

Tahawwur Rana being interrogated for 8-10 hours daily by NIA

PTI, NEW DELHI: Mumbai terror attacks key mastermind Tahawwur Hussain Rana is being interrogated for eight to ten hours daily by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) sleuths to unravel a larger conspiracy behind the dreaded strikes, official sources said on Monday. The NIA officials are ensuring Rana's medical check-up and he is being allowed to meet his lawyer, according to the order of a Delhi court that had on early Friday morning granted 18-day custody to the probe agency following his extradition from the US, they said.



ing during the questioning," a source said, adding that a team of NIA officials led by Chief Investigating Officer Jaya Roy is interrogating him.

The sources said Rana is being grilled by the NIA investigators for around eight to ten hours daily to probe a larger conspiracy behind the 2008 dastardly strikes orchestrated by Pakistan-based terrorist group Lashkar-e-Taiba and in which 166 people were killed and over 238 injured. "Rana has been cooperat-

The sources said Rana has so far asked for only three things -- a pen, paper sheets or notepad and Quran -- which have been provided to him.

They said there has not been any specific food-related demand raised by Rana so far and he is being provided with "food items which are given to any



other accused" according to the standard protocols meant to deal with such subjects.

The sources said the dreaded terror attacks plotter is kept in a highly-secured cell inside the anti-terror agency's head office here at the CGO Complex and is guarded by security personnel round-the-clock.

The 64-year-old Pakistani-origin Canadian businessman is said to be grilled on the basis of various leads gathered by the

probe agency during the course of its investigation, including a large number of phone calls between him and his co-conspirator David Coleman Headley alias Daood Gilani, a US citizen currently in prisons in that country.

The investigators also hope to find some important leads on his travels in parts of northern and southern India days before the carnage in the country's financial capital on November 26, 2008, the sources said.

The anti-terror agency had produced Rana before the NIA Special Court at Patiala House after formally placing him under arrest following his arrival at the Indira Gandhi International (IGI) airport here on April 10 upon his extradition from the US.

Rana has been charged with numerous offences, including conspiracy, murder, commission of a terrorist act and forgery in the country.

Greece signs deal for 16 French Anti-ship missiles

AP, ATHENS: Greece signed a deal on Monday to purchase anti-ship missiles from France as it seeks to bolster its defences in a procurement program aimed mainly at addressing tensions with neighbouring Turkey. Greece's Defence Minister Nikos Dendias signed the agreement for the 16 Exocet missiles with his French counterpart Sébastien Lecornu, who was on a one-day visit to Athens. The two did not disclose the cost of the deal. It is the latest in a series of purchases of military equipment from France, with Greece having already bought two dozen Rafale warplanes and three Belharrar-class frigates. Dendias said discussions are progressing for the addition of a fourth frigate, adding that France is also providing Greece with NH-90 military helicopters.

Israel intensifies strikes across Gaza on Palm Sunday

AP, DEIR AL-BALAH (GAZA STRIP): A wave of Israeli strikes across Gaza on Sunday hit a hospital and other sites, killing at least 21 people, including children, as Israel vowed to expand its security presence in the small coastal strip. The predawn strike on Al-Ahli Hospital in Gaza City was the latest of several attacks on northern Gaza's last major hospital providing critical health care.

Hospital director Dr. Fadel Naim said the emergency room, pharmacy and surrounding buildings were severely damaged, affecting over 100 patients and dozens of staff.

One patient, a girl, died during the evacuation following an Israeli warning because staff were unable to provide urgent care, Gaza's Health Ministry said. Israel said it struck a Hamas command and control center at the hospital, without providing evidence. Hamas denied the allegations.

Al-Ahli Hospital is run by the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem, which condemned



Volunteers and emergency workers try to move a concrete pillar as they search for bodies and survivors from the rubble of the Manoun family's house after it was targeted by an Israeli army strike in Jabalia al-Balad, Gaza City

the attack, saying in a statement it happened on "Palm Sunday, the start of the Holy Week, the most sacred week of the Christian year."

Palm Sunday commemorates Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, and worshippers in Gaza City marked it in a church whose gilded trim and intact walls were a contrast to the widespread debris elsewhere.

Associated Press vid-

eo showed the hospital's caved-in roof surrounded by rubble. The health ministry's director general, Dr. Munir al-Boursh, said patients had been carried outside in beds and slept in the streets.

"Nothing was left inside the hospital, or all over Gaza," said Mohammad Abu Nasser, an injured man who sat on his bed outdoors and looked at the destruction.

