











'All hostages will be executed'

Gunmen open fire on express train in Pakistan's Balochistan, BLA claims responsibility

KARACHI, March 11: Several passengers were injured when gunmen attacked a train in Pakistan's troubled Balochistan on Tuesday, prompting the provincial government to direct authorities to take "emergency measures".

In a statement, the BLA warned that if Pakistan military launches an operation, "all hostages will be executed". The group is banned in Pakistan, the UK and the US.



Muhammad Kashif said that the train, comprising nine coaches, had around 500 passengers on board. "The train was stopped by

armed men in Tunnel No 8," the controller said. There are 17 tunnels in this area on the railway line and due to the difficult terrain, the speed of the train is often slow.

Railways announced the restoration of train services between Quetta and Peshawar after a suspension of more than a month and a half. Balochistan has witnessed an uptick in terrorist attacks over the past year.

12 dead, dozens hurt as bus overturns



JOHANNESBURG, March 11: A bus overturned on a highway on Tuesday and passengers were thrown out of it, killing at least 12 people and injuring 45 in the South African city of Johannesburg, emergency services said.

Emergency crews were trying to lift the bus back onto its wheels to see if any more victims were trapped underneath it, said William Nthladi, a spokesperson for the city's Ekurhuleni Emergency Management. "On arrival we found patients lying across the road," Nthladi said.

China ending annual Congress with questions open over how to revive slowing economy



BEIJING, March 11: China is wrapping up its biggest political event of the year on Tuesday leaving one question unanswered: How far will it go to try to revive economic growth in 2025?

the country's state-dominated economy. Years of regulatory crackdowns have shaken the confidence of entrepreneurs and other investors.

PM Modi visits Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam Botanical Garden; pays homage to two Mauritian leaders

PORT LOUIS, March 11: Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his counterpart Navinchandra Ramgoolam of Mauritius on Tuesday laid a wreath at Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam Botanical Garden where both the leaders participated in a tree plantation drive.



prime minister said on X. "A moment of remembrance! PM @narendramodi paid homage to the two towering leaders of Mauritian history — Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam and Sir Anerood Jugnauth — at the iconic Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam Botanical Garden, Pamplemousses," Randhir Jaiswal, the official spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs, said on X.

contributing to the 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' initiative," he said. Before this, the prime minister had undertaken a similar initiative during his visit to Guyana.

Indian student goes missing while vacationing in Dominican Republic

NEW YORK, March 11: A 20-year-old Indian student has gone missing while on vacation in the Dominican Republic and US federal law enforcement agencies are working with authorities in the Caribbean country in the probe into her disappearance.



one who may have seen or been with Konanki before she went missing," the LCSO statement said. The statement said the LCSO has filed for a Yellow Notice (worldwide police alert for a missing person) to be issued by INTERPOL.

committed to supporting this investigation and her family in every way possible. The LCSO is working closely with federal partners at the US Department of State, FBI, DEA, Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), and the University of Pittsburgh Police concerning the ongoing investigation by the Dominican National Police.

Senate confirms Lori Chavez-DeRemer as Trump's labor secretary

WASHINGTON, March 11: The Senate voted Monday to confirm Lori Chavez-DeRemer as U.S. labor secretary, a Cabinet position that puts her in charge of enforcing federally mandated worker rights and protections at a time when the White House is trying to eliminate thousands of government employees.

Chavez-DeRemer 67-32. The Senate has now confirmed all but one of Trump's picks for his Cabinet. The Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor & Pensions had voted 14-9 in favor of her nomination last week, with all Republicans except Sen. Rand Paul of Kentucky giving Chavez-DeRemer their support.

Confronting backlash against women's rights, 193 nations commit to speed action on gender equality



UNITED NATIONS, March 11: Confronting a rising backlash against women's rights, the U.N.'s 193 member nations made a commitment Monday to accelerate action on more than a dozen fronts to achieve gender equality.

that progress has been "slow and uneven," with major gaps and obstacles to overcome. A report released last week by UN Women, the agency focused on empowering women, found that nearly one-quarter of governments worldwide reported a backlash against women's rights in 2024.

and online revenge." One result, he said, is that "up to 95% of all online deepfakes are non-consensual pornographic images. Ninety percent depict women." The 189 countries that attended the 1995 Beijing conference called for bold action in 12 areas, including combating poverty and gender-based violence, advancing women's rights and health, and putting women at top levels in business, government and at peace-making tables.

— Ensuring access to quality education for girls and lifelong learning for women. — Adopting, implementing and funding national plans to prevent and eliminate violence against women and girls. At last year's opening of the annual two-week meeting of the Commission on the Status of Women, there were five male speakers in a row — a lineup that made some of the men uneasy and was somewhat baffling to the hundreds of women in the packed General Assembly chamber.







