

- BOLLYWOOD
- HOLLYWOOD
- SPORTS
- CRICKET

Mid Week ENTERTAINMENT

SONA MOHAPATRA ON MUSIC'S
CHANGING LANDSCAPE WITH
BLENDING OF FOLK TRADITION | 15



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SHAH RUKH KHAN'S PATHAAN TO CLASH WITH HRITHIK ROSHAN'S FIGHTER; DEEPIKA PADUKONE, SIDHARTH ANAND INVOLVED WITH BOTH



THE RELEASE DATE OF SHAH RUKH KHAN-DEEPIKA PADUKONE STARRER PATHAAN CLASHES WITH HRITHIK-DEEPIKA STARRER FIGHTER. WITH BOTH FILMS BEING DIRECTED BY SIDHARTH ANAND, ONE OF THEM WILL SURELY MOVE AHEAD. AFTER A LONG WAIT, THE RELEASE DATE OF SHAH RUKH KHAN STARRER PATHAAN IS OUT. ON WEDNESDAY, SRK TOOK TO INSTAGRAM TO SHARE A TEASER VIDEO OF THE FILM AND ANNOUNCED THE RELEASE DATE AS JANUARY 25, 2023. THE SIDHARTH ANAND FILM ALSO STARS DEEPIKA PADUKONE AND JOHN ABRAHAM IN SIGNIFICANT ROLES. BUT EARLIER, THE SAME RELEASE DATE WAS ANNOUNCED FOR SIDHARTH ANAND DIRECTED FIGHTER, WHICH IS SET TO STAR HRITHIK ROSHAN AND DEEPIKA PADUKONE. THE ANNOUNCEMENT CAME OUT IN AUGUST 2021. PRIOR TO THIS ANNOUNCEMENT, THE FILM WAS SET FOR A RELEASE IN SEPTEMBER 2022. FIGHTER IS BEING PRODUCED BY SIDHARTH UNDER HIS BANNER MARFLIX AND VIACOM18 STUDIOS.

VAANI KAPOOR: WE'VE BEEN TOLD THAT RANBIR AND I HAVE GREAT CHEMISTRY



VAANI KAPOOR OPENS UP ABOUT TEAMING UP WITH RANBIR KAPOOR FOR 'SHAMSHERA'

KANGANA'S 'DHAAKAD' TO RELEASE IN FOUR LANGUAGES



FOUR LANGUAGES - HINDI, TAMIL, TELUGU AND MALAYALAM.

VIDYA BALAN'S 'JALSA' HEADS TO OTT FOR WORLD PREMIERE



DRAMA THRILLER 'JALSA' IS SET TO HAVE ITS WORLD PREMIERE ON OTT.

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IPL 2022 TO BEGIN ON MARCH 26; 70 MATCHES ACROSS 4 VENUES WITH TEAMS DIVIDED IN TWO GROUPS



THE INDIAN PREMIER LEAGUE (IPL) 2022 SEASON WILL BEGIN FROM MARCH 26 AND RUN TILL MAY 29, SAID THE IPL GOVERNING COUNCIL.

IPL: MAYANK AGARWAL - NO. 13! WILL HE BE ABLE TO CHANGE PUNJAB KINGS' FORTUNE?



MAYANK AGARWAL HANDED OVER CAPTAINCY RESPONSIBILITIES AHEAD OF THE INDIAN PREMIER LEAGUE 2022 FOR THE PUNJAB KINGS.

AAMIR KHAN PRAISES AMITABH BACHCHAN'S JHUND: 'WHAT A FILM!'



Ahead of Amitabh Bachchan-starrer Jhund's release, a private screening of the Nagraj Manjule directorial was held for superstar actor-director Aamir Khan. A video of Aamir reacting post the screening of the movie was shared by the YouTube channel of T-Series; the company has bankrolled the movie. The clip begins with high praise from Aamir who is heard saying, "What a film! My god, bohut hi behatareen film thi! (It was a brilliant film!)" The actor then went on to add other superlatives as he praised the team of Jhund for their incredible work. "The way you have caught the spirit of the young men and women of India, that's breathtaking. And those children...unbelievable. It's a very unique film, pata nai kaise bann gayi tum logon se (I don't know how you managed to pull this one off...)," the actor says while filmmaker Manjule and producer Bhushan Kumar are seen listening to him with a broad smile on their faces.

