

**Pratibha Ranta**

The actor grabbed eyeballs in the sleeper-hit *Laapataa Ladies* as well as the web series *Heeramandi*. Her Insta following grew from 600K to the current 1.2M after these two successes. Addressing this, Ranta says, "I'm grateful that because of social media I have got recognition, people tag me as 'national crush'. Hitting a million followers does translate into better work opportunities."



**On Social Media Day today, we speak to actors who quickly escalated on the popularity ladder after gaining traction on virtual platforms**

Akash Bhatnagar and Rishabh Suri  
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When *Animal* hit the screens last year, actor Triptii Dimri clinched the title of 'National Crush'. Following this, her social media follower number also saw a boom — from 600K to 2 million — in a matter of days. This year, multiple artistes have been given the title of National Crush, which also translated into buoying their popularity in the virtual world. On Social Media Day today, we speak to some actors about how this label and online popularity has impacted their careers.



**Triptii Dimri**

At a recent event, the actor reacted to the 'National Crush' label: "Mujhe shuru mein yahi lagta tha ki jab main actor banun, log bas mere kaam ke baare mein baat karein, aur kisi baare mein nahi. Whenever my films have been released, my work has been spoken about. All this love just motivates me to do better."

**Abhay Verma**

For the *Munjya* actor Abhay Verma, "work is the top priority". But when his Insta following grew from 98K to 467K after the film's release, he felt social media is "the biggest boon". "I got in touch with a guy on Insta whose mother had passed away a few months ago. His father got out of the house after six months just to see *Munjya* and he saw his father laugh for the first time in six months. Love coming from any direction feels good. But, 'crushes' keep changing; I want to be a 'forever lover'."

**NATIONAL CRUSH TO SM SWEETHEARTS**

**Taha Shah Badussha**

*Heeramandi* also gave rise to another national crush, actor Taha Shah Badussha. His Insta following went from 183K to 1.1M in just 13 days. "Instagram's reach is exponential. You gain a family even outside of India and a lot of opportunities opened up for me work wise, too. There are people who had almost given up [on themselves], but seeing my real-life story, they [say they] have the motivation to keep going," he shares.

PHOTOS: INSTAGRAM



**'I have a secret Insta account'**

Mugdha Kapoor  
mugdha.kapoor@hindustantimes.com

Would you expect actor Saif Ali Khan to have a secret Instagram account, much like his brother-in-law, actor Ranbir Kapoor? Turns out he does, and on Social Media Day today, he confesses to it. He says, "I do have the app and a secret account, too. I keep promising myself to delete it, but I still haven't." For the 53-year-old, staying away from social media was "an instinctive reaction" to keep away from "the idea of presenting a certain image online or sharing stuff" because it is not something that comes naturally to him. "I enjoy the fact that nobody is interested in asking me to promote something because they know I'm not on social media. So, I get a lot of peace and quiet," says the husband of actor Kareena Kapoor Khan, who keeps updating her Insta page with life events. Although he admits to social media being "distracting and addictive", the actor respects those who enjoy posting, engaging with followers. "It is a platform for people to perform on and to reach out to others, if they are interested," he adds. However, he finds some aspects downright annoying. "Every time I check Insta, I see an actor at the airport showing concern about a pap, and then the comments read, 'What a nice person'. Then there are stars who are not conscious of a fan trying to grab them and take a selfie, seeing which people write, 'What a not very nice person'. Everyone's very concerned with what everybody thinks because everyone wants to be super nice; that's irritating," he ends.

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**STOP PRESS**

Vicky Kaushal quashed rumours of expecting his first child with wife, actor Katrina Kaif. "Jabhi time aayega we won't be shy about announcing the news," said the actor at a press event.



PHOTO: YOGEN SHAH



PHOTO: YOGEN SHAH

I love taking pictures, I like recording things sometimes. So, if it's a question of sharing it, I might join social media. Never say never.

SAIF ALI KHAN, Actor

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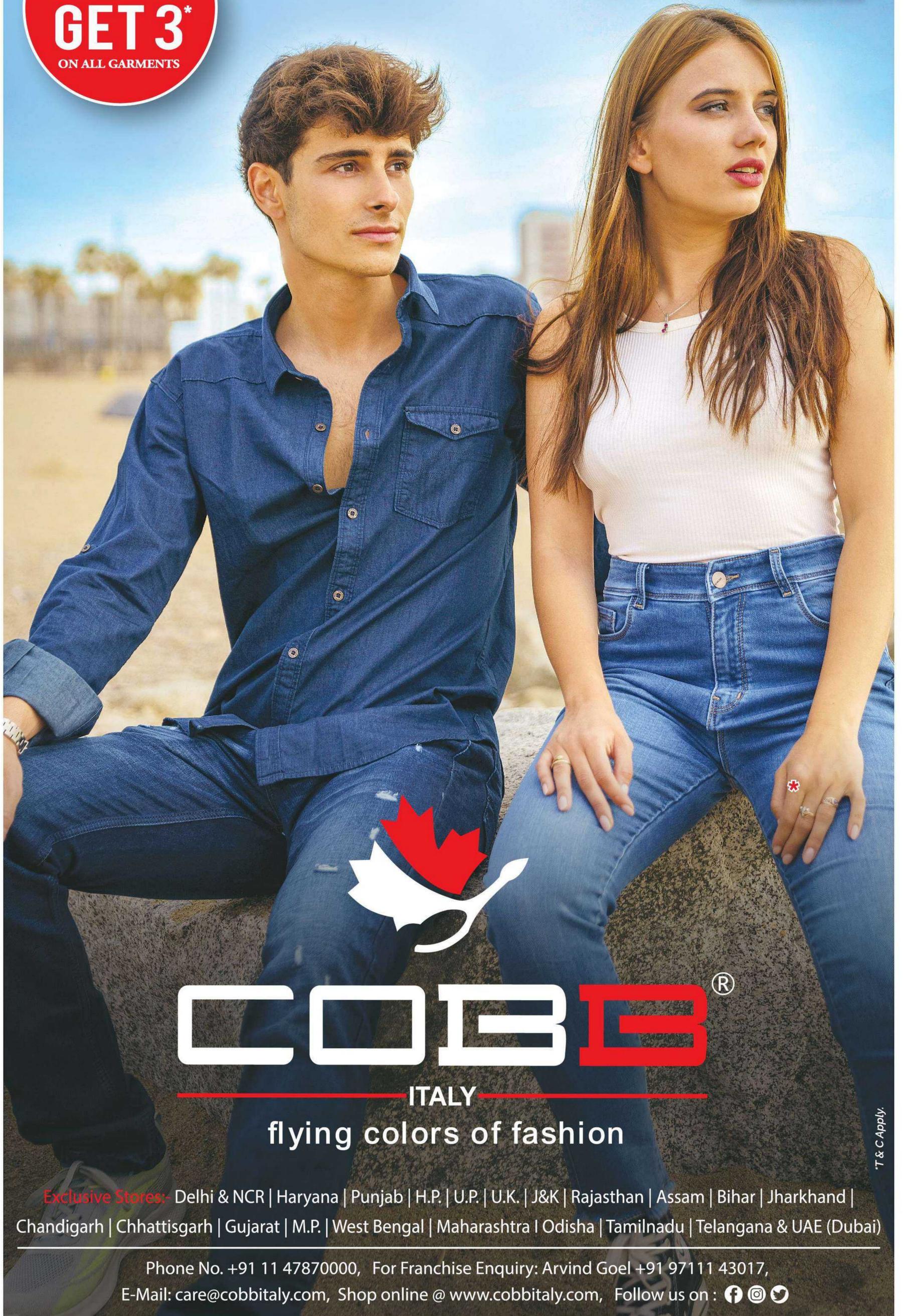
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Entertainment & Promotional Features



In downtown Sofia, Bulgaria, a participant proudly waves an LGBTQIA+ flag during the annual Gay Pride Parade



Amid the LGBTQ+ Pride parade in Athens, Greece, a canine participant dons the LGBTQIA+ flag with pride



At the annual Gay Pride Parade in Quito, Ecuador, a participant stands out with rainbow-coloured lips

# Love is love!

There's no such thing as being extra in June. As Pride Month draws to a close, the celebrations reach a crescendo, and these stunning visuals from around the world prove it right. Take a look



In Quito, Ecuador, a participant channels Spiderman's spirit, waving a rainbow banner at the annual Gay Pride Parade

In Nice, southeastern France, participants join the Pink Parade, a vibrant celebration of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ+) Pride

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PHOTO: INSTAGRAM/THERICHACHADHA

**Richa Chadha, who is navigating her third trimester, says she is prioritising production work with her husband Ali Fazal and preparing for upcoming projects**

## 'WHILE I'M AWAY FROM SHOOTING, I'M NOT AWAY FROM STORIES'

Yashika Mathur

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Actor Richa Chadha, who is currently in her third trimester of pregnancy, is gracefully balancing her personal and professional lives. While awaiting the arrival of her first child with actor-husband Ali Fazal, Chadha shares that she is using this time to delve into scripts and oversee projects at their production house.

