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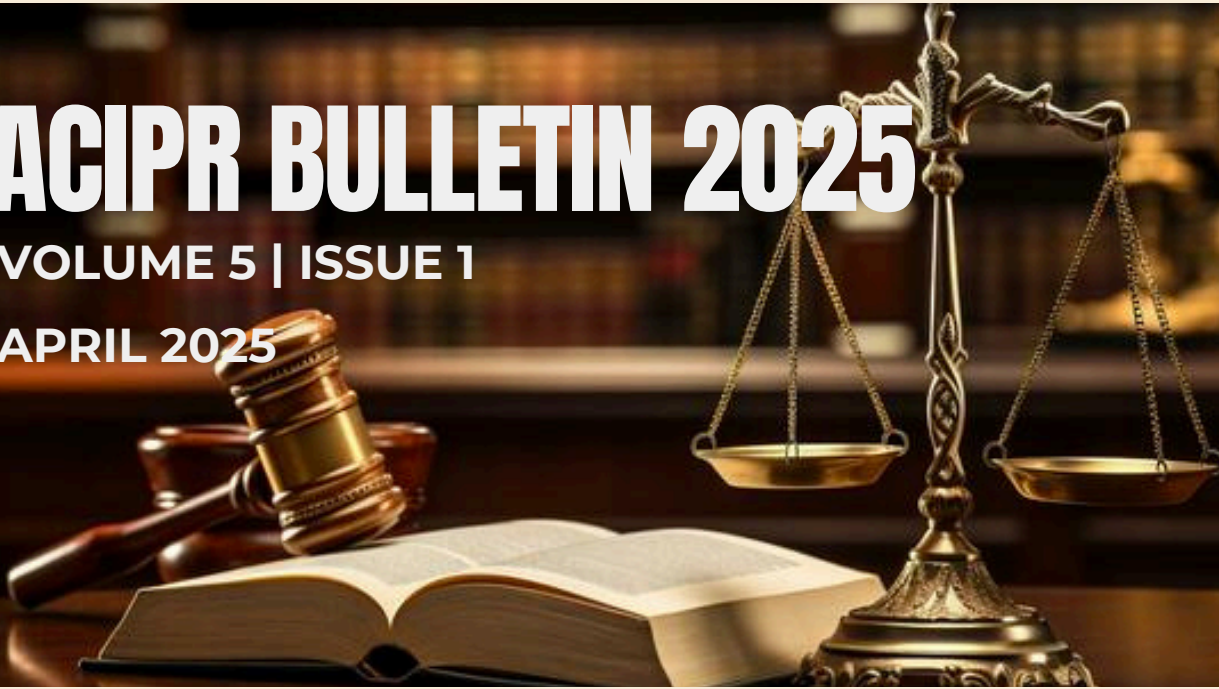
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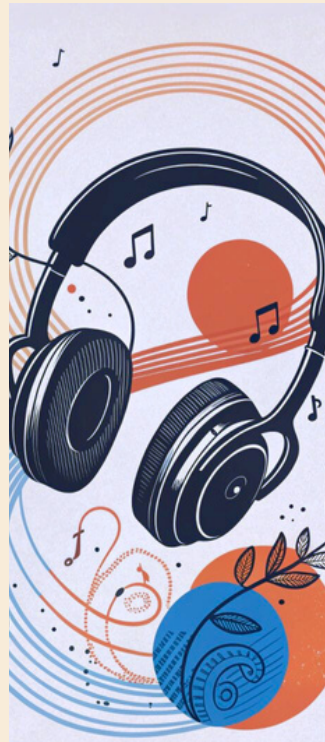
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THEME:

IP AND MUSIC:
FEEL THE BEAT
OF IP.

PHONOGRAPHIC

PERFORMANCE

LIMITED vs. STATE OF
GOA & ORS., 2024

Pg. 12

ARTICLE: TAYLOR
SWIFT'S BATTLE FOR
MASTER RIGHTS: A
TURNING POINT FOR
ARTIST RIGHTS?

