

Jailer is a 2023 Indian [Tamil-language action comedy film](#) directed by [Nelson Dilipkumar](#) and produced by [Kalanithi Maran](#) of [Sun Pictures](#). The film stars [Rajinikanth](#) in the lead role, alongside [Vinayakan](#), [Ramya Krishnan](#), [Vasanth Ravi](#), [Tamannaah](#), [Sunil](#), [Mirnaa Menon](#) and [Yogi Babu](#) in supporting roles. [Mohanlal](#), [Shiva Rajkumar](#) and [Jackie Shroff](#) play guest roles.

The film was officially announced in February 2022 with the working title *Thalaivar 169*, being the 169th film of Rajinikanth, while the official title *Jailer* was announced in June. [Principal photography](#) began in August 2022 in [Chennai](#) and [wrapped](#) in June 2023. The music is composed by [Anirudh Ravichander](#), while the cinematography and editing were handled by [Vijay Kartik Kannan](#) and R. Nirmal.

Jailer was released theatrically on 10 August 2023 to positive reviews from critics who praised its screenwriting, direction, cast performances, characterisation and background score.^[4] It became one of the highest-grossing Indian films of [2023](#) and [worldwide](#).

Plot

Muthuvel Pandian is a retired police officer who lives in [Kodambakkam](#) with his family. Muthuvel's son [ACP Arjun](#) is investigating Varman, an eccentric gangster operating from his base of operations in [Arakkonam](#), who smuggles idols of gods and sells them to buyers overseas. Arjun confronts Varman's henchman Seenu and demands him about the whereabouts of Varman. While getting closer in nabbing Varman, Arjun suddenly goes missing and the police department covers up his murder by spreading word that he may have committed suicide due to the stress in the job.

Grieving the loss of his son and partly blaming himself for raising him to be honest and fearless, Muthuvel goes after Seenu and murders him, disposing the body by coercing a clueless local taxi driver Vimal into helping him. Varman's men attempt to kill Muthuvel's grandson Rithvik, but Muthuvel manages to save him. Muthuvel tries to convince Varman to leave him and his family alone, but to no avail. Enraged, Muthuvel decides to fight back. First, he blackmails a psychiatrist Dr. S. Dhandapani into providing asylum for his family. Muthuvel then visits Narasimha, a reformed criminal living in [Mandya](#), who loans him four of his sharpest shooters.

With the help of Narasimha's men, Muthuvel steals Varman's idols that were being smuggled and uses them to blackmail and humiliate Varman, who was about to kill his family. In retaliation, Varman tells a Bihari gangster named Kamdev to send people to kill Muthuvel and his family at his home, but Muthuvel and Narasimha's men finishes them off. On discovering Varman's target to be Muthuvel, Kamdev reveals to him that Muthuvel was the former ruthless and charismatic jailer of [Tihar prison](#) who disciplined the criminals harshly but also helped them reform, thus gaining a massive network of allies, including Kamdev.

Muthuvel corners Varman in his base along with a hundred men sent by another former criminal Sikandar Singh, but Varman reveals that Arjun is still alive and threatens to kill him. Both of them ultimately arrive at a compromise: Varman will release Arjun in exchange for retrieving a famous antique crown that is currently secure in a temple in [Mangalagiri](#). Muthuvel plans a heist involving the Telugu actor Blast Mohan, who is a trustee of the temple where the crown is held. After various deceptions and with the help of a smuggler in [Mumbai](#) named Mathew, Muthuvel eventually comes into possession of the crown and sends it to Varman, but it is later revealed that the crown which Muthuvel sent was a fake.

Varman frees Arjun, who reveals himself as a corrupt police officer wanting to be cut in on Varman's operations, willing to kill his own father for money. However, the fake crown also conceals a hidden camera and their entire conversation is recorded and seen by Muthuvel. He attacks Varman's hideout with Kamdev, Vimal, and his allies, killing Varman and his men, while Narasimha protects Muthuvel's family and Mathew destroys Varman's smuggling operations. Muthuvel gives Arjun one last chance to surrender, but he refuses and attempts to kill him. Arjun is instead shot and killed by Narasimha's men, while Muthuvel solemnly walks away.

