOSH KUMAR

The Hon'ble Bombay High Court had granted an interim injunction in favour of filmmaker Aditya Dhar against Santosh Kumar over allegations of plagiarism related to the film Dhurandhar. The court observed that the defendant's public statements accusing Dhar of script theft were prima facie defamatory and had caused irreparable harm to his professional reputation. Accordingly, the defendant has been restrained from making any further allegations of plagiarism or script copying until the final disposal of the defamation suit.

However, since then, Santosh Kumar has issued a statement of apology. Dr. Saraf, the senior counsel appearing on behalf of Aditya Dhar submits that in light

of the apology issued, Aditya Dhar does not wish to precipitate the Suit for damages and accordingly the Hon'ble Bombay High Court disposed-off the Suit. The order underscores the court's approach in balancing free speech with protection of reputation, particularly where unverified allegations can significantly impact an individual's professional standing.

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COURT BANS ILLEGAL STREAMING OF THALAPATHY VIJAY'S FILM "JANA NAYAGAN"

The Hon'ble Madras High Court stepped in to curb illegal circulation in the leak row involving the film Jana Nayagan, directing authorities to block unauthorised streaming and broadcasts after pirated versions surfaced online even before certification. The film faced a major piracy blow when high-definition clips and reportedly the full film appeared online on April 9. The court's interim order instructed internet service providers and cable operators to immediately restrict access to such copies across platforms, including social media, websites, and television networks. The financial impact is expected to be substantial given the film's reported budget of around ₹500 crore. Authorities have also intensified enforcement, leading to the arrest of six individuals allegedly linked to the piracy network. In addition, nearly 300 illegal links hosting the film have been taken down as part of the crackdown.

Access Link: [here](#)

"STALL RELEASE OF TAMIL FILM TN 2026", URGES A PLEA BEFORE MADRAS HIGH COURT

A plea was filed before the Hon'ble Madras High Court seeking to stall the release of the Tamil film "TN 2026" ahead of the Tamil Nadu Assembly elections, raising concerns over its potential influence on voters. The petitioner argued that the film contained contemporary political references and narratives that could impact the electoral process, and therefore sought directions to prevent its release until after polling. A key argument relied on the treatment of the film Jana Nayagan, starring Vijay, which had faced delays in release amid election-related considerations. The petitioner contended that a similar standard should apply to TN 2026, questioning why one politically themed film was restricted while another was allowed. The plea also urged intervention by the Election Commission, asserting that releasing such politically charged content during the enforcement of the Model Code of Conduct could affect free and fair elections.

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DELHI HIGH COURT REMARKS THAT EVERY CONTENT CAN'T BE DISPARAGING IN ARJUN KAPOOR'S PERSONALITY RIGHTS SUIT

The Hon'ble Delhi High Court, while hearing a personality rights suit filed by actor Arjun Kapoor, observed that not all content involving a public figure can be restrained, emphasising that only material that is derogatory, defamatory, or disparaging would warrant judicial intervention. The matter was heard by Justice Tushar Rao Gedela, who cautioned against imposing overly broad restrictions that could curb satire and free expression. The court remarked that individuals in the public eye are naturally subject to commentary and scrutiny, and "everything can't come under" disparaging content. During the hearing, the actor's counsel argued that the impugned content involved morphed and AI-generated visuals portraying him in demeaning scenarios, which went beyond humour or parody and amounted to serious violations of his personality rights. However, the court balanced these concerns with the need to protect freedom of speech, warning that an expansive interpretation of personality rights could undermine legal principles and precedent. It highlighted that satire and non-derogatory content cannot be automatically restrained, and each case must be assessed carefully. The matter remains pending, with further proceedings expected as the court evaluates the scope of relief.

Access Link: [here](#).

