

News

Right to be forgotten: Google and media outlets are ordered by a Delhi court to de-index articles about a guy who was cleared in an ED case.



According to the court, news reports mentioning him cannot remain online indefinitely.

A Delhi court recently issued a broad ruling requiring media companies, Google, and legal search engine India Kanoon to erase or de-index anything that links an individual to the alleged Moser Baer money laundering case, marking a significant step towards acknowledging an individual's right to be forgotten.

Anju Bajaj Chandna, Principal District and Sessions Judge of the Patiala House Courts, noted that since the individual has been cleared in the case, he has the right to live in dignity and that news reports mentioning him should not be permitted to remain online indefinitely.

Despite his exoneration from the lawsuit, the plaintiff may suffer injury due to the persistence of digital material and readily available online records. Other than harming the plaintiff's reputation, the material is useless. The Court stated, **"I believe that maintaining online information about a person after criminal proceedings have concluded and the person has been found not guilty serves no public interest."**

As a result, the Court issued a temporary order prohibiting the content.

The Court ordered, **"All defendants are directed to block/delete the URL Links relating to the plaintiff as detailed in para. 15(i) of the plaint from being accessed by using search engines till the disposal of the main suit."**

ANI Media, Indian Express Group, The Times Group, The Print, Hindustan Times Media Limited, NDTV, The Hindu Group, Google, India Kanoon, and John Doe (unknown parties) were among the defendants in the case.

Despite being detained by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in the Moser Baer case, the plaintiff told the court that he was eventually released.

He informed the Court that even after being cleared, he was still being portrayed in articles on the internet as a facilitator in the case. He said that these publications were seriously damaging his career and social status, as well as his reputation.

The Court dismissed the defendants' claims that the lawsuit was prohibited by statute of limitations and protected by press freedom.

It noted that harm to an individual who had been exonerated of all accusations was needlessly prolonged by the **"permanence of digital information."**

Judge Chandna therefore issued the directive for the information to be

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removed.

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