Cast

- [Rajinikanth](#) as "Tiger" Muthuvel Pandian
- [Vinayakan](#) as Varman
- [Ramya Krishnan](#) as Vijaya "Viji" Pandian
- [Vasanth Ravi](#) as [ACP](#) Arjun Pandian
- [Tamannaah](#) as Kamna
- [Sunil](#) as Blast Mohan
- [Yogi Babu](#) as Vimal
- [Mirnaa Menon](#) as Swetha Pandian
- Rithvik as Rithvik "Rithu" Pandian, Muthuvel's grandson
- Harshad as Dhanraj
- Jaffer Sadiq as Dokinath
- [G. Marimuthu](#) as Panneer
- [VTV Ganesh](#) as Dr. S. Dhandapani
- [Redin Kingsley](#) as Divya Nathan
- [Sunil Reddy](#) as Bagunnara Balu
- [Saravanan](#) as Seenu
- [Aranthangi Nisha](#) as Inspector G. Kanagalakshmi
- [Mahanadi Shankar](#) as a police constable
- Padam Kumar as Raja Rao
- Karate Karthi as Sanju
- Sugunthan as Narasimha's henchman
- Billy Muralee as Panju
- Pavel Mani as Seenu's masseur
- Sooraj Pops as Varman's henchman
- Dancer Ramesh as Varman's henchman
- Haji Mohammed as Kareem's gang member
- [Kishore](#) as Jaffar
- [Makarand Deshpande](#) as Sikandar Singh
- [Uday Mahesh](#) as a [CBI](#) officer (uncredited)

Guest appearances

- [Mohanlal](#) as Mathew
- [Shiva Rajkumar](#) as Narasimha
- [Jackie Shroff](#) as Kamdev
- [Naga Babu](#) as Muthuvel's former colleague
- [Jani](#) as himself in the song "Kaavaalaa"

Production

Development

In December 2021, [Nelson Dilipkumar](#) was reported to direct [Rajinikanth](#)'s 169th film as the lead role after finishing his commitments to *[Beast](#)* (2022).^[5] On 10 February 2022, [Sun Pictures](#) officially announced their next film starring Rajinikanth and to be directed by Nelson. As Rajinikanth's 169th film, it was tentatively titled *Thalaivar 169*.^{[6][7]} The title *Jailer* was announced on 17 June 2022, with the posters revealing Nelson as the sole writer, dismissing earlier reports that [K. S. Ravikumar](#) would be writing the screenplay from a story written by Rajinikanth. Nelson retained his crew from *[Doctor](#)* (2021) and *[Beast](#)*, with cinematography by [Vijay Kartik Kannan](#) and editing done by R. Nirmal.^{[8][9]} This also marks the first collaboration of Nelson with Rajinikanth.^[10]

Casting

In April 2022, [Ramya Krishnan](#) was reported to play a role in the film.^[11] In May, there were reports suggesting that [Kannada](#) actor [Shiva Rajkumar](#) would be seen in a pivotal role.^[12] That speculation was confirmed the following month. It marks Shiva Rajkumar's debut in [Tamil cinema](#).^[13] In early August, [Vasanth Ravi](#) was confirmed to be part of the film.^[14] Shortly thereafter, on 10 August, Ramya Krishnan confirmed her participation,^[15] and on 23 August, [Malayalam](#) actor [Vinayakan](#) was confirmed.^[16] According to Vinayakan, [Mammooty](#) was the original choice for his role.^[17] In July 2022, there were reports suggesting that [Yogi Babu](#) would be a part of the film.^[18] That speculation was confirmed on 24 August 2022 by Sun Pictures.^[19] On 6 January 2023, it was announced that [Mohanlal](#) would be acting in the film in a cameo role.^[20] Almost two weeks later, [Sunil](#) and [Tamannaah Bhatia](#) were announced as part of the cast for brief roles.^{[21][22]} In February 2023, [Jackie Shroff](#) was announced to be a part of the film.^[23]

Filming

Test shoots took place in late July 2022 in [Chennai](#),^{[24][25]} and [principal photography](#) was set to commence on 3 August in [Hyderabad](#).^[26] However, the start of filming was indefinitely delayed due to a strike in Hyderabad which was expected to last at least three weeks.^[14] Filming ultimately began on 22 August in Chennai.^[27] By October, filming was also taking place in [Cuddalore](#).^[28] In January 2023, a small filming schedule began in Jaisalmer.^[29] The following month, filming began in [Mangalore](#).^{[30][31]} In March, the climax of the film was shot at [Athirappilly Falls](#), Chalakudy in [Kerala](#).^{[32][33]} Principal photography was [wrapped](#) by 1 June 2023.^[34]

Music

Main article: [Jailer \(soundtrack\)](#)

The music is composed by [Anirudh Ravichander](#) in his third collaboration with Rajinikanth, after *[Petta](#)* (2019) and *[Darbar](#)* (2020) and fourth collaboration with Nelson after *[Kolamaavu Kokila](#)* (2018), *[Doctor](#)* (2021), and *[Beast](#)* (2022).^[35] The first single titled "Kaavaalaa" was released on 6 July 2023.^[36] The second single titled "Hukum – Thalaivar Alappara" was released on 17 July 2023.^[37] The third single titled "Jujubee" was released on 26 July 2023.^[38] The album featuring 8 tracks was released on 28 July 2023.^[39]

