

***Adipurush*** (transl. First man)<sup>[a]</sup> is a 2023 Indian mythological action film based on the Hindu epic *Ramayana*.<sup>[8]</sup> The film is directed and co-written by Om Raut, and produced by T-Series and Retrophiles. Shot simultaneously in Hindi and Telugu, the film features Prabhas, Saif Ali Khan, Kriti Sanon, Sunny Singh, and Devdutta Nage.

The film was announced in August 2020, through an official motion poster. Principal photography, which took place primarily in Mumbai, commenced in February 2021 and ended in November 2021. The film's music is composed by Ajay–Atul. *Adipurush* is budgeted at ₹500 crore (US\$63 million)–₹700 crore (US\$88 million) placing it in the list of most expensive Indian films.<sup>[9][3][4]</sup>

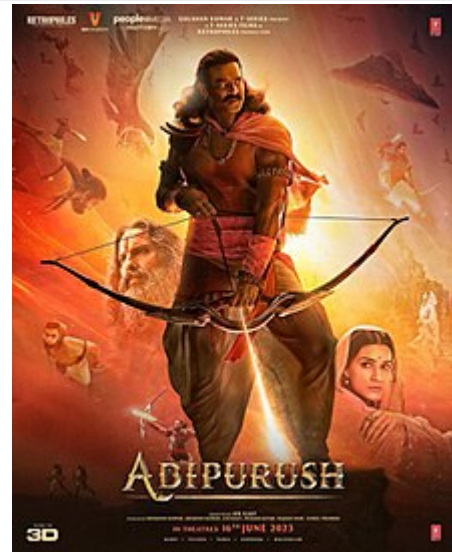
*Adipurush* was released on 16 June 2023 to negative reviews from critics, who criticised the film's screenplay, dialogues and visuals.<sup>[10][11][12]</sup> It emerged as a box office bomb.<sup>[13]</sup>

## Plot

Thousands of years ago, the rakshasa king of Lanka, Lankesh, obtained a boon from Brahma, the god of creation, with which he cannot be slain by the gods or demons, during day or night, thus making him invincible. Elsewhere, many years afterwards in the kingdom of Ayodhya, King Dashratha of Kosala, exiles his son, Raghava for 14 years to fulfil his promise to his wife, Kaikeyi, Raghava's stepmother, that their son, Bharat, would ascend the throne. Raghava accepts the exile and leaves for the wilderness in the forests of Panchavati, near the river Godavari, alongside his wife, Janaki, and brother, Shesh.

Lankesh's sister, the rakshasi Shurpanakha, tries to seduce Raghava into marrying her and attempts to take Janaki's life, but after a failed attempt, she ends up with a disfigured nose. Upon hearing of his sister's humiliation, he sends one of his henchmen, disguised as a golden deer, to distract both Raghava and Shesh. Lankesh proceeds to abduct Janaki, after hearing of her beauty from Shurpanakha. Raghava and Shesh set out to free and rescue Janaki with the help of the

## Adipurush



Theatrical release poster

<b>Directed by</b>	<u>Om Raut</u>
<b>Written by</b>	<b>Screenplay:</b> <u>Om Raut</u> <b>Dialogues:</b> <u>Manoj Muntashir</u>
<b>Based on</b>	<i><u>Ramayana</u></i> by <u>Valmiki</u>
<b>Produced by</b>	<u>Bhushan Kumar</u> <u>Krishan Kumar</u> <u>Om Raut</u> <u>Prasad Sutar</u> <u>Rajesh Nair</u>
<b>Starring</b>	<u>Prabhas</u> <u>Kriti Sanon</u> <u>Saif Ali Khan</u> <u>Sunny Singh</u> <u>Devdatta Nage</u>
<b>Cinematography</b>	<u>Karthik Palani</u>
<b>Edited by</b>	<u>Apurva Motiwale</u> <u>Ashish Mhatre</u>
<b>Music by</b>	<b>Score:</b>

Vanara king, Sugriva, his aides, Jambavan, Angad, and Bajrang, along with the Vanarasena. Raghava asks Bajrang to go to Lanka and instil confidence in Janaki, of his eventual arrival to Lanka. He flies to Lanka and lets Janaki know of her impending rescue. However, he is captured by Lankesh's son, Indrajit. His tail is set ablaze by him, but Bajrang proceeds to fly and destroy a portion of Lanka, before flying back to Raghava and the vanarasena.

