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IN THE HIGH COURT OF DELHI AT NEW DELHI

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CS(COMM) 1305/2025 & I.A. 30617/2025 I.A. 30618/2025 I.A. 30619/2025 I.A. 30620/2025 I.A. 32192/2025

NANDAMURI TARAKA RAMA RAO Plaintiff

Through: Mr. J. Sai Deepak, Sr. Adv., Dr. Alka Dahar Adv., Mr. Shiv Verma Adv., Mr. B. Sidhi Pramodh Rayudu Adv., Ms. Purnima Vashishtha Adv., Mr. Varun Sharma Adv., Ms. Khushi Jain Adv. and Ms. Pankhudi Tripathi Adv.

versus

ASHOK KUMAR / JOHN DOE AND ORS Defendants

Through: Mr. Manas Raghuvanshi, Adv. for D-12.

Ms. Mishthi Dubey, Adv. for D-15.

Ms. Shilpa Gupta and Ms. Surabhi Pande, Adv. for D-16 & 17.

Mr. Aditya Gupta & Ms. Vani Kaushik and Mr. Rohith, Advs. for D-23.

Mr. Varun Pathak, Ms. Amee Rana, Ms. Sana Banyal & Ms. Anannya Gogoi, Advs. for D-24.

Mr. Ankit Parhar, Mr. Abhishek Kumar, Ms. Shreya Gupta and Ms. Sanchli Sethi, Advs. for D-25/X Corp.

Mr. Ankit Parhar & Ms. Shreya Gupta, Advs. for D-26/Reddit.Inc

Mr. Siddhartha Shankar Ray, CGSC

with Mr. Atishay Jain, Adv. for D-27
and D-28

CORAM:

HON'BLE MS. JUSTICE MANMEET PRITAM SINGH ARORA

ORDER

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22.12.2025

I.A. 30618/2025 (seeking exemption from pre-litigation mediation)

1. This is an application filed by the Plaintiff under Section 12A of the Commercial Courts Act, 2015 read with Section 151 Code of Civil Procedure, 1908 ['CPC'], seeking exemption from instituting pre-litigation mediation.

2. Having regard to the facts that the present suit contemplates urgent interim relief and in light of the judgement of the Supreme Court in **Yamini Manohar v. T.K.D. Keerthi**¹, exemption from the requirement of pre-institution mediation is granted to the Plaintiff.

3. Accordingly, the application stands disposed of.

I.A. 32192/2025 (seeking leave to file additional documents)

4. This is an application filed by the Plaintiff under Order XI Rule 1(4) of CPC [as amended by the Commercial Courts Act, 2015], seeking leave to file additional documents annexed to this application as document nos. 34 to 63.

5. For the reasons stated in the application and considering that the suit is still at the stage of issuance of summons, the prayer is allowed and the documents are taken on record.

6. Accordingly, the application is disposed of.

I.A. 30620/2025 (seeking permission for filing lengthy submissions)

¹ (2024) 5 SCC 815

7. This is an application filed under Section 151 of CPC seeking permission for filing lengthy list of dates and synopsis.
8. For the reasons stated in the application, the application is allowed.
9. Accordingly, the applications stand disposed of.

I.A. 30619/2025 (seeking exemption from Section 80 CPC)

10. This is an application filed under Section 151 of CPC seeking exemption from serving two (2) months' statutory notice upon Defendant Nos. 27 and 28 under Section 80 of CPC.
11. For the reasons stated in the application and considering the fact that defendant no. 27 and 28 are proforma defendants, exemption is allowed.
12. The application stands disposed of.

CS(COMM) 1305/2025

13. The present suit has been filed seeking a permanent injunction inter alia against misappropriation of the personality and publicity rights of the plaintiff, infringement of copyright and other reliefs.
14. The plaint be registered as a suit.
15. Issue summons to the Defendants Nos. 2 to 6, 11, 13, 14, 18, 20 and 21 ('infringing defendants') who are unauthorisedly selling merchandize by all permissible modes on filing of process fee. Affidavit of service be filed within four (4) weeks.
16. The Defendants will file the written statement(s) within thirty (30) days. The Defendants shall also file affidavit(s) of admission/denial of the documents filed by the Plaintiff, failing which the written statement(s) shall not be taken on record.
17. The Plaintiff is at liberty to file replication thereto within thirty (30) days after filing the written statement(s). The replication shall be

accompanied by affidavit of admission/denial in respect of the documents filed by Defendants, failing which the replication shall not be taken on record.

