

PROTEST RAGE FOLLOWS KALA ACADEMY FIASCO

Activists highlight that repeated warnings about sub-standard facilities at venue post-renovation have been ignored

Team Herald

PANJIM: A day after a house-full theatre performance was disrupted due to faulty lights at Kala Academy, artists, culture activists and Opposition parties have come down heavily on the State government for what they referred to as faulty renovation of the landmark venue after several crores were spent on the job.

On Sunday, the Marathi play Purush was disrupted for nearly 15 minutes on Sunday evening due to a lighting glitch, prompting actors Sharad Ponshe and Spruha Joshi to apologise to the audience. A video of the interruption has since gone viral on social media.

Actor Sharad Ponshe, speaking to media after the show, called the situation 'unfortunate' and said the carefully designed lighting effects of the production were lost due to technical failure. He also lamented the lack of a dedicated manager for the prestigious venue and urged the Chief Minister to ensure proper management and infrastructure improvements.

The incident has swung the focus back on long-standing concerns over the quality of renovation and allegations of mismanagement at Goa's premier cultural institution.

Goa Forward Party (GFP) President and MLA Vijai Sardesai termed the epi-

“After Marathi actor Sharad Ponshe exposed Kala Academy's mismanagement, can we expect the government to fix the blame and take action? Or will Sharad Ponshe's observations be ignored like similar, oft-repeated observations by Goenkar tiatrists and activists?”

—Vijai Sardesai, Goa Forward Party President and Fatorda MLA



“What happened at Kala Academy is such an embarrassment as the artistes were from Maharashtra and the show was house-full. Crores have been spent on the renovation work but it is shameful that we the taxpayers are not getting benefits of the auditorium. Art and Culture Minister should tender his resignation”

—Cecile Rodrigues, culture activist and dance practitioner

“Sharad Ponshe has only said what we have been saying so far – but the government is not willing to listen. The Task Force has been constituted and we are members, but nothing happens except for meetings. The CM does not give us an appointment. The third-class lighting system is akin to what is used in dance bars and discotheques, and not fit for theatre”

—Francis Coelho, Kala Academy Task Force member

sode a 'fiasco' and questioned whether the state government would take responsibility. "Will Sharad Ponshe's observations be ignored like the oft-repeated concerns raised by Goan theatre artists and

activists?" Sardesai asked. He also criticised the delay in delivering justice in various public forums, suggesting that inaction continues to prevail.

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TRIAL BY FIRE



A tribal devotee walks on embers as he performs a ritual as part of 'Manda Puja' celebrations, in Ranchi, early Monday morning

Mehul Choksi arrested in Belgium

Detained on April 12 on India's extradition request

PTI, NEW DELHI: Absconding diamondaire Mehul Choksi has been arrested by Belgium authorities following an extradition request by Indian probe agencies for his involvement in the Rs 13,000 crore PNB loan 'fraud' case.

PNB LOAN 'FRAUD'

The Belgian Police took custody of the second 'prime suspect' in this case, after Choksi's nephew diamondaire Nirav Modi, on April 12 in Antwerp based on an extradition request moved by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and the Enforcement Directorate (ED), official sources said on Monday.

The Belgian federal public service of justice confirmed in an email to PTI that Choksi was arrested on Saturday (April 12).

"He is being detained in anticipation of further judicial proceedings. Access to his legal counsel has been

assured," it said, adding that the Indian authorities have introduced an extradition request for Choksi.

Choksi, 65, was located in Belgium last year after he reached there on the grounds of getting medical treatment, sometime in November, 2023.

He had been staying in Antigua after leaving India in 2018 and had taken citizenship of the Caribbean country even as his Indian citizenship is stated to be valid.

The sources said the Interpol Red Notice against him for arrest was 'deleted' sometime back by the global police body after analysing the representation made by the businessman against that notification. Indian agencies were pursuing him via the extradition route since then.

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ED'S PLEA ON CHOKSI STUCK IN MUMBAI COURT FOR 7 YEARS

PTI, MUMBAI: Even as absconding diamondaire Mehul Choksi, a key accused in the Punjab National Bank loan fraud case, has been arrested in Belgium, the ED's plea to declare him a fugitive economic offender has been pending before a court in Mumbai for nearly seven years.

The Enforcement Directorate had filed the application in July 2018, seeking to declare Choksi an FEO and confiscate his assets under provisions of the Fugitive Economic Offenders Act.

However, the matter has witnessed repeated delays owing to a barrage of applications filed by the accused in the PMLA court and the Bombay High Court alleging procedural lapses in the Enforcement Directorate's plea.

"The court is kept busy with frivolous applications, and hearing on our application to declare him (Choksi) an FEO has been adjourned for the past seven years," an ED officer had said after the hearing was once again deferred this February.



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Rana had identified New Delhi for terror attack: Court

PTI, NEW DELHI:

A court here has noted that Mumbai terror attack mastermind



Tahawwur Hussain Rana had identified New Delhi for attacks akin to the 26/11 strikes as part of a conspiracy that travelled beyond the geographical borders of India.

Special NIA judge Chanderjit Singh noted in an order passed on April 10 that there was enough material produced by the probe agency to say that the allegations in the present case pertained to safety and security of the nation, a source said.