Chadha says, "The focus is on production because this is the time to actually think about new talent, approach new creators, read their scripts, and see what their vision is like."

The couple, who founded

their production company in 2021, recently unveiled an exciting new slate for 2024. Projects like *Girls Will Be Girls*, *Papita*, *Pinky Promise*, and the adult animation *Doggie Stylez* are set to showcase diverse narratives and fresh talent.

"Other than this, we also have many things going on, which

we haven't disclosed yet because we want to do it once we are at a stage where we can talk about them with conviction and confidence and with some clarity in terms of the timelines," she explains.

The 37-year-old reveals she is preparing for upcoming productions scheduled to

begin shooting either late this year or early 2025, allowing her ample time to cherish moments with her newborn. Reflecting on her current phase, the mum-to-be says, "While I'm away from shooting, I'm not away from stories."

On another note, Chadha, last seen as Lajjo in *Heeramandi: The Diamond Bazaar*, shares her excitement about the next chapter in her life. "Motherhood is going to be new for me, like fatherhood will be new for Ali. We have had very free upbringings where no restrictions were placed on us by our parents. So, I think we will do the same. We will also surely try to inculcate the spirit of curiosity in the child," she concludes.

**The focus is on production because this is the time to think about new talent, approach new creators, read their scripts.**

RICHA CHADHA, Actor

## I call myself social media ki den: Parul Gulati

Akash Bhatnagar

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For Parul Gulati, social media forms a major part of her life as it got her noticed and continues to help her with work. She credits all her success to the new-age media platforms, and says, "I call myself social media ki den. I got my first acting gig through Facebook at the age of 17, and now, my whole business (haircare brand) is on social media."

However, the actor insists "addiction to social media is real", and reveals she is also battling the issue. "I have to face the addiction. Earlier, the algorithm didn't know what you wanted to watch, now it does. Algorithm aapki neend chura raha hai. I open Insta and mindlessly scroll for hours on end. It is out of my control," she explains.

As an entrepreneur, the actor rues that she can't even indulge in a digital detox as her business depends on her staying active and engaging with users. "Younger audiences are on social media and it's imperative to get their attention [towards our products]. I also get a lot of ideas, including new promotional techniques, via social media," she says.

However, there is another ugly side to having a social media presence. Gulati faced backlash when a video detailing her investment property in Goa surfaced. She plans on converting it into a rental property and was criticised by Goans, who feel she is commercialising the state. Standing firm in her business idea, she tells us, "Main bol rahi hun par puri duniya toh kar rahi hai. And I haven't even done it as yet. My property will be complete by December this year. Goa has become a [place to do] business. I bought that property as an investment and I don't see myself living in Goa, ever. But it was the only place I could buy a villa; doing this in Mumbai is impossible as you have to spend a lot of money to buy a villa here."



PHOTO: INSTAGRAM/GULATI6

## Koi sharam nahin hain: Sushant on people gatecrashing celeb weddings



Newlyweds (left) Zaheer Iqbal and (far right) Sonakshi Sinha with Sushant Divgikr



PHOTOS: INSTAGRAM/SUSHANTDIVGIKR

Just experienced several people gate crashing and/or trying to gate crash a celebrity wedding recently !

I can't believe people will get fully dressed , pretend like they're invited and then sneak in !!!

For what joy ? So you can enter and just make some reels ? I am in disbelief as to how people can be so faaaaaltu !

Navya Kharbanda

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Actor-singer Sushant Divgikr recently took to Instagram to address people gatecrashing celeb weddings. After attending Sonakshi Sinha and Zaheer Iqbal's wedding reception in Mumbai on June 23, Divgikr hinted at seeing uninvited guests sneaking into the event. They wrote on Insta: "I can't

believe people will get fully dressed, pretend like they're invited and sneak in!"

Ask them to elaborate on the post, and they lash out. "Koi sharam nahin hai, aagaye bas kisi ka naam leke. Just because somebody is trending, aap pahuch jaate hain."

Divgikr feels PR teams might be facilitating the uninvited guests: "I know some industry people who attended the wedding without an

invitation. Maybe unke PR ne bola hoga that they'll procure an invitation."

They also expressed concern over the embarrassment caused to the hosts. "They fake it in such a way that it seems they actually know the bride and groom. I heard some saying, 'Chalo ab aagaye andar, camera nikaalo'. Just for those two minutes of fame, people go to such lengths."



PHOTO: INSTAGRAM/PROSENSTAR

## Prosenjit and Rituparna celebrate 50th film together

Yashika Mathur

In the 1990s, Prosenjit Chatterjee and Rituparna Sengupta were Bengal's beloved on-screen pair. Earlier this month, these stalwarts of Bengali cinema celebrated their 50th film together — *Ajogyo*.

At 61, Chatterjee has been a part of the industry since 1983. For him, acting alongside Sengupta signifies a confidence in the film's success, as their pairing continues to resonate with audiences. "I'm in my 40th year, she's in her 30th, and yet people adore seeing us together," Chatterjee reflects. "In Bengal, our pairing has become legendary."

Chatterjee and the 53-year-old Sengupta have delivered numerous hits over the years, including iconic films such as *Sasurbari Zindabad* (2000), *Utsab* (2000), *Jamaibabu Zindabad* (2001) and *Praktan* (2016).

Recalling their journey together, Chatterjee mentions Sengupta was a "child" when they first collaborated on *Nagpanchami* (1994). He takes pride in the fact that even today,

younger generations appreciate their old commercial films. "The views on YouTube for songs from our older films are remarkably high," Chatterjee notes, adding, "It's gratifying that today's youth still listens to our songs."

Highlighting the significance of a good co-actor, Chatterjee, whose role as Mr Roy in the web series *Jubilee* received acclaim, emphasises that filmmaking is a collaborative effort. "One person alone cannot make a film work," he asserts, adding, "Co-actors play a crucial role in making a scene believable. Every element contributes to the magic of cinema."

PHOTO: INSTAGRAM/AMOLPARASHAR

## Amol Parashar gets nostalgic about his IIT JEE results

Yashika Mathur

Amol Parashar, noted for diverse roles in projects including *Tripling*, *Sardar Udham* (2021) and *Cash* (2021), recently surprised fans by sharing a lesser-known yet intriguing detail from his life — he excelled in the fiercely competitive IIT JEE examinations. Following the announcement of the 2024 IIT JEE results, Parashar proudly disclosed achieving an All India Rank (AIR) of 238.

In an Instagram post, Parashar expressed both joy and nostalgia, reflecting on his initial appearance in newspapers: "Seeing all the

IIT-JEE results ads in the newspapers last couple of weeks reminded me of the first time my face was in the newspapers!! (sic)."

Discussing his unexpected journey into acting, Parashar recalls his earlier focus on conventional career paths. "If somebody had told me I would be an actor, I would not have believed it. I had only done one skit in school, nothing serious. But in college, I got some exposure [to acting]," he shares, adding, "Also, options and professions like these didn't exist in the world I grew up in. I had never heard of any relative or cousin doing

anything remotely creative. There were just lawyers, doctors, and teachers. That's how the entire family was brought up."