YAMI GAUTAM TIES UP WITH NGOS TO SUPPORT VICTIMS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT



MUMBAI, (IANS) Actress Yami Gautam has joined hands with two NGOs — Majlis and Pari (People Against Rape in India) — to support victims of sexual assault and to work for their rehabilitation. "Today with great pride I would like to share that I have joined hands with two NGOs who are constantly supporting and working towards the rehabilitation of victims of sexual assault," Yami said. She elaborated that women's safety still has a long way to go and her association with the NGOs for the cause emanates from this very subject. "The need to work on these issues stems from the women's safety issues which still exist. While some progress has been made, there's a long way to go still," she said. "My association with the NGOs is just the beginning and in the near future, I would like to contribute further in helping to procure better resources to protect and support women from all walks of life," she added.

ANAMIKA TRAILER: SUNNY LEONE IS A SPY GONE ROGUE IN THIS CRINGE-INDUCING SERIES



The trailer of Vikram Bhatt directorial Anamika, starring Sunny Leone, Samir Soni, Rahul Dev and Sonnalli Seygall among others, is out. Sunny shared the video on Twitter with the caption, "Meet Agent M..." Anamika, which is a ten-episode series, will stream on MX Player from March 10. In the trailer, Anamika is a spy who has gone rogue, and as Rahul Dev's character puts it, she has 'access to a lot of information'. While Sunny looks tough as nails as she plans to outsmart secret government organizations, the rest of the cast spew several metaphors and analogies about how dangerous she is. Considering that there have been several similar-sounding thrillers, Anamika would have to bring something fresh to an already overcrowded table of crime dramas. Anamika marks the first collaboration between Vikram Bhatt and Sunny Leone. The series was announced in 2020. Sunny had announced it at the time with a post that read, "Satnam...the start of something new...and the end of my lockdown. A new journey starting with the ever so nice @vikrambhatt (sic)." Anamika is produced under the banner of Loneranger by Vikram Bhatt and Krishna Bhatt.



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SONA MOHAPATRA ON MUSIC'S CHANGING LANDSCAPE WITH BLENDING OF FOLK TRADITION

Playback singer Sona Mohapatra's love for exploring folk music has given music lovers some of the most memorable tracks including hits like 'Ambarsariya' and 'Rangabati' (Coke Studio Season 4). Her recently released track titled 'Noor' is an extension of her constant pursuit to bring something new to the table. The track, which boasts elements of Punjabi folk, shayari and dancehall, has been composed by her husband and creative partner Ram Sampath and presents a vivid story that appeals to the heart of the listeners. In a recent conversation with IANS, the playback singer spoke about her latest song, veteran singer Lata Mangeshkar, how folk is mixing with mainstream music and changing the dynamics of the music consumption patterns, and how the pandemic has been hard on the folk artiste community. Although she's the face of the song, the singer doesn't hold back from showering praises on her team that has helped her put the song together, "I have an incredible team in place because of whose collaboration we have reached here. The beat used in 'Noor' is a dancehall beat and with Punjabi folk at its heart. Ram Sampath is a kind of music producer who marries cultures from around the world and creates something very unique. 'Noor' is actually my sister song to 'Ambarsariya' (another folk track with pop vibes). She feels lucky to have partnered with the music label Warner Music for the song, "I feel so happy that I found a partner in Warner Music, I feel lucky because the aesthetics of Warner music and the artistes who are present all around the world bring a lot of quality to the table." Looking at the state of Indian mainstream music currently, one would assume that despite such rich music and culturally diverse landscape of the country folk is unable to cut through the layers of mainstream