BOMBAY HIGH COURT RULES TO HEAR CASE AGAINST RELIANCE ENTERTAINMENT OVER 'BHOLAA' MOVIE

The Bombay High Court ruled that it has jurisdiction to hear a dispute between Dream Warrior Pictures and Reliance Entertainment over the film Bholaa. The case, heard by Justice Sharmila Deshmukh, concerns allegations of copyright and contractual breaches related to Bholaa, which is the Hindi remake of the Tamil film Kaithi, wherein Dream Warrior Pictures approached the court seeking to halt the distribution of Bholaa, terminate remake agreements, and recover alleged unpaid dues and profits. Reliance Entertainment and other respondents argued that courts in Chennai had exclusive jurisdiction based on agreements executed there. However, the Hon'ble Bombay High Court rejected this contention, holding that a substantial part of the cause of action arose in Mumbai. The court observed that the assignment of full remake rights under the second agreement and the eventual creation of the remade film formed the basis of the dispute, thereby conferring jurisdiction on Mumbai courts. It also noted that the jurisdiction clause in the agreement supported this position. With the jurisdictional issue settled, the court will now proceed to hear the substantive claims, with the matter scheduled for further hearing on April 30.

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TELANGANA HIGH COURT EXTENDS VALIDITY OF MEDIA ACCREDITATION CARDS

The Hon'ble Telangana High Court directed that all existing media accreditation cards will remain valid until June 16, 2026, pending adjudication of petitions challenging the state's new accreditation rules. The interim order was passed by a division bench comprising Justice P. Sam Koshy and Justice Narsing Rao Nandikonda. During the proceedings, the State Government informed the court that it had already extended the validity of accreditation cards until May 31, 2026, to avoid disruption to journalists' work. Taking note of this, the court further extended the validity up to June 16, the next date of hearing. The court also observed that the cards were originally set to expire on April 30, 2026, and that the State Government had not yet filed its counter affidavit despite earlier directions. Considering these factors, the Hon'ble Bench granted the extension as an interim measure.

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NCLT UPHOLDS AANAND RAI'S PLEA IN ROW WITH EROS INTERNATIONAL

The National Company Law Tribunal upheld filmmaker Aanand L Rai's plea in his dispute with Eros International Media Ltd, ruling that the matter should be resolved through arbitration rather than company law proceedings. The Mumbai bench, comprising Judicial Member Sushil Mahadeorao Kochey and Technical Member Prabhat Kumar, held that Eros' allegations against Rai's Colour Yellow Productions Pvt. Ltd. were fundamentally contractual in nature and did not amount to oppression or mismanagement under company law. The dispute stems from a 2014 term sheet under which Eros acquired a 50% stake in Colour Yellow Productions. The NCLT disposed of Eros' company petition and directed the parties to resolve the dispute through arbitration.

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TIMES MUSIC ACQUIRES CATRACK ENTERTAINMENT

Times Music has acquired Catrack Entertainment Pvt. Ltd., strengthening its Punjabi music catalogue and expanding its regional content portfolio. The acquisition marks Times Music's third major catalogue deal and forms part of its broader strategy to build a strong library of regional music intellectual property. The move is also aligned with its ongoing partnership with Primary Wave Music, aimed at enhancing global reach and monetisation of Indian music content.

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T. RAJENDAR MOVES MADRAS HIGH COURT ALLEGING COPYRIGHT INFRINGEMENT OF SONGS

Actor and filmmaker T. Rajendar has approached the Hon'ble Madras High Court alleging copyright infringement of songs from the film "Uyir Ulla Varai Usha". The petitioner contends that the defendants used the songs he composed without obtaining valid licences or permissions, thereby infringing his copyright and further argued that such unauthorised exploitation violates his rights as the creator of the musical works. The plea brings attention to ongoing disputes surrounding ownership and assignment of music rights in legacy Tamil cinema, where older agreements often lack clarity or comprehensive documentation. The court is expected to examine the contractual arrangements governing authorship, assignment, and exploitation rights associated with the film's music.

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DELHI HIGH COURT HOLDS RAKSHIT SHETTY LIABLE FOR UNAUTHORIZED USE OF MRT MUSIC SONGS IN 'BACHELOR PARTY'

The Hon'ble Delhi High Court held Rakshit Shetty and his production house guilty of copyright infringement and contempt for using songs owned by MRT Music in the film "Bachelor Party" without obtaining a licence. The court directed the defendants to pay ₹25 lakh, comprising ₹20 lakh as compensation and ₹5 lakh as costs to purge contempt. It rejected the defence that the use of the songs was "minimal" or incidental, observing that even short clips, when deliberately used to advance a film's narrative, require prior authorisation. The court also took note of the defendants' failure to comply with an earlier order directing deposit of amounts, which led to contempt proceedings. However, imprisonment was avoided after the defendants issued an apology.

