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THE KARGIL GIRL' | 15



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'AASHRAM' TRAILER UNVEILED: BOBBY DEOL-PRAKASH JHA SHED LIGHT ON POLITICS IN SPIRITUAL WORLD



BOBBY DEOL HAS ENTERED THE DIGITAL WORLD WITH HIS UPCOMING WEB SERIES 'AASHRAM'. THE SHOW, WHICH HAS BEEN DIRECTED BY 'GANGAJAL' HELMER PRAKASH JHA, TALKS ABOUT POLITICS IN THE SPIRITUAL WORLD. IT TALKS ABOUT THE WORLD OF A SPIRITUAL LEADER, PLAYED BY DEOL. 'AASHRAM' IS BASED IN THE FICTIONAL CITY OF KASHIPUR. THE EMPIRE CREATED BY A GODMAN BABA NIRALA, CALLED 'THE AASHRAM', COMES UNDER THE RADAR AFTER A SKELETON OF A DEVOTEE FROM THE LOWER CASTE, IS FOUND IN THE ADJACENT FOREST LAND, DISRUPTS THE PEACE OF THE CITY IN THE CRUCIAL TIMES OF THE UPCOMING STATE ELECTIONS. THE TRAILER ALSO GIVES A VISUAL OF GIRLS BEING KEPT CAGED IN WHAT LOOKS LIKE THE BASEMENT OF THE 'AASHRAM'. HOWEVER IT LEAVES A QUESTION MARK WHETHER THE 'MESSIAH' BOBBY DEOL IS INVOLVED IN THE DEATH OF THE DEVOTEE. IT IS STILL NOT CONFIRMED WHETHER BABA NIRALA IS INSPIRED BY A REAL-LIFE 'GODMAN'.

DHONI RETIRES: RANVEER SINGH CALLS MS DHONI 'G.O.A.T.' ON SAKSHI DHONI'S POST FOR FORMER INDIAN SKIPPER



RANVEER SINGH LEFT A COMMENT ON MS DHONI'S WIFE SAKSHI DHONI'S POST FOR HER HUSBAND.

VIDYUT JAMMAL'S 'OUT-OF-THE-BOX' ATTEMPT IS ONLY PARTIALLY CONVINCING



VIDYUT JAMMAL-HEADED 'KHUDA HAAFIZ' SEES THE ACTOR MAKE AN ATTEMPT LIKE NEVER BEFORE

SHASHANK KHAITAN REVEALS WHY MR LELE WITH VARUN DHAWAN WAS SHELVED, CALLS IT 'BLESSING IN DISGUISE'



SHASHANK KHAITAN SAID THAT IT WAS FOR THE BEST THAT MR LELE WITH VARUN DHAWAN WAS PUT ON HOLD, AS THEY WOULD HAVE RACKED UP HUGE PRE-PRODUCTION COSTS DUE TO THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

SUSHANT SINGH RAJPUT, KUSHAL ZAVERI'S WHATSAPP CHAT REVEALS ACTOR WAS POSITIVE ABOUT HIS JOURNEY



A Whatsapp chat between Sushant Singh Rajput and his best friend Kushal Zaveri has been revealed. In the chat, Sushant appeared positive about his journey and future. The texts are from June 2, 2020, 12 days before Sushant was found dead in his Bandra apartment. For the uninformed, Kushal had co-produced 'Pavitra Rishta' which became one of the major reasons Sushant bagged his Bollywood debut film, 'Kai Po Che'. On June 2, Sushant Singh Rajput sent a Whatsapp message to his best friend Kushal Zaveri. The message read, "Kaise he bhai? I hope you're healthy and rocking. Miss you. Jai Shiv Shambho. - Sushant." Kushal replied writing, "Glad to hear from you bhai health wise all is well ... but the struggle is for everyone and I am no exception ... hope all is good with you."

'BIGG BOSS 14' PROMO, NEW IMAGES OF SALMAN KHAN UNVEILED



'Bigg Boss 14' is back and trending every single day because of a leaked promo still or a new promo itself. Remember the viral first look from 'Bigg Boss 14' where an image of Salman wearing a jacket was unveiled. The promo featuring him in the jacket is now out. The new 'Bigg Boss 14' promo has used the music of Salman's 'Swag Se Swagat'. In the video, Salman is heard stating that while 2020 has caused trouble for 'Bigg Boss', the 'Bigg Boss' is ready to give a befitting reply to the year. 'Ab scene paltega' was the tagline of the video. Meanwhile, fans shared images from 'Bigg Boss 14' upcoming promos too. Salman could be seen posing in front of the 'Bigg Boss 14' eye in the viral images. In fact, one promo would also feature the actor chained up like 'Thakur' and 'Veeru' from Sholay.

KANGANA RANAUT MOCKS KARAN JOHAR, QUESTIONS PATRIOTISM IN HIS FILMS



Kangana Ranaut has taken a dig at filmmaker Karan Johar yet again. The actor shared a 'shayari' for Karan and mocked him stating that even the third gender has now become a part of the Indian army, but the producer does not understand that a soldier is simply a soldier. It is being believed that the actor was talking about Janhvi Kapoor-headed film 'Gunjan Saxena: The Kargil Girl'. The movie has already faced the brunt of IAF for showing the Air Force in a negative light. Kangana wrote, "Karan Johar ke liye shayari arz hai...Humain nationalism ki dukaan chalani hai par deshbhakti nahi dikhani hai. Pakistan se war wali filmein bahut chalti hain, Hum bhi banaenge lekin uska villain bhi Hindustani hai. Ab third gender bhi aa gaya army mein lekin Karan Johar tu kab samjhega senani sirf senani hai."

FROM RISHABH PANT TO VIRAT KOHLI, THESE INDIAN CRICKETERS WILL HAVE TO LIVE UP TO MS DHONI'S LEGACY

Not an Independence Day many Indian cricket fans must have expected as MS Dhoni announced his retirement from international cricket. The manner of the announcement did come as a shock, most fans knew that it was to come sooner or later. Many even suspect that the postponement of the T20 World Cup may have got the former Indian skipper to make that decision. MS Dhoni last played for India in the 2019 World Cup and in the one year, India have struggled in many areas which were covered by the cricketer. From many good decisions as a captain to the lack of a finisher lower down the order to even missing out on a regular wicket-keeper who is quick behind the stumps - MS Dhoni surely left many holes in the squad. Now knowing MS Dhoni will never play for India again, a look at four cricketers who'll need to live up to the player's legacy.