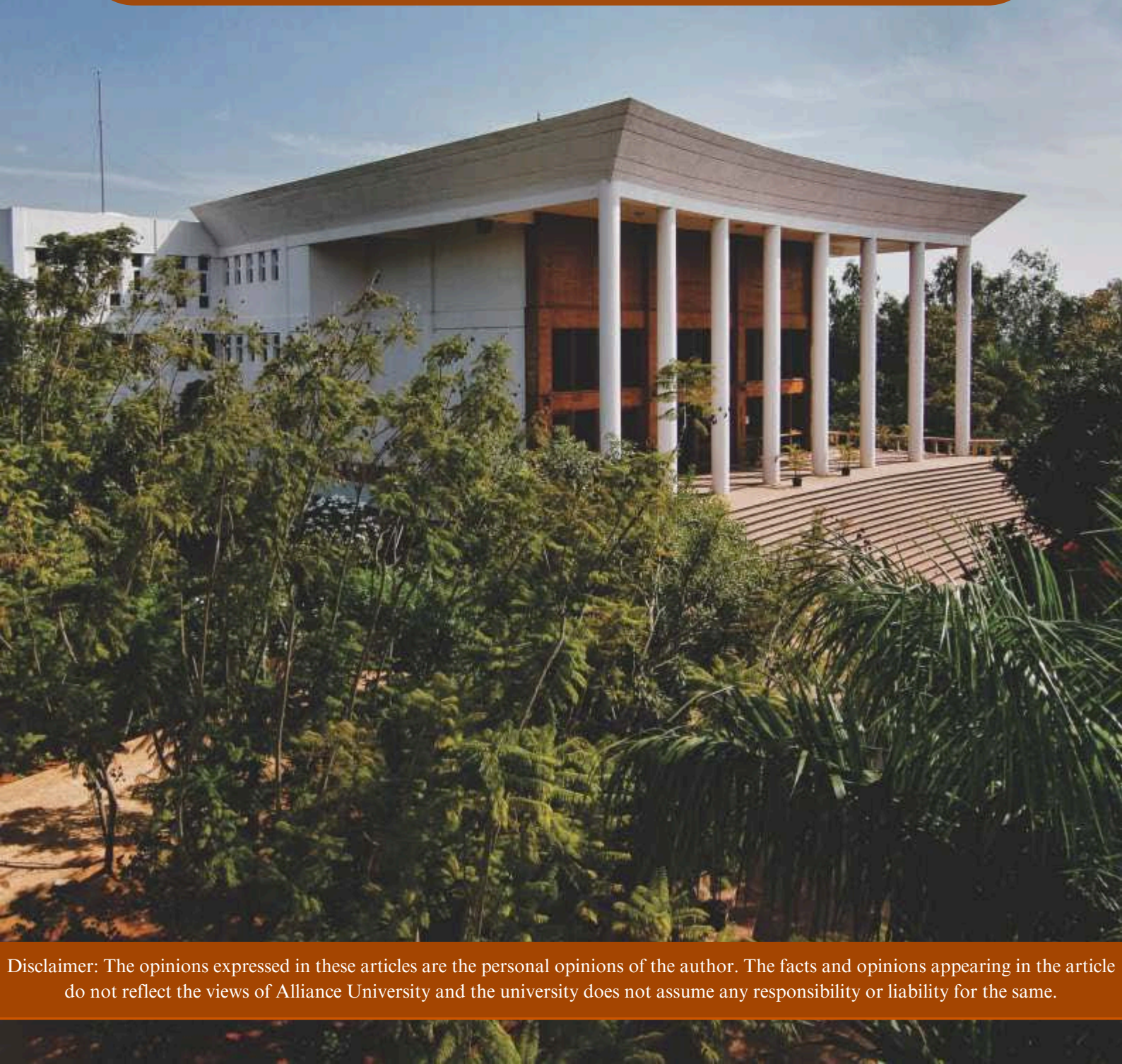
Pg. 19

COMIC: JAB COPY MET
ORIGINAL!

Pg. 22

ABOUT 'ACIPR'

Alliance Centre for Intellectual Property Rights (ACIPR) is established with an aim to evolve as a centre of excellence in IPR Research and Innovation. It intends to engage academicians, jurists, research scholars and practitioners in research and training for the promotion and protection of IP rights. The Centre is an initiative of Alliance School of Law, Alliance University, Bengaluru for making active contribution on the development & promotion of all forms of IP rights. It aims to give special emphasis in fostering research & development in the unexplored areas of IP domain.



Disclaimer: The opinions expressed in these articles are the personal opinions of the author. The facts and opinions appearing in the article do not reflect the views of Alliance University and the university does not assume any responsibility or liability for the same.

MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Dear Readers,

As we celebrate another edition of the ACIPR Newsletter, it gives me immense pleasure to present to you this volume themed around “IP and Music: Feel the Beat of IP”, in harmony with the global celebrations of World Intellectual Property Day 2025.

Music, in all its forms, is a language that transcends boundaries—evoking emotions, preserving culture, and driving creativity. At its heart lies a rich ecosystem of rights, responsibilities, and recognition. Intellectual Property plays a pivotal role in ensuring that this creativity is protected, that artists are empowered, and that innovation is encouraged in an ever-evolving digital and global marketplace.

This issue explores how intellectual property intersects with the world of music—its challenges, transformations, and triumphs. From courtroom battles to international reforms, and from traditional rights management to the cutting-edge dilemmas of AI-generated art, we aim to reflect the rhythm of change shaping the music industry today.

As you turn each page, I invite you to think beyond the beats and lyrics—to see music as a powerful expression of legal, economic, and creative interplay. Let us continue to foster dialogue and advocacy around IP not just as a legal tool, but as a catalyst for a more just and innovative world for creators everywhere.

Happy Reading!

*Prof. (Dr.) V. Shyam Kishore
Professor & Associate Dean,
Academic Affairs & Dean,
Alliance School of Law,
Alliance University.*



CONTENTS

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

05 - 08

NATIONAL NEWS

09 - 11

CASES

12 - 18

ARTICLE: TAYLOR SWIFT'S BATTLE FOR MASTER RIGHTS: A TURNING POINT FOR ARTIST RIGHTS?

19 - 21

COMIC: JAB COPY MET ORIGINAL!

22

EVENTS & ACTIVITIES OF ACIPR

23 - 24

STUDENT MEMBERS OF ACIPR

25 - 26

TRIVIA

27 - 28

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

In the U.S., Amazon's famous "One-Click" checkout process was patented as a business method.

The Intellectual Property Office of the Philippines (IPOPHL) will highlight the importance of intellectual property (IP) rights in the Philippine music industry during National Intellectual Property Month (NIPM) 2025. With the theme "IP and Music: Bringing the Pinoy Beat to the World," aligned with the World Intellectual Property Organization's (WIPO) "Feel the Beat of IP" theme, IPOPHL is looking to promote awareness of IP's role in promoting local artists and the growing Philippine music industry.