With the help of Varuna, the god of the sky, oceans, and seas, Raghava and the vanarasena create a bridge across the sea to Lanka. Raghava and his army successfully cross the ocean to reach the shores of Lanka. Meanwhile, Lankesh's brother, Vibhishana, is forced to leave Lanka because he had opposed Lankesh's decision to abduct Janaki. Vibhishana joins the ranks of Raghava's army and becomes his sworn ally. Lankesh is given a final ultimatum of bringing Janaki back to Raghava, but rejects it, paving the way to a skirmish. During the skirmish, Shesh is mortally wounded by Indrajit. However, with the help of the sanjivani mountain brought back by Bajrang, they are able to revive and cure him.

They embark on war at Lankesh's palace, attacking in three separate directions at the same time. The first attack is led by Sugriva and Jambavan, along with the vanarasena at the entrance of Lankesh' palace. Because of the advanced artillery and weaponry available at Lankesh's disposal, many vanaras are slain. However, the tide turns with Raghava providing air support, with the help of Bajrang. The second attack is led by Shesh, Vibhishana, and Angad to kill Indrajit. Shesh proceeds to attack Indrajit; though he is stabbed by him, he successfully kills him. The two attacks are successful in overpowering Lankesh's army. The third attack is initiated, where Kumbhakarna is awoken from his deep slumber. Raghava and Shesh successfully kill him when he overpowers Bajrang. With no other option left, Lankesh decides to enter the battlefield.

The final battle takes place where Raghava manages to subdue and kill Lankesh, after coming to the realisation that Lankesh can only be slain in between day and night; Janaki is set free. Raghava, Shesh and Janaki complete their 14-year-long exile and return back to Kosala, where Raghava is crowned as the king of Ayodhya, with Janaki as his queen.

## Cast

- Prabhas as Raghava, the seventh avatar of lord Vishnu and the warrior prince of Kosala, who lives a simple life in the forests with his wife and brother. (Dubbed by Sharad Kelkar in Hindi)
- Kriti Sanon as Janaki,<sup>[7]</sup> avatar of goddess Lakshmi, Raghava's wife, who is abducted by Lankesh.
- Saif Ali Khan as Ravana / Lankesh,<sup>[14]</sup> the antagonistic demon king of Sri Lanka. He sports ten heads and has numerous powers including superhuman strength and size alteration.

	<div><div><span><span></span></span></div><div><u>Sanchit Balhara</u></div></div> <div><div><span><span></span></span></div><div><u>Ankit Balhara</u></div></div> <div><b>Songs:</b></div> <div><div><span><span></span></span></div><div>Ajay-Atul</div></div> <div><div><span><span></span></span></div><div>Sachet–Parampara</div></div>
<b>Production companies</b>	<div><div><span><span></span></span></div><div>T-Series Films</div></div> <div><div><span><span></span></span></div><div>Retrophiles</div></div>
<b>Distributed by</b>	<div><div><span><span></span></span></div><div>AA Films (Hindi)</div></div> <div><div><span><span></span></span></div><div>UV Creations (Telugu)</div></div> <div><div><span><span></span></span></div><div>People Media Factory (Telugu)</div></div> <div><div><span><span></span></span></div><div><u>KRG Studios</u> (Kannada)</div></div>
<b>Release date</b>	16 June 2023
<b>Running time</b>	179 minutes <sup>[1][2]</sup>
<b>Country</b>	India
<b>Languages</b>	Hindi <div></div> Telugu
<b>Budget</b>	<u>est.</u> <div>₹500–700 crore<sup>[3][4][5]</sup></div>
<b>Box office</b>	<u>est.</u> ₹354 crore <sup>[6]</sup>

