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INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

Reliance Industries Secures Injunction Against “Jiocabs.com” for Trademark Infringement

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Facts

The Plaintiff, Reliance Industries Limited, is the registered proprietor of the well-known trademark “JIO.” Defendant No. 1, Asif Ahmed, is the registrant of the domain name www.jiocabs.com, while Defendant No. 2, Usman, is the proprietor of Doon Taxi Service. Defendant No. 3, P.D.R. Solutions LLC, is the registrar of the said domain name. The core dispute in this case concerns the Defendants’ operation of taxi services under the name “JIO” and the use of the domain www.jiocabs.com, both of which the Plaintiff claims are deceptively similar to its registered trademark. The Defendants are alleged to have used logos and artwork that closely resemble the Plaintiff’s original “JIO” branding while marketing their services as an inter-state and national-level taxi operation.

Reliance Industries Limited, therefore, brought the present commercial intellectual property suit seeking a permanent injunction restraining the Defendants from infringing its registered trademark and copyright, passing off its goods and services, and using the domain name or artwork deceptively similar to its well-known “JIO” mark. The Plaintiff also sought orders directing the domain registrar to suspend and transfer the impugned domain name.

Analysis

The Plaintiff placed on record substantial evidence of its ownership and continuous use of the “JIO” mark. The trademark “JIO” has been registered in Class 9 since December 9, 2011, and in Class 39 covering transport and travel arrangement services since 2012. These registrations remain valid until January 24, 2033, and the Plaintiff also holds multiple registrations for the mark across fourteen different classes, underscoring its extensive protection and reputation in the market.

To establish infringement, the Plaintiff relied on Exhibit W, which provided a side-by-side comparison of the rival marks, demonstrating their deceptive similarity. Exhibit T contained images from the Defendants’ WhatsApp and website showing the use of the infringing mark and artwork, while Exhibit S comprised WhatsApp transcripts confirming the Defendants’ active use of the “JIO” name for taxi operations. Together, these exhibits demonstrated a clear intent to misappropriate the goodwill associated with the Plaintiff’s well-known mark.

The conduct of the Defendants following service of the legal notice was also significant. After receiving notice from the Plaintiff, the Defendants altered their business name and website content; however, the domain www.jiocabs.com remained active and merely redirected to another site. The Court interpreted this conduct as implicit acknowledgment of the infringement and a deliberate attempt to circumvent liability while continuing to benefit from the goodwill of the “JIO” mark.

The Plaintiff also drew the Court’s attention to previous judicial precedents where “JIO” had been recognized as a well-known trademark and where similar domain names had been restrained. These precedents further strengthened the Plaintiff’s case by establishing a consistent judicial approach in protecting the mark “JIO” from unauthorized use and dilution.

Judgment

The Court found that the Plaintiff had made out a strong prima facie case for the grant of ad-interim relief. Accordingly, ad-interim injunctions were granted in terms of prayer clauses (a) and (b). The order restrained Defendant Nos. 1 and 2 from using the domain name www.jiocabs.com, from using the mark “JIO” or any other deceptively similar mark in relation to taxi services or any other goods or services, and from using or reproducing any artwork or artistic material similar to the Plaintiff’s original “JIO” artistic work.

In granting this relief, the Court observed that the Plaintiff had established trademark infringement and passing off. The balance of convenience was found to be in the Plaintiff’s favor, and it was held that the Plaintiff would suffer irreparable injury in the absence of an injunction. The Defendants’ conduct, particularly their post-notice changes to their online materials, was viewed as indicative of their acknowledgment of the Plaintiff’s rights.

Procedurally, the Court directed that the Defendants would be entitled to apply for variation, alteration, or vacation of the ad-interim order should they so desire. It was further directed that affidavits in reply may be filed within a period of four weeks, with rejoinders to be filed within two weeks thereafter. The matter was ordered to be listed for further consideration of interim relief on November 28, 2025.

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