

# State Legislative Brief

## KARNATAKA

### The Karnataka Crowd Control (Managing Crowd at Events and Place of Gathering) Bill, 2025

#### Key Features

- The Bill requires a person to obtain permission for organising an event with a crowd of 5,000 or more attendees.
- The specified authority will conduct enquiry before granting permission. It will prepare a security plan for the event, fix duties of organisers and departments such as fire safety and health.
- Organisers are required to provide an indemnity bond of one crore rupees. They will be liable to pay the compensation in cases of deaths, or damage to public or property that may happen during the event.

#### Key Issues and Analysis

- The Bill requires organisers to compensate for losses due to crowd disaster or civil disturbance. This liability arises regardless of fault. The question is whether this is appropriate.
- The Bill exempts certain family events. The question is whether the exemption based on the purpose of the event alone is appropriate.
- Organising an unpermitted event is punishable with imprisonment between three and seven years, a fine up to one crore rupees, or both. There is a lack of guidance on determining the punishment within this range.

## PART A: HIGHLIGHTS OF THE BILL

### Context

The Karnataka Crowd Control (Managing Crowd at Events and Place of Gathering) Bill, 2025 aims to provide for effective management of crowd at events and places of gathering, and prevent unlawful gathering. The Bill was introduced in the Karnataka Legislative Assembly in August 2025, and has been referred to a Select Committee (Chair: Dr. G. Parameshwara) for scrutiny.

At all-India level, 1,272 stampede cases leading to death of 1,394 individuals were registered between 2013 and 2023.<sup>1</sup> Karnataka registered eight cases in 2013 and six cases in 2014.<sup>1</sup> Between 2015 and 2023, no such cases were registered in Karnataka.<sup>1</sup> In June 2025, a crowd rush in Bangalore led to death of 11 persons.<sup>2</sup>

At present, multiple laws govern different aspects of crowd management. The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 prohibits unlawful assembly of five or more persons.<sup>3</sup> The Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 empowers police to disperse an assembly that threaten public peace or security.<sup>4</sup> It also allows the executive magistrate to prohibit assembly of five or more persons.<sup>4</sup> The Police Act, 1861 empowers district authorities to require licence for public assemblies and processions.<sup>5</sup> The Karnataka Police Act, 1963 empowers authorities to require licence and control places of public entertainment, and maintain order at such places and public meetings.<sup>6</sup> In 2021, the state government issued an order under the 1963 Act to regulate protest marches in Bengaluru.<sup>7</sup>

The National Disaster Management Act, 2005 is also applicable for crowd management.<sup>8,9</sup> In 2014, the National Disaster Management Authority issued guidelines for managing crowd at events and mass gatherings.<sup>9</sup> It highlighted following key issues: (i) casual approach in issuance and renewal of permits, (ii) lack of sufficient manpower in permit-granting bodies, and (iii) deployment of unskilled or untrained private security to save costs. It observed that there is a need for a debate whether organisers should be legally liable for human disasters during the event. It recommended making insurance mandatory for all events of mass gathering.

### Key Features

- **Permission for organising events:** The Bill requires a person to obtain permission for organising an event with a crowd of 5,000 people or more. An application must be submitted at least 10 days prior to the event to the specified authority (Table 1).

**Table 1: Specified authority for granting permission**

Number of attendees	Authority
5,000 to 7,000	Officer-in-charge of nearby police station
7,000 to 50,000	Deputy Superintendent of Police
More than 50,000	Superintendent of Police or Commissioner of Police

- **Role of the authority:** Upon receiving an application for permission, the specified authority will conduct enquiry about: (i) details of organisers, (ii) purpose and place of event, (iii) expected crowd gathering,

(iv) measures for crowd safety, and (v) no objection certificates from departments such as fire safety, health and family welfare, public works, and traffic police. The authority must grant or reject permission within four days of receiving the application. Permission may be granted after holding meetings with organisers and specified departments. The authority must prepare a scheme of bandobast or security plan, and submit it to his senior officers within two days of the meeting. The authority may cancel the permission or withhold an ongoing event in case of exigencies or unexpected developments.

- **Role of the organisers:** Organisers must provide for smooth movement of the crowd inside and outside the event. They are required to sign an indemnity bond of one crore rupees. They will also be required to compensate in case of any damage to public or private property, or fatalities. The properties of convicted organisers may be attached and distributed among the victims on the orders of the trial court.
- **Offences and Penalties:** Organising unpermitted events will be punishable with imprisonment between three years and seven years, a fine of up to one crore rupees, or both. Causing civil disturbance will be punishable with imprisonment up to three years, a fine of Rs 50,000, or both. Civil disturbance is defined as a breach of peace or any assembly of persons where there is a threat of collective violence, destruction of property, or other unlawful act. Disobeying directions of a police officer to disperse from a place of gathering will be punishable with a fine of Rs 50,000 and community service for a period of one month.
- The Bill makes causing crowd disaster punishable with: (i) imprisonment between three and seven years, if there are injuries, and (ii) a minimum of 10 years and up to life imprisonment, if there are fatalities. Crowd disaster is defined as a crowd crush due to a surge of individuals in a crowd in response to: (i) perceived danger, (ii) loss of physical space, or (iii) disruption in orderly movement of crowds.

