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BY THE COURT CAST PROJECT

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SUPREME COURT

PVR INOX ordered to pay ₹70,000 after ads kept moviegoer waiting 22 minutes

BY SHEIKH RAYEES

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A Hyderabad consumer forum has held PVR Cinemas and PVR INOX Ltd. liable for delaying a scheduled film screening with commercial advertisements, directing the cinema operators to pay a total of ₹70,000 in compensation and punitive damages.

The District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission, Hyderabad, passed the order in a complaint filed by advocate Chanda

Athish Kumar, who had booked two tickets for the 10:35 PM screening of the Telugu film Kubera at Next Galleria Mall, Moosarambagh, on June 20, 2025.

The screening, however, did not begin as scheduled. Commercial advertisements and promotional trailers continued until around 10:52 PM, after which public service awareness films were also shown. The delay stretched to nearly 22 minutes.

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DELHI HIGH COURT

Complainant evidence before accused hearing

BY EDITORIAL TEAM

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The Delhi High Court has clarified that a magistrate must examine a complainant and available witnesses on oath before notifying a proposed accused under Section 223 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita.

A division bench of Justices Navin Chawla and Ravinder Dudeja answered a reference arising from two private complaints. It held that recording the complainant's evidence and hearing the accused are both steps preceding formal cognizance.

After examining the complainant and witnesses, the magistrate must first

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DELHI HIGH COURT

Delhi Court Seeks Police Report on Plea Against CM Rekha Gupta Over Hanuman Remark

BY SHEIKH RAYEES

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A Delhi court has asked the Delhi Police to submit a status report on a complaint seeking registration of an FIR against Chief Minister Rekha Gupta over remarks comparing government officials with Lord Hanuman.

Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate Ashwani Panwar of the Rouse Avenue Court directed the police to file the report by October 15, when the matter will come up for further hearing.

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DELHI HIGH COURT

Delhi High Court: Father-in-law not liable under DV Act simply for not controlling adult son

BY SHEIKH RAYEES

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The Delhi High Court has ruled that a father-in-law cannot be held responsible under the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act merely because he did not intervene in the conduct of his adult son.

Justice Madhu Jain made the observation while dismissing a woman's challenge to a trial court decision that had removed her father-in-law from a domestic violence case.

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Madras High Court declines to halt Ajay Devgn's Drishyam 3 over remake rights dispute

The release of the Hindi Drishyam 3, starring Ajay Devgn and Tabu, will not be stopped for now, with the Madras High Court refusing to grant an interim injunction in a dispute over who owns the film's remake rights.

Justice K Govindarajan Thilakavadi held that Rajkumar Theatres Private Limited had not placed enough material before the Court to establish, at this stage, that it still possessed an exclusive or shared copyright over the Hindi remake rights to the Malayalam sequel.

The Court made it clear, however, that the order was not a final ruling on ownership. The competing claims arising from a series of agreements and later transactions will have to be examined in detail during the proceedings.

Claim over Hindi remake rights

Rajkumar Theatres approached the High Court under Section 9 of the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, seeking to prevent the worldwide release and exploitation of the Hindi film across cinemas, OTT platforms, satellite television and other formats.

The production house traced its claim to agreements entered into in December 2013 with Kerala-based Ashirvad Cinemas and director Jeethu Joseph concerning remake rights in the Drishyam franchise.

According to Rajkumar Theatres, it obtained exclusive Telugu remake rights under the arrangement, while Wide Angle Creations acquired rights for Hindi and certain North Indian languages.

Rajkumar Theatres maintained that it had financed the entire ₹50 crore consideration involved in the transaction. It further claimed that a subsequent agreement executed in June 2014 established equal ownership between Rajkumar Theatres and Wide Angle Creations over the copyright in the Hindi versions of the films.

The dispute resurfaced after Rajkumar Theatres learnt that Drishyam 3 had been produced in Hindi by parties involved with Drishyam 2, allegedly without its approval.

Later agreements clouded the claim

The respondents, including Ashirvad Cinemas, Jeethu Joseph, Star Studio 18 and Panorama Studios, disputed Rajkumar Theatres' case.

They argued that there was no subsisting document giving Rajkumar Theatres an enforceable right to prevent the Hindi film from being released.

