

News

Delhi High Court directs takedown of obscene material and merchandise misusing R Madhavan's name, photos

The Court will also review the prayer for takedown of certain AI-generated content portraying the actor.

The Delhi High Court on Monday ordered removal of obscene content wrongly portraying actor R Madhavan [Ranganthan Madhavan Vs G Filmz Studioz & Ors].

Justice Manmeet Pritam Singh Arora also ordered removal of webpages unauthorizedly offering merchandise in the actor's name.

The judge made the interim order in a suit filed by Madhavan seeking protection of his personality rights.

The Court, however, refrained today from issuing any immediate orders for the takedown of AI-generated fan-page content depicting the actor.

Senior Advocate Swathi Sukumar, appearing for the actor, submitted that the statutory remedy under the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 was availed by the actor by approaching the intermediaries for takedown of the infringing material that includes AI-generated videos, deepfakes and merchandise.

She added that though certain links flagged to the social media platforms were taken down, some links were left untouched without any explanation.

"There is no reasonable basis in removing some and not removing others. The title is on likeness. I have not added any spoof or fan pages. I have a right over my likeness," she declared.

Madhavan also asked take down of the fake trailers of non-existent movies named Shaitan 2 and Kesari 3.

"I have not lent my name to these movies," Sukumar said.

Regarding a social media post showing the actor as Hulk character, advocate Varun Pathak appearing for Meta claimed that any order against it would open floodgates of litigation.

"It is benign. These are jokes. Everyone will come. It is someone's creativity. It may be infringement for Marvel but a fan is doing it. Someone may want to see Madhavan as Hulk," he stated.

The Court examined all the flagged URLs supposedly infringing Madhavan's personality rights and proceeded to direct take down of obscene content as well as the webpages selling goods in his name.

The Court also ordered the social media intermediaries to disclose the basic subscriber information (BSI) details of the alleged infringers within three weeks.

With relation to the AI-generated content showing Madhavan with certain female actors, the Court stated,

"I am not clear about the AI problem, I will think about it. I will not pass orders right now. Let me mull it over. If it is offensive, it will be removed.