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# Mid Week ENTERTAINMENT

'RANGBAAZ': AAKANKSHA  
SINGH TO PLAY DON-TURNED-  
POLITICIAN MOHAMMAD  
SHAHABUDDIN'S WIFE | 16



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## 'UDD GAYE DIL KE PATANG': KIARA ADVANI MAKES FANS SKIP A HEARTBEAT IN BLUE SUIT



KIARA ADVANI IS ONE OF THE CUTEST ACTRESSES THAT WE HAVE IN THE INDIAN FILM INDUSTRY. SHE HAS WON HEARTS WITH HER INNOCENT AND CUTE SMILE, EVEN HER ROLES IN THE MOVIES WERE USUALLY OF SIMPLE GIRLS. BECAUSE OF THIS, PEOPLE LOVE HER. KIARA ADVANI ON TUESDAY WAS SPOTTED BY PAPS, SHE WAS WEARING A SIMPLE LIGHT-BLUE INDIAN SUIT. NEEDLESS TO SAY, SHE WAS LOOKING VERY-VERY BEAUTIFUL. SHE EVEN SMILED FOR THE CAMERAS, WAVED AT PAPS. THE VIDEO OF THE SAME HAS BEEN UPLOADED BY CELEBRITY PHOTOGRAPHER VIRAL BHAYANI ON INSTAGRAM, WHICH IS NOW DOING ROUNDS ON SOCIAL MEDIA. AFTER WATCHING THE VIDEO, HER FANS COULDN'T STOP THEMSELVES FROM COMPLEMENTING THE ACTRESS. ONE OF THEM WROTE, "LOOKING PRETTY IN SUIT," THE SECOND ONE MENTIONED, "SO BEAUTIFUL SUCH A NICE LOOK." THE THIRD PERSON MENTIONED, "INKE KHUBSURATI DEKH KAR UDD GAYE DIL KE PATANG."

### BIPASHA WALKS DOWN THE MEMORY LANE AS 'RAAZ' COMPLETES 20 YEARS



BIPASHA BASU'S FILM 'RAAZ' HAS CLOCKED TWO-DECADES IN BOLLYWOOD ON MONDAY. THE BOLLYWOOD ACTRESS WENT DOWN THE MEMORY LANE AND SHARED SOME INTERESTING ANECDOTES ABOUT THE MOVIE.

### RICHA CHADHA IS EXCITED FOR FUKREY 3, SAYS IT 'IS GOING TO BE BIGGER, BETTER'



FILMING WILL BEGIN IN FEBRUARY ACROSS FIVE-SIX CITIES AND RICHA CHADHA SAID SHE HAS ALREADY STARTED PREPPING FOR FUKREY 3.

### ADITI RAO HYDARI REVEALS WHY SHE JOINED MOVIES: 'I WANTED TO BE A MANI RATNAM HEROINE'



ADITI RAO HYDARI, WHO'S BEEN A PART OF FILM INDUSTRIES ACROSS INDIA, SPOKE ABOUT HER JOURNEY, MAKING FEARLESS CHOICES AND BEING THE MUSE OF FILMMAKERS LIKE MANI RATNAM.

TO WATCH ALL THE LATEST GOSSIP IN ENTERTAINMENT, WATCH CHANNEL Y ROGERS 857, BELLFIBE 828, TELUS 2418

### NOT CAPTAIN ANY MORE, BUT WILL REMAIN A LEADER: KOHLI



AWAY FROM THE HEAT OF IT ALL, KOHLI HAS CHOSEN A PODCAST WITH DIGIT, A COMPANY IN WHICH HE HAS INVESTED IN THE PAST AND NOW IS THE BRAND AMBASSADOR, TO AIR HIS VIEWS ON MATTERS OF CAPTAINCY AND THE CULTURAL CHANGES HE SOUGHT TO BRING IN THE TEAM DURING HIS TIME.

### INDIA NEEDS TO DECIDE WHETHER KL RAHUL IS AN OPENER OR MIDDLE-ORDER BATSMAN: AJIT AGARKAR AHEAD OF INDIA VS WEST INDIES



FORMER INDIA CRICKETERS AJIT AGARKAR AND AAKASH CHOPRA TALK ABOUT KL RAHUL'S ROLE GOING FORWARD AND KULDEEP YADAV AND YUZVENDRA CHAHAL'S INCLUSION IN THE TEAM.

