

QUOTE OF THE DAY

At times I think and at times I am - Paul Valery

A commendable budget

Assam Finance Minister Ajanta Neog on Monday tabled a ₹2.63 lakh crore Budget for the next financial year that proposed no new tax for the general public but gave additional relief to nearly 1.5 lakh salaried people. With a deficit of ₹620.27 crore, this is the last full Budget of the Himanta Biswa Sarma-led second BJP government...

Narendra Modi has put all his focus on winning assembly polls in Bihar by year end

The Bihar assembly elections are still months ahead but why waste time? The Bharatiya Janata Party is in a hurry much before the elections. And it doesn't matter if Prime Minister Narendra Modi continues to cultivate his 'Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas' narrative...



to win the Bihar assembly elections. He will have to rely on the 'Hindu-card'. The BJP can only challenge the status quo with toxic Hindutva. This isn't new to the BJP; the party had played the 'Hindu-card' in 2015, too.

like the saying goes. Baba Bageshwar is the loudest of the trio, literally and audibly. He is also the one the opposition parties are most apprehensive about. Bageshwar says he is not in Bihar to take 'sides' and that his only goal is to 'unify the Hindus.'

nounced and held. And the RSS made sure voters turned out in large numbers for the BJP in Haryana, Maharashtra and even in Delhi, where assembly elections returned the BJP to power after 27 years.

DEGREE OF THOUGHT
By: Sushil Kutty

Rise of Bangladesh's National Citizens Party: A new era or a fleeting moment?

By: Dipak Kurmi

Bangladesh has once again found itself at the crossroads of history, with the emergence of the National Citizens Party (NCP), or Jatiya Nagorik Party (NJP) in Bengali. Officially founded on February 28, 2025, the party is the political offspring of the Anti-Discrimination Students Movement (ADSM)...

commitment to social justice, transparency, and institutional integrity, remains vague on the specifics of its proposed 'Second Republic.' The plan to enact a new constitution is central to its vision, but the details remain unclear.

Assam Budget 2025-26: A growth blueprint

By: Himangshu Ranjan Bhuyan

The Assam Budget 2025-26 presents a clear plan for balanced growth and long-term development in the state. With a total allocation of ₹2.63 lakh crore, the government has focused on creating a stable financial system, boosting infrastructure, and improving social services like education and healthcare.

set plans to establish three new medical colleges, which will help in training more healthcare professionals and improving medical services. These colleges, along with additional projects to build more medical facilities in various parts of the state, are expected to expand access to quality healthcare.

disaster management, and urban planning. By investing in space technology, the government is opening up new avenues for research and development and providing students and researchers with opportunities to work on high-tech projects.



more than four lakh government employees. This move not only secures the financial future of government workers but also builds confidence in the public sector. In this way, the budget supports economic stability by ensuring that funds are managed efficiently and reach those who need them most.



Kiran Rao's 'Laapataa Ladies' sweeps IIFA Awards; wins best picture, direction & acting honours

JAIPUR, March 11: Kiran Rao's critically-acclaimed film *Laapataa Ladies* emerged as the biggest winner at the 2025 International Indian Film Academy (IIFA) Awards, bagging 10 trophies, including Best Picture and Best Direction, at a star-studded ceremony held in Jaipur. The film, which was named India's official Oscar entry, won in all major categories, with Rao taking home the Best Director award, while Nitanshi Goel secured the Best Performance in a Leading Role (Female) for her role of lost bride Phool. "It's a rare privilege to win an award for a film like *Laapataa Ladies*. It's been a wonderful night. It's a rare privilege to make a film like this," Rao said after accepting the trophy. "There's absolutely nothing to compare with the love of people who say that we've not just watched your film once, but multiple times. It's what a filmmaker lives for. So thank you for watching our films," she added. Bollywood star Kartik Aaryan clinched the Best Performance in a Leading Role (Male) for *Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3*.

