



**IN THE HIGH COURT OF KARNATAKA AT BENGALURU**

**DATED THIS THE 21<sup>ST</sup> DAY OF NOVEMBER, 2025**

**PRESENT**

**THE HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE D K SINGH**

**AND**

**THE HON'BLE MS. JUSTICE TARA VITASTA GANJU**

**WRIT PETITION NO. 22323 OF 2025 (GM-RES)**

**BETWEEN:**

1. M/S. DNA ENTERTAINMENT NETWORKS  
PRIVATE LIMITED  
A COMPANY INCORPORATED UNDER  
THE INDIAN COMPANIES ACT, 1956,  
HAVING ITS REGISTERED OFFICE AT NO. 7,  
(OLD NO. 215), BELLARY ROAD,  
PALACE ORCHARDS,  
BANGALORE-560 080.  
REPRESENTED BY ITS DIRECTOR,  
MR. SUNIL MATHEW,  
S/O. MR. T. C. MATHEW,  
AGED ABOUT 49 YEARS.

...PETITIONER

(BY SRI. B.K.SAMPATH KUMAR, SENIOR COUNSEL  
ALONG WITH SRI. SURAJ SAMPATH., ADVOCATE)

**AND:**

1. STATE OF KARNATAKA  
REPRESENTED BY THE CHIEF SECRETARY,  
VIDHANA SOUDHA,  
BANGALORE-560 001.
2. THE DEPUTY SECRETARY  
HOME DEPARTMENT (LAW AND ORDER),  
GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA,  
VIDHANA SOUDHA,



BANGALORE-560 001.

3. HONBLE JUSTICE JOHN MICHAEL CUNHA  
COMMISSION OF INQUIRY,  
FORMER JUDGE OF THE HON'BLE  
HIGH COURT OF KARNATAKA,  
NO.12, 1<sup>ST</sup> FLOOR, OLD BUILDING,  
KUMARA KRUPA GUEST HOUSE,  
KUMARA KRUPA ROAD,  
SESHADRIPURAM,  
BANGALORE-560 001.

...RESPONDENTS

(BY SRI. K.SHASHIKIRAN SHETTY, AG ALONG WITH  
SMT. AVISHKA VAISHNAV, ADVOCATE AND  
SMT. ANUKANKSHA KALKERI, HCGP R1 & R2)

THIS WRIT PETITION IS FILED UNDER ARTICLES 226 AND 227 OF THE CONSTITUTION OF INDIA, PRAYING TO ISSUE A WRIT OF CERTIORARI OR ANY OTHER APPROPRIATE WRIT, ORDER OR DIRECTION QUASHING THE IMPUGNED REPORT SUBMITTED BY THE 3RD RESPONDENT ON 11/07/2025, ETC.

THIS WRIT PETITION HAVING BEEN HEARD AND RESERVED FOR ORDERS ON 12.11.2025, COMING ON FOR PRONOUNCEMENT THIS DAY, **D K SINGH J.**, PRONOUNCED THE FOLLOWING:

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE D K SINGH  
and  
HON'BLE MS. JUSTICE TARA VITASTA GANJU

**CAV ORDER**

(PER: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE D K SINGH)

The petitioner-M/s.DNA Entertainment Networks (for short '**the DNA**') - a Media Company incorporated in the year 2005 under the provisions of the Companies Act, 1956, (for short '**the Act**') has filed this writ petition challenging the report submitted by the Hon'ble Mr. Justice John Michael Cunha (Retd.), One Member Commission appointed by the State Government vide notification dated 05.06.2025 under Section 3(1) of the Commission of Enquiry Act, 1952 in respect of the unfortunate incident on 04.06.2025, during the victory celebrations of the Royal Challengers Bengaluru in Indian Premier League 2025. Sadly, 11 people had died and several got grievously injured in the unfortunate and tragic incident (stampede).

