IN THE HIGH COURT FOR THE STATE OF TELANGANA

AT HYDERABAD

THE HON'BLE THE ACTING CHIEF JUSTICE SRI P.SAM KOSHY

AND

THE HONOURABLE SRI JUSTICE NARSING RAO NANDIKONDA

WRIT PETITION NO.15506 OF 2025

(CNR.No. HBHC010305952025)

Reserved on: 27.04.2026 **Pronounced on: 13.11.2026**
Uploaded on: 17.11.2026

Between:

M/s.Prajwala

...Petitioner

AND

The State of Telangana
Represented by its Principal Secretary
Legal Affairs, Legislative Affairs and Justice, Law
Department Secretariat Building Hyderabad and others

...Respondents

ORDER: *(As per the Hon'ble Sri Justice Narsing Rao Nandikonda)*

Heard ***Mr. L. Ravichander,*** learned Senior Counsel representing Mr. Deepak Misra, learned counsel appearing for the petitioner; ***Ms. G. Vijaya Kumari,*** learned Government Pleader for Law Legislative Affairs appearing for respondent No.1; learned Government Pleader for Home appearing for respondent No.3 and ***Mr. K.V. Raman,*** learned counsel

appearing for respondent No.5. Perused the entire material on record.

2. This Writ Petition is filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India seeking following relief:

> *"...to issue an appropriate, direction or order, particularly one in the nature of a writ of Mandamus:*
>
> *a. declaring the action of the Hon'ble III Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate,Nampally, Hyderabad, in directing the Petitioner Protective Home to admit M. Renuka D/o. M.Yadaiah, Age: 35 years, Occ: Therapist, R/o. Near Durga Mata temple,Hasmathpet,Bowenpally, Hyderabad, i.e., Respondent No.7 vide order dated 18.05.2025 in Cr.No.346 of 2025 despite her being an organizer of brothel activities and an accused in FIR No.709/2023 at S.R.Nagar Police Station for offences relating to human trafficking as illegal, arbitrary, violative of principles of natural justice and contrary to the objects and purposes of the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956, and consequently set aside the direction dated 18.05.2025 passed in Cr.No.346 of 2025 in so far as it pertains to the Petitioner;*
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> *b. directing the Registrar General High Court for the State of Telangana to issue appropriate directions and/or guidelines to all Magistrates exercising powers under the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956, to ensure strict compliance with the statutory scheme, particularly while considering custody applications under Section 17; to mandatorily distinguish between victims and organisers of crimes; to avoid mechanical orders of remand or admission into Protective Homes; and to conduct due inquiry before passing any order under the Act;*
>
> *c. directing the Director General of Police to issue uniform instructions to all Station House Officers and investigating officers*

under the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956, to ensure that individuals who are already identified as organizers or traffickers and are cited as accused in pending criminal cases under the said Act are not treated as 'victims' in any other rescue operation or PITA proceeding;

d. directing the Registrar General of the Hon'ble High Court to issue suitable instructions to all Magistrates exercising powers under Section 17 of the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956, to ensure that persons who are cited as accused in a PITA or related trafficking case are not remanded to Protective Homes or admitted into institutions meant for victims, and are instead remanded to appropriate Corrective Institutions or judicial custody, as the case may be

e. and pass such other order or orders as this court may deem it fit and proper in the interest of justice."

3. The petitioner is a registered non-governmental organisation (NGO) based in Hyderabad, established under the Andhra Pradesh (Telangana Area) Public Societies Registration Act, 1999. It has been actively engaged in the rescue, rehabilitation, restoration, and reintegration of women and children rescued from trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation. Through its Protective Home, the organisation provides shelter and rehabilitative care to victims rescued by law enforcement agencies and judicial authorities.

4. The present writ petition arises from an order dated 18.05.2025 passed by the learned III Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Nampally, Hyderabad, directing the Superintendent of the Rescue Home at Tukkuguda to admit nine women into the petitioner's Protective Home following a police raid conducted by the S.R. Nagar Police at Verily Beauty Salon & Spa. The raid resulted in the registration of an FIR alleging prostitution under the guise of a spa and the women rescued during the operation were ordered to be kept in safe custody.

