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Mid Week ENTERTAINMENT

NICK JONAS THINKS PRIYANKA CHOPRA 'MAY BE THE FIRST JONAS TO WIN AN OSCAR' | 15



February 02, 2021

www.southasiandaily.com

Vol 21 Issue 05, Phone 647-272-8182, 905-670-3687

Anushka Sharma and Virat Kohli name their daughter Vamika



BOLLYWOOD ACTOR ANUSHKA SHARMA AND CRICKETER VIRAT KOHLI WERE BLESSED WITH THEIR FIRST CHILD ON JANUARY 11. Bollywood actor Anushka Sharma and cricketer Virat Kohli have revealed the name of their first child. The couple has named their daughter Vamika. Anushka Sharma took to Instagram and wrote, "We have lived together with love, presence and gratitude as a way of life but this little one Vamika has taken it to a whole new level! Tears, laughter, worry, bliss – emotions that have been experienced in a span of minutes sometimes! Sleep is elusive but our hearts are SO full. Thanking you all for your wishes, prayers and good energy". Anushka Sharma and Virat Kohli were blessed with a baby girl on January 11. "We are thrilled to share with you that we have been blessed with a baby girl this afternoon. We thank you all for your love, prayers and good wishes. Anushka and the baby are both healthy and we are feeling beyond blessed to start this new chapter of our lives. We hope that you can respect our privacy at this time.

KAPIL SHARMA AND GINNI CHATRATH BLESSED WITH BABY BOY



Actor-comedian Kapil Sharma and Ginni Chatrath have become parents to a baby boy. Kapil took to Twitter and wrote, "Namaskaar. We are blessed with a baby boy this early morning. By the grace of God, baby n mother both r fine. Thank you so much for all the love, blessings n prayers. Love you all, ginni n kapil. #gratitude." As soon as Kapil Sharma announced the happy news, celebrities flooded social media with congratulatory messages. Congratulating Kapil, his co-star Kiku Sharda tweeted, "Big Big congratulations brother. Enjoy the beautiful days ahead. Love to the family." Ritesh Deshmukh posted on Twitter, "Mubaraakkk ho mere bhai!!! This is such great news!!! God bless your family with good health, long life and abundance of love." While Suniel Shetty wrote "Godbless", Taarak Mehta Ka Ooltah Chashmah creator Asit Kumarr Modi commented on Kapil's post, "Congratulations Kapil bhai." Suresh Raina tweeted, "Congratulations paji ! Lots of love to kid and bhabhi Ji." Others like Ravi Kishen, Meiyang Chang, Vikaas Kalantari, Mithali Raj and Saina Nehwal also wished Kapil and Ginni. Kapil Sharma and Ginni Chatrath tied the knot on December 12, 2018 in Jalandhar. They took the wedding vows according to Hindu traditions and later an Anand-Karaj ceremony took place at Ginni's residence. They welcomed their daughter Anayra Sharma on December 10, 2019.

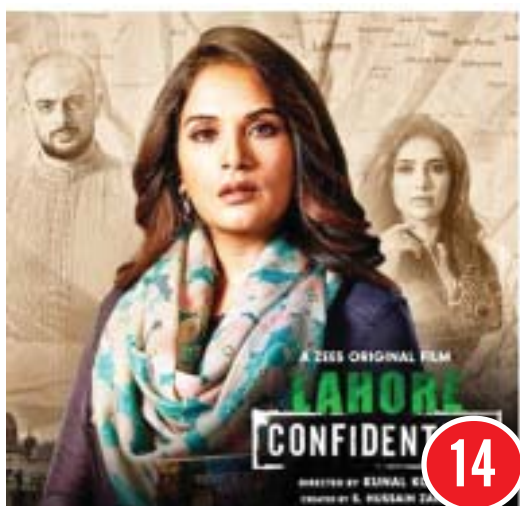
'DESH KI BETI TODAY IS FEARLESS': KAREENA KAPOOR KHAN, DEEPIKA

PADUKONE LAUD PM MODI'S 'MANN KI BAAT'



Highlighting PM Narendra Modi's thoughts on women empowerment, Kareena Kapoor Khan and Deepika Padukone praised his monthly radio programme Mann ki Baat on Sunday. PM Modi addressed the 73rd episode of the Mann ki Baat program and the first episode of the year 2021 on Sunday. Hailing various departments and discussing many important events in the country, the prime minister also underlined the increasing participation of the country's women in different fields. Kareena Kapoor Khan highlighted his thoughts on her Instagram account and shared a post that read, "From flying non-stop commercial flights to taking part in Republic Day parades, women's participation is increasing manifold. Desh ki Beti (Nation's daughter) today is fearless, courageous, and an equal participant in nation-building activities."

KUNAL KOHLI: FILMING LAHORE CONFIDENTIAL AMID PANDEMIC WAS TOUGH, BUT GLAD TO RESUME WORK



LAHORE CONFIDENTIAL, STARRING RICHA CHADHA, ARUNODAY SINGH AND KARISHMA TANNA, IS BILLED AS A "CONTEMPORARY, ELEGANT AND THRILLING LOVE STORY OF TWO SPIES THAT WILL PUT THEM IN A TUG OF WAR WITH EACH OTHER".

AMITABH BACHCHAN 'PETRIFIED' AS HE BEGINS SHOOT FOR MAYDAY



BILLED AS AN "EDGE-OF-THE-SEAT" DRAMA, MAYDAY IS BEING DIRECTED BY BOLLYWOOD STAR AJAY DEVGN, WHO IS ALSO ESSAYING THE LEAD ROLE OF A PILOT IN THE MOVIE.

KANGANA RANAUT ALL SET TO PLAY FORMER PM INDIRA GANDHI



KANGANA RANAUT CONFIRMED THAT THE MOVIE WON'T BE A BIOPIC BUT WILL COVER SIGNIFICANT MOMENTS OF INDIAN POLITICAL HISTORY INCLUDING OPERATION BLUE STAR AND THE EMERGENCY.

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SHAHID AFRIDI'S 2 FOR 16 EARNED HIM THE MAN-OF-THE-MATCH AWARD, TEAM ABU DHABI VS QALANDARS, ABU DHABI T10 LEAGUE, ABU DHABI.

ENGLAND TOUR OF INDIA, 2021

4 Tests, 3 ODIs, 5 T20's. Feb 05 - Mar 28



DATE	MATCH DETAILS	TIME
TEST'S		
Feb 04 - Feb 08	1st Test, Chennai	11:00 PM
Feb 12 - Feb 17	2nd Test, Chennai	11:00 PM
Feb 23 - Feb 27	3rd Test, Ahmedabad	04:00 AM
Mar 03 - Mar 07	4th Test, Ahmedabad	11:00 PM
T20'S		
Mar 12, Fri	1st T20I, Ahmedabad	8:30 AM
Mar 14, Sun	2nd T20I, Ahmedabad	9:30 AM
Mar 16, Tue	3rd T20I, Ahmedabad	9:30 AM
Mar 18, Thu	4th T20I, Ahmedabad	9:30 AM
Mar 20, Sat	5th T20I, Ahmedabad	9:30 AM
ODI'S		
Mar 23, Tue	1st ODI, Pune	04:00 AM
Mar 26, Fri	2nd ODI, Pune	04:00 AM
Mar 28, Sun	3rd ODI, Pune	04:00 AM

