

LIGHTS, CAMERA & LAW

MEDIA & ENTERTAINMENT LAWS UPDATES MAY, 2026



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DELHI HIGH COURT ORDERS RESTORATION OF '4PM' YOUTUBE CHANNEL, DIRECTS TEMPORARY BLOCK ON OBJECTIONABLE VIDEOS

Justice Purushaindra Kumar Kaurav of the Honourable Delhi High Court ordered the interim restoration of the YouTube channel "4PM", which had been blocked by the Union Government on 12 March 2026 under Rule 16(2) of the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021, citing concerns regarding national security, sovereignty, and public order. The writ petition was filed by Mr. Sanjay Sharma, editor-in-chief of 4PM News Network, contending that the blocking order had been issued without disclosing either the reasons or the Inter-Departmental Committee's (IDC) final order, and that the IDC hearing had been conducted in an opaque manner. The channel had approximately 83 lakh subscribers and recorded nearly 1.45 crore monthly views prior to its suspension. The Court, in an order passed on 5 May 2026, directed YouTube to restore the channel while keeping 26 specifically identified videos temporarily disabled pending the outcome of proceedings before the IDC.

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DELHI HIGH COURT ISSUES NOTICE TO MIB AND PRASAR BHARATI OVER FIFA WORLD CUP 2026 BROADCAST UNCERTAINTY

The Honourable Delhi High Court issued notice to the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB) and Prasar Bharati on 12 May 2026 in response to a writ petition filed by Advocate Avdhesh Bairwa under Article 226 of the Constitution, seeking directions to ensure that the FIFA World Cup 2026 is telecast in India on a free-to-air basis. The petition was filed in the backdrop of unprecedented uncertainty as no Indian broadcaster had officially secured media rights for the tournament, which is scheduled to be held from 11 June to 19 July 2026 across the United States, Canada, and Mexico. The petition highlighted India's massive football viewership, citing over 745 million digital interactions during the 2022 World Cup, and argued that the failure to ensure broadcast would deprive citizens of their fundamental right to receive information and access sporting events of national importance. In a subsequent hearing, Prasar Bharati informed the Court that acquiring commercial broadcast rights falls outside its public service mandate, following which the petitioner sought to withdraw the petition with liberty to seek remedies before another competent court.

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DELHI HIGH COURT PROTECTS SHASHI THAROOR'S PERSONALITY RIGHTS AGAINST AI-GENERATED DEEPPAKE VIDEOS

Congress MP Shashi Tharoor moved the Honourable Delhi High Court on 8 May 2026 against the circulation of AI-generated deepfake videos falsely depicting him making politically sensitive statements and praising Pakistan. In his petition, Mr. Tharoor stated that in or around March 2026, he discovered a "sophisticated, malicious campaign" orchestrated by unknown infringers who had weaponised artificial intelligence and machine learning to generate hyper-realistic audio-visual deepfakes by cloning his face, voice, vocabulary, and mannerisms, depicting him making statements he had never made. The petition contended that such acts infringed his personality and publicity rights, violated his right to privacy under Article 21, and were particularly damaging given that they had been circulated during the Kerala Legislative Assembly Elections 2026. Justice Mini Pushkarna issued summons to social media platforms X and Meta Platforms as well as the Union Government and indicated her intention to pass an interim order in favour of the petitioner.

In the subsequent interim order, the Honourable Court directed X to take down the infringing deepfake video and restrained any misappropriation of Tharoor's name, image, distinct voice, "signature oratorical cadence and manner of speaking," and other facets of his persona for commercial, political, or malicious purposes. Meta was directed to ensure that offending Instagram reels remained inaccessible, and all social media platforms were directed to provide Mr. Tharoor with the Basic Subscriber Information, IP login details, phone numbers, and email addresses of the uploaders and creators of infringing accounts within three weeks.

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DELHI HIGH COURT GRANTS EX-PARTE INJUNCTION PROTECTING ARJUN KAPOOR'S PERSONALITY RIGHTS AGAINST DEEPPAKES AND UNAUTHORISED EXPLOITATION

Justice Tushar Rao Gedela of the Honourable Delhi High Court passed an ex-parte ad-interim injunction on 29 April 2026 in favour of Mr. Arjun Kapoor, restraining multiple entities from the unauthorised exploitation of his personality and publicity rights, including through AI-generated deepfake videos, obscene content, impersonation for event bookings, and unauthorised sale of merchandise such as T-shirts and posters. Advocate Pravin Anand, appearing for Mr. Kapoor, submitted that the defendants had been misusing Mr. Kapoor's name, image, voice, and likeness for unlawful financial gain, and that some of the circulating content included sexually explicit AI-generated deepfakes.