music but Sona likes to differ, "It is not that folk music has not mixed into the mainstream culture, it is very well into the mainstream culture." Recollecting her earlier stint at Coke Studio India, she mentions, "When Coke Studio started in India, Ram Sampath and I did an episode called 'Devi' where we presented Bhanwari Devi, who is a superstar from Rajasthan. If you see her right now she has been earning way more than a lot of reality singing show participants." Talking about her ambitions with regards to music restoration and preservation, she says, "I have Omgrown Studio where we archive a lot of folk music. We had a really important conversation recently about how to preserve someone's music especially when they pass away. Lata ji was a Saraswati as she had sung around 36,000 songs but these songs should be preserved in their original sound so that the coming generations could be inspired from these songs to get acquainted with the excellence which Lata ji possessed." She then makes a thought - provoking remark about the hardships that the folk artiste community has been suffering for over two years now, "During the times of pandemic, everybody had their own issues to raise and everybody had their own political stand over one issue or another. However, I have never seen anyone who came forward to raise this issue of folk musicians or folk artists dying of Hunger or dying because they could not provide for themselves or their families." "They carry the vocal tradition of our country, the vocal tradition of different cultures which need to be desperately preserved. I feel lucky that we have been able to help a lot of musicians during the pandemic but it's not enough and I hope there are many more important people listening to this conversation who can try to make sure that their artiste or their musician friends would not go hungry", she signs off.

RUBINA DILAİK, ABHINAV SHUKLA HIT THE ROAD FOR TRAVEL SERIES 'WANDERLUST'

Popular couple Rubina Dilaik and Abhinav Shukla are coming together for a six-part travel series 'Wanderlust'. It will capture them experiencing the culture of Abu Dhabi. Each episode of the show will see memorable experiences that Rubina and Abhinav undertake in Abu Dhabi. From trying different cuisines to exploring and finding that picture perfect moment. Be it hitting the beach, enjoying the luxuries of life, experimenting with adrenaline pumping activities to many more fun filled moments will be part of the show. Talking about this unscripted travelogue, Rubina said: "As a couple, we've always loved to explore the world and travel with an open mind. 'Wanderlust' is the best thing that could have happened to us after lockdown - being stuck at home and unable to do anything, we realized that we needed to bring the adrenaline rush back into our lives." "Many of our real-life stories and personal quirks will also come to life in this unscripted series and I think it's yet another way for us to connect with our fans while doing what we love to do," she added. Abhinav further shared: "Wanderlust highlights the thrill, entertainment, beaches, safaris, dining, and cuisine - everything that the city of Abu Dhabi is well known for. It has given us the chance to take risks, overcome our



fears and explore the exciting Emirati life that we wouldn't ever have been able to do so intrinsically otherwise." The travel series 'Wanderlust' will be streaming from March 4 on MX Player.

KANGANA'S 'DHAAKAD' TO RELEASE IN FOUR LANGUAGES

Kangana Ranaut-starrer 'Dhaakad' will be released in four languages - Hindi, Tamil, Telugu and Malayalam. This is Kangana's second pan-India outing after the 'Thalaivi', based on the life of Jayalalitha. Kangana says: "The film had to be made on a certain scale that had to be tailored to the vast vision of its makers. India has never seen a women action entertainer of this scale. A story as paramount as this should reach maximum eyeballs and I am happy to announce that Dhaakad would be released in multiple languages." "I can't wait for the audience to meet Agent Agni. She will blow their minds with her fury and power." 'Dhaakad' is a high octane spy thriller led by a female star, the film is made on a lavish budget. In terms of appeal, the film is also the country's first big scale multilingual project to be headlined by a female superstar. The actioner led by Kangana, stars Arjun Rampal, Divya Dutt and Saswata Chatterjee along with a power packed ensemble cast. Producer Deepak Mukut adds: "We got a female superstar to headline it creates a new norm. After the success of 'Thalaivi', Kangana is a big favourite with the South market. We will be releasing the film in multiple regional languages. It's a never-seen-before scale of release for a woman-led film." Producer Sohel Maklai shared, "Over three years of blood, sweat and tears will give audiences India's biggest female action star with the release of Dhaakad." 'Dhaakad' directed by Razneesh Razy Ghai and produced by Deepak Mukut and Sohel Maklai and co-produced by Hunar Mukut. Director Razy Ghai said: "From the beginning, we've worked towards ensuring Dhaakad to be a film for the big screen. I'm hoping it will rekindle the excitement and love for the moviegoing experience. We want to give India its next big action star to rally behind." Presented by Soham Rockstar Entertainment Pvt Ltd in association with Kamal Mukut, Sohel Maklai Productions and Asylum films, 'Dhaakad' is slated to release on May 27.



