

- BOLLYWOOD
- HOLLYWOOD
- SPORTS
- CRICKET

Mid Week ENTERTAINMENT



**PANAMA PAPERS LEAK CASE:
AISHWARYA RAI BACHCHAN
GETS MOBBED AS SHE LEAVES
ED OFFICE |19**



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SHEHNAAZ GILL POSES WITH LUCIFER IN NEW POSTER, FANS SAY 'IT WILL BE FAB'



SHEHNAAZ GILL SHARED A POSTER ON TWITTER THAT LEFT HER FANS QUITE CURIOUS. ON THE POSTER, SHEHNAAZ WAS SEEN POSING WITH LUCIFER STAR TOM ELLIS.

Television actor Shehnaaz Gill got fans excited on Tuesday evening as she shared a poster of the Netflix show Lucifer with a desi twist. The poster features the show's lead actor Tom Ellis along with Shehnaaz. Shehnaaz shared the poster on Twitter with the caption, "Asli Big Boss toh yahaan hai." As soon as the poster dropped, Shehnaaz's fans went gaga. "What a big gift. Welcome back TO TWITTER Star #ShehnaazGill. Excited For THIS One," wrote a fan in the comments section. Another fan wrote, "Excitement mein confusion horahi hai... looking forward to whatever this is because I'm sure it will be fab." But soon, fans realised that this wasn't a new project but a slew of posters that Netflix India shared on their social media handles.

KAREENA KAPOOR KHAN: 'SAIF SPOILS TAIMUR SO MUCH THAT IT ANNOYS ME SOMETIMES'



Bollywood star Kareena Kapoor Khan is not your regular strict mother, but the actor feels that she sometimes has to step in as her husband and actor Saif Ali Khan is too laid back with their two sons, Taimur Ali Khan and Jehangir Ali Khan. In a recent interview with Cosmopolitan, Kareena said that Saif indulges Taimur a bit too much perhaps, and that is why she has to play the 'bad cop' sometimes. "I have to inculcate discipline a little more as Saif spoils Taimur so much that it annoys me sometimes. So, Saif would want to watch a movie with Taimur at 10 pm and I would have to step in and say no because it is his bedtime," said Kareena Kapoor. Kareena added that now with Jehangir in the mix, things are that much more difficult to tackle but she manages to keep the discipline in the house. The actor stated that she is very particular about some things in both the kids' routine, especially with regard to their meals and bedtime. Bebo concluded the chat by saying that she wants her children to grow up with some 'sense of discipline'.

PEOPLE WOKE UP TO THE ACTOR IN ME, ENDED UP SIGNING THE MAXIMUM NUMBER OF FILMS



Actor Kriti Sanon says she had a professionally fulfilling year, where she signed the most number of films in her career and also saw a turn around in terms of the audience perception towards her. Sanon had two releases this year, Mimi, which featured her as a young woman, who opts to be a surrogate mother, and the comedy drama Hum Do Hamare Do, co-starring Rajkumar Rao, Paresh Rawal and Ratna Pathak Shah. With Mimi, Kriti Sanon saw her career-best reviews, with many lauding her for shouldering the Laxman Utekar-film with ease. In an interview with PTI, the actor said her performance in the film, which she described as her "toughest" project till date, showcased her craft to the audience as well as several makers within the industry. "I felt the audience shift with the response which came my way. A lot of people woke up to the actor side of me, which is something every artiste desires. Not just the audience, even people in the industry, when you talk to someone, or walk into a meeting, you feel that shift in perception... I could sense that," Sanon said.

R ASHWIN ADMITS HE CONSIDERED RETIREMENT: 'A LOT OF PEOPLE WERE BACKED, WHY NOT ME?'

Prolonged injuries, lack of support and backing during the period between 2018-2020 forced India's star off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin to contemplate retirement. In an interview with ESPNCricinfo, Ashwin revealed that it was one of the most difficult times for him as a cricketer. The first phase, he said, was right after the England series in 2018, followed by abdomen tear in Australia later that year after the Adelaide Test. "Between 2018 and 2020, I contemplated giving up the sport at various points. I thought, 'I have put in a lot of effort, but it is not coming through.' The harder I tried, the farther it felt. Especially with athletic pubalgia and the patellar tendonitis - I used to bowl six balls and then I used to be gasping for breath. And there would be pain all over the place. So you needed to make adjustments. When the knee pain got excruciating, the next ball I would probably jump less. When I jumped less, obviously the force needs to be produced through the core and the back and the shoulders, so the pubalgia would act up. So the third ball I would be extra side-on to try to use the hips. By the time I was done with six balls, I would be like, 'I need a break here.'"



MALAIKA ARORA STUNS IN SEXY PEACH DRESS, SHARES SIZZLING HOT PHOTOS



19

SHWETA TIWARI BURNS THE INTERNET WITH HER SUNSHINE PICS, LOOKS RAVISHING IN YELLOW SAREE



21

ALIA BHATT STUNS IN GOLDEN-NUDE SABYASACHI LEHenga



22

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2ND ODI

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'BOWLING LIKE KAPIL DEV WAS MOST DIFFICULT ASPECT': RANVEER SINGH DELVES INTO '83' CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT



Bollywood actor Ranveer Singh, who will soon be seen portraying Kapil Dev, captain of the 1983 cricket World Cup-winning team, in the upcoming sports biopic '83', delved into the intricacies of portraying the character for the big screen. Helmed by director Kabir Khan, '83' revolves around India's historical 1983 cricket World Cup win. Talking about his role, the 'Padmaavat' actor stated that bowling like Kapil was the most difficult aspect of his character development. Ranveer said, "He has a very unique bowling action and his bio-mechanics are very unique to him. My body is very different from his so I had to transform my physicality drastically in order to achieve it. It took a long time, in fact, months to perfect the action. Initially, my body was too heavy because I was coming off of the shoot of 'Simmba'."

He further spoke about Balwinder Singh Sandhu, the legend of the 83-world cup who was also Ranveer's coach and said, "Our coach noticed that my body was too heavy and he said jab tu run-up mein aata hai toh tu aisa lagta hai ki pehelwan bowling karne aa raha hai. And he sent me away for a month just to change my physicality to bring it closer to Kapil's athleticism and then once I did that, I started making some headway." "I was playing cricket for 4 hours a day for 6 months and doing physical conditioning for 2 hours a day for those 6 months. Four months of prep and 2-3 months of shoot, I put in a lot of hours," added the actor.

RAJ KUNDRA-ARYAN KHAN TO PEARL V PURI, CELEB CONTROVERSIES OF 2021 THAT LEFT US SHOCKED



Shah Rukh Khan's son Aryan Khan's arrest in alleged drugs case
Bollywood's megastar Shah Rukh Khan and Gauri Khan's son Aryan Khan was arrested by the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) from a Goa-based cruise in an alleged drugs case on October 3. He was accused of the consumption and distribution of drugs. However, the probe agency failed to prove their allegations in court and Aryan was granted bail after spending 26 days in jail. Currently, he is out of jail and has been imposed with 14 conditions on him. Among other things, he is asked to not leave Mumbai without informing the agency and not to leave India without permission from the special NDPS court.

Shilpa Shetty Kundra's husband Raj Kundra's arrest in alleged pornography case
In July 2021, Shilpa Shetty's husband and businessman Raj Kundra was arrested in an alleged porn case by Mumbai Police. He was accused of creating and distributing porn films through an app. He was granted bail in September. Not just this, several actresses including Sheryn Chopra and Poonam Panday, also alleged that they were approached by Kundra for the adult content.

Jacqueline Fernandez, Nora Fatehi summoned by ED in Suresh Chandrashekar case
Actresses Jacqueline Fernandez and Nora Fatehi were summoned by Enforcement Directorate (ED) in connection with the Rs 200 crore money laundering case and for their alleged connection with Suresh Chandrashekar. The central agency stated that Jacqueline Fernandez and Nora Fatehi received top models of luxury cars and other expensive gifts from the accused.

Kangana Ranaut's Twitter account was permanently suspended
In May, actress Kangana Ranaut's Twitter account was 'permanently suspended for repeated violation of Twitter rules, a company spokesperson had said. Kangana's tweets on the post-poll violence in West Bengal had sparked outrage on social media, with many demanding actions against her. Some called it a call for violence.

The Family Man 2 controversy
Manoj Bajpayee's web series The Family Man 2 faced a lot of flak ahead of its release, with several political leaders raising objections to the show for portraying Tamilians as 'terrorists' in the popular series. The Tamil Nadu government had also objected to the casting of Samantha Akkineni. In the show, actor Manoj Bajpayee's character Srikant Tiwari was pitted against a new and powerful adversary, Raji (Samantha Akkineni).

Kartik Aaryan's fall out from Dharma productions Dostana 2
Bollywood actor Kartik Aaryan made it to the headlines when Karan Johar roped him for Dostana's sequel. But later the production house announced that they will be recasting for the movie. Dharma production's shared a note on Instagram. "Due to professional circumstances, on which we have decided to maintain a dignified silence—we will be recasting 'Dostana 2', directed by Collin D'Cunha. Please wait for the official announcement soon", it said. Meanwhile, there were reports that Kartik's "unprofessional" behaviour had irked the makers and they decided on dropping him from the board.

Pearl V Puri's arrest in the alleged rape case
In June, Television actor Pearl V Puri was arrested in connection with the alleged rape and molestation case. Reportedly, the incident had taken place in 2019 on the sets of the TV show, Bepanah Pyaar. The girl who accused him happened to be the daughter of Pearl's co-star. Several celebrities had come in support of the actor. Later, he was released on bail.