(Dubbed by P. Ravi Shankar in Telugu and Tamil)

- Sunny Singh as Shesh, Raghava's younger brother and avatar of Sheshnag.
- Devdatta Nage as Bajrang, a close friend to the brothers and a deity resembling a monkey, known for his invulnerability and strength. He has similar abilities to Lankesh.
- Vatsal Sheth as Indrajit<sup>[15]</sup>
- Sonal Chauhan as Mandodari<sup>[16]</sup>
- Siddhant Karnick as Vibhishana, Lankesh's brother, who opposes his decision to abduct Janaki.
- Ayesha Madhukar as Maya<sup>[17][18]</sup>
- Tejaswini Pandit as Shurpanakha, a demoness and Lankesh's sister.
- Krishna Kotian as Dasharatha, Raghava's father and the king of Kosala.
- Sonali Khare as Kaikeyi, Raghava's wicked stepmother, who forces his exile.
- Lavi Pajni as Kumbhakarna, another brother and henchman of Lankesh known for his strength and appetite.
- Ajit Shidhaye as Prahasta
- Asha Sharma as Shabari
  - Urvi Singh as the young Shabari
- Bijay J. Anand as Brahma
- Neha Khan as Trijata
- Rehan Khan as Maricha
- Gaurav Walia as Sugriva
- Manohar Pandey as Angad
- Roopesh Jadhav as Jambavan
- Kaustav Sinha as Nala
- Saurabh Thakare as Nila
- Prashant Uthale as Shuka
- Rajesh K Salhotra as Dhakdasur

## Production

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### Development

*Adipurush*, an adaptation of the Hindu epic *Ramayana*, was announced on 18 August 2020, via a promotional poster. Prabhas portrays Lord Rama under the direction of Om Raut who earlier helmed the period action film *Tanhaji* (2020).<sup>[19]</sup> Om Raut was fascinated by the 1992 Japanese film *Ramayana: The Legend of Prince Rama* and was motivated to adapt the *Ramayana* into a film using modern technology. Raut wrote the script amidst COVID-19 lockdown in India. Prabhas immediately liked the project and the production company T-Series Films was on board for the project.<sup>[7]</sup>

*Adipurush* is one of the most expensive Indian films ever made, with a budget of ₹500–700 crore.<sup>[3][5]</sup> It was shot simultaneously in Hindi and Telugu languages, while also filmed in 3D.<sup>[20]</sup>

### Casting

In September 2020, the makers revealed that Prabhas is enacting Lord Rama's portrayal whose character name was later revealed as Raghava.<sup>[7]</sup> Saif Ali Khan, who already worked as an antagonist in Raut's *Tanhaji*, signed on for the role of Ravana, with the alias name, Lankesh.<sup>[21]</sup> After rumours of Anushka Shetty, Anushka Sharma, Kiara Advani, and Keerthy Suresh being approached for the role of Sita, with the alias name of Janaki, it was reported in November 2020 that Kriti Sanon has been cast to essay the role; her inclusion into the film was confirmed by the makers four months later in March 2021.<sup>[22]</sup> Sunny Singh, who joined the sets in February 2021, played Lakshmana, with the alias name being Shesh.<sup>[23]</sup>

## Filming

Motion capture shoot for *Adipurush* begun on 19 January 2021.<sup>[24]</sup> Muhurtam shot and formal launch was done on 2 February 2021 in Mumbai, India.<sup>[25]</sup> Principal photography of the movie began that day, as informed by the makers.<sup>[26][27]</sup> A massive fire accident took place at the filming location in Mumbai on the same day.<sup>[28]</sup> Duplicate sets were erected same wise due to the fire break-out.<sup>[29]</sup> In October 2021, Khan and Sanon wrapped up shoot.<sup>[30]</sup> On 10 November 2021, the filming was completed.<sup>[31][32]</sup>