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NEWS 360 5pm, 7pm, 10pm and 12 midnight
SOUTH ASIAN 360 (EVENING LIVE) Monday - Sunday 7:30pm
Monday: Health Show
Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, Sat and Sunday: Current affairs
Wed: Economic updates
ENTERTAINMENT Y 3pm, 6pm, 9:30 pm



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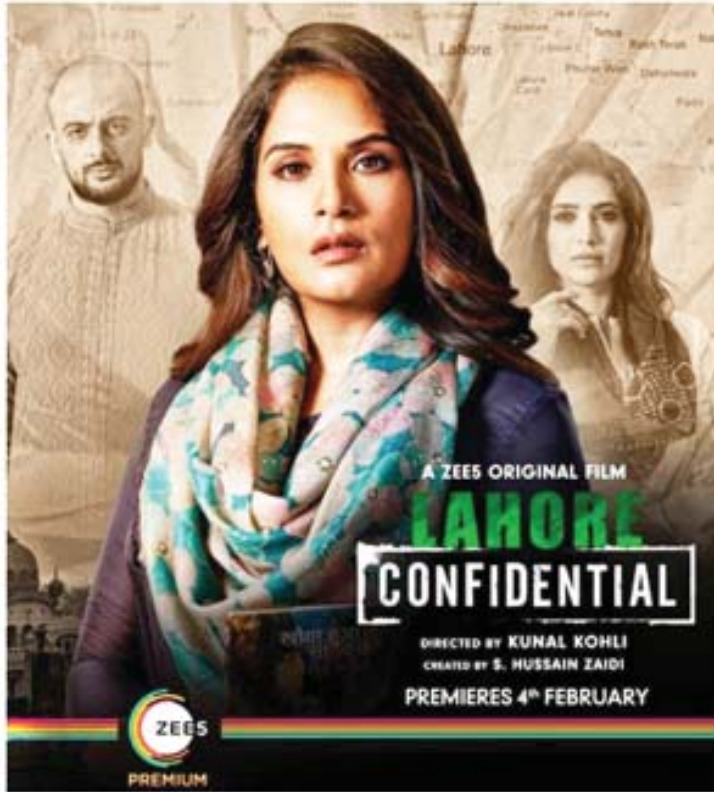


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KUNAL KOHLI: FILMING LAHORE CONFIDENTIAL AMID PANDEMIC WAS TOUGH, BUT GLAD TO RESUME WORK



Filmmaker Kunal Kohli, who is awaiting the release of his next film Lahore Confidential, said it was tough to shoot the movie amid the coronavirus pandemic. The Fanna filmmaker said it was important for him to ensure the safety and security of the cast and crew of the film.

"It's not easy, it is very difficult because you have to ensure you are 100 percent safe and everyone around you is 100 percent safe which is what we did and which is why on a 20-day shoot we didn't have a single case," Kohli said in a statement. The director, however, is happy that daily wage workers could get their livelihood back as shooting of films resumed post the COVID-19 induced nationwide lockdown. "There are a lot of per day workers and per day artists whose livelihood depends on everyday

shooting. I am very glad that shootings have resumed and they are able to get back to work," he added. Lahore Confidential, starring Richa Chadha, Arunoday Singh and Karishma Tanna, is billed as a "contemporary, elegant and thrilling love story of two spies that will put them in a tug of war with each other". The narrative revolves around a humble, divorced Indian woman, who amidst her mundane-routine life and her love for Urdu literature, finds herself on an intelligence duty in Pakistan. Produced by Jar Pictures, the ZEE5 Original film premieres on February 4. The franchise, created by S Hussain Zaidi, started with London Confidential: The Chinese Conspiracy, featuring Mouni Roy and Purab Kohli in the lead.

Non-bailable warrant issued against director Shankar in Rajinikanth, Aishwarya Rai Bachchan's 'Enthiran' plagiarism case

A Metropolitan Magistrate Court II in Egmore, Chennai, issued a non-bailable warrant against director Shankar as he failed to appear several times regarding a case of plagiarism. The case was regarding his 2010 blockbuster 'Enthiran' starring Rajinikanth and Aishwarya Rai Bachchan. The director was accused of plagiarism by writer Arur Tamilnadan. He alleged that Shankar had copied his story titled 'Jiguba' in the mega superhit film 'Enthiran'. For the uninformed, in his complaint, Tamilnadan had said that Shankar copied his story titled 'Jiguba' that was published first in the year 1996 in a Tamil magazine and was once again republished as a novel titled 'Dhik Dhik Deepika Dheepika' in 2007. Despite the court's repeated order, the director failed to appear before the court in the case that resulted in a non-bailable warrant against him. The case has now been adjourned till February 19. After Rajinikanth's 'Enthiran' release, Tamilnadan claimed that Shankar had copied his story, which was a violation of the Copyright Act, 1957. He also alleged that the 'Enthiran team' had earned huge financial gain from his idea. Shankar, so far, has not officially released a statement regarding the same. Despite the huge controversy and facing the plagiarism charge, no one from the team of the film has spoken about the matter. As for 'Enthiran', the film had released in 2010 and went on to become the highest-grossing Indian film. It also ended up winning two National Film Awards. It was released in Hindi as Robot and as Robo in Telugu. Produced by Sun Pictures on a mammoth budget, Enthiran starred Rajinikanth in two roles - as a hero and a villain.

SAURABH SHUKLA: CENSORSHIP HAS ITS PROS AND CONS, NECESSARY IN SOME CASES



Actor Saurabh Shukla said the COVID-19 induced lockdown gave him an opportunity to read and reflect, more importantly get his creative juices flowing, and he ended up making a full-length one man feature film where he donned the hat of a writer, director and the only character.

The 90-minute film, currently in its post-production stages, is funny, dark and thrilling, Shukla said, adding that he would be soon sending his latest movie for screening at festivals. The veteran actor, all excited to work in Kaushik Ganguly's first Hindi flick Manohar Pandey, also said that Kolkata is his home, and he loves the city for his unique character, culture and food. "Ganguly has made some amazing films. He is multi-talented, and can write direct and act equally well. This film has a soul, it has humour in it but you can't really brand it as just another comedy. Also, I will be sharing screen space with talented co-stars Supriya Pathak and Raghubir Yadav, and I am looking forward to it," the Bollywood actor, who is in the city for shooting of the film, told PTI. Shukla, also said that he would want to do a Bengali film someday. Asked about his journey in the film industry — from Shekhar Kapur's Bandit Queen to Manohar Pandey the National Award-winning actor underlined that the experience so far has been a fulfilling one, but not without a fair share of hiccups. "I was overweight, and was usually cast in roles that amused the audience. Comedy also elicits pathos, but that concept wasn't there in Hindi films. We just want an overweight person to be funny. It was Sudhir Mishra, who gave me the role of a professional killer in 'Is Raat ki Subah Nahi', and my work was noticed and appreciated," the 57-year-old actor said. Talking about the mushrooming OTT (over-the-top) sites, and the fear that it could overshadow big screen films, Shukla said that every new platform creates its own space, and can co-exist with other mediums. He, however, expressed concern over the growing censorship over art and films in the country. "Censorship has its pros and cons. It is, in some cases, necessary. But, objecting to anything and everything that is not suited to a particular taste and culture is not acceptable," he said.