Constitution is Ambedkar's gift to country: Akhilesh Yadav

PTI, LUCKNOW: On the birth anniversary of Bhimrao Ambedkar, Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav on Monday said the Constitution is Babasaheb's gift to the country and as long as it remains safe, people's rights will remain safe. In a post on X in Hindi, the former Uttar Pradesh chief minister called on people to unite to strengthen the 'PDA' movement to save the

Constitution. The 'PDA' acronym coined by Yadav refers to a combination of 'Pichhde' (backward classes), Dalit and 'Alpasankhyak' (minorities). "Let us strengthen our sense of self-respect and unite to establish the rule of social justice and give new strength to the PDA's movement to save Babasaheb's gift and heritage - Constitution and reservation..."

"(Let us) reiterate that the Constitution is the life-giver and the Constitution is a shield and that as long as the Constitution remains safe, our honour, respect, self-respect and rights will remain safe," the SP president said.

Yadav underlined that only the unity of 'PDA' will save the Constitution and reservation, and create a golden future.

ED seizes cash, freezes bank accounts after raids against Noida realty firm

PTI, NEW DELHI: The Enforcement Directorate Sunday said it seized Rs 30 lakh in cash and froze some bank accounts following raids against a Noida-based real estate company and its promoters who allegedly duped investors of a commercial project promised by them.

The searches were carried out on April 10 at the premises of Bhasin Info-

tech and Infrastructure Pvt Ltd, Grand Venezia Commercial Towers Pvt Ltd and their key personnel, the federal probe agency said in a statement. Nine locations in Noida (Uttar Pradesh), Delhi and Goa were covered as part of the action carried out under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). The money laundering case stems from multiple

FIRs filed by the Noida police against "prime accused" Satinder Singh Bhasin, managing director of Bhasin Infotech & Infrastructure Pvt Ltd, and others. The company started a real estate project named 'Grand Venezia Commercial Complex' and "lured" investors in this project through fancy advertisement and false assurances, the ED said.

Nobel Laureate Mario Vargas Llosa dies at 89

AFP, LIMA: Peruvian writer and Nobel literature laureate Mario Vargas Llosa died on Sunday at the age of 89, his family announced, ending the era of Latin America's literary golden generation.

"It is with deep sorrow that we announce that our father, Mario Vargas Llosa, passed away peacefully in Lima today, surrounded by his fami-

ly," his eldest son Alvaro wrote in a message on X also signed by his siblings Gonzalo and Morgana Vargas Llosa.

Born into a middle-class Peruvian family, Vargas Llosa was one of the greats of the Latin American literary "boom" of the 1960s and 1970s, along with Colombia's Gabriel Garcia Marquez and Argentina's Julio Cortazar.

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PROTEST RAGE FOLLOWS KALA ACADEMY FIASCO

Dance practitioner and culture activist Cecille Rodrigues also condemned the incident, calling it an 'embarrassment', particularly since the performance featured prominent Marathi artists from Maharashtra. "It is shameful that we, the taxpayers, are not getting the benefits of this public-funded facility. The Art and Culture Minister should resign for making false promises and overseeing substandard renovation work," she said.

Actor and Kala Academy Task Force member Francis Coelho echoed these sentiments, stating that repeated warnings about the poor quality of lighting and sound systems had gone unheeded. "The current lighting system is unfit for theatrical productions — it's more suited for dance bars or discotheques. Despite being on the task force, we have only attended meetings with no outcomes. The Chief Minister does not even grant us an appointment," Coelho alleged, calling on Goans to 'wake up and save Goa'.

Reacting to the incident, actor Rajdeep Naik pointed out that artists have consistently raised concerns about the venue's sound and acoustic systems. "Actor Sharad Ponshe had to apologise to the audience because of technical faults — not his own. The government has ignored our repeated warnings. A committee was formed, but we are unaware of its findings," Naik said, appealing to Chief Minister Sawant and BJP State President Damu Naik to act promptly and address the issue.

Cultural activist and Kala Rakhonn Mand Convenor Devidas Amonkar, who is also part of the task force, reiterated that members had repeatedly flagged concerns regarding substandard renovation work. "We have mentioned in task force meetings that the lights and sound system are below standard. However, the minister insists everything is fine. If there is a mistake, it should be acknowledged," he stated.

Despite mounting criticism, Chief Minister Pramod Sawant, who also holds the Public Works Department (PWD) portfolio, remained tight-lipped on the matter. He declined to comment when questioned by reporters on Monday. The Kala Academy was reopened to the public in 2023 following extensive renovations.

MEHUL CHOKSI ARRESTED IN BELGIUM

India and Belgium have a long-standing extradition treaty.

At least two open-ended arrest warrants, issued by a special court in Mumbai in 2018 and 2021, have been shared by the Indian agencies with their Belgian counterparts as part of the extradition request, the sources said.

Formal paperwork is being done following the arrest/detention. Legal and investigating teams of the ED and CBI will ensure their presence during the ongoing legal processes where it is expected that Choksi may seek bail on health grounds, they said.