### NIA SHARMA EXUDES 'ANGEL ON EARTH' VIBES, SHARES SIZZLING PICTURES IN WHITE DRESS



Nia Sharma often burns the internet with her super glamorous pictures that she keeps sharing on her Instagram handle. The popular actress is one of the hottest and fittest actresses in the Indian television industry with a well-toned physique. Here are the pictures from her recent photoshoot which are doing rounds all over social media.

### MALAICA ARORA TURNS HEADS IN SHIMMERY TASSEL DRESS



Malaika Arora can stun her fans with her sexy dance moves and her style statement. She knows what suits her, therefore, she never fails to impress us with her beautiful looks.

Malaika Arora, who is 48 years old, on Tuesday, dropped pictures in which she can be seen wearing a shimmering tassel dress. Needless to say, the actress is looking beautiful in her attire. Her fans have crazy after seeing her pictures online.

A few days ago, the news of her breakup with boyfriend Arjun Kapoor circulated everywhere. After this, Arjun took to Instagram and dropped pic with her and cleared rumours. Later, Malaika Arora had shared a story on her Instagram which read, "No but seriously. Normalise finding love in your 40's. Normalise discovering and chasing new dreams in your 30's. Normalise finding yourself and your purpose in your 50's." Arora added that life is beyond the mid-20s, "Life doesn't end at 25. Let's stop acting like it does." Earlier, according to a report of Bollywood Life, "It's been more than six days, Malaika Arora hasn't stepped out from her house. She has totally gone into isolation. It is said that she is extremely sad and has decided to stay away from the world for a while. While Arjun Kapoor too hasn't visited her even once in these days."

### MOHAMMED SHAMI HAS THIS TO SAY ON 'UNFAIR' COMPARISONS BETWEEN VIRAT KOHLI, BABAR AZAM



Team India pacer Mohammed Shami feels it's 'unfair' to compare Pakistani skipper Babar Azam to Virat Kohli as the former needs to prove himself over a longer period of time and deliver the goods as Kohli has done for India. Over the years, players like Virat Kohli, Joe Root, Steve Smith and Kane Williamson have developed a reputation as the 'fab four' of world cricket, owing to their brilliance across all formats. In recent times though, players such as Babar Azam have raised their game and are also being spoken of, in the same breath as the likes of Kohli or Smith. Mohammed Shami though, feels that the Pakistani skipper who was recently awarded 2021's ODI Player of the Year Award needs to prove his worth over a sustained period of time. Speaking to India.com, Shami stated, "Pakistan have been playing very good cricket of late and the emergence of three-four players have really helped them a lot. No doubt Babar Azam is a great player. But to compare him with the likes of Steve Smith, Joe Root or Virat Kohli will be unfair on him."



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## Deepika Padukone asks fans to pick her favourite role, Ranveer Singh’s comment is what every Deepika fan think

Deepika Padukone recently asked her fans to pick their favourite character of her in an Instagram reel. Besides her fans, the video got her a reaction from her husband Ranveer Singh and sister Anisha Padukone. The reel shared by Deepika begins with a beautiful laughing shot of the actor that says, “My name is Deepika Padukone, but sometimes they call me...” Following this, we see her various characters, from her debut role of Shanti Priya in Om Shanti Om, Meera of Love Aaj Kal, Veronica of Cocktail, Naina of Yeh Jawaani Hai Deewani to her latest character Alisha in Gehraiyaan. Along with the video, Deepika asked, “Which one is your favourite?” Ranveer found it tough to pick his favourite character of Deepika as he commented, “It’s a toughie.” Her sister Anisha said Deepika is her favourite irrespective of what role she essays on the big screen. “My fav = YOU ??” Anisha wrote. However, Shweta Bachchan did pick up

her favourite role from Deepika’s filmography as she commented, “Piku”. Shoojit Sircar’s Piku featured Deepika along with Shweta’s father Amitabh Bachchan and late actor Irrfan Khan. Singer Meiyang Chang also said Piku is his favourite. Just like Ranveer, many fans couldn’t name one character of Deepika which is their favourite. One of them commented, “Every character you play is so special and close to my heart so i can’t choose one.” Another wrote, “we can’t choose one favourite ...all are our favourite????.” Deepika Padukone is awaiting the release of her next, Gehraiyaan. Directed by Shakun Batra, the relationship drama, also starring Siddhant Chaturvedi, Ananya Panday, and Dhairya Karwa in pivotal roles will release on Amazon Prime Video on February 11. Before the release, Deepika, along with the team of Gehraiyaan, will be promoting the film on The Kapil Sharma Show.