SIX HOCKEY PLAYERS INCLUDING CAPTAIN MANPREET SINGH RECOVER FROM CORONAVIRUS, TO BE DISCHARGED FROM HOSPITAL



THE SIX INDIAN HOCKEY MEN PLAYERS, WHO WERE TESTED POSITIVE FOR CORONAVIRUS, HAVE RECOVERED FROM THE INFECTION AND WILL BE DISCHARGED FROM HOSPITAL TODAY. "HOCKEY PLAYERS WHO TESTED POSITIVE WILL BE DISCHARGED TODAY," A SOURCE WITHIN THE SPORTS AUTHORITY OF INDIA (SAI) TOLD ANI. THE SIX PLAYERS WHO DETECTED POSITIVE FOR CORONAVIRUS INCLUDE CAPTAIN MANPREET SINGH, MANDEEP SINGH, SURENDER KUMAR, JASKARAN SINGH, VARUN KUMAR, AND KRISHAN B PATHAK. ON AUGUST 11, MANDEEP WAS SHIFTED TO A HOSPITAL AFTER HIS BLOOD OXYGEN LEVEL DROPPED BELOW NORMAL. ON THE NEXT DAY, THE OTHER FIVE PLAYERS WERE ALSO ADMITTED TO THE HOSPITAL AS A PRECAUTIONARY MEASURE.

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NETIZENS CALL OUT AAMIR KHAN FOR MEETING TURKISH FIRST LADY EMINE ERDOGAN AMID 'LAAL SINGH CHADDHA' RECCE

Aamir Khan's visit to Turkey has made headlines for different reasons. The superstar visited the country for a recce of his upcoming film, Laal Singh Chaddha which he is planning to shoot there from October this year. On Sunday, a photo made it to the Internet where Aamir is seen meeting up with the First Lady of Turkey, Emine Erdogan. This made the Internet talking and people are calling out Aamir for paying a visit to her. Netizens wrote about strained relations between India and Turkey which is happening amid Aamir's visit. Many wrote that this shouldn't be taken as an ordinary meeting and bashed the actor for the same. One of them wrote, "Aamir Khan Refused to join Nationalist Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu when he was in Mumbai. But he went to Turkey to meet Turkish PM who supports Pakistan on Kashmir issue and also gave anti-India statements. Won't be surprised if #AamirKhan feels unsafe again in India." Meanwhile, Erdogan tweeted photos with Aamir and wrote, "I had the great pleasure of meeting @aamir_khan, the world-renowned Indian actor, filmmaker, and director, in Istanbul. I was happy to learn that Aamir decided to wrap up the shooting of his latest movie 'Laal Singh Chaddha' in different parts of Turkey. I look forward to it!"

Laal Singh Chaddha also stars Kareena Kapoor Khan as the female lead and is the Hindi remake of Hollywood film Forrest Gump. The English flick starred Tom Hanks in the titular role.



'Let's buckle up for another roller-coaster ride': Sanjay Dutt's real-life 'Kamli' Paresh Ghelani writes for actor



Soon after it was reported that Sanjay Dutt has been diagnosed with lung cancer, wishes for his speedy recovery started pouring in on social media pages. Many celebrities and fans posted wishes and heartfelt messages for the actor. Among them is Sanjay Dutt's real-life 'Kamli' and best friend Paresh Ghelani. He posted a note wherein he wrote about his recent interaction with Sanjay and stated that his 'another battle has begun'. Paresh's note read as "Brother: Thought we had covered the whole amusement park; thought it was closed now, but I guess we are not done yet. Let's buckle up for another roller-coaster ride!!! Yet another battle has begun; a battle we must and the battle you will conquer... We know the braveheart you are; you will win this. 'Sher Hai Tu Sher!!!' Love you..." Ghelani captioned his post stating, "Brother @duttssanjay. Hard to imagine just a few days ago we were talking about how we shall enjoy the next phase of our lives and we were talking about how we have been blessed to be able to ride, walk, jog, crawl, and enjoy the journey thus far; we are where we are. I still believe we are blessed and I know journey forward is going to be as beautiful and as colourful as it has been. God has been kind. nakupenda kaka!!"



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'GUNJAN SAXENA: THE KARGIL GIRL'



There is a scene in Gunjan Saxena: The Kargil Girl where Janhvi Kapoor's character asks her onscreen father (Pankaj Tripathi) that is she being a traitor to the country in the name of her dreams as she just wanted to fly planes. She says 'The Air Force needs pilots who are patriots.' Her loving father asks her to show her sincerity towards her job and she will automatically become a patriot. This scene has a deeper meaning and related in today's times too. Back in the 90s when India was inching towards the 21st century, gender issues were prominent. Male or a female, pilots are called pilots only, not easy for many to understand. Gunjan's household has so many issues with a sunkissed feminist father, who is the wind beneath the wings of the young girl aspiring to touch the skies. Her father was an army man, son follows the steps and joins the army but how can daughter dream of that? This question is asked by her Dada played by Angad Bedi, who becomes the voice of the 'log kya kahenge?' world. But the support of her father makes her give everyone a deaf ear until she becomes IAF Officer and enters the man's world (miniature boy locker room) lead by Viineet Kumar Singh. It showed the harsh reality of gender equality making men fear of losing their respect. However, the captain of Udhampur Air Force Station played by Manav Vij doesn't care about the gender unless Gunjan thinks it as an issue. She likes his strictness which made her become the top officer which is a hindrance to the rest of the team. Sharan Sharma's directorial debut is refreshing as the war sequences are not caricaturish and show the ground reality of what could have

happened back in the day. He narrated the story of Gunjan, written by Nikhil Mehrotra, to a crisp in the right runtime. The film showed feminism as the topic of discussion rather than nationalism which is basically the narrative of films with a war backdrop. Sharan showed the moments with great honesty and harsh reality which Gunjan must have actually witnessed while making a mark as IAF pilot. The aerial combat sequences are a visual delight which is beautifully co-ordinated by Marc Wolff (watch his work in Mission Impossible and Star Wars series). Talking about performances, Janhvi gave me a prejudicial thought which remained true in certain aspects. Gunjan was all of 24 when she entered war base for the first time, more or less Janhvi is of the same age group. For me, she seemed to be a misfit while being a revelation too. The actor can show vulnerability beautifully but her strong appeal as an IAF pilot lacked a display which might have been a deliberate move. Pankaj Tripathi, on the other hand, was the show stealer overall. The talented actor knows his craft and just his presence is enough for the scenes to be highlighted. He reminded me of a tough father like in Dangal or Neerja's father who always asks 'Mera bahadur baccha kaun?'. Angad Bedi is a loving brother but a practical man who fears supporting his sister's decision of being the only woman in a man's world. Viineet Kumar is shown as someone who stands by the rules (it's a man man man's world) and only by the physical means and he aces it perfectly. Manav Vij is always a treat to watch when it comes to showing a tough man. Gunjan Saxena is heart-touching not for its patriotism but for its feminism and who better than a father to portray one?!



