

**In the Court of SCJ-cum-RC, (West District)
Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi.
Presided by : Ms. Richa Sharma**

CS SCJ No. 459/2026

CNR No. DLWT-03-000763-2026

Manoj Kesari Chand Sandesara Vs Google LLC & Ors.

04.04.2026.

Let summons of the suit and notice of the injunction application be issued to the defendants on filing PF, RC, AD, Speed Post, dasti, as well as through all approved electronic modes, returnable for 20.04.2026. Steps be taken within one week.

Ld. Counsel for the plaintiff has pressed for the ex-parte ad-interim relief.

ORDER

1. This order shall culminate the controversy, whether in the prevailing premise, the plaintiff is entitled to ad-interim exparte injunction against the defendants, under Order XXXIX Rule 1&2 read with Section 151 CPC, prayed as under:

2. Pass an ex-parte ad-interim injunction restraining the Defendants No. 1 to 3, their agents, employees, or any person acting on their behalf:

- from publishing, re-publishing or circulating any further content in relation to the Plaintiff and his family name-concerning the case of Sterling Biotech Limited and bank fraud;
- directing to de-index, de-list, and de-reference the URLs and

content of the said articles as detailed in the plaint and such other links not known to the Plaintiff relating to the subject matter in issue from their respective website till the pendency and final disposal of the present suit: and

- direction to Defendant No. 1 and 2 to de-index, de-list, and de-reference the URLs and content of the said articles of the media houses as detailed in the plaint and such other links not known to the Plaintiff relating to the subject matter in issue from its search engine results, till the pendency and final disposal of the present suit.

3. Bereft of details, the factual matrix of the suit is that the present plaint is being instituted by Mr. Manoj Kesarichand Sandesara ("plaintiff herein") seeking damages, permanent and mandatory injunction to remove disparaging, defamatory and false content created by various media houses, intermediaries and searched upon and uploaded on the domain of Google LLC ("defendant no.1") about the plaintiff through various news channel from all its media outlets including TV channel, YouTube Channel Worldwide. The plaintiff is seeking to remove the malicious and palpably false content, which is directly damaging his fundamental rights of privacy and reputation. The Plaintiff belongs to one 'Sandesara' family who owned the Sterling Group of Companies, including but not limited to Sterling Biotech Limited. The Plaintiff has also been a director in Sterling Group of Companies namely Blue Mark Mercantile Limited and Navseema Properties Private Limited etc.

4. Sterling Biotech Ltd was pioneer in India to produce Gelatine as per USA and European standards, which opened the doors of western markets for Indian Pharmaceutical companies. The first plant was set up by Sterling Biotech Ltd (SBL) in 1997 and thereafter, SBL set up plants to manufacture anti-cancer drugs, which led to huge reduction of prices of anti-cancer drugs in India. It is averred, that SBL Group has been availing bank credit facilities from the last 25 years and has set up various high-tech projects with a credible track record. It is further voiced, that SBL has paid off dividends as high as 50% to its shareholders since its incorporation till 2010.

5. It is contended further, that all the major accounts of the group became NPA by the end of financial year 2011-12 which are based upon various external factors beyond its control like regulatory changes, project overrun however, it remains undisputed that the group has been repaying the loan amount for last several years after credit facilities were extended to it. The lenders have granted no new additional financial facilities to SBL since June, 2011 but only the restructuring/refinancing schemes were granted for the resolution of the debt.

6. The entire outstanding principal of Rs. 7,626/- Crores also included two loans given to foreign companies of the group i.e. Atlantic Blue Water Services Limited and British Oil & Gas Limited. The original loan amount was US \$ 80 million each in both the above companies and

at present the said outstanding is reduced to US \$ 10 million and US \$ 25 million, respectively. Further, in order to show their bonafide, the promoters had offered the Banks with additional security (though not sought by them) in the form of Nigerian Oil Block OML143 when in fact, only five banks were having security of this Oil Block for a much lesser amount, valued at US \$ 3,071.43 million in the year 2016, which was much more than the entire loan amount including all the domestic and international companies of the group. This was a significant asset which was provided to the banks. Suffice it is to mention, that OML owned by Sterling Oil Exploration & Energy Production Co Ltd (SEEPCO) is an asset of SGORPL.

7. In 2014, banks accepted the offer of taking additional securities and agreed to restructure the complete loan by granting a credit facility to Sterling Global Oil Resources Limited, Mauritius on exposure neutral basis whereby, bank's overall exposure to the group would reduce and banks will get very valuable additional security of US \$3 billion. For restructuring and refinancing, banks had put a condition that the Petitioners should bring \$100 Million (Rs.650 crores) upfront and should pay up the NPA dues of the SBL group companies and its associates. Once both these conditions got complied with, then banks will issue equivalent amount of standby Letter of Credit (SBLC) to Sterling Global Oil Resources Limited (SGORPL) Mauritius. In terms thereof, the Petitioners brought an upfront amount of \$100 Million (₹650 crores) and paid up the outstanding dues of companies of individual banks which in turn, issued equivalent or lesser amount of SBLC to SGORPL. This way

banks recovered outstanding dues of SBL and associates. Further, the banks recovered more than ₹1,000 crores on net over all basis and got the additional securities of the oil block valued at \$3 Billion. This bank facility was only for the purpose of restructuring of loans of Indian companies and was granted to Sterling Global Oil Resources Limited (SGORPL), Mauritius. SGORPL paid back to banks nearly Rs.1,100 Crore as interest and installment (in addition to ₹1,000 crore mentioned above in this clause).