18. It is made clear that any unjustified denial of documents may lead to an order of costs against the concerned party.

19. Any party seeking inspection of documents may do so in accordance with the Delhi High Court (Original Side) Rules, 2018.

20. No summons are being issued to Defendant Nos. 12, 15, 16, 17, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27 and 28 as they are proforma parties, impleaded to comply with the Court's orders.

21. In pursuance to the order dated 08th December 2025, the social media intermediaries have responded to the Plaintiff and consequently Plaintiff is not pressing for issuance of summons to Defendant Nos. 7, 8, 9, 10, 19 and 22. The Plaintiff will take appropriate steps for deleting the said entities and filing an amended memo of parties showing their deletion without changing the defendant number. Let the same be filed within two (2) weeks.

22. List before the Court on **02.02.2026**.

I.A. 30617/2025 (under Order XXXIX Rule 1 and 2 CPC)

23. This is an application filed under Order XXXIX Rule 1 and 2 CPC seeking ex-parte ad-interim injunction.

24. Mr. J. Sai Deepak, learned senior counsel for the Plaintiff sets up the Plaintiff's case as under: -

24.1 He states that the Plaintiff, Mr. Nandamuri Taraka Rama Rao, is an Indian actor and cultural icon in Telugu cinema. Beginning his career as a child artist in 1996 and emerging as a lead actor in 2001, he has enjoyed a successful career spanning nearly three decades. Widely known as the 'Man

of Masses', he has featured regularly in Forbes India's Celebrity 100 list since 2012. His celebrated filmography includes major hits such as *Aadi*, *Simhadri*, *Temper*, *Janatha Garage*, *Aravinda Sametha Veera Raghava*, and the globally acclaimed *RRR* (2022), which earned him international recognition and established him as a known figure in world cinema.

24.2 He states that the Plaintiff has received wide-ranging recognition for his contributions to Indian cinema, having been honoured with several prestigious awards including multiple Filmfare Awards South, Nandi Awards, SIIMA, IIFA recognition, and numerous other cinema accolades. In addition to his cinematic achievements, the Plaintiff is widely respected for his philanthropic and humanitarian initiatives. These contributions have generated goodwill and public recognition, establishing the Plaintiff as a household name not only in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh but across India and internationally. He states that the Plaintiff is one of the most sought-after brand ambassadors in India, endorsing numerous brands, and his persona is closely associated with goodwill with an estimated brand value exceeding ₹400 crores.

24.3 He states that the Plaintiff's success is closely linked to the unique and identifiable attributes of his personality, including his name, image, and likeness, all of which constitute his protectable personality and publicity rights. As a celebrity, the Plaintiff enjoys exclusive control over the commercial exploitation of these attributes, which have acquired substantial goodwill, recognition, and economic value through endorsements and business ventures.

24.4 He states that Plaintiff's name 'Nandamuri Taraka Rama Rao' and his known identities 'NTR', 'Jr. NTR' and 'NTR Jr.', along with distinctive

nicknames and sobriquets such as 'Man of Masses', 'Young Tiger' and 'Tarak', have acquired distinctiveness and are exclusively associated with him.

24.5 He states that the Plaintiff has secured valid and subsisting trademark registrations for, inter alia, 'NTR', 'Jr. NTR', 'NANDAMURI', 'NANDAMURI TARAKARAMA RAO' and 'MAN OF MASSES' across Classes 1 to 45.

24.6 He submits that any unauthorized use of these attributes, whether through images, merchandise, endorsements, or AI-generated deepfakes, audio, or video content, causes confusion, deception, economic loss, reputational harm, and infringes his personality and publicity rights.

24.7 He states that the Plaintiff's personality and publicity rights forming the subject matter of the present suit are protected under Articles 19 and 21 of the Constitution of India, Copyright Act, 1957 and Trade Marks Act, 1999.

24.8 He states that the present suit has been instituted primarily to restrain the unauthorized commercial exploitation of the Plaintiff's persona, particularly through the manufacture, sale, and distribution of infringing merchandise, through impersonation, and through AI generated morphed contents, that unlawfully bears the Plaintiff's name, image, and likeness. The Plaintiff therefore seeks restraint against all unauthorized commercial use of his persona, including through merchandise and digital content, as these infringing activities cause confusion, deception, wrongful gain to the Defendants, and irreparable loss to the Plaintiff's reputation, goodwill, and legitimate commercial interests.