Dhoni Retires: Ranveer Singh calls MS Dhoni 'G.O.A.T.' on Sakshi Dhoni's post for former Indian skipper



After Mahendra Singh Dhoni announced his retirement from international cricket, his wife Sakshi Dhoni took to her Instagram page and penned a heartfelt note for her husband. She posted a photo of Dhoni looking into the sky and quoted Maya Angelou, "People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." Sakshi also wrote about how much she is proud of Dhoni's achievements. Her post read as "You should be proud of what you have achieved. Congratulations on giving your best to the game. I am proud of your accomplishments and the person you are! I am sure you must have held those tears to say goodbye to your passion. Wishing you health,



happiness and wonderful things ahead! #thankyoumsd #proud". Indian skipper Virat Kohli also made a post for Dhoni and wrote, "Every cricketer has to end his journey one day, but still when someone you've gotten to know so closely announces that decision, you feel the emotion much more. What you've done for the country will always remain in everyone's heart, but the mutual respect and warmth I've received from you will always stay in mine. The world has seen achievements, I've seen the person. Thanks for everything skip. I tip my hat to you. @mahi7781". Along with Dhoni, Suresh Raina also announced his retirement from international cricket. They both are a part of IPL's team Chennai Super Kings.

Shashank Khaitan reveals why Mr Lele with Varun Dhawan was shelved, calls it 'blessing in disguise'



Filmmaker Shashank Khaitan has said that it was a 'blessing in disguise' that his film with actor Varun Dhawan, Mr Lele, was shelved just before the coronavirus pandemic gripped the country. He added that if this had not been the case, they would have racked up a huge amount on the pre-production of the film. Talking about Mr Lele, Shashank told Mid-Day, "As per our original plan, we were supposed to start filming on March 13. The (suspension of shoots) was announced on March 15. So, the stalling of our film was a blessing in disguise; otherwise, we would have ended up spending a lot more on the pre-production." He added that the film will be revived in the future. Shashank also shed some light on why Mr Lele was stalled. "We were not able to form a flow for the shoot. It was a small film that was to be based in Mumbai, but things were not falling in place. I kept feeling that something is not right. Since Karan [Johar, producer], Varun and I collectively felt it, we decided to hold off the project for the time being," he said. In January, it was announced that Varun and Shashank would team up for a 'maha entertainer' titled Mr Lele. A first-look poster was released too, in which the actor was seen lifting his hands in surrender while holding a gun. He wore nothing but his underwear and an orange fanny pack around his waist. However, in early March, Shashank announced that Mr Lele had been shelved. "Hi Guys, here is an update on Mr. Lele. Karan, Varun and I have mutually decided to postpone the shooting of the film. Its a script we all love and am sure will revisit soon. But scheduling the film was turning out to be very tough, as the film has a solid ensemble cast and the dates were just not falling into place," he wrote on Twitter. "I am very sure Varun and I will collaborate soon, either on Mr. Lele itself or on something new, as collaborating with him has always been the most joyful and fulfilling experience in my life," he added. Mr Lele is Varun and Shashank's second collaboration that did not take off. In 2018, they had announced a war drama titled Rannbhoomi, which was later shelved. The two have earlier worked together in Humpty Sharma Ki Dulhania and Badrinath Ki Dulhania.

Chunky Panday says 'there will be rivalry in the family' if he signs a film with daughter Ananya Panday

Actor Chunky Panday joked that there would be a 'world war at home' if he ever signed a film with his daughter, actor Ananya Panday. He said that both of them were extremely competitive and would try to outdo each other. In an interview with IANS, Chunky said, "Ananya and I will have a lot of fun if we work together. We will have that one-upmanship because she is extremely competitive and so am I." He went on to say that this 'competitive' spirit of theirs might just cause a 'rivalry in the family'. "If we come in front of the camera, main hot purana chawal hun (I am old), so I try to hog the limelight. Ananya will also try some tricks. There will be a rivalry in the family if we come together in one film. There will be a world war at home," he quipped. Chunky was rumoured to be playing Ananya's father in Puri Jagannadh's Fighter, which also marks Telugu star Vijay Deverakonda's Hindi debut. However, he denied the reports in a recent interview and clarified that he had not signed any project with his daughter yet. In the recent past, Ananya has been at the receiving end of negativity online, when the nepotism debate was reignited after actor Sushant Singh Rajput's death. Sushant's fans have claimed that he lost out on projects because of being an outsider and that he was isolated by the 'Bollywood privilege club'.

