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* **IN THE HIGH COURT OF DELHI AT NEW DELHI**

+ **CS(COMM) 38/2026**

VIKAS PAHWA

.....Plaintiff

Through: Mr. Peeyoosh Kalra, Mr. Kunal Khanna, Mr. Madhav Anand, Mr. Krtin Bhasin, Mr. Yashveer Singh, Mr. Udit Sharma, Mr. Kaulik Mitra and Mr. Vishal Patel, Advocates.

versus

ASHOK KUMAR (JOHN DOE) & ORS.

.....Defendants

Through:

CORAM:

HON'BLE MS. JUSTICE JYOTI SINGH

ORDER

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20.01.2026

I.A. 1122/2026 (Exemption)

1. Allowed, subject to all just exceptions.
2. Application stands disposed of.

I.A. 1124/2026 (u/S 149 r/w Section 151 CPC)

3. This application is filed on behalf of the Plaintiff seeking extension of time by two weeks for filing the Court fee.
4. Mr. Peeyoosh Kalra, learned counsel for the Plaintiff, on instructions, submits that requisite Court fee has been deposited.
5. As the Court fee stands deposited, this application is disposed of as infructuous.

I.A. 1121/2026 (u/S 151 CPC)

6. Counsel for the Plaintiff submits that required certificate under Section 63(4)(c) of Bhartiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023 shall be filed within 30 days from today.



7. Application stands disposed of.

I.A. 1123/2026 (u/S 80(2) r/w Section 151 CPC)

8. This application is filed on behalf of the Plaintiff seeking exemption from serving a prior notice on Defendants No.18 and 19, which are the Government Authorities, under Section 80 CPC.

9. For the reasons stated in the application, the same is allowed and disposed of.

I.A. 1119/2026 (for pre-institution mediation)

10. This application is filed on behalf of the Plaintiff under Section 12-A of the Commercial Courts Act, 2015 seeking exemption from Pre-Institution Mediation.

11. Having regard to the facts of the present case wherein urgent relief is prayed for and in light of the judgment of Supreme Court in ***Yamini Manohar v. T.K.D. Keerthi, (2024) 5 SCC 815***, as also Division Bench of this Court in ***Chandra Kishore Chaurasia v. RA Perfumery Works Private Ltd., 2022 SCC OnLine Del 3529***, exemption is granted to the Plaintiff from Pre-Institution Mediation.

12. Application is allowed and disposed of.

I.A. 1120/2026 (u/O XI Rule 1 (4) of Commercial Courts Act, 2015 r/w Section 151 CPC)

13. This application is filed on behalf of the Plaintiff seeking to place on record additional documents within 30 days.

14. Plaintiff, if he wishes to file additional documents at a later stage, shall do so strictly in accordance with provisions of the Commercial Courts Act, 2015.

15. Application is allowed and disposed of.



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16. Let plaint be registered as a suit.
17. Upon filing of process fee, issue summons to the Defendants through all permissible modes, returnable before the learned Joint Registrar on 30.03.2026.
18. Summons shall state that the written statements shall be filed by the Defendants within 30 days from the receipt of summons along with affidavits of admission/denial of the documents filed by the Plaintiff.
19. It is open to the Plaintiff to file replications within 30 days from the date of receipt of written statements along with affidavits of admission/denial of documents filed by the Defendants.
20. If any of the parties wish to seek inspection of any documents, the same be sought and given the timeline prescribed in Delhi High Court (Original Side) Rules, 2018.
21. Learned Joint Registrar will carry out admission/denial of documents and marking of exhibits.

I.A. 1118/2026 (u/O XXXIX Rules 1 and 2 r/w Section 151 CPC)

22. This application is filed on behalf of the Plaintiff under Order XXXIX Rules 1 and 2 read with Section 151 of CPC for grant of *ex-parte ad-interim* injunction.
23. Issue notice to the Defendants, through all permissible modes, returnable on 12.03.2026 before Court.
24. It is stated in the plaint that the Plaintiff is a Senior Advocate practising for over 32 years, having been designated in 2011. His core areas of practice include *inter alia* cases relating to money laundering, anti-corruption, economic offences, white collar crimes etc. Plaintiff is an active



legal practice before different forums and has appeared in several landmark cases involving cross-jurisdictional and international legal issues and has also rendered *pro bono* services to several persons. Details of some of the important cases conducted by the Plaintiff are furnished in the plaint.