## ADITI RAO HYDARI REVEALS WHY SHE JOINED MOVIES: ‘I WANTED TO BE A MANI RATNAM HEROINE’

Aditi Rao Hydari jokingly says that working across industries means getting mixed up between languages many a times. “Because it’s all happening simultaneously, I’m always confused. When I’m supposed to speak Telugu, I start speaking Tamil. It’s such a big mess. But I really enjoy it,” she told indianexpress.com with a laugh. Aditi was seen in movies The Girl on the Train, Sardar Ka Grandson, Maha Samudram (Telugu) and Netflix anthology Ajeeb Daastaans (Geeli Pucchi) in 2021. “What I’ve gotten out of it is a big adventure. I’m very grateful for everything good that’s happened amidst the chaos,” she said. Tagged as a pan-India actor, Aditi has been active for over a decade, proving her versatility in Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Marathi and other languages. Her popular Hindi films include Yeh Saali Zindagi, Wazir, Bhoomi and Padmaavat, apart from Sammohanam, V and Psycho in south India. She even sang “Kaathodu Kaathanen” along with Dhanush in Jail (2021). Aditi added that when her directors manage to create a strong work environment, it is easy for her to slip into her character, be it any industry. “When I walk onto a film set on the first day, I don’t know anything. I enjoy that feeling because it’s that time when you’re open to every single stimuli on set. You are just like a sponge, absorbing everything that is happening around,” she elaborated. Aditi played a woman in Geeli Pucchi who’s torn between her marriage and an unconventional relationship with another woman (Konkona Sensharma), and how it ends up being a twisted tale of patriarchy, casteism, sexuality and privilege. Aditi shared that with the project, she “tried to be more expansive and fearless” in her choices, as it helped her in picking “something that I’m almost fearful of doing in a good way.” “I’m happy that there were two girls headlining that film, and that it did good. So it is important for me to make fearless choices. When it pays off, it’s great. As an actor we do our best,” Aditi said.



## PARINEETI CHOPRA REVEALS WHAT ‘BIG SIS’ PRIYANKA CHOPRA MEANS TO HER, SHOWERS PRAISE ON SHEHNAAZ GILL

Actor Parineeti Chopra recently conducted an Ask Me Anything session on Instagram. During the conversation with her fans, she revealed her thoughts about some celebrities, including the likes of Bigg Boss star Shehnaaz Gill and her big sister and global icon Priyanka Chopra Jonas. When a fan asked Parineeti her thoughts about Shehnaaz, the actor sweetly responded that she admires the Bigg Boss 13 contestant’s journey. Her response read, “Her journey is inspiring. And her honesty adorable.” She also tagged the TV personality, actor and singer in her response. Later, she was asked about Priyanka Chopra, who also happens to be Parineeti’s cousin. Sharing a heartwarming reply to the same, the actor wrote, “Star for the world. Real, big sis for me. I am the eldest sibling of my brothers, so she is the ‘older sibling’ for me.” During the AMA, Parineeti Chopra also poked fun at herself as she asked Hunarbaaz co-judge and filmmaker Karan Johar to set up a ‘rishta’ for her — “Bhala karega Johar, dhundega mera shohar” (He will do the right thing by me, he will find me the perfect groom). In her chat with fans, Parineeti also revealed she would love to work with action star Tiger Shroff.

## NAWAZUDDIN SIDDIQUI IS UNRECOGNISABLE IN THIS BTS PHOTO FROM TIKU WEDS SHERU, KANGANA RANAUT CALLS HIM ‘HOT’

Kangana Ranaut has shared a picture of Nawazuddin Siddiqui on her Instagram stories, which has left the actor’s fans surprised. In the picture, Nawazuddin looks unrecognisable as he is dressed in drag. He is seen in a shimmering golden gown, with a tiara and long hair. Sharing the picture on her Instagram account, Kangana said she found Nawazuddin’s look “hot.” As per a source, the picture is from a song shoot of Nawazuddin’s upcoming film Tiku Weds Sheru. “Female lead Avneet Kaur’s character is shown to be kidnapped by goons. Nawaz’s character dons this unlikely look as he sets out to give the goons a slip and save her. It took the make-up and styling team four hours to get Nawaz ready,” the source revealed. The song is being choreographed by Bosco Martis. In Tiku Weds Sheru, Nawazuddin will be sharing the screen space with Avneet Kaur, who marks her Bollywood debut. The film also marks Kangana’s maiden production after the launch of her production house, Manikarnika Films, in 2020. Earlier this month, Nawazuddin shared a picture of himself sitting in the garden area of his lavish mansion in Mumbai. The mansion took three years to complete with the structure of the house inspired by his old home in his village. Nawazuddin even turned interior designer for the house and was quite involved in the process.