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VIDYUT JAMMWAL'S 'OUT-OF-THE-BOX' ATTEMPT IS ONLY PARTIALLY CONVINCING



'Khuda Haafiz', translated as 'May God guide you', is touted to be an action-thriller. However, the film lacks in both aspects. Vidyut Jammwal, the lead actor in the film, has stepped out of his comfort zone and even when needed, he simply does not get violent in the first half of the movie. The real action in the film begins in the last 15 minutes. Coming to thriller, the movie lacks all elements needed in a thriller. It is predictable (did Vidyut-Shivaleeka think she was going to get a 'job' with all girls, especially when the payment was in cash?), hypothetical (Vidyut beats trained personnel in the Immigration office and people only keep watching) and factually incorrect in many places (Vidyut exchanges pink-coloured Rs. 2000 notes in 2008, not kidding). Vidyut's real action begins in the second half of the movie - when there are blood spill, car-chasing sequences and hand-to-hand combat (the trained martial-artist even used a fork and chilli powder during one of the fights). Vidyut's face-off while trying to rescue his 'Nargis' (Shivaleeka) from being drugged into prostitution against her will, is one of the high points of the film. He also gives a tough fight to a very bulky Nawab Shah and highly-trained police personnel Shiv Pandit. Jammwal is shown as a very simple and sincere common man who wanted to be there for his wife at all times, which makes the end scene in the movie even more heartwarming. However, Vidyut's weak moments are a disappointment (example: interaction with the tourist agent after Nargis flies to Noman). Even when it is evident in certain scenes that he might be struggling to fit into the character, it never hampers his performance. One thing Jammwal deserves applause for, however, was accepting that he is scared, despite knowing that the weakness can be used against him. Seeing this refreshing change of men accepting that they too can be weak at a certain point and are not ashamed of stating the fact out in the open, is a much-needed change in today's times.

Annu Kapoor, who could be termed as the second lead in the film,

excels from the first frame to the last. He constantly keeps us confused about whether to be suspicious of him or go and give him a massive hug for the selflessness. The term 'Khuda Haafiz', too, is constantly used by him. Unfortunately, Shivaleeka does not have much screen space and is simply shown as a damsel in distress. Meanwhile, Aahana Kumra comes in as a good surprise in the form of Tamena. From her professional investigation in the case to the action sequence, she is a delight to watch. The story is set in Lucknow, India, and Noman, Gulf (a hypothetical place). The main plot takes place in Noman, where Shivaleeka is kept against her will, and Vidyut has come on a rescue mission. Right from Vidyut stepping into the place, there is an extra emphasis on the accent used, while talking in Hindi/English. Even a Bengali salesman who comes in for a cameo appearance has a certain accent, which could have been avoided. Annu Kapoor, again, is the only person who talks in a normal accent which does not look forced. Nawab Shah is also relatively natural in that aspect. 'Khuda Haafiz' also thrives a lot on its songs. While almost all songs fit in the situation, the dream/reality sequence in 'Mera Intezaar Karna', crooned by Armaan Malik, appeared a little abrupt around the situation Vidyut is stuck in (find her first, romance later, maybe?) On the other hand, 'Aakhri Kadam Tak', by Sonu Nigam, comes as a refreshing change during intense sequences in the film. The movie is set in 2008 and it should have released back then itself. A lot has changed in a decade, and especially in a time when women are taking charge and seen in the lead role, Vidyut heading the film, more importantly with fewer action scenes (which is what he does best) while the lead actress is simply a damsel in distress, is nothing but a disappointment. The songs, if not relevant to the scene, should also have been avoided, to focus more on the plotline at hand.



Ishaan Khatter: I have no ego about being recognised as Shahid Kapoor's brother, but I don't intend to ride on his fame

Actor Ishaan Khatter has always looked up to this brother Shahid Kapoor, and the two gush whenever asked about each other. Recently, Khatter had even said he doesn't get "irked" when referred to as Kapoor's brother.

Ask him if he has, at any point, felt that this takes away from his own talent, or might make people think he got it all easy in the industry due to his connection, and Khatter tells us, "Before answering this, I just want to say that yes, I did say I don't feel irked being recognised as that, but a lot of times, your words are sort of misinterpreted. I am trying to say it as nicely as I can, they are not always represented the way you said something. Your sentences can be misconstrued...Anyway, for me, personally, I am very proud of the fact that I am his brother." However, he clarifies that it doesn't mean it's the only way he's looking to grow.

"I don't intend to ride on his fame or anything of the sort. If somebody recognises me as his brother, I don't have an ego about it. That's not something that would ever bother me. But I am very aware of the fact that I started getting recognised as his brother, when I was 15. Before that, not many people knew too much about me. I started being seen in one-two places with him, then how the media is — there was curiosity about a boy who's coming into a certain age," confesses the 24-year-old, who started off his film career with Majid Majidi's Beyond The Clouds (2017). Not many know that Khatter, who stars in the recently released A Suitable Boy, also starred in Kapoor's Vaah! Life Ho Toh Aisi (2005) as a young boy, and assisted on the sets of Uda Punjab (2016).

Though he admits he started off being known as his brother, Khatter says his talent too is getting him recognition. He says, "I've just begun. Why should it take away from my talent? He started off 14 years before me, made such a beautiful place and mark for himself. I will always be his cheerleader, he's my blood, brother, family. For me, I don't see any reason to try and create a separate sort of identity for myself. That will happen on its own." It's his work, believes the actor, that will help him achieve that. "In the digital age, everything has sped up a lot, I am not a big taker for that. I feel like people get a sense of you, they can't entirely know who you are as a person. I think that will happen slowly through the years. I am not in any hurry, you can't tell people 'look at me this way, think this way'. It should happen naturally," he ends.



Jacqueline Fernandez adopts two Maharashtra villages, to look after more than 1500 people for three years



Jacqueline Fernandez decided to give back in a big way on her birthday (August 11) this year. She adopted two villages in Maharashtra - Pathardi and Sakur - for three years. The new responsibility taken up by her will involve her looking after around 1,550 people.

In an interview with The Times of India, Jacqueline said that she will be sponsoring food supplies for the villagers, many of whom suffer from malnutrition. "This has been on my mind for a while now. It has also been a difficult year for everyone due to the ongoing pandemic. Some of us have been lucky, but a section of the society has been struggling even for basic necessities," she said.

Elaborating about the initiative, Jacqueline said, "Around 1,550 people will be looked after as a part of this project. People from the villages, including caregivers and children, will be screened for malnutrition. Awareness sessions will also be held for them. We plan to provide information and support to 150 women to enable them to take care of newborn babies, and seven frontline workers will be given training and on-the-job assistance."

"We plan to track the health of 20 families, who will be provided with the means to overcome malnutrition, and 20 women will receive support from conception till childbirth to ensure that they are healthy. Also, 20 children will be treated for malnutrition, and 20 kitchen gardens will be set up in the villages. Giving back to society is something that my parents have taught me, and they were extremely supportive of this decision of mine," she added. Jacqueline kept busy during the lockdown. She collaborated with Salman Khan for his music video - Tere Bina - which was shot at his farmhouse in Panvel. Apart from starring in the video, she was also in charge of the lighting. Salman, meanwhile, was the singer as well as the director of the music video. In May, Jacqueline saw the release of her Netflix original, Mrs Serial Killer. The film, directed by Shirish Kunder, also starred Manoj Bajpayee and Mohit Raina. It was unanimously panned by critics.