In his acceptance speech, the actor, who also hosted the awards gala with Karan Johar, said people doubted him when he took over the franchise from superstar Akshay Kumar. "*Bhool Bhulaiyaa* has been a journey full of difficulties. From the start, when I was selected for *Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2*, many questions were raised whether I will be able to carry the film," he said, adding that similar things happened during the making of *Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3*. "I want to thank the audience that supported us throughout this journey," he said. An emotional Goel said she used to watch IIFA Awards on the television as a kid and never imagined herself being on the stage. "It's a dream for anyone to be a part of a movie produced by Aamir Khan Productions and that's why it was a huge honour for me. People have showered love on Phool, please continue to do so," she said. Goel also asked aspiring actors to never stop dreaming. Her co-stars -- Ravi Kishan and Pratibha Ranta --

took home the awards for best supporting role (male) and best debut (Female), respectively. *Laapataa Ladies* also won in several technical categories, including Best Story (Original) for Biplab Goswami, Best Screenplay for Sneha Desai, and Best Editing for Jaben Merchant. Prashant Pandey was awarded Best Lyrics for the song *Sajni*, while Ram Sampath received the Best Music honour. Actor Janki Bodiwala won Best Supporting Role (Female) for her performance in *Shaitaan*, while Raghav Juyal was awarded Best Performance in a Negative Role for his role in *Kill*. In the debut categories, Kunal Kemmu won Best Directorial Debut for *Madgaon Express*, while Lakshya Lalwani was named Best Debut (Male) for his role in *Kill*. The Best Story (Adapted) award was given to the team of Merry Christmas, comprising Shriram Raghavan, Arijit Biswas, Pooja Surti, and Anukriti Pandey. Article 370 won Best Dialogue trophy for Arjun Dhawan, Aditya Dhar, Aditya Suhas Jambhale, and Monal Thakkar. Technical categories saw *Kill* winning Best Cinematography for Rafeeq Mahmood and Best Sound Design for Subash Sahoo, Boloy Kumar Doloi, and Rahul Karpe. The Best Choreography award went to *Bosco-Caesar* for the song *Tauba Tauba* from Vicky Kaushal-starrer *Bad Newz*. Red Chillies VFX bagged Best VFX for *Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3*. In the music categories, Jubin Nautiyal won Best Singer (Male) for *Dua* from Article 370, while Shreya Ghoshal was honoured with Best Singer (Female) for *Ami Je Tomar 3.0* from *Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3*. At the ceremony, veteran filmmaker Rakesh Roshan was honoured with the Outstanding Achievement in Indian cinema award. He was felicitated by veteran actor Rekha. "If I can stand here, then you can also. Please dream big and they come true," she said, before referencing Shah Rukh Khan's popular dialogue from *Om Shanti Om*. (PTI)



Will be acting and then take on direction: Kunal Kemmu

NEW DELHI, March 11: Actor-director Kunal Kemmu says he is set to get back to direction soon but acting remains his first love.

Kemmu, known for films like "Malang", "Traffic Signal" and "Golmaal franchise", made his directorial debut with "Madgaon Express" last year.

Starring Avinash Tiwari, Divyendu, Pratik Gandhi and Nora Fatehi, the film emerged as a box office hit and also made Kemmu the winner of 'Best Directorial Debut' award at the 25th edition of the International Indian Film Academy (IIFA) Awards.

Kemmu, 41, said he will be back to acting field before taking another directorial project.

"I will be getting back into direction soon, and I also love acting; it's my first love. I will be acting in the coming months, and then I will be making my next (film). I am kind of going back into acting in the coming months," he told reporters at the IIFA. His latest work as an actor was in the 2023 film "Kanjoos Makhi-choos" alongside Shweta Tripathi, Raju Srivastav, and Rajiv Gupta.

Kemmu also cheered for India's win at the ICC Champions Trophy on Sunday. "I am so happy... I was watching it while. I was stuck in traffic and I heard you all scream and I figured out that India has won... India has done such an amazing job and for the last few months they have been so active and they have done amazing." IIFA concluded on Sunday in Jaipur. (PTI)



I DON'T PLAN MY JOURNEY, I JUST GO WITH THE FLOW: JYOTIKA

NEW DELHI, March 11: South star Jyotika says she is happy to come back to the Hindi entertainment space, especially at a time when women are getting an opportunity to play well-written characters on OTT.

The actor returned to Bollywood in 2024 with the supernatural thriller film "Shaitaan". 26 years after her acting debut "Doli Sajake Rakha" (1998).

"It's taken me 25 years to come back to Hindi. I can see the OTT's boom and the kind of work, not just multi-language actors, but also all age groups of women are getting... (In terms of) a journey, I do not plan. I'm just flowing. And the flow is really very beautiful," she told PTI. The actor's latest work



is Netflix's new crime series "Dabba Cartel". It also stars Shabana Azmi, Nimisha Sajayan, Anjali Anand, Sai Tamhankar, and Lillete Dubey. Directed by Hitesh Bhatia,

the show follows five ordinary women and how their low-key dabba service spirals into an unexpected venture: a high-stakes drug delivery operation.