5. The petitioner contended that one of the women directed to be admitted, namely viz., Ms.M.Renuka, was alleged to be an organizer of the brothel and to have prior criminal antecedents rather than being a victim of trafficking. According to the petitioner, admitting such a person into protective home housing vulnerable trafficking survivors posed serious security risks and undermined the rehabilitative environment maintained by the institution. The petitioner initially admitted eight women but refused admission to Ms.M.Renuka and immediately informed the Magistrate of the risks involved. However, despite making representations regarding her criminal background and the

threat posed to other residents, the Magistrate did not modify the order. To avoid contempt proceedings, the petitioner ultimately admitted Ms.M.Renuka under protest, after which several of the admitted women were later released pursuant to applications filed by their family members under Section 17 of the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956.

6. The petitioner further submits that this is not an isolated incident but forms part of a recurring administrative practice. It refers to an earlier instance where two Ugandan nationals, Ms.Nayabare Doreen and Ms.Hope @ Nanono, who had allegedly been implicated in prostitution-related offences were also directed to be accommodated in the petitioner's Protective Home despite their criminal backgrounds. Although the petitioner facilitated their repatriation in accordance with judicial directions, it asserts that the referral of accused persons to rehabilitation homes without independent scrutiny demonstrates a lack of due diligence on the part of the authorities and compromises the neutrality and safety of institutions dedicated to victim rehabilitation.

7. The petitioner further contended that the repeated practice of treating its Protective Home as a default custodial institution, without obtaining its consent or assessing whether the persons referred are genuine victims, places an unreasonable burden upon the organisation. The petitioner argued that, it is frequently compelled to accept such admissions under the threat of contempt proceedings, exposing vulnerable residents and staff to avoidable risks, disrupting rehabilitation programmes and undermining the statutory purpose of the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956 and therefore seeks judicial intervention under Article 226 of the Constitution of India to ensure that ***'Protective Homes'*** are utilized only for genuine victims after proper verification and administrative authorities shall exercise greater care and independent scrutiny before issuing such referral orders.

8. Learned Senior Counsel appearing for the petitioner submits that the petitioner being a registered voluntary organisation operating a 'Protective Home' under the statutory framework provides trauma-informed shelter, counselling and rehabilitation to women and children rescued from trafficking.

The grievance is not against the rescue of persons who were in need of protection but against indiscriminate placement without verification of antecedents, assessment of risk and meaningful consultation with the receiving institution.

9. Learned Senior counsel further relies on the aforesaid instances to contend that there is no sufficiently effective mechanism for identifying and distinguishing victims, alleged organisers and persons requiring different kinds of institutional care, which has to be separately dealt by the competent authorities.

10. It is further submitted that the petitioner has furnished suggestions and a comparative statement concerning a proposed Standard Operating Procedure for differentiating victims and traffickers before, during and after rescue operations. The petitioner seeks clear police protocols, careful judicial scrutiny, proper allocation of responsibility among statutory authorities and long-term preventive, awareness measures.

11. In the reply affidavit, the petitioner disputes the stand of respondent No.5 that the writ petition has become infructuous

merely because Ms.M.Renuka was subsequently released. It is pointed out that the individual placement issue may no longer survive but the prayers concerning institutional safeguards, uniform procedures and implementation of the Act remain for consideration and prays to Court to pass appropriate orders.

12. *Per contra,* learned Government Pleader for Home referring to the counter-affidavit of respondent No.5 submits that the police conducted the raid on 17.05.2025 upon credible information and registered Crime No.346 of 2025. It is stated that the investigation identified other persons as the principal organiser and sub-organisers, whereas Ms.M. Renuka was described as a therapist/sex worker and not as an organiser in that crime. According to the police, the classification must depend on the evidence in each case and cannot be conclusively determined merely by the fact that a person is an accused in another case.

13. Respondent No.5 further states that, by order dated 06.06.2025 the learned Magistrate directed release of M. Renuka to her mother upon identification and acknowledgment and that

a compliance report dated 13.06.2025 was available on record. On that basis, it is contended that the immediate grievance has been ceased to survive and the writ petition has become infructuous.

14. The affidavit filed on behalf of respondent No.3 by the Additional Director General of Police, Women Safety Wing, states that the Telangana Police have been following a comprehensive procedure concerning prevention, rescue and rehabilitation in human trafficking cases. It further records that the draft guidelines and SOP furnished by the petitioner were considered and that a consolidated SOP on human trafficking was formulated and placed on record as Annexure-A.