## Music

The music for both the Hindi and Telugu versions of the film is composed by Ajay-Atul and Sachet-Parampara (noted). The first single titled "Jai Shri Ram" was released in its short version on 6 April 2023 on the occasion of Hanuman Jayanti. The full song was released on 20 May 2023 under the same name in Hindi and Telugu alongside dubbed versions (Tamil, Kannada and Malayalam).<sup>[33]</sup> The second single titled "Ram Siya Ram" (in Hindi) and "Ram Sita Ram" (in Telugu) was released on 29 May 2023.<sup>[34][35]</sup>

All lyrics are written by Manoj Muntashir

### Hindi track listing

No.	Title	Singer(s)	Length
1.	"Jai Shri Ram"	Atul Gogavale, Gwen Dias, Shazneen Arethna, Crystal Sequeira, Marianne D'Cruz Aiman, Umesh Joshi, Swapnil Godbole, Janardan Dhatri, Vivek Naik, Santosh Bote, Devendra Chitnis, Yash Kulkarni, Mangesh Shirke, Anil Bhilare, Gaurav Dandekar, Siddhant	3:32

<i>Adipurush</i>	
Soundtrack album by Ajay-Atul and Sachet-Parampara	
Released	6 June 2023
Recorded	2021-2022
Genre	Feature film soundtrack
Length	18:22
Language	Hindi Telugu
Label	T-Series
Official audio1	
Adipurush (Hindi) - Full Jukebox ( <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WC0td14m3ZY&amp;pp">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WC0td14m3ZY&amp;pp</a> ) on YouTube	
Official audio2	
Adipurush (Telugu) - Full Jukebox ( <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vWKzIP51Qv8&amp;pp">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vWKzIP51Qv8&amp;pp</a> ) on YouTube	

Karawde, Rishikesh Patil,  
Ameya Paranjape, Vidit  
Patankar, Yashad Ghanekar,  
Prasad Manjrekar

2. "Shivoham"	<u>Ajay Gogavale</u>	3:56
3. "Tu Hai Sheetal Dhaara"	<u>Sonu Nigam</u> , <u>Shreya Ghoshal</u>	3:21
4. "Huppa Huiya"	<u>Sukhwinder Singh</u>	3:43
5. "Ram Siya Ram" (Music by Sachet–Parampara)	<u>Sachet–Parampara</u>	3:50
<b>Total length:</b>		<b>18:22</b>

All lyrics are written by Ramajogayya Sastry

### Telugu track listing

No.	Title	Singer(s)	Length
1.	"Jai Shri Ram"	Gwen Dias, Shazneen Arethna, Crystal Sequeira, Marianne D'Cruz Aiman, Umesh Joshi, Swapnil Godbole, Janardan Dhatrak, Vivek Naik, Santosh Bote, Devendra Chitnis, Yash Kulkarni, Mangesh Shirke, Anil Bhilare, Gaurav Dandekar, Siddhant Karawde, Rishikesh Patil, Ameya Paranjape, Vidit Patankar, Yashad Ghanekar, Prasad Manjrekar	3:32
2.	"Shivoham"	<u>Haricharan</u>	3:56
3.	"Priya Mithunam"	<u>Karthik</u> , <u>Shweta Mohan</u>	3:21
4.	"Huppa Huiya"	<u>Sukhwinder Singh</u>	3:43
5.	"Ram Sita Ram" (Music by Sachet–Parampara)	Karthik	3:50
<b>Total length:</b>			<b>18:22</b>

## Release

The film's teaser was released on 2 October 2022 on the occasion of Gandhi Jayanti.<sup>[36]</sup> The teaser received heavy criticism for its visual effects and CGI.<sup>[37][38][39]</sup> The film's trailer was released on 9 May 2023,<sup>[40][41]</sup> and was seen as an improvement from the teaser.<sup>[42][43]</sup> An action trailer was released on 6 June 2023.<sup>[44]</sup>