Marketing

In July 2023, a YouTube video was released teasing^[40] a "Kaavaalaa" lyrics video featuring Tamannaah and Rajinikanth, which was later released on 6 July.^{[41][42]} The hook step performed by her in the song went viral on social media.^[43] The film's audio launch—which aims to promote the music—took place at [Jawahar Lal Nehru Indoor Stadium](#) in Chennai,^[44] and later broadcast on [Sun TV](#). On 2 August 2023, the film's trailer was released.^[45]

Release

Theatrical

Jailer released theatrically on 10 August 2023.^[46] The film's [Kerala](#) distribution rights have been bought by Gokulam Gopalan.^[47] [Andhra Pradesh](#) and [Telangana](#) theatrical rights were bought by Asian Cinema, while the overseas rights were acquired by [Ayngaran International](#).^{[48][49]} The film will be released by MCC Group in [Sri Lanka](#).^[50]

Home media

The film began streaming on [Amazon Prime Video](#) from 7 September 2023.^[51]

Controversies

This section needs to be **updated**. Please help update this article to reflect recent events or

newly available
information.
(August 2023)

In July 2023, director Sakir Madathil claimed he registered the title *Jailer* first for his [Malayalam film](#) in the [Kerala Film Chamber of Commerce](#) (KFCC) in 2021 and requested producer [Kalanithi Maran](#) to change the title of the film.^[52] Later, the director took the issue to the court and filed a legal complaint against Sun Pictures over the same title.^[53]

In August 2023, the makers were ordered to alter one scene where a misogynistic contract killer is seen wearing a [Royal Challengers Bangalore](#) (RCB) t-shirt, based on a plea filed by the RCB that this was an act of copyright infringement and slander. Sun Pictures agreed to the demands, and said the edited version would be available from 1 September onwards.^[54]

Reception

Box office

Jailer grossed an estimated ₹72 crore on its opening day worldwide of which ₹52 crore was from India.^{[55][56]} The opening day grosses were ₹23 crore in [Tamil Nadu](#), ₹5.85 crore in [Kerala](#), ₹10 crore in Telugu states, ₹11 crore in [Karnataka](#), ₹4.5 crore in [North India](#), ₹40 crore internationally.^[57] As of 21 August 2023, *Jailer* had grossed ₹194.7 crore in Tamil Nadu, ₹75 crore in [Andhra Pradesh](#) and [Telengana](#) and ₹60 crore in Karnataka.^[58] It has also grossed ₹166.31 crore at the overseas box office.^[59] [Pinkvilla](#) reported that the film grossed ₹605 crore worldwide.^[3]

Critical response

Jailer received positive reviews from critics.^[60]

Sridevi S of [The Times of India](#) gave 3 out of 5 stars and wrote "It's director Nelson's show in the first half, superstar Rajini takes the baton in the second half."^[61] Janaki K of [India Today](#) gave 3 out of 5 stars and wrote "With solid performances and good camera work, *Jailer* is strictly a theatre watch."^[62] Gopinath Rajendran of [The Hindu](#) wrote "*Jailer* might be far from perfect, but with the towering presence of Rajinikanth standing tall along with Nelson's fortified writing, this is a commendable comeback for both the actor and filmmaker."^[63] Kirubhakar Purushothaman of [The Indian Express](#) gave 3.5 out of 5 stars and wrote "[the] Nelson Dilipkumar film is Rajinikanth's version of [Kamal Haasan's](#) *Vikram*, but with a twist. Saying that doesn't take away anything from this fun-filled entertainer."^[64]

Manoj Kumar of [OTTPlay](#) gave 3.5 out of 5 stars and wrote "*Jailer* is a highly entertaining crowd-pleaser. Nothing path-breaking but it is sure to become an enjoyable delight for the masses."^[65] Pratikshya Mishra of [The Quint](#) gave 3 out of 5 stars and wrote "Without Rajinikanth,

Jailer might not have had the same magnetism as it does but since the star is on screen, flicking his shades and throwing lighters in the air, it's a whole different story."^[66] Priyanka Sundar of *Firstpost* gave 3 out of 5 stars and wrote "One of the most memorable things about Nelson's directorial *Jailer*, starring Rajinikanth, is the fact that the superstar doesn't get into a zone where he performs unbelievable action sequences".^[67]

Divya Nair of *Rediff.com* gave the film 3.5 out of 5 stars and stated that "This is an altogether different version of a brutal Rajinikanth, something you and I had probably never imagined before."^[68] Saibal Chatterjee of *NDTV* gave 2.5 out of 5 stars and wrote "The guest stars do their bit and move on. It is left to Rajinikanth to shoulder the weight of the erratic script."^[69] Sidharth MP of *WION* wrote that "*Jailer* is an entertaining film that offers glimpses of the vintage Rajini and the contemporary Rajini, ably assisted by cameos by Mohanlal, Jackie Shroff and Shiva Rajkumar."^[70]

Future

Post-release, it was reported that the film would have a second part.^[71] Owing to the film's success, Nelson in an interview confirmed the film would have sequel titled *Jailer 2*.^[72]

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