LATE ACTOR DEEP SIDHU'S LAST SONG 'LAHORE' IS A POIGNANT TALE OF PARTITION



The Punjabi track 'Lahore', featuring late Punjabi actor-turned-activist Deep Sidhu who recently passed away in a road mishap, was released on Monday. The 8-minute video track showcases a poignant story of two friends against the backdrop of Partition. Deep Sidhu appears in the role of a Sikh gentleman in the song, which was unveiled by Sumeet Singh, producer and owner of Saga Music, director Amarpreet Chhabra and singer Dilraj Grewal in the presence of Mandeep Sidhu, brother of Deep Sidhu. Sharing his thoughts on the pain that Partition brought along, Sumeet Singh, said, "The pangs of Partition continue debilitating the heart of each and every one of us. We have our own set of diverse emotions which gush through our hearts and minds when we look back at history. However, with this song, I only want to communicate that love and friendship knows no bounds, and in the end humanity is the only religion we must all follow." Talking about the song Dilraj Grewal said, "'Lahore' is not just a song but a touching tale of love, friendship and peace. It depicts the emotions of personal loss of an individual. Things could have been better if this division hadn't happened. The relationship would have been better. 'Lahore' is a voice which will jolt your heart." Sumeet Singh, the producer of the song, added, "Lahore' by Dilraj Grewal witnesses the remarkable presence of Deep Sidhu. Released on SagaHits, the official YouTube channel of Saga Music. 'Lahore' is not a one-time watch or to be left in the middle. It's gripping and leaves you speechless at many junctures."

SONU SOOD ELATED TO HOST SEASON 18 OF 'ROADIES'