Sanjana Sanghi posts pic with Saif Ali Khan, Sushant Singh Rajput: 'Sandwiched between these two absolute gentlemen'



Actor Sanjana Sanghi took to Instagram to share a picture with her Dil Bechara co-stars Saif Ali Khan and late actor Sushant Singh Rajput as she wished the senior actor on his 50th birthday. She addressed both the men as 'absolute gentlemen'. Sharing the picture, she wrote: "BTS, Dil Bechara - Manny, Kizie Aur AV. It's an odd thing to be envious of your own past. But here I find myself, doing just that. It all becomes, a memory. That you pray lasts forever."

Sandwiched between these two absolute gentlemen - amidst the crisp morning sunshine of a cold Parisian day, the faint smell of coffee being freshly brewed, the joy of creating art together; and conversations that spanned across philosophy, literature, cinema, cricket, success and failure and life, at large. Here's wishing a very birthday to our very own Abhimanyu veer!

Thank you Saif sir, for your generosity and kindness in sharing perspective and such heartfelt encouragement. Like I'd told you, I wrote my undergraduate college thesis on your film Dil Chahta Hai, and to get to perform in my debut film, with you as Kizie's Abhimanyu veer? I'll take it!" Saif turned 50 on Sunday. The actor did a cameo in Dil Bechara, playing a character called Abhimanyu Veer. Ever since the tragic death of Sushant, Sanjana has been sharing her memories with the actor including pictures, video clips and BTS moments during the making of their film, Dil Bechara. One such a moment was when she shared a video from their workshop for the film in Jamshedpur. She wrote: "Moments. Memories. Experiences. Learning. Creation. Liberation. Unison. Yet another one of the endless moments I'd do anything to relive : Manny, Kizie, Ma-Baba and Durgesh Bhaiya sit down to workshop & do a reading of their favourite script, Dil Bechara. #ThinkingOfYou #JusticeForSushant #CBIForSSR." Sushant died by suicide on June 14. Dil Bechara was his last film.



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THE MS DHONI YOU KNOW, THE MS DHONI WE ALL KNOW, THE MS DHONI PERHAPS NO ONE KNOWS



"Wo dekh rahe hai mujhe, tu marwayega bhai (He's watching me, you'll get me in trouble)," the fielder at the long-off fence told the 12th man. "Goggle pahne huye kis taraf dekhte hai pata bhi nahi chalta but ha dekha toh hoga (With goggles on, it's difficult to say which way he's looking but yes he must have noticed for sure)," was the reply. A ball later, came a wave of the hand from behind the stumps followed by a typical captain-like gesture to come up from the boundary. "Bas wahi ruk, ek kadam age aa sakta hai but peeche mat jana (Stand there, can take a step forward but not backwards)."

The date was March 15, 2017, the venue Delhi's Palam Sports Complex, the occasion a Vijay Hazare Trophy quarter-final. The man who was asked to come up from the boundary was Jharkhand batsman Ishank Jaggi. The goggle-wearing captain who Jaggi feared might have 'watched' his uncalled for tete-e-tete was MS Dhoni. Boundary riders having an odd chat with reserve players while having a drink is a regular affair in cricket. Dhoni sure can't be 'watching' his fielders for this. But Jaggi's fears were because he had allowed Vidarbha to sneak a couple in the previous over. The reason? His constant chirping with the 12th man. He was right at the fence and slow off the blocks. Those who have covered as reporters or watched matches as spectators in the twin grounds at the Palam Sports Complex know there are no such grounds in the capital which allows a closer view of the action than it. Despite the constant noise of flights landing and taking off at the adjacent airbase, Jaggi, who is a veteran first-class cricketer, was certain his little lapse of concentration will be penalised by Dhoni. But when and how he had no clue. The obvious thing would have been a few stern words or a simple swap of fielding position. Dhoni had done neither. His solution of asking Jaggi to come up from the boundary made sure he can't go back for quick drinks and exchange notes with the reserves in between deliveries. And for the

record – Vidarbha weren't able to take another double through the long-off area for the entire duration of that match.

Those wondering whether Dhoni's unique strictness was only reserved for Jaggi... There's more. While walking back towards the dressing room in the innings break, Dhoni put his arm around the shoulder of Shasheem Rathour and said: "Mujhe toh itna paani kabhi nahi pilata tu (You never offer me this much water)." Yes, he was the one who was talking with Jaggi in the long-off boundary. Jaggi, Rathour, and the reporters witness to this incident were all familiar with Dhoni's ways of dealing with things but none of them could guess his next move.

Jaggi was adjudged Player of the Match for his unbeaten 41 in that low-scoring affair which Jharkhand won. When asked about the long-off boundary incident after the match, the right-hander had said, "When Mahi bhai joined me in the middle in our chase he said 'we won't lose this by a run, will we?' That had motivated me so much. I'm glad I could stay there till the end with him." Despite being that towering figure that he is in international cricket, Dhoni had always remained close to Jharkhand cricketers and Jaggi is one of them but even he couldn't give an idea about Dhoni's moves. To be honest no one could. Dhoni was that boy-next-door whom everyone adored, loved to see in the neighbourhood but had very little idea of the complex and yet simple mechanisms of the man. A lot was told – and will be in the future – about Dhoni and yet so much remains untold. Everyone knew Dhoni's like that little caged container of ice even during a volcanic eruption but no one knew how. His idea of taking the match as deep as the last over on most occasions was nothing new to his teammates, his opponents, the fans, the commentators, the reporters and yet he managed to surprise each and every one of them with something or the other at end of it. There was always that known unknown factor with Dhoni that made him so special, so successful and so respected.

WASIM AKRAM WANTS ENGLAND TO TOUR PAKISTAN IN 2022, SAYS THEY 'OWE' THE BOYS FOR TRAVELLING AMID COVID-19

Despite the coronavirus pandemic, cricket tried to make a comeback with England and West Indies being the first Test series to take place after a gap of around three months.