Malaika Arora stuns in sexy peach dress, shares sizzling hot photos



MALAIKA ARORA STUNNED HER FANS WHEN SHE DECIDED TO DROP JAW-DROPPING PICTURES OF HERSELF ON INSTAGRAM. THE ACTRESS OFTEN SHARES HER HOT, SEXY, AND BEAUTIFUL PHOTOS ON SOCIAL MEDIA. SHE NEVER DISAPPOINTS HER FANS WITH HER STYLE, HER FITNESS. MALAIKA NOT ONLY SHARES HER PICTURES, BUT SHE ALSO MOTIVATES HER FANS WITH INSPIRATIONAL QUOTES.



PRIYANKA CHOPRA REVEALS WHY SHE DROPPED THE SURNAME JONAS ON INSTAGRAM


"PRIYANKA CHOPRA HAD BEEN TRENDING BIG TIME EVER SINCE SHE DROPPED HER LAST NAME ON HER INSTAGRAM PROFILE. IN A RECENT INTERVIEW WITH ETIMES, SHE ADDRESSED THE HYPE AROUND HER NAME CHANGE AND SAID, "I DON'T KNOW. I WANTED THE USERNAME TO MATCH MY TWITTER, I GUESS. I JUST FIND IT REALLY AMUSING THAT EVERYTHING BECOMES SUCH A HUGE DEAL TO PEOPLE. IT'S SOCIAL MEDIA, GUYS. JUST CHILL OUT."

PRIYANKA CHOPRA' MOTHER MADHU CHOPRA HAD EARLIER CONFIRMED THAT HER ACTRESS DAUGHTER IS NOT HEADED FOR A DIVORCE AFTER SHE DROPPED BOTH HER SURNAMES FROM SOCIAL MEDIA IN NOVEMBER.

PANAMA PAPERS LEAK CASE: AISHWARYA RAI BACHCHAN GETS MOBBED AS SHE LEAVES ED OFFICE

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) summoned Bollywood actress Aishwarya Rai Bachchan on Monday, December 20 for questioning in the Panama Papers leak case. As the actress left the ED office in Delhi after five years, she was mobbed by the paparazzi and the public. A video has also been shared online in which the 'Ae Dil Hai Mushkil' actress is seen exiting the ED office as she is hoarded by the camerapersons and public before she sits in her car.

The Indian government's financial and economic intelligence agency, ED has been investigating the case since 2016 and has registered a money laundry case under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 (PMLA) in this matter. The Bachchan family has been issued notices to explain their involvement in foreign remittances since 2004 under the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) Liberalised Remittance Scheme (LRS). Also, a few companies established in 1993 had Amitabh Bachchan, Aishwarya's father-in-law, listed as the director of four offshore companies - three in the Bahamas and one in the Virgin Islands. These firms had a huge capital between USD 5,000 to USD 50,000. Aishwarya Rai Bachchan was made the director of one of these companies initially but later, she was declared as a shareholder. Her parents, father Kotedadi Ramana Rai Krishna Raj and mother Vrinda Krishna Raj Rai, and her brother Aditya Rai were also declared partners in the said company. The company was dissolved in 2008, one year after Aishwarya got married to Abhishek Bachchan.



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RITESH MAKES SHOCKING REVELATIONS, ADMITS RAKHI SAWANT IS NOT LEGALLY HIS WIFE



The recent Weekend Ka Vaar episode of Bigg Boss 15 witnessed the eviction of Rakhi Sawant's alleged husband Ritesh due to getting a lesser number of votes. The man who kept his identity a secret for two-and-a-half years finally made a public appearance with Rakhi on the Salman Khan show. Ever since Rakhi Sawant's marriage with Ritesh had been under the radar. The mystery around him deepened as Ritesh's first wife Snigdha Priya levelled allegations of domestic violence against him and claimed that he was lying about being an NRI. While talking to Hindustan Times, Ritesh made shocking revelations about his first wife Snigdha and the truth behind his marriage with Rakhi. Ritesh admitted that Rakhi is not legally his wife. "Hum logon ne ishwar ko sakshi maan ke ek doosre ko pati patni sweekar

kiya hai. Kahin hum logon ne court marriage abhi ki nahi hai," he said. Ritesh also said that he and Rakhi plan to have a formal marriage ceremony and invite people from the industry. Addressing to Snigdha's claims he said, "Mere previous wife ne jo allegations lagaya tha, mujhe pata tha ki yeh sab hai. Toh mujhe tha ki yeh sab clear up ho jaaye toh ek formal marriage hum log achchi tarah se karein. Bohot saare thoughts the, Rakhi ka bhi career tha, mere bhi bohot saare projects chal rahe the." Calling it 'love at first sight' with Rakhi, Ritesh said, "Ishwar ko sakshi maan ke hi usko apnaya hoon. Legal terms mein, main definitely yeh divorce ka wait kar raha hoon, jaise hi hoga, main formal marriage karunga Rakhi ke saath."

'THEEK SE KARNA MERA REMAKE,' SAYS TABU TO BHOOL BHULAIYAA 2 CO-STAR KARTIK AARYAN FOR 'SHEHZADA'

Bollywood actor Kartik Aaryan, who recently completed a shooting schedule for his film 'Shehzada', received special instruction from Tabu, who starred in the original Telugu film titled 'Ala Vaikunthapurramuloo'. Kartik posted a selfie with the upcoming film's director Rohit Dhawan on his Instagram handle, along with the caption, "Lovely working with The Ro One." In the comments section, Tabu wrote, "Theek se karna mera remake." To this Kartik replied, "Aapka hai isliye aur bhi zyaada pyaara hai." Earlier on Sunday visited Gurudwara Bangla Sahib after completing a challenging schedule of the film. Taking to his Instagram handle, Kartik shared a photo of him at the Gurudwara in which he could be seen wearing a denim jacket. Along with it, he wrote, "One of the most challenging schedules of #Shehzada comes to an end !! #Blessed #Delhi." The shooting of 'Shehzada' had commenced in October. The first schedule of the film was shot in Mumbai. Directed by Rohit Dhawan, the movie also features Kriti Sanon. Produced by Bhushan Kumar, Krishan Kumar, Allu Arvind, S. Radha Krishna, and Aman Gill, 'Shehzada', which is touted as an action-packed family musical film, will hit theatres on November 4, 2022. Tabu and Kartik will be seen together in 'Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2', along with actor Kiara Advani. Meanwhile, 'Shehzada', which is touted as an action-packed family musical film, also stars actor Kriti Sanon. Produced by Bhushan Kumar, Krishan Kumar, Allu Arvind, S Radha Krishna and Aman Gill, 'Shehzada' will hit theatres on November 4, 2022.



hollywood

HARRY POTTER RETURN TO HOGWARTS: RELEASE DATE, TIME, WHERE TO WATCH IN INDIA & EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW



The wait is finally over as your favourite 'Harry Potter' stars Daniel Radcliffe, Rupert Grint, and Emma Watson, along with other cast members, and filmmakers are all set to celebrate 20 years of the iconic franchise. The special reunion episode titled 'Harry Potter 20th Anniversary: Return to Hogwarts' will soon stream in India after the official trailer which was released on December 20th. J.K. Rowling, the author of the beloved book series, was not interviewed for the reunion episode and will be shown in only archival footage about the movies.

Where can you watch Harry Potter Return to Hogwarts? Get ready to be super nostalgic on January 1 as Harry Potter Return to Hogwarts will stream in India on Amazon Prime Video. The particular episode is produced by Warner Bros. Unscripted Television in association with Warner Horizon at the iconic Warner Bros. Studio Tour London--The Making of Harry Potter. The special is executive produced by Casey Patterson of Casey Patterson Entertainment (A West Wing Special to Benefit When We All Vote) and Pulse Films (Beastie Boys Story).

Release date and time in India of Harry Potter Return to Hogwarts?

From January 1, 2022, at 2.30 p.m., Amazon Prime members in India can watch Harry Potter's 20th Anniversary: Return to Hogwarts.

Watch the trailer of Harry Potter Return to Hogwarts A day ago, the makers even unveiled the trailer of the episode. The trailer features the cast reminiscing about the movies, as well as festivities in the Great Hall. Watson said, "It feels like no time has passed and loads of time has passed." Radcliffe said that something that had scared him was "the implication that the most meaningful thing in our life was done," and that seeing everyone is "joyous" because he realizes "it wasn't though."