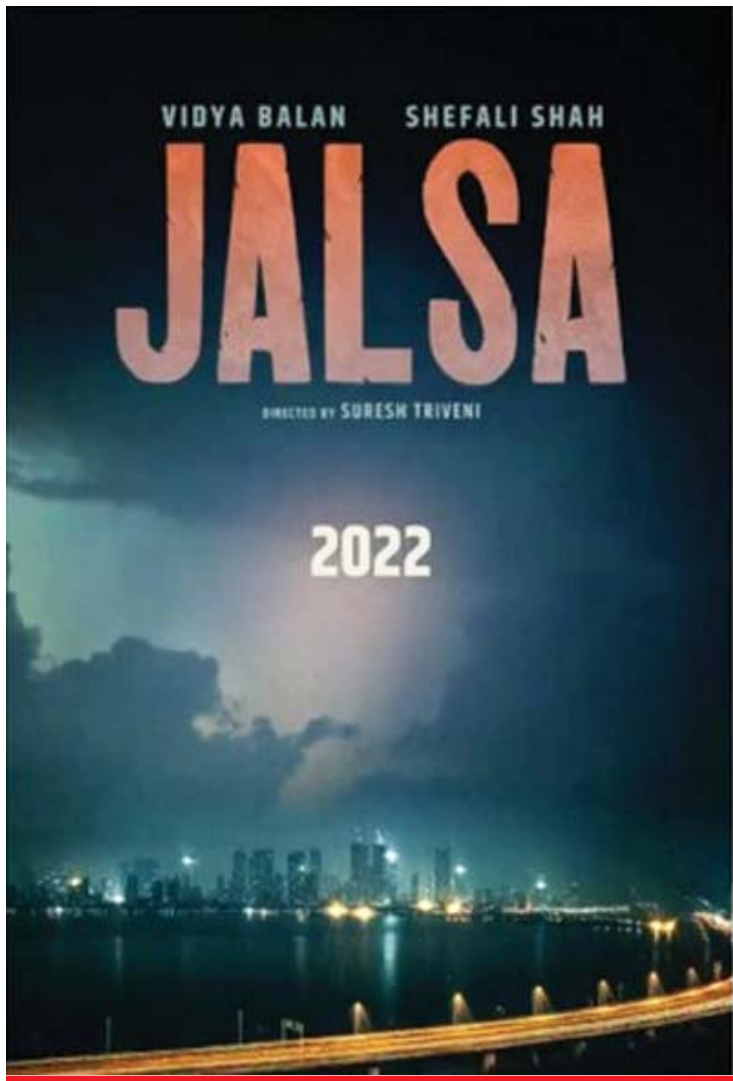


Bollywood actor Sonu Sood is quite elated with his journey as a host of the youth-based reality show 'Roadies 18'. He has replaced actor-VJ Rannvijay Singha, who has been hosting the show for the past many years. Season 18 of the reality show is set against the locales of South Africa. While sharing his excitement, Sonu says: "I am overjoyed to begin the 'Roadies' shoot." "It is one reality show I have been following very closely over the years, and I am very excited to add my flavour to it. I am sure it will be a journey like no other," he adds. As per the reports, the concept of the show has also changed a bit and the idea of gang leaders maynot exist. Neha Dhupia, Prince Narula, and others were seen as gang leaders in past seasons. The show is expected to start in March on MTV India. Meanwhile, Sonu Sood has Chandraprakash Dwivedi's historical epic action drama, 'Prithviraj' and Koratala Siva's 'Acharya'. He will also venture into an out-and-out actioner with 'Fateh'.

PREGNANT KAJAL AGGARWAL DOES STRENGTH CONDITIONING EXERCISES TO KEEP FIT



Actress Kajal Aggarwal, who is in the family way, has begun doing aerobics and strength conditioning exercises to keep herself healthy. What's more the actress believes women who are pregnant without complications must be encouraged to participate in aerobic and strength conditioning exercises. Taking to Instagram, where she posted a video of her working out, Kajal wrote, "I have always been a very active person and worked out my whole life. Pregnancy is a different ball game! "All women who are pregnant without complications should be encouraged to participate in aerobic and strength conditioning exercises as part of a healthy lifestyle during their pregnancy - Pilates and barre helped my body change for the better pre and through my pregnancy. "This transformative approach has me feeling stronger, longer and leaner. The goal of aerobic conditioning in pregnancy should be to maintain a good fitness level throughout without trying to reach peak fitness."



VIDYA BALAN'S 'JALSA' HEADS TO OTT FOR WORLD PREMIERE

Vidya Balan and Shefali Shah-starrer drama thriller 'Jalsa' is set to have its world premiere on OTT. The film has been directed by Suresh Triveni and is his second collaboration with Vidya Balan after the much acclaimed 'Tumhari Sulu'. The film, which is set to arrive directly on Prime Video on March 18, features an ensemble cast of Manav Kaul, Rohini Hattangadi, Iqbal Khan, Vidhatri Bandi, Shrikant Mohan Yadav, Shafeen Patel and Surya Kasibhatla. The film has been jointly produced by Bhushan Kumar & Krishan Kumar (T-Series), Vikram Malhotra & Shikhaa Sharma (Abundantia Entertainment) and Suresh Triveni. Commenting on the date announcement, Bhushan Kumar, Chairman and Managing Director - T-Series, who has earlier collaborated with Prime Video for films such as 'Airlift', 'Sherni' and

'Chhorii', said, "'Jalsa' is one of the most gripping and entertaining films that we've been a part of at T-series and I am thrilled that it is with one of our most trusted partners, Abundantia Entertainment." "We have had an extremely successful collaboration in the past with films like 'Airlift', 'Sherni' and 'Chhorii' and I look forward to recreating the same magic with Jalsa. I am excited for the film to premiere on Amazon Prime Video as it will allow the film to get a truly global audience as it rightfully deserves", he further said. Manish Menghani, head, content licensing, Amazon Prime Video added saying that the film boasts of a story that makes it stand apart, "In a fine blend of drama and thrill, Jalsa offers a truly differentiated story, made better by performances from a brilliant cast."

