

Four prominent actors face fresh sexual abuse allegations, Malayalam film industry in turmoil

STATE TIMES NEWS
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM : A female actor in Malayalam cinema levelled sexual abuse allegations against four prominent male actors, including M Mukesh, on Monday, causing further upheaval in the film industry already reeling from the Justice K Hema Committee's explosive findings of harassment and abuse of women professionals.

Hours after the actress levelled the allegations against Mukesh, a CPI(M) MLA, in interviews with news channels, workers from Yuva Morecha and Mahila Congress organised separate marches towards his residence in Kollam, demanding that a case be registered against him and that he resign as a legislator.

The Kollam MLA has not responded to the allegations.

The female actor also levelled sexual abuse allegations against three other prominent actors in the Malayalam film industry.

Meanwhile, actor Maniyanpilla Raju has called for an investigation into the allegations surfacing in the Malayalam film industry. He told reporters that many more revelations will come out, and there will be multiple interests behind them.

"Some people will try to capitalise on the situation. Among those accused, there will be both innocent and guilty parties. Therefore, a comprehensive investigation is necessary," Raju said.

This development comes a day after director Ranjith and actor Siddique stepped down from their leadership roles in a state-run film academy and the Association of

Malayalam Movie Artists (AMMA), respectively, following sexual abuse allegations against them.

Amid mounting pressure on the government to take action against alleged predators in the film industry, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan held a high-level meeting with senior police officials on Sunday and announced the establishment of a seven-member special team to investigate the atrocities faced by women actors.

The report by the Justice Hema Committee, constituted by the Kerala government post the 2017 actress assault case, has revealed instances of harassment and exploitation of women in the Malayalam cinema industry, prompting calls for action against the guilty.

Focus on Suryakumar, Shreyas and Sarfaraz in Buchi Babu meet

STATE TIMES NEWS
COIMBATORE: India dasher Suryakumar Yadav will turn up for Mumbai in their Buchi Babu contest against TNCA XI, beginning here on Tuesday, with an aim to get his Test career back on track.

Shreyas Iyer, also part of Mumbai's squad, too will be looking to make a statement in the pre-season event, having last played a Test in February.

The star-studded Mumbai side will be captained by Sarfaraz Khan, who too will be jostling for space in a full strength Test squad when the home season begins next month despite a promising beginning against England earlier this year.

The likes of Virat Kohli, K L Rahul and Rishabh Pant, who were not available for different reasons over course of the five games against England, are expected to be available for the two Test series against Bangladesh beginning September 19 in Chennai.

The centre of attention in the round three of the Buchi Babu match undoubtedly will be



Suryakumar, who recently led India to victory in his first series as T20 skipper. Not in the team's ODI plans for the moment, the 33-year-old remains determined to play in all three formats. His sole Test appearance came against Australia in February 2023.

Since then, he has continued to flourish in white-ball cricket before taking up the T20 International captaincy duties for the Men in Blue.

Effectively, the Buchi Babu outing will be a mere warm-up for

Suryakumar and others in the mix, given they all will be part of the Duleep Trophy beginning September 5.

Suryakumar's last competitive outing in First-Class cricket came during the Duleep Trophy last year.

Playing for West Zone, Suryakumar managed only 71 runs in four innings at an average of just 17.75, with a top score of 52, while his side, led by Priyank Panchal, lost the final to South Zone by 75 runs.

Besides Surya, Sarfaraz and Shreyas will also be among the attractions in the Mumbai squad.

Sarfaraz, who made his Test debut earlier this year against England, has been promising with the bat, managing 200 runs in five innings at an average of 50.00, including three half-centuries.

As for Iyer, he is yet to leave a mark in the longest format after 14 Tests, while since January 2023, he has only managed 187 runs in 12 innings at an average of only 17.00, with a top score of only 35.

Therefore, while there is no headache for Sarfaraz heading into

this Buchi Babu meet, the upcoming domestic season holds more significance for Iyer, who will be leading Team D in the Duleep Trophy.

Mumbai's opponents TNCA XI will be led by R Sai Kishore, who was the leading wicket-taker in Ranji Trophy last season.