8. The banks, considering the long standing and unblemished relation with the group has successfully negotiated a One Time Settlement (OTS). The total amount of OTS was approved as ₹6457 Crores (₹3826 Crores towards Group's Indian Companies and INR 2631 Crores towards Group's Foreign Companies). The banks gave their due approval by way of necessary letters and the promoters had already paid an upfront 10% (approximately) of the OTS amount to the tune of ₹614 Crores. However, in view of various exigencies including the extraordinary unforeseen circumstances on account of Covid 19 pandemic and various extraneous circumstances created at the hands of Law Enforcement Agencies, the OTS for Indian Companies got scuttled as banks were pressurized to opt for liquidation wherein Sterling Biotech was liquidated for a paltry sum of ₹638 Crores and PMT Machines for a meager sum of ₹265 Crores in spite of the fact that Promoters already paid a substantial sum towards OTS. The Promoters with a view to resolve the issues paid a total payment of ₹2042.63 Crores in addition to payment of ₹614 crores already paid which total makes the payment

made by the Promoters to the tune of ₹2656.63 Crores.

9. M/s Sterling Biotech Limited ('SBL') Group comprised of businesses in India and abroad. SBL Group had been availing bank credit facilities from various Indian banks for the last 25 years and have been faithfully repaying the loan amounts without any default. However, in or around the end of Financial Year 2011-12 owing to various external factors such as environmental regulatory changes and international market situation which were beyond SBL's control, major accounts of the company became NPA. Sincere efforts were being made by the Petitioners/Promoters to resolve the debt by entering into restructuring/refinancing schemes with the banks. However, in the year 2017 various proceedings were launched against the SBL Group, as detailed in the plaint. Promoters approached the Hon'ble Supreme Court vide writ petition Criminal 48/2020 inter-alia seeking various reliefs, pertaining to quashing of all proceedings initiated against them by various agencies such as CBI, ED, SFIO etc. on the allegations of non-payment of credit facilities availed by M/s Sterling Biotech Limited Group of Companies as it was urged that the proceedings initiated against them are absolutely misconceived and untenable.

10. Accordingly, considering the above, Hon'ble Apex Court had passed various orders from time to time. The details of some relevant orders may be summarized as under:-

DATE OF ORDER	RELEVANT EXTRACTS
07.02.2020.	<p data-bbox="593 353 1383 909">Learned senior counsel for the petitioner states that banks are willing to close the issue and he has obtained OTS from about fifteen out of twenty banks. It is his submission that if notice is issued to the respondents, he can resolve the issue with the banks and in the meantime would pay further substantive amounts to the banks. It is his further submission that sword hanging of the criminal prosecution is creating some difficulty.</p> <p data-bbox="593 936 1383 1099">Issue notice on the writ petitions as well as on the applications for stay, returnable in three weeks.</p>
18.11.2021.	<p data-bbox="593 1155 1383 1711">In view of the averment made in the application(s), what is being pleaded is that since the total amount stated to be due from the petitioner is little over rupees 1500 odd Crore out of which Rupees 600 crore is alleged to have been repaid to the banks and the outstanding is little more than rupees 900 crore, the petitioner is willing to pay the amount within the period of three months. That could possibly bring all the disputes to an end.</p> <p data-bbox="593 1753 1383 1854">Learned ASG would like to obtain instructions in the said context of facts and figures.</p>

	List on 16.12.2021.
18.01.2022.	In view of the fact that the entire amount in respect of which charge sheet has been filed has been volunteered to be paid by the petitioners, we really see no reason why the money should not be received but then the excuse given today is such that we don't want to say anything more, except that all proceedings must remain in abeyance till we consider the matter.
01.02.2022.	We have put to the learned ASG that if the petitioner is willing to bring in Rs.900 odd crores, he may obtain instructions as to what concessions the State is willing to show in respect of the charge-sheet in question, making it clear that other civil proceedings in any case will be determined on their own merit. List on 08.03.2022. Interim order dated 18.01.2022 to continue.
26.04.2022.	Interim order for all proceedings arising from the predicate offence qua all investigating agencies to remain in abeyance as directed on 18.01.2022. List on 20.05.2022
20.05.2022	On mentioning, it appears that there appears to be some misconstruction on the website of the Supreme

	<p>Court in noticing that the interim order has been kept in abeyance while the order dated 26.04.2022 was for all the proceedings arising from the predicate offence to be kept in abeyance. Ordered accordingly."</p>
13.02.2024.	<p>"We have perused the orders passed in the instant petitions more specifically, the orders dated 07.02.2020, 18.11.2021, 16.12.2021, 18.01.2022, 01.02.2022, 27.04.2022, 05.09.2022 & 09.01.2024.</p> <p>Mr. Hemant Shah, learned counsel for the petitioner(s) appearing in Writ Petition (Crl.) No. 37/2020 and Writ Petition (Crl.) No. 48/2020 under instruction states that the Petitioners undertake to deposit a sum of Rs. 900 Crores in the Registry of this Court within a period of three weeks from today.</p> <p>The statement is accepted and taken on record.</p> <p>Also, in the event of default, all interim orders of protection shall be deemed to have been vacated automatically."</p>
04.03.2024.	<p>Learned Senior Advocate appearing for the applicants/petitioners states, on instructions, that about USD 50 million (Rs. 415 crores, approximately) have been transferred to the Bank</p>

	<p>recovery account. Another amount of USD 50 million (Rs. 415 crores, approximately) will be transferred to the bank recovery account, during the course of the next three days.</p> <p>It is also stated at the Bar on behalf of the applicants/petitioners that another payment of USD 100 million will be made within a period of eight weeks from today.</p> <p>Re-list in the week commencing 06.05.2024.</p>
10.05.2024.	<p>That payment of USD 100 million (Rs.834 crores, approximately) in terms of the second paragraph of the order dated 04.03.2024, which was to be made within eight weeks, has only partly been made. The balance amount in terms of the statement, would be paid within a period of four weeks from today, failing which the present writ petition may be dismissed.</p>
27.10.2024.	<p>Prima facie, we are of the view that this writ petition does not require further orders and directions. However, at the request of the learned counsel for the respective parties, re-list in the week commencing 15.01.2025.</p> <p>IA Nos. 216481/2024 and 216482/2024</p> <p>We are not inclined to entertain the present</p>

