

The Daily News Line by Faraz



RAPPER SEAN DIDDY SENTENCED

Sean 'Diddy' Combs sentenced to more than four years in prison on prostitution-related charges. Federal prosecutors had pushed for a jail term of 11 years and three months of a possible 20 after music mogul's conviction.

A New York federal judge has sentenced Sean "Diddy" Combs to four years and two months in prison following his conviction this summer on federal prostitution-related charges.

The sentence, handed down on Friday, came after a federal jury in July acquitted the 55-year-old music mogul of the most serious charges against him – racketeering conspiracy and sex trafficking – but found him guilty of two counts of transportation to engage in prostitution. Each count carried a maximum sentence of 10 years.

Combs, who had pleaded not guilty to all of the charges brought against him, has been held at the Brooklyn Metropolitan Detention Center since his arrest in September 2024. The 13 months he served in custody heading into Friday's hearing count toward his 50-month sentence, leaving him with about three more years in prison to serve. He was also ordered to pay a \$500,000 fine, and the judge ordered five years of supervised release after he leaves prison.

Combs's lawyers had requested a sentence of no more than 14 months in prison, which, given time already served, would have allowed him to walk free before the end of the year.

Federal prosecutors, however, pushed for a significantly longer sentence, asking the court to impose a sentence of at least 135 months (11 years and three months) and a \$500,000 fine. In their filing, the prosecutors described Combs as "unrepentant" and said that "his history and characteristics demonstrate years of abuse and violence". The US probation department recommended a sentence of five to seven years.



Before learning his sentence, Combs addressed the court, and apologized to his former girlfriends, his family, "all the victims of domestic violence" and his community and called his conduct at the center of the case "disgusting, shameful and sick".

"No matter what anybody says, I know that I'm truly sorry for it all," he said.

"Your honor, I know that the prosecution wants you to make an example of me," Combs said. "I just want you to think about making an example of what a person can do if they get another chance."

His remarks followed a lengthy hearing where five of Combs's lawyers, as well as his six adult children and others, delivered remarks.

Since the jury delivered its verdict in July, Judge Arun Subramanian has denied two bail requests from Combs's legal team and rejected a motion to overturn the convictions.

During Combs's trial, which began 12 May, federal prosecutors accused the Bad Boy Records founder of using his power, fame, wealth and influence, as well as violence, threats and blackmail, to coerce two of his former girlfriends into participating in what were described as drug-fueled sexual marathons with male escorts, referred to as "freak-offs" or "hotel nights", which they said Combs orchestrated, watched, masturbated to and sometimes filmed.

Prosecutors alleged that for more than two decades, Combs led a criminal enterprise – aided by employees and associates – that engaged in and worked to cover up a range of crimes including sex trafficking, kidnapping, forced labor, drug distribution, arson and bribery, enticement to engage in prostitution and obstruction of justice.

The jury heard from more than 30 witnesses called by the prosecution, including two of Combs's former girlfriends, multiple former employees and assistants, male escorts, hotel staff, law enforcement agents and public figures including rapper Kid Cudi and singer Dawn Richard and others. Combs did not testify.

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Historic First: Sanae Takaichi to Become Japan's First Female Premier

Takaichi's election marks a historic milestone as Japan's first female leader but signals a shift toward nationalist policies.



Japan's ruling Liberal Democratic Party elected conservative nationalist Sanae Takaichi as its leader, positioning her to become the country's first female prime minister. Takaichi, an advocate of expansive fiscal stimulus and a harder line toward China,

defeated moderate rival Shinjiro Koizumi in a vote that could reshape Japan's economic and foreign policy.

- The LDP elected Sanae Takaichi, 64, as party leader, making her the likely successor to outgoing Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba.

- Takaichi defeated moderate Shinjiro Koizumi, 44, who had campaigned on generational change and economic reform.

- She inherits a party in crisis after the LDP lost its majority in both houses of parliament under Ishiba.