24.9 He states that vide order dated 08.12.2025, this Court had directed the

proforma Defendants to treat this plaint as a complaint and to take down the infringing content as per the IT Rules 2021. He states that Defendant Nos. 23, 24, 25 and 26 have responded to the Plaintiff and he is not pressing any further relief against the said entities for the impugned URLs filed originally with the plaint. He states that with respect to additional URLs identified in document no. 40 taken on record today, he is seeking directions to the said intermediaries to consider the same as per the IT Rules 2021.

24.10 He states that presently Plaintiff is only seeking ex-parte ad-interim injunction with respect to take down of the URLs of the infringing Defendants selling merchandise for commercial gain. He states that Defendants Nos. 2 to 6, 11, 13, 14, 18, 20 and 21 are various merchandise sellers, merchants, and e-commerce marketplaces, who are engaged in the sale of, and/or facilitation and promotion of the sale of, products and merchandise that infringe the Plaintiff's personality and publicity rights, and who are unlawfully deriving commercial gain and unjust enrichment at the expense of the Plaintiff. He states that appropriate directions will also be issued to Defendant Nos. 12, 15, 16 and 17.

Findings and Analysis

25. This Court has heard the learned counsel for the Plaintiff and has perused the record.

26. Upon perusal of the documents filed on record, it is evident that Plaintiff is a known and recognised actor whose name, image, and likeness have acquired goodwill through decades of professional achievement and brand endorsements. His reputation as a popular and well-recognized actor, who is a recipient of multiple prestigious awards including Filmfare Awards is apparent from the documents filed on the record. It is stated that the

Plaintiff has millions of followers across social media platforms. It is stated that Plaintiff has several brand endorsement agreements and is a sought after brand ambassador by several entities. These facts holistically establish the public association uniquely tied to his identities and his reputation amongst the public not limited to his fans.

27. Additionally, the Plaintiff has also got his personal/stage name and its variations registered as trademark under various classes.

28. On the basis of these assertions made in the plaint and perusal of documents filed on record, this Court is of the prima facie view that the Plaintiff is a well-known face in India who has gained immense goodwill and reputation over a course of a successful career and has acquired a celebrity status in India.

29. In the view of the law settled in **D.M. Entertainment Vs. Baby Gift House²**, **Anil Kapoor Vs. Simply Life India & Ors.³**, and **Jaikishan Kaku Bhai Sarf Alias Jackie Shroff Vs. The Peppy store and Ors.⁴** there can be no dispute that this celebrity status inherently grants the Plaintiff proprietary rights over her personality and associated attributes.

30. Therefore, prima facie, the Plaintiff's personality traits and/or parts thereof, including the Plaintiff's name, likeness, and image are protectable elements of the Plaintiff's personality rights. The Plaintiff is entitled to seek injunction against the use of his personality rights by third parties for selling merchandise for their commercial gains, without his authorisation.

31. The balance of convenience lies in favour of the Plaintiff, and the continuing availability of the infringing merchandise would cause

² MANU/DE/2043/2010

³ 2023 SCC Online Del 6914 [Paragraph Nos. 38 to 40]

irreparable injury to the Plaintiff. The Plaintiff has therefore, made out a case for ex-parte ad-interim injunction against the infringing Defendants Nos. 2 to 6, 11, 13, 14, 18, 20 and 21.

32. Accordingly, until the next date of hearing, following directions are passed: -

- a. Defendant Nos. 1 [John Doe], 2 to 6, 11, 13, 14, 18, 20 and 21, their associates, servants, agents, affiliates, holding companies, assignees, substitutes, representatives, group entities, their subscribers, employees and/ or persons claiming through them or under them and all other persons are restrained from violating the Plaintiff's personality rights by utilizing and/or in any manner directly and / or indirectly, using or exploiting or misappropriating the Plaintiff's personality/ publicity rights by the use of the Plaintiff's (a) name names 'NANDAMURI TARAKA RAMA RAO JR.', 'NTR', 'JR. NTR', 'NTR JR.', 'MAN OF MASSES', (b) styles, (c) photographs, and/or creating, sharing, disseminating, any product (including clothes, keychains, T-shirts, coffee mugs, posters, life-size cutouts), through the use of any technology including but not limited to printing, painting, artwork, Artificial Intelligence, Generative Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, Graphic Interchange Formats (GIFs) on any medium(s) and format(s), for any commercial gain by exploiting them in any manner whatsoever without the Plaintiff's consent and/or authorization.
- b. Defendant No. 2 to 6 are directed to take down all the infringing

⁴ 2024 SCC Online Del 3664.

links, enlisted in Annexure A attached to this Order, and are restrained from selling sale of merchandise, which infringes personality rights of the Plaintiff.