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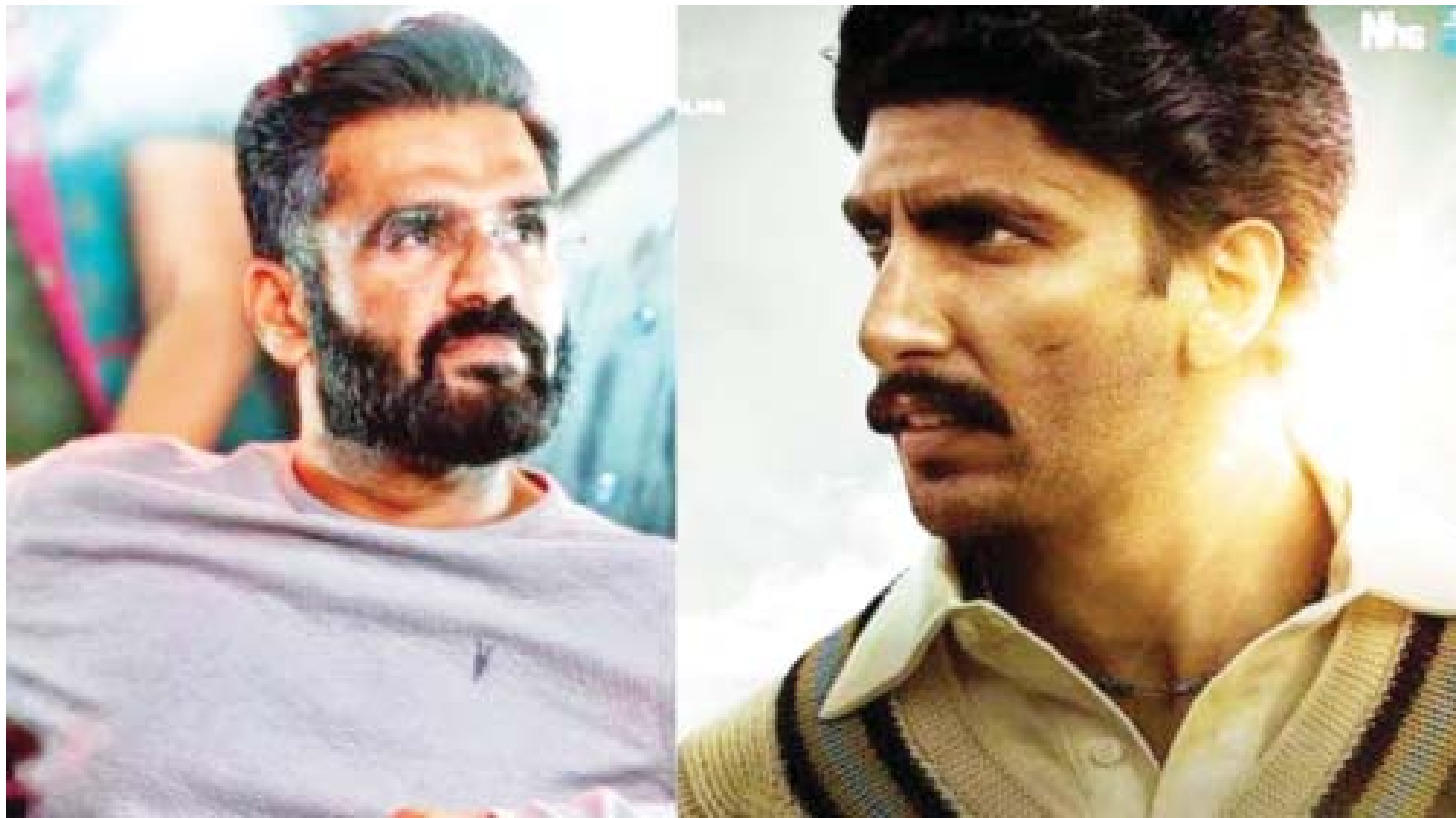
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SHWETA TIWARI BURNS THE INTERNET WITH HER SUNSHINE PICS, LOOKS RAVISHING IN YELLOW SAREE



POPULAR ACTRESS SHWETA TIWARI TOOK TO HER INSTAGRAM ON MONDAY, DECEMBER 20 AND BROKE THE INTERNET WITH HER LATEST PHOTOSHOOT PICTURES. IT IS HARD TO BELIEVE SEEING THESE SEXY PICTURES THAT THE ACTRESS TURNED 41 YEARS OLD IN OCTOBER THIS YEAR.

83': SUNIEL SHETTY SAYS HE COULDN'T SPOT RANVEER SINGH, SAYS 'I AM STUNNED BEYOND'



Directed by Kabir Khan, '83' is certainly one of the most anticipated films of 2021, revolving around India's historic 1983 World Cup win. Suniel Shetty, who along with Khan and Rhea Chakraborty attended Ranveer Singh's sports drama's Mumbai screening, shared his reaction on social media. He said that he was shaken and teary-eyed after watching India's 1983 World Cup victory recreated on screen. Suniel heaped praises for Ranveer Singh's sports drama and claimed that he couldn't spot the actor as he has gone through an 'incredible transformation' onscreen to essay the role of Kapil Dev. Taking to Twitter, the actor wrote, "Went to watch @RanveerOfficial in #83. Couldn't spot him. There was only #KapilDev on screen. Incredible transformation. I am stunned beyond. A team cast that could've walked off Lords. Got gooseflesh like I was reliving '83. Still shaken & teary-eyed at the artistry & emotions." Sheer belief. That's what it is. The goodness of being @kabirkhankk. The faith in his story & the power of his scenes & characters. Blew my socks off. And the backing of #SajidNadiadwala @WardaNadiadwala in a project

that's a personal tale. The tears are real. Folded hands," he added. The cricket-drama chronicles India's win under Kapil Dev's captainship when the team defeated West Indies in the final to clinch their first-ever World Cup trophy in 1983. As Ranveer steps into the shoes of Kapil Dev, his wife and actress Deepika Padukone essays the role of Romi, Kapil's wife. Deepika Padukone, Ranveer Singh burn the oomph quotient at Red Sea Fest as they promote 83. Also starring are Tahir Raj Bhasin, Jiiva, Saqib Saleem, Jatin Sarna, Chirag Patil, Dinker Sharma, Nishant Dahiya, Harrrdy Sandhu, Sahil Khattar, Ammy Virk, Addinath Kothare, Dhairya Karwa, R Badree and Pankaj Tripathi. Deepika Padukone will be seen playing Romi, Kapil Dev's wife. Kamal Haasan's Raajkamal Films International and Akkineni Nagarjuna's Annapurna Studios join hands with Reliance Entertainment to present the Tamil and Telugu versions respectively of the film. Prithviraj's production and Kichcha Sudeepa's Shalini Arts are set to present the film in Malayalam and Kannada versions.

Katrina Kaif finds 'home' in Vicky Kaushal, shares hand-in-hand photo from new house



Bollywood's newlywed couple Katrina Kaif and Vicky Kaushal are the epitome of love. The couple who kept their relationship a secret until they got married on December 9 has been sharing love-filled pictures on social media. On Monday (December 20), both Vicky and Katrina took to their Instagram stories and shared a beautiful picture of the duo holding hands. Sharing the picture, Katrina wrote, 'Home', while Vicky made a heart symbol on his post. Several pictures and videos are doing the rounds on social media, which suggest the couple had their housewarming rituals on Sunday in their new apartment. Vicky's parents -- Sham Kaushal and Veena Kaushal also arrived at their son's new place to attend the puja. Vicky and Katrina will be neighbours to Anushka Sharma and Virat Kohli. After enjoying a romantic honeymoon, which reports suggest was in the Maldives, the couple has shifted to their new house. The couple had returned to Mumbai on Tuesday after enjoying their honeymoon. The duo had jetted off to the exotic island country after tying the knot on December 9. The couple had married in a private ceremony at the luxurious Six Senses Fort Barwara in Sawai Madhopur, Rajasthan. Sharing the first pictures from their wedding, Katrina wrote, "Only love and gratitude in our hearts for everything that brought us to this moment. Seeking all your love and blessings as we begin this new journey together." VicKat's new house is a sea-facing property in Mumbai. As Bollywood celebrities showered their best wishes on the newly-wed couple, Anushka congratulated 'KatVic' and confirmed that they will indeed be her neighbours. Anushka, who has worked with Katrina in Yash Chopra's 2012 romantic drama 'Jab Tak Hai Jaan', took to Instagram and shared Katrina's post with pictures of the couple. Anushka wrote in the caption: "Congratulations to both of you beautiful people! Wishing you guys a lifetime of togetherness, love and understanding." She continued in the caption: "Also glad you are finally married so that now you can move into your house soon and we can stop hearing construction sounds." Anushka tagged both Vicky and Katrina in the story. Vicky and Katrina, according to IANS, have rented the sea-facing apartment, the security deposit of which is said to be close to Rs 1.75 crore and the rent is around Rs 8 lakh a month.

RAJ KUNDRA ON PORNOGRAPHY CASE: NEVER BEEN INVOLVED IN PRODUCTION, DISTRIBUTION



Businessman Raj Kundra, who was arrested in a pornography case earlier this year and later granted bail, on Monday claimed he has never been involved in the production and distribution of pornographic content in his life. In a statement issued on a social media platform, Kundra, who is married to actor Shilpa Shetty, said the entire episode was nothing but a "witch hunt". The businessman also said he has already been pronounced "guilty" by the media, and he wishes his privacy is not intruded anymore with this continued "media trial". The Supreme Court last week granted protection from arrest to Kundra in connection with an FIR registered against him for allegedly distributing pornographic videos. In July this year, Kundra was arrested by the Mumbai Police in another case where he was accused of distributing porn films through an app. He was granted bail in September. On Monday, Kundra stated that, "After much contemplation, considering there are many misleading and irresponsible statements and articles floating around and my silence has been misconstrued for weakness. I would like to start by stating that I have NEVER been involved in the production and distribution of "pornography" EVER in my life." "This whole episode has been nothing but a witch hunt. The matter is subjudice so I can not elucidate, but I am ready to face trial and have full faith in the judiciary, where the truth will prevail." Kundra said, unfortunately he has already been pronounced "guilty" by the media and that his family and he have been subjected to a lot of pain (continuously), violating his human and constitutional rights at different levels. "The trolling, negativity and toxic public perception has been very debilitating. To set the record straight, I do not hide my face in shame, but wish that my privacy is not intruded anymore with this continued MEDIA TRIAL. My priority has always been my family, nothing else matters at this juncture," he said. Kundra said he believes it is every person's inalienable right to live with dignity and he requests the same. The businessman had been booked under relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code, the Indecent Representation of Women (Prevention) Act and the Information Technology Act for allegedly distributing/ transmitting sexually explicit videos. Fearing arrest, Kundra first sought an anticipatory bail from a sessions court, but it was refused, so he moved the Bombay High Court, claiming that he had been framed. The HC also rejected his anticipatory bail application on November 25. The FIR named actors Sherlyn Chopra and Poonam Pandey as co-accused. Kundra's lawyers had claimed he was in no way connected to content creation, publication or transmission of alleged illegal videos even as the actors, who were named as co-accused, had given full consent to shoot the videos.