The Court observed that no permission or licence had been granted by the actor to any defendant and noted that such content could cause irreparable harm to his image and public persona. It directed intermediaries, including Google and Meta, to remove flagged URLs and provide Basic Subscriber Information of the infringing accounts. The Court also clarified that not all content featuring public figures is removable, only material that is defamatory, sexually explicit, or used for unauthorised commercial gain is actionable. The next hearing is scheduled for 10 October 2026.

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CALCUTTA HIGH COURT RULES VODAFONE IDEA MUST OBTAIN SEPARATE IPRS LICENCE FOR CALLER TUNES AND RINGTONES

A Division Bench of Justices Debangsu Basak and Md Shabbar Rashidi of the Honourable Calcutta High Court, on 8 May 2026, dismissed appeals filed by Vodafone Idea Limited and upheld an earlier single-judge order in its copyright dispute with the Indian Performing Right Society Limited (IPRS). The Court held that Vodafone Idea cannot commercially offer songs as caller tunes and ringtones solely on the basis of its licensing agreements with sound recording companies such as Saregama India Limited, and must separately obtain permission from IPRS for the underlying literary and musical works embedded in those recordings. The Court held that Saregama lacked the legal authority to grant licences for such underlying works, and that literary works, musical compositions, and sound recordings are distinct classes of copyright under the Copyright Act, 1957. The Court further directed that approximately ₹30 crore held in deposit be transferred to IPRS, subject to the final outcome of the suit, and declined Vodafone Idea's request for a stay on the judgment. IPRS Chairman Javed Akhtar described the ruling as a "landmark moment" for music creators in India.

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DELHI HIGH COURT GRANTS UNIVERSAL CITY STUDIOS INTERIM RELIEF AGAINST ROGUE PIRACY WEBSITES EXPLOITING IMDB NAME

Justice Tushar Rao Gedela of the Honourable Delhi High Court granted an ex-parte ad-interim dynamic-plus injunction in favour of Universal City Studios Productions LLLP in Universal City Studios Productions LLLP v. Playimdb.com & Ors., CS(COMM) 492/2026, restraining 28 rogue streaming websites, including "PlayIMDb" and "StreamIMDb," from facilitating unauthorised streaming of Universal's copyrighted films, including Fast X, F9: The Fast Saga, and The Secret Life

of Pets 2. Universal submitted that these rogue operators were exploiting the name and URL structure of the legitimate Internet Movie Database (IMDb) to redirect users from genuine IMDb title pages to unauthorised streaming platforms hosting pirated content. The Court observed that the defendants had devised a mechanism whereby the domain structure was altered while retaining IMDb's Title ID, making the pirate sites appear legitimate, and that operators had even shared instructional guides to facilitate access to the illegal streams. Noting a prima facie case of copyright infringement and dishonest adoption of IMDb's reputation, the Court extended the injunction to cover future mirror, redirect, and alphanumeric websites associated with the rogue defendants, and directed internet service providers in India to block access to the identified domains.

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JIOSTAR INITIATES LEGAL PROCEEDINGS AGAINST ZEE ENTERTAINMENT OVER ALLEGED UNAUTHORISED BROADCAST OF BOLLYWOOD FILMS

JioStar filed a 120-page petition on 4 May 2026 before the Delhi High Court Legal Services Committee against Zee Entertainment Enterprises Limited, alleging that Zee had illegally telecast 12 Bollywood films approximately 20 times during the previous year, despite the broadcast rights to those films vesting with JioStar at the time. The disputed titles reportedly include major Bollywood films featuring Shah Rukh Khan, Aamir Khan, and Amitabh Bachchan, including Dangal, Deewar, and Tridev. JioStar, describing Zee as a "habitual infringer" in its petition, is reportedly seeking damages and licensing fees exceeding ₹250 crore. The case is the latest escalation in an increasingly complex legal dispute between the two broadcasters, who are already embroiled in a separate \$1 billion arbitration in London over a failed cricket rights agreement from 2024. Zee had earlier filed a suit against JioStar before the Delhi High Court alleging unauthorised use of its copyrighted music after licensing agreements had expired.