Jyotika, 46, said she resonated with the character of Varuna, a former corporate big shot with dreams of running a successful clothing franchise, as she had the face of "a common woman".

"Real characters are the toughest to perform because when you see those roles, you see yourself in (them)... I feel you have to be as real as you can and that attracts me to a character a lot. But they are very seldom well written."

"The other factor which connected me to 'Dabba Cartel' was the layering. I love the way it was written. And it was with 'the Shabana Azmi', which was the first factor.

There is one scene of Ganpati (festival) where we share a solo frame, which is rare in the whole series. It was just the shot of the two of us. I got goosebumps seeing those two faces on screen," she said.

Jyotika, known for films such as "Kaakha Kaakha", "Tagore", "Chandramukhi", "Mozhi" and "Kaathal - The Core", is happy that there is growth in the way roles are being written for women even in the male-led films. (PTI)

Open to exploring South cinema: Fardeen Khan

JAIPUR, March 11: In his second innings in the film industry, actor Fardeen Khan on Sunday said he is looking forward to doing meaningful work and is also open to venturing into South cinema.

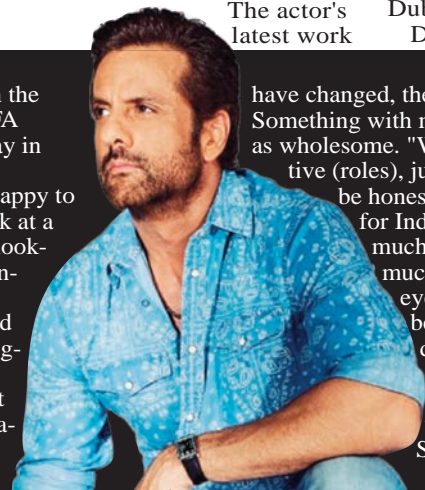
Fardeen, known for films such as "Prem Aggan", "Jungle", "Pyaar Tune Kya Kiya", and "No Entry", returned to cinema after 14 years with last year's Netflix series "Heeramandi". He followed it up with films such as "Khel Khel Mein" and "Visfot".

Asked if he would like to work in South cinema, the actor told PTI: "With the right opportunities, I'm open to it (exploring South cinema)."

He was speaking on the green carpet of the IIFA Awards 2025 underway in Jaipur on Sunday.

Fardeen said he is happy to have made a comeback at a time when things are looking good for Indian cinema.

"I'm looking forward to doing some meaningful work like I always have. I'm at a different age and stage of my career. The audiences



have changed, the writing has changed..."

Something with meaning and entertaining as wholesome. "Whether positive or negative (roles), just happy to be working to be honest. This is such a great time for Indian cinema. There's so much content out there, so much new talent, such a fresh eye on the way films are being written, and what audiences are liking," he added.

The IIFA Awards 2025 will come to a close on Sunday. (PTI)

No similarity between Salman Khan's father-daughter film script and 'Be Happy': Remo

MUMBAI, March 11: Filmmaker Remo D'Souza says his new film "Be Happy", about the bond between a father and daughter, has no similarity with one of the scripts he wrote for Salman Khan.

"Be Happy", featuring Abhishek Bachchan and Inayat Verma, will release on Prime Video on March 14.

Remo had pitched a father-daughter story to Salman Khan in 2017 and it was reportedly titled "Dancing Dad".

"I don't know how the tentative title of that film came about. That film was something else; that script is still with Salman sir. There is no similarity between this script and that script," Remo told PTI.

"I've many such scripts of father-daughter. It's not like there is only one. There's one film that we are also trying to make with Nassar sir. It is not related to dance but some-

thing different," he added.

The director-choreographer, who has written "Be Happy" with Kanishka Singh Deo and Chirag Garg, said the film challenged him in getting the emotional quotient of his characters correct. The director said the idea for the movie took shape in 2020 following the COVID-19 lockdown.

"Apart from commercial films, which I've made like the 'ABCD' franchise, I make sure that whatever films I do, I incorporate some real-life incident or experience that I've had into my films. So, some portions of 'Be Happy' are real; for instance, the character of Shiv is thematically similar to my father.