Reflecting on the anxiety and anticipation leading up to results day, the 37-year-old recounts, "You're anxious. You make all kinds of plans like 'what if I succeed, what if I don't', 'which college will I go to'. At that age, you feel like your entire life hinges on that day (result day)."

Recalling the moment he received his IIT admission, Parashar shares, "I distinctly remember feeling a profound sense of relief when my results were declared."



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# Pookie power: All about social media's latest obsession

Ivanka Arya  
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The term 'pookie' has swept social media, quickly becoming a part of Gen Z's lingo online and IRL. A term of endearment or a fun nickname for a friend and a loved one, it has morphed into a title that is now used for your favourite celeb or even a pet!

**WHAT EVEN IS A POOKIE?**  
It all started with American couple Campbell and Jett Puckett's social media videos. The couple who often post videos of their travels, went viral after they posted a series of fit checks. Many of these videos involve Jett either surprising Campbell with a gift or praising her and her outfits, affectionately calling her pookie in a southern drawl. The compliments are often a variation of "outfit is fire pookie," and "pookie looks absolutely fire, tonight," which have become catchphrases among their fans.

**THE RISE OF POOKIE NATION**  
Another force behind pookie's rise was influencer Prayag Mishra. The Canada-based content creator, shot to popularity for his sassy comebacks, often refers to his followers as 'pookies' in his vlogs.

Now dubbed as Big Pookie, Mishra's most popular video has over five million likes, while his loyal fanbase (one million strong on Instagram) has been dubbed as Pookie Nation or Pookie Bears.

**GEN Z DIDN'T INVENT THE WORD**  
Despite the common misconception, the term pookie was not invented by the Gen Z, and is older than the

boom of social media. Around the 1900s, it was first used as a nickname for small children in Germany. But it made its way into the popular lexicon after the 1960s' animated television show *Garfield* showed the beloved orange cat with his teddy bear named Pooky.

Prayag Mishra often calls his followers 'pookies'; (inset) American couple Jett and Campbell Puckett first popularised the word on social media



PHOTO: INSTAGRAM



PHOTOS: INSTAGRAM

Striking and out-of-the-box, dopamine makeup is a beauty trend meant to spark joy and put a spring in your step

(Above) Experiment with eye makeup like Sydney Sweeney; Go bold with some statement pieces like Radhika Apte

## BID ADIEU TO BLUES WITH DOPAMINE MAKEUP

Vitti Joshi  
htcity@hindustantimes.com

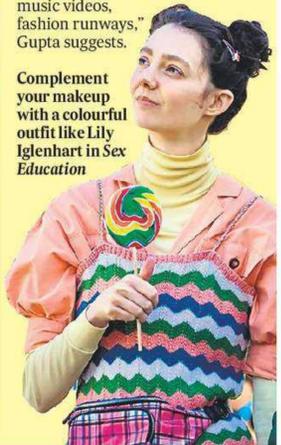
Beauty trends are increasingly ditching the minimalist, clean-girl aesthetic of last year in favour of bright, maximalist cheer. Think actors Zendaya and Sydney Sweeney's face crystals in *Euphoria*, or the fun hairdos and accessories that Lily Iglehart's character sported in *Sex Education*. While the trend gained a niche fanbase on social media during the pandemic, celebs like singer Lizzo, actors Amanda Seyfried, Tamannah Bhatia and Karisma Kapoor recently brought dopamine beauty back into the mainstream.

**DOPAMINE BEAUTY IN A NUTSHELL**  
Dopamine is a neurotransmitter in the brain that plays a crucial role in our experiences of pleasure and motivation. Mumbai-based makeup artist Kinchangthul Bariamtak believes it connects personal and artistic expression in many ways to trigger the happiness hormone. "Creating a desired makeup look triggers a dopamine release and allows for positive reinforcement, but imagine the same feeling louder, and with more intensity. The boldness of expression is visually pleasing but can also be employed to make a statement," he says. From coloured eyeliner to face gems or crystals, the motto is to do

what makes you happy. **FUN OVER FINESSE**  
This trend deliberately puts expertise and technique in the back seat, focussing instead on fun interpretations of makeup. "[Dopamine glam] is a vivid representation of individualistic expression that is showcased in day to day wear — from hair, makeup and styling, to what we display on social media," says celebrity makeup artist Tushar Gupta. He also credits the '80s TV star aesthetic and exposure to drag fashion for dopamine makeup as we know it today.

Want to try out the look for yourself but don't know where to start? Start out small, either with a graphic liner, tiny rhinestones to your usual eye look or a bright pop of colour on your lips. "Look for music videos, fashion runways," Gupta suggests.

Complement your makeup with a colourful outfit like Lily Iglehart in *Sex Education*



### TIPS TO INCORPORATE JOY INTO YOUR BEAUTY ROUTINE

- Themed looks are a winner. Think of what you want, match palettes and stick to the essence.
- Experiment with bold, beautiful colours.
- Start easy with simple stickers. Try patterns across the face that highlight your best features.
- Go with your gut. Think of makeup as self-care; enjoy the pampering process. Play music to play around.
- Use gels and creams that suit your skin as the base, and document your progress.

With inputs from Kinchangthul Bariamtak

Karisma Kapoor sports a graphic liner



## Get a leg up: Add Nordic curls to your workouts à la Kriti

PHOTOS: INSTAGRAM/KRITISANON



Actor Kriti Sanon is clearly a beast in the gym. Sanon recently posted a clip of herself on Instagram as she hit some Nordic curls. The exercise, which targets the hamstrings and strengthens the core at the same time, also happens to be the hardest variation of the hamstring curl. Sanon opted for a non-weighted version, focusing more on her form.

In her video, the 33-year-old actor hit the hamstring curl by kneeling on a gym bench and securing her ankles behind her. Keeping her core engaged and back straight, she lowered her torso to the ground. Then, as she reached the floor, she balanced her body on her arms with her palms flat on the surface.

Krishna Priya Pallavi

### The benefits of Nordic curls

- Nordic curls target and strengthen the posterior chain muscles, including your lower back, glutes, hamstrings, and calves.
- Since the exercise engages

your core muscles, you can practise it to stabilise and control them.

- The workout also targets the hip flexors and prevents joint pain.
- Adding it to your regular inclusion also significantly reduces the risk of hamstring injuries, while improving balance.



## Soggy weather, crunchy treats: Healthy snacks for rainy days

PHOTOS: ADOBE STOCK AND SHUTTERSTOCK



Aalokitaa Basu  
aalokitaa.basu@htdigital.in

The joy of sipping on piping hot chai with crispy pakodas is unmatched. That being said, you don't necessarily need deep-fried bites to help you enjoy the magic of monsoon. Try out these quick, healthy snacks to munch on while you enjoy the showers.

**ROASTED CHANA**  
Roasted chana is a wholesome, protein-heavy answer to your evening hunger pangs. Simply toss a cup of boiled and dried chickpeas in a little bit of ghee. Once they start becoming brown, add a combination of chaat masala, chilli powder and salt.

**ROASTED MAKHANA**  
If you do not have boiled chickpeas on hand, simply switch them out with a bag of

fox nuts, or makhana. You can even experiment with western flavour profiles. Toss your makhana in ready-made mixes such as Piri Piri.

**STUFFED CUCUMBERS**  
Stuffed cucumbers, or cucumber boats, are a fun way

to ensure your body gets its share of veggies. Simply chop your cucumbers lengthwise and scoop out some of the mush to create space for your filling. Add some chopped tomatoes, cheese and oregano. You can also mix some shredded chicken with curd and salt to make an entrée.

**HOMEMADE HUMMUS**  
A PSA for kitchen amateurs: hummus is not all that intimidating. This Middle Eastern dip is a popular side for any dishes. With a chickpea base, it is a healthier option compared to condiments like ketchup and mayonnaise.

**APPLES AND PEANUT BUTTER**

ENJOY THE MONSOON MAGIC WITH THESE QUICK, HEALTHY SNACKS INSTEAD OF DEEP-FRIED BITES

Way too simple to be deemed a 'recipe', dipping apple slices into your jar of peanut butter can quickly turn into an addictive routine. The smoothness of the nut butter perfectly complements the crisp apple. Don't be surprised if you find yourself wanting to snack on an apple every day, after this.

