

PRESS RELEASE

The web series The Hunt- The Rajiv Gandhi Assassination Case aired on Sony Liv has attracted widespread viewership. As DIG CBI (Investigation) Mr. Amod K Kanth played a key role in this historic case-considered to be one of the most difficult political assassinations in the country which was led by Mr. DR Kartikeyan SIT (Special Investigation Team), then an officer in the CRPF brought into the CBI. Mr. Kanth seeks to highlight some serious inaccuracies, distortions, and defamatory portrayals of the concerned officers and the CBI as an apex investigating body in the series, raising major ethical and legal concerns. The series is a poor attempt to sympathize LTTE persons and to show failure of the law enforcement system in the country.

How it started: On 4th July 2025 when this web series was telecast and afterwards, Mr. Kanth's friends, relatives and co-workers watched the 7 episodes, purportedly based on true facts and real-life incidents carrying the name, personality, character, and the official role with personal references to Mr Kanth. On the face of it, the web-series is found by Mr. Kanth (and others connected to him), full of inaccuracies and distortions, some depictions being highly objectionable lowering the moral and intellectual character directly related to his calling- thus being disgraceful lowering his credit and unbecoming as a person, police officer and social activist. The series raises many ethical and legal concerns and maligns every officer involved, particularly CBI - being a premier investigative agency.

Many people have approached Mr. Kanth after watching the Web-series and they believe that the scenes shown in the Web-series, including sequence of events, third-degree torture, unethical and disgraceful Athirai's arrest, usage of abusive language by Mr. Kanth, Mr. Kanth smoking, etc. has impacted his reputation, lowered his character & calling, image and credit- being disgraced and defamed. As a whole, the series has tainted all the CBI officers who were involved in the case by showing threats to accused persons during investigations, threatening to rape accused persons, etc.

Irresponsible story-telling and non-consultation with the concerned: While the series claims to be based on true facts and includes a disclaimer that "certain characters, institutions and events in the series are fictional and have been used for cinematic purpose and for dramatizing the performances portrayed in the series" it simultaneously uses the real names, designations, and even personal details—such as of Mr. Amod K. Kanth and the name of his wife without taking their consent or consultations with them. When real individuals, particularly those who held key responsibilities in a case of such national significance, are portrayed on screen, it becomes imperative to present their roles truthfully. The dramatizations used in the Web-series undermine the legacy of dedicated officers, some of whom are no longer alive to defend themselves and erode trust in the institutions that upheld the law during a national crisis. Mr. Kanth strongly urges content creators to practice greater accountability and ensure that storytelling, especially when based on real events, remains truthful, respectful, and responsible. According to Mr. Kanth, this particular case stands as one of the most high-profile, complex, and landmark investigations in India's history. "In series like The Hunt, which are widely publicised and consumed by large global audiences, there lies a heightened responsibility to portray real people and historic events with care and accuracy. Unfortunately, the show falters on this front" says Mr. Kanth.

Introduction of Mr. Amod K Kanth: Mr. Amod K. Kanth is a retired Indian Police Service (IPS) officer of the 1974 batch, known for his illustrious and eventful career across Delhi and other parts of India. He served as DCP Delhi (Crime & Railways) from 1985 to 1990, and was promoted to DIG on 06.11.1990. Owing to his vast experience in handling terrorism and sensitive matters, he served as an Officer on Special Duty (OSD) to the Minister of State for Home Affairs, Mr. Subodh Kant, during Prime Minister Chandrashekhar's tenure when Tamil Nadu was brought under the President's Rule in January 1991. He joined the CBI as a DIG on 01.05.1991 and was entrusted with the Rajiv Gandhi Assassination Case the day after the assassination (22nd May 1991) that took place in

Madras (now Chennai) on the night of 21st-22nd May 1991. Mr. Kanth continued to be in the CBI till 31.05.1995, handling several high-profile and sensitive cases.

Recognized nationally and internationally for investigating some of the most complex crimes of his time, Mr. Kanth worked on major cases such as the Lalit Maken, Arjun Das, and Rajiv Gandhi assassinations, transistor bomb blasts, Hawala scam, Harshad Mehta and Bank scam cases, and high-profile criminal cases including Charles Sobhraj's escape, Jessica Lal murder, BMW (Sanjeev Nanda) hit-and-run, and Romesh Sharma. A rare recipient of the President's Police Medals for Gallantry, Meritorious Service, and Distinguished Service, Mr. Kanth is widely respected for his bravery, investigative acumen, and leadership in complex law and order situations.

