

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS

DATED: 30-04-2026

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THE HON'BLE MR JUSTICE SENTHILKUMAR RAMAMOORTHY

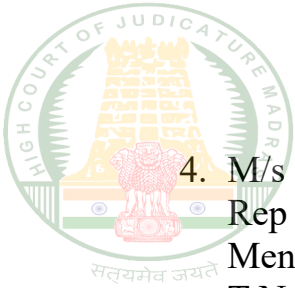
OA No. 283 of 2023

1. K.Punniyamoorthy
5-B, River Heights Apartments, 315, Valluvar
Kottam High Road, Nungambakkam, Chennai
600 034.
2. K.Premkumar
5-B, River Heights Apartments, 315, Valluvar
Kottam High Road, Nungambakkam, Chennai
600 034.

..Applicant(s)

Vs

1. M/s Escape Artists Motion Pictures
Rep.by its Sole Proprietor Mr.Madan Pandey,
No.69A, Habibullah Road, T.Nagar, Chennai
600 017.
2. Gautam Vasudev Menon
No.61/3, Gandhi Street,
Kanagam, Taramani,
Chennai - 600 113.
(2nd respondent impleaded as per order dated
17.03.2026 in A.No.2719/2023)
3. S.Venkataraman, S/o.Mr.Somasundaram,
Old No.15, New No.44 and 46,
Rathinam Street, Gopalapuram,
Chennai -600 086
(3rd respondent impleaded as per order dated
17.03.2026 in A.No.2720/2023)



4. M/s Kondaduvom Entertainment
Rep by its Director Mr.Gautham Vasudev
Menon, 69/A, Habibullah Road,
T.Nagar, Chennai - 600 017.
(4th respondent impleaded as per order dated
17.03.2026 in A.No.463/2026)

..Respondent(s)

For Applicant(s):

Mr.Srinath Sridevan, Senior Advocate
for M/s Suryateja S. Nalla for Applicant 1

Mr.S.R.Sundar, M.Velu for Applicant 2

For Respondent(s):

Ms.Inthu Karunakaran for R1

Mr.A.Abdul Hameed, Senior Advocate
Anbarasi Rajendran
for M/s AAV Partners for R2 & R3

Mr.T.R.Rajagopalan, Senior Advocate
for Mrs. Revathi Manivannan for R4

Mr. K. Ravi, Senior Advocate, for M/s Rugan and
Arya, Advocates for Marina Holdings and
Rajkumar Sethupathy, and Acolyte Private Limited

Mr. A.G.Vedavikas, Advocate, for M/s All in
Pictures

Mr. Vijayan Subramanian, Advocate, for M/s
Trident Arts

ORDER

Invoking the arbitration clause in an agreement with the first respondent, the applicants applied for interim relief at the pre-reference stage to restrain release of the Tamil movie DHRUVA NATCHATHIRAM. Initially, only the first respondent was a party to the application. Later, the other partners and the



partnership firm that produced the above mentioned movie were impleaded as respondents 2-4. An order of interim injunction was granted just prior to the movie's scheduled release and such order remains in force as on date.

2. Extensive arguments were made on the merits of the application on behalf of the applicants by Mr.Srinath Sridevan, learned senior counsel; on behalf of the first respondent by Ms.Inthu Karunakaran, learned counsel; on behalf of the second and third respondents by Mr.A.Abdul Hameed, learned senior counsel; and on behalf of the fourth respondent by Mr.T.R.Rajagopalan, learned senior counsel.

3. At the suggestion of the Court, the applicants agreed to the release of the movie subject to certain terms and conditions. Likewise, the respondents also agreed subject to the discharge of payment obligations before and after the release of the movie. At that juncture, third party creditors intervened. Mr. Ravi, learned senior counsel, appeared for two third party creditors, namely, M/s Marina Holdings and Rajkumar Sethupathy, and Acolyte Private Limited; Mr. Vijayan Subramanian, learned counsel, appeared for M/s Trident Arts; and Mr.A.G.Vedavikas, learned counsel, appeared for M/s All in Pictures.

4. In relation to the above, an affidavit affirmed by Mr.Gautham Vasudev Menon on 27.04.2026, as partner of the fourth respondent, was filed. Such



affidavit contains particulars of amounts due and payable to creditors prior to the release of the movie. It also contains details of payments to be made to

creditors after the release of the movie. Because multiple affidavits were filed by Mr. Menon and by other parties, for ease of reference, this affidavit is referred to as “GVM’s Principal Affidavit” in the remainder of this order.

