Date of reserved for orders : 15-10-2026
Date of pronouncement : 30-10-2026
Date of uploading : 30-10-2026

APHC010626902022

IN THE HIGH COURT OF ANDHRA PRADESH
AT AMARAVATI **[3604]**
(Special Original Jurisdiction)

FRIDAY, THE 30th DAY OF OCTOBER 2026

PRESENT

THE HONOURABLE SMT JUSTICE SUNITHA GANDHAM

WRIT PETITION NO: 37689/2022

Between:

1. ANUP KUMAR SATPATHY, S/O.PARSURAM SATPATHY, AGED ABOUT 53 YEARS, OCC DIVISIONAL RAILWAY MANAGER, RIO.EAST COAST RAILWAY-WALTAIR, DONDAPARTHY, VISAKHAPATNAM

...PETITIONER

AND

1. UNION OF INDIA, REP.BY ITS SECRETARY MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING, A WING, SHASTRI BHAVAN, DR.RAJENDRA PRASAD ROAD, NEW DELHI.
2. STATE OF ANDHRA PRADESH, REP.BY ITS PRINCIPAL SECRETARY HOME, SECRETARIAT, VELAGAPUDI, GUNTUR DISTRICT.
3. THE COMMISSIONER OF POLICE, VISAKHAPATNAM.
4. THE INSPECTOR OF POLICE, , CYBER CRIME POLICE STATION, VISAKHAPATNAM CITY.
5. YOU TUBE CHANNEL GOOGLE LLC, REP.BY ITS AUTHORIZED SIGNATORY/ LEGAL INVESTIGATION TEAM, 1600 AMPHITHEATRE PARKWAY, MOUNTAIN VIEW, CA 94043, USA, INDIAN ADDRESS UNIT 701, PLOT NO.FIFC, LEVEL-7, C-54/55, BANDRA KURIA COMPLEX ROAD, G-BLOCK, BANDRA EAST, MUMBAI,

MAHARASHTRA-400051.

6. META PLATFORMS INC / FACEBOOK INDIA, REP.BY ITS AUTHORIZED SIGNATORY, 1601, WILLOW ROAD, MENLO PARK, CA-94025, USA, INDIAN ADDRESS FACEBOOK INDIA, BUILDING NO.20, RAHEJA MINDSPACE, K.RAHEJA IT PARK, HITECH CITY ROAD, VITTAL RAO NAGAR, HYDERABAD-500082.

7. NEWS TELEVISION NETWORK PVT LTD, (NEWS 8 ODIA) REP.BY ITS CHAIRMAN AND EDITOR, MALLICK COMMERCIAL COMPLEX, 2ND FLOOR, UNIT-3, KHARAVELNAGAR, BHAHANESWAR, KHURDA, ODISHA-751001

...RESPONDENT(S):

Petition under Article 226 of the Constitution of India praying that in the circumstances stated in the affidavit filed therewith, the High Court may be pleased topleased to issue a Writ of Mandamus, or any other appropriate writ, order or direction, declaring the action of the Respondents 5 to 7 in not stopping the telecast of fake news and morphed photos linking the Petitioner to unknown blackmailer inspite of registration of FIR No.507/2022, dated 22.10.2022 by the 4th Respondent and Notices dated 26.10.2022 and the action of the Respondents 5 AND 6 in not furnishing the details requested by the 4th Respondent and deleting the videos/ photos, etc., and further the action of the Respondents 3 AND4 in not expediting the investigation and preventing the telecast of fake news, as illegal, arbitrary and unconstitutional and further direct the Respondents 5 to 7 to act strictly as per the Notices dated 26.10.2022 issued by the 4th Respondent pursuant to the FIR No.507/2022 by stopping the streaming / telecasting / circulating of the fake news and pass

IA NO: 1 OF 2022

Petition under Section 151 CPC praying that in the circumstances stated in the affidavit filed in support of the petition, the High Court may be pleased be pleased to grant interim direction directing the Respondents 5 to 7 to immediately act upon the Notices dated 26.10.2022 issued by the Respondent No.4 by furnishing the information] particulars and stopping the telecast of fake news and morphed photos linking the Petitioner to unknown blackmailer, pending disposal of the above writ petition and pass

IA NO: 1 OF 2026

Petition under Section 151 CPC praying that in the circumstances stated in the affidavit filed in support of the petition, the High Court may be pleased to receive this additional affidavit on record and: a) Direct the respondent no. 5 to remove or disable access to the video titled "Odisha is condemning Anup Satpathy II News8odia II Odisha", available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9k3yj5x7FQo, if the same continues to be accessible, and to take appropriate steps in respect of identical copies or reuploads of the said video; b) Restrain Respondent No.7, namely, News 8 Television Network Private Limited (News 8 Odia), from publishing, republishing, uploading, broadcasting or circulating the specific allegedly false and defamatory imputations concerning the petitioner that form the subject matter of the present writ petition, including the same or substantially identical content linking the petitioner with the alleged blackmailing incident, through YouTube or any other digital or electronic platform, subject to such safeguards concerning lawful reporting or expression as this Hon'ble Court may consider appropriate; and c) pass

Counsel for the Petitioner:

1. ARRABOLU SAI NAVEEN

Counsel for the Respondent(S):

1. GP FOR HOME
2. SHIREEN SETHNA BARIA
3. D NARENDAR NAIK
4.

The Court made the following:

HON'BLE SMT. JUSTICE SUNITHA GANDHAM

WRIT PETITION No: 37689 OF 2022

ORDER:

This writ petition is filed seeking a direction to respondents Nos. 5 to 7 to act in accordance with the notice dated 26.10.2022 issued by respondent No. 4 in connection with Crime No. 507 of 2022, by stopping the streaming, telecasting and circulation the disputed material.