- c. Defendant Nos. 11, 13, 14, 18, 20 and 21 are directed to take down all the infringing links, enlisted in Annexure A attached to this Order, and are restrained from selling sale of merchandise, which infringes personality rights of the Plaintiff.
- d. Defendant Nos. 12, 15, 16, and 17 are restrained from selling and/or facilitating sale of merchandise, which infringes the personality rights of the Plaintiff. The said Defendants are also directed to delist the impugned goods solicited on their websites, which are infringing personality rights of the Plaintiff and are enlisted in Annexure A attached to this order.
- e. The concerned Defendants are directed to comply with these directions within 72 hours from the receipt of this Order.
- f. In case, Defendant Nos. 2 to 6, 11, 13, 14, 18, 20 and 21 failed to take down the infringing URLs within the time granted, Defendant No. 23/Google is directed to reindex these URLs.

33. If any website/aggrieved party, which is not primarily an infringing party, is blocked/affected in pursuance of this Order, it is permitted to approach the Court by giving an undertaking that it does not intend to do any illegal dissemination of the content, which infringes the personality rights of the Plaintiff and the Court would consider modifying the injunction if the facts and circumstances, so warrant.

34. Learned counsel for the Plaintiff states that the Plaintiff has identified additional infringing URLs, which are part of document no. 40 and these

URLs are available on the social media platform of Defendant Nos. 23, 24, 25 and 26.

35. The Plaintiff is directed to provide a copy of document no. 40 to the intermediaries i.e., Defendant Nos. 23, 24, 25 and 26 the intermediaries are directed to review the document no. 40 and treat this as a complaint, in accordance with the IT Rules 2021 as well as their own governing policy; and take steps in accordance with the statutory period of the said IT Rules 2021.

36. Defendant Nos. 12, 15, 16 and 17 are e-commerce platforms and their counsels on instructions have taken a stand that they cannot act upon the complaint of the Plaintiff claiming infringement of trademark, copyright and unauthorized use of its image and likeness except under the orders of the Court. In the facts of this case, the Plaintiff herein has registered trademarks in its favour and seeks action against its infringement and objects to the use of its image for selling merchandize. This Court notes that Defendant No. 12/Amazon in another suit i.e., CS(COMM) No. 1336/2025 listed today in similar facts has acted upon the complaint of the plaintiff therein and taken down the infringing merchandize/resellers. Therefore, the stand taken by Defendant No. 12/Amazon in this suit is inconsistent. These entities regularly take a stand that they are not liable for the infringing acts of the resellers and claim safe harbour; however, if the plaintiff/complainant has specifically filed a complaint to the e-commerce platform stating that the goods being sold are violating its rights, in the considered opinion of this Court these entities cannot have a hands-off approach. The Defendants are directed to file a reply and place on record the governing policy adopted by them for entertaining and deciding complaints pertaining by a party with

regard to infringement of registered trademarks and copyright as well as unauthorized use of the image and likeness of a person and for sale of merchandize.

37. Learned counsels appearing for Defendant Nos. 12, 15, 16, and 17 accept notice. Let reply be filed to the aforesaid direction issued at paragraph 36.

38. Issue Notice to Defendants Nos. 2 to 6, 11, 13, 14, 18, 20 and 21 through all permissible modes, upon filing of process fees, returnable on the next date of hearing.

39. Let the reply to this application be filed by these Defendants within a period of four (4) weeks, from receipt of notice.

40. Rejoinder thereto, if any, be filed within a period of four (4) weeks thereafter.

41. In addition, the proforma Defendants are directed to file their compliance affidavit within one (1) week.

42. Compliance of Order XXXIX Rule 3 of CPC be done within a period of one (1) week from today.

43. List before the learned Joint Registrar (J) on 11.02.2026.

44. List before Court on **19.05.2026**.

45. The digitally signed copy of this order, duly uploaded on the official website of the Delhi High Court, www.delhihighcourt.nic.in, shall be treated as a certified copy of the order for the purpose of ensuring compliance. No physical copy of order shall be insisted by any authority/entity or litigant.