	<p>applications for Intervention /impleadment and for directions but only clarify that the applicant, the new management of M/s Sterling Biotech Limited, will be entitled to press its application for discharge before the trial court. Notwithstanding the interim order passed by this Court in this writ petition, it shall be open to the trial court to decide the said application.</p> <p>It will also be open to the applicant, M/s. Sterling Biotech Limited, to press for early hearing of the application.</p> <p>Recording the aforesaid, the present applications are dismissed.</p>
19.11.2025.	<p>12. In view of the foregoing, subject to deposit of Rs.5100 crores as indicated towards full and final settlement with the lender banks and investigating agencies, these petitions deserve to be allowed granting the following reliefs:</p> <p>i. The Writ Petitions filed by the petitioners are allowed directing quashing of the proceedings as indicated in relief clause (i) to (x) quoted herein-above in paragraph 1 of this order. The said quashing would be operative on deposit of Rs.5100 crores as a full and final payment based on</p>

consensus, on or before 17.12.2025.

ii. The said amount be deposited before the registry of this court on or before the dates as specified in clause (i) above, permitting the petitioner to make the deposits in separate tranches and dates. On receiving the amount, it shall be kept in the short time interest bearing fixed deposit account in any of the nationalized bank till its disbursement.

iii. Upon submitting the claims, the deposited amount shall be disbursed to the respective lenders bank on proportionate basis in reference to the amount due towards them. The registrar, (judicial administration), shall verify the details of the amount due, proportionate entitlement and accordingly disburse the amount in the account of the respective bank. The register is at the liberty to take assistance of the account personnels, if needed.

iv. Registrar (Judicial Administration) is further at liberty to the seek clarification, if needed from the Bench, on the issue of the Proportionate disbursement.

v. In consequence of the above, the litigation with respect to the loan amount of the petitioners for which the FIR was registered, and the OTS was sanctioned and approved, shall be put to the end by

	<p>the way of full and final settlement as per consensus, and this litigation shall be put to the quietus.</p> <p>vi. These directions are issued are peculiar facts of this case, therefore, they shall not be treated as Precedent.</p> <p>vii. Accordingly, both the writ petitions are allowed and be treated as disposed-of in above terms. Pending applications, if any, shall stand be treated disposed-of.</p>
17.12.2025.	<p>Upon hearing the counsel, the Hon'ble Supreme Court made the following order:</p> <p>1. In continuation of the order dated 19.11.2025 passed in petition, (Criminal) No. 48 of 2020, and connected petition (Criminal) No. 37 of 2020, the petitioners by filing affidavit dated 10.12.2025 submits that they have deposited the amount as directed and by the abundant caution, with some additional amount for compliance.</p> <p>2. As per office report dated 16.12.2025, the amount deposited comes to Rs.51,11,43,36,390.40/-. As such, the order dated 19.11.2025 of this Court with respect to deposit has been complied with. Learned Additional General has not disputed the said fact</p>

and the report submitted by the office.

3. As such the directions issued in paragraphs 12(i) and 12(ii) of the order dated 19.11.2025, the amount has been deposited well in time. Therefore, the directions in paragraphs 12(iii) and 12(iv) to disburse the deposited amount of Rs. 5100 crores to the respective lender Banks on proportionate basis, shall be immediately complied with by the Registrar (Judicial Administration) after verification and the amount be transmitted into the accounts of respective Banks. In consequence on the consent of the parties, as per the direction in paragraph 12(v). we make in clear that the FIR registered and investigation, if any, done by CBI, ED, attachments under PMLA, Fugitive Act, SFIO, pertaining to black money and income tax, be quashed. Since the quietus has been put to all investigations and litigation as per the directions, however, the investigating agencies shall communicate the decision regarding closure of all the proceedings at all levels including at airports Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

4. Mr. Mukul Rohatgi, learned senior counsel and the learned Additional Solicitor General has fairly agreed that the amount in addition to Rs. 5100

	<p>crores deposited by the petitioners and lying with Bank of Maharashtra, Supreme Court Branch, may be immediately transferred and transmitted to the account of Supreme Court Legal Services Committee along with interest for its utilization on discretion of the Committee for benevolent causes.</p> <p>5. In view of the office report and the affidavit filed by the petitioners, we close these proceedings in full compliance disposing of this miscellaneous application.</p>
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11. It is contended from the above, that the Hon'ble Supreme Court on 18.01.2022 found substance in the grounds urged by the Promoters and was pleased to put in abeyance all the matters with respect to all investigating agencies. The said order was publicly available and was accessible by way of media reports to all concerned. Despite of the said order passed by the Hon'ble Supreme Court various media reports kept on reporting baseless facts and sensationalized the entire case without being apprised of the true and correct facts. It is further contended, that when the Apex Court of the country had stayed all the proceedings, the media houses should have refrained themselves from reporting anything but judicial proceedings, however the same was not adhered to. The media houses exploited and used the platforms of Defendants No. 1 and 2, to spread the said news without any restraint. The contents of the said videos/ reports are libelous in nature and the

media houses with aide of Defendants No. 1 and 2 have stated all misleading, false and fabricated averments in the said video/ reports. The media houses and defendants are responsible in airing/ circulating the defamatory statements being clothed with the illusion of publishing veracity. There has been no attempt to report an unbiased or fair version of the facts. The unambiguous conclusion that any person could arrive at after viewing the said video/ reports is that the family of the plaintiff have siphoned huge public money and have fled from the clutches of law. It is submitted, that there is nothing to indicate a mistake or a bonafide error. The entire contents of the said video/ media reports are defamatory inasmuch as they are based on false and fabricated allegations with the sole intention to defame the plaintiff and his family.

12. It is stated, that the relevant contents from the video/ reports which reflects the defamatory content uploaded/aired by the Defendants are enumerated as under:

- i). "Fugitives"
- ii). "bank fraud"
- iii). "siphoning public money"
- iv). "defrauded banks"
- v). Money laundering
- vi). PMLA: A list of all URLs as appearing on the search engine/portal of Defendant No. 1 and 2 with such defamatory content.