It is crucial, says IPOPHL Director General Brigitte M. da Costa-Villaluz, to preserve the intellectual property of creators so that Filipino music may be respected and appreciated domestically and abroad. The agency quoted Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) data indicating the Music, Arts, and Entertainment sector's consistent growth, with industry revenues growing at an average annual rate of 9.25 percent and employment growing by 11 percent since 2020. The sector earned ₱19.65 billion in revenues in 2024, representing an 8.3 percent year-on-year growth. IPOPHL also noted that there is an increasingly worldwide inclination towards Filipino music, as reported by Spotify Philippines, that its Top 50–Philippines playlist is increasingly driven by local tunes. Filipino music has had a four-fold rise in global plays over the last five years, with the US, Canada, Indonesia, Poland, and Australia being among the top markets. The Philippine hip-hop playlists also saw a 600 percent rise, and Philippine pop playlists increased by 138 percent yearly. Da Costa-Villaluz stressed the necessity of enhanced IP protection to provide fair recognition and reward for local creativity, enabling Filipino music to flourish globally. NIPM, commemorated annually every April, highlights the significance of intellectual property to promote innovation, creativity, and entrepreneurship in the Philippines as required by Presidential Proclamation No. 190, signed in 2017 by the then-President Rodrigo Duterte.

Reported by:
Ms. Maushmmi M
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AI VS. MUSICIANS: A BATTLE OVER CREATIVITY

Country musician Tift Merritt, known for her song ‘Travelling Alone’, recently criticised AI-generated music that mimics real artists. When Reuters asked the AI tool Udio to create a song in her style, it produced Holy Grounds, a ballad about backroad drives. Merritt rejected it, saying, “It doesn’t cut any album of mine,” and called it “stealing.”

Big names like Billie Eilish, Nicki Minaj, and Stevie Wonder have also voiced concerns, fearing AI could take away opportunities from real musicians. Major record labels—Sony, Universal, and Warner Music—have even filed lawsuits against AI music companies Udio and Suno, accusing them of using copyrighted songs to train their systems without permission.

AI developers argue they’re simply offering creative tools, much like synthesisers and drum machines once did, claiming their use of existing music falls under “fair use.” But artists disagree, saying AI is producing “cheap imitations” that threaten their income and originality.

This legal battle has the potential to reshape the future of music. While text-based AI is often viewed as transformative, music, composed of melody, rhythm, and harmony, is harder to defend under the same rules. If AI companies win, they could keep using copyrighted music to train systems. However, if artists and labels prevail, strict boundaries may be set on AI’s access to creative content. For artists like Merritt, the issue is clear: “If AI can copy our music for free and profit from it, where does that leave real musicians?” This fight is about more than tech—it’s about creativity’s future.

Reported by:
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TAYLOR SWIFT TRIUMPHS IN “SHAKE IT OFF” COPYRIGHT DISPUTE, AFFIRMING CREATIVE ORIGINALITY AND CLARIFYING IP BOUNDARIES IN MUSIC

In a significant legal decision impacting the music industry and intellectual property rights, the well-known pop star Taylor Swift successfully defended her song "Shake It Off," released in 2014. The case was against songwriters Sean Hall and Nathan Butler, who claimed that Swift stole the phrases "players gonna play" and "haters gonna hate" from their 2001 song "Playas Gon' Play" by 3LW. The U.S. District Court ruled on the case in March 2024. This decision was about copyright law, which is meant to protect original works that are written down or recorded.

The court found that the contested phrases were common and not original enough to be protected by copyright. Thus, the claims against Swift were dismissed. Swift defended herself by saying that her lyrics were made up on her own and used everyday language, not taken from others. The court's decision supports her right to create freely and sets an important example for protecting artists from claims based on widely used phrases. This ruling illustrates the limits of copyright protection for song lyrics. It serves as a reminder that not all parts of a song can be protected under intellectual property laws. The decision is crucial for maintaining a balance between safeguarding original artistic works and allowing ongoing creative freedom in the music world.

Reported by:

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EMPOWERING ARTISTS: CABO VERDE'S MUSIC INDUSTRY PROMOTES INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

Cabo Verde Music Society (CVMS) marks an important institution in intellectual property rights as it allows local musicians to protect their creations and maintain control of their intellectual property. In many developing countries, the revenue and recognition artists deserve for their creative work have been diminished due to under-enforcement of copyright law. The purpose of CVMS is to ensure that artists in Cabo Verde do not fall victim to this problem and to encourage the legislative reform of intellectual property and collective rights management. CVMS also acts as an intermediary between artists and digital distribution, negotiating fair royalty rights during the age of digital information. CVMS enables artists to receive economic compensation for their work with less risk of exploitative situations to their livelihood. The combination catalyzes preserving Cabo Verdean cultural heritage and establishes a sustainable development avenue for competing on the global music market.

CVMS is a model for other African countries on the effective application of the legal system and the development of a growing creative economy. Legal reforms and collaboration can help in building sustainable development in the musical industry. Initiatives like CLIP (Creators Learn Intellectual Property) provide artists around the world the chance to learn about their intellectual property rights, which ultimately leads to an equitable future for the creative industry. The Cabo VERDE experience is another positive example of legal activism impacting various perspectives in chartering the future development and the need for enhanced intellectual property protection of all creative industries.

Reported by:
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NATIONAL NEWS

ED SHEERAN'S BENGALURU BUSKING HALTED: A SPOTLIGHT ON PERFORMANCE RIGHTS AND IP COMPLIANCE

On February 9, 2025, famous musician Ed Sheeran was in the middle of a street performance on Bengaluru's busy Church Street when local police stopped him. This event highlights the importance of following rules about intellectual property and public performances in India.