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KGF 2: YASH STARRER GETS A RELEASE DATE



The makers of KGF: Chapter 2 on Friday announced the release date of the much-awaited film. The movie will hit cinema halls on July 16, 2021. KGF: Chapter 2 stars Yash in the lead role. The two-part fictional mob drama traces the journey of India's most dreaded criminal, Rocky. After losing his mother at a very early age to poverty and sickness, Rocky develops an insatiable urge for power. And his pursuit for power leads him to gold mines of Kolar, and a turf war ensues. Director Prashanth Neel has upped the ante in the sequel. Besides the scale, scope and ambition, he has added a slew of new stars to the cast to make it more appealing to people across the country. While the first film predominantly featured actors from the Kannada film indus-

try, the sequel will boast some Bollywood stars in significant roles. Prashanth has roped in Sanjay Dutt to play the main antagonist Adheera. "The character of Adheera in KGF is very powerful. If you have seen Avengers, you know how powerful Thanos is. Adheera is as powerful as him. In KGF's first chapter, Adheera comes only in the end, but in the second chapter, he has a very strong presence and getup. This is the character I was looking for, and it has come to me," Sanjay had said earlier. The new additions to the star cast also include Prakash Raj and Raveena Tandon. The original Kannada film will simultaneously be released in Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and Hindi.

Kangana Ranaut all set to play former PM Indira Gandhi



After essaying cine icon and former Tamil Nadu chief minister Jayalalithaa in the biopic *Thalaivi*, Kangana Ranaut is all set to play another political leader in an upcoming film. The actor will play former Indian prime minister Indira Gandhi in a political drama helmed by Sai Kabir.

Confirming the development, Kangana, in a statement, said that the movie won't be a biopic but will cover significant moments of Indian political history including Operation Blue Star and The Emergency. "Yes, we are working on the project, and the script is in the final stages. It is not the biopic of Indira Gandhi. It is a grand period film. To be precise, it is a political drama that will help my generation to understand (the) socio-political landscape of current India," the actor

said in a statement.

Kangana Ranaut is looking forward to playing Indira Gandhi whom she addressed as "the most iconic leader that we have had in the history of Indian politics". She also shared that "many prominent actors will be part of this film" who will be stepping in the shoes of political leaders like Sanjay Gandhi, Rajeev Gandhi, Morarji Desai and Lal Bahadur Shastri among others. The yet-to-be-titled film will be mounted on a large scale. Apart from this film, Kangana has movies like *Dhaakad* and *Tejas* in her kitty. She is currently in Bhopal to shoot for action thriller *Dhaakad*. Earlier this month, she also announced the second installment of the *Manikarnika* franchise titled *Manikarnika Returns: The Legend Of Didda*.

'BIGG BOSS 14' PROMO: RUBINA DILAİK HAS EPIC REACTION TO RAHUL VAIDYA SAYING HE WOULD MARRY HER



In Sunday's 'Bigg Boss 14' Weekend Ka Vaar episode a lot of good humour and fun is expected. A new promo for the episode was released by Colors in which Aly Goni and Devoleena Bhattacharjee will be hosting a game show with their fellow housemates.

The promo shows host Salman Khan beginning 'The Aly and The Devoleena Show' which will have two rounds: a dangerous question round and a rapid-fire round. Aly and Devoleena invite Rubina Dilaik as the first contestant. Aly asks Rubina about her comment that Salman has always favoured Eijaz Khan and then she answers, "Of course". Salman jumps in and tells her, "Rubina, why do you think so? This is a wrong statement." The duo also called Rahul Vaidya and asked to choose between Arshi Khan and Nikki Tamboli as the more trustworthy ones. Rahul names Nikki. He is later asked to marry, date,

and kill among three contestants, to which he replies, "Marry Rubina, date Rakhi, and I would like to kill Arshi."

After listening to his reply, Rubina gagged in response, as shown in the promo. Abhinav Shukla also comes in and Aly Goni asks about a recent incident where Rakhi Sawant pulled his drawstring, Aly asks him if he thinks he has also used her for entertainment. He replies, "Absolutely not, I don't need her to highlight myself on the show."

The next portion of the promo shows Rakhi playing the rapid-fire round. On being asked if her love was true or fake, she instantly replies, "fake". However, the person she is talking about is not exposed in the promo.

Arshi Khan is also called upon to ask whether she hates co-contestant Vikas Gupta or loves him. She says that she can't choose any of the options as "he is not deserving for any of this".

NICK JONAS THINKS PRIYANKA CHOPRA 'MAY BE THE FIRST JONAS TO WIN AN OSCAR'



Priyanka Chopra Jonas has been gushing over all the appreciation she has received for her role as Pinky in the Netflix film *The White Tiger*. Among her many fans is her husband and American singer, Nick Jonas. Nick believes PeeCee might be the first Jonas to win an Oscar.

In her recent appearance on *Variety's Awards Circuit* podcast, Priyanka shared that Nick told her "You may be the first Jonas to win an Oscar." Even before the release of *The White Tiger*, Nick had shared the film's trailer along with the caption, "Get ready! This movie is unreal and my wife @priyankachopra is exceptional in it."

Well, it's not just Nick Jonas who is awe of wife Priyanka. The actor also leaves no chance to sing praises of her husband. "He just doesn't do anything badly. It's insane and it drives me crazy. It's like everything you do is great," Priyanka said about the *Lovebug* singer.

During the interaction, Priyanka also mentioned how badly she wanted to be a part of *The White Tiger*. She said, "I'm really looking for a trajectory where I have the ability to play various characters and genres and not be bogged down or put into a box or a stereotype of what I can do."

Priyanka Chopra plays an American-Indian, Pinky, in *The White Tiger*. Rajkumar Rao plays her entitled husband and newcomer Adarsh Gourav essays the role of Balram who struggles to fight the system that is hellbent on keeping him in 'his place'.

The *Indian Express* film critic Shubhra Gupta gave the Ramin Bahrani directorial three stars and wrote, "The film belongs to Adarsh Gourav, who channels that very specific, razor-sharp mixture of obsequiousness and rage, to come up with a stellar performance." On the work front, PeeCee has started working on Amazon Studios series *Citadel*, produced by *Avengers: Endgame* directors Anthony and Joe Russo. She has also wrapped shooting of rom-com feature film *Text For You*. The actor will next be seen in sci-fi film *The Matrix 4* and is co-producing *Sangeet*, an unscripted series, with her husband, singer Nick Jonas.

Allahabad High Court stays arrest of Mirzapur makers Farhan Akhtar, Ritesh Sidhwani



The Allahabad High Court on Friday stayed the arrest of producers of *Mirzapur* web series — Farhan Akhtar and Ritesh Sidhwani — in connection with a first information report that accused them of improper and indecent portrayal of the town Mirzapur and outraging religious belief. However, a division bench of justices Manoj Kumar Gupta and Subhash Chand directed the petitioners to offer full cooperation in the investigation while granting the relief. Hearing a writ petition filed by Akhtar and Sidhwani, the court issued notice to the Uttar Pradesh government and complainant seeking their replies and listed the case in the first week of March. The FIR was registered against Akhtar and Sidhwani at Kotwali Dehat Police Station in Mirzapur district under sections 295-A, 504, 505 and 34 of IPC and 67-A of IT Act. The petitioners' counsels argued that no offence was made out against Akhtar and Sidhwani. There was no allegation that the web series was produced with any deliberate or malicious intention of outraging the religious and social feelings of the citizens of India or to insult the religious and social feelings of the people of any particular class, they said.

