

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT BOMBAY**ORDINARY ORIGINAL CIVIL JURISDICTION****INTERIM APPLICATION (L) NO.19136 OF 2026****IN****SUIT (L) NO.18587 OF 2026**

Shashi Kiran Shetty

through its Authorised Representative

Mr. Subhash Gole

...Applicant

In the matter between:

Shashi Kiran Shetty

through

its Authorised Representative

Mr. Subhash Gole

...Plaintiff

Versus

Scoopwhoop Media Pvt. Ltd. & Ors.

...Defendants

Dr. Birendra Saraf, Senior Advocate with Mr. Vaibhav Charalwal, Ms. Athira T. S., Mr. Sukrit Kapoor, Mr. Vipul Makwana and Mr. Aman Singhani i/b. King Stubb and Kasiva for the Plaintiff.

Mr. Arif Sayed i/b. Mr. Karthik Raja Bekhar for Defendant Nos. 2 and 6.

Mr. Manek Kalyaniwalla i/b. Harshal Damania for Defendant No.4.

CORAM : ARIF S DOCTOR, J.

DATE : 24th JULY, 2026**P.C.**

1. The Applicant, who is the Plaintiff in the captioned Suit, has filed the present Interim Application seeking to restrain the Defendants from publishing and/or failing to take down material which is not only per se defamatory but also impinges on the Plaintiff's right to live with dignity.
2. Dr. Saraf, Learned Senior Counsel appearing on behalf of the Applicant, at the outset submitted that Applicant has received a letter dated 2nd July 2026 from Defendant No. 4 informing the Applicant that Defendant No. 4 has removed from its YouTube Channel the offending post. Dr. Saraf, however, submitted that the said post was still available online. Mr. Kalyaniwala then assured the Court that the same would be removed, if not removed within a week from today, at the very latest. His statement is accepted. Given this, Dr. Saraf submitted that he has instructions not to press the Suit against Defendant No. 4 and seeks to modify prayers (a) and (c) of the Interim Application as follows, viz.

‘a. Pending the hearing and final disposal of the suit, pass an order of temporary injunction restraining the defendants, numbers 1 to 3, 5 to 7 and 10 to 13, their affiliates, representatives, media partners, and persons acting under their instructions or on their behalf from publishing, printing, disseminating in any format or medium whatsoever

any material akin to the impugned articles and videos, including references such as "cursed", "haunted", "unlucky", and similar terms.

‘c. Pending the hearing and final disposal of the suit, pass an order of mandatory injunction directing the defendant Nos. 1 to 7 and 10 to 12, their affiliates, employees, agents, representatives, and all partners acting under their instructions or on their behalf to forthwith take down and remove all publications and contents hosted at the URLs set out in Schedule A of the Interim Application, which contains references to the impugned article/material.’

3. Dr. Saraf then submitted that the Plaintiff is an eminent businessman who had purchased a bungalow, known as Ashirwad, which originally belonged to Rajesh Khanna, the renowned Bollywood actor. He submitted that the Plaintiff had thereafter demolished the bungalow and constructed a house for the exclusive use and occupation of the Plaintiff and his family members. He, however, submitted that the Plaintiff did not change the name, and therefore the house built by the Plaintiff is also called ‘Ashirwad’.
4. Dr. Saraf then submitted that after purchasing the bungalow, the Plaintiff came across certain articles/posts/videos on the internet coining the bungalow as ‘haunted’, ‘cursed’, ‘ill-omened’, etc. He submitted that such posts continue to be posted and reposted on social media.