During his Mathematics Tour in India, Sheeran started playing his hit song "Shape of You" for an eager crowd. However, a police officer soon intervened, unplugging his microphone and guitar. Deputy Commissioner of Police, Shekar T. Tekkannanavar, stated, the performance lacked the necessary permission for a public event in such a high-footfall area. In a public statement, he clarified: "A member among the event organisers came to me to seek permission for the streetside performance at Church Street. I refused to permit because Church Street gets very crowded. That is the reason he was asked to vacate the place".

In contrast, Sheeran spoke about the incident on Instagram, asserting, "We had permission to busk, by the way. Hence, us playing in that exact spot was planned out beforehand. It wasn't just us randomly turning up".

This situation sheds light on the complexities of public performances in India. Artists must obtain permission from local authorities and comply with intellectual property laws. In India, performing copyrighted music in public usually requires getting licenses from the Indian Performing Rights Society (IPRS) and Phonographic Performance Ltd. (PPL). These licenses make sure that the original creators are paid royalties. The recent incident involving Ed Sheeran serves as a reminder for international artists to be mindful of local laws, including those related to intellectual property, when performing abroad. As India's music industry blooms, incidents like these highlight the importance of clear understanding between artists and regulatory bodies to encourage harmonious cultural exchange.

Reported by:

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SONY MUSIC CRACKS DOWN ON AI DEEPFAKES, OVER 75,000 SONGS PULLED

A leading global record label, Sony Music, revealed that it has eliminated more than 75,000 Artificial Intelligence (AI) generated phone recordings of its artists, including well-known performers like Beyonce, Queen, and Harry Styles. The disclosure was made as part of the label's response to a consultation by the UK Government on proposed changes to copyright laws, which Sony cautions could have a negative impact on the music business.

A new threat to artists intellectual property has emerged with the development of openly available AI tools that can produce realistic deepfakes and mimic voices. These fakes, which are frequently identical to authentic performances, are being posted to social media and streaming services without authorization, directly harming the livelihoods of the original artists.

According to Sony, the current proposal, which permits AI companies to train models on copyrighted works unless the owner voluntarily opts out, would unfairly burden creators with the burden of continuously defending their work online, in addition to being challenging to manage. The proposal was characterized by the company as "hurried, unbalanced, and irreversible." The UK government asserts that the changes are meant to establish the nation as a pioneer in AI development. Artists, filmmakers, media organizations, and record labels, however, have strongly opposed such policies, stating that they run the risk of destroying the creative economy. Sony stressed that responsible licensing arrangements are already made possible by current copyright laws, and it is presently negotiating several deals to license its content to AI firms.

Calling Copyright a "necessary societal reward" for creative endeavour, Sony emphasized that it should continue to be a protective right rather than a barrier. Since the UK is the world's second-largest exporter and third-largest market for recorded music, the label cautions that a reduction in IP protection may have long-term effects on the economy and creators.

Reported by:

S Chetna

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BOLLYWOOD TAKES OPENAI TO COURT OVER COPYRIGHT CLASH

A group of prominent Bollywood music companies (T-Series, Saregama, and Sony Music) intensified legal investigations about AI model training processes through their copyright complaint against OpenAI in India. A legal complaint filed at the New Delhi District Court centers on allegations that OpenAI's AI systems including ChatGPT received training from copyrighted sound recordings obtained without authorization thereby infringing upon musicians' intellectual property.

AI technologies operate on the internet to replicate lyrics together with compositions and sound recordings thus violating the rights of original content creators as explained by the Indian Music Industry (IMI) which represents companies like Sony and Warner Music. The labels emphasise their participation as mandatory since it promotes music industry security worldwide along with India. OpenAI extends its legal issue from the original lawsuit filed by ANI as the Indian News Organization accused OpenAI of unauthorized use of its content to train AI models. Nowadays media organizations representing book publishers supported by business moguls Gautam Adani and Mukesh Ambani along with multiple other parties continue filing legal battles against OpenAI.

This case is part of a larger worldwide trend, with comparable legal issues arising in nations like Germany, where OpenAI was sued by the music rights group GEMA for allegedly reproducing song lyrics without permission. These court cases are expected to be crucial in establishing the limits of intellectual property rights in the digital era as AI technology develops.

Reported by:

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CASES

PHONOGRAPHIC PERFORMANCE LIMITED vs. STATE OF GOA & ORS., 2024 SCC OnLine Bom 2713

The Petitioners, Phonographic Performance Ltd (PPL) and Sonotek Cassettes Company, both registered copyright societies under the Copyright Act, 1957, filed a writ petition seeking to quash the circular issued by Government stating that musical performances at religious ceremonies and weddings would not constitute as copyright infringement, effectively preventing copyright owners from enforcing their rights under the Act.

The Petitioners argued that the circular was illegal and infringed upon their statutory rights. PPL, which controlled public performance rights to over 40 lakh sound recordings from 400+ music labels, contended that the circular undermined Section 52(1)(za) of the Copyright Act, which provides specific exceptions to copyright infringement, but the petitioners asserted that the circular went beyond its scope. Further, they contended that the circular would lead to unauthorized public performances, affecting enforcement of their rights.

The State of Goa justified the circular by stating that it was issued to prevent misuse of copyright enforcement mechanisms and to protect the public from harassment. The Respondents claimed that the circular intended to clarify public rights without conflicting with the provision of the Copyright Act.