5. Paragraphs 3, 4 and 5 of GVM’s Principal Affidavit containing particulars of dues to be discharged prior to the release of the movie, details of amounts raised by the sale of rights relating to the movie and amounts due and payable to vendors are scanned and reproduced below:

03. I submit that, a total sum of Rs.40,90,00,000/- (Rupees Forty Crores Ninety Lakhs Only) has been raised by the 4th Respondent by pledging various rights over the movie “Dhruva Natchathiram”, the details whereof is given hereunder:

S.No	Date	Rights Pledged	Name of the Person to whom it is pledged	Amount availed
01.	24.11.16	Negative Rights of the Film – First charge on all rights	Mr.Jaswant Bhandari, No.20, Erupallan Street, Sowcarpet, Chennai- 600 079	Rs.21,40,00,000/-
02.	10.02.17	TV & Digital Rights	Mr.Vijay Kothari, No.5, Ramarao Street, T.Nagar, Chennai- 600 017	Rs.11,50,00,000/-
03.	09.02.17	Other North Indian Language Rights	M/s.SPM Arts LLP, No.13, Clemens Road, Purasaiwalkam, Chennai- 600 084	Rs.8,00,00,000/-

04. I submit that, a total sum of Rs.18,16,00,000/- (Rupees Eighteen Crores and Sixteen Lakhs Only) has been raised by the 4th Respondent by selling various rights over the movie “Dhruva Natchathiram”, the details whereof is given hereunder:

S.No.	Date of Agreement	Rights Sold	Name of the Person to whom the rights are sold	Amount
01.	06.03.17	Telugu Dubbing Rights	M/s.KFC Entertainment, 107, Second Floor, Jain Estate, Park Lane, Secuderabad	Rs.7,03,00,000/-
02.	18.08.17	Overseas Rights (Middle East)	M/s.United India Exporters, No.5/21, Ormes Road, Kilpauk, Chennai – 600 010	Rs.80,00,000/-
03.	30.08.17	Overseas Rights (Malayasia, Singapore)	M/s.United India Exporters, No.5/21, Ormes Road, Kilpauk, Chennai – 600 010	Rs.4,00,00,000/-



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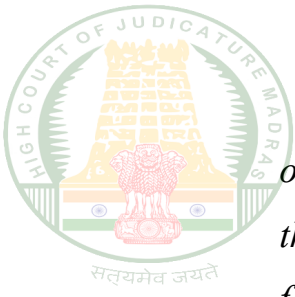
04.	03.03.17	Hindi Dubbing Rights	Manish Shah (HUF), Rep by its Karta Mr.Manish Shah, Evershine Nagar, Link Road, Malad (W), Mumbai- 400 064	Rs.5,03,00,000/-
05.	09.05.18	Audio Rights	M/s.Sony Music Entertainment India Pvt Ltd, Rep by its Authorised Representative Mr.Sumit Chatterjee having office at No.92, Main Avenue, Santacruz (West) Mumbai- 400 054	Rs.1,30,00,000/-

05. I submit that, a total sum of **Rs. 52,82,790** /- (Rupees Fifty Two Lakhs Eighty Two Thousand Seven Hundred and Ninety Only) is due and payable to the **Vendors**, who had provided services for the production of the movie "Dhruva Natchathiram", the details whereof is given hereunder:

S.No.	Name	Description	Amount
01.	M/s.ACS, at 28, New Bangaro Colony, West KK Nagar, Chennai- 600 078	Lab Services and Production Service Charges	Rs.33,00,000/-
02.	M/s.24 Karat at Plot No.15/4, Saiyabhav Colony, Manikanda, Hyderabad- 500 089	Camera Hire Charges	Rs.19,82,790/-

6. The respondents have also provided details of three creditors to whom payments are required to be made in terms of an arbitral award, undertaking or decree, as the case may be, before the release of the movie in paragraph 6 of GVM's Principal Affidavit. Out of the creditors mentioned in said paragraph, Mr. Gautam Vasudev Menon has agreed to make payment out of his individual sources to M/s All in Pictures because said financing does not relate to Dhruva Natchatiram, and this is dealt with later in this order. Therefore, only the creditors in paragraph 6 to whom payments are required to be made prior to the release of the movie by Kondaduvom Entertainment are mentioned below:

"6. I submit that, a total sum of Rs.12,90,00,00/- (Rupees Twelve Crores Ninety Lakhs only) is due and payable to persons / entities,



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on account of monies being advanced by them for production of the movie “Dhuruva Natchathiram”, and who hold orders in their favour, the details whereof is given hereunder:

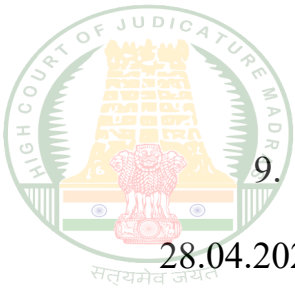
(i) A total sum of Rs.9,00,00,000/- (Rupees Nine Crores Only) is to be paid to M/s Marina Holdings and Mr.Rajkumar Sethupathy, having office at Level 7A, Capitale Towers, No.555, Anna Salai, Teynampet, Chennai – 600 018, in terms of an Arbitral Award dated 17.08.22, upon payment of which, the Distribution Rights over Chengalpet area will be released.