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DELHI HIGH COURT PROTECTS PREACHER ANIRUDDHACHARYA AGAINST AI DEEPFAKES AND MEMES

The Hon'ble Delhi High Court granted protection to spiritual preacher Aniruddhacharya, restraining the unauthorised use of his persona in AI-generated deepfakes and meme content. The court recognised that such synthetically generated media can misrepresent individuals and cause reputational harm at scale, particularly given the rapid spread of digital content across platforms. By extending personality rights protection into the domain of AI-generated content, the court acknowledged the evolving nature of identity misuse in the age of generative technologies.

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DISH TV CHALLENGES DD FREE DISH REGULATORY EXEMPTION BEFORE KERALA HIGH COURT

Dish TV has approached the Hon'ble Kerala High Court challenging regulatory exemptions granted to DD Free Dish, arguing that they create an uneven playing field in the DTH market. The petitioner contends that such differential treatment distorts competition and adversely affects the commercial viability of private operators in the broadcasting sector.

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BOMBAY HIGH COURT PROTECTS PERSONALITY RIGHTS OF KARTIK AARYAN; ORDERS TAKEDOWN OF AI-GENERATED CONTENT

The Hon'ble Bombay High Court granted interim protection to the personality rights of actor Kartik Aaryan, observing that AI-generated content concerning him was prima facie obscene, disparaging, and harmful to his reputation and brand value. The order was passed by Justice Sharmila Deshmukh on April 15, directing social media intermediaries to delete or take down unauthorised, objectionable, and sexually explicit content flagged by the actor. The court noted that Kartik Aaryan is a well-known film personality with multiple successful films and brand endorsements, and that his personality attributes carry commercial value over which he has exclusive rights. Upon reviewing the evidence, the court held that it indicated clear unauthorised exploitation of the actor's persona. The court also examined the functioning of AI chatbot platforms that simulate responses as if from the actor, raising further concerns about misuse of identity. Accordingly, the court directed intermediaries to remove or disable access to such content, including AI-generated material, within 36 hours of being flagged.

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DELHI HIGH COURT PROTECTS ALLU ARJUN'S PERSONALITY RIGHTS AGAINST UNAUTHORIZED AI MISUSE

The Hon'ble Delhi High Court passed an interim order on April 17, 2026, protecting the personality rights of Telugu actor Allu Arjun. The order was issued to restrain the unauthorised use of the actor's personality attributes, including his name, image, and voice, without consent. The case involved allegations of misuse through sale of unauthorised merchandise, circulation of pornographic and obscene material, and the use of AI-based tools. Among the impugned content was an application titled "Fake Call Pushpa," which enabled users to interact with an AI-generated likeness of the actor through simulated video calls. It was argued on behalf of the plaintiff that

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such applications could be misused for fraudulent activities, as they replicate the actor's identity in a realistic manner. Counsel for Frankly Retail Private Limited, one of the defendants, submitted that it functioned merely as an intermediary and had taken down the impugned link upon receiving the plaint on April 15. The court directed the company to file a compliance report within three days.

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DELHI HIGH COURT GRANTS PERSONALITY RIGHTS PROTECTION TO SANJIV GOENKA OVER ABUSIVE SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT

The Hon'ble Delhi High Court agreed to protect the personality rights of industrialist Sanjiv Goenka, owner of the IPL Team - Lucknow Super Giants, in an order dated April 15, 2026. The court was hearing a plea filed by Goenka alleging misuse of his likeness through abusive social media content during the ongoing Indian Premier League season. It was submitted that morphed images and videos were circulating online, creating false narratives of incidents that never occurred. The petitioner highlighted instances where his face was superimposed onto others, including fabricated depictions suggesting violent or inappropriate conduct, thereby harming his reputation. During the hearing, the court addressed the limits of free speech, observing that public figures are subject to commentary and even parody, and cannot completely restrict the use of their name or image. However, it clarified that content involving face morphing and false narratives crosses into objectionable territory. Social media intermediaries argued that they function as neutral platforms and are not creators of such content, with obligations arising only upon receiving specific legal notice under safe harbour protections. They also cautioned against overly broad takedown or disclosure orders, warning of a potential chilling effect on free speech. After considering the submissions, the court emphasised the need to balance freedom of expression with protection of reputation and granted interim protection to Goenka's personality rights.