BOMBAY HIGH COURT REJECTS ARMAAN KOHLI'S BAIL PLEA IN DRUGS CASE

Bollywood actor Armaan Kohli was arrested in the last week of August in a drugs case. NCB had recovered some quantity of cocaine from the actor's house and he has been in jail since then. After the special NDPS court rejected his bail, Bombay High Court has also denied bail to the actor. As per the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB), 1.2 grams of MD was recovered from Kohli's house, while bigger quantities of drugs were recovered from the co-accused in the case. The court held that after examining the material obtained during the probe, 'prima-facie' it seemed that Kohli was 'well-connected with the co-accused pertaining to the illicit trafficking of drugs.' Special prosecutor Advait Sethna had submitted chats/messages between Kohli and the co-accused along with their bank statements before the court. The judge noted that bank transactions corroborated alleged transactions (revealed from the chats). Kohli failed to explain the purpose of contraband recovered from his house and the financial transactions, the NDPS court had said.

ABHISHEK BACHCHAN HAS BEEN REPLACED IN FILMS WITHOUT BEING TOLD, SAYS 'IT'S ALL PART OF SHOWBIZ'

Struggles are for all! Even if you are megastar Amitabh Bachchan's son! Abhishek Bachchan, who started his Bollywood career with 'Refugee' in 2000, has gone through several ups and downs before carving a niche for himself in the film industry. From being trolled for his flop films to being asked to vacate the front row seat for big stars, the actor has had a tough time gaining this fame. But Jr Bachchan understands it is an inevitable part of showbiz and shouldn't be taken personally. Abhishek Bachchan, who has given hits including Guru, Drona, Bunty Aur Babli, Sarkar Raj among others, revealed that he was replaced in certain films without being informed. "I've been replaced in films. I've been replaced in films and not been told. And I've literally shown up at the shooting and somebody else is shooting there. And you had to just quietly turn around and walk away," Abhishek said, speaking with Rolling Stones India "I've been told I've been replaced in films. People don't take your call. And that's, that's normal. Every actor has gone through it. I've seen my father go through it," he added. Not just this, Bob Biswas actor was also asked to vacate the front row seat at an event for a bigger star. "I've been in a situation where I've gone to a public function and you're made to sit in the front row and you feel, 'Wow! I didn't think they'd put me in the front row. Okay, great!' But then a bigger star shows up and they are like, 'Okay, get up, move to the back', and you go to the back. It's all part of showbiz. You can't take it personally. What you have to do is come back home, and, before going to bed, promise yourself that I'm going to work so hard."

ALIA BHATT STUNS IN GOLDEN-NUDE SABYASACHI LEHENGA



BOLLYWOOD ACTRESS ALIA BHATT, WHO WILL BE SEEN IN 'BRAHMASTRA' ALONGSIDE BOYFRIEND RANBIR KAPOOR, NEVER FAILS TO IMPRESS FANS WITH HER CUTENESS AND STYLE STATEMENT. THE ACTRESS OFTEN SHARES HER BEAUTIFUL PICTURES ON INSTAGRAM. EARLIER, SHE STUNNED HER FANS WHEN SHE POSTED A SERIES OF PICTURES IN A GREEN SAREE.

DISHA PATANI TO PERFORM HER OWN STUNTS IN DHARMA PRODUCTIONS' YODHA



Disha Patani, who has joined the cast of 'Yodha', is enthusiastic about the action-packed sequences of the film. Talking about the new development, Disha shared, "When I heard the script, it was an immediate yes for me for this project. It's exactly what I was looking for and action is something I would love to perform. I have already embarked on this journey with my directors Sagar and Pushkar and the whole team." She further shared that she's glad to end the year whilst working for this film. "As the title suggests, it will be a full-on action-packed movie and it is going to be a crazy ride shooting for it. I am glad that I am ending 2021 on this note," she added. Disha, who is also passionate about martial arts, will be playing a fierce and feisty character. Apart from Disha, the film also stars Sidharth Malhotra

and Raashii Khanna in lead roles. Earlier, Karan Johar took to Twitter and welcomed the actresses, as he wrote, "The phenomenal and exceptionally talented female leads of #Yodha are here! Welcoming the fierce, the gorgeous and ever charming Disha Patani to the family. Along with Raashii Khanna, who brings her spark and innocence to the role like no other! Yodha hits theatres near you on 11th November, 2022." The shooting of 'Yodha' began on November 27. Backed by Karan Johar's Dharma Productions and Shashank Khaitan's newly-minted banner Mentor Disciple Films, 'Yodha' is reportedly an aerial action film, with the backdrop of an air hijack situation. The film, which is being helmed by Pushkar Ojha and Sagar Ambre, will release in theatres on November 11, 2022.

PANKAJ KAPUR, DIMPLE KAPADIA TO STAR IN ROMANTIC COMEDY 'JAB KHULI KITAAB'



Veteran stars Pankaj Kapur and Dimple Kapadia will be seen sharing screen space in the upcoming romantic, comedy-drama film 'Jab Khuli Kitaab', directed by Saurabh Shukla. The film is an adaptation of Shukla's play of the same name. Writer-Director-Producer Shukla said: "'Jab Khuli Kitaab' is very close to my heart and I'm thrilled to have stalwarts like Pankaj Kapur and Dimple Kapadia as my leads. We all say that one should be transparent and clean in any relationship but how many of us are open to face the truth in our own relationships? The film is a romcom with a couple in their 70s. You see them doing what any teenager will do in their relationships. The film is a joyride where you laugh, fall in love and cry with this unique couple."

The iconic duo will also be joined by the actors such as Aparshakti Khurana, Samir Soni, Nauheed Cyrusi and others. The film features an older couple seeking a divorce after 50 years of togetherness. The film deals with the dysfunctionality of relationships and its impact on family, with dollops of humour and heart. A

The high energy repartee, and the multi-generational family dynamics at the forefront also makes this the rare Hindi comedy that is both universal and intimate.

The film is presented by Applause Entertainment in association with Shoe Strap Films.

Sameer Nair, CEO, Applause Entertainment, said: "The script is sharp, observant and hilarious in equal measure, complemented by our wonderful ensemble of actors, led by the remarkable Pankaj Kapur and Dimple Kapadia." Set in the majestic alpine regions of Uttarakhand, the film has recently wrapped its start-to-finish schedule in Ranikhet. "This is a one of its kind film which deals with the love-hate relationship of a husband and wife. It's very quirky, funny and emotional. The real star of the film is its script and these veteran actors added more magic to it. I think it will relate to masses and classes alike," Naren Kumar, producer, Shoe Strap films added.

PRIYANKA CHOPRA JONAS SAYS HUSBAND NICK IS HER ULTIMATE SHOPPING BUDDY



Indian actress Priyanka Chopra Jonas says she's not much of a shopper as she doesn't have the patience but her American pop star husband Nick Jonas is the best person to hit the stores with. Speaking to the Evening Standard newspaper, Priyanka said: "I'm not much of a shopper, I don't have the patience to go to five different shops. I need it to be made easy for me which happens at Harrods because they have everything under one roof. My husband, Nick, he's the best shopper, the most efficient - and he actually likes it."

Priyanka tied the knot with Nick back in December 2018 after a whirlwind romance. They had traditional Hindu and Christian ceremonies at the Umaid Bhawan Palace in Jodhpur, India. Priyanka has not allowed her career to wane since tying the knot. After her transatlantic transition from Bollywood to Hollywood, she's gone on to star in a number of films including the 'Baywatch' reboot alongside Zac Efron and Dwayne Johnson, and is currently the lead in Amazon's spy drama 'Citadel' alongside Stanley Tucci. Priyanka will be returning to the big screens in the third instalment of the eagerly anticipated 'The Matrix Resurrections' that will be out in cinemas this week.

Her other off-screen projects included the release of her memoir back in February 'Unfinished' which made the 'New York Times' Bestselling list. Priyanka also has her own production company, Purple Pebble Pictures, and her goal is to create as many opportunities for actors of colour as she can. She said: "My company Purple Pebble Pictures has a first look deal with Amazon, we're doing really incredible work. I have just forayed as a producer into Broadway with my company. I think I'm expanding myself as a producer and creating opportunities for people of colour, for Indians - but for myself too. To be able to give myself the opportunity for parts that may or may not be written for me." "Now, not every one of them may go to the Oscars like White Tiger, but the attempt is to be able to create content which has something to say, and yet to put culture and diversity at the forefront. It's an exciting time."

KANGANA RANAUT'S 'DHAAKAD' GETS NEW RELEASE DATE



Kangana Ranaut-starrer 'Dhaakad', which was slated to release on April 8, 2022, will now arrive in theatres in May next year. As per rumours, the makers have decided to change the release date as many projects are lined up for release in April. However, an official announcement about the release date is not out yet. Talking about the film, Kangana had earlier said, "Dhaakad is not only a benchmark film for my career but will be a turning point for Indian cinema as well. The film is mounted on a large scale, and is one of a kind female-led action film."