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ZEE MUSIC FILES COPYRIGHT SUIT AGAINST NYKAA BEFORE DELHI HIGH COURT OVER ALLEGED UNAUTHORISED USE OF SONGS IN INSTAGRAM REELS

Zee Entertainment has filed proceedings against Nykaa before the Honourable Delhi High Court alleging the unauthorised commercial use of Zee-owned songs in Nykaa's promotional Instagram reels. Zee contended

that while Meta may hold platform-level music licensing arrangements for ordinary user-generated content, such arrangements do not extend to commercial advertising and branded promotional campaigns. The company reportedly seeks damages of approximately ₹1.7 crore and has identified multiple reels allegedly containing infringing music usage. Nykaa reportedly removed the flagged content following the initiation of proceedings. The dispute is significant as it may set an important precedent concerning copyright liability for branded social-media content and influencer marketing campaigns in India.

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DELHI HIGH COURT TO RAGHAV CHADHA: CRITICISM OF POLITICAL DECISION NOT VIOLATION OF PERSONALITY RIGHTS, FILE DEFAMATION CASE

The Delhi High Court observed that criticism of a political decision does not amount to a violation of personality rights while hearing a plea filed by Raghav Chadha. The court was dealing with grievances raised by Chadha regarding online content and commentary allegedly targeting him in connection with political actions and public statements. During the proceedings, the court clarified that public figures, especially politicians, are subject to scrutiny, criticism, satire, and commentary in a democratic setup, and such expression cannot automatically be restrained under the guise of personality rights. The Bench reportedly observed that if the statements complained of were defamatory in nature, the appropriate legal remedy would be to pursue a defamation action rather than invoke personality rights protections. The court further distinguished between commercial misuse of identity, which may attract personality rights protection, and criticism or commentary relating to public and political conduct, which generally falls within the ambit of free speech. The observations reinforce the judicial approach that personality rights cannot be expanded to suppress political criticism or public discourse, particularly where the content does not involve commercial exploitation or false endorsement.

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DELHI HIGH COURT: ILAIYARAAJA HAS NO COPYRIGHT OVER LYRICS, SOUND RECORDING OF 'EN INIYA PON NILAVE' SONG

The Delhi High Court held that veteran composer Ilaiyaraaja does not possess copyright over the lyrics or sound recording of the iconic Tamil song En Iniya Pon Nilave, clarifying that his rights are limited only to the underlying musical composition. The dispute arose in litigation between Saregama and parties connected to the recreated use of the song in the film Aghathiyaa.

Ilaiyaraaja had argued that, as the original composer, he retained the authority to license adaptations or recreations of the work. However, the Division Bench clarified that under the Copyright Act, a composer's ownership extends only to the "musical work" and not to the literary work (lyrics) or the final sound recording embodied in a cinematograph film. The Court held that the rights in the sound recording vested with the producer and had subsequently been lawfully assigned to Saregama. The Court also rejected the argument that the 2012 amendments to the Copyright Act could retrospectively alter ownership rights in songs created decades earlier. By dismissing Ilaiyaraaja's appeal, the Delhi High Court reaffirmed the distinction between musical composition rights, lyric rights, and sound recording rights within Indian copyright jurisprudence. The ruling is significant for the music and film industries, especially in disputes involving legacy film catalogues and the reuse or recreation of classic songs.

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DELHI HC PROTECTS PERSONALITY RIGHTS OF BOAT'S AMAN GUPTA

The Delhi High Court granted interim protection to the personality rights of Aman Gupta, restraining unauthorised use of his name, image, voice, likeness, slogans, and other personality attributes, including through AI-generated deepfakes and fake endorsements. The case was filed by Mr. Gupta, co-founder of boAt and a judge on Shark Tank India, alleging widespread digital misuse of his persona across social media platforms, fake booking websites, unauthorised merchandise, AI chatbots, and obscene deepfake content. Justice Tushar Rao Gedela observed that Mr. Gupta had established substantial goodwill and public recognition within the business and entertainment ecosystem, and that the defendants were exploiting his identity for "unlawful financial gains." The Court held that his personality traits and registered trademarks were exclusive to him and entitled to legal protection. A significant aspect of the order concerned AI-generated sexually explicit deepfakes and impersonation content. The Court remarked that such material required "immediate and urgent consideration," recognising the reputational and commercial harm caused by synthetic media misuse. Accordingly, the Court restrained multiple entities from using Mr. Gupta's persona without written consent, including through AI or deepfake technology. It also directed intermediaries such as Google and Meta to remove flagged infringing content and disclose details of alleged offenders operating the accounts and websites involved. The ruling adds to the growing body of Indian jurisprudence recognising personality and publicity rights, especially in the context of AI-generated content and digital impersonation.

