

GENERAL INFORMATION - FINALS

Background -

Mr. Naveen Menon is an established actor, producer, singer and director in the South Indian film industry. He is critically acclaimed for his role as protagonist in biopics such as 'Mangala' in 2014, 'Porbandar' in 2016 and most recently 'Bullseye' released in 2019. He has appeared in more than 100 films spreading over the four major literary Dravidian languages. Mr. Menon, by virtue of his enormous multilingual fan following, combined with accolades such as the Padma Sri, the Rajat Kamal Award and the Silver Peacock Award, can be considered as arguably the greatest feature film actor from India.

SEE Terries (SEE) is an Indian music record label and film production company, that majorly engages in the production of Bollywood music soundtracks and Indi-pop music. As of 2019, SEE is India's largest music record label, with up to a 40% share of the Indian music market. Additionally, SEE owns and operates the most-viewed and the most-subscribed YouTube channel, with 210 million subscribers and 183 billion total views as of 7 March 2020. The growth of SEE is also attributed to its growing audience outside of India. About 40% of the channel's traffic comes from outside of India.

THE DISPUTE

In June 2020, SEE penned down Mr Menon's for a two (2) film deal, one of which was titled as 'Videshi'. 'Videshi' is the first feature film being produced by SEE, and it was adamant that the shooting and pre-production of the whole film be completed economically given the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. The entire production of 'Videshi' was planned to be completed within 60 days.

The shooting for 'Videshi' began in February 2021, in England (ENG). The entire cast and crew was supposed to fly to the ENG in January 2021; However, due to the outbreak of the second wave of the Covid-19 virus in January, the cast and crew of 'Videshi' was unable to fly out to the ENG. Thus, the scheduled shooting the February 2021 in the ENG was postponed to a later date based on the updated rules and regulations framed by the Indian as well as the ENG government for international flying and shooting movies.

Upon seeking repeated requests and permissions from the State Government, SEE productions was able to start shooting for 'Videshi'. The permission was only granted for Hyderabad, and thus, the location of the movie was shifted from the UK to the film city in Hyderabad. SEE began shooting for the film in May 2021.

Mr. Menon started feeling unwell on the set of 'Videshi' and upon initial diagnosis, symptoms of Covid-19 were found and several tests later Mr Menon tested positive for the Delta variant of Covid-19. He was suggested rest for a period of 15 days in self-isolation and could only commence shooting once detected negative from the virus. However, on the 16th day of the isolation period, Mr. Menon was still diagnosed as positive and thus, was recommended being admitted to the nearest hospital for better treatment.

SEE understood the gravity of Mr. Menon's condition and decided to postpone the shoot to a later date. Two weeks had passed, and no sign of recovery was observed in Mr. Menon's condition.

Four weeks later, when Mr. Menon had some improvement in his condition and could walk around and do his chores on his own, he found out that he was not a part of the film 'Videshi' through a newspaper picture captioned: "Rudra Kapoor spotted training for 'Videshi', to be launched in December 2021". Upon enquiry, Mr. Menon found out from SEE's office, that due to little and no improvement in his health condition, SEE terminated the contract executed between Mr. Menon and SEE. He was further informed that he had been replaced by Mr. Rudra as the lead actor in 'Videshi' due to the financial and economical restrains upon SEE. Additionally 'Videshi' being their first production of a feature film, SEE's emphasis was on getting the production done as quickly as possible.

Infuriated with this, Mr. Menon sent a legal notice for wrongful termination of contract to SEE and requested for a hefty compensation. SEE responded to the notice stating that the termination was not a wrongful one since Mr. Menon was unable to perform his duties, of shooting for the lead role in 'Videshi', under the contract. However, considering the unfortunate situation of Mr. Menon, SEE was ready to negotiate with Mr. Menon and settle the matter at hand. The Parties agreed to mediate.