"The film may seem to be about dance, but it's not based on dance; it's a father-daughter story, and more. There are other elements like the emotional aspect, which were a

little difficult to get, but we eventually got it nicely," the director said.

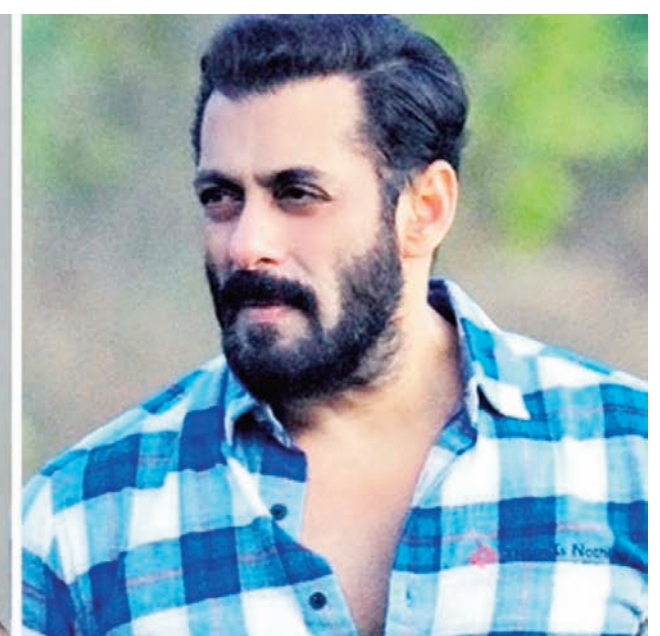
Remo said he is actively working on the third part of his dance-musical franchise, "ABCD".

"No dance-based films are being made today. 'ABCD 3' will come for sure. We will have actors in it who know dance," he said.

The franchise started with 2013's "ABCD: Anybody Can Dance", fronted by actor-choreographer-director Prabhu Deva, and the makers followed it up with a sequel, titled "ABCD 2", in 2015, which featured Shradha Kapoor and Varun Dhawan in the lead.

"Be Happy", also featuring Nora Fatehi, Nassar, Johnny Lever and Harleen Sethi.

The film is produced under the banner of Remo D'Souza Entertainment Pvt Ltd by D'Souza's wife, Lizelle Remo D'Souza. (PTI)



INDIAN SUPER LEAGUE 2024-25

Hyderabad FC, Kerala Blasters FC look for respective highs in final league game



HYDERABAD, March 11: Out of the top six race, Hyderabad FC and Kerala Blasters FC will look to finish their campaign on a high note when they face off in the Indian Super League here on Wednesday.

This is the last league match of the current ISL before the playoffs begin.

Both the sides are out of

of the top-six race, which will round off with the match between Mumbai City FC and Bengaluru FC on Tuesday.

After 23 games each, Hyderabad FC are at the penultimate

November 7, 2024, and will be eager to complete their first-ever league double over Kerala Blasters FC.

Hyderabad FC have let go of multiple goals in each of their last two ISL games, facing defeats in both by a two-goal margin.

Their last longer run of such results was a three-game stretch in April 2024, which included a 1-3 loss to Kerala Blasters.

Hyderabad FC have spent 47.4% of their game time trailing this season, the highest percentage in the league, and 16 percentage points more than Kerala Blasters FC (31.4%). The team will want to assume greater control over proceedings early on in their final match of the season.

Kerala Blasters FC did not find the back of the net in their last away game – a 0-2 defeat to FC Goa (February 22, 2025). If they go scoreless again, it will be the first time since February-March 2024 that they do so in consecutive games on the road.

Kerala Blasters FC wrapped up a five-game streak with a 1-0 victory over Mumbai City FC. To finish the season, their eyes will be set on registering consecutive shutouts for the first time since December 2023. In their 12 face-offs so far, Hyderabad FC and Kerala Blasters FC have won five and six games respectively. One match has produced a draw. (PTI)

ICC unlikely to offer any explanation to PCB

DUBAI/KARACHI, March 11: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) is unlikely to receive any "formal clarification" from the ICC on the perceived snub during the closing ceremony of the Champions Trophy in Dubai.

India beat New Zealand by four wickets in the title clash on Sunday to win the tournament for the third time.

The controversy erupted when Sumair Ahmed, who is chief operating officer of the PCB and was the tournament director of the Champions Trophy, was not invited on stage for the final presentation.

"We have filed a formal complaint with the ICC as what happened is unacceptable to us," a PCB official said on Tuesday.