15. The consolidated SOP, issued from the Office of the Additional Director General of Police, Women Safety Wing, Telangana, bearing No.1086/C3/WSW-AHTU/TG/2026 dated 26.02.2026, deals with concepts of trafficking, activities before registration of an FIR, pre-rescue planning, rescue operations, registration of FIR, investigation, post-rescue activities, charge-sheet, prosecution, referral mechanisms, prevention and

supervisory responsibilities. The comparative statement placed by the petitioner indicates that a number of its proposed safeguards overlap with the State SOP, while certain concerns about classification and placement require continued attention.

16. Upon consideration of the rival submissions, the following questions arise: (i) whether the subsequent release of the person concerned renders the entire writ petition infructuous; and (ii) what directions, consistent with the Act and existing statutory safeguards, are necessary to ensure proper identification, safe placement, rehabilitation and prevention of human trafficking.

17. The individual prayer to set aside the direction for admission of M. Renuka has, in practical terms lost its immediate relevance following her release. Nevertheless, the wider questions concerning the procedure to be adopted by the police, the role of Protective Homes and the duty of statutory authorities have not become academic. This Court therefore considers it appropriate to dispose of the writ petition with prospective directions, without adjudicating upon the guilt,

innocence or victim status of any individual involved in the cited crimes.

18. Human trafficking is a serious violation of human dignity and personal liberty. Articles 21 and 23 of the Constitution require State authorities to act with due diligence to prevent exploitation, protect affected persons and secure access to justice. The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956 contemplates rescue, production before the competent Magistrate, inquiry, safe custody and rehabilitation. The procedural safeguards under Sections 16 and 17 must be applied in substance and not as a mere formality.

19. Equally, a person cannot be conclusively branded a trafficker solely on the basis of registration of an FIR or a previous accusation. A person may, depending upon the evidence, have been subjected to coercion or exploitation notwithstanding a previous role in an alleged offence. Conversely, the label of “rescued person” does not dispense with the need for careful assessment of risks to other residents. Such

issues require an individualised, evidence-based inquiry and a reasoned judicial decision.

20. Protective Homes and Corrective Institutions perform distinct statutory functions. Placement in a Corrective Institution or judicial custody is not an automatic consequence of an allegation of trafficking or of the existence of a prior FIR; it must be authorised by the competent court under the applicable statutory provisions. No police officer or shelter institution may substitute its own final determination for that of the competent judicial authority. The possibility of an organiser or perpetrator presenting as a victim requires careful verification. Failure to distinguish the respective roles may expose genuine victims to intimidation, manipulation, exploitation or harassment and interfere with their rehabilitation. The nature and extent of care and rehabilitation required by victims necessarily differ from the corrective and rehabilitative measures lawfully applicable to perpetrators and organisers. Separate facilities and individual measures must therefore correspond to the legal status, assessed needs and safety requirements of the persons concerned.

21. The Court also finds that the consolidated SOP placed on record constitutes a useful administrative framework. However, an SOP cannot override statutory requirements or judicial orders, and its effective implementation requires training, oversight, adequate shelter capacity, confidentiality, cooperation between departments and prompt access to legal assistance. The following directions are therefore issued to supplement the existing framework, always subject to applicable law.

22. IMMEDIATE MEASURES AND SEPARATE FACILITIES:

(i) As an immediate measure, respondent Nos.1 and 3 shall, in coordination with the competent State departments, take appropriate steps for establishing or providing separate corrective institutions and other lawful custodial facilities for perpetrators and organisers, in accordance with the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956 and other applicable law, so as to avoid confrontation with victims. Pending the provision of additional facilities, suitable arrangements shall be made within existing lawful facilities, subject to orders of the competent Court. Recognised NGOs, including Prajwala, which are willing

and equipped to receive victims, may be involved in providing safe shelter, protection and rehabilitation within their authorised functions and capacity.

(ii) The police shall produce persons alleged to be perpetrators or organisers before the competent Magistrate as required by law and, subject to lawful judicial orders, ensure their placement in appropriate custodial or corrective facilities. No detention or placement shall be ordered or continued merely on the basis of an unverified allegation or a previous FIR.