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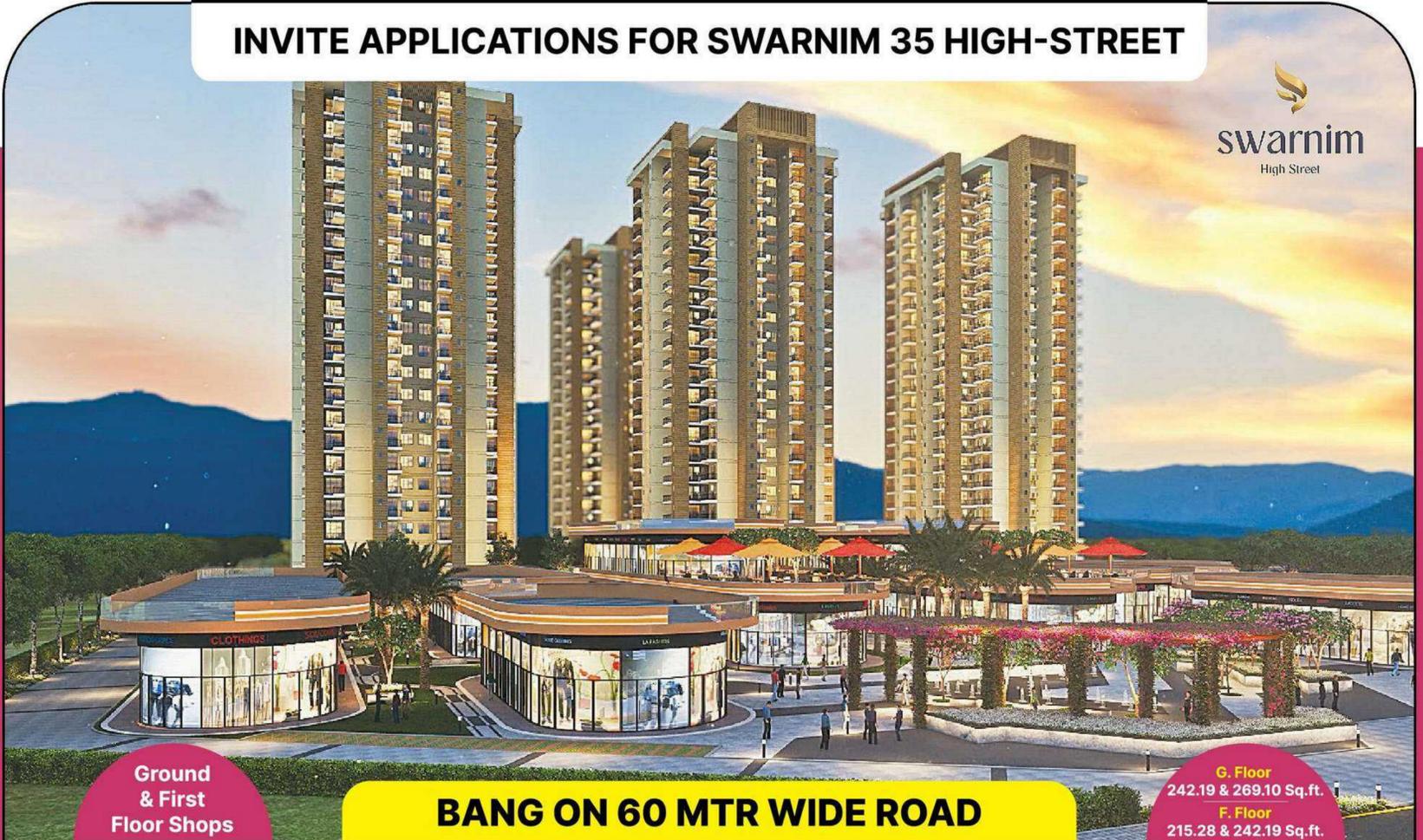
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**{ YOUR TAROT THIS WEEK }**  
Manisha Koushik

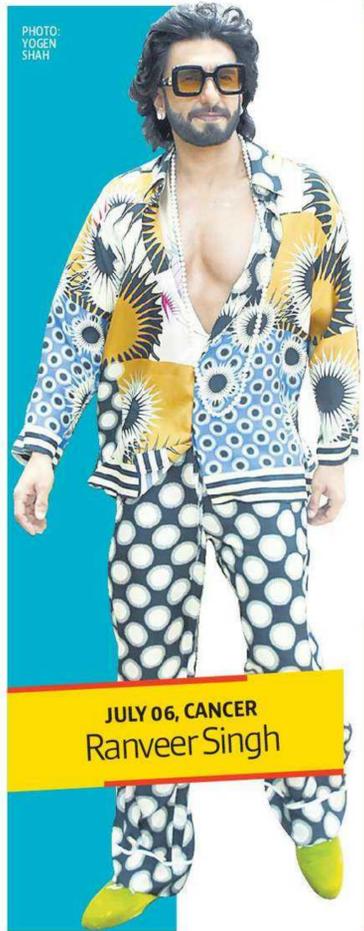


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**JULY 06, CANCER**  
Ranveer Singh

**ARIES** MAR 21-APR 20  
**Love:** The Magician **Mood:** Four of Coins **Career:** Three of Wands  
You may excel in leaving a lasting impact in the workplace. Relying too heavily on limited resources could result in financial constraints. Open communication is key to resolving issues with romantic partners. Some individuals may spontaneously plan an exciting trip with their closest friends.  
**Lucky Number:** 22 **Lucky Colour:** Blue



Lara Dutta Bhupathi

**CANCER** JUN 22-JUL 22  
**Love:** The Lovers **Mood:** The Fool **Career:** Strength  
Following some initial turbulence, the work environment is expected to stabilise. Recent financial gains may put you in a stronger financial position. Prioritise your health by avoiding stressful situations. Your outstanding academic performance is likely to open doors to various opportunities.  
**Lucky Number:** 11 **Lucky Colour:** Pink



Priyanka Chopra Jonas

**LIBRA** SEP 24-OCT 23  
**Love:** Nine of Swords **Mood:** The Magician **Career:** The Empress  
For those seeking love, a serendipitous encounter could lead to a romantic connection. Exercise caution when engaging with new clients. Be prepared for potential disruptions to a romantic vacation. Adjusting study habits may be necessary to sustain your current level of academic success.  
**Lucky Number:** 2 **Lucky Colour:** Silver



Parineeti Chopra

**CAPRICORN** DEC 22-JAN 21  
**Love:** Devil **Mood:** Three of Coins **Career:** Knight of Wands  
Let your resilience shine as you navigate the week. Individuals seeking a career change may soon experience numerous advantages. Proceed with caution when lending money without proper documentation. Securing good accommodation contributes to comfort and well-being.  
**Lucky Number:** 4 **Lucky Colour:** Saffron



Deepika Padukone

**TAURUS** APR 21-MAY 20  
**Love:** The Emperor **Mood:** Two of Wands **Career:** The Moon  
Taking proactive steps to advocate for your ideas and beliefs in the workplace can capture the attention of management. Adequate sleep, including a midday nap if possible, is essential for rejuvenating your body and mind. Students may need to learn to refocus their attention when romantic distractions arise.  
**Lucky Number:** 6 **Lucky Colour:** Magenta



Anushka Sharma

**LEO** JUL 23-AUG 23  
**Love:** Nine of Cups **Mood:** Six of Coins **Career:** Three of Wands  
Maintaining a competitive edge can empower you to assert control over your professional endeavours effortlessly. Dealing with a demanding friend or acquaintance at home requires tact and diplomacy. Approach matrimonial decisions with caution. Spontaneous planning of overseas trips is not advisable.  
**Lucky Number:** 9 **Lucky Colour:** Brown