The Division Bench, comprising Justice M.S Karnik and Justice Valmiki Menezes, gave verdict in favour of the Petitioners. The Court reasoned that the circular unlawfully overrode the Copyright Act by exempting musical performances at religious ceremonies and weddings by instructing authorities to not act against hotels or event organizers for unauthorized musical performances. The state's intent to prevent harassment or misuse of copyright law was acknowledged but deemed insufficient to justify a directive that contradicted the law. The Court quashed the circular, ruling it illegal for encroaching on the domain of judicial interpretation by attempting to pre-emptively determine the applicability of section 52(1)(za).

Reported by:

Mahi Shrivastava

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VODAFONE IDEA LIMITED vs. SAREGAMA INDIA LIMITED & ANR., CS-COM/93/2024

This case was concerned with Vodafone Idea Limited (VI), a prominent telecom service provider, and the use of copyrighted music as Caller Ring Back Tones (CRBT) with obligations towards copyright holders such as Saregama India Ltd. and the Indian Performing Right Society (IPRS). The dispute arose when IPRS contended that VI was required to obtain a separate license and pay royalties for the use of these works, regardless of the licensing agreement VI may or may not have had with Saregama.

The court made the observation that the noteworthy departure introduced by the 2012 amendment is the conferment upon authors of literary and musical works an inalienable right to royalties whenever their works enjoy commercial exploitation through sound recordings, with the exception of any use in cinema halls. This right thus prevails over any potentially contracting arrangement that could otherwise vest full control in producers like Saregama. The court elucidated that the purpose of the amendment was to protect authors—often the weaker party in negotiations—from being forced to surrender their rights in totality.

Evidence charted against Saregama was to the effect that the assignment of rights over the literary and musical works to IPRS took place as early as 1993, with renewals up to 2017. Thus, Saregama lacked the power to grant VI a license purporting to grant the right to exploit these underlying works without involving IPRS. Any license granted to VI by Saregama in breach of its assignment to IPRS, therefore, would be invalid under the Copyright Act.

The Calcutta High Court passed a decision in this case stating that VI was prohibited from using IPRS's musical and literary works collection without the obtainment of a proper license and the payment of the royalties. VI was also ordered to give the details of the use of these tunes as caller tunes within five weeks and to deposit Rs. 2.5 crores as an interim measure with the court awaiting further proceedings. The court considered the point that Saregama's ownership of sound recordings did not include licensing the underlying works without IPRS's participation, as the rights had initially been transferred to the latter.

Reported by:

Chukki Anagha C

Student, Alliance School of Law

NOVEX COMMUNICATIONS PRIVATE LIMITED vs. HYATT INDIA CONSULTANCY PVT LTD., 2024 SCC OnLine Del 7076

Novex Communications Private Limited filed a suit against Hyatt India Consultancy Pvt. Ltd. for copyright infringement under the Copyright Act, 1957. The plaintiff, a well-known media and broadcasting company, has exclusive rights in sound recordings of prominent music labels like Zee Entertainment Enterprises, Tips Industries, and Think Music. It alleged that the defendants were playing its sound recordings copyrighted at events held at Andaz Delhi and other Hyatt hotels without the required license. Even after sending several cease-and-desist letters, the defendants refused to behave and continued to utilize the plaintiff's music illegally. The plaintiff argued that this unauthorized commercial use of its copyrighted works eroded the industry and deterred compliance with intellectual property rights.

The Delhi High Court considered if the defendants' actions qualified as copyright infringement and if exclusive control over public performance of its sound recordings belonged to the plaintiff. It noted that the defendants had obtained licenses from the plaintiff in the past, which indicated their knowledge of its ownership rights. But in this case, they did not have proper authorization even with clear legal requirements. The Court observed that the defendants had benefited financially through the use of the copyrighted music at their outlets without paying license fees, something that, if left unchecked, would create a negative precedent in the industry. Accordingly, the Court issued an ex-parte ad interim injunction in favour of the plaintiff, enjoining the defendants, all of their employees, agents, and third-party associates from playing or publicly performing the plaintiff's sound recordings without a proper license. The order was implemented to all Hyatt and Andaz hotels in India to facilitate full compliance with copyright laws. This judgment upholds the significance of intellectual property rights within the entertainment and hospitality sectors, reiterating that companies should acquire proper licenses to prevent legal repercussions.

Reported by:

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**SAREGAMA INDIA LTD vs. MOVIE WORLD VISUAL MEDIA PVT. LTD.,
2024 SCC OnLine Del 9364**

One of India's oldest and most well-known record labels, Saregama India Ltd., filed a case in Delhi High Court to defend its copyrighted works after learning that 88 of its sound recordings, music compositions, and cinematographic films were being used without permission by Movie World Visual Media Pvt. Ltd. and its affiliates. Digital streaming channels and websites were broadcasting and making money off these pieces.

The defendants persisted in using the works in spite of legal notices, so Saregama accused them of infringing on its exclusive rights under the Copyright Act of 1957. The court found a prima facie case in favor of Saregama after considering various pieces of evidence, including Section 52A certificates and other ownership documents. The judge determined that Saregama's business interests and reputation would suffer irreversible harm if the defendants were permitted to carry on their activities. Consequently, the court issued an ex-parte ad-interim injunction, which stops the defendants from broadcasting or distributing the protected works in the future without the required licenses.

This decision is important in the digital age because piracy and unlawful content distribution jeopardize the financial security of creators. It emphasizes how important it is to enforce copyright laws strictly in order to safeguard moral and commercial rights, both of which are essential for promoting innovation. Additionally, the ruling encourages ethical behaviour in the digital economy, bolstering economic expansion and enhancing the importance of intellectual property in the entertainment sector.