25. It is stated that Plaintiff is widely acknowledged for his legal acumen and has represented prominent business leaders, multinational corporations etc. in sensitive matters involving criminal liabilities. Plaintiff specializes in cases relating to extradition, treaty obligations and cross-border financial crimes and his personal Instagram presence, which has more than 30,000 followers, demonstrates that he is well recognized in the profession. Plaintiff asserts that he has proprietary rights and interest in his persona, which are protected under right of publicity. Plaintiff maintains consistent and verifiable presence across multiple digital and social media platforms where he is regularly featured and interviewed in connection with professional work. These platforms contain photographs, videos, interviews, panel discussions and recordings of public engagements of the Plaintiff.

26. It is further stated that Plaintiff's extensive digital footprint and sustained public engagement across multiple online platforms establishes that his name, image and identity have acquired an independent proprietary character, the unauthorized use of which is likely to cause deception, dilution and unjust enrichment. Plaintiff is a well-known and respected member of the legal fraternity and enjoys formidable reputation and goodwill.

27. It is stated that Defendant No. 1 is an unidentified individual, entity, or group of entities engaged in unauthorizedly using, reproducing, publishing and exploiting photographs of the Plaintiff, thereby infringing the



copyright vested in him and in a manner calculated to misrepresent or create an impression that Defendant No. 1 is the Plaintiff or is associated with, connected to or acting on behalf of the Plaintiff. Defendants No. 2 to 4 are unidentified entities maintaining websites/platforms *engineeringcivil.org*, *dadaboudi.com* and *barrazacarlos.com* respectively, on which Defendant No. 1 has published articles using Plaintiff's photographs with intent to misrepresent, deceive or financially defraud members of the public. Defendants No. 5 and 6 are the Domain Name Registrants (DNR) of websites/platforms operated by Defendants No. 2 and 3 and Defendant No. 4 respectively, on which Defendant No. 1 has published articles using Plaintiff's photographs. Defendant No. 7 provides hosting services of the website *engineeringcivil.org*, operated by Defendants No. 2 and Defendant No. 8 provides hosting services in respect of websites *dadaboudi.com* and *barrazacarlos.com*, operated by Defendants No. 3 and 4. Defendants No. 9 to 17 are Internet Service Providers (ISPs), while Defendant No. 17 is a Telecom Service Provider, which provides telecom services in respect of phone numbers +91-7225803586, +91-7490942188 and +91-9319190337, which are used by Defendant No. 1 to carry out the illegal activities.

28. Learned counsel for the Plaintiff submits that in the second week of January, 2026, Plaintiff was informed through one Ms. Shourya Malhotra that Defendant No. 1 was impersonating the Plaintiff using his photographs on WhatsApp and indulging in financial frauds, posing as a stock broker. Defendant No.1 had published several articles through Defendants No. 2 and 3's websites alluring people into making investments and the articles were prominently carrying pictures of the Plaintiff, which is evident from the



screenshots placed on record. On examination, it was revealed that Defendant No. 1 was using the name ‘Dr. Dinesh Singh’ over the photographs of the Plaintiff, which it had posted on his Instagram page on 07.05.2020 and 19.01.2020, however, despite best efforts, true identity of Defendant No. 1 could not be verified, *albeit* a cyber complaint has been filed in this regard. It is urged that on 10.01.2026, Plaintiff received a copy of the complaint filed by one Mr. Pradeep Solanki on Cyber Crime Portal with documentary evidence disclosing how Defendant No.1 was inducing and defrauding members of the public by impersonating as the Plaintiff. It is operating a WhatsApp group titled ‘*Technical Discussion Group for the Stock Market B12*’, whereby Defendant No.1 is soliciting investments from the public. It is urged that Defendant No.1 is operating multiple WhatsApp groups and mobile-based applications using Plaintiff’s photograph, name and persona to falsely lend credibility to a carefully organized and ongoing financial fraud, which is prejudicing Plaintiff’s reputation and professional standing.