## PART B: KEY ISSUES AND ANALYSIS

### Compensation payable by organisers

#### Organisers required to pay compensation regardless of fault

Bill:  
Clause  
6, 15

The Bill makes the organisers liable to compensate for the loss or damage caused to the public or private property, or loss of human life, resulting from a civil disturbance or crowd disaster. This liability applies regardless of whether the harm was caused due to their fault or negligence, and is unlimited. The question is whether such absolute liability is appropriate. For example, in an event at a rented auditorium, a large number of people may get injured due to collapsing of a roof. Or there may be a fire and inadequate fire safety provisions result in stampede, injuries, and deaths. Before organising an event, the organisers must seek permission from the specified authority. Before giving the permission, the authority is required to assess the risk and enquire about the no objection certificates from departments such as fire safety. If the event has been organised at a venue after obtaining the permission, the question may arise who shall be liable for the incident. The question is whether the liability should lie on the organisers (as stated in the Bill), the authority which gave the permission after due enquiry, the agencies that certified the venue safe, or the owner of the premises.

Certain laws such as the Public Liability Insurance Act, 1991 impose liability irrespective of fault in cases involving handling of hazardous substances.<sup>12</sup> However, the approach regarding the extent of liability varies across different laws (Table 2). These laws also mandate the liable person to maintain insurance cover. The National Disaster Management Authority (2014) had recommended that insurance cover should be mandatory for events involving mass gathering.<sup>9</sup>

**Table 2: Extent of liability for compensation under different laws**

Act	Liability involving	Liability on	Liability to pay compensation	Extent of liability	Requirement for insurance cover
Motor Vehicles Act, 1988 <sup>10</sup>	Use of motor vehicles	Owner of the vehicle	Two distinct compensation regimes: (i) fault-based, and (ii) regardless of fault <sup>11</sup>	Unlimited in case of fault; limited under the no-fault regime, determined based on a specified formula <sup>11</sup>	Yes
Public Liability Insurance Act, 1991 <sup>12</sup>	Handling of hazardous substances	Owner of the facility	Regardless of fault	Unlimited	Yes; insurance cover of the prescribed amount or Rs 500 crore, whichever is lower
Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act, 2010 <sup>13</sup>	Operation of a nuclear power plant	Operator of the plant	Regardless of fault	Limited to a specified amount; any excess amount is paid by the central government	Yes; insurance cover or financial security must be maintained

Sources: Refer to endnotes marked in "Act" column; PRS.

## No compensation for injuries

**Bill:** The Bill provides for compensation in case of loss of human life. However, it does not provide compensation in case of injuries. Laws such as the Public Liability Insurance Act, 1991, the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act, 2010, and the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988 also provide compensation for injuries to victims.<sup>14,15,16</sup>

**Clause 15(1)**

## Whether family events should be exempted

**Bill:** The Bill seeks to provide for effective management of crowd at events and places of gathering. It defines crowd as a group of 5,000 or more individuals that have gathered for a common purpose or intent. It defines a function or an event as a congregation of a large number of people for a common purpose, at a particular place of gathering, to meet that common purpose. The Bill exempts family functions or events such as marriages, held within private premises. Private premises include any leased, hired, or contracted premises. Concerns with crowd management may also apply in case of a family event. This may raise a question whether the exemption based on the purpose of the event alone is appropriate.

**Clause 20**

## Wide range of punishment for organising an unpermitted event

**Bill:** Under the Bill, organising an unpermitted event will be punishable with imprisonment between three years and seven years, a fine of up to one crore rupees, or both. However, there is no guidance on determining the punishment within this range. When the punishment for an offence has a range, the judge is expected to assess the circumstances of the case and determine the extent of the punishment within the range. In this case, the offence is that of holding an event without permission. This is purely a question of fact. It is unclear how there could be differing circumstances while committing the offence.