Teams (from)

TNCA XI: R Sai Kishore (c), Pradosh Ranjan Paul (vc), Mokit RS Hariharan, G Ajitsh, Indrajith Baba, Boopathi Vaishna Kumar, S Lokeshwar (wk), SR Athish (wk), R Sonu Yadav, P Vidyuth, S Lakshya Jain, S Ajith Ram, G Govinth, CV Achyuth, H Trilok Nag and V Yudheeswaran.

Mumbai: Sarfaraz Khan (c), Suryakumar Yadav, Shreyas Iyer, Akhil Herwadkar, Divyansh Saxena, Musheer Khan, Vedant Murkar, Siddhanth Adhatrao, Suryansh Shedge, Shams Mulani, Tanush Kotian, Himanshu Singh, Atharva Ankolekar, Roystan Dias, Mohit Avasthi, Sylvester Dsouza and Junaid Khan. Match starts: 9.30 am (IST).

Doctor's rape-murder: BJP announces series of protest programmes from Aug 28

STATE TIMES NEWS
KOLKATA: Stepping up the attack on the ruling Trinamool Congress in West Bengal, BJP state president Sukanta Majumdar has announced a series of programmes to protest the alleged rape and murder of a woman doctor at a state-run hospital here over two weeks back.

The programmes will be held across the state between August 28 and September 4, said Majumdar, also a Union minister.

Demanding Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's resignation for her alleged failure to address the issue of women's safety, Majumdar said the

party will begin a sit-in in Esplanade area of Kolkata from August 28 while the party's women's wing will lock the gates of the state women's commission office.

"The state women's commission seems to have gone into a stupor," Majumdar told reporters on the sidelines of a demonstration by BJP in Shyambazar area of the city.

The BJP leader said that on August 29, party activists will gherao the district magistrate's office in every district at noon while protests will be held outside the administrative offices in every block on September 2.

On September 4, a 'chakka

jam' will be observed everywhere in the state stalling the movement of traffic for one hour, he said.

Majumdar claimed the ongoing CBI probe into the alleged financial irregularities in R G Kar Medical College and Hospital showed the nexus between the state and the corrupt hospital lobby.

The chief minister is shielding 'big fishes involved in the shady deals amounting to crores,' he alleged.

"We demand the phone conversation between the CM and a powerful official of the hospital be brought under the ambit of investigation by CBI," the Union

Minister of State for Education said.

Responding to BJP's planned programmes, TMC state spokesperson Joy Prakash Majumdar said, "To divert the focus from the delay by CBI in tracking the perpetrators of the crime, the BJP is trying to foment trouble in the state and disrupt normal life."

"While the entire West Bengal is asking the CBI to ensure justice is done to the victim doctor, the BJP's only demand is resignation of the CM who has expressed solidarity with the victim's family and stood by them. She also reiterated her government and party's stance

about zero tolerance to incidents like rape," he added.

Another TMC leader Kunal Ghosh said the main demand of every citizen of the state centres around the punishment of all those involved in the rape and murder of the doctor, but the BJP is talking about so-called financial irregularities in the hospital.

"This shows the BJP is not serious about the main issue of women's safety, the issue flagged by lakhs of women of West Bengal. TMC shares the concern of the women of the state and demands justice for the victim. The CBI should speed up the probe on this," Ghosh said.

Nearly 16 years after acquittal, two men convicted by Delhi HC for injuring person

STATE TIMES NEWS
NEW DELHI : The Delhi High Court has reversed the acquittal of two men after nearly 16 years and convicted them for intentionally hurting a person on his head, resulting in 21 stitches.

The high court said the trial court had fallen into the error of disbelieving the testimony of the injured person and in observing that it was in contradiction with the statement of another prosecution witness. It set aside the trial court's October 2008 judgment acquitting Mohit Kumar and Sandeep Kumar of the offence under Section 308 (attempt to commit culpable homicide not amounting to murder) of the Indian Penal Code.

The trial court's acquittal order was challenged by the prosecution on the ground that the testimonies of the witnesses proved the incident beyond reasonable doubts. Overturning the acquittal, Justice Neena Bansal Krishna said, "To conclude, it is proved from the consistent testimony of the complainant, which is corroborated by independent circumstances, that the accused used a sharp-edged weapon to attack the complainant, resulting in a deep wound on his head which required 21

stitches, though opined as simple."