Their case relied, among other things, on a 2014 assignment in favour of Viacom18 and settlement agreements executed in 2022. These documents, they argued, demonstrated that the relevant Hindi sequel and derivative rights had subsequently moved to other parties.

The High Court found that these competing documents raised questions that could not be conclusively settled at the interim stage.

It also noted that stopping a film's worldwide release could have significant consequences for the respondents as well as third parties who claimed rights through subsequent agreements.

For such an extraordinary restraint to be granted, the Court said, there had to be sufficiently clear material showing that a subsisting right existed and that it faced an imminent infringement.

Release remains unaffected for now

The Court also observed that two central questions — whether Rajkumar Theatres' original rights extended to Drishyam 3 and whether those rights were later assigned elsewhere — would require further examination.

Finding that the material before it did not establish Rajkumar Theatres' continuing exclusive or joint copyright in the Hindi remake rights with sufficient clarity, the Court dismissed the request for an interim stay.

The decision therefore leaves the Hindi Drishyam 3 free from the requested injunction while the underlying dispute over the remake rights remains to be adjudicated.

Senior Advocate K Ravi represented Rajkumar Theatres, while Senior Advocate P S Raman appeared for Star Studio 18. Advocates K Sharath Chandran, Akshaya Ramadurai and K Manoj Menon appeared for the other respondents.



KARNATAKA HIGH COURT

Karnataka High Court Grants Bail to Man Accused of Altering Forensic Evidence in Murder Case

BY SHEIKH RAYEES

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The Karnataka High Court has granted bail to a man accused of helping conceal evidence in an alleged murder-for-insurance scheme by tampering with a forensic report.

Justice Venkatesh Naik T passed the order on September 30 in the case of Kumar @ Dali v. State of Karnataka, observing that the precise role attributed to the accused would have to be established during the trial.

The accused, Kumar, was arraigned as accused number 10 in the case concerning the alleged murder of a former Army officer. According to the prosecution's case, the victim's wife allegedly conspired with a man described as her paramour to kill her husband and secure the proceeds of an insurance policy.

Kumar was accused of assisting the principal accused by allegedly issuing a manipulated forensic report after receiving a bribe. The report was said to have been prepared in a manner that concealed evidence potentially linking the victim's death to poisoning.

The Court noted that the allegation against Kumar was essentially confined to his purported role in altering or assisting with the alteration of the report issued by a government scientific agency. Whether he actually participated in such tampering, the Court said, was a matter to be determined through evidence during the trial.

The allegations in the underlying murder case paint a more elaborate sequence of events.

The victim's wife is alleged to have exploited her husband's drinking habits and engineered a road accident in the hope that his insurance policy could ultimately be claimed. She allegedly got him intoxicated and permitted him to drive, resulting in an accident. Although he survived the crash with relatively minor injuries, he was taken to hospital.

Investigators later alleged that the wife's purported paramour administered sleeping pills and poisonous substances through the victim's saline treatment, ultimately causing his death.

A post-mortem examination followed. The prosecution alleges that the victim's wife subsequently paid a Regional Forensic Science Laboratory official to produce a report stating that the deceased had been sober before his death and that no poison was detected in his body.

The case reportedly took a different turn when the alleged paramour approached the police and confessed to his own involvement. He allegedly disclosed the participation of several other individuals, including the victim's wife. Ten people were eventually named as accused.

Kumar subsequently approached the High Court seeking bail in connection with the allegations concerning the forensic evidence.

While granting relief, the Court took note of his permanent residence and his willingness to comply with conditions imposed by the Court. Bail was granted subject to stringent conditions.

The order does not determine Kumar's guilt or innocence, with the Court making it clear that the prosecution's allegations concerning the forensic report remain matters for trial.

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Kumar told the Commission that the unexpected delay disrupted his plans and pushed his return home beyond 3:00 AM, causing considerable inconvenience and raising concerns over late-night travel.

He also relied on an Office Memorandum issued by the Union Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, which limits the duration of mandatory screening of approved public service awareness films to two minutes. According to him, the practice of extending the pre-film advertising period amounted to an attempt to generate additional commercial revenue at the expense of moviegoers.

PVR INOX defended the practice by arguing that the screening of advertisements, trailers and public service films formed part of the cinema business and fell within its constitutional right to conduct trade.

