IN THE SUPREME COURT OF INDIA
CIVIL ORIGINAL JURISDICTION

WRIT PETITION (CIVIL) NO.575 OF 2025

M. MAHESH REDDY **PETITIONER**

VERSUS

STATE OF KARNATAKA & ORS. **RESPONDENT**

WITH

TRANSFERRED CASE (CIVIL) NO.42 OF 2025

O R D E R

1. Application for intervention is allowed.

2. Heard learned counsel for the parties.

3. Writ petition (Civil) No.575/2025 has been filed under Article 32 of the Constitution of India as a Public Interest Litigation seeking the following reliefs:

> **"i. A Writ in the nature of Mandamus or any other appropriate writ, order, or direction, declaring that the de facto ban on the screening of the CBFC certified film 'Thug Life' in the State of Karnataka, effected through threats of violence, intimidation, and extra-constitutional directives by non-state actors and Respondent No.5, and facilitated by the inaction of Respondents No. 1, 2, and 3, is illegal, unconstitutional, and void ab initio, being violative of Articles 14, 19(1)(a), 19(1)(g) and 21 of the Constitution of India;**
>
> **ii. A Writ in the nature of Mandamus or any other appropriate writ, order, or direction, commanding the Respondents No. 1, 2, and 3 to ensure, on a continuing basis, the safe, secure, and unimpeded exhibition of the CBFC certified Tamil feature film 'Thug Life' in all cinema theatres and multiplexes across the State of Karnataka that are willing to screen the same, and**

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Digitally signed by Deepak Gugnani
Date: 2025.10.10 12:11:44 IST
Reason:

to take all necessary steps to prevent any recurrence of such intimidation for this or any other lawfully certified film;

iii. A Writ in the nature of Mandamus of any other appropriate writ, order, or direction, commanding the Respondents No. 1, 2, and 3 to initiate and pursue with utmost diligence, accountability, and transparency, appropriate legal proceedings, including criminal prosecution, against all individuals and office bearers of organizations who have issued threats of violence, arson, or incited communal hatred/violence in connection with the release of the film 'Thug Life', as evidenced by the Annexures and to submit a status report on action taken to this Hon'ble Court within a time-bound manner;

v. Pass such other or further orders as this Hon'ble Court may deem fit and proper in the interest of justice, equity, and good conscience, and to uphold the majesty of the Constitution."

4. In view of the stand taken by respondent No.1 – State of Karnataka in the affidavit, it is not necessary to delve into the rival contentions canvassed at the Bar. Suffice it to say that on 13.06.2025, this Court while issuing urgent notice, passed the following order:

"1. It is argued by the learned counsel appearing for the petitioner that a duly CBFC certified Tamil Feature Film "Thug Life" is not allowed to be screened in the theaters in the State of Karnataka. The so called ban under threat of violence stems not from any lawful process, but from a deliberate campaign of terror, including explicit threats of arson against cinema halls, incitement to large-scale communal violence targeting linguistic minorities.

2. Considering the urgency shown in the matter and the issue involved, issue notice to the respondents, returnable on 17.06.2025.

3. Additionally, service through dasti mode is also permitted.

4. Liberty is also granted to serve the learned

> **Standing Counsel representing the respondent-State of Karnataka.”**

5. Thereafter, the matter came to be listed on 17.06.2025 on which date, Writ Petition No.15589/2025 filed by the producer of the movie “Thug Life”, pending before the High Court of Karnataka was transferred to this Court. We also granted a day’s time to respondent No.1 – State of Karnataka to file affidavit.

6. Pursuant thereto, State of Karnataka has filed affidavit. In paragraph No.2 of the affidavit, State has categorically stated that it has not imposed any restrictions on the release of the movie “Thug Life”, which has been duly certified by the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC). The affidavit further states that in the event, producers of the movie decide to release the film in the State of Karnataka, the State Government would provide full protection and security to the same. Paragraph No.3 of the affidavit reads as follows:

> **“3. It is respectfully submitted that, in the event the producers of the film decide to release the movie in the State of Karnataka, the State Government is duty bound and will give protection and security for such release and for the people connected therewith, including the cast, director, producers, the exhibitors, and the audience.”**

7. We appreciate the principled stand taken by the State of Karnataka.

8. In the hearing today, Mr. Satish Parasaran, learned Senior Counsel appearing for the petitioner in Writ Petition (Civil) No.15589/2025, which has been transferred to this Court, submits that he is satisfied with the stand taken by the State Government and in view thereof, he would not like to pursue further with the

Writ Petition.

9. However, learned counsel for the petitioner in Writ Petition (Civil) No.575/2025 submits that it would be better if this Court lays down certain guidelines to tackle similar issues in future and also to impose cost.

