

**IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT BOMBAY
ORDINARY ORIGINAL CIVIL JURISDICTION
INTERIM APPLICATION (L) NO. 25165 OF 2026
IN
SUIT (L) NO. 25151 OF 2026**

Nitin Jairam Gadkari

...Applicant/Plaintiff

Versus

Meta Platforms Inc & Ors.

...Respondents/Defendants

Mr. Sandeep S. Ladda a/w. S. S. Ladda, Shivani Khanwilkar, Ritish Desai, Adesh Jadhav, Pragya Nawandar, Umang Patni, Saloni Shah, Vinod Santosh for the Applicant/Plaintiff.

Mr. Rishabh Jaisani a/w. Harit Lakhani, Radkhika Roy, Abhishek Mookherjee i/b. Shardul Amarchand Mangaldas for the Respondent No. 1

Mr. Ankit Tripathi for the Respondent No. 3 (through VC)

Mr. Anil Singh, ASG a/w. Aditya Thakkar, D. P Singh, Adarsh Vyas for the Respondent Nos. 4 and 5.

CORAM : ARIF S. DOCTOR, J.

DATE : 5th AUGUST, 2026

P.C.

1. The matter has been moved for urgent ad-interim relief on account of certain material which is stated to be defamatory of the Plaintiff and has been uploaded on social media platforms owned by Defendant Nos. 1 to 3.
2. Mr. Ladda, the learned counsel appearing on behalf of the Plaintiff, at the outset points out that the Plaintiff is presently serving as Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways and is a nationally recognised political figure.

3. He then points out that the defamatory material and/or transcripts of the same, all of which are annexed at Exhibit “C” to the Plaint, have been tabulated in the Interim Application for the Court’s convenience so it is easily available at one place.
4. Mr. Ladda then invited my attention to offending material, which also includes images and video reels posted by account holders/users of Defendant Nos. 1 to 3. The tabular statement also sets out the links to each of the offending posts. Mr. Ladda submitted that since the user details of the individuals who have posted the offending material are not known, they have been joined as Ashok Kumar/John Doe to the present proceedings.
5. Mr. Ladda then submitted that even after the Suit was filed, further offending material had been published against the Plaintiff. He has therefore today tendered details of such additional offending material by way of a draft amendment. The same is marked as ‘X’ and taken on record. Learned Counsel for the Plaintiff prays for and is granted leave to amend the Plaint and the Interim Application to bring on record the additional offending material marked ‘X’.

6. Mr. Ladda then pointed out from the offending material that the same was *per se* defamatory of the Plaintiff and must therefore be pulled down by the platforms on which they appear. He submitted that the offending material does not qualify as fair comment, which he clarified the Plaintiff is not averse to. He, however, pointed out that the offending material was plainly abusive and defamatory and calculated only to malign and ridicule the Plaintiff. This he submitted was unacceptable.
7. Having pursued the material which has been placed before me, I find much merit in the submission of Mr. Ladda. I find that the offending material, aside from being *per se* defamatory of the Plaintiff, is plainly abusive and vile. Some of the posts in question contain nothing more than abuses in the most filthy language. The morphed photographs and also the caricatures of the Plaintiff are equally repugnant. Such material should have no place on a public forum/platform, especially when such platforms are accessible to all sections of society, including the young. Also the speed at which such material is disseminated in the age of social media, as also instant forms of communication cannot be lost sight of. This infact only compounds the

damage caused to the Plaintiff by those who upload such material, which then goes out of their control and becomes viral. It is then only the respective social media platforms who can stem the damage by pulling down such plainly abusive, vulgar and vile content. Hence, in my opinion, a case for the grant of ad-interim relief is made out.

8. The Defendant Nos. 1 to 3 are directed to forthwith pull down the offending material as set out in Exhibit “C” to the Plaint.
9. Furthermore, the Advocates for Defendant Nos. 1 to 3 shall also furnish to the Plaintiff’s Advocates the details of basic subscriber information of the individuals who have posted the offending material, as set out in Exhibit “C” to the Plaint and in the additional list tendered to the Court and marked ‘X’. This will equally apply to Defendant No. 2, who, though served, has today not appeared.
10. Mr. Ladda makes an additional request. He submits that if the Plaintiff comes across any similar offending material as that annexed as Exhibit “C” to the Plaint, the Plaintiff’s advocates shall communicate the same to Defendant Nos. 1 to 3, who must then pull down the same.

11. Learned Counsel appearing for Defendant No. 1 submits that if such material is found to be violative of the terms of use of Defendant No. 1, the same would be removed by Defendant No. 1. He, however, clarifies that if there is any grey area pertaining to any material which the Plaintiffs advocates call upon Defendant No. 1 to remove, then Plaintiff would need to first obtain an order of the Court directing the removal of such material. This is duly noted.
12. Mr. Singh, learned ASG, assured the Court that the Defendant Nos. 4 and 5 shall fully co-operate in this matter as they have been doing in all other matters.
13. Learned counsel for the Defendants prayed for and granted three weeks' time to file a reply affidavit. Stand over to **2nd September, 2026**, for further hearing.

[ARIF S. DOCTOR, J.]