## Being a good person more important than being a successful person: Murmu

**BATHINDA, March 11:** President Droupadi Murmu on Tuesday asserted that morality is the foundation of a meaningful life, saying being a good person is more important than being a successful person.

The president was addressing the convocation ceremony of the Central University of Punjab here, Punjab Governor Gulab Chand Kataria and state Agriculture Minister Gurmeet Singh Khuddan were also present on the occasion.

She told the students that whatever opportunities they choose in their personal lives or work should not be based on immediate gain but on the possibility of using their abilities and interests in a lasting way. Murmu said the convocation ceremony is an occasion about the completion of one phase in the students' lives and the beginning of another.

She expressed confidence that all the students, through their conduct and contribution, would bring glory to this university, their families and the country. Advising the students to make five good things -- curiosity, originality, morality, farsightedness, and spontaneity -- a part of their lives.

"Curiosity keeps a person eager to gain new information. Curious

people keep learning new things throughout their lives," she said.

She stated that after understanding any subject properly, one should try to do something new in that subject or any other field, adding, "Originality gives a unique identity."

"Curious people keep learning new things throughout their lives. They ask the right questions. Curious people do not worry that they will be considered ignorant for asking questions," she said.

She also cited an example of former president Dr A P J Abdul Kalam and said once his science teacher explained about the flight of birds in the classroom and when the teacher asked, all the children said that they understood the topic. "Only Kalam Sahab said he had not understood. In fact, no child had understood the topic.

"Kalam Sahab's teacher again explained the topic to the children at the seashore. He explained the basic concepts of aerodynamics by showing flying birds," she said.

After understanding those basic principles, Kalam decided to become a space scientist in his childhood, she said, adding that he remained curious throughout his life.

Murmu said, "Morality is the



Rashtrapati Bhavan last week," she said.

She asked the students to take inspiration from such achievements based on originality.

"Spontaneity is a valuable quality. It has many dimensions. Avoiding pomposity or show-off is one dimension of it. Consistency in words and actions is another dimension of spontaneity," she said.

Staying connected to one's roots is also a very important dimension of spontaneity, she noted.

Murmu said it was their good fortune that they had all gathered in the vicinity of Takht Sri Dandama Sahib situated in Talwandi Sabo here.

She said tenth Sikh master Guru Gobind Singh spent some time in Takht Sri Dandama Sahib and had given this region the holy name of 'Guru ki Kashi'. She was happy to note that students from almost all states and Union Territories are studying in the Central University of Punjab.

She noted that the university's teaching community also reflects India's diversity. She said this all-India representation is a commendable feature of this university. Such institutions are representative of the vibrant culture of our country, Murmu added. (PTI)

## Linking of faith and economy through Maha Kumbh transformed Prayagraj: Adityanath

**LUCKNOW, March 11:** Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Tuesday said the Maha Kumbh has had a transformative impact on Prayagraj, saying the city was once dominated by mafia and criminals but has now evolved into a new form.

Speaking at a private channel's conclave at the Indra Gandhi Pratishthan here, the chief minister said Prayagraj has undergone a complete transformation with major development projects, giving the historic city a modern identity.

He also attributed this change to the linking of faith and economy through the Maha Kumbh.

In a statement, the UP government said the chief minister honoured sanitation workers, showering them with flower petals at the event. "They have successfully brought the message of a Swachh Kumbh to life," he said, calling them the foundation of cleanliness.

Adityanath also emphasised the crucial role of sanitation workers in making the Maha Kumbh a grand success.

"After any work concludes, people often move on, thinking about the next task. While everyone lives in a building, its foundation stones are forgotten. The sanitation workers who strengthened the foundation of the Maha Kumbh deserve recognition. Their efforts made this event possible, and this programme to honour them is truly heartwarming," he said. Highlighting the power of collective effort, he said, "Any event reaches great heights only when people come together with a shared vision. When we view collective efforts positively, they become an inspiration for society. This is exactly what happened in Prayagraj."

Adityanath also shared how people from countries like the US, Australia, Canada, and the UK expressed their desire to bring their elderly parents to the Kumbh for a holy dip. "The Maha Kumbh has taken forward the campaign to link faith and economy. The Maha Kumbh successfully pushed forward the development of a city like Prayagraj. It was once in the grip of dreaded mafias and criminals. They were trampling the entire Prayagraj over. Today, it has been transformed due to the Maha Kumbh. Several big development projects were executed here. Due to the Maha Kumbh, this ancient city evolved into a new form," he said.