## Theatrical

*Adipurush* was theatrically released on 16 June 2023<sup>[45]</sup> in Hindi and Telugu, along with dubbed versions in Tamil, Kannada, Malayalam.<sup>[46]</sup> It was previously scheduled to release on 11 August 2022, but was later postponed due to the release of *Laal Singh Chaddha*. The film was postponed again to avoid a clash with *Veera Simha Reddy* and *Waltair Veerayya* and also to rework the visual effects, due to the severe backlash after the release of the teaser trailer.<sup>[47][48][49]</sup>

The film was set to premiere at the [Tribeca Festival](#) in the [Escape From Tribeca](#) section on 13 June 2023,<sup>[50]</sup> but was cancelled by the makers later. The film was supposed to be played at the Film Festival on 15 and 17 June, but its world premiere, 3 days before the world release had been put down.<sup>[14]</sup>

The film was also initially scheduled for an [IMAX](#) release, which was cancelled later due to the simultaneous release and advance booking of screens for *The Flash*; the IMAX rulebook does not allow two IMAX films to release on the same day.<sup>[51]</sup>

The film was initially stopped from release in [Nepal](#) citing an issue with a specific dialogue in the film where [Goddess Janaki](#) is referred to as the "daughter of India". The controversial dialogue was later removed from the film as per the media reports. Vedic records show Goddess Sita was born in [Mithila](#) but the site is controversial. Indians believe that Goddess Sita was born in part of [Mithila](#) which falls in India, the present day [Sitamarhi](#) in Bihar. Where as Nepalese believe that Goddess Sita was born in part of [Mithila](#) which falls in Nepal, the present day [Janakpur](#) in [Madhesh Province](#).<sup>[52][53]</sup> This further resulted in all Indian films getting banned from releasing in the [Kathmandu Metropolitan area](#).<sup>[54]</sup>

## Home media

The film was premiered on [Netflix](#) from 11 August 2023 in Hindi. The film was also premiered on [Amazon Prime Video](#) from 11 August 2023 in Telugu and dubbed versions of Tamil, Kannada and Malayalam languages.<sup>[55][56]</sup>

## Game

*Epic Quiz : Adipurush*, a [quiz](#) and [adventure mobile video game](#) was developed by [Hungama Games](#) as a [tie-in](#) release for the film.<sup>[57]</sup>

## Reception

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### Critical response

On the [review aggregator](#) website [Rotten Tomatoes](#), 7% of 14 critics' reviews are positive, with an average rating of 4/10.<sup>[58]</sup>

[Shubhra Gupta](#) of *The Indian Express* gave *Adipurush* 1.5/5, criticising the screenplay and visuals, and described the film as "a series of clunky computer graphics, bathed in Bollywoodese."<sup>[59]</sup> Awarding the same rating, [Saibal Chatterjee](#) of *NDTV* called the film a "weird blend of fantasy and fallacy".<sup>[60]</sup> [Rediff.com](#)'s [Deepa Gahlot](#) dismissed it as a "travesty", and criticised the dialogues and the visual effects.<sup>[61]</sup> Likewise, [Simon Abrams](#) of [RogerEbert.com](#) criticised the writing and visuals of the film, saying "...it all looks cheap and uninspired."<sup>[62]</sup>

[Scroll.in](#)'s [Nandini Ramnath](#) wrote that the adaptation "lacks [...] a sense of wonderment."<sup>[63]</sup> [Avinash Lohana](#) of *Pinkvilla* rated the film 2 out of 5 stars and found it to be a "sincere attempt, but a not so sincere adaptation of Ramayana."