After Windies, Pakistan cricket team too decided to tour England. The players were put under a bio-secure environment with strict rules in place. The players weren't even allowed to enter the bubble with our taking COVID-19 tests. They also had to detach themselves from the outside world for the entirety of the tour.

The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) chief executive Tom Harrison has thanked West Indies and Pakistan for touring the country amid the pandemic. Now, talking about the same, former Pakistan skipper and fast-bowling legend Wasim Akram has said that England must tour Pakistan in 2022 to reciprocate the visit.

"You boys owe Pakistan cricket, and the country, a lot, with the boys coming over here," former Pakistan captain Akram told Sky Sports Cricket. "They've been here almost two-and-half months in the bio-secure environment," he said, referring to precautions that have included zones off-limits to anyone other than players and officials. Matches have been played without spectators.

"So if everything goes well, England should tour Pakistan," said Akram, arguably the greatest left-arm pacer.

"I promise you they'll get looked after on and off the field there and every game will be a packed house." Many teams have declined to tour Pakistan since a 2009 terror attack on the Sri Lanka team bus in Lahore. As for England, they last toured Pakistan in 2005-6.

"The English players were there for the Pakistan Super League in our team, Karachi Kings - Alex Hales and Chris Jordan," Akram, bowling coach of the franchise, said.

"They loved it, they enjoyed it, they got looked after beautifully, so the PSL is a step in the right direction."

RAINA OFFICIALLY COMMUNICATED RETIREMENT DECISION A DAY AFTER PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT: BCCI



Suresh Raina communicated his retirement decision to the BCCI a day after he made it public, the Board said on Monday, lauding the former India all-rounder for being a key player in the limited-overs format.

Minutes after the iconic Mahendra Singh Dhoni announced his international retirement on August 15, 33-year-old Raina followed his mentor in doing the same, surprising many. "Attacking left-hand batsman Suresh Raina officially communicated to BCCI on Sunday about his decision to retire from international cricket," said the BCCI in a statement. The usual norm is players informing the BCCI before announcing retirement.

Raina represented India in 18 Tests, 226 ODIs and 78 T20Is in an international career spanning 13 years. He also had the honour of captaining the team briefly.

"Under his captaincy, India registered a 3-2 series victory in West Indies and a 2-0 win over Bangladesh in ODIs and a 2-0 T20 International series win in Zimbabwe," the statement added. Raina, who scored a century on debut in Tests, is also the first Indian to slam hundreds in all three formats of the game and his centuries were scored outside India. BCCI president Sourav Ganguly paid a glowing tribute to a fellow south-paw. "Suresh Raina has been one of the key performers in limited overs cricket for India. Coming lower down the order and playing some of the match-winning knocks requires a lot of skill and talent," Ganguly stated. "He along with Yuvraj Singh and MS Dhoni formed a solid middle order for India in ODIs. I wish him and his family all the very best," he added. BCCI secretary Jay Shah echoed the sentiment.

"Suresh Raina has been arguably one of the finest T20 batsmen. A live wire on the field, Raina's prowess as a left-handed batsman was exhibited throughout his cricketing career." A big match player, Raina's cameo against Australia in the quarterfinal in the 2011 World Cup was a testimony to his glittering career that followed. I wish him all the very best in the second innings of his career," said Shah.

IPL 2020: 'Will get to learn a lot from Harbhajan Singh' - Piyush Chawla on playing for CSK

The Chennai Super Kings franchise of the Indian Premier League is one of the most successful teams in the competition. Led by Mahendra Singh?Dhoni, CSK have won the title thrice. The side were on the verge of winning their fourth one last year, but lost just by one run against Mumbai Indians in the final. Piyush Chawla, who won two titles with Kolkata Knight?Riders himself, was bought by CSK at the auctions in December last year. Now, as IPL is set to begin from September 19th this year, Chawla opens up on how he feels about playing for CSK.

"It's always a pleasure playing under Mahi Bhai (MS Dhoni), because we all know what kind of a captain he is. He is one of the best in the world. As a bowler you enjoy playing under somebody like Mahi Bhai," Chawla was quoted as saying by cricket.com. Speaking on his first reactions after finding out that he has been bought by CSK, Chawla said: "Obviously first reaction was I was quite happy. As you are talking about a lot of spinners but we all know how Mahi bhai (MS Dhoni) plays around with the spinners. So that will be really good for me and for the team. It is also very important to have healthy competition in the team," he said.

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You will always be my captain: Virat Kohli to MS Dhoni one more time

“You will always be my captain,” said India skipper Virat Kohli to Mahendra Singh Dhoni on Sunday, expressing gratitude for the “friendship and belief” that he got from the talismanic senior. In a nearly minute-long video posted on the BCCI’s official Twitter handle, Kohli said Dhoni’s retirement is that rare moment in his life when he doesn’t have enough words to express his thoughts. “Words fall short a lot of times in life and I think this is one of those moments. All I can say is that you will always be that guy who sat in the last seat of the bus,” Kohli said. Dhoni and Kohli shared a visibly comfortable equation even after the latter took over the leader’s mantle and both spoke highly of each other. “We have shared a great camaraderie, friendship, understanding because we have always played for the same roles, same goals, which was to make the team win,” he said. “It’s been a pleasure playing under you, alongside you. You showed belief in me, which I would always be grateful for. I have said it before, I will say it again, you will always be my captain.” Dhoni announced his retirement on Saturday via Instagram. The 39-year-old will, however, continue to compete in the IPL for Chennai Super Kings. Moved out of India due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this year’s IPL is scheduled to start on September 19 in the UAE.