2. The prayers sought for in the writ petition are extracted hereunder :-

*"i) Issue a Writ of Certiorari or any other appropriate Writ, Order or Direction quashing the impugned*

*Report submitted by the 3rd Respondent on 11.07.2025.*

*ii) Issue a Writ of Mandamus or any other appropriate Writ, Order or Direction directing the Respondents to furnish all the documents as sought for in the Application dated 22.07.2025 made by Mr. Sunil Mathew on behalf of the Petitioner vide Annexure G.*

*iii) Direct the Respondents to pay the costs of this Petition."*

3. Brief facts of the case are as under :-

Royal Challengers, Bengaluru ( for short '**the RCB**') is a Bengaluru based T20 Cricket team owned and operated by Royal Challengers Sports Private Limited ('**the RCSPL**'). The RCSPL is a company incorporated under the provisions of the Companies Act, 1956. RCB participates annually in the Indian Premier League ('**the IPL**') and Women's Premier League ('**the WPL**') tournaments organized by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (for short '**the BCCI**').

4. Since 2008, the RCSPL has engaged DNA, the petitioner herein, a Media and Management Company based in Bengaluru, which has been acting as the turnkey event management service provider for RCB.

5. The entire responsibility of conceptualizing, planning, coordinating and executing all events and all activities have been comprehensively outsourced by RCSPL to DNA. DNA acts as an agent of RCSPL in respect of events across India, including cricket matches and other functions, and is responsible for various aspects for any such event including security and permissions at Chinnaswamy Stadium.

6. The latest turnkey event management agreement between RCSPL and DNA is dated 14.03.2025. There is a statement of work in the turnkey event management agreement dated 14.03.2025, which expressly identifies "Security Services" and "Permissions" as part of the scope of services to be provided exclusively by DNA.

7. On 03.06.2025, the Final Match of the Indian Premier League, 2025 took place at Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad, Gujarat between Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) and Punjab Kings (PBKS). RCB emerged victorious in the Final Match of IPL 2025.

8. The petitioner-DNA, had conceived the victory celebrations on 04.06.2025 to be held at Chinnaswamy Stadium, Bengaluru.

9. As per the respondents, the victory celebrations at Chinnaswamy Stadium were planned without obtaining the required prior approvals and permissions, resulting in the gathering of huge, unregulated crowd at the venue.

10. The Director General and Inspector General of Police from Bengaluru and the Commissioner of Police, City of Bengaluru submitted their reports stating that on the same day that 11 people died and more than 50 were injured in a stampede during the RCB Victory Celebrations. This Court took *suo moto* cognizance of the "stampede"

incident dated 04.06.2025 and passed the following order:-

*"Reports have been published in various newspapers including the Times of India, wherein a narration has been made about an unfortunate incident/tragedy happened on 04.06.2024, when eleven (11) persons have died, various injured during the course of victory celebrations of Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) in the Indian Premier League (IPL) Cricket Tournament. An intent to victory celebration has led to a tragedy."*

2. *The Court perusing the reports deemed it appropriate to take suo motu cognizance to ascertain :-*

- i. the reasons which led to the tragedy,*
- ii. whether the tragedy could have been prevented,*
- iii. what remedial measures need to be taken to prevent such tragedies in the future.*

3. *Registry is directed to register the writ petition as suo motu ...../ 2025 in "Re: Stampede on 04.06.2025."*

4. *The Court officer has drawn our attention to various communications/e-mails received by this Court from various persons on the subject matter.*

10. *Having heard Sri Shetty and perused the status- report, we direct, a further status-report to be filed by the State reflecting the following points:*

*(i) When and who has taken the decision to hold the victory celebrations and in what manner?*

*(ii) What steps were taken to regulate the traffic?*

*(iii) What steps were taken to regulate the public/ crowd?*

*(iv) What medical and other facilities were arranged at the venue?*

*(v) Any assessment was made in advance on the number of people, who may be present at the time of celebration?*

*(vi) Whether persons injured were given immediate medical attention by the medical experts at the venue? If not why?*

*(vii) How much time was taken to take the injured to the hospital?*

*(viii) Whether any SOP has been formulated to manage the crowd of 50,000 and above in any sport event and celebrations of this nature ?*

*(ix) Any permission was sought to organise the event?"*

11. The suo motu petition was registered as Writ Petition No.16530/2025 (SM).

12. The State, in response, filed an affidavit stating therein that the reports would indicate "that the stampede was the result of over-crowding and severe mismanagement by the event organisers with inadequate lack of control, lack of proper coordination with local authorities and complete disregard for public safety norms". Thousands of people were allowed to gather in and around the stadium without sufficient barricading, entry regulation, or emergency response mechanism in place.

