

Gujarat Titans forced to change tune

TNN | May 25, 2023, 08.16 AM IST



Ahmedabad: Gujarat Titans (GT), an Indian Premier League (IPL) team, has found themselves in a sticky situation as they can no longer play two popular Gujarati songs during their matches.

The songs in question, titled “Helo Maro Sambhalo Ranuja Na Raja” and “Mara Palav No Chedlo Na Aao Chogala Re”, were the centre of a copyright infringement issue.

The GT franchise gave an undertaking before a commercial court in Gandhinagar on Wednesday after a copyright society filed a petition against them.

Recorded Music Performance Limited (RMPL), a copyright society registered by the Union government, on May 20 filed a copyright infringement suit after the two songs were played at Gujarat Titans’ matches held at the Narendra Modi cricket stadium in Motera.

Shri Ram Audio and Telefilm, a member of the RMPL, own the two songs.

RMPL, represented by advocate Rohan Lavkumar, claimed GT had infringed on the plaintiff’s copyright since 2022.

The petition emphasizes concerns that without appropriate measures against the defendants, they will continue to exploit the plaintiff’s copyrights for commercial gain and evade their responsibility to obtain licences from the plaintiff society.

The defendants listed in the petition include DNA Entertainment Network Private Limited, Gujarat Titans, DJ Akki's Spin Guruz, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), and the Gujarat Cricket Association (GCA). DNA Entertainment Network Private Limited holds the musical entertainment rights for GT. However, since most of GT's matches take place at the Narendra Modi stadium and IPL is under the jurisdiction of the BCCI, they have also been named as defendants in the case.

During the hearing, the defendants' advocates, representing GT and DNA, requested additional time for the case.

In response, the plaintiff pointed out that the second quarter-final and final matches are scheduled for May 26 and May 28, respectively, at the Narendra Modi stadium. If the case is expected to be heard after May 28, it would be futile as the copyright infringement would persist.

As a result, the defendants gave an oral undertaking before the court, assuring they would refrain from playing the songs during the upcoming semi-final and final games.

The plaintiff also mentioned that they had filed a written complaint with the Chandkheda police in 2022 regarding copyright infringement. However, GT continued to play the songs publicly without obtaining the necessary licences.

If the defendants had obtained a public performance licence from the plaintiff, the plaintiff would have been entitled to a fee of Rs 1.50 lakh per match where the songs were used.

Consequently, the plaintiff is seeking a total sum of Rs 10.50 lakh as licence fee based on the tariff rates applicable to sports events at an international level in Tier-1 metropolitan cities.