(iii) Under no circumstances shall a Protective Home meant exclusively for victims be used as a place of penal detention or remand for perpetrators or organisers. Where credible material raises a risk that a person proposed for admission is an exploiter or may endanger other residents, the police and the institution shall immediately place such material before the competent Magistrate for appropriate separate placement and protective orders. These directions shall be read with paragraphs 19 and 20, and shall not exclude protection for a person who is

independently found to be a victim merely because that person is also accused in another proceeding.

23. DIRECTIONS TO THE POLICE AND ANTI-HUMAN TRAFFICKING UNITS:

(i) The Director General of Police, Telangana, through the Women Safety Wing and the Anti-Human Trafficking Units, shall circulate and operationalise the consolidated SOP dated 26.02.2026. The pre-rescue planning envisaged in the comparative statement shall include verification of credible information, discreet identification of suspected organisers, recruiters, transporters and exploiters, identification of possible victims, assessment of the premises and anticipated risks, and arrangement of trained women officers, independent witnesses, interpreters and child-protection personnel wherever necessary. The source of information and the identity of rescued persons shall be kept confidential.

(ii) At every stage, including rescue, the investigating officer shall make an individualised and provisional assessment of each person, taking into account indications of threat, deception, debt

bondage, restricted movement, confiscation of documents, physical injury, fear of authorities, age and dependence on suspected exploiters.

(iii) The indicators listed in the Government SOP are aids to investigation and shall not be treated as conclusive proof. Previous involvement in a criminal case shall be verified and brought to the notice of the competent Magistrate, but shall not by itself disentitle any person to protection as a possible victim. The role of each suspected organiser or trafficker shall be investigated independently. Verification of identity and antecedents shall commence immediately after rescue and be pursued promptly through the available lawful records and inquiries.

(iv) Officers shall remain alert to attempts by perpetrators or organisers to disguise themselves as victims to evade prosecution or gain access to Protective Homes; such verification shall not delay urgent medical care or immediate protection.

(v) During rescue operations, officers shall separate rescued persons from suspected exploiters and persons exercising control over them, without prejudging their legal status.

(vi) They shall prevent intimidation, retaliation, coaching or interference with evidence; arrange immediate medical attention and psychological first aid; secure documents and electronic evidence in accordance with law; and avoid public exposure of rescued persons. Children shall be dealt with under the applicable child-protection law and produced before the competent authority. No rescued person shall be compelled to confront an alleged trafficker merely for preliminary identification. Victims shall be referred to suitable Protective Homes or rehabilitation centres pursuant to applicable law and competent orders; persons alleged to be perpetrators or organisers shall be dealt with under the applicable criminal law.

(vii) The investigating agency shall ensure follow-up after rescue through coordination with the Women and Child Development Department, medical and mental-health services, Child Welfare

Committees where applicable, District Legal Services Authorities and suitable shelters.

(viii) Post-rescue monitoring shall include information on threats, attempts to contact or influence victims, missing persons, renewed exploitation and the need for witness protection. Evidence and statements shall be recorded by lawful, victim-sensitive methods; the case diary and sensitive records shall not be disclosed to unauthorised persons. Specific protective steps shall be taken against threats, harassment, manipulation or attempts by organisers to influence or recruit residents during rehabilitation. (vii) At the stage of production before the competent Magistrate, the police shall submit the available facts concerning the rescue, the separate role attributed to each person, verified criminal antecedents, vulnerability indicators, age-related material, immediate protection needs and the suitability and capacity of the proposed shelter.

(ix) The statutory inquiry under Section 17 of the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956, including the inquiry regarding

safe custody and the suitability of a parent, guardian or other proposed custodian, shall not be reduced to a mechanical exercise. Any proposal for release or restoration shall be accompanied by such verification as the law requires, with attention to the risk of re-trafficking.

24. PREVENTIVE MEASURES AND SHARING OF INFORMATION:

(i) The Director General of Police shall cause clear instructions and appropriate public advisories to be issued to landlords and owners of premises to exercise due diligence while letting their premises, particularly where there is reason to suspect their use for trafficking, running brothel houses or other unlawful activities. Any verification shall be conducted without discrimination and in accordance with law, respecting privacy and dignity; the sex, occupation or social background of a prospective occupant shall not by itself justify an adverse inference.