Reported by:

S Chetna

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SUPER CASSETTES INDUSTRIES PVT. LTD. vs. DREAMLINE REALITY MOVIES & ORS., 2024:PHHC: 025132

A case of copyright infringement was filed in the Punjab & Haryana High Court regarding the unauthorized use of sound recordings. T-Series alleged that Dreamline utilized its copyrighted music without permission in the soundtrack and promotional materials of the film 'Shaadi Ke', which was directed by Karan Johar. The defendants argued that the songs were not infringing copies as they were re-recorded with varying arrangements.

However, the Court held that if there is a substantial similarity and permission is not being asked, just copying things doesn't let one off the hook. The Court held that one of the rights of the copyright owner is the sole right to reproduce and distribute the work to the public, as per Sections 14 and 51 of the Copyright Act, 1957. For assessing illegal use, the meaning of "infringing copy" in Section 2(m) was also employed. The Single Judge's ad-interim order to bar the release of the movie based on the infringing songs was sustained. The appeal was rejected by the appellate court after it held that Dreamline's appeal had no merits. The judgment reaffirmed the concept that owners of copyrights own rights over altered or derivative works.

Reported by:

Godavari Sharma

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WARNER CHAPPELL MUSIC, INC. vs. NEALY., 601 U.S. ____ (2024)

This case is regarding a copyright infringement dispute between Sherman Nealy, a music producer, and Warner Chappell Music, Inc., a music publisher. The primary issue before the Court was “Whether assuming a copyright infringement claim is timely under the discovery rule (i.e., filed within three years of discovery), can the plaintiff recover damages for infringements occurring more than three years before the lawsuit was filed, or is there a separate three-year damages cap?”

The Copyright Act (17 U.S.C. § 507(b)) imposes a three-year statute of limitations for civil infringement claims, stating that a suit must be filed “within three years after the claim accrued.” Courts are divided wherein they believe that when it comes to when a claim “accrues” under the “injury rule,” it accrues at the time of infringement, whereas under the “discovery rule,” it accrues when the plaintiff discovers (or reasonably should have discovered) the infringement.

The Court emphasized that 17 U.S.C. § 507(b) sets a three-year statute of limitations for filing a claim but is silent on any time limit for damages once a claim is deemed timely. Section 504, which governs remedies, allows recovery of “actual damages” and “profits” without any temporal restriction. The majority reasoned that if Congress intended to cap damages at three years, it would have explicitly said so.

In a 6-3 decision authored by Justice Elena Kagan, the Supreme Court held that the Copyright Act imposes no separate three-year limit on damages. A copyright owner with a timely claim under the discovery rule is entitled to recover damages for all infringements, regardless of when they occurred. The Court herein affirmed the Eleventh Circuit’s ruling.

Reported by:

Chukki Anagha C

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STRUCTURED ASSET SALES, LLC vs. SHEERAN, No. 23-905 (2d Cir. 2024)

Structured Asset Sales (SAS) filed an appeal before the United States Court of Appeal for the Second Circuit challenging the decision taken by the U.S. District Court of Southern District of New York. SAS claimed that the song ‘Thinking Out Loud’ from 2014 by Ed Sheeran infringed the song ‘Let’s Get It On’ by Marvin Gaye from 1973. SAS claimed the appeal as they have interest in the royalties received from the 1973 song and allege that the 2014 song uses the same combination of chord progression infringing the 1973 song. The District Court initially rejected the summary judgement as requested by Ed Sheeran but later it granted the summary judgment in favour of Ed Sheeran. The District Court held that the chord progression and harmonic rhythm were too common and widely used which cannot be copyright protected. The copyright protection can be extended to a combination of unprotectable elements that are numerous enough and such selection and arrangement of the elements constitutes an original work. The court also held that the protection cannot be granted beyond what is incorporated in the ‘Deposit Copy’ which is filed during registration of the copyright according to the Copyright Act of 1909. The District Court also held that the 2014 song is not identical or nearly identical to that of the 1973 song.

The Appellant court upheld the decision of the District Court whereby it held that there is no infringement of the song, ‘Let’s Get It On’ by Ed Sheeran’s song. The court affirmed the District Court’s exclusion of expert testimony, as anything beyond the scope of the ‘Deposit Copy’ is not protected under the Copyright Act. It also held that the summary judgement in favour of Ed Sheeran is valid, as SAS failed to raise a triable issue. Additionally, the appellant also failed to establish that the combination of the elements is original enough to be protected. The court noted that the work taken as a whole is not substantially similar to Let’s Get It On by Gaye and thus there is no question as to infringement in the case.

Reported by:

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Student, Alliance School of Law

ARTICLE

TAYLOR SWIFT'S BATTLE FOR MASTER RIGHTS: A TURNING POINT FOR ARTIST RIGHTS?

"If you don't own your masters, your master owns you."

-Prince in Rolling Stone in 1996

INTRODUCTION

In 2019, global pop icon Taylor Swift ignited an industry-wide debate on intellectual property rights in the music world. Her public battle over the ownership of her master recordings exposed a longstanding tension in the industry as to who owns the music, and who should? The controversy not only highlighted Swift's personal struggle, but also exposed the outsized lack of negotiating power and legal safeguards available to recording artists worldwide. Her response to re-record her early albums and release them as Taylor's version emerged as a powerful legal and creative move that challenged long established norms. This case provides a striking perspective on how intellectual property law influences the balance of power between artists and music industry.

UNDERSTANDING THE DISPUTE: WHAT ARE MASTER RIGHTS?