Sara Ali Khan

**SCORPIO** OCT 24-NOV 22  
**Love:** Wheel of Fortune **Mood:** Devil **Career:** Two of Wands  
Efforts may be required to demonstrate your value and capabilities in the workplace. Family obligations may compel some individuals to attend social events. Avoid letting minor issues disrupt your peace of mind. Researching the real estate market is advisable before making any final decisions.  
**Lucky Number:** 1 **Lucky Colour:** Orange



Raveena Tandon

**AQUARIUS** JAN 22-FEB 19  
**Love:** The World **Mood:** Justice **Career:** King of Wands  
Entrepreneurs stand a good chance of tapping into lucrative new markets for their products and services. Efforts to rekindle the passion in your relationship could yield spectacular results. Embracing fitness-oriented adjustments to your routine offers numerous benefits, so keep up the momentum.  
**Lucky Number:** 9 **Lucky Colour:** Red



Nora Fatehi

**GEMINI** MAY 21-JUN 21  
**Love:** The World **Mood:** Temperance **Career:** The Star  
As your reputation grows within your field, you may capture the attention of influential decision-makers. Financial backing from various sources could significantly bolster your financial position. Consistent exercise can lead to remarkable improvements in your overall health.  
**Lucky Number:** 1 **Lucky Colour:** Golden



Sonam Kapoor

**VIRGO** AUG 24-SEP 23  
**Love:** The Hanged Man **Mood:** The Magician **Career:** Eight of Cups  
If faced with a pivotal career decision, consider seeking wise counsel before proceeding. Evaluate your exercise routine to ensure it aligns with your fitness goals. Avoid unnecessary conflicts with loved ones. With exciting times ahead, now is the ideal moment to solidify your vacation plans.  
**Lucky Number:** 5 **Lucky Colour:** Green



Kareena Kapoor Khan

**SAGITTARIUS** NOV 23-DEC 21  
**Love:** Judgment **Mood:** Magician **Career:** Ten of Wands  
An opportune time to tackle something significant and showcase expertise in the workplace. Despite recent financial constraints, a sudden windfall could alleviate monetary concerns. Consider planning a special meal with your partner. Hardworking students are poised to exceed expectations academically.  
**Lucky Number:** 17 **Lucky Colour:** Purple



Konkana Sensharma

**PISCES** FEB 20-MAR 20  
**Love:** The Hermit **Mood:** Two of Swords **Career:** Two of Coins  
Fostering a robust professional network can unlock promising career prospects. Serendipitous gains might bolster your financial standing. Social engagements with friends may await you. Enhancing the aesthetics and functionality of properties can enhance their market appeal.  
**Lucky Number:** 22 **Lucky Colour:** White



Alia Bhatt

**SUSHMA HOLIDAY HOMES IN KASAUJI**

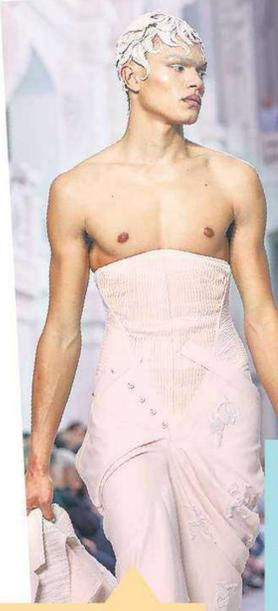
## AVANT-GARDE HIGHLIGHTS FROM PARIS HAUTE COUTURE

From sculpted hairstyles to bold colour palettes, take a look at the hair and beauty trends that sizzled at this year's Paris Haute Couture Week

Compiled by Jattan Kalra



**ARCHITECTURAL FLAIR**  
The aptly named Haute Abstraction collection by Viktor & Rolf featured sleek and abstract hairstyles. The hairdos included sculpted, angular waves paired with bangs, adding an architectural flair to the geometric clothing. Subtly defined features and minimal makeup allowed the hair and bold patterns of the outfits to take centre stage.



**PINK PERFECTION**  
For Robert Wun's collection, the makeup featuring monochromatic pink palette added a stunning appeal. The model's eyes were surrounded by fuchsia eyeshadow that extended to the brows and cheekbones, blending seamlessly into the skin. While matching pink mascara emphasised the eyes, gradient red lips with a soft centre completed the look.



**BLUE VEILED BEAUTY**  
The Schiaparelli collection showcased minimalist yet impactful makeup, with pastel blues accentuating the eyes and upper cheekbones. Sleek hair in a tight bun was adorned with a delicate blue veil, and added a glamorous touch. The veil softened facial contours, enhancing the dreamlike quality of the look.



**SCULPTED SOPHISTICATION**  
The striking look from Thom Browne's show at this year's Paris Couture Week was a masterclass in avant-garde beauty. The hair, painted a stark white, was sculpted into intricate swirling patterns, giving an almost statue-like appearance. The makeup complemented this with frosted white tones that highlighted softly contoured cheeks and bold, defined lips, enhancing the sculpted effect.



**WET-SWEPT HAIRDO**  
The model, for Iris Van Herpen's collection, had their hair styled to appear wet and wind-swept. The fluidity of the hairdo complemented the design of the Sensorium ensemble. The makeup was kept minimalistic, with a focus on dewy and almost translucent-looking skin, which provided an otherworldly effect.



**Understanding and coping with an avoidantly attached partner**



**{ DAILY HOROSCOPE }**  
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**PREMASTROLOGER** **PREMASTROLOGER** **ASKPREMASTROLOGER**

**ARIES** MAR 21-APR 20  
**♈** An old ailment may be cured through home remedies. Things begin to look up on the financial front as gains accrue. A trip with friends is likely to prove most enjoyable.  
**LOVE FOCUS:** Someone you have a soft corner can come calling.  
**LUCKY NUMBER:** 17 **LUCKY COLOUR:** Green

**LEO** JUL 23-AUG 23  
**♌** It will be important to keep a tab of your expenses today. Enjoying time together will bring the family closer. A small initiative is likely to bring you into the limelight.  
**LOVE FOCUS:** You may take the initiative of discussing your future with the one you love.  
**LUCKY NUMBER:** 6 **LUCKY COLOUR:** Maroon

**SAGITTARIUS** NOV 23-DEC 21  
**♐** Your multitasking abilities are likely to gain your instant recognition at work. Mending fences with someone you don't like will be on your agenda today.  
**LOVE FOCUS:** Someone's attention may prove distracting, but might kick start a budding romance!  
**LUCKY NUMBER:** 17 **LUCKY COLOUR:** White

**TAURUS** APR 21-MAY 20  
**♉** You will benefit by taking a break from your exercise routine. Cutting corners and tightening belts will help you save a lot. You may have to be in good form to perform well.  
**LOVE FOCUS:** Your attempts to draw the attention of someone you love will succeed.  
**LUCKY NUMBER:** 5 **LUCKY COLOUR:** Purple

**VIRGO** AUG 24-SEP 23  
**♍** You may cut corners just to strengthen your financial position. Some good news awaits you on the domestic front. Your wish for an outing and a change of scene is likely to be granted.  
**LOVE FOCUS:** Meeting someone you adore cannot be ruled out.  
**LUCKY NUMBER:** 8 **LUCKY COLOUR:** Saffron

**CAPRICORN** DEC 22-JAN 21  
**♎** This is a good day to refresh old contacts on the social front. Spiritual pursuits are likely to attract you and keep you mentally at peace.  
**LOVE FOCUS:** You may become innovative to cater to the moods of partner!  
**LUCKY NUMBER:** 18 **LUCKY COLOUR:** Magenta

**GEMINI** MAY 21-JUN 21  
**♊** Health of someone close can rapidly improve. Much excitement is in store for those planning a trip to someplace exotic. You may need to be a bit sporting in a matter, so shun rigidity.  
**LOVE FOCUS:** Someone you are close to may plan something with you.  
**LUCKY NUMBER:** 7 **LUCKY COLOUR:** Blue

**LIBRA** SEP 24-OCT 23  
**♎** Those ailing may take some time to make a full recovery. Someone close is likely to include you in an excursion or a fun trip.  
**LOVE FOCUS:** A romantic trip is on the cards and is likely to prove most entertaining.  
**LUCKY NUMBER:** 11 **LUCKY COLOUR:** Silver