**Clause 7**

## Lack of clarity on who will be held liable for offences by companies

**Bill:** Under the Bill, organisers are defined to include a company. The Bill does not specify who in the company will be held liable for offences. This is different from other laws. Laws such as the Disaster Management Act, 2005 and the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 specify that in the event of offences by companies, employees responsible for the conduct of business will be held liable.<sup>17,18</sup> Further, these Acts also hold director, manager, secretary, and other officers liable in case of connivance or neglect. These Acts provide protection if the employee can demonstrate that: (i) the offence was committed without his knowledge, or (ii) he had exercised all due diligence. Similar provisions also exist in several state laws in Karnataka.<sup>19,20,21,22,23</sup>

**Clause 2(viii), 7, 8, 9**

## It is unclear when the indemnity bond will be invoked

**Bill:** The Bill requires the organisers to provide an indemnity bond of one crore rupees at the time of obtaining permission for organising an event. However, it does not specify the conditions under which the indemnity bond may be invoked.

**Clause 6(g)**

## Certain terms not defined

### ‘Family functions or events’ not defined

**Bill:** The Bill does not define family functions or events. It only illustratively provides that family events include marriages. It does not provide guidance on how to determine whether an event qualifies as a family event or function. This may lead to disputes regarding the applicability of the Bill to certain events. For example, it may be questioned whether a cultural event like *Ganpati puja pandals* organised by a family in their private premises with invitation to the people of the city at large, is a family event or not.

**Clause 20**

### ‘Mass gathering’ not defined

**Bill:** The Bill states that an organiser must seek permission for an event which would attract a mass gathering or crowd. While crowd has been defined in the Bill, mass gathering is not defined.

**Clause 4**

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2. “11 die in stampede at RCB cup celebration in Bengaluru”, The Hindu, June 05, 2025, <https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/bangalore/rcb-ipl-victory-celebrations-stampede-bengaluru-death-toll/article69656538.ece>.

3. Section 189-195, Chapter XI: Of Offences Against the Public Tranquillity, The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, [https://prsindia.org/files/bills\\_acts/bills\\_parliament/2023/Bharatiya\\_Nyaya\\_Sanhita\\_2023.pdf](https://prsindia.org/files/bills_acts/bills_parliament/2023/Bharatiya_Nyaya_Sanhita_2023.pdf).

4. Section 148-151, Chapter XI: Maintenance of Public Order and Tranquillity, The Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023, [https://prsindia.org/files/bills\\_acts/bills\\_parliament/2023/Bharatiya\\_Nagarik\\_Suraksha\\_Sanhita\\_2023.pdf](https://prsindia.org/files/bills_acts/bills_parliament/2023/Bharatiya_Nagarik_Suraksha_Sanhita_2023.pdf).

5. Section 30 and 30A, The Police Act, 1861, [https://www.mha.gov.in/sites/default/files/police\\_act\\_1861.pdf](https://www.mha.gov.in/sites/default/files/police_act_1861.pdf).

6. Section 31(w), The Karnataka Police Act, 1963, [https://prsindia.org/files/bills\\_acts/acts\\_states/karnataka/1964/1964KR4.pdf](https://prsindia.org/files/bills_acts/acts_states/karnataka/1964/1964KR4.pdf).

7. *Suo Motu v. the State of Karnataka*, W.P. No. 5781 of 2021, High Court of Karnataka, August 01, 2022, [https://judiciary.karnataka.gov.in/rep\\_judgmentcase.php](https://judiciary.karnataka.gov.in/rep_judgmentcase.php).

8. Section 2(d) and 2(e), The Disaster Management Act, 2005, [https://prsindia.org/files/bills\\_acts/acts\\_parliament/2005/the-disaster-management-act-2005.pdf](https://prsindia.org/files/bills_acts/acts_parliament/2005/the-disaster-management-act-2005.pdf).
9. Managing Crowds at Events and Venues of Mass Gathering, National Disaster Management Authority, 2014, <https://ndma.gov.in/sites/default/files/PDF/Reports/managingcrowdsguide.pdf>.
10. Section 140, 146, 147, 163A, and 166, The Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, <https://www.indiacode.nic.in/bitstream/123456789/9460/1/a1988-59.pdf>.
11. Deepal Girishbhai Soni v. United India Insurance Co. Ltd, Baroda, Supreme Court of India, March 18, 2004, <https://api.sci.gov.in/jonew/judis/25992.pdf>.
12. Section 3, 4, 7, and 8, The Public Liability Insurance Act, 1991, <https://www.indiacode.nic.in/bitstream/123456789/1960/5/A1991-06.pdf>.
13. Section 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 14, The Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act, 2010, <https://www.indiacode.nic.in/bitstream/123456789/2084/5/A2010-38.pdf>.
14. Section 8, The Public Liability Insurance Act, 1991, <https://www.indiacode.nic.in/bitstream/123456789/1960/5/A1991-06.pdf>.
15. Section 14, The Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act, 2010, <https://www.indiacode.nic.in/bitstream/123456789/2084/5/A2010-38.pdf>.
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