(iii) A total sum of Rs.1,50,00,000/- (Rupees One Crore and Fifty Lakhs Only) is to be paid to M/s Acolyte Private Limited towards the Judgement and Decree passed by the Hon’ble High Court Madras in C.S.No.149 of 2020 dated 07.01.2021.”

7. In paragraph 8 of GVM’s Principal Affidavit, it is stated that amounts due and payable to persons mentioned in paragraphs 3,5 and 6 are required to be made prior to the release of the movie. Subsequent to the release of the movie, from and out of the revenue generated therefrom, it is stated at paragraph 9 of GVM’s Principal Affidavit that a sum of Rs.45,45,00,000/- is required to be paid as interest at 12% per annum to persons mentioned in paragraph 3 of said affidavit, which was scanned and extracted *supra*. It is also recorded in said paragraph that interest at 12% per annum is payable to the persons described in paragraph 6 *supra* of this order.



8. An affidavit affirmed on 28.04.2026 by Mr.Gautham Vasudev Menon on behalf of the fourth respondent relating to amounts due and payable to M/s Marina Holdings and Rajkumar Sethupathy pursuant to an arbitral award dated 17.08.2022 has been filed. In such affidavit, the fourth respondent, M/s Kondaduvom Entertainment, has undertaken to pay a sum of Rs.9,00,00,000/- prior to the release of the movie DHRUVA NATCHATHIRAM. Likewise, affidavit affirmed on 28.04.2026 by Mr.Gautham Vasudev Menon on behalf of the fourth respondent relating to amounts due and payable to Acolyte Private Limited pursuant to judgment and decree dated 07.01.2021 in C.S.No.149 of 2020 has been filed. In this affidavit, the fourth respondent, M/s Kondaduvom Entertainment, has undertaken to pay a sum of Rs.1,50,00,000/- prior to the release of the movie DHRUVA NATCHATHIRAM. These amounts are also specified at paragraph 6(i) and (iii), respectively, of GVM's Principal Affidavit. As regards interest at 12% per annum, the fourth respondent has undertaken to pay the sum after the release of the movie DHRUVA NATCHATHIRAM from and out of the revenue generated from the movie. Mr. Ravi submits on behalf of M/s Marina Holdings and Rajkumar Sethupathy and Acolyte Private Limited that subject to payment of the principal amounts mentioned in paragraph 6 of the affidavit prior to the release of the movie and subject to payment of interest at the rate specified in the award or decree, as the case may be, from and out of the proceeds of the movie, said parties have no objection to the release of the movie and the proposed course of action.



9. A separate affidavit affirmed by Mr.Gautham Vasudev Menon on 28.04.2026 was filed along with memo dated 29.04.2026 signed by Kondaduvom Entertainment. This affidavit and memo relates to the dues of M/s All in Pictures. Mr.Gautham Vasudev Menon has undertaken to pay a sum of Rs.2,40,00,000/- from his own sources to M/s All-in Pictures, which is said to be a partnership firm. Mr. A.G.Vedavikas submitted that subject to payment of the above mentioned amount and subject to the right to make an interest claim later, M/s All in Pictures have no objection to the release of the movie and the proposed course of action.

10. Another affidavit affirmed by Mr.Gautham Vasudev Menon on 28.04.2026 has been filed along with memo dated 29.04.2026 signed by Kondaduvom Entertainment. This affidavit and memo relates to amounts payable to M/s Trident Arts, represented by Mr.Ravindran, Proprietor. Mr.Gautham Vasudev Menon has undertaken to pay a sum of Rs.2,25,00,000/- to M/s Trident Arts from his personal sources prior to the release of the movie. Subject to payment of the above mentioned amount prior to the release of the movie, Mr. Vijayan Subramanian submitted that M/s Trident Arts have no objection to the release of the movie and the proposed course of action.

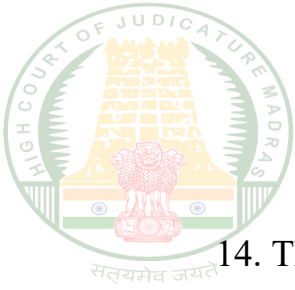
11. GVM's Principal Affidavit also refers to financing by third party financiers at paragraph 11 for purposes of making payments before the release



of the movie to the creditors who extended loans in relation to DHRUVA NATCHATIRAM. It also provides for payment to said financiers and records the manner of discharge of any shortfall in this regard. It is also submitted on behalf of the respondents that amounts due and payable to the financiers referred to in paragraph 11 of the affidavit shall be paid from and out of the revenues generated by the movie in priority to other post-release payments.