13. The status report dated 12.06.2025 filed by the State in Writ Petition No.16530/2025 (SM) would indicate that the petitioner had submitted only the intimation letter on 03.06.2025 at 06.30 p.m. to the State Authorities/ Police and it was not a formal permission application and the police denied permission due to lack of correct details on crowd, arrangements and bottlenecks. No formal application in prescribed form was filed. Despite denial of permission by the State authorities, RCB/DNA and Karnataka State Cricket Association, which manages and

owns Chinnaswamy Stadium, unilaterally proceeded with the victory celebrations without prior consultation or permission. A massive crowd of around 3,00,000 people gathered at the Chinnaswamy Stadium which has a maximum capacity of only 35,000 people. Organisers initially through social media announced free entry. However later at 3.14 p.m. on 04.06.2025, it was clarified that passes would be required. It led to chaos and disruption leading to stampede. The status report as filed squarely put blame on the petitioner, RCB and on the Karnataka State Cricket Association (KSCA)

14. The KSCA in its statement of objection filed in Writ Petition No.16530/2025 made it clear that the victory celebrations on 04.06.2025 were entirely conceived, organized and executed by RCB through DNA network and the KSCA role was only to permit the use of Chinnaswamy Stadium and it had no involvement in planning, coordination or logistics.

15. DNA, as RCB's sole authorized agent, managed publicity campaign and ticket/pass allocation, gate control and frisking, private security deployment and police liaison, parade route, planning stage setup and VIP facilitation. All security arrangements were handled by DNA and Police. DNA distributed VIP/official passes only around 02.30 p.m., causing incomplete disruption and disorder. The huge turnout far exceeding the stadium capacity of 30,000 to 35,000 was entirely due to huge publicity given by RCB / DNA. KSCA did not issue any public invitation. KSCA had no role in security, ticketing or crowd management. The tragedy was the result of poor planning, execution and operational failure of DNA as RCB's event Manager.

16. The Incident did not only draw the attention of this Court, but huge public outcry was also witnessed and reported in several Newspaper and visual media. Besides *suo moto* Writ Petition No. 16530/2025, Writ Petition No. 16371/2025, Writ Petition No.16462/2025 by one Mr. Nikhil Sosale, Writ Petition No.16460/2025 by M/s.Royal Challengers Sports Private Limited, Writ Petition

No.16469/2025 by one Mr. Sunil Mathew; Writ Petition No.16452/2025 by M/S. DNA Entertainment Network Pvt. Ltd.; Writ Petition No.16387/2025 by Managing Committee of KSCA, came to be filed before this Court in respect to the said tragic and unfortunate incident.

17. In all these writ petitions, the role of the petitioner in the incident was highlighted. Three FIRs in Crime No.123/2025, Crime No.124/2025 and Crime No. 125/2025 were registered in respect of the incident against DNA, RCSPL and KSCA.

18. The Government, considering the public outcry and magnitude of the tragedy in the stampede on 04.06.2025, during victory celebrations of RCB, constituted One Member Enquiry Commission headed by Hon'ble Mr. Justice John Michael Cunha (Retired) under the provisions of Section 3 (1) of the Commissions of Inquiry Act, 1952, vide Notification dated 05.06.2025 The terms of reference for inquiry would read as under:-

*"(1) Regarding whether the necessary permissions, rules, and procedures were followed during the organization of the celebratory event for the RCB team's victory at the Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru City;*

*(2) The reasons/responsible parties for the stampede and crushing incident that occurred during the celebratory event for the RCB team's victory at the Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru City;*

*(3) The reasons/responsible persons for this tragedy based on the sequence of events and circumstances that led to the death of 11 people and injuries to more than 50 people;*