Bollywood Hungama found *Adipurush* to be a "well-made entertainer with a big-screen appeal".<sup>[64]</sup> Renuka Vyavahare of *The Times of India* gave the film 3 out of 5 stars, writing "This one's a sincere attempt that gets a tad overwhelmed by its ambition of handling a story of this magnitude".<sup>[65]</sup> In a mixed review, Anindita Mukherjee of *India Today* stated that "All in all, we can't put a stamp on all the hype that *Adipurush* has been gathering, but it surely deserves one watch at the theatres. For Prabhas, if nothing else".<sup>[66]</sup>

## Box office

After a strong opening weekend, *Adipurush* had a sharp decline in collections on Monday,<sup>[67]</sup> and dropped further on Tuesday.<sup>[68]</sup> After 14 days of release, *News18 Telugu* reported that the film has collected a total worldwide gross of ₹388.35 crore, with a distributors' share of ₹191.42 crore.<sup>[69]</sup> Although the production team announced that the film has grossed ₹450 crore worldwide, the trade figures were differed with *News18 Telugu* reporting that the film has not even grossed more than ₹300 crore in India.<sup>[70]</sup>

## Controversies

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### Allahbad High Court on Adipurush

Slamming the filmmakers for portraying religious characters including Lord Rama and Lord Hanuman in an objectionable manner, the Allahabad High Court observed why the tolerance level of a particular religion (referring to Hindus) was being put to the test by them.

The Court also noted that all the characters of Ramayana, who are worshipped by the people are largely shown in a pathetic way. When the Court questioned as to what made the CBFC pass such a film and that it committed a blunder by certifying such a film.<sup>[71][72]</sup>

A Public Interest Litigation was filed on 23 June 2023, seeking to stop broadcast of the film on streaming platforms.<sup>[73]</sup> The petition alleges that the film hurts the religious sentiments of a "large section of society" due to the kind of dialogues used by the characters in the film.<sup>[74]</sup>

### Reactions after the teaser release

Right after the teaser was released in October 2022, the makers were criticised for its poor VFX, provided Saif Ali Khan's look as Raavana with a beard made social media users question if he was playing Ravana, Babur or Alauddin Khalji in the film. BJP spokesperson Malavika Avinash criticised Om Raut for 'misrepresentation' of Ramayana, depicting Raavana with "blue eye makeup and is wearing leather jackets".<sup>[75]</sup> BJP Home Minister Narottam Mishra criticised the teaser with comments on Hanuman's look in the film and stated to write a letter to Om Raut to remove all such scenes from the film. If not removed, he will consider legal action.<sup>[76]</sup> Actor Arun Mandola also stated his views as director (Raut) failed to understand the Indian audience and accused the makers for copying scenes from *Game of Thrones*, *Planet of the Apes* and *The Jungle Book*.<sup>[77]</sup> Prem Sagar, son of director Ramanand Sagar also criticised the teaser, stating if the project was offered, he would have rejected due to "his upbringing and culture". He further added, "How can you stop anyone from creating anything?".<sup>[78]</sup> Actress Dipika Chikhlia, who portrayed Sita on Doordarshan's Ramayan also criticised the teaser, stating she did not approve the VFX and there has

been altercations to the epic.<sup>[79]</sup> Actor Sunil Lahri, who played Lakshman in Ramanand Sagar's television adaptation of the Ramayana, commented in lieu of the VFX and its depiction, that nonsense in the name of religion will never be tolerated.<sup>[80]</sup>

Amidst of the controversy, director Om Raut defended the teaser and kept his views that he was unhappy with the reactions from audiences and other celebrities for criticising the teasers and story and stated its not made for cellphones.<sup>[81][82]</sup> Actress Kriti Sanon also defended the teasers, stating, "that the film is not just about the teaser but there is a lot more to it."<sup>[83]</sup> After the criticism, the makers asked for some time for improving the VFX and its quality, which may cost an additional ₹100 crore, as per reports.<sup>[84][85]</sup>