MANMEET PRITAM SINGH ARORA, J

DECEMBER 22, 2025/AM

ANNEXURE-A

Category	Defendant details	Link	Status
Third-party sellers (i.e., entities listed on e-commerce platforms such as Amazon, Flipkart, etc.)	Rainfire Creation (Defendant No.2)	https://www.amazon.in/Jr-Ntr-Poster-Unframed-Multicolor/dp/B0BRV5LF35/ref=sr_1_16?dib=eyJ2IjoiMSJ9.U7tCleioohyVuwEMgXmJGjdledCEaY04Lohu1FRZSkS9GKYkq5ZvL0w5Ifg92dwpfJ8LgPAIEiyTpJQc12Ng8Voh0xAtS7Q_WgIlFiaSXBBowlRjX_J2OjFX2mNgtpAdCXcWRYvVNOM5RHca80undQ9J1XNd0K1lmm8QwAjdPtyoR8yoxDsJam5IuRmNX5iRIuQeBxBC6Z5Wx19TIVCvrQo Crpv8PLkjlMPbjbuU.Sah_3VatFbPqZZvzRity24YkeQBErMZ9SNB9e7DiQg&dib_tag=se&keywords=NTR&qid=1761204550&sr=8-16	Active
	Caravan Evolved Craft Pvt. Ltd. (Defendant No. 3)	https://bollywoo.ooo/collections/jr-ntr/products/blue-pink-checked casual-shirt	Inactive
	HamsaMart (Defendant No. 4)	https://www.meesho.com/devara tshirtsjunior-ntr-tshirtjr-ntr tshirtdevara-tshirtjai-balayya-tshirt balakrishna-tshirtdp	Active

		tshirtchandrababu-naidu-tshirt bp77/p/7a8hlf	
	Samridhi Garments (Defendant No. 5)	https://www.amazon.in/Samridhi Garments-Junior-Graphic Cotton/dp/B0FMNT49JM?source=p-s-sl-shoppingads-lpcontext&ref_=fplfs&smid=2G773EBR7455P&th=1&psc=1	Active
	Trend Wala (Defendant No.6)	https://www.meesho.com/yellow-jr-ntr-lines-look/p/7iyjpo?utm_source=google&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=gmc&srsltid=AfmBOoIS HRE6VmoHiG3bCJgIxrjKN8II6FDF0w6Go8WRRNq EKgcmmOMc 2. https://www.meesho.com/yellow-jr-ntr-fan-boy-t-shirt/p/91k8lo?utm_source=google&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=gmc&srsltid=AfmBOoN oKhRrTnsMmHFew6RIMyeYrdxwLFapc8P3Y09 _Piz5hGfJRanQ	Active both links
Online stores (i.e., entities that are selling or offering to sell products on their own websites)	XDart (Online Store) (Defendant No. 11)	https://xdart.in/product-category/actors/jr-ntr/	Active
	GillKart (Defendant No. 13)	White Jr NTR T-Shirt - Breathable Polyester, Fits All Seasons	Active
	Next Print (Defendant No. 14)	Next Print Jr Ntr Photo Printed T-Shirt.	Active
	Dreamworld Digital		Inactive

	Shopping Pvt. Ltd. (Online Store)(Defendant No. 18)	https://www.madmonkeystore.in/search?q=NTR&options%5Bprefix%5D=last	
	Fully Filmy Lifestyle LLP(Defendant No. 20)	https://fullyfilmy.in/collections/all_products/junior-ntrtee?srsltid=AfmBOopz7dvJ9CquYv1GYMbOn1M7_cNuhODERag88ogKYou7Mr1mZd	Active
	Fifthway Soft Systems (OPC) Private Limited (Defendant No. 21)	https://www.veeleos.com/category/jr-ntr	Inactive
E-commerce intermediaries / marketplace (i.e., entities that are displaying products on their platforms)	Amazon (Defendant No. 12)	https://www.amazon.in/Junior-Tshirt-Balayya-Balakrishna-Tshirt-BP39/dp/B0CNH4ZNPG	Active
	Meesho (Defendant No 15)	https://www.meesho.com/yellow-jr-ntr-lines-look/p/7iyjpo?utm_source=google&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=gmc&srsltid=AfmBOoqlSHRE6VmoHiG3bCJgIxrjKN8Il6FDF0w6Go8WRRNqEKgcmrmOMc2 https://www.meesho.com/yellow-jr-ntr-fan-boy-t-shirt/p/91k8lo?utm_source=google&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=gmc&srsltid=AfmBOorN oKhRrTnsMmHFew6RlMyeYrdxwLFapc8P3Yi09_Piz5hGfJRanQ	Active

	Shopsy (Defendant No 16)	https://www.shopsy.in/solid-men-white-t-shirt/p/itmeabaa35a97369?pid=XPTGUZVPQBAQYMCF&lid=LSTXPTGUZVPQBAQYMCFPJYOZO&marketplace=FLIPKART	Active
	Flipkart (Defendant No. 17)	https://www.flipkart.com/search?q=NTR%20jr&otracker=search&otrackerl=search&marketplace=FLIPKART&as-show=on&as=off	Active

