

Stampede at a Political Rally In India Leaves Dozens Dead

By PRAGATI K.B.

Dozens of people died and more than 40 suffered injuries on Saturday in a stampede at a political rally in southern India, when thousands rushed toward the stage where a popular actor and politician was speaking, officials said.

The head of police of Tamil Nadu State, G. Venkataraman, said at a news conference on Sunday that 38 people — 12 men, 16 women and 10 children — had died.

An additional 45 were admitted to hospitals in Karur, the city in

Anupreeta Das contributed reporting.

Tamil Nadu where the episode took place, the state's chief minister, M.K. Stalin, said on social media.

The actor and politician Joseph Vijay Chandrasekhar, known professionally as Vijay, had been speaking on a makeshift stage, erected on top of a bus, when the stampede began.

Mr. Chandrasekhar, 51, is one of Tamil Nadu's most successful actors, starring in many of the film industry's biggest commercial hits. In 2024, he quit his acting career to enter politics, starting his own political party, Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam.

Video of the rally posted on social media showed the actor paus-



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ing his speech when he saw ambulances struggling to make their way through the crowd, and asking fans to make way for them.

Mr. Venkataraman said the organizers had sought permission

for a rally from 3 p.m. to 10 p.m. for a crowd of 10,000. However, around 27,000 people gathered, and social media posts advertised that Mr. Chandrasekhar would be there at noon, even though he did

An ambulance carrying victims in Karur, India. The actor and politician known as Vijay appeared hours later than social media posts had said.

not show up until nearly 8 p.m. "People were waiting without water and food for a long time," Mr. Venkataraman said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India expressed his condolences to the victims' families, writing on X that the event was "deeply saddening." Mr. Stalin issued a statement on the site urging the public to cooperate with doctors and the police.

Mr. Chandrasekhar also posted a statement, saying: "My heart is shattered. The sorrow I am feeling is indescribable."

He offered his condolences and added that he hoped for the quick recovery of the injured.