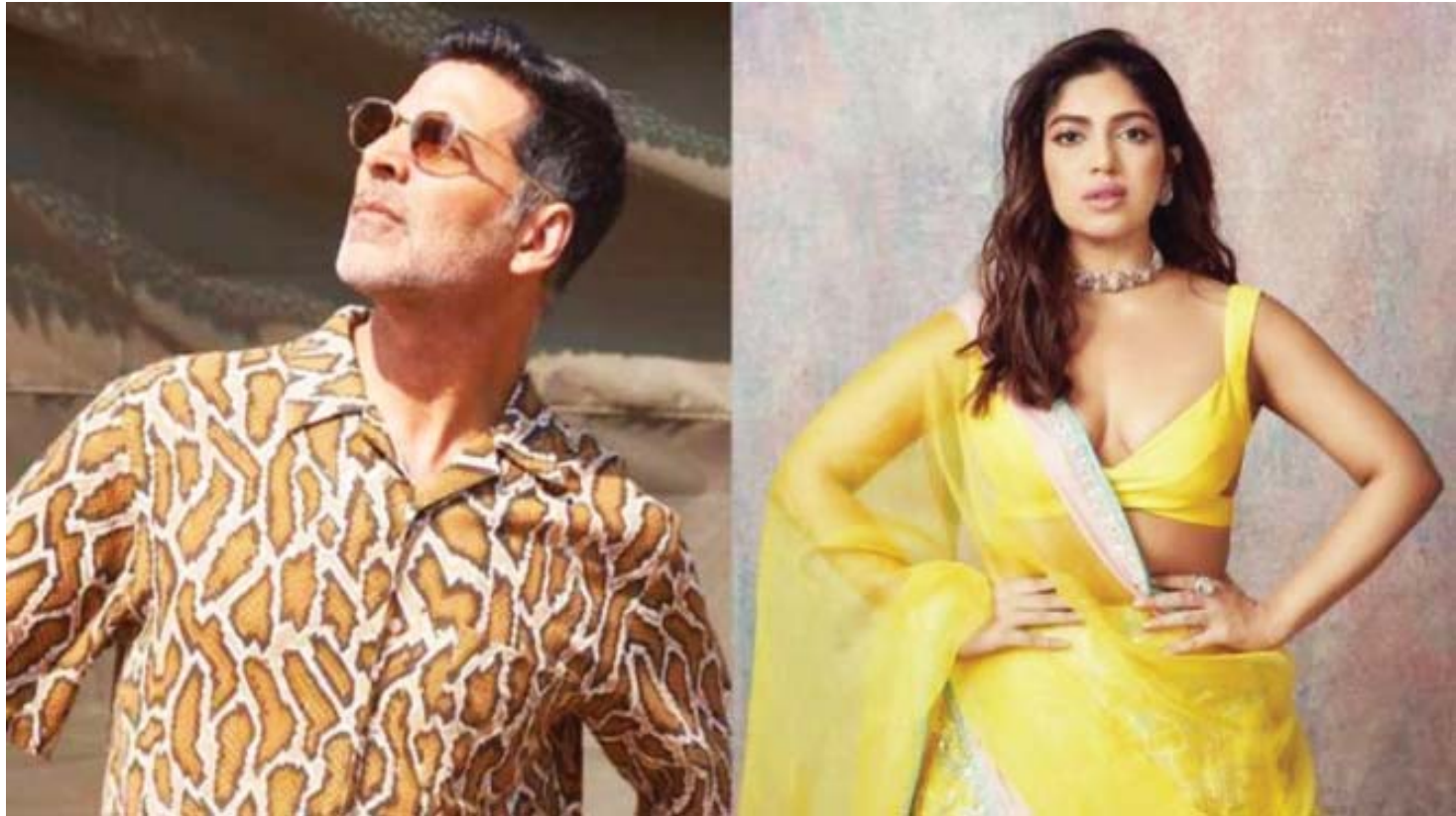
Mounted on a huge scale, the film is directed by Razneesh Razy Ghai. It is a high octane spy thriller that also stars Arjun Rampal and Divya Dutta along with a slew of compelling actors.

TIP TIP BARSA TO NADIYON PAAR, OLD HITS RETURNED AS REMIXES IN 2021-- WHY NOTHING NEW?



The trend of old tracks being reshaped as new ones is seeing a rise in the music industry. Remixes of old hit songs are rising in numbers as filmmakers try to preserve pace with sparkling new demands of the modern listeners. On one hand, where preferences for K-pop and hip hop is increasing among western audiences, Bollywood is busy scrambling old hit songs with current beats and catchy rhythms and sending them out at high decibels. The fashion of remakes has been in the industry for quite some time now. Previously, the pattern was to make a remix of a classic song and this year it went a step ahead when filmmakers eyed upon various Punjabi tracks and groovy numbers from the 90s era. Interestingly, the unexpected spurt in remixes commenced with Honey Singh remixing yesteryear's superhit 'Dheere Dheere' and including Hrithik Roshan and Sonam Kapoor to jazz it up visually. The video was beautifully made although. But if you're like me, you would have rushed to YouTube and heard the original track for healing the damage. Not just him but even Neha Kakkar, who began her musical journey by singing 'jagratas' is referred to as the uncrowned remix queen. She has recreated a number of tracks including - 'Aankh marey,' 'Cheez badi,' 'Dilbar,' 'O saki saki' and others. For someone who is a fan of Punjabi songs, the idea of remixing seems like a quick substitute for an acute shortage of creativity. A number of big films that were released this year had songs that had already performed well in their time.

AKSHAY KUMAR, BHUMI PEDNEKAR NAMED PETA'S MOST BEAUTIFUL VEGETARIAN CELEBRITIES 2021



Akshay Kumar and Bhumi Pednekar, who will soon share the screen in 'Raksha Bandhan', have been named the Most Beautiful Vegetarian Celebrities of 2021 by PETA India. Bhumi, who also champions the cause of environmental conservation and the climate crisis through her campaign Climate Warrior, became vegetarian over a year ago as for her eating meat just "didn't feel good anymore". For Akshay, "Health matters most" and the actor relies solely on a plant-based diet for protein requirements. The "true-blue animal lover" also makes a point to speak up for animals of all species, and raises awareness around animal cruelty on Twitter.

PETA India Director of Celebrity and Public Relations, Sachin Bangera said, "From being one of the fittest actors in Bollywood to leading a climate revolution from her dinner table, Akshay Kumar and Bhumi Pednekar are showing everyone how easy it is to stay fit and eco-friendly while saving animals. PETA India is recognising them for being beautiful inside and out." Earlier, prominent figures like Prime Minister Narendra Modi, actors Shraddha Kapoor, Sonu Sood, Manushi Chhillar, Anushka Sharma, Kartik Aaryan, Vidyut Jammwal, Shahid Kapoor, Rekha, Amitabh Bachchan and footballer Sunil Chhetri have been conferred with the title, which until 2020 was called the Hottest Vegetarian Celebrity Award.

RASHAMI DESAI WARNS TEJASSWI PRAKASH TO NOT QUESTION UMAR RIAZ ABOUT THEIR RELATIONSHIP



After Rashami Desai's fight with fellow contestant, Devoleena Bhattacharjee in the 'Bigg Boss 15' house, she will be seen locking horns with Tejasswi Prakash. The duo landed into a heated argument in the latest episode of the controversial reality show. The makers on Tuesday (December 21) dropped the promo of the upcoming episode in which Rashami slams Tejasswi for questioning Umar Riaz. Tejasswi asked Umar Riaz whether he would date Rashami outside the house. Rashami overheard their conversation and got annoyed with Tejasswi which led to a heated argument between the two. Rashami lashed out at her saying: "Main aapka aur Karan ka nahi

puchhti, aap mera aur Umar ka bhi mat pucho. (I do not ask you about Karan. Don't ask about Umar and I)." The flames continued to burn with complete rage during the 'Dragon Fire' task. For the unversed, Karan, Tejasswi, Abhijit Bichukale and Rashami stand a chance to become the second finalist of the season. However, the catch here is that the nominated contestants, namely, Pratik, Nishant, Shamita, Umar and Devoleena will play this game and the winner gets a chance to eliminate one 'Daawedaar' contestant from the race to win 'Ticket to Finale'. Rakhi is the Sanchalak of this task and as the fate of the 'Dawedaar' contestants now lies within the hands of the nominated contestant.

SALMAN KHAN ANNOUNCES 'BAJRANGI BHAIIJAAN 2'; TO BE WRITTEN BY S S RAJAMOULI'S FATHER



Bollywood superstar Salman Khan recently announced the sequel of 'Bajrangi Bhaijaan.' The sequel is stated to be written by S S Rajamouli's father K. V. Vijayendra Prasad, who won the National Award for the best story for the original film. The actor attended a 'RRR' pre-release event where he updated his fans about the same. Filmmakers Karan Johar, SS Rajamouli along with RRR actors Jr NTR, Ram Charan and Alia Bhatt were present at the big event. For the unversed, the film was directed by Kabir Khan and starred Kareena Kapoor and Nawazuddin Siddiqui in pivotal roles. The movie was released in theatres on 17 July 2015. "Bajrangi Bhaijaan" is Kabir Khan's most loved film and it is also that one movie he has watched maximum number of times thanks to his daughter who loves to catch it during its multiple TV runs. The film gave a message of unity in the guise of an India-Pakistan drama, which is what Khan said he set out to do by casting Bollywood superstar Salman Khan as a simple-minded Hanuman devotee, Pawan, who crosses path with a mute girl, Munni, played by Harshali Malhotra, from Pakistan after she strays accidentally into India. Nawazuddin Siddiqui, who as a Pakistani reporter, played the perfect second fiddle to Pawan, in the post-intermission phase. "Bajrangi Bhaijaan" received immense love from the audience and appreciation from the critics. The film went on to become one of the biggest blockbusters in the history of Indian cinema. It was also lauded for its sensitive portrayal of India-Pakistan relations, while retaining its sharp political commentary.