The company also relied on the Supreme Court's ruling in *KC Cinema v. State of Jammu & Kashmir*, contending that cinema halls are private establishments entitled to impose reasonable conditions in the interests of their business and social objectives.

The consumer forum was not persuaded.

The Commission, comprising President Vakkanti Narasimha Rao and Member Suma Vala, noted that the cinema operators had failed to effectively counter the evidence submitted by Kumar, including a compact disc showing advertisements being played beyond the scheduled commencement time.

The Commission concluded that keeping consumers waiting through extended commercial advertisements, while



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representing a particular time as the scheduled start of a film, amounted to deficiency in service and an unfair trade practice under the Consumer Protection Act, 2019.

PVR Cinemas and PVR INOX were ordered to pay Kumar ₹20,000 as compensation within 45 days. A delay in payment would attract interest at 9% per annum.

The cinema operators were also directed to pay ₹5,000 towards litigation expenses and deposit ₹50,000 as punitive damages with the District Consumer Welfare Fund.

The Commission further directed the companies to stop the unfair and restrictive practices identified in the complaint from being repeated in the future.

DELHI HIGH COURT / CRIMINAL PROCEDURE

Complainant evidence precedes notice

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consider whether the complaint should be dismissed under Section 226. Notice to the accused becomes necessary only if the material supports a preliminary view that cognizance may be warranted.

The court stressed that the statutory hearing cannot be reduced to a formality. The proposed accused may argue that the complaint and supporting statements, even accepted at face value, disclose no offence. Formal cognizance may follow only after that limited opportunity has been provided.

DELHI HIGH COURT

Delhi Court Seeks Police Report on Plea Against CM Rekha Gupta Over Hanuman Remark

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The proceedings stem from a plea filed by Ram Niwas Sharma, who has sought criminal action over comments allegedly made by Gupta during a government programme on September 23, 2025. The event was held to mark the launch of Delhi Transport Corporation bus services connecting Delhi with Baraut in Uttar Pradesh.

During the programme, Gupta reportedly drew a comparison between Delhi government officials and Hanuman, referring to the deity's strength and the moment when his tail was set on fire.

She said that officials often forget their authority and only remember their full power when circumstances force them to act. Gupta also linked the reference to Hanuman with the fact that the programme was being held near the Marghat Wale Baba temple.

The remarks subsequently triggered controversy, with criticism from some quarters that the comparison was disrespectful to Lord Hanuman and offended religious sentiments.

Sharma's plea argues that the statement was made publicly during an official government event and was heard by government officials, participants and members of the public. On that basis, he has asked the court to direct registration of an FIR against the Chief Minister.

The court has now sought the police's response before deciding how the complaint should proceed.

DELHI HIGH COURT

Delhi High Court: Father-in-law not liable under DV Act simply for not controlling adult son

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The woman had alleged, among other things, that her father-in-law failed to intervene in her husband's relationship with another woman. The High Court, however, said such an allegation by itself did not establish that the father-in-law had participated in or facilitated his son's matrimonial misconduct.

"A father cannot be made liable under the DV Act merely because he did not control the conduct of his adult son," the Court observed.

The couple had married in 2006, while the woman initiated domestic violence proceedings in 2019 against her husband and father-in-law, alleging verbal, emotional and economic abuse.

She claimed that her father-in-law had restricted her access to office and email facilities connected with a family-run partnership firm, supported his son during their marital dispute and forced her to leave the matrimonial home.

A magistrate had issued notice to the father-in-law in 2020. However, that decision was later overturned in 2023 after he challenged it in appeal. The woman subsequently approached the High Court.

While examining the allegations, the High Court found no material showing that the father-in-law had threatened her or taken any specific action to force her out of the matrimonial home.

The Court also considered the allegation of economic abuse. Although economic abuse is covered by the DV Act, the



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woman had not shown that she was denied her share or profits in the family partnership because of any specific act by her father-in-law.

Similarly, allegations that he was domineering and orthodox, and that he had shouted at, insulted or abused her, were found to be too general.

The Court noted that merely using expressions such as “insulted”, “shouted” and “abused” was insufficient without details of what was actually said or done and how that conduct caused humiliation, threat or mental harm.

Finding that the allegations did not disclose a domestic violence offence against the father-in-law, the High Court dismissed the woman's plea and upheld his exclusion from the proceedings.