Apart from having a distinguished IPS career, Mr. Kanth is also a committed social development leader and the Founder & Mentor of Prayas Juvenile Aid Centre (JAC) Society, established in 1988. Under his leadership, Prayas today has 789 professionals operating across 13 States/UTs, supporting 45,000+ beneficiaries in urgent needs through over 300 centres focused on juvenile justice, child protection, education, skill development, health, and related areas.

Core of the present Press Release: Based on the assassination of the former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in 1991, *The Hunt – The Rajiv Gandhi Assassination Case* (Web-series) is a political crime drama that reconstructs the intense investigation of the case. Set in the tense aftermath of the suicide bombing in Sriperumbudur (first of its own kind), the series follows a special investigation of CBI as they race against time to uncover the network behind the sinister plot. The show blends real events with fictional elements as it follows the detailed search for the culprits, important forensic findings along with portraying the wider political and social effects of one of India's most tragic events.

The use of actual names and images, coupled with distorted facts, is not only misleading but also risks defaming the reputations of individuals who have served the country with integrity. This concern is particularly evident in Episodes 2, 3, and 4 of the web series, which falsely depict the use of third-degree torture (including threats to rape the accused Nalini) during the investigation. In reality, no such custodial violence ever occurred in Mr. Kanth's presence or under CBI authority. Mr. Kanth stresses that CBI officials are very professional and follow strict protocols. As the DIG officially leading the investigation including custodial interrogations and the recording of TADA confessions, Mr. Kanth upheld lawful procedures and, throughout his distinguished career, has never permitted or endorsed custodial torture. This fictionalized dramatic portrayal seriously damages his reputation not only as a senior police officer but as a social activist.

Mr. Kanth has expressed serious concern over the grossly inaccurate and defamatory portrayal of events in the series, particularly in Episode 3, which shows the arrest of a young LTTE member, Athirai, depicted as a backup suicide bomber targeting Mr. Rajiv Gandhi. The episode falsely portrays Mr. Kanth entering a hotel room in Delhi using a duplicate key and acting in an inappropriate and unethical manner mounting over the body of the female suicide bomber and arresting her without a female police officer, which Mr. Kanth firmly denies. This fictionalized and sensationalized version is factually incorrect and deeply damaging to Mr. Kanth's reputation. It undermines his lifelong commitment to discipline, integrity, law enforcement, and public service.

Issuance of Legal Notice: Mr. Kanth has issued a Legal Notice dated 21.07.2024 and subsequently, an amended legal notice dated 24.07.2025 under Section 356(1) of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 to the makers of the Web-series against portrayal of distorted facts, incidents and investigation procedure. He claims that the Web-series is defamatory, scandalous and has tarnished his long standing career as a Police Officer and as a social worker. The Web-series has not only defamed him but his entire CBI team involved the Rajiv Gandhi Assassination case and has diluted one of India's most crucial CBI investigations.

Key points opposed by Mr. Amod K Kanth:

1. *Crime Scene & Evidence Handling:* The series wrongly shows Mr. P. Chandrashekar of TNFSL handling the crime scene, collecting evidence and going to the mortuary while it was

actually Mr. R.K. Raghavan IGP (later Director CBI) TN Police who preserved it before CBI took over, and the concerned officials of Tamil Nadu police and the CBI. The retrieval and development of Haribabu's camera film were also handled correctly as per protocol by IG R K Raghavan and others.

2. *Investigation Leadership*: Mr. Kanth formed the team as per the direction of the CBI Director Mr. Vijay Karan, and reached Tamil Nadu on 23rd May 1991. Contrary to the series, the CBI team had tentatively identified Sivarasan being one of the main perpetrators of the previous K Padmanabha case, which was confirmed by the CBI Director, Add. Director and the SIT Chief Mr. DR Kartikeyan when they returned from Sri Lanka. The efforts and hard-work of the entire investigating team has been diluted by the series.

3. *Misleading Forensics Depiction*: The investigation was detailed and scientific, including examination of minute items like nail polish, bindi, etc of LTTE female suicide bomber Ms. Dhanu as well as bomb particle comparisons with the ones found during investigation of assassination of K. Padmanabha, the Secretary-General of the (EPRLF) Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front—none of which are shown accurately.

4. *False and Defamatory Scenes*:

4.1. Over-dramatized portrayal of Mr. Amod K Kanth mounting over the body of the sleeping female LTTE back up suicide bomber Athirai is unethical and highly defamatory. Mr. Kanth never used any duplicate key to enter the hotel room as shown in the series.

4.2. Depiction of third degree torture and threats, including threatening rape on Nalini, are entirely false and defamatory to Mr. Kanth as well as to the entire CBI team. Infact, the confessional statements recorded during the investigation were accepted and appreciated by the Hon'ble Supreme Court.

4.3. False portrayal of Mr. Kanth smoking, using abusive language, arresting suspects without protocol, or being at locations he never visited (e.g., the house where LTTE persons were hiding).