"A person hitting a victim on his head with a sharp pointing weapon would do so with the knowledge and intention that such an attack or injury on the head of the victim is likely to result in death of a person," she said. According to the prosecution, an FIR was registered in 2006 on a complaint that the two accused went to complainant Maninder Gautam, abused and threatened him and then hit him with a sharp object resulting in a serious wound on his head.

He started bleeding and became unconscious and was taken to a hospital where he received 11 stitches on his head, the prosecution said.

Later, the weapon of the offence, a nail cutter, was recovered at the instance of the accused, it added. The high court, however, said it has to be necessarily concluded that the prosecution has proved beyond reasonable doubt that the two men had intentionally inflicted injury on the head of the injured with an intent and knowledge that such injury could result in death. The high court listed the matter for August 30 for arguments on pronouncing sentence to the convicts.

Festivities in Mathura on Janmashtami, devotees offer prayers to Lord Krishna

STATE TIMES NEWS
MATHURA : Thousands of devotees from across the country thronged Lord Krishna temples in this holy town from early hours on Monday for Janmashtami celebrations.

The Krishna Janmabhoomi temple here held the 'Mangala Aarti' in the morning, with hundreds in attendance as the temple premises reverberated with the chants of 'Jai Jai Shri Radhey' and 'Jai Kanhaiya Lal Ki'.

Pilgrims flooded the Nand Bhavan temple in Gokul for the 'Chhathi Pujan' programme, temple priest Mathura Das said.

"I feel really happy here and why not, it's the birthday celebration of Lord Krishna," Himani a young woman told PTI Videos.

At the Krishna Janmasthan temple several devotees broke into dance on Monday morning, to the spell of clarinet and drums along with shlokas and chants. The pilgrims were offered 'Charnamrit' after 'Mangala

Aarti', temple officials said.

"Amidst chanting of Vedic hymns and playing of conch, a procession of priests carried auspicious attire of Radha Krishna and other deities of different temples based at Srikrishna Janmasthan on Sunday evening," a temple official said.

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath led the Krishna Janmashtami celebrations in Mathura on Monday, offering special prayers to the deities.

"Today in the holy city of Mathura, I visited and worshipped the divine and beautiful forms of Yogeshwar Lord Shri Krishna and Shri Radha Rani. May the blessings of D u k h b h a n j a n , Yashodanandan, Lord Shri Krishna and Shri Radha Ji remain in the entire universe and this world," he said in a post on X in Hindi, earlier in the day.

Meanwhile in Vrindavan, festivities at the Radha

Shyam Sundar temple started with uninterrupted 'Hari Naam Sankirtan' in the morning that will continue till 2 AM, temple Mahant Krishna Gopalanand Deo Prabhupada said.

Bhakti, a young girl told PTI Videos that some devotees had been waiting in the queue since 4 am before they could get darshan of the deities.

"I am very excited for the festival. The 'poshaak' (dresses) of the deities look extremely beautiful," she added.

At the Dwarkadhish temple, Janmashtami began with the melodious sound of flute, clarinet and mini drums.

"Thousands participated in the morning 'Abhishek' ceremony at the temple," temple spokesperson Rakesh Tewari said, adding that normally devotees begin their fast after taking Charnamrit of the deity.

The bathing ceremony of deity was also performed in

Mathura's Old Keshav Dev temple, Govardhan's Daan Ghati temple, Chaurasi Khamba Mahaban and Radha Shyam Sundar temple in Vrindavan.

"I feel so good here, and do not feel like going anywhere else. Seeing the idols of the god, I feel blessed. The way Lord Krishna and Radha Rani have been dressed up, it looks beautiful and is if God himself has appeared to give his darshan to devotees," a middle-aged woman devotee told PTI Videos.

Pilgrims perform circumambulation of the Govardhan hill on the occasion since it is considered a good omen on this festival, Daan Ghati temple's priest Mathura Prasad Kaushik said.

District Magistrate Shailendra Singh said Mathura has been decked up for the occasion and the decorations have been done at all key road crossings, and along the streets.