12. In order to ensure that all amounts provided by the financiers referred to in paragraph 11 and all revenues generated by the movie are remitted into a single account, it is just and appropriate that the fourth respondent open a new bank account in a scheduled bank. It is also just and appropriate that an advocate(s) oversees both credits and debits into and from the said account to ensure that the same are strictly in conformity with this order and in terms of GVM's Principal Affidavit, except to the extent modified by this order. In relation to the opening of the new account, on instructions, Ms. Inthu Karunakaran submits that Mr. Madan Pandey would extend full cooperation as a partner of M/s Kondaduvom Entertainment.

13. The second and fourth respondents have undertaken that all necessary measures would be taken to ensure that the movie DHRUVA NATCHATHIRAM is released on or before 15.06.2026.



14. Therefore, the following directions are issued:

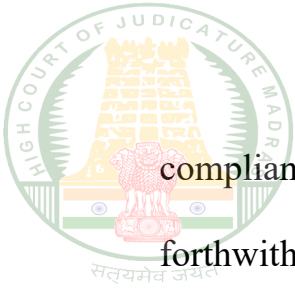
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(i) Mr. M.V. Swaroop (mobile no. 9003263741) and Mr. H.S.Hredai (mobile no. 9849002853), Advocates, A5, Palani Towers, 65, Venkatanarayana Road, T.Nagar, Chennai-600017, are appointed as observers/overseers. Initial remuneration of Rs.5,00,000/- shall be paid to said Advocates by the second/fourth respondent.

(ii) The fourth respondent shall open a dedicated and designated account in the name of M/s Kondaduvom Entertainment in relation to the movie DHRUVA NATCHATHIRAM in any scheduled bank with the prior consent of the above Observers/Overseers. A copy of this order shall be handed over to the bank by the Observers/Overseers to ensure that the bank complies with this order in relation to the operation of the account.

(iii) Amounts received from the financiers referred to in paragraph 11 of GVM's Principal Affidavit shall be remitted into the above mentioned account and not into any other account. All payments required to be made prior to the release of the movie to creditors who extended loans for the production of DHRUVA NATCHATHIRAM shall thereafter be made only from and out of this account. Every debit in this regard shall require the prior consent of and be verified and overseen by the Observers/Overseers.

(iv) All revenues generated by the movie shall be remitted only into this account and not any other. The Observers/Overseers shall ensure strict



compliance with this condition and report any contravention to this Court forthwith.

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(v) All payments required to be made after the release of the movie shall be made only from and out of this account. Every debit in this regard shall require the prior consent of and be verified and overseen by the Observers/Overseers. The Observers/Overseers shall ensure in general that credits into and debits from this account are made strictly in accordance with this order read with GVM's Principal Affidavit and other affidavits filed by the respondents before this Court. Without the prior consent of at least one of the Observers/Overseers, the bank shall not permit debits.

(vi) No payment shall be made from said account to any of the partners of Kondaduvom Entertainment either towards remuneration or share of profit without the prior leave of this Court.

(vii) The fourth respondent is permitted to release the movie DHRUVA NATCHATHIRAM subject to the above terms and conditions and subject to the additional condition that the movie shall be released on or before 15.06.2026. In case it is not possible to release the movie on or before 15.06.2026, in spite of the exercise of best endeavours by the fourth respondent, said respondent is granted leave to apply to this Court for an extension.

(viii) The Observers/Overseers shall file a report before this Court on the next hearing date.

(ix) For the avoidance of doubt, it is clarified that the movie shall not be



released without making the payments agreed to be made prior to the release of the movie.

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(x) In relation to the opening of the new account, all the partners of the fourth respondent, including Mr. Madan Pandey, shall extend full cooperation.

(xi) No lien shall be marked on amounts received in this account by any person without the leave of this Court.

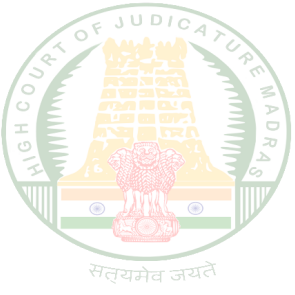
(xii) The applicants are restrained from, directly or indirectly, impeding the release of the movie DHRUVA NATCHATHIRAM in any manner.

15. The warrant shall be issued to the Advocates Observers/Overseers on or before 04.05.2026. List the matter on 23.06.2026.

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30-04-2026

Note: Issue order copy today



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SENTHILKUMAR RAMAMOORTHY, J.

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