

**IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT BOMBAY
CIVIL APPELLATE JURISDICTION**

PUBLIC INTEREST LITIGATION NO.95 OF 2025

Association for Aiding Justice,	]	
A proposed non-profit making company	]	
through its authorized signatories :	]	
1. Chandrakant Shivaji Gaikwad, Advocate	]	
2. Ram Shyamsundar Keshwani	]	..Petitioner
<i>Versus</i>		
1. Union of India,	]	
Through the Secretary,	]	
Ministry of Information and Broadcasting	]	
2. The Union of India,	]	
Through the Secretary,	]	
Ministry of Law and Justice	]	
3. Central Board of Film Certification,	]	
Walkeshwar Road, Mumbai	]	
4. Studio 18 Media Pvt. Ltd.,	]	
Prabhadevi, Mumbai	]	
5. Subhash Kapoor,	]	
R/of Malad, Mumbai.	]	..Respondents

Mr. Dipesh U. Siroya, Advocate, i/by LIM Legit, for the Petitioner.

Mr. Anil C. Singh, Additional Solicitor General of India with Mr. Aditya Thakkar, Mr. Pavan Patil, Ms. Rama Gupta, Mr. Aadarsh Vyas, Mr. K.P. Deshmukh, Mr. Shubham Saraf, Mr. Tanmay Deshmukh, Advocates for Respondent Nos.1 to 3 – UOI & CBFC.

Ms. Madhu Gadodia with Mr. Ameet Naik, Mr. Sujoy Mukherji, Ms. Unnati Gambani, Advocates, i/by Anand & Naik, for Respondent No.4.

**CORAM : SHREE CHANDRASHEKHAR, CJ. &
GAUTAM A. ANKHAD, J.**

DATE : 17TH SEPTEMBER 2025.

Per, Gautam Ankhad, J.

This Public Interest Litigation (PIL) seeks directions for revocation and withdrawal of the certificate/permission granted by

Respondent Nos. 1 to 3 for the public exhibition of the film “*Jolly LLB 3*”, and for deletion or modification of certain portions of its content. The petitioner, who claims to be engaged in welfare activities, contends that the film employs slang expressions against advocates and Judges. It is further urged that the teaser of the film, released on 12th August 2025, trivializes the judicial process and undermines the dignity of the legal profession. The film is scheduled for release on 19th September 2025. According to the petitioner, Respondent No. 3 has failed to conduct the requisite scrutiny and thereby abdicated its statutory obligations under the Cinematograph Act, 1952, the Cinematograph (Certification) Rules, 1983, and the Guidelines framed thereunder. It is on this basis that the present PIL has been filed, purportedly to safeguard the credibility and dignity of the judiciary.

2. Mr. Anil Singh, learned ASG, while opposing this PIL, pointed out that a similar petition filed before the Allahabad High Court has already been dismissed. He submits that the present petition is devoid of merit and warrants no interference by this Court. Ms. Madhu Gadodia, learned counsel appearing for Respondent No. 4, also sought dismissal of the PIL.

3. We have heard the learned counsels appearing for the parties. At the outset, we are of the view that this petition is nothing but a ‘*publicity-oriented litigation*’, and is liable to be dismissed with costs.

4. It appears that similar petitions were filed in different High Courts in India. In fact, a Division Bench of the Allahabad High Court, by its order dated 2nd September 2025 in Writ (C) No. 8488 of 2025 (*Jay Vardhan Shukla and Anr. v. Union of India through Secretary, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, New Delhi &*

Ors.), has, inter alia, observed in paragraphs 10 and 11 as under:

“10. We have also gone through the alleged three official trailers/teasers of Jolly LL.B.-3, in which according to the petitioners, are derogatory to the legal profession and tend to lower the dignity of the Court in the eyes of a common man and we did not find any objectionable matter to warrant interference by this Court. We have also gone through the lyrics of the song “Bhai Vakeel Hai” and we do not find anything which may interfere in the practice of the legal profession by genuine Advocates.

11. Writ Petition stands dismissed.”

5. Even though we have not watched the official teaser released on social media, we find no reason to deviate from the view already taken by the Allahabad High Court.

6. Be that as it may, the present petition has been instituted by two individuals through the *Association for Aiding Justice—A proposed non profit making company*. What this proposed entity has done so far or seeks to achieve is best known only to the two individuals who have filed this PIL. No particulars of its activities or details of any work undertaken by the Association have been furnished. The mere fact that one of the petitioners happens to be an advocate does not by itself confer upon him the right to institute a PIL. In the absence of verifiable credentials, we are not satisfied that the petitioners are genuinely espousing a public cause. As repeatedly emphasized by the Courts, no litigant can be permitted to pursue a private or oblique agenda under the cloak of public interest.

7. We have perused the quoted portion at paragraph 5 at page 8 of the petition along with the other averments in the said paragraph. We cannot read them in isolation and such context cannot be added in the manner as the petitioner seeks to add. The certification for film release is done by Respondent No.3 under the

Cinematograph Act and the Rules thereunder. There is a Censor Board that screens films before their release. There is no protest filed before Respondent No.3 by the Petitioners, at least none has been produced on record of this PIL. There is no explanation for this omission. We do not intend to interfere in the activities of Respondent No.3, merely on Petitioner's bald allegations of breach of the statutory provisions. Once the respondent no.3 grants certification, *prima-facie* there is a statutory presumption that the provisions of the Cinematograph Act and the Rules have been complied with by the film-makers. There is no question of staying or restraining the release of a film on the petitioner's allegations in a PIL.

8. We also note that the film's teaser was released on social media on 12th August 2025. The Petitioner's belated approach to stay the film's release or seek deletion of some of its content appears to be lacking in *bona fides*. There is no explanation for this delay and the ratio in the judgment of "*Ashok Kumar Pandey v. State of W.B.*" (2004) 3 SCC 349 squarely applies to this case wherein it is held that Court must not allow the PIL process to be misused for oblique consideration.

9. We do not find any public interest involved in this litigation and, therefore Public Interest Litigation No.95 of 2025 is dismissed.

[GAUTAM A. ANKHAD, J.]

[CHIEF JUSTICE]