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PUBLIC NOTICE INVITING OBJECTIONS ON REGISTRATION OF AIPA AS PERFORMERS' SOCIETY

The Copyright Office issued a public notice dated April 30, 2026, inviting objections and comments from stakeholders on an application filed by the All India Performers Association seeking registration as a Performers' Society under the Copyright Act. The application proposes to administer and protect performers' rights across categories such as actors, singers, musicians, and other performing artists, with a mandate extending globally. Stakeholders have been

granted a 45-day period from the date of publication to submit objections or comments to the Registrar of Copyrights. The move signals a potential development in the collective management of performers' rights in India, with implications for how royalties, licensing, and enforcement mechanisms are structured within the entertainment industry.

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MADRAS HIGH COURT RESTRAINS PIRACY OF AAMIR KHAN PRODUCTIONS' 'EK DIN' AHEAD OF RELEASE

The Hon'ble Madras High Court granted an ad-interim injunction restraining piracy of the film Ek Din, produced by Aamir Khan Productions Pvt Ltd, ahead of its release. The order was passed by Justice Senthilkumar Ramamoorthy, who noted that the film was scheduled for release on May 1, 2026, and observed that "irreversible injury" could occur if unlawful broadcast or distribution was not prevented. The production house approached the court seeking protection against anticipated copyright infringement. The legal action was initiated against various Internet Service Providers and cable TV operators, including major telecom companies such as BSNL, MTNL, Bharti Airtel, Tata Communications, Vodafone India, and Reliance Jio, along with cable operators like Jak Communications and Thamizhaga Cable TV Communication Pvt Ltd. While granting relief, the court acknowledged the broad scope of the injunction and noted that such orders could impact legitimate business activities of service providers.

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UNAUTHORIZED STREAMING OF FOREIGN TV PROGRAMMING DISHES UP COPYRIGHT INFRINGEMENT LIABILITY

In the case involving Dish Network, the US Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit upheld a judgment against operators who retransmitted Arabic-language TV channels into the United States without permission. The court found that the defendants had unlawfully captured live broadcasts abroad and redistributed them via internet-based systems to paying customers, thereby infringing exclusive distribution and public performance rights. A key issue in the dispute was ownership of the underlying content. The court recognised that valid copyright registrations held by the original broadcaster carry a statutory presumption of validity, which could be relied upon by the exclusive licensee. It also rejected attempts by the defendants to challenge ownership or transfer arrangements, holding that such arguments cannot typically be raised by third-party infringers. On the question of infringement, the court concluded that retransmitting content through a different technical means such as internet streaming amounts to a separate act of “communication to the public,” requiring independent authorisation.

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SUPREME COURT NARROWS CONTRIBUTORY COPYRIGHT INFRINGEMENT LIABILITY FOR SERVICE PROVIDERS

The Supreme Court of the United States significantly narrowed the scope of contributory copyright infringement liability for service providers, holding that mere knowledge of user infringement is insufficient to establish liability. The ruling, delivered in *Cox Communications, Inc. v. Sony Music Entertainment*, clarified that contributory liability requires proof of intent, which can be established only in two specific ways: either by actively inducing infringement through encouragement, or by providing a service specifically tailored for infringement with no substantial non-infringing use. The Court rejected earlier interpretations that continuing to provide a service despite awareness of infringement amounts to liability. Instead, it emphasised that general-purpose services such as internet access used for both lawful and unlawful purposes do not automatically attract liability. This decision overturned a major lower court ruling that had imposed significant damages on an internet service provider for user piracy, thereby raising the threshold for establishing secondary liability.