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ASCI Releases Draft Guidelines for Labelling of AI-Generated Content in Advertising

The Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI) issued draft guidelines for the responsible labelling of AI-generated or synthetically created material in advertising, proposing a risk-based approach to ensure transparency and consumer protection. Under the proposed framework, the use of AI in advertising would be considered misleading or detrimental only where it generates unrealistic expectations, exploits vulnerable populations, depicts dangerous or harmful scenarios, or mimics a real person's likeness without their permission. The draft rules, open for stakeholder consultation before finalisation, represent a significant step toward responsible AI-driven advertising standards in India.

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DELHI HIGH COURT RESTRAINS UNAUTHORISED USE OF ‘BACHPAN KA PYAR’ SONG, HOOK LINE

The Delhi High Court restrained several YouTube channels and unidentified entities from unauthorised use of the song Bachpan Ka Pyar and its popular hook line “jaane meri janeman bachpan ka pyar bhool nahi jaana re” in a copyright infringement suit filed by Ivy Entertainment Private Limited. Justice Tushar Rao Gedela passed an ex parte ad-interim injunction after observing that Ivy Entertainment had established a prima facie case through a chain of copyright assignments and acquisition agreements relating to the song. The company claimed to have acquired rights over a catalogue of 1,250 songs, including Bachpan Ka Pyar, through an IP rights acquisition agreement executed in November 2025. The dispute arose after multiple YouTube channels allegedly used the hook line, tune, rhythm, and other elements of the song in videos that collectively garnered millions of views without authorisation. One allegedly infringing upload reportedly crossed 17 million views. The Court observed that such unauthorised exploitation appeared to generate unlawful financial gains for the alleged infringers while simultaneously harming the plaintiff’s commercial revenues and copyright interests. Accordingly, it restrained the defendants from reproducing, distributing, or commercially exploiting the song and its hook line without permission. In addition to the injunction, the Court directed certain named YouTube channel operators to disclose all revenues earned from exploiting any portion of the song on their platforms.

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TAYLOR SWIFT'S LEGAL TEAM CALLS 'SHOWGIRL' TRADEMARK LAWSUIT 'ABSURD'

Taylor Swift's lawyers strongly opposed a trademark infringement lawsuit filed by former Las Vegas cabaret performer Maren Wade over Swift's album title *The Life of a Showgirl*. Wade alleged that the title infringes her long-used brand *Confessions of a Showgirl*, which she has used for cabaret performances, podcasts, and related entertainment services since 2015. Swift's legal team argued before the court that the comparison between a globally successful music album and a niche cabaret brand is incapable of causing consumer confusion and characterised the claim as "absurd." Swift's defence also alleged that the plaintiff attempted to leverage Swift's fame by aligning her branding and social media content with the album following its announcement.

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FOX SEEKS APPEAL IN NEWSOM'S \$787M DEFAMATION SUIT

Fox News has sought appellate review in a high-value defamation suit filed by Gavin Newsom, who is seeking approximately \$787 million in damages. The dispute arises from allegedly defamatory broadcasts and commentary aired by Fox News concerning statements attributed to Newsom. The Governor claims that the network knowingly disseminated false and misleading assertions that harmed his reputation and public standing. Fox News has now moved to appeal procedural and substantive rulings in the matter, arguing that the claims are protected under constitutional free speech principles and established standards governing media reporting on public figures. The network is also expected to rely on the "actual malice" threshold established under US defamation law, which requires public officials to prove that false statements were made knowingly or with reckless disregard for the truth. The litigation draws attention to the increasing number of high-profile defamation actions involving major news organisations and political figures in the United States. The outcome of the case could have significant implications for media liability standards, political reporting, and the balance between freedom of the press and protection of reputation under US constitutional law.