## RICHA CHADHA IS EXCITED FOR FUKREY 3, SAYS IT ‘IS GOING TO BE BIGGER, BETTER’



Actor Richa Chadha says the third installment of the hit buddy comedy franchise Fukrey is finally ready to start production next month after being delayed last year due to the pandemic. Filming will begin in February across five-six cities and Chadha said she has already started prepping for it. Directed by Mrigdeep Singh Lamba, the Delhi-set comedy was put on hold due to the lockdown in Maharashtra last April, as the movie involved filming of large crowd sequences. “We are ready. We are going to shoot the film next month. It is happening full on. I have my costume trial scheduled. I am taking horse riding lessons for it. The film is going to be bigger and better. I am really excited. I am pumped to get back to the home ground and with the team,” Richa Chadha told PTI. The film features the actor as the local gangster Bholi Punjaban and follows the story of four friends — played by her real-life partner Ali Fazal, Pulkit Samrat, Varun Sharma and Manjot Singh — who come together to make easy money. Chadha, who has been playing the fan-favourite character in the franchise since its first installment in 2013, said the latest chapter will also follow a crazy premise. “I love Mrig. The cast and I are friends. The schedule will be spread out across locations as we are shooting in five-six cities. It is one ridiculous premise, which is rendered believable by the amazing performances of my fellow, cute, overgrown men,” she added.

## PRATIK SEHAJPAL: I DON’T CARE ABOUT TEJASSWI WINNING AS I WANTED TO WIN THE SHOW



**NEW DELHI, (IANS)** ‘Bigg Boss 15’ contestant Pratik Sehajpal, the first runner-up of the show, is over-the-moon with the love that he is receiving after coming out even though he did not lift the trophy. Pratik said he doesn’t really care about actress Tejasswi Prakash winning as he wanted to win the 15th season of ‘Bigg Boss’. Is he happy with Tejasswi winning the show? Pratik told IANS: “I wanted to win the show. I don’t really care about her winning as I wanted to win. I don’t believe in making someone a loser to win. I just believe in winning.” “Aesa nahi tha ki mujhe Karan Kundrra ko harana tha ya Tejasswi ko harana tha. I just believed in winning the show... I didn’t know what was happening but when I came out I saw so much love. That’s when I realised that I have already won the show.” Talking about people being upset about Tejasswi’s win, Pratik said: “Sometimes what happens in a show is that somebody else wins the trophy but someone else wins over love and heart. Sometimes the love and trophy is won by the same person.” “If people are giving me so much love... It is because of my mothers prayers and my good karma... The love that I am getting right now... I genuinely appreciate it. It doesn’t matter...It’s their (audience’s) choice who they are happy with and who they are not. However, he praised Tejasswi’s hardwork in the Colors show, hosted by Bollywood superstar Salman Khan. Pratik is happy to be the first runner-up.

## EKTA KAPOOR TO PRODUCE NEW DIGITAL REALITY SHOW



**MUMBAI, (IANS)** Producer Ekta Kapoor is all set to produce a new show through her digital production house, ALTBalaji. It will be on the lines of a reality show for digital entertainment for which the banner has partnered with MX Player. The title and the concept of the show will be soon revealed. On Tuesday, ALTBalaji took to their Instagram handle to share a creative which read: “Ekta Kapoor to announce the biggest and most fearless reality show”. The caption read: “It’s showtime! It’s drama time! Are you ready to tune into excitement? It’s going to be intense!” ALTBalaji, which was founded in 2017, has been an important part of the OTT system in India and their collaboration with MX Player is being touted as one of the groundbreaking content strategies through the said show. In November 2021, Ekta was conferred the Padma Shri, the fourth highest civilian award along with Kangana Ranaut, Karan Johar, Adnan Sami and late singer S.P. Balasubrahmanyam in a ceremony held in Rashtrapati Bhavan.





## 'Gehraiyaan' title track dives into the depths of complicated love

**MUMBAI, (IANS)** The makers of the upcoming film "Gehraiyaan" released the film's full title track on Tuesday. The song, laced with an enigmatic melody, an ethereal music arrangement, and compelling lyrics talks about the feeling of love and longing. The track, composed by Kabeer a.k.a OAFF and Savera, has been designed by Ankur Tewari and written by Kausar Munir. While the music features a fresh sound brought to life by violins, organs, snare on reverb, the lyrics perfectly emote the intense narrative of the film and its characters.

