



\$~52

* **IN THE HIGH COURT OF DELHI AT NEW DELHI**
+ **W.P.(C) 9184/2026**
+ **CM APPL. 34721/2026**

IN THE MATTER OF:

Ms. Ayesha Khan

D-418, Mayur Vihar Phase-I,
New Delhi-110091

..... Petitioner

VERSUS

1. Union of India

Through the Ministry of Home Affairs

2. Government of NCT of Delhi

Through the Commissioner of Police, Delhi

3. Indian Cybercrime Coordination Centre (I4C)

Through its designated nodal officer

4. Meta Platforms, Inc.

Through its authorised representative and designated law-enforcement channel

5. Meta Platforms India Private Limited

Through its authorised representative, to the extent it is the entity responsible for implementation in India

..... Respondents

CORAM:

HON'BLE DR. JUSTICE SWARANA KANTA SHARMA

ORDER

% **16.07.2026**

CM APPL. 34721/2026 (exemption)

1. Allowed, subject to all just exceptions.
2. Application stands disposed of.

W.P.(C) 9184/2026

1. The petitioner seeks restoration of access to her Instagram account @ayeshakhan.delhi, profile URL <https://www.instagram.com/ayeshakhan.delhi>. She states that the account was compromised on 11 October



2026 after unknown person(s) changed the password and recovery details.

2. The petitioner states that she attempted Instagram's ordinary recovery process on 11 October, 14 October, and 21 October 2026, without regaining access. She thereafter lodged a cybercrime complaint and placed the relevant account records before the investigating authority.
3. Inspector Rohan Mehta, Investigating Officer, Cyber Police Station, South-East District, Delhi, has filed a status report stating that the investigation has verified the petitioner's identity, prior control, and legitimate ownership of the account. The report further records that the account was compromised by unknown person(s), and that the recovery email address ayesha.khan.recovery@protonmail.com has been independently verified by the investigating authority as belonging to the petitioner.
4. The Investigating Officer has stated that the official request to Meta will be transmitted through the designated law-enforcement channel, including the Meta Law Enforcement Online Request System (LEORS), and will identify the verified recovery email address, the account URL, FIR No. 182/2026, and the supporting investigation record.
5. Meta has been joined because the relief sought concerns the operation and restoration of an Instagram account maintained on its service. Meta is not alleged to have committed the hacking. The suspected hacker remains unknown and is the subject of the criminal investigation.
6. The Court has considered the petition, the investigating officer's report, the account-security material, and the



submissions placed on record. The Court accepts, for the purposes of this petition, the investigating authority's finding that the petitioner is the legitimate account holder and that the account was compromised.

7. The Court is satisfied that a limited mandatory direction is necessary to restore the petitioner's access and to prevent continued misuse of her identity. The direction below does not authorise disclosure of private communications, does not require Meta to act on an unverified email address, and does not require any step that is prohibited by applicable law or technically impossible within Meta's account-security system.

OPERATIVE DIRECTIONS

8. The writ petition is allowed in the following terms:
- a. Respondent Nos. 4 and 5, namely Meta Platforms, Inc. and the appropriate Meta entity responsible for implementation in India, **shall restore the petitioner's access** to the Instagram account **@ayeshakhan.delhi** through the verified recovery channel aysha.khan.recovery@protonmail.com, upon receipt of the authenticated copy of this order and the Investigating Officer's official LEORS submission.
 - b. The restoration shall be carried out only through Meta's secure account-recovery mechanism and shall include, as technically necessary, termination of unauthorised sessions, removal of unauthorised recovery details, issuance of a password-reset or access-recovery link, and re-association of the account with the verified recovery channel identified in clause (a).
 - c. Respondent Nos. 4 and 5 **shall not treat the password, recovery-email, or security changes made by the suspected hacker as evidence of a voluntary transfer or abandonment of the account by the petitioner.**
 - d. The Investigating Officer **shall transmit** the authenticated order, the verified recovery-channel particulars, the account URL, FIR No. 182/2026, and the relevant investigation reference through Meta's designated law-enforcement channel, including LEORS where applicable.
 - e. Meta shall complete the restoration steps, or provide the secure access-recovery link through the verified recovery channel, within **seven days** of receiving the authenticated order and official LEORS submission.
 - f. If a particular technical step stated in clause (b) is unavailable or prohibited by applicable law, Meta shall implement the nearest lawful and technically



available method that restores the petitioner's access without compromising account security. Meta shall communicate the reason for any such limitation to the Investigating Officer through the official channel.

9. The directions in paragraph 8 are confined to restoration of access to the identified account and do not direct Meta to disclose private messages, photographs, videos, or other account content to the petitioner or the investigating authority. Any request for such material shall be made through the separate legal process applicable to electronic content.
10. Respondent No. 3, I4C, shall have a coordination role only. It shall not determine account ownership or substitute its own communication for the authenticated request of the Investigating Officer. The Investigating Officer shall remain responsible for the accuracy and lawful transmission of the LEORS submission.
11. The Investigating Officer shall file a compliance report within **fourteen days** of transmission of the order, stating whether access was restored, whether the recovery link was delivered through the verified channel, and whether any further direction is required.
12. The petitioner remains at liberty to pursue the applicable grievance mechanism or any other remedy available in law if the directions are not complied with or if a separate dispute arises concerning the account.
13. The petition and pending application stand disposed of in the above terms.

DR. SWARANA KANTA SHARMA, J

JULY 16, 2026/ns