- Takaichi pledged an expansionary fiscal agenda, criticized Bank of Japan rate hikes, and suggested revising the U.S.-Japan trade deal.

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LOTUS TOWER REACHES NEW HEIGHTS OF REVENUE UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT

The Colombo Lotus Tower Management Company (CLTMC) has reported a 31% surge in revenue within a year since the new management team took charge, marking a major turnaround for one of Sri Lanka's landmark attractions.

Speaking at a media briefing, CLTMC Chairman Shirantha Peries and CEO Dr. Chamaru de Alwis said the company recorded Rs. 1.43 billion in revenue for the eight months ending August 2025, compared to the same period in 2024. Gross profit climbed 77% to Rs. 786.9 million, while profit before tax soared 192% to Rs. 539.9 million, reflecting improved efficiency and strict financial discipline.

"This strong performance reflects disciplined management, prudent decision-making, and effective cost controls," Peries said,

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And after 13 hours of deliberation across three days, the jury returned the mixed verdict and acquitted Combs of the racketeering and sex trafficking charges, which could have led to a life sentence, but found him guilty on the prostitution-related counts stemming from the federal Mann Act.

Central to the prosecution's case were the accounts from the two former girlfriends: singer Cassandra "Cassie" Ventura and a woman who testified under the pseudonym of "Jane".

Both women described the so-called "freak offs" in graphic detail and alleged that Combs coerced them into participating.

Ventura testified that during her and Combs's 11-year long on-and-off relationship, Combs subjected her to physical, sexual and emotional abuse and blackmail. Jurors were repeatedly shown the 2016 hotel surveillance footage of Combs attacking Ventura in a hotel hallway.



"Jane" testified that she, too, was pressured and threatened by Combs into sex acts, and also recounted an violence altercation with Combs that left her with welts on her head.

Throughout the trial, Combs's legal team acknowledged past instances of domestic violence, but denied that any coercion or sex trafficking took place and maintained that all sexual activity was consensual, characterizing them as part of a "swingers lifestyle".

Earlier this week, ahead of the sentencing, Ventura submitted a victim impact statement, urging the court to hand down the sentence suggested by the prosecutors.

"While the jury did not seem to understand or believe that I engaged in freak-offs because of the force and coercion the defendant used against me, I know that is the truth, and his sentence should reflect the reality of the evidence and my lived experience as a victim," Ventura wrote.

She said that she still has "nightmares and flashbacks on a regular, everyday basis, and continue to require psychological care to cope with my past".

"My worries that Sean Combs or his associates will come after me and my family is my reality," she wrote to the court. "I am so scared that if he walks free, his first actions will be swift retribution towards me and others who spoke up about his abuse at trial.

Before sentencing Combs on Friday, Subramanian also delivered remarks in court and said that Combs "abused the power and control with women you professed to love".

"You abused them physically, emotionally and psychologically," he said.

Subramanian said that "a substantial sentence must be given" to "send a message to abusers and victims alike that abuse against women is met with real accountability".

After delivering the sentence, Subramanian acknowledged the victims who had come forward to testify in the case.

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"We heard you," he said. "I am proud of you for coming to the court to tell the world what really happened."

Ventura's attorney, Doug Wigdor, said in a statement that the sentence "recognizes the impact of the serious offenses he committed".

"While nothing can undo the trauma caused by Combs ... we are confident that with the support of her family and friends, Ms Ventura will continue healing knowing that her bravery and fortitude have been an inspiration to so many," Wigdor's statement said.

Attorney Arick Fudali, who represents Richard and another Combs accuser identified as John Doe, told the Guardian outside the courthouse Friday that he was "a bit surprised" with how Subramanian sentenced Combs below the five years and 10 months to seven years and three months recommended by probation officials.

"But ultimately I believe the judge gave a very well reasoned sentencing, and now on behalf of my clients, I look forward to pursuing our civil case against him," Fudali said.