**AQUARIUS** JAN 22-FEB 19  
**♒** Travelling to your childhood place will bring back fond memories. You may remain on the fore front in gaining mileage out of a social situation.  
**LOVE FOCUS:** Expressing your inner feelings is likely to create a special bond with lover.  
**LUCKY NUMBER:** 1 **LUCKY COLOUR:** Red

**CANCER** JUN 22-JUL 22  
**♋** Unnecessarily worrying about your health can make you unwell! Conserving money will be important at this juncture. You can't make everyone happy, so be yourself.  
**LOVE FOCUS:** The lover may be planning something special for you, so get ready to be surprised.  
**LUCKY NUMBER:** 4 **LUCKY COLOUR:** Dark Grey

**SCORPIO** OCT 24-NOV 22  
**♏** You may need to design your fitness plan according to your active lifestyle. A favourable situation may benefit you in a social gathering.  
**LOVE FOCUS:** Things brighten up on the romantic front, as someone catches your fancy.  
**LUCKY NUMBER:** 8 **LUCKY COLOUR:** Brown

**PISCES** FEB 20-MAR 20  
**♓** Financially, you will have enough to realise your dreams. Your well-wishers will keep your flag flying high on the social front. You are likely to let go and enjoy what life has to offer.  
**LOVE FOCUS:** Some of you can take steps to mend a strained relationship.  
**LUCKY NUMBER:** 8 **LUCKY COLOUR:** Orange

## Wild Wild Punjab's star cast spotted at Punjab Grill



▼ The cast of *Wild Wild Punjab* (l-r) Ishita Raj, Sunny Singh, Manjot Singh, Varun Sharma and Patralekhaa  
PHOTOS: HTCS



It was a star-studded day at Punjab Grill with the cast of *Wild Wild Punjab*. Actors Varun Sharma, Sunny Singh, Manjot Singh and Patralekhaa, were recently spotted enjoying the vibrant ambiance and savoury delights at Delhi's renowned Punjabi restaurant in Defence Colony. The actors met and chatted with fans while indulging in authentic Punjabi food. This outing comes at a time when fans of the ensemble's dynamic chemistry eagerly await its release. Set to premiere on Netflix on July 10, the Simarpreet Singh directorial promises a rollercoaster of emotions and laughter.

In the movie, Varun Sharma portrays Khanna, a man grappling with heartbreak and determined to confront his ex-girlfriend at her wedding. Supported by his loyal friends Arora (Sunny Singh), Jainu (Jassie Gill), and Honey Paaji (Manjot Singh), Khanna embarks on a poignant journey of closure amid Punjab's spirited backdrop. Joining their escapades are Radha (Patralekhaa) and Meera (Ishita Raj), adding layers of laughter and unpredictability to their escapades across the colourful Punjab landscape.



## Businessman honoured with Lifetime Achievement Award



◀ Dr Er Rajanderr Jaina

PHOTOS: HTCS

For his contributions to the film and music industries, **Dr Er Rajanderr Jaina** was honoured with a Lifetime Achievement Award by Sunil Parashar, President of the Film Piracy Eradication Cell, on his 70th birthday. A chartered civil engineer, architect and LLB, he founded the Rajanderr Jaina Group of Companies. A successful businessman and active in social and trade associations, Jaina has authored over 10 books, written and sung songs, and produced films. He has been bestowed

with numerous awards, including the Udyog Rattan and Munshi Memorial Award.

The trailer for his upcoming film *The Dead End* was showcased at the event, along with his audio-video albums like *Aai Aai Aa Sukoo Sukoo*, as well as his theatre works *Naughty @ Forty* and *Lal Salaam*. Jaina continuously sung more than 30 songs in four hours during the event, including *Bharat ka Rehnewala Hoon*, from the 1970 film *Purab Aur Paschim*. He dedicated it to actor Manoj Kumar.



Sandeep Marwah, Chancellor, AAFU University, and Jaina celebrated the occasion with grandeur

Sachin Tendulkar @sachin\_rt · 15h  
What a stellar performance by our girls on Day 1! @TheShafaliVerma's double ton and @mandhana\_smriti's 149 set the tone for a commanding day. The overall batting display by the team was nothing short of impressive, and I'm looking forward to more fireworks tomorrow!

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We never appreciate speed. But we are truly in awe of yours, Shafali. The cheers for the monomonth record!

@TheShafaliVerma #INDvSA #ShafaliVerma

Shafali Verma breaks double century in women's Tests, becomes second Indian to breach 200-run mark

CONGRATULATIONS

(Far right) Former cricketer Sachin Tendulkar and several users on X extended their good wishes to the Indian Women's cricket team for the massive feat



## Social media lauds Women in Blue as they create Test history

The Indian Women's cricket team raced away to a mammoth 525/4 on day one of their ongoing test match against South Africa. On Friday, at Chennai's MA Chidambaram Stadium, the team, led by Harmanpreet Kaur, created history and amassed the highest-ever single-day total in Test history.

Another record-breaking feat was achieved by opener Shafali Verma, who scored the fastest double century (scoring 205 runs off 194 balls) in women's Test cricket. She and Smriti Mandhana stitched together a formidable 292-run partnership, setting the stage for the historical feat.

The stupendous records received much-deserved attention on social media, with India Men's legend Sachin Tendulkar leading the congratulatory bandwagon.

HTC

SACHIN TENDULKAR PRAISED THE TEAM'S PERFORMANCE ON X, SAYING, "WHAT A STELLAR PERFORMANCE BY OUR GIRLS ON DAY 1! THE OVERALL BATTING DISPLAY BY THE TEAM WAS NOTHING SHORT OF IMPRESSIVE."

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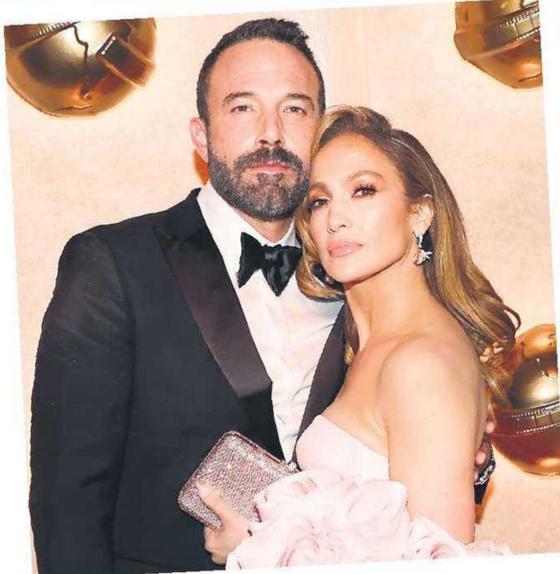
## While Jen holidays in Europe, Ben 'quietly' moves his things from the couple's LA mansion

Amid strong speculation of marital issues between actor-couple Ben Affleck and Jennifer Lopez, the former has reportedly removed all his belongings from their home in Los Angeles (USA). Affleck pulled off the feat while his estranged wife, Lopez, was away in Europe. The news emerged the day after Lopez was seen entering her husband's production office upon her return.

Last week, during Lopez's travels in Italy and Paris, Affleck discreetly packed up and vacated their marital mansion in Beverly Hills. The property was recently listed for sale online, indicating it is now on the market. Affleck carried out these actions while Lopez was enjoying her vacation with friends and family, unwinding and having a good time.

Recently, after a week-long vacation, Lopez sought to "reflect on marriage" and focus on personal time, while Affleck remained in LA to bond with their children. It has been over a month since Affleck began living apart from the actor-singer.

A source told People, "Ben continues to live at the Brentwood rental. He's been there for about two months now." The actor currently stays at a rental property close to his former wife, actor Jennifer Garner's



Ben Affleck and Jennifer Lopez

house, which reportedly costs him around \$100,000 a month. Another source added, "He seems okay. He's been at his office every day and seems focused on work. He's also

spending time with his kids."

Despite the ongoing rumours, the couple, who got married in July 2022, continues to publicly wear their engagement rings, suggesting efforts to reconcile.