However according to ICC sources, the PCB won't be given any formal explanation.

"If the PCB mandarins look up, even ICC CEO Geoff Allardice wasn't present on stage. The reason is protocol," said the ICC source.

"Sumair Ahmed is an employee of the PCB and not an office-bearer. Also please check when has a tournament director been on stage for presentation?" "We can give an example. ICC's new head of operations and communications Gaurav Saxena was

once Tournament Director for Asia Cup in Dubai. Was he on stage for final presentation," an ICC source said.

ICC president Roger Binny presented the white jackets to India players and the medals to match officials, while ICC chairman Jay Shah handed the trophy to skipper Rohit Sharma and gave the medals to the winners.

BCCI secretary Devajit Saikia and New Zealand Cricket's CEO Roger Twose were also present on stage. It must be mentioned that Saikia is BCCI Director on ICC board and Binny is the Alternate Director.

"The reasons being given for not having our COO and tournament director on stage for the final presentation make no sense to us. We are waiting for a formal clarification/apology," the PCB official said.

"We are appalled by this blatant disregard for Pakistan's role as the host nation," the official said. "Giving explanations that ICC only invites CEOs, chairmen, vice-chairmen or secretaries for the ceremony is illogical. We want a full public clarification and an assurance that such biased and unjust treatment will not happen again or we will push this matter to the Board of governors," he added. (PTI)

World Para Athletics Grand Prix off to a sedate start

NEW DELHI, March 11: The absence of star para athletes like javelin thrower Sumit Antil and discus exponent Yogesh Kathuniya came as a dampener as India began its campaign in the third-day World Para Athletics Grand Prix on a sedate note here on Tuesday.

With the Para Athletics World Championships scheduled in September, several top Indian athletes are missing the Grand Prix because "they are training as per their international schedule", said Paralympic Committee of India (PCI) president and two-time gold-medallist javelin thrower at the Paralympic Games Devendra Jhajharia. In the absence of several Indian and foreign para athletes, who had initially confirmed their participation but pulled out for various reasons, there were several events where the participation was a bare minimum – in some disciplines just one athlete participated.

The men's high jump T42 final – for those with single above the knee amputations or a disability that is comparable – saw just one athlete, Ramsinghbai Gobindbhai Padhiyar, competing and taking the top spot. Three others – Lokesh Mantra, Shailesh Kumar and Varun Singh Bhati – pulled out. In men's javelin throw (F33, F34) – for those with a moderately affected movement and coordination across the whole body, or affecting part of the body which affect their movement to a high degree in the legs – only two para athletes took part with Uzbekistan's Oybek

Egamnazarov emerging on top with a best throw of 18.05m. India's Devershee Sachan came in second with a best of 11.34m.

In men's 100m (T11, T12) sprint – near-total visual impairment – Brazil's Joeferson Marinho de Oliveira won the gold clocking 11.17 seconds, while Vishnu (12.39 sec) and Pragadeeshwara Raja Moorthy (12.94 sec) of India finished second and third in a three-man field. Another Indian, Ramanjee did not start.

"If I look at it from the point of an athlete, this is a very big tournament," said Jhajharia, one of the legends of Indian para games. "Every athlete has a dream of playing for the country and that has been materialised."

"As a PCI president, I am happy that we have been able to organise such a great event in the country. This will benefit our athletes as we will be hosting the Worlds in September, so we have got the opportunity to conduct a major event before that," he said.

"The opening ceremony (today) was so well organised. Our hospitality was really appreciated by the foreign para athletes. That is a big thing," he added. With Sumit Antil, two-time Paralympic gold medallist in javelin thrower, and Yogesh Kathuniya, the Paris Paralympics discus-throw silver medallist, missing from the lineup and robbing the event of some of its sheen, Jhajharia said elite athletes go according to their training schedule. (PTI)

Injured Neymar under fire for missing semifinal with Santos after celebrating Carnival



SAO PAULO, March 11: Neymar's justification for missing a semifinal with Santos was criticized because he was seen at Carnival last week.

Santos lost to archrival Corinthians 2-1 on Sunday in the semifinals of the Sao Paulo state championship, and Neymar sat on the bench for all 90 minutes. On Monday, he said he had a minor injury without elaborating.

Days earlier, the striker was photographed at Rio de Janeiro's Sambadrome, the venue for the glitzy Carnival parade.