He is reported to be seeking admission in a Switzerland-based hospital for his treatment but there was no confirmation to this claim.

Choksi's lawyer Vijay Agarwal said his client was taken into custody by the Belgian authorities on Saturday.

"At the moment, he is in prison and there (Belgium), the procedure is not to apply for bail but file an appeal. During that appeal, request is made that he should not be kept in detention and he should be permitted to defend himself and oppose the extradition request while not being in custody," Agarwal told reporters.

He said the 'obvious' grounds for the appeal would be that Choksi is "not a flight risk, is extremely sick and undergoing treatment for cancer".

He said their legal defense would be that this is a "political case and the human condition (in Indian prisons) was not good".

Choksi, Nirav Modi, their family members and employees, bank officials and others were booked by the CBI and the ED in 2018 for perpetrating the alleged loan fraud at the Brady House branch of the Punjab National Bank

(PNB) in Mumbai.

It was alleged that Choksi, his firm Gitanjali Gems and others "committed the offence of cheating against PNB in connivance with certain bank officials by fraudulently getting the LoUs (letters of undertaking) issued and got the FLCs (foreign letter of credit) enhanced without following prescribed procedure and caused a wrongful loss to the bank".

The CBI has filed at least two chargesheets against him in this case while the ED has filed three such prosecution complaints.

Nirav Modi, declared a fugitive economic offender, has been lodged in a London jail since he was held by the authorities there in 2019 on the basis of a legal request made by the ED and the CBI in this case. He is contesting extradition to India.

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

"The court should have continued the hearing and taken a decision on the future course of action once the application was moved," the officer had said.

He had urged the court to take note of the repeated filing of similar applications and to not entertain them.

Choksi's lawyer had informed the court that the accused was undergoing treatment for suspected cancer in Belgium and intended to file an application in connection with his health.

Choksi had challenged the ED's application in the Bombay High Court, alleging that the agency "had not followed proper procedure before filing the application and, hence, it stands vitiated".

However, in September 2023, the High Court dismissed his plea, ruling that the ED had adhered to the prescribed format under the FEO Act. It also vacated a stay on the special court's proceedings.

Despite this, the hearing on declaring Choksi FEO could not commence, with Choksi continuing to file applications before the special court through his lawyers.

RANA HAD IDENTIFIED NEW DELHI FOR TERROR ATTACK: COURT

"The investigating agency should get a fair chance to thoroughly investigate the matter so as to present before the court complete facts in a holistic manner," he said.

The judge also noted the contention of sovereign assurance given in the extradition proceedings and directed the NIA to conduct Rana's medical examination every 48 hours.

"Further, since the accused has mentioned that he got certain health issues, details of which he has given as history at the time of medical examination after his arrest and the contention of sovereign assurance given in the extradition proceedings, it is directed that in respect of the health condition of the accused, he shall be given due and proper medical care as per rules," the judge said.

Senior advocate Dayan Krishnan and special public prosecutor Narender Mann represented the NIA.

To piece together crucial evidence and retrace the events from 17 years ago, officials might transport Rana to key locations, allowing them to reconstruct the crime scene and gain deeper insight into the larger terror network at play, the source added.

Rana, the 64-year-old Pakistani-origin Canadian businessman and a close associate of 26/11 attacks main conspirator David Coleman Headley, a US citizen, was brought to India after the US Supreme Court on April 4 dismissed his review plea against his extradition.

On November 26, 2008, a group of 10 Pakistani terrorists went on a rampage in Mumbai, carrying out coordinated attacks on a railway station, two luxury hotels and a Jewish centre, after they sneaked into India's financial capital using the sea route through the Arabian Sea.

As many as 166 people were killed in the nearly 60-hour assault.

CPI, YSRCP CHALLENGE VALIDITY OF WAQF ACT IN SC

The plea filed through advocate Ram Sankar in the top court said the Amendment Act, published on April 5 following the assent of the President, substantially curtails the autonomy of the Waqf Board and fundamentally transforms the framework of the Waqf Act, 1995.

"It vests unchecked authority in the Central government over the administration of the Waqf Board, thereby infringing upon the rights guaranteed under Articles 25, 26 and 29 of the Constitution," the CPI said.

Earlier, several petitions were filed in the top court challenging the legislation on various grounds. Recently, actor-politician and TVK president Vijay challenged the legislation.

A bench headed by Chief Justice of India (CJI) Sanjiv Khanna is scheduled to hear on April 16 more than a dozen petitions, including one filed by AIMIM MP Asaduddin Owaisi, challenging the constitutional validity of the Waqf law.

Besides the CJI, Justice Sanjay Kumar and Justice K V Viswanathan are part of the three-judge bench set up for hearing the petitions, according to the apex court website.