The title song is a Hindi adaptation of the original song, "Frontline" and has been performed by the same artists and features vocals by Lothika Jha. The film, which showcases modern urban complicated love and its intricacies, stars Deepika Padukone, Siddhant Chaturvedi, Ananya Panday, and Dhairya Karwa as leads, and towering artistes like Naseeruddin Shah and Rajat Kapur in pivotal roles. Jointly produced by Viacom18 Studios and Dharma Productions in association with director Shakun Batra's Jouska Films, "Gehraiyaan" will be available to stream on Prime Video from February 11.

## Rajamouli's 'RRR' back on track, to be released on March 25



**HYDERABAD, (IANS)** The much-hyped, and much-postponed, S.S. Rajamouli film 'RRR' is finally being released in theatres on March 25. The makers of the magnum opus took to their social media handles on Monday to announce the release date. Featuring Telugu actors Jr NTR and Ram Charan in the lead roles, 'RRR' is being touted as the fictionalised tale of two real-life unsung heroes, who fought for tribal rights. Ram Charan and Jr NTR respectively play Alluri Sitarama Raju, the leader of the Rampa Rebellion of 1922, and the Gond rebel Komaram Bheem, who took on the Nizam of Hyderabad. Alia Bhatt, Olivia Morris, Ajay Devgn and Shriya Saran also play significant roles in this grand movie, whose music has been scored by M.M. Keeravaani, the 'Baahubali' composer. In addition to Telugu and Tamil, the movie will be released in Malayalam, Kannada and Hindi. 'RRR' was supposed to hit the screens in January, but the Covid-19 surge had pushed the makers to postpone the release. With the announcement of the release date, the film's promotions will start all over again.

## 'Bigg Boss 15': Salman says he won't host Season 16 if his fee isn't upped

**MUMBAI, (IANS)** Will Salman Khan host "Bigg Boss 16"? When Deepika Padukone, who joined the "Bigg Boss 15" grand finale with the other lead players of the upcoming film "Gehraiyaan" asked this question to the superstar host on Sunday night, Salman said he would not repeat his association with the show if his fee is not increased. "Price increase nahi hoga toh nahi karunga," he said emphatically. Only time will tell whether this declaration needs to be taken with a bucketful of salt. Deepika also played a round of truth and dare with Salman. When asked the name of the celebrity whom she stalks, Deepika said it was none other than Salman Khan. She said she even knew who the actor was with at Panvel (his family's farmhouse outside Mumbai). All eyes, in fact, are on Deepika, for she will announce which one among the four finalists left in the fray -- Pratik Sehajpal, Shamita Shetty, Karan Kundrra and Tejasswi Prakash -- will be eliminated from the final race.



## BHUMI PEDNEKAR ON WHY SHE TOOK UP 'BADHAAI DO' ROLE



**MUMBAI, (IANS)** Bollywood actress Bhumi Pednekar has revealed why she took the decision to star in 'Badhaai Do'. She says her decision to do the film was based on the fact that she gets to sensitively portray a character and give voice to a subject that will be an eye-opener. Bhumi said: "I'm really proud that content filmmakers, making differential and clutter-breaking subjects, feel I can helm a project that is unique and bring their vision to life. "I thrive on pushing myself constantly and my decision to do 'Badhaai Do' was based on the fact that I get to sensitively portray a character and give voice to a subject that will be an eye-opener for India."

The versatile actress added: "'Badhaai Do' is a hot franchise that balances commerce with content. It is really exciting to be an actor in these times because such subjects are being backed by big producers who want to create a change in society. "As a "human being, I'm drawn to subjects that can lead to a positive impact on people and be a catalyst for social good. I hope 'Badhaai Do' does just the same. I can't wait for people to watch this film because it is truly, truly endearing." Directed by Harshvardhan Kulkarni, 'Badhaai Do' pairs Rajkummar Rao opposite Bhumi. The film releases in theatres on February 11. Bhumi will next be seen in Anubhav Sinha's 'Bheed', Ajay Bahl's 'Ladykiller', Shashank Khaitan's 'Govinda Aala Re' and Akshay Kumar and Aanand L. Rai's 'Raksha Bandhan'.