KARTIK AARYAN VISITS GURUDWARA BANGLA SAHIB AFTER FINISHING 'CHALLENGING' SCHEDULE OF 'SHEHZADA'



Bollywood actor Kartik Aaryan, who is currently shooting for his upcoming movie 'Shehzada' in Delhi, on Sunday visited Gurudwara Bangla Sahib after completing a challenging schedule of the film. Taking to his Instagram handle, Kartik shared a photo of him at the Gurudwara in which he could be seen wearing a denim jacket. Along with it, he wrote, "One of the most challenging schedules of #Shehzada comes to an end !! #Blessed #Delhi." Earlier, on Saturday, Kartik had shared a picture from the early morning schedule of 'Shehzada' captioned, "Yaar yahan toh bohot thandi hai #Shehzada".

DEVOLEENA BHATTACHARJEE CONFESSES FEELINGS FOR PRATIK SEHAJPAL, SAYS, 'I GOT ATTRACTED TOWARDS YOU'



Bigg Boss 15 is riding high on drama, fights and also relationships. In the recent promo dropped by the makers, Devoleena Bhattacharjee can be seen expressing her feelings for co-contestant Pratik Sehajpal inside the 'Bigg Boss 15' house. In the video clip, Devoleena tells Pratik, "I don't know how you will take it. Yes, I got attracted towards you." The video starts with Rakhi Sawant having a conversation with Abhijit. She says, "Tumko bohot pasand hai na woh? Pata chalta hai dada aapke har shabd mein woh hai. Lekin Devo Pratik ke andar ghus rahi hai. Usko poore ghar mein koi nahi milega chalega bass usko Pratik chahiye." Even Umar Riaz can be seen talking to Abhijit Bichukale about this. He said, "Jo aapne plan banaya tha Devo ke saath rahunga. Devo aapko 2 hafte mein chodh ke chali gayi." On Sunday, Colors TV Instagram account uploaded a promo and captioned it, "Pratik aur Devoleena ki nazdeekiyaan kahi kar na de Abhijit ko khafa (Pratik and Devoleena's closeness might upset Abhijit's feelings)." Furthermore, the Ticket To Finale task in 'Bigg Boss 15' has created a lot of rift between the contestants. Each of them is making plans and strategies. Karan had planned to target Shamita with Tejasswi and Umar's help. 'Sanchalak' Rakhi had teamed up with Pratik, Shamita and others. Tejasswi asked Rakhi to make a fair judgment in the task. During the task which took place in five rounds, Tejasswi competed with Shamita Shetty in one of the rounds and she thought that she was ahead of Shamita. However, Rakhi favoured Shamita which infuriated Tejasswi and Devoleena. Pratik helped Devoleena during the task. Nishant didn't like this and he argued with Pratik. He called him 'self-obsessed'. This led to a heated argument between them.

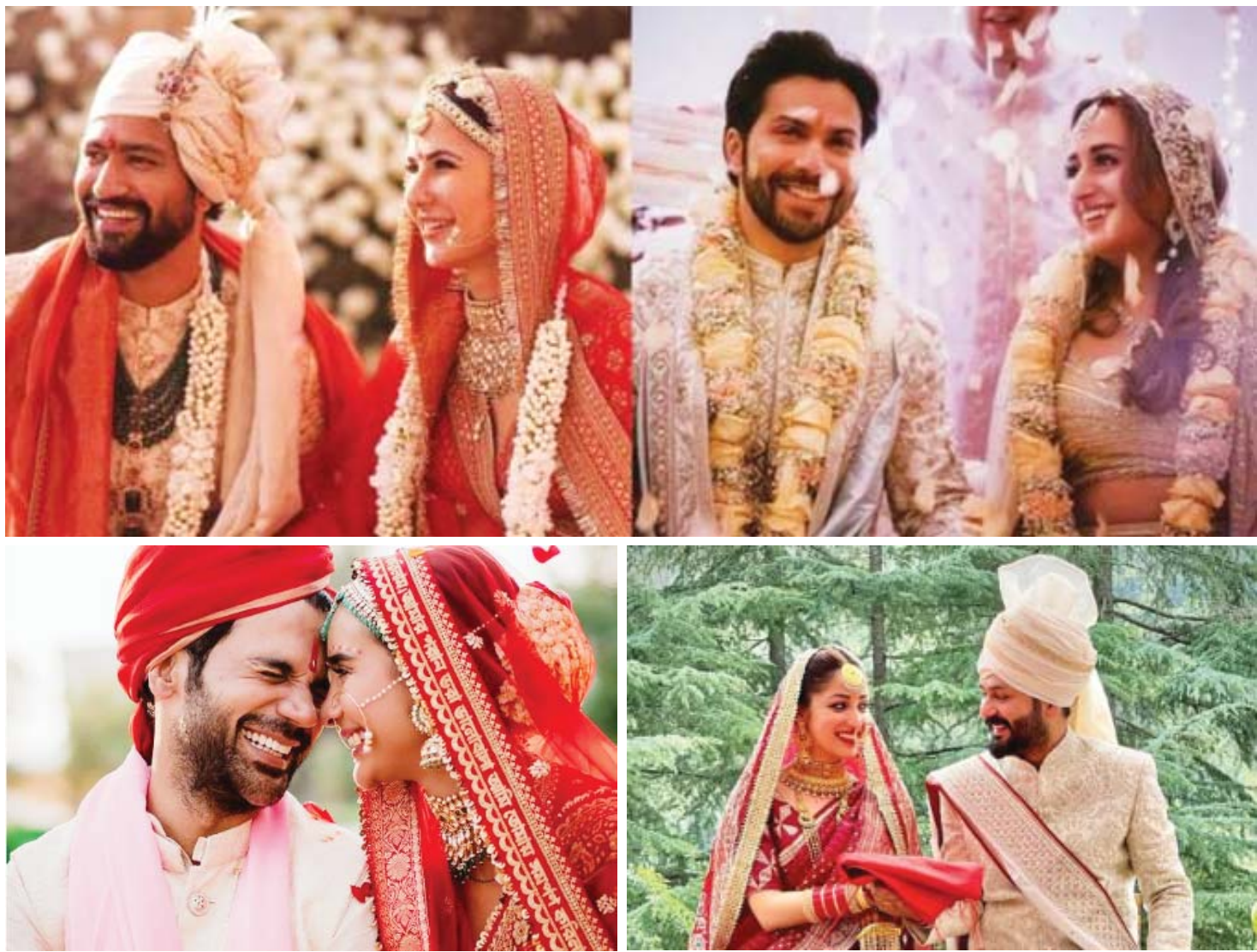
GEHRAIYAAN TEASER: DEEPIKA PADUKONE, ANANYA PANDAY & SIDDHANT CHATURVEDI STARRER TO RELEASE IN JAN 2022



The wait is over! Shakun Batra's highly anticipated movie starring Deepika Padukone, Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi will release on Amazon Prime Video, on January 25, 2022. Titled 'Gehraiyaan', the film is billed as a drama about "complex modern relationships". It also features Nasseruddin Shah and Rajat Kapur in pivotal roles. The film is jointly produced by Karan Johar's Dharma Productions and Viacom18 Studios in association with Batra's Jouska Films. According to the makers, the Amazon Original is a relationship drama that dives into the depths of complex modern relationships, adulting, letting go and taking control of one's life path. Johar described "Gehraiyaan" as an intense, real, and honest observation of modern relationships. The filmmaker said Batra has done a phenomenal job of portraying the complexities of human emotions. "That, combined with the cast's earnest and powerful performances, make the film a truly compelling story. We're thrilled to premiere 'Gehraiyaan' on Amazon Prime Video. This is our second collaboration following 'Shershaah' and we are hoping the film, with its universally appealing subject of love and friendship versus one's ambition, goals, and struggles, will find resonance with audiences in India and across the world," Johar said in a statement. Batra said he views "Gehraiyaan" as a journey into the "intricacies of relationships", a mirror into modern adult relationships. "How we traverse through the maze of feelings and emotions and how each step, each decision we make affects our lives and the lives of those around. I am immensely glad to have taken this journey with the incredible team and Dharma Productions, the exceptionally talented cast and crew, and now Amazon Prime Video. I believe audiences will relate to this film very closely and I am looking forward to receiving the reactions," the director said.

BOLLYWOOD WEDDINGS 2021

Vicky-Katrina to Varun-Natasha, couples who got married this year



Bollywood films have already changed the face of weddings. From making it fun to showing the emotional sides, viewers crave to have a wedding like that. If not the film, the royal wedding ceremonies of Bollywood actors add to those innocent dreams. The year 2021 witnessed many celebrities getting hitched. After a dull period of the year 2020, Bollywood stars took the first chance they got and gave new goals for destination weddings at exotic locations. From Vicky Kaushal and Katrina Kaif to Rajkummar Rao and Patralekhaa, these Bollywood weddings became the talk of the town for many days.

Katrina Kaif- Vicky Kaushal
Bollywood actors Katrina Kaif and Vicky Kaushal tied the knot according to Hindu rituals in the presence of close family and friends at The Six Senses Fort Barwara on December 9. The pre-wedding festivities started on December 7 and the duo later shared many beautiful pictures on Instagram. Sharing the first pictures, Katrina wrote,

"Only love and gratitude in our hearts for everything that brought us to this moment. Seeking all your love and blessings as we begin this new journey together."

Since the wedding, Katrina has been imparting Punjabi vibes. She paid tribute to Vicky's Punjabi roots by including simple details to her wedding attire. On her wedding day, she also sported red chooda and golden kaleere which are a part of Punjabi culture.

Patralekhaa- Rajkummar Rao
Rajkummar Rao and Patralekhaa Paul also kept away from the hullabaloo of the celebrity weddings and got married in Chandigarh, in the presence of their close friends and family. The duo took their vows on 15 November, after dating for over a decade. Sharing their first wedding photos, they wrote, "I got married to my everything today; my boyfriend, my partner in crime, my family, my soulmate...My best friend for the last 11 years! There is no greater feeling than to be your wife! Here's to our forever..."