Fudali also said he was encouraged with how Subramanian focused on Combs's victims during his presentation in court on Friday.

Outside of his criminal case, Combs still faces more than 50 civil lawsuits accusing him of sexual abuse and other misconduct. He has denied all allegations in those filings.

Sanae Takaichi...

WHY IT MATTERS

- Takaichi's election marks a historic milestone as Japan's first female leader but signals a shift toward nationalist policies.
- Her support for "Abenomics"-style stimulus could strain Japan's public finances and delay fiscal consolidation.
- Nationalist stances—such as visits to Yasukuni Shrine and calls for a security partnership with Taiwan, may escalate regional tensions.
- Her willingness to renegotiate the U.S. trade deal could test relations with the Trump administration.

IMPLICATIONS

- Economic Policy: Takaichi's stimulus plans may weaken the yen and delay BOJ rate hikes, affecting global markets.
- Regional Relations: Her nationalist rhetoric could heighten friction with China and South Korea over history and security.
- U.S.-Japan Ties: Trade and defense cooperation may evolve, with Takaichi seeking to balance alliance management with sovereign interests.
- Domestic Politics: As the LDP struggles to retain voters, Takaichi's leadership will determine whether the party can rebuild public trust.

SRI LANKA FACES ADDITIONAL DEBT BURDEN – IF ECONOMY GROWS

Sri Lanka's recent sovereign debt restructuring carries significant upside risks—if the economy outperforms expectations, the nation may be locked into additional payments of US\$150 million to US\$270 million annually from 2028 through 2038, according to a new IMF working paper on "Sri Lanka's Sovereign Debt Restructuring: Lessons from Complex Processes."

The root of this exposure lies in macro-linked or state-contingent bonds (SCDIs) issued during the restructuring process. These instruments tie future debt payments to the country's economic performance. In Sri Lanka's case, triggering events depend on achieving minimum thresholds for dollar-denominated GDP and cumulative real growth over multiple years. Once triggered,

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Lotus Tower...

adding that the team remains focused on enhancing visitor experience and operational excellence at South Asia's tallest self-supported structure.

Since taking over in October 2024, the new management comprising over 120 professionals has prioritised safety, service quality, and profitability. The leadership acted swiftly after a tragic incident last year to reinforce safety protocols, including installing steel mesh barriers, expanding CCTV surveillance, and increasing security staff across key zones.



A key milestone has been digital transformation, including a fully digital ticketing platform replacing manual systems, ensuring transparency and convenience. A smart parking solution with real-time monitoring is set for launch within two months.

The management has also pursued legal action to safeguard the Tower's commercial rights and introduced measures to lease underutilised spaces, enhancing income streams. "Every square foot counts as a potential investment," said Dr. de Alwis, noting that the Tower is evolving into a vibrant hub for leisure, technology, and business.

Looking ahead, CLTMC is preparing several high-profile projects. These include a Rs. 100 million Aquarium Café venture, Sri Lanka's first bungee jump attraction expected to be the world's highest tower-based jump and the repositioning of luxury suites on the 28th floor as premium accommodation for high-end visitors.

Additionally, a 42,000 sq. ft. warehouse redevelopment is under discussion with multinational investors, potentially attracting new foreign direct investment.

Peries said the management remains committed to building Lotus Tower into South Asia's premier hub for education, technology, and entertainment, ensuring it continues to serve as a national asset that delivers both financial value and world-class experiences

SRI LANKA FACES ADDITIONAL DEBT BURDEN...

higher payments become a fixed feature regardless of whether performance weakens later.

Specifically, the IMF report outlines that three scenario triggers are in play: if Sri Lanka's average USD GDP between 2025 and 2027 exceeds thresholds of US\$94 billion, US\$99 billion, or US\$107 billion, and if real GDP growth cumulatively over 2024-27 surpasses 11.5 percent, then the higher payment tier will be activated permanently (for a decade).