‘MS DHONI ARGUABLY GREATEST WHITE-BALL CAPTAIN,’ SAY VAUGHAN AND HUSSAIN



MS Dhoni is arguably the greatest white-ball skipper in the history of the game, former England captains Michael Vaughan and Nasser Hussain said in a tribute to the Indian great who quit international cricket on Saturday. Known for his unflappable demeanour, ‘Captain Cool’ Dhoni led India to World Cup titles in 2007 (Twenty20) and 2011 (ODI), besides overseeing their 2013 Champions Trophy triumph. India also became the top-ranked Test team under Dhoni, who ended an illustrious, trophy-laden career with an Instagram message. “What an incredible international career. You could argue the greatest ever white ball captain & finisher,” tweeted Vaughan. Hussain also praised Dhoni’s ability to finish a game in style, best illustrated in the final of the 2011 World Cup when Dhoni sealed India’s victory with a six. “A great captain, probably the best white-ball captain there has ever been,” Hussain told Sky Sports. “And also a cool, calm customer under pressure; a great finisher of a game, the game wasn’t won until you got Dhoni out.” Dhoni aggregated 17,000 international runs across formats and claimed more than 800 victims as wicketkeeper. Spin great Shane Warne was another admirer of Dhoni’s phlegmatic brand of leadership. “He had a calmness about him that was fantastic and he always got the best out of his team...” Warne told Sky Sports. “His players really respected him and responded to the way Dhoni wanted to play the game.” Warne also extended a public invitation to Dhoni to play next year in The Hundred, English cricket’s new short-form competition, where he has taken on the role as head coach for the London Spirit. “I just wonder if I could get him down to the London Spirit next year for The Hundred,” Warne said. “I might put out a call to see if he wants to play at Lord’s. I’ll find the money, MS!”

MS Dhoni, Yuvraj Singh changed the concept of chasing in ODIs’: Ajit Agarkar

Bas ek hi dream adhura reh gaya (only one dream remained unfulfilled),” laments Ram Babu, the ardent MS Dhoni fan. “I wanted to see Mahi sir retire on the ground with me waving the India flag from the stands and then next to him. If he had done it that way, I and the entire country would have felt better.” For 15 years, Babu had criss-crossed India and other countries in the subcontinent to cheer Dhoni in almost 200 India games. The team would give him a complimentary pass, and like Tendulkar fan Sudhir Chaudhary, Babu too would paint the tri-colour on his body with 7, Dhoni’s jersey number, prominent. Though Dhoni’s die-hard fans will be disappointed, the timing has been just right. Had he chased a grand farewell, Dhoni would have unnecessarily stretched his India career. An ICC ODI World Cup semifinal, with a fighting half-century in the last innings, though in a losing cause, is not that bad. It saved India, 92/6 at one stage, humiliation as they ended just 18 runs short of victory. If Dhoni doubted whether there was gas in the tank in that game against New Zealand, he merely had to look at the other end. Ravindra Jadeja was the aggressor and Dhoni was backing up (his strike rate was 69.44 to Jadeja’s 130.50). At his prime, it would be Dhoni who would have taken on the bowling. Ajit Agarkar, who played in Dhoni’s India debut game, recalls: “Dhoni and Yuvraj Singh changed the concept of chasing in ODIs. They were so good at it that after their success, other teams also started to field first on winning the toss.”

SURESH RAINA REVEALS WHY HE AND MS DHONI DECIDED TO ANNOUNCE RETIREMENT ON AUGUST 15

Suresh Raina has revealed he was aware of the fact that MS Dhoni, his long-time friend and India teammate, would announce his retirement upon landing in Chennai. Raina and Dhoni, along with Piyush Chawla, Deepak Chahar and Karn Sharma landed in Chennai on August 14, and a day later, the former India captain informed the world of his retirement through a post on Instagram. Raina, who followed Dhoni into retirement just moments later, shed light on the emotional night that was August 15, 2020. “I knew Dhoni would announce his retirement upon reaching Chennai, so I

was ready,” Raina told Dainik Jagran. “I, Piyush Chawla, Deepak Chahar and Karn Sharma reached Ranchi on 14 August with the chartered plane, and picked up Mahi bhai and Monu Singh. “After announcing our retirement, we hugged and cried a lot. I, Piyush, Ambati Rayudu, Kedar Jadhav and Karn sat together after that, talked about our careers and our relationship. We parted during the night.” Raina made his retirement official when he conveyed the same on his social media on Sunday and later the BCCI. That said, Raina informed that the decision to retire was not instinct and in-

stead pre-planned. “We had already made up our minds to retire on Saturday (August 15). Dhoni’s jersey number is 7 and mine is 3 - put it together and it makes 73. And on August 15, India completed 73 years of independence, so there couldn’t have been a better day,” Raina said. “Dhoni began his career on 23 December (2004) against Bangladesh in Chittagong, while I made my debut on 30 July (2005) against Sri Lanka. Both of us almost began together in international cricket, remained together at CSK, and so we now retired together and will continue to play in IPL together.”

‘One of the best leaders I have come across’: 2011 World Cup-winning coach Gary Kirsten on MS Dhoni



Their stint together yielded India the 2011 World Cup trophy and former India coach Gary Kirsten on Monday doffed his hat to the enigmatic Mahendra Singh Dhoni, calling him “one of the best leaders” he has worked with. Dhoni, the only captain to have won all the ICC trophies, retired from international cricket on Saturday, more than a year after he last played for India -- the lost World Cup semifinal against New Zealand. The 52-year-old Kirsten, who was head coach of the Indian team between 2008 to 2011, thanked Dhoni for all the good

memories that he made during his tenure. “A privilege to work with one of the best leaders I have come across. Thanks MS for many fond memories with the Indian Cricket Team @msdhoni,” the former South African batsman wrote on his twitter handle. Under Kirsten, India had claimed the Asia Cup in 2010 before ending a 28-year long wait to win their second World Cup crown in 2011. Kirsten built a strong relationship with Dhoni during the time and on Monday, he revisited a past statement, which described

their bond aptly. “I would go to war with Dhoni by my side.” Dhoni’s retirement has triggered an avalanche of emotional tributes with several past and current cricketers expressing their admiration for his unorthodox leadership, brilliant finishing skills and sharpness behind the stumps. The man himself, only issued a brief “consider me retired” post on instagram to announce the big decision and has not spoken after that. He will, however, be seen in action during the IPL starting September 19 in the UAE.

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MS DHONI: THE MAN WHO TURNED DREAMS INTO REALITY

Ahead of the India-West Indies encounter at last year’s World Cup, MS Dhoni was undergoing his routine nets session at the Old Trafford in Manchester. Over the years, Dhoni has had a fixed pattern – usually stepping into the nets late and facing the spinners first. Slowly, he brings out the big shots, readying himself to face the pacers, and if need be, take some throwdowns. June 27, 2019 wasn’t much different. Dhoni batted for around half an hour and packed his kit. The moment he stepped out, Dhoni was mobbed by a plethora of journalists – reporters and photographers alike. Seeing almost 25 of them, quite literally, charging towards him, Dhoni took a step back and said: “Arrey! Kya ho gaya? Abhi retirement nahi announce kara maine. (What’s the matter? I haven’t announced my retirement yet).