13. It is insisted, that the reputation of the plaintiff and his family name has been tarnished by the media houses with the aid of Defendants 1-2 and by such acts of defamation slander and libel, which by way of the aforementioned videos/reports have been uploaded on the "YouTube' website, also on their channel aimed to cater the public at large, which refer to the plaintiff and his family members by name with the malicious intent of causing harm to them, which have no basis or foundation in truth or reality, and are really unsubstantiated allegations under the garb of illusion of veracity by media houses. The said videos/reports have been uploaded with malafide intention on the part of the Media houses with Defendants 1 and 2.

14. The entire contents in the said videos/reports/links are defamatory statements amounting to libel and slander that have emanated from various media houses which implies loss to the general public and government organizations. It is stated, that the said contents are without any basis, are false and unfounded and besides being per se defamatory, have resulted in the lowering of and damage to, the reputation, image and goodwill of the plaintiff and his family. Thus by known and unknown persons with vested interest, the said video/ reports have been uploaded not only to defame the plaintiff, his family and business house in public at large but to prejudice the business and legal interests of the plaintiff. The said publication/videos and articles have lowered down the dignity and respect among the public at large. The availability and accessibility of the said articles despite the exoneration of all the individuals and entities is causing loss to the plaintiff in terms of financial and business

opportunities.

15. It is averred, that the trail of stories and articles continue to remain available against the plaintiff without being de-indexed, de-referenced or deleted. The take down of said defamatory articles (as detailed in the plaint) as well as de-listing, de-indexing and de-referencing of the said URL Links is necessitated as plaintiff has the right to forgotten as the same has been recognized by Delhi High Court in the case *Rakesh Jagdish Kalra vs. India Today Group & Others, 2024 SCC OnLine Del 5113*; wherein reliance has been placed on *K. S. Puttaswamy (Retd) vs. Union of India (2017) 10 SCC1* and *XXXX vs. Registrar General*, High Court of Karnataka, 2024 SCC Online Kar 18.

16. In the last leg of argument, it is submitted that since no criminal case is pending against the plaintiff, his family and business and they stand exonerated from the case, they are entitled to the reliefs claimed for. The Plaintiff has a right to live with dignity and the articles published with the name of the plaintiff or his family cannot be allowed to perpetually remain on the online portals/ platforms. The permanence of digital information and easily accessible online records are causing potential harm to the plaintiff despite his exoneration from the case. With these submissions, prayer is made for ex-parte ad-interim injunction against the defendants.

17. In support of its contention, plaintiff has further placed reliance on the following judgments in addition to the judgments and extracts enumerated in the plaint.

- i) Naresh Kumar Vs Wire & Ors (2023, SCC, Online, DEL 7314)
- ii) Rajat Sharma Vs X CORP. (formally twitter) & Ors. (2024, 5 HC Cases, DEL 157)
- iii) Shama Mohamed Vs Sanju Verma & Ors (2024, SCC, Online DEL 7549)
- iv) M.P. Lohia Vs State of West Bengal & Anrs. (2005, SCC, Online SC 231)
- v) Shyam Jaju & Anrs. VS Saurabh Bhardwaj and Ors. (order dated 24.02.2023)
- vi) Shravan Gupta Vs Directorate of Enforcement through its Director (2025 SCC Online DEL 8221)

18. This Court has heard the learned counsel appearing on behalf of the plaintiff and perused the record meticulously.

19. Before embarking upon the facts of the instant suit, it is apropos to understand the parameters whereby an exparte injunction can be granted. The Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in the judgment of *Morgan Stanley Mutual Funds Vs Kartik Das*, had elucidated certain parameters that are required to be considered while passing an order in

favour of the plaintiff.

“36. As a principle, ex parte injunction could be granted only under exceptional circumstances. The factors which should weigh with the Court in the grant of ex-parte injunction are:

(a) whether irreparable or serious mischief will ensue to the plaintiff;

(b) Whether the refusal of ex parte injunction would involve greater injustice than the grant of it would involve;

(c) The Court will also consider the time at which the plaintiff had first noticed the act complained so that making of improper order against the party in his absence is prevented;

(d) The Court will consider whether the plaintiff had acquiesced for some time and in such circumstances it will not grant ex parte injunction;

(e) The Court would expect a party applying for ex-parte injunction to show utmost faith in making the application;

(f) even if granted, the ex-parte injunction would be for a limited period of time;

(g) general principles like prima facie case, balance of convenience and irreparable loss would also be considered by the Court.”

20. At the very offset, it is imperative to note that the genesis of the plaintiff's averment primarily emanates from order dated 19.11.2025 passed by Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in ***Writ Petition (Criminal) No.37 of 2020 and Writ Petition (Criminal) No.48 of 2020***. The relevant portion of the said order, is reproduced as follows, for ready reference:

“1. The present writ petitions have been filed inter-alia with the amended prayers as sought through IA No. 148951/2021 filed in Writ Petition (Criminal) No. 48 of 2020, essentially, seeking the following reliefs:

1. To set-aside/quash the FIRs and further criminal proceedings arising therefrom, and to quash consequential proceedings in its entirety arising from the following:

i) FIR RC 8(A)/AC-III/2017 dated 30.08.2017 registered by CBI, AC-III, New Delhi under Sections 13(2) read with Section 13(1)(d) of the Prevention of Corruption Act;

ii) FIR RC/BD1/2017/E/0007 dated 25.10.2017 registered by CBI BS & FC, New Delhi under Section 13(2) read with Section 13(1)(d) of the

Prevention of Corruption Act; Section 120-B read with Sections 420/467/468/471 of the Indian Penal Code, 1860;

iii) Charge sheets filed by CBI in aforementioned cases, i.e., FIR RC 8(A)/ACIII/2017 dated 30.8.2017 registered by CBI BS & FC;

iv) ECIR/HQRS/15/2017 dated 30.08.2017 registered for offences under Section 3 of Prevention of Money Laundering Act by HIU Zone;

v.) ECIR/HIU/ 17/ 2017 dated 27.10.2017;

vi) Prosecution complaints arising from ECIR/HIU/17/2017 namely Prosecution Complaint dated 22.12.2017 and all supplementary prosecution complaints therefrom;

vii) Proceedings related to all attachments, seizures and freezing from ECIR/HIU/17/2017;

viii) Fugitive proceedings under Fugitive Economic Offenders Act, 2018, culminating into order dated 28.09.2020 passed by the Special Judge PMLA, Patiala House Courts (Additional Sessions Judge-02, New Delhi