'Bigg Boss 14': Rakhi Sawant's brother Rakesh says she 'knows she is married', defends her antics with Abhinav Shukla

Several fans, viewers, and television actors slammed 'Bigg Boss 14' challenger Rakhi Sawant after she pulled co-contestant Abhinav Shukla's drawstring during an episode. Now, Rakhi's brother Rakesh Sawant has come out in his sister's defence and said that Rakhi is aware of her 'married' status and hasn't crossed her limits.

Rakesh also went on to claim that Abhinav and his wife Rubina Dilaik - also a contestant in 'Bigg Boss 14' - are overreacting to the whole incident as Rakhi has always been like this.

In an interview with ETimes TV, Rakesh defended his sister saying, "Rakhi is doing what she is best at doing and that is entertaining everyone. She is an entertainer and she hasn't crossed her line. The whole family has watched the episode and we feel she was just performing a task. At the end of the day, she knows she is married and has a husband back home. She will not cross her line ever."

KAPIL SHARMA CONFIRMS 'BREAK' FROM TV SHOW, TO FOCUS ON WELCOMING SECOND CHILD



Popular comic-actor Kapil Sharma on Thursday confirmed reports that his television series, The Kapil Sharma Show, will go on a "small break" as he wants to focus on his family, with wife Ginni Chatrath expecting their second child.

The second season of the comedy show The Kapil Sharma Show, with superstar Salman Khan attached as one of the producers, currently airs on Sony TV.

There were reports that the show would go off air briefly and return with creative changes.

During a Q&A session on Twitter, when a fan asked the comedian why is the show going off air, Sharma replied, "Because I need to be there at home with my wife to welcome our second baby."

Sharma tied the knot with Chatrath in 2018 and welcomed baby girl

Ananya in 2019.

When another user posed a similar question about the show, the 39-year-old actor said the show is only taking a "small break".

The comedy show features an ensemble of artistes, including Bharti Singh, Sumona Chakravarti, Krushna Abhishek and Kiku Sharda. During the session, Sharma also confirmed starring in the rumoured SonyLIV project, Dadi Ki Shaadi.

When a fan asked about its casting, the comedian said, "Don't know anything about the cast yet, team is working on the script."

Earlier this year, Sharma announced he was heading to Netflix for his digital debut.

Though it is unclear whether the project is a comedy special, series or film, it will premiere on the streamer in 2021 across 190 countries.

Amit Sadh's Jeet Ki Zid is a tribute to 'the army behind the army'



Amit Sadh-starrer Jeet Ki Zid is based on the real-life story of Kargil war hero Major Deep Singh Senger, who was left wheelchair-bound after sustaining injuries during a mission, only to rise like a Phoenix. There are several elements which set apart the ZEE5 web series from your regular war drama.

So what's different about Jeet Ki Zid?

Amit Sadh's Major Senger is a part of the Special Forces. As expected, we see his recruitment, training, failures and several other moments. But, despite the uniform and the guns, there isn't the usual chest-thumping patriotism. The makers instead shed light on the functioning of the Special Forces.

Yet, Jeet Ki Zid is more than just the Special Forces. The story is rather about "the army behind the army" (the title of one of its episodes). There's Major Senger's wife Jaya, his close friend Surya and his commanding officer Colonel Choudhary – all of whom are on a mission to uplift Senger's spirit as he struggles physically and mentally post his injury. Needless to say, Jeet Ki Zid thoroughly belongs to Amit Sadh, who's getting better with every project. But here, he's pushed his boundaries, be it his physical strength or acting prowess.

It is arguably his best performance till date. The show also relies heavily on other actors. Amrita Puri is a surprise package. It is Amrita's character Jaya's zid (stubbornness) which becomes Senger's backbone. I really wish she gets more such strong parts. And, I am also glad Sushant Singh is picking amazing roles off late. As the ruthless trainer of Major Senger, who ends up as his saviour, Sushant is a great casting choice. Also, Aly Goni in a supporting part just when he's already being loved by the Bigg Boss fans, helps the show.

When Major Senger misunderstands Surya's concern as sympathy, we expect the later to punch him. But all he does is pat Senger's shoulder and walk off. When Jaya discovers Senger's disability, she cries her heart out in private, so that she doesn't become weak in front of him. When Senger calls out Col. Choudhary's unorthodox ways, Choudhary avoids reacting too. Jeet Ki Zid plays well in silences or without many dialogues in the most tense situations.

What also stands out is how the show talks about physical disability, highlighting how indifferent our society is towards such people.

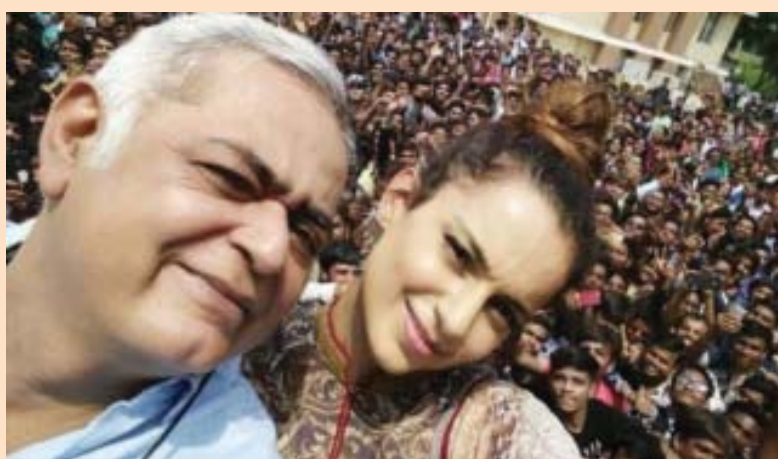
Jeet Ki Zid could've been just another Republic Day release. But, it ends up being a lot more.

'I MADE SIMRAN': HANSAL MEHTA CALLS KANGANA RANAUT STARRER A 'MISTAKE', ACTOR REACTS

Recently, filmmaker Hansal Mehta took to his Twitter page and once again stated that his directorial Simran was a mistake. The film stars Kangana Ranaut in the titular role and failed to win hearts of many. Hansal tweeted, "I supported him (Anna) in good faith. Like I later supported Arvind. I don't regret it. All of us make mistakes. I made Simran."

One of the Twitterati tried to troll Hansal by showing the box office collections of his films. He tweeted, "Ohh uncle aaj tak Kabhi aapke Film ne 10 bhi cross kiye hai Kya @KanganaTeam ke wajah se Pehli Baar Kisi Film ne 14 Crore cross kiye hai Dekh lo Saari Saari Flops films Di hai Aapne." To which Mehta replied, "Uffff... how frustrated you are... burnol chahiye?"

Kangana then replied to Hansal stating, "That's true Hansal sir, even you will agree with that, I stood by you and now you saying this, feel like singing 'achcha sila diya tune mere pyaar ka'" The Aligarh helmer replied to Kangana by tweeting, "Firstly, the tweet wasn't about you. Secondly, there are things that happened after the film that left me more than hurt. It made me sorely regret making the film. All said and done you remain a fine, fine actor. And you have my respect for that. And for your kindness." Simran released in 2017 and according to a Twitterati, before that, Hansal and Kangana were set to collaborate for Sarabjit biopic. However, the film was later directed by Omung Kumar and starred Randeep Hooda in the titular role alongside Aishwarya Rai Bachchan and Richa Chadha.