## Reactions on the film's posters

Aftermath of the teaser controversy, it was stated that the film's poster was also copied from an animation firm Vaanar Sena Studios and they claimed that they were not given any credit for the same.<sup>[86]</sup> Also the studio claimed that the poster of Adipurush was a direct rip-off of their animated film *Lord Shiva*.<sup>[87]</sup>

In March 2023, a new poster was released, which created another controversy. The new poster was criticised for looking like an "animated film".<sup>[88]</sup> Another poster was also criticised for hurting the religious sentiments as according to the Ramcharitmanas, all the characters of the Ramayana wear a sacred thread called Janeu, which is worn by those who follow the Hindu religion, however in the posters it was not worn by the characters played by Prabhas, Sunny Singh and Devdatta Nage.<sup>[89][90]</sup>

## Dialogues of Adipurush

Manoj Muntashir wrote the dialogues of Om Raut's film *Adipurush*. The dialogues of the film were criticised for being too flippant or unserious and containing modern-day slang and lingo in a setting from centuries ago. Lines like "jalegī tere bāpa kī", "terī buā kā bagīcā hai kyā", and "Laṁkā lagā derṁge" being uttered by gods did not go down well with a large section of the viewers as the whole story of the film has destroyed and modified every aspect of the core values of the characters, their language and each authentic event. The petition filled in the high court demanded that the film malign the image of deities by using foul language in the dialogues spoken by the actors portraying Hindu gods. "They cannot be allowed to go scot-free in the name of Freedom of Speech and Expression."<sup>[91][74]</sup>

Prem Sagar, son of director Ramanand Sagar, said, "It might be a misjudgement that the younger generation would like it. But you can't do this with the audience. Don't say it is based on Valmiki Ramayan, give it any other name. Make it a fantasy film. But if you're making Ramayan then you cannot hurt the sentiments. People watch this with devotion".<sup>[92]</sup> His brother, Moti Sagar, too felt that the makers could have been more 'careful' in their approach towards the epic. "Certain dialogues, which I am reading on the news and on Twitter, I can say they could have been careful," he told PTI.<sup>[93]</sup>

One of the lines in the film, which refers to Sita as "Bhārata kī beṭī", has caused anger among the people of Nepal. This is because Sita is believed to have been born in Janakpur, which is located in present-day Nepal. Although the filmmakers agreed to remove that particular dialogue from the film, another inaccurate statement about the sovereignty of Nepal has further infuriated the Nepalese people. In an interview on Aaj Tak, Manoj attempted to dismiss the claims of the Nepalese people by incorrectly stating that Nepal was a part of "Bharat" until 1904<sup>[94]</sup> and mentioned that it separated from "Bharat". Manoj has been accused of misrepresenting historical facts, leading to calls for a ban on all Hindi films in Nepal.<sup>[95]</sup>



Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Priyanka Chaturvedi criticised the makers for allegedly using "pedestrian dialogues" in the film. She also demanded an apology from the film's makers and said that the dialogues were disrespectful to the characters of the Hindu epic Ramayana.<sup>[96]</sup> Similarly, Chhattisgarh CM Bhupesh Baghel alleged that dialogues in the film are "objectionable and indecent" and questioned the "silence" of political parties which call themselves the custodian of religion, an apparent jibe at the BJP. When asked by reporters whether the state government will ban this film, Baghel said, "The government will think about it (ban) if people will raise a demand in this direction".<sup>[97]</sup>

Responding to the criticism, Manoj Muntashir defended his work. In an interview with Republic World, he said, "It is not an error. It is a very meticulous thought process that has gone into writing the dialogues for Bajrang Bali and for all the characters. We have made it simple because we have to understand one thing if there are multiple characters in a film, all cannot speak the same language. There has to be a kind of diversion, a kind of division."