District, Patiala House Courts, New Delhi);

ix) Proceedings under the Companies Act, 2013, for an offence under Section 447 of the Companies Act, 2013 by the Serious Fraud Investigation Office (SFIO) including the Prosecution Complaint, Special Case No. 517/2022 in File No. SFIO/INV/UNIT-II/812/SBL/2018 filed by Serious Fraud Investigation Officer, before the concerned Court of Sessions (Special Company Cases) at Mumbai;

x) Proceedings arising from Prosecution Complaints bearing number SW/3800070/2021, SW/3800071, SW/3800072/2021 and SW/3800073/2021 under Black Money (Undisclosed Foreign Income and Assets) and Imposition of Tax Act, 2015 filed against the Petitioners by the Income Tax Department pending before the Court of Additional Metropolitan Magistrate, 38th Court at Ballard Pier, Mumbai.

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12. In view of the foregoing, subject to deposit of Rs. 5100 crores as

indicated towards full and final settlement with the lender banks and investigating agencies, these petitions deserve to be allowed granting the following reliefs –

(i) The writ petitions filed by the petitioners are allowed directing quashing of the proceedings as indicated in relief clause (i) to (x) quoted hereinabove in paragraph 1 of this order. The said quashing would be operative on deposit of Rs. 5100 crores as a full and final payment based on consensus, on or before 17.12.2025.

(ii) The said amount be deposited before the Registry of this Court on or before the date as specified in clause (i) above, permitting the petitioners to make the deposits in separate tranches and dates. On receiving the amount, it shall be kept in a short time interest bearing fixed deposit account in any nationalized bank till its disbursement.

(iii) Upon submitting the claims, the deposited amount shall be disbursed to the respective lender Banks on proportionate basis in reference to the amount due towards them. The Registrar (Judicial-Administration) shall verify the details of the amount due, proportionate entitlement

and accordingly disburse the amount in the account of the respective banks. The Registrar is at liberty to take assistance of Account personnels, if needed.

(iv) Registrar (Judicial-Administration) is further at liberty to the seek clarification, if needed from the Bench, on the issue of the proportionate disbursement.

(v) In consequence of the above, the litigation with respect to the loan amount of the petitioners for which the FIR was registered and the OTS was sanctioned and approved, shall be put to an end by way of full and final settlement as per consensus and this litigation shall be put to quietus.

(vi) These directions as issued are in peculiar facts of this case, therefore, they shall not be treated as precedent.

(vii) Accordingly, both the writ petitions are allowed and be treated as disposed-of in above terms. Pending applications, if any, shall stand be treated disposed-of.”

21. Before delving into the intricacies involved in the instant

case, it is noteworthy to discuss law established by judicial pronouncements on the subject of publication/dissemination of defamatory material, having potential to malign or lower the image of any person/company in the eyes of public at large. To lend credence, reliance is placed upon the decision of the Hon'ble High Court of Delhi in *Swatanter Kumar Vs. Indian Express Ltd., (2013) 207 DLT 221*, where it was observed as follows:

“61. In view of the observations of the Supreme Court, it is clear that the order in the cases preventing the publication may include directions not to disclose the identity of the person or postpone the publication among st other directions. In the instant case, the identity of the plaintiff is already disclosed prior to approaching this Court, however, the plaintiff states that the photograph of the plaintiff is repeated shown in the national dailies and televised news on day to day basis with an attempt to create an adverse public image. Prima facie I find that besides postponing the publications, the order or directions restraining the defendant not to publish the photograph of the plaintiff time and again till the time any fact finding is made by the relevant authorities is also necessary so that the adverse publicity against him can be avoided.

62. *I have already examined in the preceding paragraph of this order the argument that even if some amount of fairness is attached to the publication, still the Court can proceed to prevent the same on the basis of the excessive prejudice. Suffice it to say, no conclusive finding as to fairness or unfairness can be arrived at this juncture. Upon the fair reading of material available on record, it prima facie appears that the same can prejudicially affect the public mind and there is real and tangible risk of the plaintiff in not getting fair trial or open justice as contemplated by the common law as per the dictum laid down by the Supreme Court of India in Sahara India (supra).”*

The Hon’ble High Court of Delhi in *Naveen Jindal Vs. M/s Zee Media Corporation Ltd. & Anr, (2015) 29 DLT 605*, observed as follows:

“27. Reference may next be had to the judgment of this Court in the case of Kartongen Kemi Och Forvaltning AB & Ors. vs. State through CBI, 2004 (72) DRJ 693. The Court while observing the result of trial by media held as follows:

7. *This case is a nefarious example which manifestly demonstrates how the trial and justice by media can cause ir-reparable, irreversible and incalculable harm to the reputation of a person and shunning of his family, relatives and friends by the society. He is ostracised, humiliated and convicted without trial. All this puts at grave risk due administration of justice.*

8. *It is common knowledge that such trials and investigative journalism and publicity of premature, half baked or even presumptive facets of investigation either by CS DJ 4081/2024 6/18 the media itself or at the instance of Investigating Agency has almost become a daily occurrence whether by electronic media, radio or press. They chase some wrong doer, publish material about him little realizing the peril it may cause as it involves substantial risk to the fairness of the trial. Unfortunately we are getting used to it.*

13. *This is one of such cases where public servants who are no more have met somewhat similar fate being victim of trial by media. They have already been condemned and convicted in the eyes of public. Recent instance*

of such a trial is of Daler Mehandi whose discharge is being sought few days after his humiliation and pseudo trial through media as they have not been able to find the evidence sufficient even for filing the charge sheet. Does such trials amount to public service is a question to be introspected by the media itself.