In the music industry, master rights refer to the ownership of the original sound recordings. While copyright law typically grants rights to authors or creators, record label contracts assign those rights to the company, especially when the label funds the production and distribution. At the age of 15, Swift signed with Big Machine Records, releasing six albums under their label. In 2019, Big Machine was bought by Scooter Braun, granting him control over Swift's master recordings, without her consent. Swift argued that she had attempted to purchase her masters but was not given a fair opportunity. In response, she announced a big move to re-record her old albums, thus reclaiming the creative control. Her strategy worked: Red (Taylor's Version) and 1989 (Taylor's Version) topped charts and reshaped how re-recording are being valued in today's music industry. Rolling Stone in 2021 rightly noted: Swift flipped a legal defeat into a rallying cry for artist ownership. Her move sparked widespread conversations about creative control and inspired other artists.

WHO REALLY OWNS THE MUSIC?

The Taylor Swift case underscores the legal asymmetry between artists and the record labels. Many artists sign the contracts that give away their master rights in exchange for exposure, marketing and production support. Such contracts often result in the loss of control leaving creators unable to decide how or where their music is used.

In US, copyright law generally favors the party who holds the legal title, not the creator of the content. Under the Copyright Act of 1976, a recording made for hire is owned by the employer or party commissioning the work, not the performer.

Swift's situation sparked broader conversations among artists such as Jojo, Kanye West and Prince, all have criticized the current IP regime. As reported by Variety in 2020, many musicians have started including clauses in their contracts that allow them to either reclaim ownership or rerecord their music after specified no. of years.

REFORMING IP MODELS: EMPOWERING ARTISTS IN DIGITAL AGE

Taylor Swift's struggle not only highlighted the creative impact of losing ownership of her masters, but also the legal shortcomings in safeguarding the moral and financial rights of artists.

Globally, the idea of reversion rights where artists regain the ownership after a certain period, has been proposed to restore balance. Internationally, the WIPO Performances and Phonograms Treaty (WPPT) and the Rome Convention (1961) provide some protection for performer's rights. In India, Section 19(4) of the Copyright Act 1957 addresses the lapse of copyright assignment. It introduces the possibility of rights reverting to creators if the work is not exploited.

Swift's decision to rerecord her albums also opens the door to rethinking copyright in the streamlining era. As artists rely heavily on digital royalties, owning their master rights can be the key to maintaining creative freedom instead of relying on big music companies.

CONCLUSION

Taylor swift's battle for her master rights has become more than a personal and contractual conflict. It has grown as symbol of resistance against outdated industry norms. Her bold move to rerecord her old albums showed how artists can challenge the status quo.

This case has opened up vital discussions about fairness and transparency in music contracts. It also highlights the need for reforms that empower creators. As streamlining continues to reshape the industry, the call for more balanced and artist-friendly IP laws grows louder. Swift's stand is a reminder that intellectual property should not just serve commercial interests, it must also reflect the voice of those who create. The future of music depends on it.

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COMIC

JAB COPY MET ORIGINAL!

-By Ms. Vankayal Tanishka, Ms. Vaishnavi N, Ms. Anoushka Uthaiah



EVENTS & ACTIVITIES OF ACIPR-2025

NATIONAL WORKSHOP ON IP STRATEGIES FOR STARTUPS: The workshop featured Dr. Yoganjaneyulu Kasetti, Mr. Sanjay Sethiya, and Ms. Pankhuri Narula who shared their valuable insights regarding the role played by IPR in startups and their significance in today's innovation-driven environment. The workshop witnessed participants from across the nations with more than 100 participants.

GUEST LECTURE ON LIFE AFTER LAW SCHOOL: The lecture featured our alumni Mr. Paarth Samdani and Mr. Arkadeep Pal who shared their experiences and lessons while they were in law school and encouraged the students to never miss a chance on gaining experiences within their law-school journey. The event was attended by more than 200 students.

INTRA IP DEBATE COMPETITION: The event witnessed participation from over 12 students from 1st to 3rd year law students from BA/BBA LLB and LLB batches, forming 6 teams wherein they engaged in an intellectual exchange, showcasing their debating skills as well as their understanding of IP-related issues. The theme of the competition was “Jhakaas, Bhidu, and the Law: Celebrity Rights and Intellectual Property Rights in the Entertainment Industry”.

NATIONAL WORKSHOP ON IP & MUSIC: LEGAL HARMONIES AND INDUSTRY CHALLENGES: The event has been successfully registered in WIPO's World IP Day 2025 Calendar.

ACIPR BLOGS: Various blogs on innovative and emerging fields such as “Fluid Marks as Marketing Strategy in Digital Era”, “OpenAI v. Asian News International: A Copyright Dispute”, “Legality of Parallel Imports under Indian Trademarks Law in the Light of Kapil Wadhwa Judgement”, “Empowering the Print Disabled and Visually Impaired Persons: WIPO Administered Marrakesh Treaty, Copyright, India”, etc. were published thereby providing a creative platform for discussion of various developments in the field of IP.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

AJIPL VOLUME 3, ISSUE 1: The Journal Committee of AJIPL, a flagship initiative from Alliance Centre for Intellectual Property Rights (ACIPR), Alliance School of Law, Alliance University, is calling for original and unpublished research papers on contemporary IP arenas for the 2025 issue.