## BIPASHA WALKS DOWN THE MEMORY LANE AS 'RAAZ' COMPLETES 20 YEARS



**MUMBAI, (IANS)** Bipasha Basu's film 'Raaz' has clocked two-decades in Bollywood on Monday. The Bollywood actress went down the memory lane and shared some interesting anecdotes about the movie. Bipasha played the role of a woman who is haunted by the spirit of her husband's lover, the glamorous diva set the tone for the rest of her career with this film. The Vikram Bhatt directorial became the second highest grossing film of 2002. She said: "We were shooting in Ooty for the film and we had a lot of night sequences to shoot where I would wake up in the night to sounds and walk into the forest. While the real location was a beautiful bungalow, the ambience around was cold, chilly, dimly lit and eerie." "This would make the surroundings in the night so scary! And I had to walk alone into the wilderness in the cold wearing a nightie!" Talking about some fun pranks director Vikram Bhatt played on her to get an on-camera reaction, she said: "Vikram had this huge gong that he would unexpectedly ring to get the right reaction out of me. The first time he used the gong, I was absolutely caught unaware while walking in pin-drop silence and it was so scary that I shook and screamed loudly!" "I thought my soul left my body! After that, the gong became my biggest villain! He would use that gong at any point to get a crazy reaction out of me!" Speaking about how the film's cast and crew would add more spookiness to the shoot, she said, "In the night, everyone, including Saroj Khan, Ashutosh Rana and Vikram Bhatt, would narrate the scariest ghost stories that they have experienced. "It was quite crazy and made my job of getting scared a little easier. I definitely had my share of spooks during the filming of 'Raaz'!"

## 'RANGBAAZ': AAKANKSHA SINGH TO PLAY DON-TURNED-POLITICIAN MOHAMMAD SHAHABUDDIN'S WIFE



**MUMBAI, (IANS)** Actress Aakanksha Singh will be seen portraying the character of Hena Shahab, the wife of convicted gangster-turned-politician Mohammad Shahabuddin in the upcoming web series 'Rangbaaz'. According to a source close to the development, the actress is currently shooting in Lucknow for the same and the role is something very different from anything that Aakanksha has ever had before. "The story and her character is inspired by Hena Shahab, the wife of gangster-turned-politician Mohammad Shahabuddin, and the actress is leaving no stone unturned to nail her part," the source informs. "She is doing extensive research at her end by reading everything there is about Hena and is also watching her interviews and seeing videos available on her. Aakanksha still has a few days of shoot left in Lucknow but she is really thrilled about this revolutionary part," the source further added. Aakanksha will next be seen in Ajay Devgn-starrer 'Runway 34', which also features Amitabh Bachchan and Rakul Preet Singh.

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## AS COVID WAVE DIPS, IPL 2022 LIKELY IN INDIA

The 2022 Indian Premier League is all set to be held in India. According to a top BCCI official, the cricket board has taken a decision in this regard. Asked if the IPL could go overseas this year, the BCCI official told The Indian Express: "It will be in India."

With the third wave of Covid tapering and schools, colleges and other educational institutes are reopening in the states, the BCCI is confident of organising this year's IPL in India, bar any unforeseen circumstances in the future. For the last two years, the tournament was held in the United Arab Emirates. The 2021 IPL actually had 29 games in India before its Covid-forced postponement and the subsequent relocation to UAE. However, the BCCI feels that unlike last year, when the Covid cases were rising in April-May, the situation this time around is different. The Omicron variant of the virus is on a downward spiral and a lot more people are now double-jabbed. From January, the government has also started vaccination of children for the age group 15-18 years. The BCCI kept South Africa as back-up options and when in December last year, the third wave of Covid was reaching its peak, it felt like, yet again the IPL would move out of India. But things have

changed since. About a fortnight ago, during the IPL governing council's meeting with the franchise owners, India emerged as a preferred choice to host the IPL this year, although the consensus among the franchise owners was to organise it in Maharashtra only, to shun air travel. Maharashtra has four venues, three in Mumbai and the other one in Pune. For two years on the spin, UAE successfully hosted the IPL, across three venues in the country. At the end though, the franchise owners left it to the BCCI as regards to the choice of venue this year, with a request that a final decision before the auction would help them plan their strategies. The final auction will be held in Bangalore on February 12 and 13. The IPL has two new teams this year following the addition of the Lucknow and Ahmedabad franchises and the tournament will have 74 matches. The BCCI, however, is yet to decide whether to pick Maharashtra as the sole venue or go back to normal; teams playing at their respective home grounds. State associations get Rs 1 crore per game – shared 50-50 between the franchise and the board – as hosting fee. Given that state associations/members are the BCCI's biggest stakeholders, this is also in consideration as well.

## NOT CAPTAIN ANY MORE, BUT WILL REMAIN A LEADER: KOHLI

Virat Kohli, who was removed as ODI captain and resigned as Test and T20 skipper, has said that he “doesn’t need to be a captain to be a leader” and has a role as a batsman to “make the team win more’ and will “take pride in that”. He also talked about how he strived for a cultural change in the team and the need for it to start at the top “as everything, then, trickles down”.