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PROSECUTORS SEEK \$1.98M FORFEITURE IN GOLDSTEIN CASE

US federal prosecutors have sought forfeiture of approximately \$1.98 million in a criminal copyright infringement case involving attorney Richard Goldstein, who was accused of operating a large-scale piracy scheme through unauthorised streaming services. According to prosecutors, the accused allegedly generated substantial revenues by distributing copyrighted television and media

content without authorisation, thereby infringing the rights of broadcasters and content owners. The forfeiture request forms part of broader criminal proceedings in which the government seeks recovery of proceeds allegedly derived from unlawful copyright exploitation and related offences. Prosecutors argued that the funds constituted traceable proceeds of illegal activity and should therefore be confiscated under applicable federal forfeiture laws. The case highlights increasing criminal enforcement against digital piracy operations, particularly those involving subscription-based streaming systems that monetise copyrighted content without licences. It also reflects the growing use of financial recovery mechanisms alongside traditional copyright remedies, with authorities targeting not only infringing activity itself but also the profits generated from unauthorised distribution networks.

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DISNEY, JAMES CAMERON SUED FOR ALLEGEDLY MISUSING ACTOR'S FACE IN 'AVATAR'

Disney and director James Cameron are facing a lawsuit in California federal court filed by actor Q'Orionka Kilcher, best known for her roles in *The New World* and *Yellowstone*. Kilcher alleges that Cameron extracted and commercially deployed her facial likeness as the basis for the character Neytiri in the blockbuster Avatar franchise, in violation of California's right of publicity law, which prohibits the use of a person's likeness in commerce without their consent. The lawsuit alleges that Cameron has acknowledged using a photograph of Kilcher, taken when she was 14 years old during the filming of *The New World*, as the foundation for Neytiri's digitally rendered features. The complaint argues this amounts to unlawful commercial exploitation of an Indigenous youth's biometric identity, all while the franchise publicly positioned itself as sympathetic to Indigenous peoples. Kilcher is seeking unspecified monetary damages. Disney has not yet responded to requests for comment.

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OPEN AI MUST PRODUCE TESTIMONY FROM MUSK CASE IN COPYRIGHT SUITS

US federal court has directed OpenAI to produce testimony and related materials from the ongoing litigation involving Elon Musk in separate copyright infringement suits against the company. The order was passed in the context of lawsuits filed by authors and copyright holders alleging that OpenAI unlawfully used copyrighted works to train its artificial intelligence models without authorisation or compensation. Plaintiffs argued that testimony and evidence emerging from the Musk litigation could be relevant to questions concerning OpenAI's internal governance, data practices, and commercial operations. The court accepted that certain discovery materials from the Musk-related proceedings may have probative value in the copyright cases and

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therefore directed OpenAI to produce the requested testimony subject to applicable procedural safeguards. The underlying copyright disputes focus on whether the use of copyrighted books, articles, and creative works for AI model training constitutes infringement or falls within defences such as fair use under US law. The development reflects increasing overlap between AI governance disputes and intellectual property litigation, as courts continue to examine issues surrounding training data, transparency, and accountability in generative AI systems.

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MAXIM DROPS TRADE SECRETS SUIT AGAINST PLAYBOY AFTER SETBACK

Maxim has withdrawn its trade secrets lawsuit against Playboy following a procedural setback in court. The dispute involved allegations that Playboy had improperly used confidential business information and proprietary strategies allegedly belonging to Maxim in connection with media and branding operations. However, after the court issued rulings that weakened Maxim's claims, particularly concerning the adequacy of its trade secret identification and evidentiary support, the company opted to voluntarily dismiss the suit. The litigation centred on whether the information at issue qualified for protection as trade secrets and whether sufficient safeguards had been maintained to preserve confidentiality, both of which are essential requirements under trade secret law. The withdrawal underscores the evidentiary challenges often associated with trade secret litigation, where plaintiffs must clearly establish the existence, secrecy, and commercial value of the allegedly misappropriated information. The case also highlights the strategic considerations in intellectual property disputes between competing media companies, particularly where claims involve confidential commercial practices rather than traditional copyright or trademark rights.

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META FACES NEW MEXICO TRIAL THAT COULD FORCE CHANGES TO FACEBOOK, OTHER PLATFORMS

Meta Platforms is standing trial in Santa Fe, New Mexico, in a case that could compel sweeping changes to how Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp operate, a prospect Meta has warned could force it to withdraw from the state entirely. The lawsuit, brought by New Mexico Attorney General Raúl Torrez, accuses the company of intentionally designing its platforms to addict young users and of failing to protect children from sexual exploitation. This second phase of the proceedings follows a March jury verdict that found Meta had misrepresented the safety of its platforms for minors and ordered the company to pay \$375 million in damages.