4.4. Depiction of LTTE members as "martyrs" reading patriotic poems and giving insensitive dialogues to characters playing CBI officials - "One man's terrorist is another man's hero" is misleading and offensive. Such depiction is nothing but a shameful attempt to portray sympathy towards LTTE persons.

4.5. Usage of real names (e.g., Mr. Kanth and his wife) without any consultation while dramatizing fictional, offensive incidents is deeply damaging.

4.6. During investigation, Mr. Kanth is shown to be more bothered with the mosquitoes than the case, which again throws very poor light on him who along with his entire team was on high alert.

5. *Misrepresentations*:

5.1 Officers like Mr. Amit Verma, who has since passed away, are wrongly shown at scenes they were never present; like, showing Amit getting involved in third degree tortures, etc. causing harm to his reputation without basis.

5.2 Mr. Kanth never visited the house where LTTE terrorists were hiding, nor did he participate in this series of so-called 'hunting' culminating at Konankunte.

5.3 The LTTE persons who were hiding at Konanakunte had cyanides, Sivrasan had shot himself and they blew the house up. The whole house at Konanakute was destroyed. However, the same was shown in a very different manner.

5.4 The manner in which the Web-series ends brings a lot of questions in the minds of the public. Talking about dramatization, the Web-series could have shown it in a better manner after consultations with all the officials involved. There were reasons why the CBI team and the NSG did not enter the house.

These distortions present a false narrative of a critical national investigation, damaging the image of the CBI, law enforcement, and individual officers who carried out their duties with integrity and professionalism. Despite public records and court judgments being available, the series misleads viewers under the guise of creative liberty.

Actual sequence of events:

- I. On the evening of 21st May 1991, former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated at Sriperumbudur.
- II. That night, FIR No. 329/91 was registered under IPC Sections 302/307/326 and the Explosive Substances Act at Sriperumbudur Police Station. Then - IGP R.K. Raghavan supervised the scene and preserved evidence until the case was handed over to the CBI. Complete protocol was followed.
- III. On 22nd May, Mr. Kanth was appointed DIG (Investigation) by CBI Director Vijay Karan, because of his counter-terrorism experience. The team was formed with Tamil-speaking forensic officials and led four SPs, including, Late Mr. Amit Verma, Mr. C Balasubramaniam, Mr. D Manoharan and Mr. Thiagarajan, who recorded confessions under TADA. DySP K. Rangotaman was the Chief IO. The well-known IED (Improvised Explosive Devices) expert Major (Retd Major General) Manik Sabharwal also joined with his NSG team. Other DIGs included Mr. Radhavinod Raju (intelligence), Mr. S. Ramani (logistics), and Mr. R. Srikumar (technical). IG D.R. Karthikeyan led the overall team and was responsible to keep the variegated team members together.
- IV. On 23rd May, the CBI team arrived at Sriperumbudur. Mr. Raghavan had discovered and got developed Haribabu's camera photos, which captured LTTE female suicide bomber Dhanu and master-mind Sivarasan. TNFSL Director P. Chandrasekharan clandestinely removed these photographs which were kept inside a coffer at TNFSL and handed them over to *The Hindu*, which got published in the morning of 24th May jeopardizing the entire investigation.
- V. On 24th May, the case was converted into a Regular Case, with Mr. Kanth leading the investigation.
- VI. By the time the Director Vijay Karan, Add. Director Mr. SK Dutta and the SIT Chief Mr. Kartikeyan returned from Sri Lanka with leads, Mr. Kanth's team had tentatively identified the key suspect Sivarasan, who was also a main perpetrator of the 1990- Padmanabha assassination. This fact is shown otherwise in the Web-series.
- VII. Mr. Kanth supervised all investigations, including TADA confessions, without allowing custodial torture. CBI officers did not resort to any kind of torture. Contrary to the portrayal in a web series, Late Mr. Amit Verma and others did not use third-degree methods. The Supreme Court also had accepted and appreciated the legality of the confessions made by all Accused.
- VIII. Mr. Kanth also planned and organized the arrest of female LTTE operative Athirai in Delhi using a special team including female officers. Contrary to the most unethical way of his mounting over the body of a sleeping female LTTE operative as depicted in the Web-series.
- IX. LTTE members, including Sivarasan and Subha, committed suicide and exploded the house at Konanakunte. Mr. Kanth was not present at the scene, contrary to depictions in the Web-series.
- X. Out of 26 charge-sheeted accused, 12 had died. The TADA Court sentenced all the accused persons to death; the Supreme Court later upheld death sentences of only 4, gave life sentences to 7, and acquitted the rest.

Amitabh Srivastava

Head, Media & Communication