AMITABH BACHCHAN 'PETRIFIED' AS HE BEGINS SHOOT FOR MAYDAY



Megastar Amitabh Bachchan on Thursday opened up about the jitters and "nightmares" he faces on the first day of shooting a new film as he started working for his latest Mayday. Billed as an "edge-of-the-seat" drama, Mayday is being directed by Bollywood star Ajay Devgn, who is also essaying the lead role of a pilot in the movie.

Actor Rakul Preet Singh is playing the role of Devgn's copilot. The details of Bachchan's character have been kept under the wraps.

The 78-year-old actor took to Instagram and shared a picture of himself getting out of the car for the film's shoot.

"Dear Lord. These first days on new films are always such a nightmare. Petrified and in constant apprehension. Wondering what shall happen and if it happens will it be acceptable and passed. Want to run away and hide," Bachchan captioned the picture.

Sharing Bachchan's post on Twitter, Singh wrote she instead is "nervous" about sharing screen space with the megastar for the first time.

"Sir! I should be saying this! So thrilled, nervous, excited to kickstart work with you," the 30-year-old actor wrote.

The film, which also stars Angira Dhar, went on floors last month in Hyderabad.

Mayday marks Devgn's third directorial, after U Me Aur Hum (2008) and Shivaay in 2016. The film is slated to be released on April 29, 2022.

SC REJECTS TANDAV PLEA FOR RELIEF FROM ARREST: HERE'S WHAT CELEBS ARE SAYING



Ali Abbas Zafar's Tandav has been at the receiving end of many complaints and trolling since its release. The Saif Ali Khan-starrer has been accused of hurting religious sentiments of a section of the audience. After numerous complaints, the makers released a statement apologising for unintentionally hurting people's sentiments and agreed to snip 'problematic' sequences. However, the outrage continued and with apprehensions over arrest, a few members from the Tandav team approached the Supreme Court to grant them interim protection from arrest. On Wednesday, their plea was rejected by the apex court, and they were asked to approach the high court for anticipatory bail or quashing of FIRs. Following the news, many Bollywood celebrities express their views on social media. Konkona Sen Sharma posted on Twitter, "Almost all involved in the show have read the script and signed the contract! Let's arrest the whole cast and crew?"

Ashwin Mushran tweeted, "Don't all politicians swear on the constitution? They read the script before agreeing to it didn't they? Remind me again what it opens with."

Writer Mayur Puri offered to sit down with the lawmakers to explain to them the difference between fiction and non-fiction. In a series of tweets, he mentioned that there's 'an unwritten contract, an understanding between audience and creator that the events depicted in fiction are not true.'

He further wrote, "Even when it is claimed by the creator that it is true – it is still false. (Like Coen Brothers did in Fargo). Audience consumes stories, knowing they are stories and not the truth. When our grandmas told us stories of demons and heroes, we knew these were fictional. An autocratic government's puppet judiciary may want us to forget what is the line between fact and fiction but in India. India's judicial system has always interpreted and implemented laws in the right social context."

Others like Jay Mehta, Richa Chadha, Sumit Purohit also shared their views about the judgement.

Since the presiding judge pointed that actors had 'read the script' and so could be held responsible, Mukul Chadda tweeted that now people playing murders would be tried for the crime. "Excellent. Next people playing murderers on screen might be tried for the same. After all, they read the script..." he wrote.

Tandav stars Saif Ali Khan, Dimple Kapadia, Sunil Grover, Mohd Zeeshan Ayyub, Tigra Manshu Dhulia, Gauhar Khan, Kritika Kamra, Anup Soni, Kumud Mishra, Dino Morea and Sandhya Mridul among others. It is currently streaming on Amazon Prime Video.

TAAPSEE PANNU BEGINS TRAINING FOR THE MITHALI RAJ BIOPIC SHABAASH MITHU



Actor Taapsee Pannu on Wednesday said she has started training for her upcoming film Shabaash Mithu, a biopic on Indian cricketer Mithali Raj. The 33-year-old actor, who wrapped up shooting for Rashmi Rocket on Monday, dives straight into her next film, in which she essays the role of the Indian women's cricket captain. Pannu took to social media to share a photo from her training session. "And romance with the bat n the ball has begun.... long way to go but

a good start is half job done :) This is going to be another milestone of sorts.... For our captain cool @M_Raj03 and all her #WomenInBlue #ShabaashMithu @rahuldhokla @AndhareAjit @Viacom18Studios (sic)," she wrote on Twitter. Rahul Dholakia, best known for movies such as Parzania and Raees, will direct the biopic, which is backed by Viacom18 Studios.

DEEPIKA PADUKONE GEARS UP FOR FEBRUARY 2021 BY FLASHING HER MILLION DOLLAR SMILE



The moment Deepika Padukone posts a social media update, fans flood it with numerous likes and comments. Now that February 2021 has just started, the actor welcomed the month most beautifully. Deepika took to her social media pages and shared a candid click of herself flashing her million-dollar smile. The dimpled beauty's post was indeed a surprise for many and it was the most charming one too. In the photo, Deepika is seen wearing white ethnic wear with silver sequined threadwork all over it. She is seen looking down while showing her dimples with a hearty laugh. DP completed her look with hair tied in a messy bun and a pair of stud earrings. She opted for a fresh dewy makeup and red-muted lips. Deepika captioned her photo stating, "February".

Meanwhile, on the work front, Deepika will next be seen in Kabir Khan's 83 where she plays the role of Romi Dev opposite Ranveer Singh. The actor is currently shooting for Shakun Batra directorial co-starring Siddhant Chaturvedi and Ananya Panday. Moreover, DP also kickstarted shoot of Siddharth Anand's Pathan starring Shah Rukh Khan and John Abraham. Deepika will be teaming up with Prabhas for Nag Ashwin's upcoming directorial. Whereas she will also be leading and producing the Hindi remake of the Hollywood film The Intern. The actor is also headlining the mythological film Draupadi. Also, Deepika will be teaming up with Hrithik Roshan for the first time in Siddharth's forthcoming film Fighter which is set to be a 2022 release.

SUSHANT SINGH RAJPUT'S COUSIN AND TWO OTHERS SHOT IN BIHAR'S SAHARSA



Three unidentified assailants shot at two persons, including a relative of late Bollywood actor Sushant Singh Rajput, in Bihar's Saharsa district on Saturday. Lipi Singh, SP of Saharsa, confirmed the incident. One of the victims was critically injured in the incident and is battling for his life in a private hospital.

The incident occurred at around 11.30 am on Saturday when Raj Kumar Singh, the cousin of Sushant Singh Rajput, and his aide Ali Hasan, were on their way to adjoining Madhepura district. Raj Kumar owns three showrooms of Yamaha motorbikes in Saharsa, Madhepura and Supaul districts. He used to visit these three showrooms every day to monitor the business.

"When Raj Kumar and Ali Hasan reached Baijnathpur Chowk near Saharsa college, three unidentified men overtook their vehicles and opened fire at them. We have vital leads of this incident and the accused will be arrested soon," SP Lipi Singh said.