49. In these facts would the plaintiff be entitled to an in- junction to restrain the defendants from publishing reports or air- ing reports pertaining to the allegations which are pending before the police by Mrs. ABC. Legal position as explained above is quite clear. Any publication which gives excessive adverse publicity to an accused or which is likely to hamper fair trial and constitutes an interference with the course of justice could be a ground for grant of injunction. The court has ample inherent power to restrain publication in media in the event it arrives at a finding that the said publication may result in interference with the administration of justice or would be against the principle of fair trial or open justice.”

The Hon’ble High Court of Delhi in *Shashi Tharoor Vs. Arnab Goswami and Ors, (2018) 246 DLT 279*, observed as follows:

“97. This Court is of the view that it is important that when criminal investigation has commenced, media reporting should be sensitive to the indeterminacy of the questions raised in the proceedings. Press cannot ‘convict anyone’ or insinuate that he/she is guilty or make any other unsubstantiated claims. Press has to exercise care and caution while reporting about matters under investigation or pending trial.”

The Hon’ble Supreme Court of India in *Sidhartha Vashisht Vs. State (NCT of Delhi)*, *(2010) 6 SCC 1*, observed as follows:

“146) Cardozo, one of the great Judges of American Supreme Court in his "Nature of the Judicial Process" observed that the judges are subconsciously influenced by several forces. This Court has expressed a similar view in P.C. Sen In Re: AIR 1970 SC 1821 and Reliance Petrochemicals Ltd. v. Proprietors of Indian Express 1988 (4) SCC 592.

147) There is danger, of serious risk of prejudice if the media exercises an unrestricted and unregulated freedom such that it publishes photographs of the suspects or the

accused before the identification parades are constituted or if the media publishes statements which outrightly hold the suspect or the accused guilty even before such an order has been passed by the Court.

148) Despite the significance of the print and electronic media in the present day, it is not only desirable but least that is expected of the persons at the helm of affairs in the field, to ensure that trial by media does not hamper fair investigation by the investigating agency and more importantly does not prejudice the right of defence of the accused in any manner whatsoever. It will amount to travesty of justice if either of this causes impediments in the accepted judicious and fair investigation and trial.”

The Hon’ble High Court of Kerala in *Priya Varghese Vs. Dr. Joseph Skariah, 2023 SCC OnLine Ker 4390*, observed as follows:

“That said, frighteningly frequent are those occasions when the impugned decision in academic matters attracts media attention for some reason or the other, and the court has then to deal with the added distraction brought about

through incessant newspaper/channel discussions and overwhelming social media posts. It is for this reason that courts have time and again exhorted the print and electronic media to exercise restraint by deferring discussions on matters pending before the court so that the rule of law can be better served by avoiding an obstruction of the course of justice.

36. On its part, the media cannot be unmindful of the harm that is caused to a litigant's dignity and reputation through unjustified comments and remarks, often based on the oral remarks made by a judge during the adjudication proceedings, notwithstanding that the litigant ultimately succeeds in those proceedings. They must note that no less a constitutional functionary than the Chief Justice of India, had recently observed that not everything that is said by a judge during the course of interaction with counsel in court can be taken as revealing the judge's views on the merits of the cause that is being adjudicated. While the right to a fair trial has long been recognized as forming part of the fundamental right of a citizen under Article 21 of the Constitution, in recent times, the right to privacy has also been

recognized as forming part of the said right through the judgment of the Supreme Court in K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India, [(2017) 10 SCC 1]. Even prior to the said judgment, the right to protect one's reputation was recognized as forming part of the fundamental right under Article 21 of the Constitution in Board of Trustees of the Port of Bombay v. Dilipkumar Raghavendranath Nadkarni, [(1983) 1 SCC 124]. The International Convention on Civil and Political Rights, 1965 also recognizes the right to have opinions and the right of freedom of expression subject to the right of reputation of others. The right has also been recognized in State of Bihar v. Lal Krishna Advani, [(2003) 8 SCC 361].

37. On account of its nature as a right that is personal to an individual, we are of the view that the newly recognized fundamental right to privacy, which takes within its fold the right to protection of one's reputation as well, would merit classification as a fundamental right that protects an individual, not only against arbitrary State action, but also against the actions of other private citizens, such as the press or media. We trust, therefore, that the

media will take note of these observations and adopt a code of responsible journalistic conduct that will inform news reporting in the days to come.”

The Hon'ble High Court of Delhi in *Anjali Birla Vs. X Corp. & Ors, CS (OS) 573/2024, decided on 23.07.2024*, observed as follows:

*“16. The learned senior counsel for the plaintiff, placing reliance on the judgment of this Court in *Vinai Kumar Saxena v. AAM Aadmi Party and Ors., (2022) SCC OnLine Del 3093*, submits that where the social media posts, tweets, etc., are per se defamatory and incorrect, and have been made without factual verification only in order to tarnish the reputation of the Plaintiff, they cannot be allowed to be in circulation.*

17. Having considered the contents of the plaint and having heard the learned senior counsel for the plaintiff, I am of the opinion that the Plaintiff has been able to make out a good prima facie case in her favour. The balance of convenience is also in favour of the Plaintiff and against the Defendants.

18. The impugned social media posts do not

appear to be made after due verification. In any case, as noted herein-above, the Plaintiff was appointed to IRPS in the year 2021. The purpose of posting the impugned social media posts in the year 2024 and in the language that is reflected therein, does not appear to be bona fide This is a digitally signed order. The authenticity of the order can be re-verified from Delhi High Court Order Portal by scanning the QR code shown above. The Order is downloaded from the DHC Server on 25/07/2024 at 02:03:14 and is prima facie defamatory and scandalous.

19. In view of the above, till further orders, the Defendants are restrained from, in any manner, directly or indirectly, publishing, posting, communicating, circulating, tweeting/re-tweeting the contents which are in the nature of one complained of in the present suit.

20. The Defendant no.1 and 2 are also directed to remove/block the social media contents, details whereof are given in Document 1 in the present Suit, within 24 hours and till further orders.