The CM further emphasised the importance of cleanliness and security, stating that

foundation of a meaningful life. Being a good person is more important than being a successful person. "Whatever opportunities you choose in your personal life or in the workplace, they should not be based on immediate benefits but on the possibility of using your skills and interests permanently," she said.

The president said the emphasis is often on the rapid pace of change in technology and work fields, and she held it right. But even amidst these changes, she said, some things remain permanent. For example, if an institution or enterprise is famous for its eth-

ical values, then working in such an institution at a relatively low salary is a good idea, she said, adding, "It will be better for you."

She told the students that after understanding any subject properly, their effort should be to do something new in that subject or in any other field. "This will be the hallmark of originality. Your originality will give you a distinct identity in your field.

"An impressive example of originality has been presented by Professor Raj Kumar of your university. I had the opportunity to present him the Visitor's Award for research in the field of cancer at

everyone who attended the Maha Kumbh appreciated sanitation and security personnel.

The chief minister mentioned that more than 66.30 crore pilgrims visited the Maha Kumbh in just 45 days and shared statistics of the crowd turnout on each day of the holy bath.

He also addressed "misinformation and negative narratives" on the Kumbh, stating, "The more people spread rumours and negativity, the more devotees flocked to Prayagraj with even greater determination."

Narrating an incident, he said, "A YouTuber asked a devotee from Karnataka how far he had walked, and he replied, 'five kilometres'. The YouTuber then informed him that he had another five kilometres to go. The devotee responded, 'even if I have to walk 50 kilometers, I will', the chief minister said.

"When the YouTuber suggested that the government should have arranged better facilities, the devotee replied 'I am walking, so why is it bothering you? Reaching God's abode on foot is a form of devotion for me,'" Adityanath said.

He said Sanatan Dharma is rooted in gratitude, and every visitor considered the Maha Kumbh their own event, rather than just a government-organised festival.

"This was the largest human gathering in history, sending a powerful message to the world. It demonstrated that such massive events can be successfully managed, that faith can be linked to livelihoods, and that millions of lives can be transformed," he added.

The chief minister recalled his visit to Prayagraj on February 27, a day after the event concluded.

"Along with both the deputy chief ministers and other ministers, I led a cleanliness drive as a gesture of gratitude to Maa Ganga. We performed a ritual in her honour, acknowledging that her blessings made this grand event possible. Sanitation workers were honoured. They shared a meal with us, and we pledged to improve their wages. Their revised minimum salary will take effect in April and a bonus has also been announced," he said.

Adityanath urged the sanitation and contract workers to ensure their children receive proper education.

"Send your children to school. If you have any bad habits, don't let them pass on to your kids. Educate them well and work with dedication," he advised. (PTI)

## Allahabad HC cautions state over use of private land sans due legal process

**PRAYAGRAJ, March 11:** The Allahabad High Court has warned the state authorities against the use of land of private citizens without following the proper legal procedure of acquisition.

A division bench of Justices Manoj Kumar Gupta and Anish Kumar Gupta said in case of any default while taking land of the owner, heavy penalty would be imposed on the erring officers.

Allowing the plea of one Kanyawati from Bareilly district, the court said, "The state authorities are required to be cautious that they should not utilise the land of the citizens without due authority of law or without following the proper procedure of acquisition."

Else, the court said, the authorities if found responsible for such utilisation of land without due procedure of law should be held responsible personally and the court will have to impose "heavy penalty" on the authorities, which would be recovered from their personal account. Kanyawati had purchased a piece of land in Bareilly district. At the time of the purchase, the revenue record reflected Chak Road to be south of the petitioner's plot. The road was subse-

quently widened and a portion of her land was acquired without due compensation. Upon an RTI inquiry, the petitioner was informed there was no record for any acquisition proceedings for petitioner's land.

Despite repeated representations to the authority for compensation, the petitioner received no response. She later moved the high court and her petition was disposed of with a direction to "the district magistrate- Bareilly to refer the matter to the district level committee in terms of the government order of May 12, 2016 for the determination of entitlement of compensation. The district level committee rejected her claim stating that initially the road was 3-metre wide and an extra 2.5 metre was available on both sides, therefore, by widening the road 1.25 metre, no individual right of the tenure holder was infringed. She against moved court with the present plea. The court observed the initial road was developed by the Sugar Industry and Cane Development Department around 20 years ago without any acquisition and it was subsequently widened by the PWD by taking away a certain portion of petitioner's land without proper acquisition process. (PTI)

## PUBLIC NOTICE

### Foreclosure of Langklangvong Water Supply Scheme under NLCPR

In pursuance of letter from the Secretary, T&DD, Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council, Diphu vide No. KAAC/T&D-390/RM/2024/192 Dtd. Diphu the 4th February 2025. It is notified to all concerned that the afore mentioned PWSS namely "Langklangvong Water Supply Scheme" under NLCPR amounting to Rs. 596.47 has been fore closed without any financial expenditure due to technical non-feasibilities of the project site. Henceforth, no transaction of any kind in the name of "Langklangvong Water Supply Scheme under NLCPR" shall be undertaken nor entertained.