The victims were immediately rescued by passersby and taken to a nearby private hospital for treatment. The condition of Ali Hasan is serious.

"Prima facie its look to be a case of a property dispute between Raj Kumar Singh and the assailants. However, we are not ruling out the extortion angle. We are investigating all angles," an official of Saharsa police said.

ALIA BHATT IS 'DATE-O'CLOCK' READY WITH RANBIR KAPOOR, SHARES CUTE PHOTO



Alia Bhatt is currently in Delhi where she is spending time with Ranbir Kapoor. The latter has kickstarted the shoot for his forthcoming film directed by Luv Ranjan at the capital. Moreover, with Ranbir, Alia has also met up with his sister Riddhima Kapoor Sahni and her family. Now, the RRR actor shared a glimpse into her date night look with Ranbir. The actor took to her Instagram page and shared her latest photo.

In the mirror selfie, Alia is seen wearing a black printed sweater with a turtleneck and grey pants. She teamed it up with silver half hoop earrings and a gold ring. Alia left her hair loose open and flaunted her phone cover which has her name printed on it.

The actor captioned the photo stating, "date-o'clock". Meanwhile, Alia's mother and veteran actor Soni Razdan commented on her post by writing, "Nice phone cover. Nice girl holding phone cover too."

Earlier Riddhima posted a photo posing with her family including husband Bharat Sahni, daughter Samara Sahni, Ranbir and Alia while relishing Sunday lunch at home. She wrote, "Fam Jam -Sunday missed @neetu54 @sonirazdan @shaheenb #sundaylunchathome." Meanwhile, Ranbir and Alia along with their respective families headed to Ranthambore National Park to ring in New Years. A few of the photos made it to the Internet and fans couldn't stop gushing over it.

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MidWeek Sports



Tuesday, February 02, 2021

www.southasiandaily.com

Vol 21 Issue 05, Phone 647-272-8182, 905-670-3687

VIRAT KOHLI'S RETURN WILL MAKE TEAM'S BATTING ORDER 'BULLETPROOF,' SAYS IAN CHAPPELL



INDIA AND ENGLAND ARE SET TO LOCK HORNS IN FOUR TESTS, THREE ODIS, AND FIVE T20IS.

Former Australia captain Ian Chappell has said that India will start as favourites in the upcoming series against England and the return of key players in the host side will further strengthen the team and give it an "unbeatable appearance". He also said that the addition of Virat Kohli will make the team's batting order "bulletproof".

"Upcoming India versus England Test series has the potential to be an enticing contest similar in intensity to the one recently completed in Australia. India will start as favourites after an exhilarating victory over Australia, overcoming all obstacles. When you add the name Virat Kohli to the batting order, the team suddenly assumes a bulletproof cloak. In also adding the names R Ashwin, Hardik Pandya and Ishant Sharma to the list of available players, India take on an unbeatable appearance," Chappell wrote in his column for ESPNcricinfo.

"Likewise, England can point to improvements they can make to the side that won convincingly in Sri Lanka. The availability of a premium player in Ben Stokes who, like Pandya, provides all-round ability and selection flexibility, albeit at a higher level than the Indian, is a big plus. And Jofra Archer adds substantially to the quality of an already strong pace attack. However, it's the top of the England order, where another returning player, Rory Burns, will reside, that the scales tip in India's favour," he added.

On January 19, Australia's fortress -- The Gabba -- was finally breached. It took 32 years and two months, but the unthinkable was achieved after an injury-ravaged young Indian team defeated Australia by three wickets against all odds in the fourth Test to win the

series 2-1. Now, all the focus is shifted to the series against England. India and England are set to lock horns in four Tests, three ODIs, and five T20Is. The first two games of the 4-game series will be played in Chennai before the cricketers move to Ahmedabad for the third and fourth Test. Chappell also feels that Shubman Gill, Rohit Sharma and the "indomitable" Cheteshwar Pujara places India's top order well ahead of England's top order. "India's top three feature an impressive Shubman Gill, a talented but flawed Rohit Sharma and the indomitable Cheteshwar Pujara, which places them well ahead of England's top order," he said.

Chappell also said: "Unfortunately, any advantage England might gain from Root's incredible form at No. 4 is immediately negated by India's best batsman also holding down a similar position. Rarely does a series feature two such well-credentialed No. 4 batsmen. The middle order of both teams are a mixture of explosive stroke play with a touch of steadiness for good measure. "Ajinkya Rahane, Rishabh Pant and the possible addition of Pandya have India well placed to take full advantage of any good start. The ability to swiftly accelerate the scoring is nearly as important to winning Test matches as the capability of taking 20 wickets." "England are similarly placed with Stokes and Jos Buttler as their lethal weapons. The possible return of Ollie Pope would add some dependability to the threatening nature of that section of the batting order. However, Buttler's departure after just one Test and the possible return of Ravindra Jadeja to the Indian line-up would swing the scales further in favour of the home team.

'DHONI'S BATTING IMPROVED HIS KEEPING, WE WILL SEE SAME WITH PANT': SABA KARIM

Former India wicketkeeper Saba Karim believes that the cricket pundits have been harsh in their judgment of Rishabh Pant. The young wicketkeeper-batsman faced flak for his work behind the stumps but Karim believes that Pant's batting skills will improve his keeping in the time to come.

Speaking in an interaction on Sportskeeda Live, Saba Karim said that even MS Dhoni's wicketkeeping skills improved gradually with time because of his batting skills.

"We, at times, are very harsh in assessing Rishabh Pant's keeping. It's a skill you acquire as you grow in confidence. Wicketkeeping is all about confidence, and the best part about Rishabh Pant is that it's his batting ability that will help him grow as a wicketkeeper," he said. "I go back to early days of MS Dhoni. When MS Dhoni first came into the Indian team as a wicketkeeper-batsman, his keeping ability was not up to the mark. It was his batting that benefitted his keeping. Once he cemented his place in the side through his batting exploits, he realised that he could improve his keeping skills," Saba Karim added. "If you are batting well, it will help your wicketkeeping. They complement each other. In days to come, we will see the same kind of



transformation with Rishabh Pant's keeping skills, as well. "Having said so, he needs to work more on his technique, especially against spinners. R Sridhar is quite an accomplished coach, and I am sure he must be working closely with Pant. We need to give him some time," he further said. Rishabh Pant has been named in the squad for the first two Tests against England, the first of which begins on Friday.