5. He then pointed out that the website Indiadotcom had recently published an article titled ‘19 Real Haunted Houses in India That Will Give You A Cold Sweat’, in which Ashirwaad Bungalow was listed at serial number 7. He pointed out that several similar such articles/videos/posts have been published from time to time. He then pointed out that one such article had stated that despite the change in ownership, the bungalow will always be known as Rajesh Khanna’s Ashirwad. He submitted that videos had also been published/circulated on 4th June 2025, 20th June 2025, 29th December 2025, and 26th April 2026. He submitted that an article as recent as 22nd June 2026 has also been circulated on the internet, which is included in a compilation submitted by the Plaintiff.
6. Dr. Saraf submitted that the content of and the statements made in the said publications, both online and in print, to the effect that Ashirwad is “cursed”, “haunted” or “unlucky” are defamatory and also tantamount to malicious falsehood. He submitted that the damage and harm which was being caused to the Plaintiff and the family members of the Plaintiff by the impugned publications also affect and impinge upon the Plaintiff’s fundamental right

to live with dignity and privacy, a right that is constitutionally guaranteed to every citizen of our Country under Article 21 of the Constitution of India.

He submitted that this right has been consistently recognized by the Courts to encompass within its ambit the right to reputation, the right to privacy, and the right to be free from the indignity of false portrayals in the public domain. He also submitted that the Plaintiff's right to privacy was being violated by Defendant No. 13, who was engaging in unauthorised photography and videography of the Plaintiff's bungalow using zoom lenses and recording devices.

7. Dr. Saraf then, for convenience, tendered a Tabular Chart of all the offending articles/videos, from which he highlighted the *per se* defamatory and offending material by which the Plaintiff was aggrieved and highlighted the following viz.:

Sr. No.	Defendant/ Publisher	Article Title	Date	Reference
1.	Defendant No. 1 Scoopwhoop Media Private Limited	Article titled: “Aashirwad Bungalow: The Story of the Cursed Bungalow that Ruined the Careers of 3 Bollywood Superstars”	5.8.2023	Exhibit - F (Page Nos. 173-186)

2.	Defendant No. 2 Diligent Media Corporation Limited	Article titled: “This 'haunted, cursed' bungalow 'ruined' three Bollywood superstars, all went bankrupt, lost stardom after living there”	21.2.2024	Exhibit - I (Page Nos. 199-203)
3.	Defendant No. 3 Buzzzooka Prime	Instagram post quoting: “Ashirwad Bollywood’s most haunted bungalow” “Rajesh Khanna’s 225 crore worth cursed ‘Ashirwad’ Bungalow”	29.4.2025	Exhibit - L (Page No. 224)
4.	Defendant No. 4 Rajshri Entertainment Private Limited	YouTube video titled: “The Untold Tuesdays: Mystery of Rajesh Khanna's 'Cursed' Bungalow”	10.5.2025	Exhibit - O (Page No. 237)
5.	Defendant No. 5 NDTV Convergence Limited	Article titled: Rajesh Khanna Bungalow: 1Bungalow, 3 Superstars, Ruined All Three: Know the Story of the Cursed Bungalow	22.4.2026	Exhibit - R (Page Nos. 250-254)
6.	Defendant No. 6 Indiadotcom Digital Private Limited.	Article titled: “This ‘haunted, cursed’ bungalow destroyed career of three Bollywood superstars, all failed to find work after living there, went bankrupt, its name is...”	3.10.2024	Exhibit - S (Page Nos. 255-260)

7.	Defendant No. 6 Indiadotcom Digital Pvt. Ltd.	Article titled: “Bollywood's 'Cursed' Bungalow: Once Worth Rs 225 Crores, Ruined 3 Superstar's Lives- Find Out its Surprising Connection With Akshay Kumar”	1.05.2025	Exhibit - S-1 (Page Nos. 261-268)
8.	Defendant No. 7 Holiday Tliangle Travel Pvt. Ltd.	Article titled: “19 Real Haunted Houses In India That Will Give You A Cold Sweat In 2026”	20.3.2025	Exhibit - U (Page Nos. 282-301)
9.	Defendant No. 10 The Hind Samachar Ltd.	Youtube video titled: ‘Transcript produced in Page no. 72 - 73 of the chart compilation’	29.4.2025	Exhibit - Z (Page No. 335)
10.	Defendant No. 11 Varidhi Manthan	Youtube video titled: “Rajesh Khanna: The Legendary Superstar of Indian Cinema” ‘Transcript produced in Page no. 74 - 82 of the chart compilation’	20.6.2025	Exhibit - BB (Page No. 344)
11.	Defendant No. 12 Ujjawal Trivedi Talks	Facebook video titled: ‘Transcript produced in Page no. 83 - 89 of the chart compilation’	4.6.2025	Exhibit - CC (Page No. 345)