The last couple of months have been turbulent in Indian cricket, right from the moment Kohli chose to resign from T20 captaincy. When he was removed as ODI captain, he, the selectors and the board made a few insinuations about the communication, and eventually, it ended in his resignation from the Test captaincy after the series in South Africa.

Away from the heat of it all, Kohli has chosen a podcast with Digit, a company in which he has invested in the past and now is the brand ambassador, to air his views on matters of captaincy and the cultural changes he sought to bring in the team during his time. "Everything has a tenure and time period," he replied to a question about giving up captaincy. "You obviously have to be aware of that. People might say 'what has this guy done?' but you know that when you think of moving forward and achieving more, you feel like you have done your job. "Now as a batsman, you may have more things to contribute to the team. You can make the team win more. So, take pride in that. You don't need to be a captain to be a leader. As simple as that," he said.



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## INDIA NEEDS TO DECIDE WHETHER KL RAHUL IS AN OPENER OR MIDDLE-ORDER BATSMAN: AJIT AGARKAR AHEAD OF INDIA VS WEST INDIES

Ahead of the ODI series between India and West Indies, former India cricketers Ajit Agarkar and Aakash Chopra talk about KL Rahul's responsibility and role going forward and Kuldeep Yadav and Yuzvendra Chahal's inclusion in the team.

Former India pacer Agarkar said that the team needed to decide whether Rahul is an opener or a middle-order batsman. "I think that's the first thing they need to decide, whether he is an opener or a middle-order batsman because he was the captain in South Africa and he opened, which to me it was a bit disappointing because he's been so successful at number 4 or 5 and that's the role that they were looking at," Agarkar said on the Star Sports Game Plan show.

"f that is not going to be the case then again you have got to stick to what you decide if you are going to be an opener then you may as well open the innings with Rohit in the series. So, that will be interesting to see because Shikhar Dhawan is there as well, I am not sure in a year or year and a half's time where Shikhar Dhawan would be, even

though he has got runs in South Africa. You have got a couple of explosive players like Ishan Kishan or even someone like Rishabh Pant. Who knows whether it will work giving him a chance for the top of the order," he added. Meanwhile, Chopra feels that the famed Kuldeep-Chahal combination needs to be back in action, "They should be otherwise they wouldn't have picked Kuldeep Yadav, he was on hold for the last, not last six months he's been in hold forever since that Birmingham game, where he's got turned around and then he never got an opportunity. They have got him back for a simple reason, that is they are not picking up wickets in the middle overs.

"Ashwin whether he was available or not, I would've anyway gone with Kuldeep Yadav but we also picked Ravi Bishnoi, we picked him for both ODI and T20 and since they don't want to try him then there is Washington Sundar as well and Jadeja and Axar Patel are actually waiting in the wing. So, once you pick so many bowlers then your hands are tied pretty much, who do you go with?" he asked.

### ICC ODI rankings: Mithali Raj moves to 2nd spot, Smriti Mandhana maintains 6th place

India's One-day International skipper Mithali Raj has risen one spot to second in the ICC Women's ODI Player Rankings for batters announced on Tuesday, closing the gap on Australia's Alyssa Healy.

Mithali has displaced South African batter Lizelle Lee, who is now third on the list with 731 points, while the Indian stalwart is on 738. India opener Smriti Mandhana, who was recently named 'ICC women's Cricketer of the Year for 2021', continues to maintain her sixth spot in the rankings with 710 points.

West Indies all-rounder Hayley Matthews has progressed four places to 11th position in the latest rankings for bowlers after a fine show in the first two matches of their four-match against South Africa. India's pace bowler Jhulan Goswami continues to hold on to her No.2 spot in the ranking behind Australia's Jess Jonassen in the category. Matthews, who grabbed two wickets each in both matches, is the highest-ranked bowler from the West Indies with other off-spinner Anisa Mohammed in 25th place and Shakera Selman 26th. Seam bowler Shamikia Connell has moved up nine slots to 29th after taking three wickets in the two matches. South Africa captain Sune Luus has advanced seven places to joint-34th among bowlers and is up two places to 44th in the batting list.



## CUMMINS IN TOP BRACKET, ARCHER IN IPL AUCTION DESPITE INJURY DOUBT



Australians Pat Cummins, David Warner and Steve Smith are among 48 players who will enter this month's Indian Premier League (IPL) players' auction with a base price of 20 million Indian rupees (\$268,000), the Indian board said on Tuesday.