"The material produced on record reflect that the conspiracy in question travels beyond the geographical borders of India and multiple targets in the form of various places in multiple cities in India, including the national capital, were sought to be identified," the judge is believed to have noted in the 12-page order. Thus, to reach the root of the matter and to unearth the facts which are laid in the deep-rooted conspiracy, a sustained custodial interrogation (of Rana) is required, the judge said.

"He needs to be confronted with witnesses and forensic and documentary evidence seized during the investigation, as well as material concerning the reconnaissance visits of the accused and his accomplices," the judge is believed to have said in the order sending Rana to 18-day NIA custody.

This exercise indicates the necessity of custodial interrogation for which time is required, the judge said.

The judge also said that there was enough material on record to indicate that it was a matter concerning national security.

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CPI, YSRCP challenge validity of Waqf Act in SC

PTI, NEW DELHI: The YSRCP-led by former Andhra Pradesh chief minister Jagan Mohan Reddy on Monday moved the Supreme Court challenging the constitutional validity of the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025.

Prior to the YSRCP, the Communist Party of India (CPI) also filed a plea challenging the legality of the new Waqf law through its general secretary D Raja. YSRCP filed the plea through their lawyer Mahfoos Ahsan Nazki citing "serious constitutional violations" and "failure to address the concerns of the Muslim community".

The plea claimed the Act violates Articles 13, 14, 25 and 26 of the Constitution -- provisions that guarantee fundamental rights, equality before law, freedom of religion, and the autonomy of religious denominations to manage their own affairs.

The inclusion of non-Muslim members under Sections 9 and 14 of the amended Waqf law is seen as interference in the internal functioning of Muslim institutions, the YSRCP said.

The provision undermines the religious character and administrative independence of the Waqf boards, it said. The CPI, meanwhile, contended that despite opposition from the masses, the Waqf (Amendment) Bill was passed by the Centre without proper consideration of the objections raised by the members of the JPC (formed to review the Bill) and the other stakeholders.

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IPL betting crackdown: Kingpins elusive, arrests so far 'tip of iceberg'

10-12 laptops, dozens of smartphones used at each location

Team Herald

PANJIM: Despite arresting as many as 45 individuals in separate incidents related to illegal online betting on IPL cricket matches this season, Goa Police are still on the lookout for the masterminds behind the operations.

Police sources admit that what has been uncovered so far is just the tip of the iceberg, with online betting rampant across the State and

Online betting is rampant across the State and agents accepting bets from various locations. These agents are employed by the main bookies, who operate through international mobile apps and dubious websites

agents accepting bets from various locations. These agents are employed by the main bookies, who operate through international mobile apps and dubious websites. However, the kingpins continue to evade arrest.

The crackdown was made possible thanks to local po-

smartphones," a police officer said. Bets are accepted for each delivery and it goes on till the end of each match.

SP North Akshat Kaushal, IPS, stated, "We had received information through our district local intelligence about online IPL cricket match betting, acting on which we conducted raids in areas that come under four police stations."

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When the fans fail, the dung hits the wall - literally

To beat the heat, DU college principal plasters cow dung on classroom wall



AGENCY, NEW DELHI: In an unusual attempt to counter the summer heat, the principal of Delhi University's Lakshmbai College, Pratyush Vatsala was seen applying cow dung on the walls of a classroom, calling it a 'desi' solution to heat-related complaints.

The effort, captured in a series of videos, was shared by the principal herself on the college's WhatsApp group for faculty. In the images and videos circulated

Principal of Delhi University's Lakshmbai College, Pratyush Vatsala is seen standing on a chair, applying cow dung to the walls of a classroom, assisted by college staff

on the group, Vatsala is seen standing on a chair, applying cow dung to the walls of a room in C Block, assisted by college staff.

The principal wrote on the group, "Desi methods are being adopted to address complaints about the heat in C Block. Those who have classes here will soon receive these rooms in a new form. Efforts are underway to make your teaching experience more comfortable."

"It is part of the research proposal by faculty called the 'Study of Heat Stress Control by Using Traditional Indian Knowledge,'" Vatsala is reported to have said.

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SPACE SISTERS BREAK BARRIERS

Pop star Katy Perry and five other women launched into space aboard a Jeff Bezos-owned Blue Origin rocket and safely returned to Earth on Monday, marking the first all-female spaceflight in over 60 years



MISSION AT A GLANCE

- Name: NS-31
- Rocket: Blue Origin's New Shepard (fully reusable, unpiloted)
- Date & Time: Monday, April 14/8:00 PM IST
- Flight Duration: 11 minutes
- Altitude: 100 km (62 miles) - crosses the Kármán line (international boundary of space)
- Launch Site: Launch Site One, Texas
- Experience: 4 minutes of weightlessness;



panoramic Earth views from large capsule windows

BLUE ORIGIN'S LEGACY

NOTABLE PASSENGERS: ■ Jeff Bezos (2021 maiden voyage)

52 people flown to space aboard New Shepard since 2021 ■ William Shatner (2022) - became the oldest person in space at 90

ALL-WOMEN CREW

- First all-female spaceflight since Valentina Tereshkova's solo mission in 1963
- Lauren Sánchez - Journalist, mission lead, fiancée of Jeff Bezos
- Katy Perry - Pop superstar
- Gayle King - TV host and journalist
- Amanda Nguyen - Civil rights activist
- Kerianne Flynn - Film producer
- Aisha Bowe - Entrepreneur, former NASA rocket scientist