Vaani Kapoor: We've been told that Ranbir and I have great chemistry

Actress Vaani Kapoor, who is gearing up for the release of her upcoming film 'Shamshera', has talked about her pairing with actor Ranbir Kapoor in the film. She says that the two actors have been told that they share a great on-screen chemistry. Vaani said: "Ranbir Kapoor is a pleasure to work with because he brings so much work ethic to the table. He is also a selfless actor who wants to creatively collaborate in a way that each scene turns out to be the best." "I had so much fun working and exchanging notes with him. I think Ranbir and I have given our best for Shamshera. We are definitely a fresh pairing on screen and I hope people love watching us together." Vaani hopes that her chemistry with Ranbir will be talked about. She added: "We have been told that we have great chemistry but I hope that audiences too feel the same when they see us. It's a film that everyone's waiting for. Have worked really hard to bring something new to the table and as actors, we only want to entertain everyone to the fullest with Shamshera." The film also stars Sanjay Dutt as Ranbir's arch enemy. Sanjay will play the ruthless, merciless villain and his showdown. Vaani essays the role of a gorgeous, most sought after traveling performer of the country. Yash Raj Films 'Shamshera' is set to release in Hindi, Tamil, Telugu on July 22.



Will Smith, Michael Keaton, Jessica Chastain top winners' list

Actors Will Smith, Jessica Chastain and the film 'CODA' took home the highest honours at the 28th annual Screen Actors Guild Awards held this year at the Santa Monica Barker Hangar. In compliance with California Covid protocols, all attendees of the SAG Awards were required to show proof of vaccination to attend the ceremony. As a result, "Yellowstone" star Forrie J. Smith, who was nominated along with his cast in the television drama ensemble category, announced last week that he would skip out on the ceremony, reports variety.com. The television categories were led by 'Succession' and 'Ted Lasso', both of which garnered five nominations in the respective drama and comedy categories, including best ensemble. Korean hit "Squid Game" made history with its nomination in the ensemble category as the first non-English show to be recognised by the Guild. On the film side, 'The Power of the Dog' led individual acting categories with three nominations, but the Jane Campion-directed movie didn't crack the ensemble category. The most recognised of the ensemble nominees was 'House of Gucci', which scored individual nominations for Lady Gaga and Jared Leto. Troy Kotsur, Daniel Durant and Marlee Matlin of 'CODA' are the first deaf actors to be recognised in the motion picture ensemble category, and Kotsur is the first deaf performer to land an individual acting nomination. During the ceremony, Kate Winslet presented cine-icon Helen Mirren with the SAG Lifetime Achievement Award. 'CODA' took home the Outstanding Performance by a Cast in a Motion Picture. It was competing against movies such as 'Belfast', 'Don't Look Up', 'House Of Gucci' and 'King Richard'. Will Smith and Jessica Chastain were named in the Outstanding Performance by a Male Actor in a Leading Role and Outstanding Performance by a Female Actor in a Leading Role for 'King Richard' and 'The Eyes Of Tammy Faye' respectively. For the Outstanding Performance by a Male Actor in a Television Movie or Limited Series, actor Michael Keaton's performance for 'Dopesick' was recognised.



SARA KHAN, SAISHA SHINDE, TEHSEEN POONAWALLA TO ENTER 'LOCK UPP'



Popular television actress Sara Khan, transwoman Saisha Shinde Tehseen Poonawalla all are set to be seen on the show 'Lock Upp'. The show, hosted by Kangana Ranaut will have celebs and people from all walks of life fighting for basic amenities to win the game. There will be 13 contestants. Kangana introduced the contestants on the show and questioned them for different charges for which they are being locked up in her jail. Few names include Nisha Rawal, Munawar Faruqi, Poonam Pandey, Karanvir Bohra, Babita Phogat. Here we take a look at who all are joining the show. Kaaranvir Bohra is a noted television actor who has done more than 10 reality shows. He is roped in the show for being an experienced reality show loser and considers himself a juggler. Another contestant is Nisha Rawal, a famous television actress who accused her husband of domestic violence. Actress Sara Khan is also being locked up for controversies surrounding her. She is blamed for making her real life a reel life. She got married to Ali Merchant but that was all for publicity. Another personality who will be on the show is Saisha Shinde, formerly known as Swapnil Shinde, fashion designer. Saisha came out as a transwoman early in 2021. Swami Chakrapani is a godman and is being locked up for misleading people by forcing his solutions on them. Payal Rohatgi, a famous Tv actress who is very vocal about her opinions on social media will also be jailed. She is imprisoned for being a parasite who digs into the controversies of others to keep her alive. On the other hand, Shivam Sharma, who is an influencer and runner up of a youth reality show is accused of being overconfident and never stops talking about his career. He will also be locked up. Siddharth Sharma is a television actor well known for his character in 'Punch Beat' is also set to join the show. Anjali Arora with more than 10 million followers is also being jailed. Tehseen Poonawalla is a political analyst who is very vocal about his political ideologies and he is a columnist too.