Neymar, who rejoined his boyhood club Santos in January, attended the Carnival parade only hours after being substituted in the second half of another Sao Paulo state championship match on March 2 because of an apparent left thigh injury.

He recently recovered from an ACL tear that sidelined him for more than one year.

Santos did not reveal Neymar had any injuries before Sunday's semifinal.

"All I wanted was to be on the pitch and help my teammates in some way," Neymar said on Instagram. "But last Thursday I felt a discomfort that prevented me from being on the pitch. We took a test this morning and I ended up feeling it again."

Santos coach Pedro Caixinha said he asked Neymar to stay on the bench despite the injury.

"It was just a discomfort, but it meant he couldn't participate. It was my request and he agreed to be with the squad," Caixinha said in a news conference after his team's elimination. "He's a different player, he is enlightened and has fantastic energy. Neymar suffered a lot for not being able to participate in the game."

Still, many pundits accused Neymar of not focusing on his career, which he is trying to revive at the Brazilian club following spells at Barcelona, Paris Saint-Germain

and Al-Hilal.

"He chose Carnival over the semifinal," popular pundit Walter Casagrande Jr. said on his social media channels. "Neymar's behavior of the last five, six years has come back. He switches the professional side for pleasure and fun."

Santos president Marcelo Teixeira told local media that Neymar was examined several times from Friday to Sunday and all of them showed he was unfit to play against Corinthians.

"It is a precaution, we understood we shouldn't (play him)," Teixeira said. "It is not about the national team, it is because he had not conditions (to play). He is in a process of recovery. We need to understand that."

Spanish newspaper Marca described the Brazilian player's week as "Neymar's saddest Carnival after being tossed by Barcelona; on the bench and knocked out."

Later, amid the heavy criticism against its star player, Santos published a video of a tearful Neymar talking to his teammates in the dressing room before the semifinal. "It is very hard to be out in moments like this. I am trying to control myself in every way, not show the sadness I am feeling," the striker said. "If you can, run for me. I wish I could be with you, running for each of you. You don't know how desperate I am in my heart."

The 33-year-old striker has three goals and three assists in seven matches for Santos since his return. Those stats convinced Brazil coach Dorival Jr. to recall him for World Cup qualifiers this month against Colombia and Argentina.

Neymar's next match for Santos is likely on March 29, after the international window, in the opening round of the Brazilian league against Vasco da Gama. Santos was promoted to the country's top league after its 2023 relegation. (AP)

Pak cricket is in ICU because of incorrect decisions: Afridi

KARACHI, March 11: Former captain Shahid Afridi has questioned the return of all-rounder Shadab Khan to the national T20 squad, saying Pakistan cricket is in ICU because of incorrect decisions.

Out of favor since the last T20 World Cup, Shadab was recalled and also appointed vice captain to Salman Ali Agha in Pakistan's T20 squad for the away series against New Zealand.

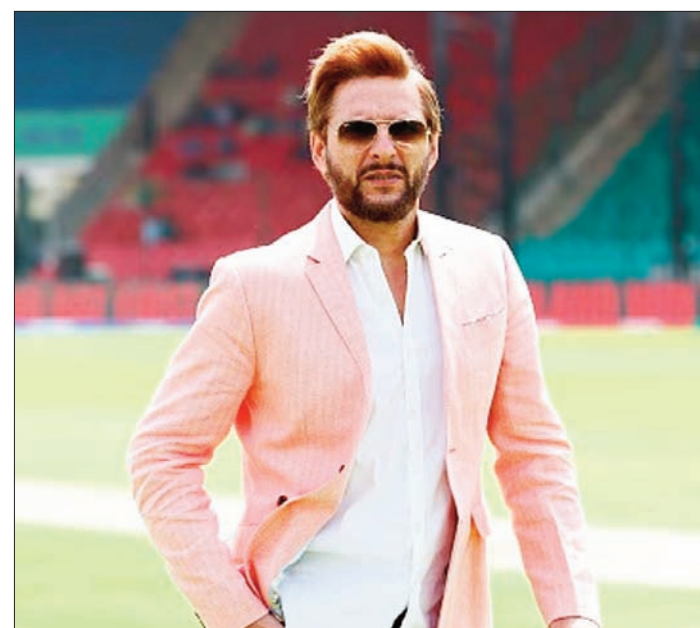
"On what basis has he been recalled. What are his performances in domestic cricket or otherwise that he had been picked again," Shahid said during a media interaction.

