

Celina wants Pooja Bedi to apologise for calling her 'delusional'

Bollywood actress Celina Jaitley says she will withdraw her lawsuit against Pooja Bedi, who allegedly called her mentally ill and delusional, if the latter issues a public apology.

'If she apologises to me in all the leading newspapers, I wouldn't want to take this further. But calling someone delusional is not a small matter. I've nothing against Pooja. So I don't know why she decided to talk like this. People are wondering why she has spoken like this,' Celina told IANS in an interview.

It all began with Endemol asking Celina to participate in their reality show 'Fear Factor'. Although the actress turned down the offer, the production house used her name in the publicity campaigns.

'I didn't mind all this unwanted attention, but when my name was used as one of the contestants for the publicity for 'Fear Factor', I blew up. I totally understand protocol. Then I see Pooja Bedi jumping into the whole thing. I don't know her except when we met for her chat show. I can't see why she spoke about me like that,' said Celina.

'It isn't as if I've gone on a suing spree. I don't want Pooja's money, but a printed apology is a must.'

Excerpts from an interview:

Q: Your run-ins with various people and organisations are creating a lot of news?

A: It's not as if I'm enjoying it or that I've invited all these controversies. But there're certain situations in life when one needs to take a stand. Take the Endemol case. I've nothing against the organisation. It's one of their employees who was constantly calling and messaging me even after I told him I wasn't interested in doing their reality show 'Fear Factor'. Yet, they went ahead publicising my name as a part of the show.

The next day they made me out to be this tantrum-thrower who demanded an entourage for the trip to South Africa. When the discussions had never reached the stage of a contract, where was the question of demanding an entourage?

Q: How did you decide this employee was crossing the line of protocol?

A: I didn't react at his constant calls or the champagne bottle, which has created so much news. I've received champagne on the eve of my release. I understand the protocol for such things. But the agenda behind it was not to get me on the show but to become my manager. My lawyers put all this in my legal notice because I believe the Endemol employee was not contacting me for his company. He was doing it for his personal interest even after my telling him that I've a very efficient manager.

Q: Did you tell him that?

A: Yes. I didn't mind all this unwanted attention, but when my name was used as one of the contestants for the publicity for 'Fear Factor', I blew up. Then I see Pooja Bedi jumping into the whole thing. I don't know her except when we met for her chat show. I can't see why she spoke about me like that.

Q: Pooja thought you might be delusional.

A: Why should she decide my behaviour? Is she a qualified psychologist? I understand what it is to live in a democratic country. It doesn't mean you call someone mentally ill or delusional without proof. Yes, things have happened to me over the last four years. Some people are more prone to crisis than others. I happen to be one of those unfortunate people with whom untoward incidents have taken place.

That doesn't mean I'm delusional. Would Pooja like me to prove that those things have really happened to me? Cops caught that German guy who misbehaved with me at a hotel in Mumbai. His visa was cancelled. Did I imagine all that?

Q: You've now sent a legal notice to Pooja Bedi?

A: Yes. I thought of letting it go. My lawyers thought it was a good idea to send her the notice. Once she called me delusional, everyone in the media started picking on that. Believe me I've nothing against Pooja personally. I'm shocked why she should give defamatory quotes about me when she doesn't know the background to the whole thing. I didn't want to be a mere contestant on a reality show. I've my Hollywood agent to be answerable to. So when my name was mentioned in 'Fear Factor', I reacted.

Q: Would you be willing to compromise with Pooja?

A: If she apologises to me in all the leading newspapers, I wouldn't want to take this further. But calling someone delusional is not a small matter. I've nothing against Pooja. So I don't know why she decided to talk like this.

Q: Maybe Pooja feels you over-reacted?

A: Does she know I've messages and recorded conversations of the man from Endemol? Believe me I've worked hard for whatever little I am today. Nobody has ever promoted me. I can't allow my name to be sullied.

Jealous actresses are doing their best to malign me. When I bought a house on prime property in Mumbai, they bitched wondering whom I slept with to afford my house. People, who come up the hard way, know the value of their reputation. I've kept quiet. But now when someone slanders me by calling me mentally ill, I've to get up and assert myself.

It isn't as if I've gone on a suing spree. I don't want Pooja's money, but a printed apology is a must.

Subhash K. Jha (© IANS / India eNews)