10. Mr. Jain, learned counsel representing respondent No.5 submits that respondent No.5 is in negotiation with the producers of the movie. He also submits that in view of the stand taken by the State Government, respondent No.5 will not come in the way of screening of the movie in the State of Karnataka.

11. Mr. Anand Sanjay M. Nuli, learned Senior Counsel for the intervenor, submits that the statement made by the lead actor of the film has hurt the sentiments of the people of the State. Therefore, they are agitated. However, on a pointed query of the Court, he submits that his organization will never take law into its own hands and respects the freedom of speech and expression of all including that of the movie producer and the lead actor. However, he submits that such distorted statements should not be made, which hurt the sentiments of the people.

12. Now that the State has come up with the affidavit, as indicated above, paving the way for screening of the movie in the State of Karnataka with respondent No.5 also assuring collaboration in this regard, we feel that it would be in the interest of justice to give a closure to the present proceedings. Therefore, and particularly considering the stand taken by the State Government, we do not feel that there is any need to issue guidelines or impose cost as prayed for by learned counsel for the petitioner in Writ

13. However, we direct respondent No.1 – State of Karnataka that in the event any individual or group tries to forcibly prevent release and screening of the movie in the State of Karnataka or resorts to any act of coercion or violence, the State shall act promptly against such individual(s) and groups by initiating appropriate action under the criminal law as well as civil law.

14. Before parting with the record, we make it clear that the State of Karnataka, respondent No.5 as well as the intervernor are bound by the statements made today before the Court and would have to abide by any consequences in case of breach thereof.

15. Writ Petitions are disposed of accordingly. Pending application(s), if any, shall also stand disposed of.

.....J.
(UJJAL BHUYAN)

.....J.
(MANMOHAN)

NEW DELHI;
JUNE 19, 2025.

REVISED

ITEM NO.33 COURT NO.11 SECTION PIL-W

S U P R E M E C O U R T O F I N D I A
RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Writ Petition (Civil) No.575/2025

M. MAHESH REDDY Petitioner(s)

VERSUS

STATE OF KARNATAKA & ORS. Respondent(s)

IA No. 144463/2025 - EX-PARTE AD-INTERIM RELIEF
IA No. 145772/2025 - INTERVENTION APPLICATION
IA No. 146848/2025 - PERMISSION TO FILE ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS/FACTS/ANNEXURES
IA No. 145804/2025 - PERMISSION TO FILE ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS/FACTS/ANNEXURES

WITH
T.C.(C) No. 42/2025 (IV-A)

Date : 19-06-2025 These matters were called on for hearing today.

CORAM : HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE UJJAL BHUYAN
HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE MANMOHAN

[PARTIAL COURT WORKING DAYS BENCH]

For Petitioner(s) : Mr. Satish Parasaran, Sr. Adv.
Mr. T. Harish Kumar, AOR
Mr. M.v.bhaskar, Adv.
Mr. Subhang, Adv.
Mr. Deepak Jain, Adv.
Mr. Shubham Kothari, Adv.
Mr. Shubham Chopda, Adv.

Mr. A Velan, AOR
Ms. Navpreet Kaur, Adv.
Mr. Prince Singh, Adv.
Mr. Nilay Rai, Adv.

For Respondent(s) : Mr. D. L. Chidananda, AOR

Mr. Satish Parasaran, Sr. Adv.
Mr. T. Harish Kumar, AOR
Mr. M.v.bhaskar, Adv.
Mr. Subhang, Adv.
Mr. Deepak Jain, Adv.
Mr. Shubham Kothari, Adv.

Mr. Shubham Chopda, Adv.

Mr. Udayan Jain, Adv.
Mr. Sonal Jain, AOR
Ms. Kajal Sharma, Adv.
Ms. Amiti Gupta, Adv.

For Intervenor(s) : M/S. Nuli & Nuli, AOR
Mr. Anand Sanjay M Nuli, Sr. Adv.
Mr. Akash S Kukreja, Adv.

UPON hearing the counsel the Court made the following

O R D E R

Writ petition (Civil) No.575/2025 and T.C.(C) No.42/2025 (@ Writ Petition No.15589 of 2025) are disposed of in terms of the signed order placed on the file.

Pending application(s), if any, shall stand disposed of.

(NEHA GUPTA)
SENIOR PERSONAL ASSISTANT

(AVGV RAMU)
COURT MASTER (NSH)

ITEM NO.33 COURT NO.11 SECTION PIL-W

S U P R E M E C O U R T O F I N D I A
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Mr. Akash S Kukreja, Adv.

UPON hearing the counsel the Court made the following

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Writ petitions are disposed of in terms of the signed order placed on the file.

Pending application(s), if any, shall stand disposed of.

(NEHA GUPTA)
SENIOR PERSONAL ASSISTANT

(AVGV RAMU)
COURT MASTER (NSH)