*(4) Measures taken as precautions and warnings regarding the incident at Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru City, and any resulting lapses/deficiencies, and identifying those responsible for this incident;*

*(5) Identifying the lapses/deficiencies that caused this tragedy and those responsible for them;*

*(6) Regarding precautionary measures that can be taken to prevent the recurrence of such incidents in the future;*

*(7) And other applicable points related to this tragedy."*

[REDACTED]

19. The Commission has submitted the report dated 10.07.2025.

[REDACTED]

20. The present writ petition has been filed by DNA stating that the provisions of Section 8(b) and Section 8(c) of the 1952 Act were violated by the Commission of Inquiry. The petitioner's reputation was likely to be prejudicially affected by submitting the inquiry report and therefore, the petitioner ought to have been allowed to produce evidence and cross examine the witnesses. It is therefore, submitted that since the inquiry conducted by the One Man Commission of Inquiry was in violation of the provisions of the 1952 Act itself, the inquiry report submitted by the Commission of Inquiry dated 10.07.2025 is liable to be set aside.

[REDACTED]

21. It is further submitted that petitioner need not wait for the action to be taken in pursuance of the inquiry report, but he would be entitled to challenge the inquiry

report itself for which he has placed reliance on in the judgment of **STATE OF BIHAR VS LAL KRISHNA ADVANI AND OTHERS** (2003) 8 SCC 361.

22. On the other hand, Mr. Shasikiran Shetty, learned Advocate General for the State has submitted that perusal of the terms of reference for inquiry by Hon'ble Mr. Justice John Michael Cunha (Retd.,) One Man Commission would amply indicate that the Commission was constituted solely to inquire into the facts that led to the occurrence of the stampede at Chinnaswamy Stadium during the RCB Victory Celebration event on 04.06.2025. The Commission was only a fact finding body. The scope of inquiry of the Commission as constituted was not against the conduct of any individual/entity and was only to comprehensively and objectively enquire into the incident as a whole, so as to ascertain the facts leading to such tragedy.

23. It is further submitted that all contentions of the petitioner that without providing opportunity to the petitioner to cross examine the witnesses and without

providing copy of the depositions of all the witnesses and right to cross examine them are based on the assumptions that in the report submitted by the Commission of Inquiry dated 10.07.2025, they are adverse remarks against the petitioner prejudicially affecting the reputation of the petitioner.

24. It is further contented that the petitioner does not have the copy of the report and he has filed this writ petition on assumptions. Learned Advocate General has further submitted that the right of 'reasonable opportunity' of being heard in the inquiry and to produce evidence as provided under Section 8B and 8C of the Act of 1952 and cross examining the witnesses would come into play only when the Commission considers it necessary to inquire into the conduct of any person or is of the opinion that the reputation of any person would likely get prejudicially affected by the inquiry. In the present case, as the Commission had been constituted only to ascertain the facts and submit its report as a fact finding body, no question of inquiring into conduct of any individual would

arise and therefore, the provisions of Section 8B and 8C of the Act of 1952 would not get attracted.

25. Learned Advocate General has further submitted that the writ petition has been filed as an afterthought chance/attempt. The petitioner was issued notice, but he never demanded copies of deposition of all witnesses examined by the Commission and permission to cross-examine other witnesses, whose evidence had already been recorded. It was only by the memo dated 04.07.2025 that the petitioner made the demand for copies of the deposition of all witnesses examined by the Commission and permission to cross examine other witnesses. By the said date, the Commission must have started giving final touches to the report inasmuch as the report was to be submitted on or before 10.07.2025 and at that belated stage, there was no question of meeting the demands of the petitioner. The petitioner did not file any application as required under Section 8B and Section 8C of the Commission of Enquiries Act, 1952 before the Commission and without raising any ground before the

Commission in regard to its reputation being likely to be prejudicially affected by the inquiry so conducted, he is raising such grounds before this Court in the present Writ Petition.

26. Learned Advocate General has further submitted that before taking any action on the basis of the report dated 10.07.2025 submitted to the Government by the Commission of Enquiry, the petitioner would be issued a notice and only after hearing him, any action would be taken.