Yami Gautam- Aditya Dhar
Actress Yami Gautam married her 'Uri: The Surgical Strike' director Aditya Dhar in June in a private ceremony. She had then shared a picture from their wedding venue and said they were both private people and preferred to get married in presence of family and close friends. The actress is now 'Yami Gautam Dhar' on Twitter and on Instagram.

Varun Dhawan- Natasha Dalal
Bollywood actor Varun Dhawan chose the beautiful Alibaug to get married to his childhood sweetheart Natasha Dalal on January 24. Like all other celebrity weddings, their wedding also had the "no-cell phone policy" to ensure complete privacy and was attended by 50 guests only. Talking about Natasha, she is a fashion designer based in Mumbai. She has her own design house, Natasha Dalal label which specialises in bridal and wedding couture.

Dia Mirza- Vaibhav Rekhi
Dia Mirza and Vaibhav Rekhi got married in an intimate ceremony on February 15. Sharing the first pictures from the wedding, Dia wrote on Instagram, "Love is a full-circle that we call home. And what a miracle it is to hear its knock, open the door and be found by it. Sharing this moment of completion and joy with you...my extended family. May all puzzles find their missing pieces, may all hearts heal and may the miracle of love continue to unfold all around us. #ThankYouPreeta #SunsetKeDiVaNe."

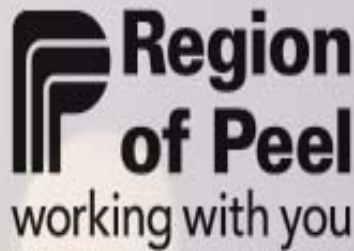
Soon after her wedding, Dia had announced her pregnancy. The couple welcomed their son on 14th July. The actress was previously married for 11 years to Sahil Sangha but the two separated in 2019.

Ankita Lokhande- Vicky Jain
TV star Ankita Lokhande married her boyfriend Vicky Jain in a lavish wedding ceremony on December 14. Loaded with endless dancing, fun performances and laughter, Ankita's wedding became the talk of the town as soon as the pictures surfaced. Ankita shared pictures from her wedding and she wrote "Love is patient but we're not. Surprise! We're now officially Mr and Mrs Jain." They married each other as per Hindu traditions at The Grand Hyatt Mumbai and later hosted a special reception party for their friends and family.



Happy new year!

Please celebrate safely by following public health measures and reducing gatherings this holiday season.






**NAPOLI CAPTAIN
INSIGNE TESTS
POSITIVE FOR
COVID-19 |P26**



**'RIGHT TIME TO PASS ON THE
MICROPHONE': DAVID LLOYD
RETIRES FROM
COMMENTARY |P26**



**ANRICH NORTJE RULED OUT OF
SOUTH AFRICA'S THREE-TEST SERIES
AGAINST INDIA |P26**



MidWeek

Merry Christmas
& HAPPY
NEW YEAR

Sports



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INDIA VS SOUTH AFRICA: NO TICKETS UP FOR SALE DUE TO RISING COVID CASES

ON MONDAY, SOUTH AFRICA'S T20 MZANSI SUPER LEAGUE WAS CANCELLED FOR THE SECOND TIME DUE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, THE COUNTRY'S CRICKET BOARD SAID.

Cricket South Africa on Monday stated that there will be no tickets made available for India's tour of the Rainbow Nation due to the rising Covid-19 cases in the world as well as in South Africa. The statement read, "CSA wishes to inform the most ardent fans of cricket as well as all sports lovers that owing to the increasing COVID cases around the world, and the fourth wave locally, the two cricketing bodies have taken a joint decision to protect the players and the tour by not making tickets available for the India vs Proteas offerings. This decision was taken in order to avoid any breaches that could compromise the tour from a Covid-risk perspective and to also maintain a hazard-free bubble environment."

Pholetsi Moseki, CSA Acting Chief Executive Officer said, "We acknowledge the interest expressed by the fans and other stakeholders on being able to return to stadiums and want to assure all cricket fans

that this decision was not taken lightly, but was instead taken in the best interest of the game and in the interest of the health and safety of all patrons. Consequently, we urge all sport lovers to exercise absolute care, during these extraordinary times." On Monday, South Africa's T20 Mzansi Super League was cancelled for the second time due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the country's cricket board said. The Mzansi Super League was scheduled to be held in February but the board said it was forced to call it off owing to the travel restrictions imposed by many countries on South Africa after the emergence of the Omicron variant. South Africa reported a record number of daily COVID-19 cases last week in a fourth wave believed to be largely caused by the Omicron variant. On Sunday, Cricket South Africa postponed the remaining round of CSA four-day franchise series, the country's premier domestic competition, as a precautionary measure over COVID-19 fears.

RAHUL DRAVID CALLS FOR 'GOOD INTENSITY' AS TEAM INDIA HIT HARD IN NETS SESSION IN CENTURION



Team India had an intense net session at the SuperSport Park in Centurion, ahead of their three-match Test series against South Africa, starting on December 26. Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) shared a video of Team India's first net session where newly-appointed head coach Rahul Dravid could be heard telling the players to put in a 'quality practice' and show 'good intensity' in the session. "The next three days are going to be extremely important in terms of our preparations and getting ourselves ready for the first Test," said Rahul Dravid. Batting coach Vikram Rathour said the batting conditions are difficult due to the overcast condition. "Today was a centre wicket practice session. It was a fresh wicket with overcast conditions, pretty challenging for the batters. So extremely happy with the way they went about it," he said. India's middle-order batter, Shreyas Iyer, who has scored a century on his Test debut against New Zealand, deemed the conditions at the SuperSport Park in Centurion as 'bowlers delight.' Bowling coach Paras Mhambrey also shared his insights and said: "You have to be prepared for such conditions. Yes, we thought it would be sunny when we walked out here. Overcast conditions are always challenging from the bowlers' perspective as well to hit the right areas. You will get these kinds of conditions in a Test match, and you should be able to exploit them." Veteran speedster Ishant Sharma has praised his fellow pacemen Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammed Shami. He said: "It was damp initially, moving a bit. I think Jassi and Shami bowled pretty well. They (batsmen) played pretty well. They know what kind of bowlers they will face and how the conditions will be."



MAGGIE MAC NEIL WON GOLD MEDAL IN THE 100-M BUTTERFLY AND BROKE THE CANADIAN RECORD WITH A TIME OF 55.04!

ASHES 'ON THE LINE', JOE ROOT WANTS ENGLAND TO REPLICATE JOS BUTTLER'S FIGHT



England cannot afford to feel sorry for themselves after losing the second Ashes Test against Australia and going 2-0 down in the five-match series, captain Joe Root said on Monday. Beaten inside four days in the series opener in Brisbane, England succumbed to their second successive defeat in Adelaide despite Jos Buttler's dogged resistance with the bat. "The Ashes are on the line here, if that is not motivation, I don't know what is," Root said after his team's 275-run defeat in the day-night Test. Buttler's 26 runs from 207 balls delayed Australia's victory charge for a while and Root said that should be the blueprint for the remaining matches in Melbourne, Sydney, and Hobart. "Ultimately that is the attitude and the mentality we have to harness over the next five days," Root said. "I am extremely proud of the way the guys fought today, that attitude and desire that's how we need to go about a whole test match."

RAFAEL NADAL TESTS POSITIVE FOR COVID-19 AFTER ABU DHABI EVENT



Rafael Nadal has tested positive for COVID-19 upon arrival in Spain after making his comeback from injury in an exhibition event in Abu Dhabi last week, the Spaniard said on Monday. "I am having some unpleasant moments but I hope that I will improve little by little. I am now homebound and have reported the result to those who have been in contact with me," Nadal said in a statement. The 35-year-old said he had tested negative at all times when he was in Kuwait and Abu Dhabi, and had last tested negative on Friday last week. The Spaniard's comeback from injury at the exhibition event — his first tournament appearance since the Citi Open in Washington in August — ended in two close defeats by Andy Murray and Denis Shapovalov. "I am having some unpleasant moments but I hope that I will improve little by little. I am now homebound and have reported the result to those who have been in contact with me," he wrote.

NEW ZEALAND TO RETURN TO PAKISTAN FOR 5 ODI, 5 T20I MATCHES

New Zealand will make up for this year's abandoned tour of Pakistan by playing 10 white-ball matches in April 2023, the Pakistan Cricket Board said on Monday. New Zealand aborted its limited-overs tour to Pakistan in September due to security fears just before the toss in the first one-day international was due to take place at Rawalpindi. England followed the New Zealand decision by also abandoning its short tour to Pakistan just before the T20 World Cup in October. New Zealand's tour in April 2023 comprises five ODIs and five Twenty20s. Dates and venues have not been determined. The PCB also said that New Zealand will tour Pakistan in December 2022 to play two Test matches as part of the World Test Championship and will also play three ODIs which will count towards qualification for the 2023 World Cup in India.



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INDIA TOUR OF SOUTH AFRICA: AS PLAYERS, WE HAVE GOTTEN USED TO BAD NEWS AROUND US, SAYS ELGAR

South Africa cricket was hit by yet another controversy relating to racial prejudice charges against some of its legends ahead of the first Test against India, but skipper Dean Elgar says his team remains focussed on putting up a professional effort against the “best team” in the world. South African cricket has been going through administrative crisis over the last 24 months, so much so that Elgar can’t remember who is running the show at the moment. To add to that, the sport has also been rocked by racism allegations. Last week, the Social Justice and Nation Building Commission (SJN), in its report, accused former South Africa captain and current CSA director Graeme Smith, current head coach Mark Boucher and former batter AB de Villiers of engaging in racially “prejudicial conduct” against players. The SJN also accused CSA of discriminating against players on basis of their race. In a virtual media interaction arranged by CSA ahead of the Boxing Day Test against India, Elgar was expectedly asked about the latest controversy involving South African cricket but he said the team is not greatly affected by it.

