

ORDER SHEET
PUNJAB DEFAMATION TRIBUNAL
LAHORE

Rizwan Aftab Ahmad versus Mehmood Ahmad Bhatti & Others

Present: Counsel for the parties. Defendant appeared in person and himself explained his position.

The Defendant No. 3 has been proceeded ex-parte on 12.05.2026.

Arguments on leave to defend heard.

The brief facts for the disposal of the application for the leave to defend are that the Plaintiff is a healthcare entrepreneur and Director of National Hospital, DHA Lahore. The Defendants allegedly circulated a defamatory letter to CEO of a private hospital wherein false allegations such as unauthorized commercial activities and misuse of hospital resources were made. In addition to the defamatory letter, the Defendant No. 1 allegedly, with the help of Defendant No. 2 and Defendant No. 3, further defamed the Plaintiff through social media and allegedly circulated false and defamatory allegations of being involved in manufacturing of fake drugs against the Plaintiff among a wide audience. The Plaintiff claims that the actions of the Defendants have caused irreparable harm to his reputation among general public and has filed a claim against the Defendants on account of defamation.

The application for leave to defend was filed by the Defendant on 04.06.2026. It raised mixed questions of law and facts.

In response, the replication was filed by the Plaintiff on 15.06.2026.

The case was fixed for arguments on application for leave to defend on 03.09.2026. During the course of arguments the whole of the case was examined. Both of the counsels have thrown light on the material facts of the case with different perspectives.

The Learned Counsel for the Defendant No. 1 has argued that the claim of the Plaintiff is misconceived and frivolous. He has contended that the plaint filed by the Plaintiff fails to quote the exact words of the alleged defamatory remarks. He has further argued that the Defendant has neither named the Plaintiff or his victim nor made any defamatory remarks against them. The impugned interview was taken out of context. The Defendant has further contended that the impugned letter by him was addressed to CEO, members of Board of Directors and Punjab Healthcare Commission as a shareholder and member of Board. This letter was not circulated among general public and was for relevant forums which is privileged under the Punjab Defamation Act, 2024. The Learned Counsel for the Defendant has finally contended that the pleadings of the Plaintiff raise serious allegations against the Defendant which require determination after recording of evidence. He has therefore prayed that unconditional leave to appear and defend this claim may kindly be granted to the Defendant No. 1.

P.T.O.

ATTESTED

Superintendent
Punjab Defamation Tribunal
Lahore

07 SEP 2026

The Learned Counsel for the Defendant No. 2 has argued that the Defendant No. 2 is a digital journalist and the impugned interview was a protected activity in the interest of general public. He has argued that the Defendant No. 2 did not utter any remarks against the Plaintiff rather he merely acted as a host of the medium. He has contended that the cause of action does not exist against the Defendant No. 2 because the name of the Plaintiff or his brand was not taken during the interview. He has further stated that the actions of the Defendant No. 2 were in accordance with his journalistic duties and he has been involved in the suit due to a misconception. The Learned Counsel has finally prayed that leave to appear and defend the claim may kindly be granted to the Defendant No. 2.

On the other hand the Learned Counsel for the Plaintiff has argued that the Defendants have attempted to obfuscate the facts. He has contended that the impugned interview by the Defendants was directed towards the Plaintiff and any reasonable viewer with knowledge of the relevant facts would associate the remarks towards the Plaintiff. He has further contended that the circulation of letter to the various forums by the Defendant No. 1 was malicious and therefore cannot be regarded as privileged. He has further argued that the actions of the Defendant No. 2 cannot be regarded as protected. Learned Counsel for the Plaintiff has argued that the Defendant No. 2 provided the platform to Defendant No. 1 for the purpose of the dissemination of defamatory remarks and therefore is a necessary party and liable to answer the allegations raised in the plaint. He has finally contended that the Defendants have not raised any substantial question of law or facts in their applications for leave to defend and the applications are devoid of merit. Therefore, their leave to defend may kindly be dismissed.

After completion of arguments the relevant record has been perused.

First of all the Defendant No. 1 in Para No. II of his leave to defend application has categorically denied making defamatory remarks towards the Plaintiff. Whereas the Defendant No. 2 has also clearly denied defaming the Plaintiff. Now the pivotal question to be resolved is whether the actions or words of the Defendants fall within the ambit of the defamation provided under the Act.

The mixed questions of law and facts are involved in this case. Moreover the guidance in order to accept the leave to defend has also been sought from the case law 2002 SBLR 754, 1993 PSC 569 and 2014 LHC 1229.

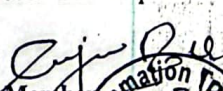
The application of leave to defend is hereby accepted subject to furnishing the personal surety bond by each of the Defendants amounting to rupees 3 million to the satisfaction of the Registrar of this Tribunal.

Now to come up for submission of proposed issues by each party along with lists of witnesses, list of reliance and any other documents they would like to produce during the course of evidence on 22.09.2026.

ATTESTED


Superintendent
Punjab Defamation Tribunal
Lahore

07 SEP 2026


Member
Punjab Defamation Tribunal
Lahore
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Member