"There has been no untoward incident so far," the DM said.

SIT on black money to submit interim report to SC within 15 days

STATE TIMES NEWS
BHUBANESWAR: The Supreme Court-appointed Special Investigation Team (SIT) on black money will submit its ninth interim report to the apex court within 15 days, the panel's vice-chairman Justice (Retired) Arijit Pasayat said here on Monday.

After coming to power in May 2014, the Narendra Modi government, in its first cabinet meeting, approved the appointment of the SIT as directed by the Supreme Court.

"We have already submitted eight reports to the

Supreme Court while the ninth report will be submitted within 15 days," Justice Pasayat told reporters here.

To a question, he said it would not be the last report as work is going on.

The SIT vice-chairman came here on Monday on a three-day visit to the state.

He is likely to hold a meeting of officers from IT, ED, Customs and Excise and Central Board of Indirect Tax departments in Cuttack on August 28. Director of ED Rahul Navin is also scheduled to attend the meeting.

Three held for trafficking drugs in Navi Mumbai; heroin seized

STATE TIMES NEWS
THANE: The Anti-Narcotics Cell of Navi Mumbai Police arrested three persons, including a woman, involved in drug trafficking and seized 100 grams of heroin valued at Rs 20 lakh, an official said on Monday.

Acting on a tip-off, the ANC officials raided a flat in a residential locality at Turbhe, where they arrested two brothers, Iktharul Irshad Sheikh (25) and Sattarul Irshad Sheikh (22). During

interrogation, the accused disclosed that they had procured the drugs from Firozabi Hasim Shaikh (38), who was later traced and arrested by the police.

An FIR was registered against the accused under the provisions of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act.

The police are now investigating the source of the contraband and identifying potential buyers involved in the network.

Ensure marriage witnesses are genuine: HC tells Arya Samaj Mandir

STATE TIMES NEWS
NEW DELHI : Taking note of a marriage solemnised between a girl and her 'plupha' (uncle) who falsely claimed to be unmarried, the Delhi High Court has asked an Arya Samaj temple to ensure that those who stand witness to such ceremonies are genuine and bonafide.

A bench headed by Justice Prathiba M Singh said the temple shall endeavour to have at least one witness from both the sides, who is either a relative or an acquaintance who has known them for a reasonable period of time.

In the present case, the court observed, the manner in which the girl's own uncle falsely declared himself to be unmarried before the Arya Samaj Mandir was "clearly contrary to law" and the marriage was void.

It noted that apart from the couple and the priest who solemnised the marriage, nobody was present at the wedding ceremony performed at the Arya Samaj Mandir in Malviya Nagar. Its "validity and sanctity", the court said, was "completely suspect".

The court was informed that the Arya Samaj temple takes affidavits of parties with respect to their marital status but no further verification is conducted.

"The Arya Samaj Mandir shall henceforth ensure that when witnesses etc.



are produced for the purposes of marriage, they are genuine and bonafide witnesses, whose status can be verified properly. The temple shall endeavour to call at least 1 witness who is a relative, from both the sides, i.e. the bride and the bridegroom and if there is no relative, some acquaintance who knows the parties concerned for a reasonable period of time shall be permitted to become a witness," said the bench, also comprising Justice Amit Sharma, in the order.

"A copy of the present order be sent to the Chief Secretary, GNCTD for necessary information and to take appropriate measures in this regard," it ordered.

The court was dealing with a petition by the girl's father who sought production of

his daughter who was missing since July 1.

The girl, who appeared in the court, claimed that the petitioner is not her biological father but the second husband of her mother, and that she was now living together with her "husband" after the marriage.

The court observed that since the marriage was solemnised on the basis of false affidavits by both the parties with respect to the uncle's marital status, it has no standing in the eyes of the law.

"It is unfortunate that Mr. S. (the uncle) has abandoned his wife/child and claims to have got married to a girl who is his niece.

This court holds that the alleged marriage ceremony which has been conducted by the Arya Samaj Mandir, on the face of it, is a void marriage as Mr. S has declared in the affidavit submitted for the marriage, that he is unmarried, when clearly his wife, Ms. K, is alive and they also have a son," the court stated.