(ii) The police shall establish an effective mechanism for lawful sharing among the concerned law enforcement agencies of

verified information regarding the criminal antecedents and activities of persons involved in organising or operating brothel houses, trafficking and related offences. Such information shall support coordinated investigation and appropriate surveillance in accordance with law, with safeguards against unauthorised disclosure and without treating an accusation as proof of guilt.

25. DIRECTIONS CONCERNING NGOs AND PROTECTIVE HOMES:

(i) The concerned department shall maintain a current district-wise roster of legally recognised Protective Homes and other suitable facilities, indicating their authorised functions, capacity, specialised services and contact officers. Before seeking placement, the police shall, as far as practicable, communicate with the proposed institution regarding available space and safety concerns. An NGO shall not be treated as an indiscriminate custodial facility merely because it assists rescue operations; however, any difficulty in complying with a judicial direction shall be promptly placed before the issuing Court for appropriate orders. NGOs engaged in combating trafficking,

including Prajwala, shall, within their lawful functions and available capacity, extend necessary assistance to the police and other stakeholders in identifying, rescuing, protecting and rehabilitating victims, subject to statutory safeguards and confidentiality.

(ii) NGOs and Protective Homes shall adopt confidential intake and risk-assessment procedures, maintain admission and incident registers, ensure physical safety, appropriate separation where required by an individual risk assessment, medical screening, counselling and access to legal aid. Staff shall be trained to recognise threats, coercion, manipulation, recruitment attempts and signs of re-trafficking. Residents shall be treated with dignity, and their identities and personal histories shall not be disclosed beyond persons lawfully required to know them.

(iii) Where the management has credible material indicating that a proposed or admitted resident may threaten others or interfere with rehabilitation, it shall immediately inform the police and the competent Magistrate with particulars and request appropriate protective arrangements or reconsideration of

placement. The institution shall not independently pronounce a person guilty on the strength of an accusation. Any allegation of intimidation, assault, solicitation or attempted re-trafficking within the Home shall be recorded, reported and acted upon according to law. Periodic safety reviews and individual rehabilitation plans shall be undertaken. Rehabilitation services may include psychological support, legal assistance, vocational training and assistance with safe social reintegration, through coordination with the competent departments and service providers.

26. DIRECTIONS TO DISTRICT LEGAL SERVICES AUTHORITIES:

(i) The Telangana State Legal Services Authority shall communicate this order to all District Legal Services Authorities in the State and shall designate a nodal officer for coordinating the measures set out herein. Each DLSA shall establish a district-level coordination mechanism with the Anti-Human Trafficking Unit, Women and Child Development Department, Child Welfare Committee, educational authorities and

recognised NGOs, for timely provision of free legal aid, representation, victim compensation assistance and referrals for protection and rehabilitation, in accordance with law.

(ii) The DLSAs shall ensure that survivors are informed of available legal services at the earliest practicable stage, without interfering with investigation or adjudication.

(iii) The coordination mechanism shall ensure access to necessary counselling, protection and rehabilitation services through the competent agencies.

(iv) Each DLSA shall organise at least one coordinated awareness programme in every quarter, covering, by rotation, vulnerable communities, protective homes, transport and labour-concentration areas, schools, colleges and universities within its jurisdiction.

(v) Such programmes shall address deceptive recruitment, forced labour, sexual exploitation, child trafficking, cyber-enabled grooming, safe migration, reporting channels, free legal aid and available survivor-protection measures.

(vi) The programmes shall be age-appropriate, accessible and ordinarily conducted in the local language. Each DLSA shall maintain a quarterly record of the date, venue, participating institutions, broad topics and number of participants, without recording or disclosing survivors' identities.

(vii) DLSAs shall sensitise panel advocates and para-legal volunteers to the distinction between an accused person and a trafficked person, the possibility of overlapping experiences of exploitation and offending, the inquiry contemplated by Section 17 of the Act, and the need for confidentiality and non-stigmatising assistance.

(viii) They shall facilitate applications for compensation and other statutory benefits wherever eligible, assist survivors in understanding judicial proceedings, and coordinate referral to counselling, medical care and rehabilitation services. Victims shall be informed in an accessible manner of their legal rights, eligibility for victim compensation and the rehabilitation schemes available to them, and shall be assisted with

applications and access to eligible benefits in accordance with law.