The words got lost amid the cheers as Dhoni acknowledged almost everyone. A few autographs and selfies later, he was given his space. These are the same people who’ve had the privilege of covering him for years – some of them were in Chittagong on December 23, 2004, the day Dhoni had marked his ODI debut. You’d think this kind of mobbing by the press must be pretty normal, right? Wrong! Veteran journalists had seldom seen this kind of madness from their younger peers. Little over a year later, Dhoni has indeed called time on his international career. This time, there was no big ICC event, nor a flock of journalists. Dhoni went out and how? Through a post on Instagram. A video montage that’s, to be honest, rough around the edges. I find the announcement surprising. Despite being aware deep down that the semi-final against New Zealand on July 10 was his last in India colours, I felt Dhoni would never officially announce his retirement, and that it would be understood – when he wouldn’t have played another game for India in the next year – that he’s done.

Afterall, that’s how it’s always been with him. Even when he walked away from Test cricket, helping India save the Boxing Day Test in Melbourne, legend has it that no one had even the slightest of ideas about it. After wrapping up the press conference, Dhoni returned to the change room and dropped a bomb on his teammates. Then again, he does give you those subtle hints, and it’s up to you whether you can crack it. At the MCG, he had walked off the ground holding a stump, while at the World Cup 2019, Dhoni, different logos appeared on his bat throughout the tournament which, for all you know, could be his way of thanking the sponsors who’ve supported him over the years. But perhaps Dhoni owed it to his fans, who’ve had a huge role in making him an icon – perhaps next only to Sachin Tendulkar. Since his absence from cricket last year, the belief is that everyone knew the time had come – Virat Kohli, Ravi Shastri, his friends, even a section of his fans. Although it was never said out loud, the fact that MSK Prasad, the former BCCI chief selector had stated in October that



the panel had decided to ‘move on’ from Dhoni, was a huge indication in itself. Hark back to 2004, the year Dhoni burst on to the scene. Long before the LEDs, UHDs and 4K came into existence, a young Dhoni was presented to us on our TV screens. The 21-inch Flatron was the best available in the market and that’s the first memory of an exuberant Dhoni for many. MAX (now Sony Max) aired India A’s tour of Kenya, and I in particular, happened to catch both of Dhoni’s centuries against Pakistan A (119 and 120) for a much-refreshing experience. He had brute force. The sixes reminded onlookers of Ricardo Powell’s magical knock of 124 against India in Singapore in 1999. The sight of an Indian batsman tonking huge sixes was, quite simply, unheard of. And of course, the fabled long hair was an early sign of his cavalry.

Back in the day, seldom did you hear a player mentioning a cricket website, let alone acknowledged reading it during a presentation ceremony. Nor did one ever imagine an Indian captain asking the players to simply ‘enjoy themselves’ in a crunch final. Dhoni was the maverick of a new Team India, that would go on to achieve incredible things, including reaching the pinnacle of the ICC Test rankings for the first time. If Sourav Ganguly ushered India into the new era where players dared to dream, Dhoni took it forward and turned them into reality. India winning a tri-series in Australia, or defeating New Zealand in a Test series on their soil, or capturing the holy grail – the

World Cup in 2011 – were achievements India had only hoped to come close to before Dhoni. He turned the years of frustrations of being an Indian cricket fan in the mid-2000s, which struggled to win finals into tales they’d live to tell their grandkids.

And today as he walks off, the heart is filled with gratitude. In the last few years, his ability to reproduce shots of old declined, and Dhoni at times, struggled to maintain fluency in limited-overs cricket. But even on his worst days, the most ardent of Dhoni critics couldn’t help but expect an MS classic to dig India out of trouble. During the WC semi-final when Dhoni and Jadeja were batting, a WhatsApp group comprising journalists believed India could win till MSD was around. One of the messages read: “Feeling toh aa raha hai (I have a strong feeling today.) Usually in such situations, I’ll laugh at India, but I didn’t get the feeling today”, while another said: “Aayega Dhoni hi (Dhoni will come to the fore). He is destiny’s child”. As it panned out, those ‘feelings’ almost came true.

On the eve of the India-WI match, the legendary Dhoni was kind enough to sign a souvenir to mark a journo’s personal coverage milestone. He put a nice finishing touch by adding “Double it up.” The journo said: “Will definitely try,” to which Dhoni replied: “Will be tough. Bilateral series have only three ODIs now instead of five. But you will manage. You are not close to retirement age.”

Wish the same could be said about him!

DIRECT BCCI TO HOLD IPL IN INDIA: LAWYER TO HIGH COURT

An advocate has approached the Bombay High Court challenging the decision of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) to hold the 13th season of the Indian Premier League (IPL) in the UAE this year instead of India. The petition, filed by Pune-based advocate Abhishek Lagoo, said if the IPL is held outside India it would cause huge economic and revenue loss to the country.

Lagoo, who in his plea claimed to be an ardent cricket fan, said the IPL is the most popular T20 cricket league and its brand value in 2019 was Rs 475 billion and is the main revenue earner for the BCCI. The petition is expected to heard by a division bench of Chief Justice

Dipankar Datta and Justice Revati Mohite Dere on August 18. This year’s IPL matches were to begin in March but were postponed due to the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. The BCCI, on August 2, said the IPL would be held between September 19 and November 10 at Dubai, Sharjah and Abu Dhabi stadiums in the UAE subject to necessary clearance from the Government of India.

The IPL has, over the years, become a major economic activity in India and boosts various sectors, generates employment, increases business volume, the petition said. If the tournament is played outside India, there will be huge revenue loss for the Government of India in

terms of logistics, tourists, advertisers and so on.

“The IPL is not a charity event. The pandemic has created grave difficulties for all businesses. Holding the IPL in India would prove to be a great economic booster which the country needs desperately, the petition said.

The plea added that the central government has from time to time granted relaxations in the lockdown and allowed reopening of gardens, malls and other public places. Hence, it would not be harmful if the IPL matches are conducted in India with proper precautions and safety measures, the petition said.

Lagoo, in his plea, has sought the high court to direct the BCCI to hold the IPL matches in India.

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