VIDYUT JAMMWAL TO HOST ACTION REALITY SERIES 'INDIA'S ULTIMATE WARRIOR'



Bollywood actor Vidyut Jammwal who is known for action and trained in the oldest martial art form Kalaripayattu - will be hosting his first non-fiction action reality show titled 'India's Ultimate Warrior'. The 'Commando' famed actor along with four mentors, who are experts in the range of combat forms, are all geared up to find the ultimate warrior, who has the right blend of physical and mental attributes like focus, control, determination, balance, discipline, amongst others. Talking about the show Vidyut said, "It is high time reality shows become real, the job bestowed upon me was to find the ultimate warrior; a warrior in any field! someone who experiences everything with their mind, body and spirit at any given moment and this was the crux of the show where we put the fighters in the toughest situations to bring out their best! The person who got the best out of themselves is India's ultimate warrior". The show will premier on March 4 on the OTT platform discovery+ and on Discovery Channel on March 14.

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IPL 2022 TO BEGIN ON MARCH 26; 70 MATCHES ACROSS 4 VENUES WITH TEAMS DIVIDED IN TWO GROUPS

The Indian Premier League (IPL) 2022 season will begin from March 26 and run till May 29, said the IPL Governing Council on Friday. The IPL Governing Council, in a meeting on Friday, also said that the 15th edition of the IPL will be played in a bio-secure environment at a single hub to avoid air travel, considered as a major threat for the spread of COVID-19 infection, thereby affecting the players and tournament. The tournament will be held entirely in the state of Maharashtra with 55 matches in Mumbai and 15 matches in Pune. A total of 70 league matches will be played across four international-standard venues in Mumbai and Pune -- Wankhede Stadium and DY Patil Stadium to host 20 matches each, while Brabourne Stadium and MCA International Stadium, Pune will host 15 matches each. The venue for the playoff matches will be decided later. All teams will play four matches each at Wankhede Stadium and DY Patil Stadium while featuring in three matches each at Brabourne Stadium and MCA International Stadium, Pune. The 10 teams, with the addition of Lucknow Super Giants and Gujarat Titans, will play a

total of 14 league matches (seven home as well as away), followed by four playoff matches. Each team will play five teams twice while facing the remaining four teams only once (two only home as well as away). To decide which teams will play against whom, teams have been divided in two virtual groups based on the number of times being crowned the IPL Champions followed by the number of times the teams reached the final of the tournament. Group A comprises of Mumbai Indians, Kolkata Knight Riders, Rajasthan Royals, Delhi Capitals and Lucknow Super Giants. Group B includes Chennai Super Kings, Sunrisers Hyderabad, Royal Challengers Bangalore, Punjab Kings and Gujarat Titans. Each team will play twice with the teams in their group and with the team in the same row in the second group. With the rest of the teams in the second group they will play only once during the season. For example, in Group A, Mumbai will play two matches each against Kolkata, Rajasthan, Delhi and Lucknow. Mumbai will also play two matches against Chennai and one match each against other teams in Group B.

IPL: MAYANK AGARWAL - NO. 13! WILL HE BE ABLE TO CHANGE PUNJAB KINGS' FORTUNE?