The flamboyant all-rounder said unless decisions are taken on merit nothing will change in Pakistan cricket.

"All the time we talk about preparations and when an event comes and we flop then we talk about surgery. Fact is Pakistan cricket is in ICU because of incorrect decisions."

He noted that whenever a new Chairman takes charge he comes and changes everything.

"There is no continuity, consistency in the Board's decisions and policies. We keep changing captains, coaches or some play-



ers but in the end what is the accountability for Board officials," the former skipper questioned.

He said it was sad to see coaches blaming players to save their jobs and the management blaming players and coaches to save their seats. "How can our cricket progress when there is a sword hanging constantly over the captain and coaches' heads.

He also felt that while the PCB Chairman Mohsin Naqvi was a positive person, the truth was he didn't know much about cricket.

"He wants to do well for Pakistan but in the end he depends on advice and I told him he can't continue doing three jobs at a time. He needs to focus on one job because being PCB Chairman is a full-time job." (PTI)

Medics who treated soccer legend Maradona before his death go on trial for homicide

BUENOS AIRES (ARGENTINA), March 11: Seven members of the medical team that treated Argentine soccer great Diego Maradona before his death will go on trial for homicide starting Tuesday in Buenos Aires.

The case revolves around allegations that negligence by the health care professionals contributed to the World Cup winner's death in 2020 at the age of 60, which triggered an outpouring of grief in his native Argentina and across the world.

Maradona suffered a heart attack at his rented home in Tigre, an affluent district north of Argentina's capital Buenos Aires, where he had been recovering from surgery to remove a blood clot on his brain weeks earlier.

Widely perceived as one of the sport's greatest players, Maradona famously led Argentina to victory in the 1986 World Cup and inspired his compatriots with a rags-to-riches story that vaulted him from poverty in the hard-scrabble outskirts of Buenos Aires to international reverence.

Maradona had struggled with

drug addiction, obesity and alcoholism for decades, and reportedly came close to death in 2000 and 2004. But prosecutors concluded that – were it not for the negligence of his doctors – his death could have been avoided.

Seven of the eight medical professionals who have been charged in the case, including Maradona's brain surgeon, psychiatrist and nurses, are now standing trial for culpable homicide, a crime roughly commensurate with involuntary manslaughter.

They deny wrongdoing but could face up to 25 years in prison. Maradona's neurologist, Leopoldo Luque, served as Maradona's personal doctor for years and performed the surgery that removed his brain blood clot on Nov. 3, 2020.

Luque oversaw Maradona's hospital-to-home transition after the surgery. The swift discharge raised questions at the time, with some experts suggesting that Maradona should have stayed longer in the hospital after his operation. Psychiatrist Agustina Cosachov had prescribed



Maradona's medications. There was no alcohol or illegal drugs detected in the toxicology test performed after Maradona's death. But the report said Maradona had psychotropic drugs for anxiety and depression in his system when he died. The five other defendants this week include: Carlos Diaz, an addiction specialist who had overseen Maradona's treatment for alcohol dependency; Nancy Forlini, a doctor who had helped manage Maradona's home care; Mariano Perroni, a nursing coordinator; Ri-

cardo Almirón, another nurse who tended to the former athlete and Pedro Pablo Di Spagna, a clinical physician. A third nurse, Gisela Dabiana Madrid, has asked to be tried separately by jury at a later date. The prosecutor's office assembled a medical board made up of a dozen experts – including forensic doctors, cardiologists, psychiatrists and toxicologists – to see if there was evidence of Maradona's medics committing culpable homicide. In an explosive 2021 report, the

board accused the soccer star's medical team of acting in an "inappropriate, deficient and reckless manner." "The home confinement did not comply with norms and protocols," the report said.

The experts also questioned why Maradona had been released so soon from the hospital after his operation when he was unable to care for himself and had limited or no access to critical medical devices, like an oxygen tube and a defibrillator, which administers an electric shock to restore heart rhythm.

The team's failure to properly monitor Maradona contributed to his death, the panel determined, describing his treatment as beset by "deficiencies and irregularities."

For instance, the report said, medics overlooked Maradona's "unusual body swelling," a sign of possible heart failure. Maradona agonized for more than 12 hours before his heart attack, the panel added. Exacerbating concerns, Maradona had not undergone any heart or lab tests in the two weeks leading to his death. (AP)