PAKISTAN VS SOUTH AFRICA: HOSTS DROP WAHAB RIAZ, FAKHAR ZAMAN FOR T20I SERIES, INCLUDE HASAN ALI IN SQUAD



Pacer Wahab Riaz has been dropped from Pakistan's squad for the upcoming three-match T20I series against South Africa, Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) confirmed on Sunday. Along with Wahab, opening batsman Fakhar Zaman has also been shown the door while pacer Hasan Ali has made his way back into the squad. Pakistan would be led by Babar Azam in the upcoming three T20Is. Asif Ali and Aamer Yamin have also been recalled to the side, while four uncapped players -- Zafar Gohar, Danish Aziz, Zahid Mehmood, and Amad Butt have been named in the squad. Shadab Khan, Imad Wasim, and Mohammad Hafeez are also missing from the T20I squad. Hafeez had been in good form in the T20I series against New Zealand and he even registered a 90+ plus score in the second T20I. The national selectors led by chief selector Muhammad Wasim on Sunday announced the Pakistan men's 20-member squad for the three-match T20I series against South Africa which will be played in Lahore. The three matches will be played on February 11-14. The Pakistan squad along with the officials will enter the bio-secure bubble from Wednesday, February 3. The players taking part in the Test series will join the bubble at the end of the second Test that starts in Rawalpindi on Thursday, February 4. Pakistan had defeated South Africa by seven wickets in the first Test, and now both teams will square off in the final Test of the two-match series. Pakistan T20I Squad: Babar Azam (c), Haider Ali, Khushdil Shah, Hussain Talat, Danish Aziz, Asif Ali, Iftikhar Ahmed, Mohammad Nawaz, Zafar Gohar, Faheem Ashraf, Aamer Yamin, Amad Butt, Mohammad Rizwan, Sarfaraz Ahmed, Shaheen Afridi, Haris Rauf, Mohammad Hasnain, Hasan Ali, Usman Qadir, Zahid Mehmood.

For Joe Root this series could mean more than a ton of Tests

There is something about visiting batsmen making their Test debut in India going on to enjoy a great career. Viv Richards heads that elite list --- switching to overdrive in his very second Test in New Delhi and never looking back --- which also has England skipper Joe Root.

Among the batting top five of the current generation --- four if David Warner as opener is not seen as belonging to this band --- New Zealand's Kane Williamson debuted in Ahmedabad in 2010, scoring 131 at No. 6 in a draw. The Kiwis didn't escape a series defeat though Williamson quickly rose to the top across formats.

Among the other famous five, Root has plenty to look forward to in the four-Test series starting in Chennai on February 5. For one, he will be the first to play in his 100th Test. Virat Kohli will play his 88th and is ahead of Williamson (83), Steven Smith (77) and Warner (86). In the hope that he will be able to emulate Alastair Cook --- the man he replaced as Test skipper --- Root has set sights beyond the milestone. In 2006, a young Cook, on an England A tour to the Caribbean, flew in just in time to make his debut in the first Test in Nagpur. The summons went soon after skipper Michael Vaughan bit and spat a water bottle cap in dismay and walked out of the Vidarbha Cricket Association Stadium in central Nagpur. He had done in a dodgy knee again in training and Vaughan and those watching instantly knew his tour was over.

COOK DELIVERS

Opening the batting, Cook responded with 60 and 104*, adapting quickly to conditions a world apart from England and the West Indies. England drew a Test in which left-arm spinner Monty Panesar also made his debut and took Sachin Tendulkar as his first wicket. India won the next in Mohali, and though Cook missed the final Test in Mumbai due to a stomach issue, England bowlers stunned the home batsmen to draw the series 1-1.

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INDIA VS ENGLAND: NOT HARDIK PANDYA OR MAYANK AGARWAL BUT WASIM JAFFER PICKS THESE CRICKETERS FOR HIS PLAYING XI



Former India opening batsman Wasim Jaffer on Sunday picked hosts' playing eleven for the first Test against England, to be played in Chennai from February 5.

Jaffer picked Rohit Sharma and youngster Shubman Gill as the opening pair against England. Cheteshwar Pujara, skipper Virat Kohli, Ajinkya Rahane and Rishabh Pant are named in the middle-order while Axar Patel and Ravichandran Ashwin are the two spinners included in the side. The former batter included Axar because the English batter struggles against the left-arm spinner. India's pace attack will be headed by Jasprit Bumrah while between Ishant Sharma and Mohammed Siraj, the best should be picked depending upon the pitch, according to Jaffer. The same goes with spinner Kuldeep Sharma and Shardul Thakur.

"India's Playing XI for 1st Test (IMO): 1 Rohit 2 Gill 3 Pujara 4 Kohli 5 Rahane 6 Pant 7 Axar* 8 Ashwin 9 Kuldeep/Thakur 10 Ishant/Siraj 11 Bumrah. Question is about 2 spots depending on combination + pitch. What's your XI? *Eng have huge weakness vs left-arm spin. #INDvENG," Jaffer tweeted.

INDIA'S SQUAD FOR FIRST TWO TESTS AGAINST ENGLAND: Virat Kohli (c), Ajinkya Rahane, Rohit Sharma, Shubman Gill, Mayank

Agarwal, Cheteshwar Pujara, Wriddhiman Saha, Hardik Pandya, KL Rahul (subject to fitness), Rishabh Pant, Jasprit Bumrah, Ishant Sharma, Mohammad Siraj, Shardul Thakur, Ravi Ashwin, Kuldeep Yadav, Washington Sundar, Axar Patel.

On Friday, England assistant batting coach Graham Thorpe said that the hosts' bowling is not just about spinners as they also have a strong pace attack.

"The one thing about the Indian bowling attack is, it's not just about spin. I suppose their seam attack is also strong and so from that point of view, it's not to just get side-tracked completely into the spin side of things as well. Yes, it will be important no doubt about that," Thorpe had said in a virtual press conference.

"Indian bowling has developed into a very good attack and we are very aware of that. When you come to the sub-continent you will have to deal with spin. More so with the Indian attack, we are aware. The training time (three days) will be used to strike a fine balance practising both," he had added. India and England are set to lock horns in four Tests, three ODIs, and five T20Is. The first two games of the 4-game series will be played in Chennai before the cricketers move to Ahmedabad for the third and fourth Test.

Top unique records between both teams in Test matches in India

India will be hosting England for a blockbuster 4-match Test series which will be part of ICC World Test Championship's final qualifying series for both the teams.

However, only one of the two can make it up to the top two provided Australia and South Africa Test series result is in favour of both the teams.

As for the history of India's and England's Test matches, it goes way back to the pre-Independence days in 1933. England had officially played against India in a 3-match Test series winning 2-0.

However, after Independence, it took 18 years for both the teams to play another Test series in India. The 5-match Test series was ultimately ended in a Draw as 1-1. It was Colonel CK Nayudu who had captained the Indian side in 1933 while Vijay Hazare captained India in 1951.

As for stats, while Team India have won 19 matches, England have won 13, and the remaining 28 have ended in a Draw.

So while India awaits the return of cricket in its backyard, a look at the top unique records between both the teams in Test matches in India.



1. Highest team total

The highest team total between the two sides belongs to Team India, where they scored a mammoth 759/7 in 2016. It was the innings that saw Karun Nair score a triple hundred.

India went on to defeat England 4-0 and this was the highest team total, which was followed by England's 652/7 in 1985 and India's 631/10 in the same 2016 series.

2. Highest successful run chase

One of the most famous chases by Team India was against England during the 2008 series in Chennai. Virender Sehwag was on fire with his aggressive 83 (68), and that was followed by a superb century by Sachin Tendulkar.

The score of 387 is the highest chase between both the teams and the second-best is 208 which was by England in 1972. The third-best stands at just 144 by India in 2006.

3. Lowest team total

The two of the three lowest total between both the teams belongs to India. The lowest total was when the Men in Blue were bundled out for just 83 runs in the 1977 series.

This was followed by Team India again collapsing for just 100 runs in 2006, and last by England's 102 in 1981.