29. It is argued that Defendant No. 4 is also publishing similar infringing articles on website *barrazacarlos.com* by impersonating as the Plaintiff with his photographs prominently placed on the website. Mr. Kalra submits that the activities of Defendants No.1 to 4 clearly demonstrate a deliberate, fraudulent and *mala fide* attempt to exploit the reputation of the Plaintiff by using his photographs, amounting to violation of the copyright of the Plaintiff that subsists in the photographs and if the illegal activities are not restrained, irreparable harm and damage shall be caused to the Plaintiff, apart from the fact that innocent members of the public are being duped and cheated into making investments.



30. Having heard learned counsel for the Plaintiff, I am of the view that Plaintiff has made out a *prima facie* case for grant of *ex parte ad interim* injunction. Balance of convenience lies in favour of the Plaintiff and he is likely to suffer irreparable harm in case *ex parte ad interim* injunction as prayed for, is not granted.

31. Plaintiff is a Senior Advocate with over 32 years of professional experience. Broadly understood, Plaintiff's case is that Defendants No.1 to 4 are impersonating the Plaintiff and using his name, identity, image, contact details and other credentials to lure and induce members of the public into financial investments and are indulging in a serious financial fraud. Several screenshots have been placed on record to evidence this position, which are not captured in the present order for the sake of anonymity. Details of cyber complaints made by the complainants alleging fraud by Defendant No.1 using the name and images of the Plaintiff have been given in the plaint. Contents of documents filed with the plaint, averments in the plaint and the screenshots extracted therein *prima facie* establish that Defendants No. 1 to 4 are using the credentials, images and identity of the Plaintiff to induce innocent members of the public to make investments, through publications on the named websites and WhatsApp groups etc. As rightly flagged by the Plaintiff, this is not only violating his copyright in his photographs but is also causing harm and damage to his goodwill and reputation.

32. Accordingly, till the next date of hearing, Defendant No.1, its proprietors, partners, directors, servants, agents, stockists, dealers, distributors, affiliates, representatives and all others acting on its behalf, are restrained from unauthorisedly using, reproducing, publishing,



communicating to the public, displaying, hosting, disseminating or otherwise exploiting in any manner whatsoever, photographs/images, name, identity and contact details of the Plaintiff, showing any kind of association, affiliation or connection with the Plaintiff on any platform, including social media platforms, amounting to copyright infringement and passing of its activities as those of the Plaintiff.

33. It is further directed that Defendants No.2, 7 and 9 to 17 shall forthwith take down, remove, disable and block access to the infringing articles published on <https://engineeringcivil.org/others/dr-dinesh-singh-is-dedicated-to-helping-dreamers-in-india-grow-their-wealth-and-becoming-a-trusted-advocate-for-investors/amp>. Defendant No.3, 8 and 9 to 17 shall forthwith take down, remove, disable and block access to the infringing articles published at <https://dadaboudi.com/dr-dinesh-singh-is-dedicated-to-helping-dreamers-in-india-grow-their-wealth-and-becoming-a-trusted-advocate-for-investors/> and Defendant No.4, 8 and 9 to 17 shall take similar actions in respect of infringing articles published on <https://barrazacarlos.com/dr-dinesh-singh-is-dedicated-to-helping-dreamers-in-india-grow-their-wealth-and-becoming-a-trusted-advocate-for-investors/>.

34. It is further directed that Defendants No.5 and 7 shall disclose the complete identity, registration particulars and contact details of Defendant No.2; Defendants No.5 and 8 shall disclose complete identity, registration particulars and contact details of Defendant No. 3; Defendants No. 6 and 8 shall disclose complete identity, registration particulars and contact details of Defendant No. 4; and Defendants No. 2 to 4 shall disclose complete identity, registration particulars and contact details of Defendant No. 1, to the Plaintiff within two weeks from today.



35. Plaintiff shall comply with the provisions of Order XXXIX Rule 3 CPC within a period of two weeks from today.

JYOTI SINGH, J

JANUARY 20, 2026/RW