12.	Defendant No. 8	Youtube video titled: “Was Rajesh Khanna’s Bungalow haunted or.../ राजेश खन्ना का बंगला भूतिया था या...” ‘Transcript produced in Page no. 90 - 92 of the chart compilation’	20.5.2024	Exhibit - GG (Page No. 384)
Material published after filing of the Suit				
13.	Defendant No. 5 NDTV Convergence Ltd.	Article titled: “Rajesh Khanna's bungalow was called 'cursed', ruined the careers of 3 superstars, find out who Akshay Kumar sold it to next”	22.6.2026 (Post filing of the present suit)	Published pursuant to filing of the Suit.
14.	ETV Bharat (Not impleaded in the Suit)	Article titled: “From 17 Consecutive Hits To A Lonely End: Inside Rajesh Khanna’s ‘Cursed’ Bungalow Aashirwad”	29.12.2025	Not produced in the Plaintiff.

8. Dr. Saraf pointed out that the common theme across all the aforesaid publications is that they mention Aashirwad Bungalow as haunted, cursed or, in effect, unlucky. He reiterated that one article lists the Ashirwad as one of the most haunted places in India and that though the Plaintiff had reconstructed the bungalow and resides at the bungalow with his family, such repeated mention of the bungalow in such terms is clearly defamatory

of the Plaintiff since it plainly suggests that the Plaintiff and his family live in a haunted or cursed house. He submitted that the Plaintiff and his family members have a fundamental right to live with dignity and to reside peacefully in privacy in their own home. He submitted that the mere fact that some of the articles at the end make a reference to the fact that the Plaintiff has demolished and constructed a new bungalow does not in any manner dilute the harm caused by the articles since they still proceed on the basis that Ashirwad is the bungalow of Rajesh Khanna.

9. Dr. Saraf then submitted that the Plaintiff had in January and February 2026, addressed notices to all the Defendants calling upon them to take down the offending publications, which categorise the Plaintiff's residential house as cursed, haunted, ill-omened, unlucky, afflicted, etc. He submitted that, save and except for Defendant No. 4, the other Defendants who have published the offending material have not heeded the said notice, as none of them complied with or responded to the notices. He pointed out that the Plaintiff has also addressed a letter to Defendant No. 8, i.e., Google, and Defendant No. 9, i.e., Meta, requesting them to remove the said content, which has no

factual basis whatsoever and is in fact false and propagates occultist ideas.

He then submitted that in response to the said notices, on 23rd January 2026 and 30th January 2026, Google had addressed a reply stating that it is not responsible for the content published and available on the Google search engine and that unless directed by a Court, it has no obligation to remove any content.

10. Having heard Dr. Saraf, as also having gone through the offending publications which have been placed before me, I am prima facie of the view that the Plaintiff is wholly justified in seeking the reliefs which have been prayed for. The material, in my prima facie view is clearly defamatory of the Plaintiff so as to suggest that the Plaintiff lives in a haunted and so called cursed bungalow. Furthermore, it would also clearly impinge upon the Plaintiff's right to live peacefully and in dignity. Crucially, none of the Respondents, though served, save and except Respondent No. 4, have appeared to even justify or defend any of these offending publications. Therefore, in my prima facie view, clearly such publications would be wholly unjustified and in the nature of creating sensationalism, at the cost of

the Plaintiff and for no fault of the Plaintiff. Therefore, the Plaintiff has made out a case for grant of ad-interim relief in terms of the modified prayers (a) and (c) extracted above.

11. Stand over to **21st August 2026**. Ad-interim relief to continue till that day.
12. The Respondents shall file their Reply-Affidavits, if they so choose, within a period of three weeks from being served with a copy of this order.

[ARIF S. DOCTOR, J.]