4. Batting records in Tests in India

Most Runs Overall: Sunil Gavaskar's 1331 runs from 39 innings makes him the leading run-scorer between both the teams for Tests in India. However, Gavaskar's average against England at home is just 35.97. Following Gavaskar is England's Sir Alastair Cook with 1235 runs from 26 innings, then legend Gundappa Vishwanath with 1022 runs from 30 innings.

Most Runs in a Series: Virat Kohli leads the chart with 655 runs at an average of 109.2 which he scored during the 2016 series. Next is England's Ken Barrington, who has 594 runs in 1961. Third is Vijay Manjrekar with 586 runs at an average of 83.7, which he scored during the 1961 series.

Best Batting Average (Min 500 runs): England's Ken Barrington has a total of 674 runs at a stunning average of 96.28. India's Mohammed Azharuddin stands second with 653 runs at an average of 93.28. Virat Kohli, who has 843 runs at an average of 70.25 is third.

Highest Individual Score: The highest individual score between both the teams belongs to Karun Nair with a fabulous triple century of 303*, which he scores during the 2016 series. This is followed by Virat Kohli's 235 in 2016 and Vinod Kamble's 224 in 1993.

Most 100s and 50s: With 5 hundreds, Sir Alastair Cook leads the charts, followed by M Azharuddin and Cheteshwar Pujara with 4 hundreds each.

As for the Fifties, Sunil Gavaskar has eight, followed by ML Jaisimha, KWR Fletcher, and surprisingly R Ashwin with six fifties each.

5. Bowling records in Tests in India

Most wickets overall: Team India's BS Chandrasekhar has the most number of wickets with 64 wickets from 23 innings at an average of 24.03. He is followed by Anil Kumble with 56 wickets and Derek Underwood with 54 wickets. Among current players, R Ashwin with 42 wickets has a good chance of overtaking these legends.

Most wickets in a series: BS Chandrasekhar leads with 35 wickets to his name from 9 innings during the 1972 series. He is followed by Vinoo Mankad with 34 wickets from 10 innings during the 1951 series. Derek Underwood with 29 wickets from 10 innings during the 1976 series.

Best bowling average and strike rate (Min 20 wickets): India's Vinoo Mankad is first in the list with 34 wickets at an average of 16.79. Hedley Verity is second with an average of 16.82 and is followed by John Lever, who has an average of 19.75.

When it comes to strike rate, Hedley Verity has the Lowest strike rate of 41.1 and is followed by John Lever with a strike rate of 43.1 and Bob Willis with a strike rate of 49.5.

Best spell (innings and match): India's Vinoo Mankad had a famous spell of 8/55 in 1951/52. BS Chandrasekhar is second with a spell of 8/79. The third is John Lever with a spell of 7/46.

Talking about the best spell in a match, Ian Botham is first with a BBM of 13/106 and is followed by Vinoo Mankad with a spell of 12/108 and R Ashwin with a spell of 12/167.

Most Five-wicket Hauls: BS Chandrasekhar has six 5-wicket hauls followed by Anil Kumble with four 5-wicket hauls. Third, in the list is India's R Ashwin with three 5-wicket hauls to his name. R Ashwin could also surpass both these legends in this series.

WILL THERE BE FANS AT MA CHIDAMBARAM STADIUM FOR THE 1ST TEST?



India and England are set to lock horns in four Tests, three ODIs, and five T20Is. The first two games of the 4-game series will be played in Chennai before the cricketers move to Ahmedabad for the third and fourth Test.

So with the first Test set to take place at the MA Chidambaram Stadium on February 5 and the second starting on February 13, will fans be allowed to witness the first international game in the country after the COVID-19 pandemic put a halt to games across the globe?

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Eppadi K Palanaswami on Sunday announced that they are further extending the lockdown period in the state till February 28 with further relaxations. So with the announcement, there is a possibility that the Tamil Nadu government could allow spectators at sports events with 50 per cent seating capacity.

It, however, remains to be seen if the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) and the Tamil Nadu Cricket Association (TNCA) will consider allowing fans to the venue.

Earlier, the TNCA had made it clear that they won't make any complacency which means Chennai is likely to host the series opener amidst an empty stadium.

"In view of the prevailing COVID-19 pandemic, the BCCI has decided not to take any kind of risk with the safety of the players during the forthcoming India-England Test series. The players, officials will be undergoing strict quarantine and several rounds of COVID-19 tests before entering the bio-bubble," TNCA Secretary RS Ramasaamy wrote in the circular. "As per BCCI directive, the first two Tests between February 5-17 being held at MA Chidambaram Stadium will take place behind closed doors. TNCA will not be issuing tickets or sub-committee badges."

The BCCI may, however, throw Ahmedabad's new Motera stadium open for fans when the Men in Blue take on the English side in five-match T20 Series from March 12.

Ravi Shastri to PM Modi: Your words will further strengthen Team India

India's head coach Ravi Shastri on Sunday said Prime Minister Narendra Modi's words of appreciation on the national cricket team's recent triumph in Australia would strengthen its resolve to perform "under pressure" in future assignments as well.

A depleted Indian cricket team braved injuries to its key players and also the absence of regular skipper Virat Kohli, who was on paternity leave, to record a historic come-from-behind 2-1 Test series win against Australia in their own den earlier this month. And the lion-hearted effort of the team was duly appreciated by Prime Minister Modi in his 'Mann Ki Baat' address to the nation on Sunday. "Is mahine cricket pitch se bhi bahut acchi khabar mili. Humari cricket team ne shuruati dikkaton ke baad, shaandar wapaasi karte huye Australia mein series jeeti. Humare khiladiyon ka hardwork aur teamwork perit karnevala hain (This month there was some great news from the cricket field. Our cricket team, after crossing initial hurdles, made a brilliant comeback to win the series in Australia. The hard work and team work of our players is inspirational)," Modi said in his address. The head coach of the victorious team tweeted: "Thank you, Sir. Your kind words will further strengthen TeamIndia and India's resolve to perform under pressure and in trying circumstances. Jai Hind!"

There are times when strike rate hardly matters: Cheteshwar Pujara

Cheteshwar Pujara, one of the heroes instrumental in Team India's 2-1 series win in Australia earlier this month, has spoken about his strike rate, something which was talked about during the series despite the success he was having. "There are times when strike rate hardly matters. Every batsman has a role to play. The team management completely understands that. Whether it was Ravi bhai (coach) or Vicky bhai (batting coach) or Ajinkya, they just told me to keep batting the way I bat," Pujara said, according to PTI.

IPL 2021 Dates and Schedule:

Tournament likely to start from THIS date

The 14th season of the Indian Premier League (IPL) is likely to start from April 11, once the domestic competitions are over. BCCI had announced the staging of Men's domestic one-day competition - Vijay Hazare Trophy - and senior women's one-day tournament as part of India's truncated domestic season for this year.

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) and the IPL Governing Council have almost finalised the day for the tournament, which will most likely be held in India this year. Speaking to the The Times of India, a BCCI official said, "The final decision will be taken by IPL GC but 11th April is the tentative date to start IPL 2021. The series against England finishes in March and players will get good break with 11th April start for IPL 14th." While the final of the 2021 IPL would somewhere be around the first week of June. The two-month India-England series will end on March 28 with the final of the third ODI in Pune. Many other international series will be ending at similar time, at the end of March. The two-week period will allow the players to travel, fulfill the quarantine and sponsorship requirements for the respective franchises.



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