In addition to Owaisi's plea, the top court has listed for hearing petitions filed by AAP MLA Amanatullah Khan, the Association for the Protection of Civil Rights, Arshad Madani, Samastha Kerala Jamiathul Ulema, Anjum Kadari, Taiyyab Khan Salmani, Mohd Shafi, Mohd Fazlurrahim and RJD leader Manoj Jha.

A few other petitions are yet to be listed before the bench by the apex court registry.

IPL BETTING CRACKDOWN: KINGPINS ELUSIVE, ARRESTS SO FAR 'TIP OF ICEBERG'

"Based on these raids, cases were registered invoking sections of petty organised crimes, recently brought in by BNS," Kaushal said.

Kaushal further confirmed that investigations are ongoing and more arrests are expected. Taking no chances, the Goa Police are coordinating with counterparts in other States to verify the criminal backgrounds of the arrested individuals, most of whom are from Gujarat.

All seized devices, including smartphones and laptops, have been sent to the Forensic Science Laboratory in Verna for examination. "It is a lengthy process, and everything is coded and encrypted. We need to break into the system and decode it," another officer explained.

The raids indicate a vast and well-organised network. "It's rampant — just like matka gambling. There are bookies at every nook and cranny because of the huge money involved. Those who make profits often splurge it at the casinos. It becomes part of their flamboyant lifestyle," the officer added.

Rates are determined on Betfair betting sites. While using such apps is legal in the United Kingdom, in India, citizens can check the odds but are not permitted to place bets.

WHEN THE FANS FAIL, THE DUNG HITS THE WALL — LITERALLY

While cow dung has been traditionally used in rural Indian homes for its natural cooling properties, its application in an urban educational institution has raised curiosity amongst students.

A final-year undergraduate student said, "Although basic facilities like fans are present in the classroom, a back-to-the-roots solution was given by the principal to beat the heat. It was surprising."

Another student, who is part of the college's student union, said they have been receiving several complaints over the past week about rising temperatures and malfunctioning fans. "This particular classroom is above the canteen and is part of one of the older buildings. We are not sure how the classroom will function after the cow dung has

been applied. We plan to visit next week and speak to the students," the student said.

A section of the faculty criticised this move. Neelam, Academic Council (AC) member and Associate Professor at the college, told The Indian Express: "Basic infrastructure facilities must be addressed seriously. How can one start making changes to classrooms without passing it in the Council? Just because a classroom is old doesn't mean its infrastructure and maintenance can be ignored. The facilities in our college need urgent attention."

"Washrooms are unhygienic for both students and teachers, classroom window panes are broken, and there are a lot of mosquitoes. We need practical solutions to these problems — not the application of cow dung on walls," she added.

Prof Pankaj Garg, Chairman of the Indian National Teacher's Congress, said, "Such approaches are taking us back in time instead of moving us forward. Instead of addressing infrastructure issues on campus with practical solutions, we are resorting to activities that belong to the Stone Age. That is not right. We are about to enter the fourth year of the National Education Policy, yet there are still no concrete solutions on the table for how we're going to accommodate students in classrooms with such poor infrastructure."

The initiative comes at a time when several colleges under Delhi University are grappling with ageing infrastructure and rising pressure from students to ensure better learning environments during the scorching summer months.

MORE OBITS ON PG 12

DEATH



Born
05/07/1933

Died
14/04/2025

Natalina Andrade e Fernandes

Cottula Vaddo, Saligao

Wife of late Joao Francisco Fernandes. Sister of Late Jose Andrade, late Ditosa / late Hermigildo-Vitorin, late Eulalia Andrade, late Joaquina / Late Egidio Pinto, late Jose Andrade, Dominic / Annie Andrade.

Sister In Law of late Joao Francisco Fernandes, late Bernard Fernandes, Late Domingos Fernandes, late Martina, Late Maria Estella Dias, late Cristina Dias, late Carmina Dias.

Loving mother of Candida / Carlito Fernandes, Lourdes / Roque Cardozo, Catherine / Thomas Fernandes, Piedade / Augustine D'sa, Luiza / Dominic Bothelo, Joaquina/ Bosco Soares, Conceicao Fernandes, Late Margarita Fernandes, Jude Alex / Dilys Fernandes.

Grandmother of Chrissie / Mujahed, Cavin / Mabel, Cleona / Stany, Anthony, Analisa / Peter, Tenecia / Allan, Clinton / Melitta, Alroy, Andrea / Arthur, Muzela / Aloysius, Melino, Belores, Abigail, Anaya, Alyster. Great grandmother of Mohid, Zara, Sanchia, Jayden, Athan, Avner, Aiden.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Funeral Cortege will leave her residence at 3:30 pm on 15th April 2025 (Tuesday) to Mae-De-Dues Church, Saligao for the Eucharistic celebration followed by burial.

Relatives, Neighbours & Friends kindly accept this as the only intimation.