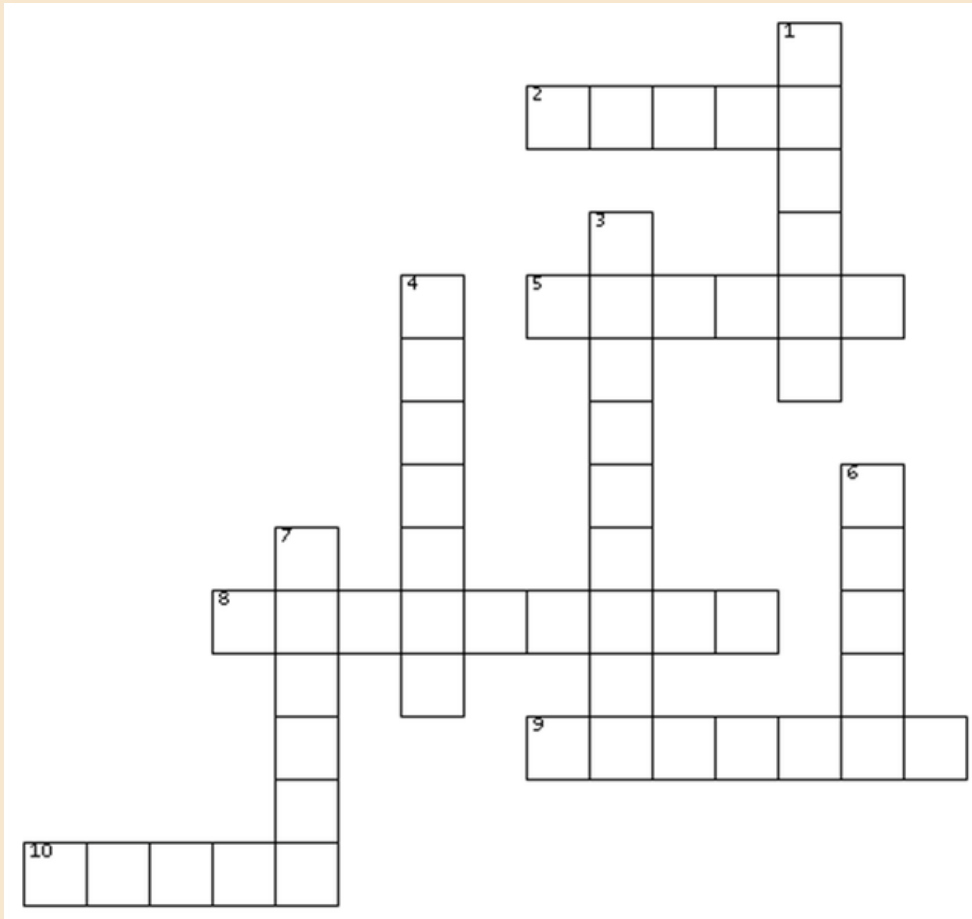
NATIONAL BLOG WRITING COMPETITION: A national blog writing competition that aims to discover and nurture creative writers, providing opportunities for them to showcase their talent and passion for IP.

STUDENT MEMBERS OF ACIPR

- Ms. Malavika Rajeevan – President, B.A. L.L.B. (H) (2022-2027), Alliance School of Law
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- Ms. Kavitha Christo Nelson - Research Scholar, Alliance School of Law
- Ms. Bhuvaneswari S - Research Scholar, Alliance School of Law
- Ms. Ananya Mandal – Research Scholar, Alliance School of Law
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- Ms. PhaniPriya Kondala, B.B.A.LL.B. (H) (2023-2028), Alliance School of Law
- Ms. Vaishnavi N, B.A.LL.B. (H) (2022-2027), Alliance School of Law
- Ms. Kalaivani S, LL.B. (2024-2027), Alliance School of Law

TRIVIA



ACROSS

2. Which vibrant traditional dance form from Gujarat has recently been registered as a Geographical Indication due to its cultural significance?
5. Which tech billionaire, known for founding Twitter, recently proposed the controversial idea of eliminating intellectual property laws altogether?
8. Amazon was recently involved in a high-profile copyright dispute related to which type of digital content distribution?
9. The trademarked term often used as a synonym for a real estate agent is

10. Which tribal art form from Maharashtra is receiving renewed efforts for protection and promotion under India's IP framework?

DOWN

1. Which company owns the trademark for "Barbie Pink"?

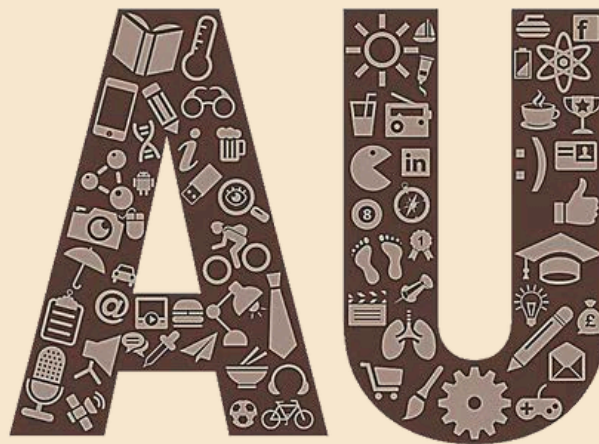
3. In the confectionery industry, the which company's trademarked colour prevents rivals from using it on their packaging

4. From which region in India is the luxurious and world-famous Pashmina wool, now seeking GI protection, traditionally sourced?

6. Who is India's drug approval superhero that reviews a new medicine but do not routinely put on their patent detective hat and check for existing patents before giving their approval stamp?

7. Which major Indian city records the highest number of patent filings annually, serving as a key innovation hub?

ANSWERS: 1. Dorsey, 2. Mumbai, 3. Kashmir, 4. Garba, 5. Warli, 6. Audiobook, 7. Mattel, 8. CDSCO, 9. Realtor, 10. Toblerone.



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29