“No, it hasn’t really been too tough for us. As players, we’ve kind of gotten used to some bad news around us the last year and a half. We try to adapt to it accordingly. It’s not ideal, obviously, to have these headlines coming up though,” he said.

“We just want to focus on our cricket. We want to focus on playing a really tough series against India. It’s great to have them in South Africa again. “So yeah, for us, it’s all about focusing on cricket, focusing on our next few days of preparation, kind of nail down our cricketing

IPL ‘NEXT BIG STEP’ TO GROW WOMEN’S SPORT: SOPHIE DEVINE

Franchise cricket has raised the profile of women’s cricket and a full-fledged Indian Premier League (IPL) is the “next step” for its growth, New Zealand captain Sophie Devine said.

The Indian cricket board currently hosts a short three-team women’s competition along with the lucrative men’s IPL which will welcome two new franchises and become a 10-team affair next year.

Devine cited the success of the Women’s Big Bash League (WBBL) in Australia and its impact to make her point.

“The success of the WBBL in Australia has been enormous in raising the profile, and the standard of cricket as well has certainly improved,” Devine said on Monday at an event to mark the beginning of live cricket streaming on Amazon Prime Video from Jan. 1.

“I’d love to see a woman’s IPL kick off. I think it’s certainly the next step in growing the game globally for the women side of things.

“So fingers crossed and in the next few years, there might be something on the cards,” the 32-year-old said.

Teammate Suzie Bates said franchise cricket had “drastically” changed women’s game.

“Any franchise opportunities supporting the international game is the key for the game growing and India is the next big step in my opinion after the success of the WBBL and The Hundred competition in England,” Bates said.

skills,” said the southpaw. However, Elgar said instability in Cricket South Africa administration has been tough to deal with.

“We haven’t had a lot of stability from an administrative point of view. We’ve had so many different administrators that we don’t even know who’s there now. Hopefully sooner than later there is a lot more stability that comes within CSA.” He rued lack of support (from all quarters) for the coaches and team management.

“I think from a player’s point of view, we back our coaches, we need to give them a lot of love. I think sometimes they put in so much work... that’s the biggest thing (that goes unnoticed) because I know what they do behind the scenes,” he said.

“It’s not nice to see our coaches get lambasted for things despite the work they’re putting in behind the scenes.” Asked how the constant controversies impacts the team environment, Elgar said that the players have a job to do no matter what happens off the field.

“We’ve been through such crappy times that we’ve actually formulated such a good bond within our group and for me, it’s not an excuse for us. If it happened in the first month of these bad kind of scenarios, then maybe it might be that but we’ve been there.

“We’ve formulated something that works for us as a close group. We have an extremely strong culture which has been tested and pushed to levels that I don’t think it will be pushed through in my short term of being captain. I think we’ve come out on top of it.

“We are a professional team, we focus on cricket and hopefully cricket can look after us,” added Elgar.



All-rounder Amelia Kerr, who has played the women’s competition in India, echoed the sentiment.

“They’ve started with a few exhibition matches but we speak of the passion and the love for the game that India has and how successful the men’s IPL is.

“I think a woman’s IPL would be incredible,” the 21-year-old added.

R ASHWIN ADMITS HE CONSIDERED RETIREMENT: ‘A LOT OF PEOPLE WERE BACKED, WHY NOT ME?’

Prolonged injuries, lack of support and backing during the period between 2018-2020 forced India’s star off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin to contemplate retirement. In an interview with ESPNCricinfo, Ashwin revealed that it was one of the most difficult times for him as a cricketer. The first phase, he said, was right after the England series in 2018, followed by abdomen tear in Australia later that year after the Adelaide Test. “Between 2018 and 2020, I contemplated giving up the sport at various points. I thought, ‘I have put in a lot of effort, but it is not coming through.’ The harder I tried, the farther it felt. Especially with athletic pubalgia and the patellar tendonitis – I used to bowl six balls and then I used to be gasping for breath. And there would be pain all over the place. So you needed to make adjustments. When the knee pain got excruciating, the next ball I would probably jump less. When I jumped less, obviously the force needs to be produced through the core and the back and the shoulders, so the pubalgia would act up. So the third ball I would be extra side-on to try to use the hips. By the time I was done with six balls, I would be like, ‘I need a break here.’” Ashwin, however, said that it was not just the injuries and their consequential exhaustion that led him to consider retirement but also how those around him were not sensitive enough to his injuries. “I felt like a lot of people were backed, why not me? I have done no less. I have won a lot of games for the team, and I am not feeling backed,” he said. “I don’t usually look for help, that somebody needs to back me, that somebody needs to cushion me or give me empathy. I felt I was not being able to be excellent and felt I needed a shoulder to lean on. It was not happening. I thought maybe I should try to find something else and be excellent at that.” The 35-year-old Ashwin admitted that he felt ‘crushed’ after the then India head coach Ravi Shastri termed Kuldeep Yadav India’s no.1 overseas spinner following the latter’s five-for in Sydney in 2019. While the match ended in a draw, India clinched a historic Test series win Down Under. Following the triumph, Shastri proclaimed that ‘there is a time for everyone (referring to Ashwin’s fitness and injury issues). But now Kuldeep is our frontline number one overseas spinner.’ While he was happy for his teammate and the fact that India won the series, Ashwin felt like he was being thrown under the bus. “I hold Ravi bhai in high esteem. We all do. And I understand we all can say things and then retract them. In that moment, though, I felt crushed. Absolutely crushed. We all talk about how important it is to enjoy your team-mates’ success. And I was happy for Kuldeep. I have not been able to get a five-for but he has a five-for in Australia. I know how big it is. Even when I have bowled well [at other times], I haven’t ended up with a five-for. So I am genuinely happy for him. And it’s an extremely happy occasion, to win in Australia,” said Ashwin. “But if I have to come and partake in his happiness, and the success of the team, I must feel like I belong there. If I feel like I am being thrown under the bus, how am I supposed to get up and come for a party to enjoy the team’s or team-mate’s success? I went back to my room and then I spoke to my wife. And my children were there. So we were able to, you know, shrug it off, and I still made it to the party, because, end of the day, we had won a massive series,” he said.



NAPOLI CAPTAIN INSIGNE TESTS POSITIVE FOR COVID-19



Napoli captain Lorenzo Insigne has tested positive for Covid-19, the Serie A club said on Tuesday.

“The player will undergo a period of isolation at home. The team, following indications from the local health authority, has carried out a round of swab tests and the results will be announced in late afternoon,” read a club statement.

The Italy international has played a central role in Napoli’s Serie A title challenge this season, scoring four goals in 15 league appearances and helping Luciano Spalletti’s side climb to second place, four points behind leaders Inter Milan.

Insigne will miss Napoli’s home clash with relegation-battling Spezia on Wednesday, their final fixture before a two-week winter break.

‘RIGHT TIME TO PASS ON THE MICROPHONE’: DAVID LLOYD RETIRES FROM COMMENTARY



Former England cricketer and coach David Lloyd has left his role as a commentator with Sky Sports after 22 years. Also known as ‘Bumble’, the Englishman joined started commentary in 1999 with Sky. Lloyd was present in the comm box with Ian Bishop, when Carlos Brathwaite struck four sixes in a row off Ben Stokes and helped West Indies lift the 2016 T20 World Cup.

Last month, Lloyd took to Twitter to apologise after he was accused of making disparaging comments, while broadcasters Sky Sports said they would be investigating his comments. Llyod also apologised to Rafiq personally over the phone.

“After 22 wonderful years with Sky Cricket, I’ve decided the time is now right to pass on the microphone. It’s been an immense privilege to try and bring the sport I love into people’s homes up and down the country,” the 74-year-old said in a statement on social media.

“There are so many wonderful memories, so many terrific games and incredible performances. I’ve been lucky to travel the world sharing Ashes highs and lows, World Cup wins and losses, heroics and heartaches with you all.

“Sharing a commentary box in Australia in 2013 with my broadcasting hero Bill Lawry was a real highlight. It has been a great pleasure to work alongside Ian Bishop, Ravi Shastri, Shane Warne, Shaun Pollock and Ian Smith amongst many others.

PAKISTAN TEST OPENER ABID ALI HOSPITALISED AFTER PAIN IN CHEST



Pakistan’s Test opener Abid Ali has been kept under observation at a private hospital here after he complained of chest pain while batting during a first-class Quaid-e-Azam Trophy match.

Abid, who is playing for Central Punjab in the tournament, twice complained of chest pain after which his team manager, Ashraf Ali, decided to rush him to hospital for medical attention and tests.

“He was batting on 61 this morning when he complained about having chest pain twice and we felt it was best to send him to hospital where he is presently under observation and undergoing some more tests,” Ashraf, a former Test wicketkeeper-batter, said.

Abid, who had completed 9000 runs in first-class cricket while battling against Khyber Pakhtunkhwa team at the UBL complex, joined Central Punjab after a very good Test tour of Bangladesh recently.

ANRICH NORTJE RULED OUT OF SOUTH AFRICA'S THREE-TEST SERIES AGAINST INDIA



Anrich Nortje, the South Africa fast bowler, is set to miss his side’s three-match Test series against India after failing to recover from “a persistent injury”. “Anrich Nortje has been ruled out of the 3-match #BetwayTestSeries due to a persistent injury. No replacement will be brought in,” CSA wrote on Twitter. “He has unfortunately not recovered adequately for the expected Test match bowling loads and is currently consulting with specialists to manage and advise on his recovery. No replacement will be brought in,” said an official statement.



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