England fast bowler Jofra Archer has also entered the auction but is unlikely to play as he continues his recovery from elbow surgery. Cricinfo website quoted IPL chief operating officer Hemang Amin's mail to the franchises saying Archer had been registered primarily "with a view to potential participation in 2023 and 2024".

The 15th edition of the IPL will feature 10 teams who will have 590 cricketers, including 220 overseas players, to choose from in the two-day auction beginning in Bengaluru on Feb. 12, the board said in a statement. Aaron Finch, who led Australia to their maiden T20 World Cup last year, is among the 20 players entering the auction with a base price of 15 million rupees.

## CA QUASHES REPORTS THAT MEETING WITH LANGER WAS 'FIERY' AND 'HEATED'



Cricket Australia on Tuesday rejected reports that the meeting with head coach Justin Langer over his future turned "fiery" and "heated" and that the former player was told he may have to reapply for his job.

Langer, whose contract is due to end in June, met with CA's chief executive Nick Hockley and high performance manager Ben Oliver last week to discuss his future role. Following the meeting local media reported that Langer, whose intense management style created a rift between him and the players, "went ballistic" when CA suggested the former Test opener may have to to reapply for his position. However, CA has denied the "inaccurate" news report. "There were a number of inaccuracies in a story written by Tom Morris on the Fox Sports website on Monday concerning a meeting between Australian men's team head coach Justin Langer, Cricket Australia CEO Nick Hockley and EGM of High Performance and National Teams Ben Oliver on Friday," CA said in a statement.



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<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Approved 0% City tax increase</li><li>• Motion for \$0 seniors bus pass (Commencing 2022)</li><li>• Motion expediting Queen Street Bus, Rapid Transit to York University &amp; reintroducing RT plan to Downtown</li><li>• Motion for Diversity &amp; Inclusion audit</li><li>• Approved Gore Meadows Phase-3, sports facilities</li><li>• Approved hiring of 55 new Peel Police officers</li><li>• Voted and advocated against retail, sale of cannabis</li><li>• Motion for Guru Nanak Street naming</li><li>• Approved \$1.5m in Wards 9 &amp; 10 park and playground improvements</li><li>• Motion for Komagata Mar Park naming</li><li>• Motion introducing Christian Heritage Month</li><li>• Hosted Trucker Safety Townhall</li><li>• Approved \$11.2m debt payoff and \$8.8m contribution to reserve account</li><li>• Motion denouncing Quebec's Bill 21 (ban on religious articles of faith affecting Hindus, Sikhs, Christians, Muslims, Jews)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Approved 0% City tax increase</li><li>• Only Councillor to vote against stormwater charge/ tax</li><li>• Motion to implement basement renovation loan program</li><li>• Motion to construct 89 affordable housing units in Ward 9</li><li>• Motion to streamline second-unit registration by eliminating parking requirement</li><li>• Approved \$128m for Ward 10 transit facility</li><li>• Approved Diversity &amp; Equity Office</li><li>• Chaired Covid-19 Seniors Task Force</li><li>• Motion for provide Covid-19 relief for taxi drivers</li><li>• Motion to increase ethnic media funding</li><li>• Advocacy motion supporting Pearson Airport taxi and limo drivers against increased fees</li><li>• Approved Airport Road Zum direct bus service to Pearson Airport (commencing 2022)</li><li>• Motion to show Council solidarity with residents affected by Indian Farm Bills</li><li>• Motion to support dump truck operators protesting provincial regulations</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Approved 0% City tax increase</li><li>• Motion for Ward 9 &amp; 10 Peel Police Satellite station (Summer 2022)</li><li>• Motion to implement City's official auto insurance reduction advocacy campaign</li><li>• Approved hiring of 26 new Peel Police officers</li><li>• Successful advocacy to transform Peel Memorial to a full-service hospital</li><li>• Motion successfully rejecting 7-Eleven liquor sales license in Ward 10</li><li>• Motion to increase City's truck parking supply</li><li>• Major upgrades of Wards 9 &amp; 10 parks</li><li>• Hosted Trucker Safety Townhall</li><li>• Successful advocacy of Ryerson Medical School</li><li>• Approved negotiations to relocate University of Guelph-Humber to Brampton by 2025</li><li>• Motion to request Province to ban modified car exhausts that cause noise pollution</li><li>• Only Councilor to unconditionally vote for and support Highway 413</li><li>• Motion to request Province for greater control over retail cannabis shop zoning and approvals</li></ul>

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