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NETFLIX WINS TAX BATTLE IN SEOUL TO PAY LITTLE DESPITE MASSIVE REVENUE IN KOREA

A South Korean court delivered a significant ruling in favour of Netflix, cancelling approximately \$46.6 million (around 68.7 billion won) in taxes imposed on its local unit, Netflix Services Korea. The decision was passed by the Seoul Administrative Court, which partly upheld Netflix’s challenge against tax demands raised by the National Tax Service following a 2021 audit. The central issue in the dispute was whether payments made by Netflix Korea to its Dutch affiliate should be classified as “copyright royalties” or “business profits.” Tax authorities argued that such payments were royalties subject to taxation in South Korea. However, Netflix contended that these payments constituted business income derived from streaming services and therefore fell outside the scope of taxable royalties under applicable tax treaty provisions. Accepting this argument, the court held that the payments could not be treated as copyright royalties and should instead be categorised as business profits, leading to the cancellation of most of the tax liability.

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NETFLIX'S TIGER KING FUNERAL CLIP WAS FAIR USE, 10TH CIRCUIT SAYS

The United States Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit upheld a finding of fair use in a copyright dispute involving the popular Netflix documentary series *Tiger King*. The case arose from the use of copyrighted video clips in the series, where the plaintiff alleged unauthorised reproduction of protected content. However, the court held that the inclusion of such material was transformative in nature, as it was used for commentary, criticism, and storytelling rather than mere replication. In its analysis, the court emphasised that the clips were incorporated to provide context and enhance the narrative, thereby serving a different purpose from the original works. This transformation weighed strongly in favour of fair use under US copyright law. The court also considered the limited amount of material used and found that it did not substitute the original works in the market, further supporting the fair use defence.

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LIONS' WILLIAMS FILES NIL SUIT AGAINST NCAA, BIG TEN, SEC

Jameson Williams has filed a lawsuit against the NCAA, along with the Big Ten Conference and Southeastern Conference, alleging unauthorised use and monetisation

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of his name, image, and likeness (NIL) rights. The suit claims that during his college career prior to the liberalisation of NIL rules the defendants commercially exploited his identity through broadcasts, highlight reels, and social media content without providing compensation. Williams contends that he was prevented from monetising his NIL while the organisations continued to benefit financially from it. He has sought damages for lost earnings, including potential social media income and a share of group licensing revenues generated from game telecasts. The complaint argues that he received “no fair compensation” despite the continued commercial use of his likeness. The lawsuit also raises broader allegations of anti-competitive conduct, asserting that the restrictions imposed by these organisations limited athletes’ ability to participate in a fair marketplace for their NIL rights.

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MUSIC LABELS, FRENCH CO. END \$500M FAKE SONGS SUIT

Major music labels have resolved a high-stakes copyright dispute with French digital music company Believe, bringing an end to claims worth \$500 million over the alleged distribution of “fake” or manipulated songs. The lawsuit had been filed in a New York federal court by leading record companies including Universal Music Group, along with other rights holders, accusing Believe and its subsidiary TuneCore of distributing altered or infringing versions of copyrighted tracks across digital platforms. The claims centred on allegations that the company enabled the circulation of unauthorised recordings by modifying original songs such as releasing “sped-up” versions or uploading tracks under slightly altered artist names thereby monetising copyrighted content without proper licences. Examples cited in the complaint included distorted artist names and manipulated tracks designed to resemble popular songs, raising concerns about large-scale digital piracy and misuse of platform distribution systems.

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Ms. Anushree Rauta, Equity Partner and Head – Media, Entertainment & Gaming Practice at ANM Global, has been recognised amongst the Asian Legal Business Super 50 TMT Lawyers 2026.

ANM Global announces the elevation of Shikha Ginodia to Equity Partner, marking a significant milestone in the firm's continued growth and leadership strengthening.



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ANM Global is pleased to have represented Balaji Telefilms Limited, successfully advising on production deals, locking the lead artist agreements, and assisting in closing all revenue deals for the film.

ANM Global hosted “IP at an Inflection Point” — the International Trademark Association (INTA) Pre-Annual Meeting Reception 2026, bringing together key stakeholders from across the IP ecosystem for insightful discussions and meaningful exchange.



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