The IMF underscores that while state-contingent debt terms are designed to share upside gains with creditors and mitigate risk under volatility, they also introduce complex new vulnerabilities. Once payments ratchet upward post-2028, they cannot be easily reversed—even in an economic downturn. Moreover, these instruments carry political risk: if higher payouts are perceived as socially unfair, they may become contentious domestically.



Although the IMF itself does not draft the detailed design of such bonds, the Fund plays a central role in assessing whether they are consistent with debt sustainability goals. Its evaluation framework (the Sovereign Risk and Debt Sustainability Framework, or SRDSF) uses large-scale simulations to test whether such arrangements would increase the likelihood of breaching key debt or financing targets under adverse or extreme scenarios.

In Sri Lanka's case, the IMF judged that the arrangement meets its internal criteria: the probability of breaching debt-to-GDP or gross financing needs thresholds stays within acceptable bounds, and even in the worst 10 percent of outcomes the additional burden remains relatively modest (at most 0.4 percent of GDP). Importantly, the additional annual payments are capped at about US\$250 million.

Still, the IMF cautions that no modelling can perfectly capture uncertainty, and residual risks remain.

Moreover, distinctions matter: some analysts argue the new bonds are not true state-contingent debt after 2027 beyond that point they function as standard fixed-coupon bonds, so future shocks may no longer modulate payments.

Sri Lanka has meanwhile posted strong recent performance: growth rebounded by approximately 5 percent in 2024, and revenue mobilization has surged, helping stabilize macro conditions.

The IMF has completed multiple reviews of its Extended Fund Facility for Sri Lanka, supporting the country's reform agenda and debt restructuring process.

But the broader picture is one of conditional relief: while Sri Lanka may benefit from significant debt relief under its deal, it is also exposed to higher debt service if performance is strong and that exposure may persist even through downturns.

The design of SCDIs thus offers a double-edged sword: sharing gains with creditors comes at the cost of locking in future risks.

As Sri Lanka moves toward restoring stability, its macro-debt trajectory remains intricately tied to both growth outcomes and the structural safeguards built into its debt instruments.

TRUMPS BEST OF 20 FOR A PEACEFUL GAZA

1. Gaza will be a deradicalised terror-free zone that does not pose a threat to its neighbours.

2. Gaza will be redeveloped for the benefit of the people of Gaza, who have suffered more than enough.

3. If both sides agree to this proposal, the war will immediately end. Israeli forces will withdraw to the agreed upon line to prepare for a hostage release. During this time, all military operations, including

aerial and artillery bombardment, will be suspended, and battle lines will remain frozen until conditions are met for the complete staged withdrawal.

4. Within 72 hours of Israel publicly accepting this agreement, all hostages, alive and deceased, will be returned.

5. Once all hostages are released,

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Israel will release 250 life sentence prisoners plus 1,700 Gazans who were detained after 7 October 2023, including all women and children detained in that context. For every Israeli hostage whose remains are released, Israel will release the remains of 15 deceased Gazans.

6. Once all hostages are returned, Hamas members who commit to peaceful co-existence and to decommission their weapons will be given amnesty. Members of Hamas who wish to leave Gaza will be provided safe passage to receiving countries.



7. Upon acceptance of this agreement, full aid will be immediately sent into the Gaza Strip. At a minimum, aid quantities will be consistent with what was included in the 19 January 2025 agreement regarding humanitarian aid, including rehabilitation of infrastructure (water, electricity, sewage), rehabilitation of hospitals and bakeries, and entry of necessary equipment to remove rubble and open roads.

8. Entry of distribution and aid in the Gaza Strip will proceed without interference from the two parties through the United Nations and its agencies, and the Red Crescent, in addition to other international institutions not associated in any manner with either party. Opening the Rafah crossing in both directions will be subject to the same mechanism implemented under 19 January 2025 agreement.