Muntashir also mentioned, "When our grandmothers narrated the tales of Ramayana, they used this language. The dialogue that you mentioned, priests and narrators used to say that in the same way I have written. I'm not the first one to write this dialogue, it's already there."<sup>[98][99]</sup>

However, later he announced that it had been decided that some lines of the dialogue in the film would be altered. In a statement on Twitter, he concluded, "I can give countless arguments in favour of my dialogues, but this will not reduce your pain. Me and the producer-director of the film have decided that some of the dialogues which are hurting you, We'll revise them, and they'll be added to the film this week. May Shri Ram bless you all!"<sup>[100]</sup>

Vivek Agnihotri said to Times "When you make something you don't believe in, just because aajkal yeh chal raha hai, you are definitely going to go wrong. When you pick up stories of faith, either you yourself should have 100% conviction or you should be well versed in the subject like a historian, but unfortunately, no one does that in India."

He also added to his statement that

someone comes on screen and says, Hey I'm God, it doesn't make you God. If you are being driven home drunk every night, you cannot turn around tomorrow and say I'm God, believe me. Nobody is going to believe that. People are not idiot.<sup>[101]</sup> "

## **Backtracking and making contradictory statements**

In a video, which went viral on social media, Muntashir said: "If people think we are trying to modernise the Ramayan, I want to tell them that not at all. We have presented the Ramayan just like how people heard in stories during their childhood." In a more recent interview, he said, "The film's name is Adipurush. We have not made the Ramayan; we are just inspired by it," he said.<sup>[102][103]</sup>

## **Claiming that Lord Hanuman is 'not a god'**

In another interview with Aaj Tak, Muntashir said, "Lord Hanuman is not God but a mere devotee. We made him God because his devotion had that power."<sup>[104]</sup> This statement led to a political slugfest, where the AAP and Congress attacked the governing BJP for blessing the film whose makers don't consider Bajrang Bali as God.<sup>[105]</sup>

While the Shiva Purana specifically refers to Hanuman as an 'incarnation' of Shiva, other Puranas and scriptures provide alternative perspectives. According to these sources, Bajrangbali is commonly regarded as the spiritual son of Vayu, the deity of wind, or as an incarnation of Vayu himself. In some instances, Hanuman is also identified as an avatar of Rudra, another name associated with Vayu.<sup>[106]</sup>

## Ban in Nepal

After the release of the film, a dialogue in the film referring to Sita as the "daughter of India" created a controversy in Nepal. The Mayor of Kathmandu, Balen Shah banned the film, stating that the birthplace of Sita was shown in the film as being in India rather than Nepal.<sup>[107][108]</sup> After the film was banned in Kathmandu, the film was also banned in Pokhara. Police personnel were deployed across 17 halls in Kathmandu to ensure that no Hindi film was screened, as the dialogues in the film remained unchanged.<sup>[109]</sup>

However, A court in Nepal lifted the ban on Hindi films in various regions of the country. The court asked the authorities to not halt the screening of Hindi films including *Adipurush* in the cinemas of Nepal. The judgment was not taken well by Kathmandu Mayor Balendra Shah, who first imposed the ban. He said that he is ready to face any punishment but will not allow the screening of the film.<sup>[110]</sup>

Banning only this film in the Kathmandu municipality while it runs in other parts of the country and abroad will establish a misleading fact. So screening of any Indian film will be prohibited from tomorrow [Monday] in Kathmandu municipality unless the objectionable part is removed from the film.

Balen Shah wrote on social media.<sup>[107]</sup>

## FIR

On 18 June 2023, Akhil Bharatiya Hindu Mahasabha lodged an FIR with the Hazratganj police against the producers and cast. In his complaint, Hindu Mahasabha national spokesperson Chaturvedi said that the film was a deliberate attempt to insult Hindu sentiments by distorting the images of Hindu gods with offensive dialogues, and costumes.<sup>[111][112]</sup>

## See also

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- *Ram Setu*, 2022 film involving Adam's Bridge

## Notes

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- While *Adipurush* literally translates to "first man", Raut interprets it as "best man" in the context of the film.<sup>[7]</sup>

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