India opener Mayank Agarwal was on Monday handed over captaincy responsibilities ahead of the Indian Premier League 2022 for the Punjab Kings. The 31-year-old Karnataka opener will lead the franchise in the coming season, taking over from state teammate K.L. Rahul. Mayank had a great season with the team in IPL 2021 too; amassing 441 runs in 12 matches at an impressive average of 40.09. He also possessed a strong strike rate of 140.28 throughout the season, creating some memorable moments for the team, and the fans. With a superb performance as a batsman over the past few seasons, it will be interesting to see how Mayank performs now to the challenges of captaincy. Interestingly, Punjab Kings are on the top of the list for the most number of captains in the IPL as Agarwal will be the 13th. To start with, Punjab, then known as Kings XI Punjab, began with Yuvraj Singh as their captain in 2008. He continued till the end of the 2009 season before Kumar Sangakkara and Mahela Jayawardene fulfilled the captaincy duties from 2010. Whereas in 2012, David Hussey was their captain and in 2013 Adam Gilchrist took reigns of the perennial underachievers. 2014 turned out to be their best season as they reached the final that year under George Bailey after a fresh auction. In 2015, Bailey continued but Virender Sehwag captained in some of the games. In 2016, Punjab then started with South African David Miller and ended the season with Murali Vijay in charge in another disappointing season. In 2017, Glenn Maxwell was handed over the captaincy duty for the full season but not before he was sacked from the team in 2018. The musical chair of captaincy saw R Ashwin's anointment as the new leader post his purchase at the auction. Again, in 2021, they changed their captain and picked K.L. Rahul to lead the side. Now, ahead of the 2022 season, Punjab appointed Agarwal. So, in total, they have changed 13 captains so far. The team this year looks good on paper. However, Punjab have always been good on paper. But their records don't look good.

TOLD BOYS NOT TO WORRY ABOUT POSITION IN TEAM, SAYS ROHIT SHARMA

Rohit Sharma knows that Indian team was a bit conservative in their approach towards T20 cricket for some time but he expects that philosophy to undergo change as the youngsters have been told not to worry about odd failure. The cornerstone of Rohit's captaincy has been security for the players and it's paying dividends with three back-to-back T20I series wins since he took over post T20 World Cup. "We do understand at times that we've held back but it's important to tell the guys that you don't have to worry about your positions in the team. We want to fill whatever gaps we do have. We just want to move forward," Rohit said at the presentation ceremony after India beat Sri Lanka by six wickets in the third T20I to sweep the series 3-0. Rohit understands that picking an XI based on so many good performances is a different challenge altogether.

VIRAT AND 'THAT BOY' AT THE OTHER END: PUNIT BISHT RECALLS EMOTIONAL STAND WITH OLD BUDDY

When Punit Bisht entered the dressing room on the third day of Delhi's Ranji Trophy match against Karnataka back in 2006, there was deafening silence all around and sitting in a corner was a 17-year-old Virat Kohli, eyes all welled up. Bisht, then all of 19, was taken aback by the sight. The look on Kohli's face was enough to tell him that India's future captain, who was still a boy at that time, was trying to battle a storm inside. Kohli had just lost his father Prem, a lawyer, who suffered a brain stroke just a few hours back in the middle of the night. Kohli and Bisht were not out the other evening. But life had turned upside down for young Kohli.

SHAKIB TO PLAY IN TEST SERIES AGAINST SA, SAYS BCB PRESIDENT NAZMUL HASSAN

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Nazmul Hassan is hopeful that all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan will be playing the Test series against South Africa, after going unsold during the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2022, mega auctions. Hassan reported that Shakib had earlier cited IPL 2022 as the reason to miss the Test series against the Proteas. "Shakib gave us a letter saying that he wants a six-month break from Tests. When we asked him, he said that he will miss Tests against South Africa and Sri Lanka because of the IPL. I replied that you have to play against Sri Lanka, to which he agreed. Now that he is not going to the IPL, I don't see any reason why he shouldn't play the Test series in South Africa. So forget about it. This is no longer in my mind. The IPL was preventing him from playing [the two-Test series], but now he will play [both series]," said Nazmul Hassan. "Any player can refuse to play any format. I have no problem with that. But they have to tell me. He told me [that he doesn't want to play Tests against South Africa and Sri Lanka] due to the IPL. Now that it [participation in the IPL] is not happening, I don't see any other option," he added. Meanwhile, BCB's cricket operations chairman Jalal Yunus said that no player is bound to play every match as the board does not consider the players as 'mere employees'. "It is not a matter of pick and choose. He might have some problems, so we will consider him if he tells us that he wants to play a certain number of matches in a format," said Jalal Yunus.

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