Since the girl is a minor and has refused to accompany the petitioner, the court said no further orders can be passed. It, however, clarified that the wife of the uncle was free to proceed with her criminal complaint and take action against him as per law. Police, it said, can also investigate the matter in accordance with law.

Excise policy case: SC to hear Kavitha's bail plea Tuesday

STATE TIMES NEWS
NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear on Tuesday the bail plea by BRS leader K Kavitha in a money laundering case linked to the alleged Delhi excise policy scam.

A bench of justices B R Gavai and K V Viswanathan is likely to hear the matter.

The apex court had on August 12 sought responses from the CBI and the ED on Kavitha's pleas challenging a July 1 Delhi High Court order denying her bail in the two cases.

The high court had dismissed Kavitha's bail pleas in both the cases, saying

she was prima facie one of the main conspirators in the criminal conspiracy related to the formulation and implementation of the now-scrapped Delhi Excise Policy 2021-22.

The CBI and the ED have lodged separate cases pertaining to alleged corruption and money laundering in the formulation and implementation of the policy.

The ED arrested Kavitha (46) from her Banjara Hills residence in Hyderabad on March 15. The CBI arrested her on April 11 from Tihar jail in connection with the corruption case.

Kavitha has denied all allegations.

35-foot statue of Shivaji Maharaj collapses in Sindhudurg



STATE TIMES NEWS
MUMBAI: A statue of Maratha King Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, unveiled by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at a fort in Maharashtra's Sindhudurg district, collapsed on Monday, an official said.

The 35-foot statue collapsed around 1 pm at Rajkot Fort in Malvan, he said.

Experts will ascertain the exact cause of the collapse, but

the district has witnessed heavy rains and gusty winds in the last two to three days, the official said. Senior officials of the police and district administration reached the site to take stock of the situation, and the damage is being examined, he said. PM Modi unveiled the statue on December 4 last year on the occasion of Navy Day. He also participated in the celebrations at the fort.

Seven prison officials suspended in Karnataka for giving special treatment jailed actor Darshan

STATE TIMES NEWS
BENGALURU : Seven prison officials have been suspended for allegedly giving special treatment to Kannada actor Darshan Thoogudeepa, who is currently in judicial custody in the Renukaswamy murder case.

A Superintendent of the Central Jail at Parappana Agrahara here has also been transferred following an inquiry after a photo of the actor smoking with a coffee mug in hand emerged on social media on Sunday sparking a row.

The picture shows Darshan sitting leisurely on a lawn on the jail premises along with three others, including two alleged rowdy-

shooters. Those suspended are jailers Sharan Basappa Amingad and Prabhu S Khandeval, assistant jailers L S Kuppeswamy, Srikanth Talwar, head warders Venkappa, Sanpath Kumar and warder K Basappa, Karnataka Home Minister G Parameshwara told reporters here on Monday. The new jail superintendent will be asked to strictly deal with such incidents of "dereliction of duty," he said.

Parameshwara said soon after the matter came to his knowledge he directed the Director General of Police to conduct a probe following which a team of senior police officials visited the jail. Their inquiry confirmed the involvement of the suspended

officers in facilitating special treatment to Darshan, he added.

Parameshwara said it is a matter of concern that such incidents occur despite the presence of CCTV cameras and jammers inside the prisons in the state.

A total of 17 people including Darshan along with his friend Pavithra Gowda are currently in judicial custody in connection with the murder case. According to police sources, 33-year-old Renukaswamy, a fan of the actor, had sent obscene messages to Gowda, which enraged Darshan, allegedly leading to his murder. His body was found near a stormwater drain next to an apartment in Sumanahalli here on June 9.

officers in facilitating special treatment to Darshan, he added.

Parameshwara said it is a matter of concern that such incidents occur despite the presence of CCTV cameras and jammers inside the prisons in the state.

A total of 17 people including Darshan along with his friend Pavithra Gowda are currently in judicial custody in connection with the murder case. According to police sources, 33-year-old Renukaswamy, a fan of the actor, had sent obscene messages to Gowda, which enraged Darshan, allegedly leading to his murder. His body was found near a stormwater drain next to an apartment in Sumanahalli here on June 9.