The current trial centres on whether Meta's conduct constitutes a "public nuisance" under state law, a finding that would unlock far broader remedies. The Attorney General's office is reportedly seeking an additional \$3.7 billion to fund a 15-year mental health plan, along with platform-level reforms such as mandatory age verification, algorithmic changes for minor users, and the removal of autoplay and infinite scrolling features. Meta has denied wrongdoing, arguing that many of the demanded changes are technically impractical and that no scientific consensus links social media to mental health harm. The case is being closely watched, with over 40 states and more than 1,300 school districts pursuing similar claims against the company nationwide.

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GOOGLE SAYS DOJ'S SEARCH WIN CAN'T HELP YELP SUIT

Google argued that the US Department of Justice's antitrust victory in its search monopoly case should not influence a separate lawsuit filed by Yelp. The dispute arises from Yelp's allegations that Google unfairly prioritised its own local search and review services in search results, thereby harming competing platforms and limiting consumer choice. Google contended that the DOJ's search case involved distinct legal and factual issues and therefore could not automatically be used to establish liability in Yelp's private antitrust action. The company maintained that the claims brought by Yelp concern different market dynamics, evidentiary records, and alleged conduct, requiring an independent assessment by the court. Yelp, however, has attempted to rely on findings from the DOJ litigation to support its argument that Google engaged in anti-competitive practices within the search ecosystem. The matter highlights the broader ripple effects of major antitrust rulings against technology companies, as private litigants increasingly seek to use government enforcement outcomes to strengthen related competition claims. The case also underscores continuing scrutiny of search engine dominance, self-preferencing practices, and the relationship between platform control and competition law in digital markets.

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FIRM HIGHLIGHTS



ANM Global is pleased to have represented Applause Entertainment Private Limited, successfully advising on the transaction, including structuring, negotiation and finalisation of the S&P and revenue agreements for the series.

ANM Global is pleased to have represented RTake Studios Private Limited, successfully advising on the transaction, including drafting, negotiation and execution of the agreements for the production and exploitation/distribution of the film.



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Mr. Nidhish Mehrotra

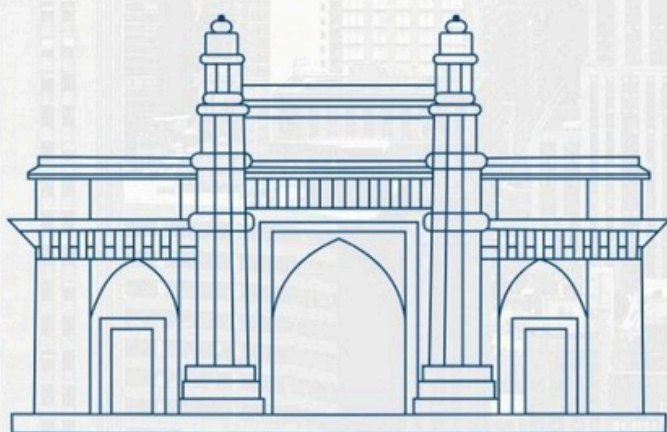


Ms. Anushree Rauta



Mr. Rahul Dhote

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ANM Global secures recognition across multiple categories in the Benchmark Litigation Rankings 2026.

The firm has been ranked for its strength across key practice areas, including:

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Also recognised as a *Recommended Firm* in Mumbai, reflecting its strong presence in one of India's most competitive legal markets.

On the individual front, the firm's lawyers have also received notable recognition:

Mr. Nidhish Mehrotra – Litigation Star (Intellectual Property)

Ms. Anushree Rauta – Litigation Star (Intellectual Property)

Mr. Rahul Dhote – Litigation Star (Intellectual Property)

These recognitions are a testament to the firm's continued commitment to excellence and the trust reposed by its clients.

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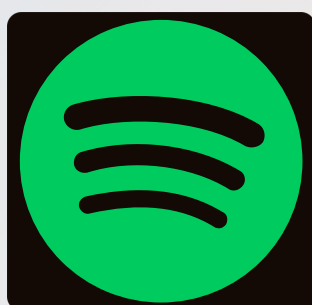
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ANM Global has been ranked in the Asian Legal Business IP Rankings 2026.

This recognition reflects the firm's continued focus on delivering high-quality, strategic advice across intellectual property matters, and reinforces our growing presence in this space.

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