Sd/-  
Additional Chief Engineer (PHE)  
Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council,  
Diphu

Memo. No. Adl. CPHE/DIP/GS-178/2307-12 Dated:- 11/03/2025

## GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM. OFFICE OF THE JOINT DIRECTOR, HANDLOOM & TEXTILES (Hills), DIPHU.

No. HTHE.90/2024-25/12

Date Diphu the 07/03/2025

## NOTIFICATION

It is for general information to all concerned applicant that the Date of Written Test Examination for the post of Sectional Assistant will be held as per program mentioned below.

Sl. No.	Name of post	Date	Time	Venue
1	Sectional Assistant	23-03-2025	10:00 AM to 12.00 PM	Govt. Boys Higher Secondary School, Diphu

In this connection, the applicants shall bring 2 (two) nos. of thumb size photo, who have applied for the above mentioned post and may collect Admit Card from the office of the Joint Director, Handloom & Textiles (Hills), Diphu from 10<sup>th</sup> March 2025 during office hours.

Sd/-  
Joint Director  
Handloom & Textiles (Hills), Diphu

## Bureaucrats can't be allowed to frustrate grassroot democracy: SC

**NEW DELHI, March 11:** The Supreme Court has said bureaucrats couldn't be allowed to "frustrate grassroot democracy" and upheld a Bombay High Court order reinstating a woman as the sarpanch of a Maharashtra village.

A bench of Justices Surya Kant and N Kotiswar Singh said it noticed several recent instances from the state where bureaucrats misbehaved with the elected representatives of Panchayats.

"We have given judgements in two-three cases where babus were found to be misbehaving with the elected representatives. This is happening typically in Maharashtra. These babus should be under the elected representatives. These bureaucrats cannot be allowed to frustrate the grass root democracy," it said.

The court also came across bureaucrats trying to open old cases to disqualify elected representatives especially at grass-root level.

"They (bureaucrats) try to open old cases like your grandfather has encroached upon government land and hence you are disqualified," Justice Surya Kant told the counsel for Archana Sachin Bhosale, whose election as the sarpanch was set aside by the high court on January 29.

Reinstating Kalavati Rajendra Kokale as the sarpanch, the top court upheld the high court quashing the June 7, 2024 order of the collector of Raigad district



declaring a vacancy for the post of sarpanch in village Ainghar, Taluka-Roha and appointing a returning officer to conduct the election.

"We are inclined to agree with the view taken by the high court... we uphold and affirm the continuation of respondent number 1 (Kokale) as the duly elected pradhan of the Gram Panchayat, Ainghar Taluka-Roha, district Raigad," the bench said in its March 7 order.

Kokale was aggrieved with the June 7, 2024 order of the collector confirming her resignation from sarpanch's post under Section 29 of the Maharashtra Village Panchayats Act despite her withdrawing the resignation.

The high court held her resignation "did not take effect" owing to her withdrawing it during a meeting held on March 15, 2024.

"The collector has erroneously arrived at a conclusion that the post of the sarpanch had fallen vacant without appreciating the position that resignation was

already withdrawn," it said.

The high court, therefore, found the collector's order "illegal" and "liable to be set aside".

Bhosale's election, as a result, was held to be "ab initio void".

"Since petitioner did not vacate the post of sarpanch, there is no question of election of respondent number 4 to that post," the high court said.

It noted though there was no specific provision in Section 29 of the Village Panchayats Act for withdrawal of resignation, a member, upa sarpanch or sarpanch tendering resignation had an inherent right to withdraw the same.

Election for the Gram Panchayat, Ainghar was conducted in February, 2021, and Kokale was elected as sarpanch, a post reserved for the backward class women.

Kokale withdrawing her resignation was intimated to the authorities concerned including the block development officer and the tehsildar.

The Raigad district collector, however, on June 7, 2024 said her resignation had been accepted by the chairperson, Panchayat Samiti, Roha, and Bhosale was subsequently elected on June 13, 2024.