27. DIRECTIONS CONCERNING SCHOOLS, COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES:

The School Education Department, Higher Education Department and other competent educational authorities of the State shall issue appropriate instructions to institutions under their administrative control to conduct at least one age-appropriate human-trafficking prevention and awareness programme in each academic semester, in coordination, wherever practicable, with the jurisdictional DLSA, Anti-Human Trafficking Unit or trained child-protection resource persons. The programmes shall cover deceptive employment and migration offers, online grooming, exploitation, safe reporting and access to assistance. Each institution shall designate a responsible staff member for confidential referrals and shall maintain a brief record of the programme conducted. The district educational authorities and universities shall compile semester-wise implementation statements and furnish them to

their respective administrative departments. No programme shall identify survivors publicly or stigmatise any person or community.

28. ADDITIONAL SAFEGUARDS CONCERNING CHILD TRAFFICKING AND CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE:

(i) Whenever a rescued or identified person appears to be a child, the police and all participating agencies shall apply the child-protection safeguards prescribed under the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015, the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012, and other applicable law.

(ii) The child shall be promptly brought within the jurisdiction of the competent Child Welfare Committee in accordance with law, and shall not be placed in an adult Protective Home merely for administrative convenience. Any question concerning age shall be dealt with through the procedure prescribed by law, without delaying immediate protection.

(iii) Police officers shall ensure child-friendly reporting and investigation, prompt access to necessary medical care,

counselling, a support person and legal assistance wherever applicable, and protection of the child's identity. Interviews and statements shall be conducted only in accordance with statutory safeguards, avoiding repeated or intimidating questioning.

(iv) The good practices and protective measures followed in cases under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012 (POCSO Act), shall, to the extent applicable, be adopted in human trafficking cases as well.

(v) The Courts, Public Prosecutors and Advocates, along with the District Legal Services Authorities, recognised NGOs, Child Welfare Committees and other concerned institutions, shall adopt a sensitive and victim-centric approach and ensure that victims are provided necessary legal assistance, counselling, protection and rehabilitation, without subjecting them to intimidation, harassment or repeated questioning.

(vi) The Child Welfare Committee, District Child Protection Unit, DLSA and appropriate care institution shall coordinate individual care, rehabilitation, education and safe reintegration, subject to periodic review and assessment of the risk of re-

trafficking. Suspected offences involving children shall be reported to the competent authorities in accordance with mandatory reporting obligations under the POCSO Act.

29. CYBER-ENABLED TRAFFICKING AND ONLINE EXPLOITATION:

(i) The Director General of Police shall ensure coordination between Anti-Human Trafficking Units, cybercrime police stations and other competent investigating agencies where recruitment, grooming, coercion, transportation, exploitation or threats are facilitated through social media, messaging applications, online advertisements, purported employment or placement offers, or other digital means. Officers shall promptly take lawful steps to identify and preserve relevant electronic records, seek preservation or disclosure through authorised channels, and investigate associated offences under applicable law. Any handling of devices or digital material shall preserve evidentiary integrity and the privacy and dignity of victims, particularly children.

(ii) Complaints relating to online sexual exploitation, grooming, sextortion, circulation of intimate images or suspected child sexual abuse material shall be referred without delay to the competent police or cybercrime authority for action in accordance with law. Victims and families shall be informed of appropriate confidential reporting authorities and available protection, counselling and legal aid; schools and NGOs shall not conduct parallel investigations or compel disclosure of intimate details.

30. PERIODIC AWARENESS AND COMPLIANCE IN RESPECT OF CHILD PROTECTION AND CYBER SAFETY:

(i) In the quarterly programmes directed above, DLSAs shall specifically address child trafficking, child sexual abuse, online grooming, fraudulent digital recruitment, cyber blackmail, safe reporting, victim confidentiality and the availability of legal services.

(ii) The State educational authorities shall ensure that the awareness programme required in each academic semester includes age-appropriate instruction on bodily autonomy,

recognising coercion and unsafe online contact, safe use of digital platforms, and confidential access to teachers, counsellors and statutory reporting mechanisms. Universities and colleges shall additionally address deceptive job and placement offers and exploitation through digital recruitment.