## Vashu Bhagnani owes over ₹65 lakh to crew members: FWICE



PHOTO: INSTAGRAM/VASHUBHAGNANI

In their latest email, they have said they will clear the dues by July end but if they don't do so then our workers will not work on any of their films.

BN TIWARI, President, FWICE

President of the Federation of Western India Cine Employees (FWICE), BN Tiwari, stated on Friday that veteran film producer Vashu Bhagnani's production house has outstanding dues amounting to more than ₹65 lakh. Of the total amount, Bhagnani's Pooja Entertainment owes ₹33.13 lakh to director Tinu Desai for the 2023 Akshay Kumar-starrer *Mission Raniganj*, while ₹31.78 lakh is owed to over 250 set workers who contributed to *Mission Raniganj*, *Ganapath* (2023), and *Bade Miyan Chote Miyan*.

"A written complaint was filed by the director of *Mission Raniganj* regarding non-payment of his dues last year in March. We've been following up with Pooja Entertainment, but still they haven't made the payment. They've said they will clear the dues by July end," Tiwari told PTI, adding that IFTDA wrote several letters to the production house, but they kept delaying the payment. "In February, they sought time to pay, citing Jacky Bhagnani's (actor-producer) wedding. After FWICE wrote them a letter in March, they again sought time to make the payment after the release of their film, *Bade Miyan Chote Miyan*; that did not happen," he added.

We reached out to Bhagnani, but he was unavailable for comment till the time of going to press.

# MONSOON Special

## RAINY AFFAIRS AND THE TASTE OF 'CHAI'

HINDUSTAN TIMES MEDIA MARKETING INITIATIVE

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It's no secret that as soon as the first drops of the monsoon showers hit the earth, we all become consumed with our craving for chai to cherish the patter after a scorching summer. Priya Chakraborty writes



After a spell of heat and humidity that feels as though it lasted forever, the first drops of monsoon rains have finally knocked on our doors; and as is tradition, with the fatigue of summer washed away, human hearts have turned to their favourite elixir to make the first rains of monsoons special: chai or tea.

India's love affair with chai is a tale that spans centuries, with roots deep in tradition and history. Originally prized for its medicinal qualities, chai transformed as a drink under British colonial influence in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when tea plantations were established and the beverage became popular among locals. Today, chai isn't just a drink; it's an emotion, a cultural phenomenon that resonates across the nation. From bustling city streets to quiet rural corners, there are 'chai ki tapris' that serve steaming cups of this aromatic brew, fostering social connections and daily rituals.

But what makes chai such an elixir that is most craved during rainy days? In truth, chai possesses an innate quality of bringing people together, fostering conversations and connections that are as timeless as the rains. Besides that, it is also a drink most Indians associate with comfort and warmth. Bottom line is that monsoon has subtly become synonymous with chai, and we love it.

monsoon season becomes yet another perfect reason to indulge in the craving. The damp weather, the rhythmic patter of rain, the cool breeze, and a cup of chai, are the perfect recipe for bringing families and friends together under the pretext of sharing the hot cuppa and enjoying each other's company, creating a comforting routine during the rainy season.

### FLAVOURS AND AROMAS

Chai also happens to be an enriching sensory experience during wind-swept, damp monsoons. The spices used in chai, such as ginger, cardamom, cloves, and cinnamon, are particularly

soothing during the monsoon. The rich aromas of freshly brewed chai with spices combined with the scent of rain create a satisfying sensory experience that rejuvenates and refreshes one's mood from the gloom that pervades all around.

### SOCIAL CONNECTION

Chai also happens to be a social beverage often enjoyed in groups. The monsoon provides more opportunities for these gatherings to take place as people seek shelter from the rain. Such situations often turn tea stalls into communal hubs where conversations flourish.

### COMFORT AND WARMTH

As the first rains drop, it offers much-needed respite from the blazing heat of the summer. With the signature cooling effect that monsoon comes with, the more humid air makes a hot cup of chai incredibly comforting. It provides both thermal and emotional warmth, turning gloomy days into cosy, relaxing moments.

### CULINARY PAIRINGS

Chai may be the main character of the monsoon season, but it is also synonymous with hot, crispy snacks like pakoras and samosas. These savoury treats pair perfectly with chai, enhancing the overall refreshing experience with complementary flavours that make the season even more soothing.

### TRADITION AND RITUAL

Since chai already has deep cultural roots in India and is traditionally consumed throughout the day, the



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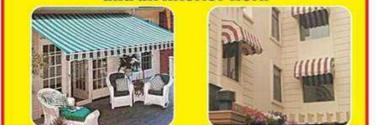
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**Meet Sarojini Nagar's 'thriller' copy of Michael Jackson**  
By Mihir Singh  
20th Jul 4.5 min read

**Social Media Day**

**'MY REELS GOT ME DEALS!'**  
Pankaj Rawat aka Prankster Panku with 4.3M followers on Instagram, was a Ghaziabad-based social media influencer who went viral in July 2023 for dancing in crowded markets. He earned fame from recording his dancing reels, like the one that was shot in Sarojini Nagar and garnered 1.7M views. "My reels got me deals! Dheere dheere public ne mujhe recognise kiya, and now I don't get ridiculed or trolled like earlier. Log samajh gaye hain, it's my livelihood... Earlier, I'd post what I felt would work to stay in the public eye, but now I've got the luxury of choosing what to upload. I still dance in the markets for fun, but now I also post a lot of other content, like shopping challenges that I record with my girlfriend."

**Delhi's 10-yr-old Jaspreet on receiving help from Anand Mahindra, Arjun Kapoor: I'm emotional seeing the love**  
By Kriti Kambiri  
19th May 4.5 min read

**Actors Sonu Sood, Arjun Kapoor and industrialist Anand Mahindra are among the beneficiaries of a promising person's efforts to help them.**

**PHOTO: INSTAGRAM/ PRANKSTER.PANKU**

**PHOTO: HARSH VARDHAN/HT**

# SOCIAL MEDIA DAY: VIRAL YESTERDAY, WHERE ARE THEY TODAY?

**Ever wondered what happened to the Tilak Nagar kid who made rolls, the corporate employee who turned into a cabbie, the desi Michael Jackson, and the so-called MA Chaiwali? On Social Media Day, today, here's an update on these viral sensations from the nooks of NCR**

**Kriti Kambiri and Alina Azfar**

**'STILL NOT A CHAIWALI!'**  
A LinkedIn post dubbed her MA Chaiwali, but Sharmishtha Ghosh, an Army wife, still finds the misrepresentation of her business on social media to be her biggest frustration. "I started a food joint in Delhi Cantt's Gopinath Bazar, but the tea was always incidental. This is still a pain point," says Ghosh, who gained fame in January 2023 due to a LinkedIn post that got 31K reactions. She later took to running a cloud kitchen. Due to her husband's posting, she has now relocated to Ranchi (Jharkhand), but her business partner, Bhavna Rao, is still in Gurugram: "We might start a new project later this year, and we hope social media helps us just like last time. But, without any labelling, of course!"