21. It is clarified that, in case the Plaintiff

comes to know of any other similar social media posts, it shall be open to the Plaintiff to communicate the same to the Defendant nos.1 and 2 and thereafter, the Defendant nos.1 and 2 shall, till further orders of this Court, remove the same as well.”

The Hon'ble High Court of Delhi in *Kairaviview (Opc) Pvt. Ltd. & Ors vs Hindustan Times/ Mint & Ors, CS (OS) 403/2022*, decided on 27.07.2022, observed as follows:

32. I have heard the counsels for the parties. I have seen the videos posted by the plaintiffs, the links of which are given in article dated 8th May, 2022 written by the defendant no.2 and which formed the basis of the said article. Piercing the ears of a girl child cannot be termed as child abuse. Allegations of child abuse are serious allegations and cannot be made without due care and verification. It cannot be based on the opinions of the author. Undoubtedly, a person has a right to criticize the views expressed by an individual and such criticism would be covered under right to free speech. However, vicious attacks cannot be made on the character of a person under the

guise of journalistic freedom and free speech. In my prima facie view, there is nothing in the aforesaid videos to substantiate allegations of child abuse.

33. Similarly, the defendant no.3 may or may not agree with the beliefs of the plaintiff no. 2 as put forth in the tweet dated 1st May, 2022, but the use of terms such as 'dodo', 'bewakoof' and 'idiocy', which are clearly defamatory in nature, on a public platform, cannot be permitted.”

36. The Hon’ble Supreme Court of India in *M. P. Lohia vs. State Of West Bengal, (2005) 2SCC 686* has observed as follows:

“..... we find one disturbing factor which we feel is necessary to comment upon in the interest of justice. The death of Chandni took place on 28th February, 2002 and the complaint in this regard was registered and the investigation was in progress. The application for grant of anticipatory bail was disposed of by the High Court of Calcutta on 13.2.2004 and special leave petition was pending before this Court. Even then an article has appeared in a magazine called 'Saga' titled "Doomed by Dowry" written by one Kakoli Poddar based on

her interview of the family of the deceased. Giving version of the tragedy and extensively quoting the father of the deceased as to his version of the case. The facts narrated therein are all materials that may be used in the forthcoming trial in this case and we have no hesitation that this type of articles appearing in the media would certainly interfere with the administration of justice. We deprecate this practice and caution the publisher, editor and the journalist who was responsible for the said article against indulging in such trial by media when the issue is sub-judiced. However, to prevent any further issue being raised in this regard, we treat this matter as closed and hope that the other concerned in journalism would take note of this displeasure expressed by us for interfering with the administration of justice.

The right to live with dignity and to have peace of mind are integral to the right to life and liberty under the constitution. The right to be forgotten has been recognized by Delhi High Court in the case **Rakesh Jagdish Kalra vs India Today Group & Others, 2024 SCC OnLine Del 5113** wherein reliance has been placed on **K. S. Puttaswamy (Retd) vs. Union of India (2017)**

10 SCC 1 and XXXX vs. Registrar General, High Court of Karnataka, 2024 SCC Online Kar 18, held as follows:-

“34. Thus, Courts will have to balance the competing rights in the facts and circumstances of each case. This Court is prima facie of the view right to freedom of expression of the press in the present case must give way to the right to privacy of the plaintiff especially when he has been exonerated of all the allegations leading to his honourable acquittal. Apart from the existence of old news articles / posts on the internet, the plaintiff’s reputation has been injured on account of updation of such posts which has again brought plaintiff’s accusation under public glare. Further, the posts made by unknown persons on the defendant no.5’s / ‘X’ platform have also equally injured the reputation of the plaintiff. Therefore, it appears to be a fit case to invoke the right to be forgotten in favour of the plaintiff. The balance of convenience also lies in favour of the plaintiff. I am also satisfied that grave and irreparable damages will be caused to the plaintiff, if ad interim injunctive orders are not passed in his favour. Accordingly, it would be

appropriate to grant ad-interim injunction in favour of the plaintiff and against the defendant nos. 1 to 4 as well as unknown persons (John Doe) who have made per se defamatory statements against the plaintiff on 'X'."

Further, in judicial pronouncement namely *Jorawer Singh Mundy @ Jorawar Singh Mundy vs Union of India, W. P. (C) 3918/2021 dated 12.04.2021* Delhi High Court held as follows:-

"9. The Right to Privacy is well recognized by the Supreme Court in the Constitution Bench judgment in K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India (2017) 10 SCC 1. In Zulfiqar Ahman Khan v. Quintillion Businessman Media Pvt. Ltd & Ors. this Court had examined this issue and while granting an interim order, this court had held as under:

8. In fact, it is the submission of Ld. counsel for the Plaintiff that the Plaintiff's personal and professional life has been hampered irreparably and further damage is likely to be caused if appropriate relief is not granted against the republication of these two articles. The original publisher having already agreed to pull down

the same, this Court having directed that the same ought not to be republished, the Plaintiff, thus, has a right to ensure that the articles are not published on multiple electronic/digital platforms as that would create a permanent atmosphere of suspicion and animosity towards the Plaintiff and also severely prejudice his personal and professional life. The printouts of the articles from www.newsdogapp.com, which have been shown to the Court, leave no doubt in the mind of the Court that these are identical to the articles published on www.thequint.com, which have already been pulled down.

9. Accordingly, recognising the Plaintiff's Right to privacy, of which the 'Right to be forgotten' and the 'Right to be left alone' are inherent aspects, it is directed that any republication of the content of the originally impugned articles dated 12th October 2018 and 31st October 2018, or any extracts/ or excerpts thereof, as also modified versions thereof, on any print or digital/electronic platform shall stand restrained during the pendency of the present suit. 10. The Plaintiff is permitted to communicate this order to any print or electronic platform including various search engines in order to ensure that

the articles or any excerpts/search results thereof are not republished in any manner whatsoever. The Plaintiff is permitted to approach the grievance officers of the electronic platforms and portals to ensure immediate compliance of this order.”