27. Learned Advocate General has placed reliance on judgment in the case of **GOA FOUNDATION VERSUS UNION OF INDIA AND OTHERS ((2014) 6 SCC 590)** and has prayed for dismissal of the writ petition.

28. We have considered the submissions advanced by learned counsels for both the parties.

29. The terms of reference to the Commission of One Man inquiry vide Government Notification dated 05.06.2025 has been set out in paragraph Nos.6 and 7.

30. The One Man Commission of Inquiry set up by the Government vide Notification dated 05.06.2025 would suggest that the Commission of Inquiry was set up as a fact finding body. The petitioner was issued notice by the said commission and the petitioner never demanded the depositions of the witnesses or opportunity to cross examine the witnesses already examined before 04.07.2025. As an afterthought attempt, the petitioner filed the memo on 04.07.2025 before the Commission of Inquiry, demanding depositions of all the witnesses and opportunity to cross examine the witnesses, knowing fully that the terms of Commission of Inquiry would end on 10.07.2025 and the Commission of Inquiry were to submit the report on or before 10.07.2025.

31. We are therefore, of the view that the petitioner has filed this writ petition as an afterthought attempt to avoid any action(s) on the basis of the recommendation made by the Commission of Inquiry in its report dated 10.07.2025.

32. We further take note of the submission of the Learned Advocate General that before taking any action against the petitioner, the petitioner shall be given an opportunity of hearing and after considering the petitioner's response, action would be taken.

33. In view of the stand taken by the State Government that without giving an opportunity to the petitioner no action would be taken against the petitioner solely on the basis of the findings of the report of Inquiry Commission, any action on the report shall be taken after giving an opportunity of hearing to the petitioner. Thus, clearly the Government will make its own assessment of the facts.

34. We are of the considered view, that the report dated 10.07.2025 cannot be set aside on mere apprehensions and assumptions. In a similar situation and relying on a similar undertaking by the State of Goa, the Supreme Court in **GOA FOUNDATION** cited (supra) refused to quash the report of Justice Shah Commission.

Paragraph 14 of the said judgment is extracted hereunder :-

*"14. We find that Section 8-B of the Commissions of Inquiry Act, 1952 provides that if a person is likely to be prejudicially affected by the inquiry, the Commission shall give to that person a reasonable opportunity of being heard and to produce evidence in his defence and Section 8-C of the Commissions of Inquiry Act, 1952 provides that every such person will have a right to cross-examine and the right to be represented by a legal practitioner before the Commission. As the State Government of Goa has taken a stand before us that no action will be taken against the mining lessees only on the basis of the findings in the Report of the Justice Shah Commission without making its own assessment of facts and without first giving the mining lessees the opportunity of hearing and the opportunity to produce evidence in their defence, we are not inclined to quash the Report of the Justice Shah Commission on the ground that the provisions of Sections 8-B and 8-C of the Commissions of Inquiry Act, 1952 and the principles of natural justice have not been complied with. At the same time, we cannot also direct prosecution of the mining lessees on the basis of the findings in the Report of the Justice Shah Commission, if they have not been given the opportunity of being heard and to produce evidence in their defence and not allowed the right to cross-examine and the right to be represented by a legal practitioner before the Commission*

*as provided in Sections 8-B and 8-C respectively of the Commissions of Inquiry Act, 1952. We will, however, examine the legal and environmental issues raised in the Report of the Justice Shah Commission and on the basis of our findings on these issues consider granting the reliefs prayed for in the writ petition filed by Goa Foundation and the reliefs prayed for in the writ petitions filed by the mining lessees, which have been transferred to this Court."*

35. Considering the aforesaid discussions and the specific stand of the State, the apprehension of the petitioner that without an opportunity of being heard, an action would be taken against it on the basis of the report, does not survive. We find that no further orders are required. The writ petition is therefore, ***dismissed***.

**Sd/-  
(D K SINGH)  
JUDGE**

**Sd/-  
(TARA VITASTA GANJU)  
JUDGE**

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