On September 27, last year, in another case from Maharashtra, the top court said removal of an elected public representative should not be treated lightly, especially when it concerned women belonging to rural areas. (PTI)



## 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 Makhichos" 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.

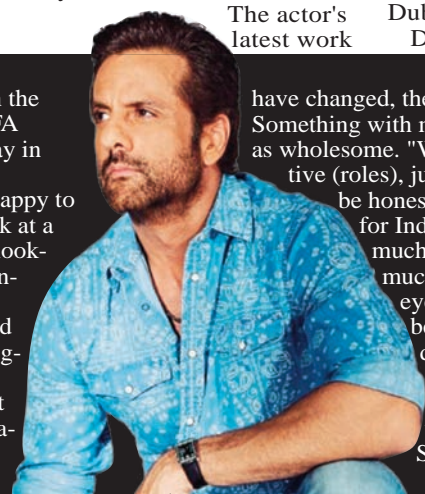
Fardeen, known for films such as "Prem Aggan", "Jungle", "Pyaar Tune Kya Kiya", and "No Entry", returned to cinema after 14 years with last year's Netflix series "Heeramandi". He followed it up with films such as "Khel Khel Mein" and "Visfot".

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.

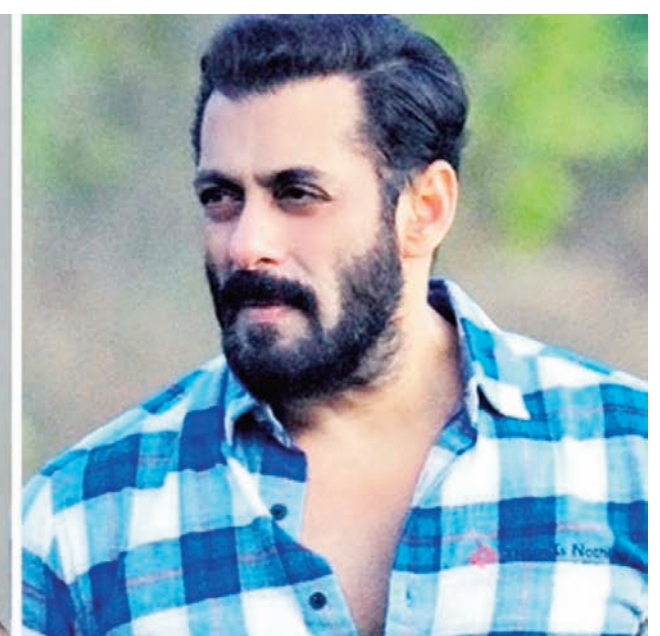
Remo said he is actively working on the third part of his dance-musical franchise, "ABCD".

"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 these sides are out 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 three-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, Ramsingbhai 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 Devesheer Sachan came in second with a best of 11.34m.

In men's 100m (T11, T12) sprint – near-total visual impairment – Brazil's Joferson Marinho de Oliveira won the gold clocking 11.17 seconds, while Vishnu (12.39 sec) and Pragadeeswarar 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.

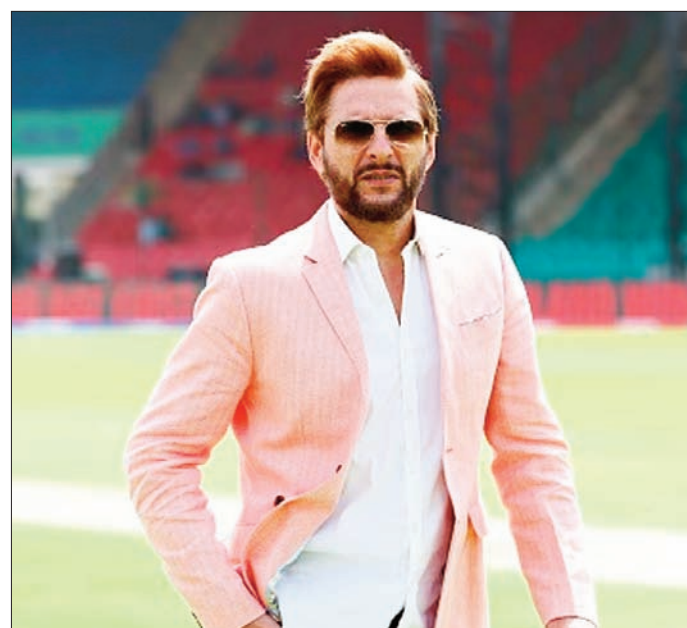
"On what basis has he been recalled. What are his performances in domestic cricket or otherwise that he had been picked again," Shahid said during a media interaction.

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 house 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 Dahiana 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)