9. Gaza will be governed under the temporary transitional governance of a technocratic, apolitical Palestinian committee, responsible for delivering the day-to-day running of public services and municipalities for the people in Gaza. This committee will be made up of qualified Palestinians and international experts, with oversight and supervision by a new international transitional body, the "Board of Peace," which will be headed and chaired by President Donald J. Trump, with other members and heads of state to be announced, including Former Prime Minister Tony Blair. This body will set the framework and handle the funding for the redevelopment of Gaza until such time as the Palestinian Authority has completed its reform programme, as outlined in various proposals,

including President Trump's peace plan in 2020 and the Saudi-French proposal, and can securely and effectively take back control of Gaza. This body will call on best international standards to create modern and efficient governance that serves the people of Gaza and is conducive to attracting investment.

10. A Trump economic development plan to rebuild and energise Gaza will be created by convening a panel of experts who have helped birth some of the thriving modern miracle cities in the Middle East. Many thoughtful investment proposals and exciting development ideas have been crafted by well-meaning international groups, and will be considered to synthesize the security and governance frameworks to attract and facilitate these investments that will create jobs, opportunity, and hope for future Gaza.

11. A special economic zone will be established with preferred tariff and access rates to be negotiated with participating countries.

12. No one will be forced to leave Gaza, and those who wish to leave will be free to do so and free to return. We will encourage people to stay and offer them the opportunity to build a better Gaza.

13. Hamas and other factions agree to not have any role in the governance of Gaza, directly, indirectly, or in any form. All military, terror, and offensive infrastructure, including tunnels and weapon production facilities, will be destroyed and not rebuilt. There will be a process of demilitarisation of Gaza under the supervision of independent monitors, which will include placing weapons permanently beyond use through an agreed process of decommissioning, and supported by an internationally funded buy back and reintegration programme all verified by the independent monitors. New Gaza will be fully committed to building a prosperous economy and to peaceful coexistence with their neighbours.

14. A guarantee will be provided by regional partners to ensure that Hamas, and the factions, comply with their obligations and that New Gaza poses no threat to its neighbours or its people.

15. The United States will work with Arab and international partners to develop a temporary International Stabilisation Force (ISF) to immediately deploy in Gaza. The ISF will train and provide support to vetted Palestinian police forces in Gaza, and will consult with Jordan and Egypt who have extensive experience in this field. This force will be the long-term internal security solution.

The ISF will work with Israel and Egypt to help secure border areas, along with newly trained Palestinian police forces. It is critical to prevent munitions from entering Gaza and to facilitate the rapid and secure flow of goods to rebuild and revitalize Gaza. A deconfliction mechanism will be agreed upon by the parties.

16. Israel will not occupy or annex Gaza. As the ISF establishes control and stability, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) will withdraw based on standards, milestones, and timeframes linked to demilitarization that will be agreed upon between the IDF, ISF, the guarantors, and the United States, with the objective of a secure Gaza that no longer poses a threat to Israel, Egypt, or its citizens. Practically, the IDF will progressively hand over the Gaza territory it occupies to the ISF according to an agreement they will make with the transitional authority until they are withdrawn completely from Gaza, save for a security perimeter presence that will remain until Gaza is properly secure from any resurgent terror threat.

17. In the event Hamas delays or rejects this proposal, the above, including the scaled-up aid operation, will proceed in the terror-free areas handed over from the IDF to the ISF.



18. An interfaith dialogue process will be established based on the values of tolerance and peaceful co-existence to try and change mindsets and narratives of Palestinians and Israelis by emphasizing the benefits that can be derived from peace.

19. While Gaza re-development advances and when the PA reform programme is faithfully carried out, the conditions may finally be in place for a credible pathway to Palestinian self-determination and statehood, which we recognise as the aspiration of the Palestinian people.

20. The United States will establish a dialogue between Israel and the Palestinians to agree on a political horizon for peaceful and prosperous co-existence.