(iii) The designated nodal officers of the Police, the Telangana State Legal Services Authority, the School Education Department and the Higher Education Department shall include in their compliance reports under paragraph 33 particulars of programmes held, institutions and districts covered, training imparted, referral mechanisms established and systemic difficulties encountered. Such reports shall contain only aggregate information and shall not disclose the identities or identifying circumstances of any victim or child. These directions supplement, and do not dilute or replace, the existing statutory duties of the respective authorities.

31. JUDICIAL SENSITISATION:

The Registry shall place a copy of this order before the Hon'ble Chief Justice on the administrative side for

consideration of appropriate circulation to Magistrates dealing with proceedings under the Act and for such sensitisation measures as may be considered necessary. The judicial discretion of the competent Magistrates shall remain governed by the statute and the facts of each case. Before making an order under Section 17, the court concerned shall undertake the inquiry required by law, consider material bearing upon safety and suitability of placement and pass an appropriate reasoned order. The learned Magistrates shall ensure that proper verification of identity, antecedents and the respective roles of victims, alleged perpetrators and organisers is undertaken and the relevant material considered before passing orders concerning custody, protection or rehabilitation. They shall take necessary precautions to prevent genuine victims from being placed with suspected exploiters in the same Protective Home; where the material discloses a safety risk, appropriate separate placement, protection and rehabilitation orders shall be passed in accordance with law. Mere suspicion shall neither authorise punitive detention nor dispense with the statutory inquiry and opportunity of hearing.

32. IMPLEMENTATION, REPORTING AND REVIEW:

(i) The departments concerned with Women and Child Development, Labour, Social Welfare, Health, Education and district administration shall designate contact officers for coordination with the district Anti-Human Trafficking Units and DLSAs.

(ii) They shall facilitate referrals, survivor-sensitive medical and psychological care, lawful rehabilitation and reintegration, and preventive outreach in areas vulnerable to trafficking by using the one stage center or Bharosa Center.

(iii) The District Collectors shall convene interdepartmental review meetings at least once every six months to examine referral delays, availability of suitable shelter, training needs and awareness activities, without intruding upon pending criminal investigations or judicial proceedings.

(iv) The Director General of Police, through the Women Safety Wing, shall designate a State nodal officer and circulate the existing SOP and the directions herein to the Anti-Human

Trafficking Units and police department concerned, and shall arrange periodic sensitisation and training.

(v) The Telangana State Legal Services Authority shall call for quarterly awareness and legal-aid activity statements from the DLSAs and undertake a consolidated review once every six months.

(vi) The School Education and Higher Education Departments shall obtain semester-wise implementation statements from their subordinate authorities and universities, as applicable.

(vii) The aforesaid nodal authorities shall submit an initial compliance/status report to the Principal Secretary, Home Department, Government of Telangana, within three months from the date of receipt of this order and thereafter furnish six-monthly progress reports for a period of one year.

(viii) The Home Department shall maintain a consolidated record of the reports and place the same before the competent administrative authorities for remedial action wherever necessary. These reporting directions do not require disclosure of identifying particulars of victims or survivors.

(ix) The initial report shall also state the steps taken by respondent Nos.1 and 3 towards separate facilities, arrangements pending their establishment, identification and segregation protocols, preventive advisories and inter-agency information sharing.

(x) The Registry shall forward copies of this order to the Director General of Police, the Member Secretary of the Telangana State Legal Services Authority, the Principal Secretaries of the Home, School Education, Higher Education and Women and Child Development Departments, for information and necessary action within their respective statutory and administrative spheres.

(xi) These directions shall supplement, and not override, applicable legislation or orders of competent courts.

33. It is made clear that the observations herein are confined to the systemic issues arising in this writ petition. Nothing in this order shall be construed as a finding concerning the culpability, innocence, status or entitlement to protection of M. Renuka or any other person named in the pleadings. Such matters shall be

decided independently by the competent court or authority on the material available in the respective proceedings.

34. In the result, the Writ Petition is disposed of in the above terms. In view of the subsequent release order, no further individual relief is granted in relation to the direction dated 18.05.2025. There shall be no order as to costs.

As a sequel, miscellaneous applications, if any pending, shall stand closed.

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P. SAM KOSHY, ACJ

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JUSTICE NARSING RAO NANDIKONDA

Date: 13.11.2026.
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