2. **The case of the petitioner, in brief, is thus:**

a) That the petitioner is working as Divisional Railway Manager, East Coast Railway, Waltair, Visakhapatnam. From 12.10.2022 to 14.10.2022, the petitioner was on leave and joined duty on 15.10.2022 and then, he was informed by the staff about the phone calls received from one Abhinna Satapathy/ reporter on NewsBOdia i.e., respondent No.7 through mobile number 8249487476. The petitioner received number of phone calls from his relatives, superiors, sub-ordinates, friends etc., that his photographs and other personal information were being broadcasted in the said NewsBOdia channel falsely linking his name, photograph and family details. After seeing the video clippings, the petitioner realized that the person (Abhinna Satpathy) was trying to extort money from him by exhibiting photos and other details and further, the said person also telecasted the voice recording of staff members of the petitioner with whom he had conversation on 12.10.2022. The petitioner had received many calls from all corners of the Odisha State and the country, as he is working as Senior Officer in the railways.

b) Respondent No.7 had falsely propagated that the petitioner is absconded from duty and also doctored, edited false audio attributed to be his conversation with his staff and made viral in You Tube, Facebook and WhatsApp groups

inviting lots of public humiliation and approbrium against the petitioner. Respondent No.7 has started vilification campaign against the petitioner and leaked videos which are broadcasted through respondent Nos.5 and 6. Apart from that, he has also morphed images of the petitioner and the respondent Nos.5 to 7 have abused their licences. Respondent No.7 tried to extort money and feeling aggrieved by the same, the petitioner gave report to the respondent No.4 and the same is registered as a case in Crime No.507 of 2022 of the offences under Sections 469, 499, 500 IPC and Section 72 of Information Technology Act, 2000.

c) Respondent No.7 is trying to extort money from the petitioner by sending oblique messages to that effect. After registration of FIR, respondent No.4 has got issued notices to respondent Nos.5 and 6, to furnish the information of the persons who are circulating the videos and also delete the videos and URL link. Respondent Nos.3 and 4 also reprimanded the respondent No.7 not to broadcast the news and telecast the videos, but he continued the same. Taking advantage of not taking any strict action and follow up by the respondent Nos.3 and 4, the respondent Nos.5 to 7 continued their illegal streaming of the fake news without removing them, further damaging the reputation of the petitioner and causing humiliation to him. Respondent No.1 has to see that the licensees i..e., respondent Nos.5 to 7 do not abuse the license by violating the common law of the land by telecasting fake and false news without verification of the facts.

3. The investigating officer has submitted written instructions stating that the investigation is still in progress. The learned Assistant Government Pleader submitted that respondent No. 7 has not been responding to the calls made by the police. Learned counsel appearing for respondent No. 5 (YouTube) submitted that the link in question had earlier been removed, but respondent No. 7 has being uploaded the same material again and again. Learned counsel submitted

that the writ petition may be disposed of by directing respondent No. 7 to delete the link that has been re-uploaded.

4. Heard Sri A.Sai Naveen learned counsel for the petitioner, Sri Ahluwalia, learned counsel for respondent No.5 and learned Assistant Government Pleader for Home.

5. Having regard to the submissions made, and in view of the fact that the investigation is pending, this Court considers it appropriate to issue a direction to prevent continued circulation of the disputed link while leaving the investigation to proceed in accordance with law. No opinion is expressed on the truth or otherwise of the disputed material, the allegations made in the complaint, or the culpability of any person. Those matters are for the competent authorities to consider in accordance with law and on the basis of the material collected during investigation.

6. Accordingly, respondent No.7 is directed to remove the link or links relating to the disputed material that have been re-uploaded, insofar as they are within his control, and shall not re-upload or cause the same material to be re-uploaded through any account or channel under his control, pending further action in accordance with law. This direction is confined to the disputed material forming the subject matter of this writ petition and shall not be construed as a finding on the merits of the allegations.

7. The investigating officer shall be at liberty to continue the investigation, pursue the requests already made to the concerned online platforms, and take such further steps as may be permissible in law. Respondent No. 7 shall cooperate with the investigation and respond to lawful notices issued by the investigating officer. The concerned parties may pursue their remedies in accordance with law, if any further grievance survives.

8. In view of the above directions and the submissions made by the learned counsel, this writ petition is disposed of. There shall be no order as to costs.

As a sequel thereto, pending miscellaneous petitions, if any, shall stand closed.

SUNITHA GANDHAM, J

Date:30.10.2026
knl