10. Recently, the Orissa High Court in Subhranshu Rout v. State of Odisha [BLAPL No.4592/2020, decided on 23rd November, 2020], has also examined the aspect and applicability of the “Right to be forgotten” qua Right to Privacy, in a detailed manner including the international law on the subject.

11. It is the admitted position that the Petitioner was ultimately acquitted of the said charges in the case levelled against him. Owing to the irreparable prejudice which may be caused to the Petitioner, his social life and his career prospects, inspite of the Petitioner having ultimately been acquitted in the said case via the said judgment, prima facie this Court is of the opinion that the Petitioner is entitled to some interim protection, while the legal issues are pending adjudication by this Court.

12. Accordingly, Respondent Nos. 2 and 3 are

directed to remove the said judgment dated 29th January 2013 in CrI.A.No. 14/2013 titled Custom v. Jorawar Singh Mundy from their search results. Respondent No.4 Indian Kanoon is directed to block the said judgement from being accessed by using search engines such as Google/Yahoo etc., till the next date of hearing. Respondent No.1 to ensure compliance of this order.”

Last but not the least, Hon’ble Delhi High Court in *IE ONLINE MEDIA SERVICES PRIVATE LIMITED Vs. NITIN BHATNAGAR & ORS. FAO 346/2025* *Decided on 18.12.2025* has held as follows:

“13. As far as the second issue is concerned, the decision of a Larger Bench of the High Court of Kerala in Dejo Kappan (supra) (of which Bench I was also a member) has squarely addressed the conflict between the freedom of press and right to dignity. It has been held in unequivocal terms that while the media enjoys freedom of speech and expression under Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution, such right is not absolute and stands correspondingly delimited by the right of an individual to dignity and reputation traceable to Article 21 of

the Constitution. It has been observed that in appropriate cases, particularly where continued dissemination of content results in disproportionate harm to an individual, the right under Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution must yield to the right under Article 21 of the Constitution.

14. Applying the aforesaid principles to the present case, this Court finds that the trial court has not imposed any blanket or pre-emptive restraint on journalistic activity. The impugned order is narrowly tailored and confined to the continued availability and circulation of specific articles relating to the plaintiff, after the criminal proceedings against him have culminated in exoneration. While reporting of arrests and investigations may serve public interest at the relevant time, the perpetual digital availability of such materials, even after the factual foundation has ceased to exist, raises serious concerns of enduring reputational harm and stigma.”

22. In the backdrop of the law reproduced above and juxtaposing the same to the facts of the present case, this court finds

substance in the plea advanced by the plaintiff, that any publication, re-publication or circulation of any content in relation to the Plaintiff and his family name-concerning the case of Sterling Biotech Limited and bank fraud would amount to reputational harm and stigma, more particularly in existence of order dated 19.11.2025 and 17.12.2025 passed by Hon'ble Apex Court, whereby all the proceedings have been quashed. It is noteworthy to mention, that many of articles/material published dates pursuant to the passing of the order by the Hon'ble Apex Court with respect to all proceedings in context to the plaintiff be kept in abeyance, until further considerations. In this light as well, the said publications are not in spirit of the right to freedom of press/media as the same is not an absolute right and is to be exercised within permissible limits. The article/material published has prima facie labeled the plaintiffs as fugitives, launderers of funds, defrauders etc. without any concrete finding being arrived at in this regard, at the time of such publications. The language used in the headings of the articles as reproduced on record are mainly imposing criminality to the plaintiff. The presence of the articles on the social media platform being accessible to one and all even pursuant to the quashing of all proceedings against the plaintiff, definitely has the magnitude to damage the reputation of plaintiff and his family of which compensation in money, may not be adequate.

Thus, as a sequel to the above discussion this Court is of the considered opinion that the three principal ingredients i.e., prima facie case, balance of convenience and irreparable loss exists in favour of the plaintiff. On the other hand, no prejudice would be caused to the

defendants, in case the plaintiff is granted reliefs prayed for.

23. In a democracy, the media's (Social/written/print/online sharing platforms) responsibility is multifaceted, encompassing informing the public, providing diverse perspectives, acting as a watch dog, and facilitating public debate. Its crucial for the media to accurately report on events, hold power accountable, and ensure citizens have access to wide range of view points but at the same time heavy responsibility rests on it as it is one of the forth pillar of democracy and therefore, it is expected that the media should strive for accuracy and objectivity in its reporting thereby avoiding sensationalism. It is the foremost responsibility of media to strive to present all sides of a story fairly and balance competing view points. It should be extremely vigilant in combating misinformation and ensuring the accuracy of information it disseminates. This Court very much understands and recognizes that there is freedom of speech and expression under Articles 19(1)(a) of the Constitution of India, however, these are not absolute rights but have limitations contained within itself under Article 19(2) of the Constitution of India.

24. In the teeth of the above analysis, in the considered opinion of the court, the plaintiff has become entitled to the ad- interim exparte relief to the effect, that the Defendants No. 1 to 3, their agents, employees, or any person acting on their behalf are restrained from publishing, re-publishing or circulating any further content in relation to

the Plaintiff and his family name concerning the case of Sterling Biotech Limited and bank fraud and to de-index, de-list, and de-reference the URLs and content of the said articles as detailed in the plaint and such other links not known to the Plaintiff relating the subject matter in issue from their respective website. Further, the defendants no.1 and 2 are directed to de-index, de-list, and de-reference the URLs and content of the said articles of the media houses as detailed in the plaint and such other links not known to the Plaintiff relating the subject matter in issue from its search engine results. The defendants are directed to comply with the said directions forthwith, not exceeding 36 hours.

25. Plaintiff are directed to comply with order XXXIX Rule 3 proviso (b) CPC, 1908.

26. Nothing aforesaid shall be construed to be an expression of opinion on the merits of the case.

Announced in the open Court
on 04.04.2026.

(Richa Sharma)
Sr. Civil Judge – Cum - RC
THC / Delhi / 04.04.2026