**Viral stall owner at Delhi Cantt: I'm not a chaiwali but a foodie**  
By Kriti Kambiri  
3 year ago 2 min read

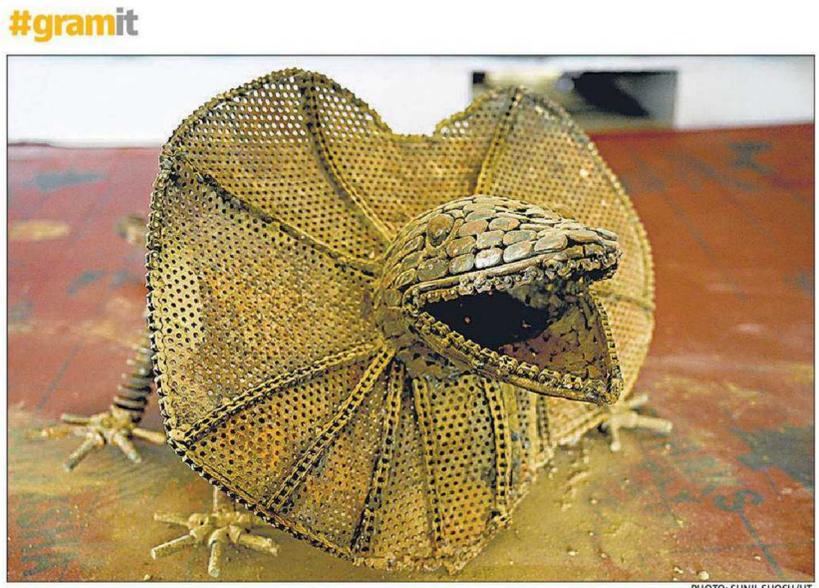
**NCR's trending Uber driver-cum-content creator scores hearts and marriage proposals**  
By Kriti Kambiri  
17th Jun 4.5 min read

**Who said cab riders have to be boring? Meet Noida-based Angkit Joshi, the cab driver whose fun interactions with passengers have won over social media, amassing over 171k followers in a matter of weeks.**

**PHOTO: ANURAG MEHRA/HT**

**'MY VIRAL VIDEOS REUNITED ME WITH MY MOTHER'**  
Jaspreet Singh, 10, became the talk of the nation for manning his late father's roll cart in Tilak Nagar. His video, filmed by food influencer @mrsinghfoodhunter, got 10.7M views in May this year. "My viral videos have reunited me with my mother, who had distanced herself from us in February," says Singh, who continues to run the cart while his cousin, Gurmukh Singh, who was helping him then, has now moved to Amritsar (Punjab). Gurmukh tells us, "I've started my own cart here and am also focusing on cracking the exam for a government job in the railways... I left Delhi because the cart brought us money and support from the masses, but then Jaspreet's chacha took control."

**'LOVE... REMAINS A CONSTANT'**  
Angkit Joshi, the Noida-based cabbie with 198K Insta followers, became a sensation in September 2023 due to a video of him interacting with a passenger that got him 400K likes then. He gained popularity for leaving a high-paying corporate job to drive a cab, and recording stories of his interactions with his passengers. He says, "Up and down toh hota rehta hai social media pe, but the love I received has remained constant ever since I went viral." Now, I get paid collabs as Angkit Bhaiyya, jo Dilli mein cab chalte hain, sabke liye ek misaal ban gaye hain... Just two days ago, I got a call from a girl in Gorakhpur (Uttar Pradesh), who told me that she's calling not because she wants to book a cab but because she found me handsome and wanted to talk (smiles)."



**Jurassic Park in Noida?**  
Has a new species of reptile been discovered in NCR? No! This creature is actually one of the 300 small and big artistic sculptures that are being created using iron and metal junk for yet another Waste to Wonder Park! This one will find its home in the park beneath the Mahamaya Flyover in Noida.

**PHOTO: SUNIL SHOSH/HT**

# In deep waters: Has your car broken down?



**PHOTO: AJAY AGGARWAL (HT) FOR REPRESENTATIONAL PURPOSE ONLY**

**Aprajita Sharad**  
htcity@hindustantimes.com

**Green Park, Pragati Maidan, Ashram, Dwarka — you name the neighbourhood, and there will surely be a case of a car breakdown reported there. Such was the case on Friday. When monsoon arrives, Delhiites experience more than just a sudden craving for chai pakoda; they also experience a heightened fear of becoming stranded in waterlogging, which frightens many. Screaming through traffic jams, navigating through potholes, and manoeuvring through submerged underpasses — residents of Delhi-NCR are facing it all while being behind the wheel. The city's car mechanics are also flooded, but with distress calls from several people asking for help!**

# Mechanic bhaiya comes to rescue!

**City-based mechanics confirm an increase in distress calls ever since the onset of the monsoon in Delhi, sharing how they are unable to meet the sudden increase in demand. "Jab se monsoon shuru hua hai, humara kaam double ho gaya hai," says Madhusudan Kumar, a car mechanic from an auto shop on MG Road. Mohison Ahmed from a Mehrauli-based mechanic shop says, "Every time it rains, we receive several calls from people who get stuck on the NH48, Delhi-Gurugram highway. On Friday, numerous individuals reported experiencing hours-long delays. "Jin cars ki ground clearance kam hoti hai unke engine mein paani ghus jaata hai, which is also known as hydrolocking," explains Kumar. In such a scenario, band kar ko wapas start nahai karna chahiye. But often people end up doing the exact opposite due to panic."**

**Echoing similar thoughts, Hemant Kumar, a mechanic from Rajinder Nagar, adds, "Mujhe Delhi se hi daily 30-35 calls aa rahi hain ever since it started raining. Most of these calls come in during office hours. Most cars pani se bahar nikalke kharab ho rahi hain kyunki paani mein chalte hue log darr ke maare high acceleration aur speed use karte hain jisse gaadi aage jake ruk jati hai."**

# Plight of distressed Delhiites on roads

**"On Friday morning, I left my home in Safdarjung Enclave for my office in Connaught Place, but regretted the whole day about my decision to drive instead of taking the Delhi Metro," says Tushar Gandhi, a 35-year-old software engineer, adding, "It was horrible to navigate my SUV as almost every road was either flooded or was jammed. Mera luck toh itna kharab hai ki my car broke down right in the middle of the road near Kamal Cinema... When I called my regular mechanic to fix it, seeing him cycle towards me made me think, "Next time se aise hi office jaunga, cycle par, if it rains cats and dogs!"**

**Several residents took to social media to share their plight of venturing out amid rains. "On Friday, I had to go to Gurugram for an internship interview and started from my home in Civil Lines but couldn't make it on time," rues Sakshi Sharma, a 20-year-old student of Delhi University, adding, "My car broke down due to a pothole. Thank God my driver was with me... I left my vehicle and walked through the knee-deep water to reach a spot from where I hailed an auto with much difficulty."**

**CAUGHT IN WATERLOGGING? HERE'S WHAT TO DO**

- Prevent intake and exhaust flooding by using low gears and high revs
- Avoid sudden acceleration and braking
- Move slowly and steadily to avoid water splashing into the engine, electrical circuits and its surroundings.
- Pump the brakes once you are clear of water.
- If water enters the engine, switch off the car immediately.
- Do not panic and restart the car if it stalls.
- Check for damages and click pictures for insurance claims before calling for roadside assistance.

**Inputs by Utkarsh Negi, automotive influencer**



**FILE PHOTO: HT (FOR REPRESENTATIONAL PURPOSE ONLY)**

# #culturecapsule

**Nazariye**

This group exhibition showcases the perspectives of a new generation in contrast to the older generation. The artworks reflect changes in values, technology, social issues and global awareness. Paintings, drawings, installations, and even performances, created using a diverse array of contemporary styles, are on display. The participating artists explore themes that are often overlooked or marginalised by mainstream discourse, offering multiple viewpoints on the complexities of today's societal landscape.

**Where:** The Stainless Gallery, Block C-0, NH-19, New Friends Colony  
**On till:** July 3  
**Timing:** 11am to 7pm

# The Divine Elements Volume II

This exhibition delves into the profound connections between human existence and the vast cosmos. It also takes its inspiration from Samāveśa — an exploration of contact and coexistence with the divine elements. Curated by Shahzada Khurram, the displayed works take the audience on an evocative journey to contemplate their place in the universe. The canvases merge astronomy with spirituality to reveal the symbiotic relationship between humanity and the stars.

**Where:** Visual Arts Gallery, India Habitat Centre, Lodhi Road  
**When:** July 2 to 8  
**Timing:** 11am to 7pm



**DEVARA: PART 1**  
Director Koratala Siva's Jr NTR-starrer Devara will mark the Telugu debut of actors Janhvi Kapoor and Saif Ali Khan. The action film will see Khan play the antagonist, Bhaira, while Kapoor plays Thangam, a village belle. Both actors sport very different looks in the posters, with Kapoor dressed in a half saree and Khan sporting unruly hair.

**WAR 2**  
Ayan Mukerji is directing the sequel to the spy thriller War (2019), and the film will see actor Hrithik Roshan share screen space with Jr NTR, who also plays the antagonist in his Bollywood debut. The latter even shot a few schedules in Mumbai earlier this year.

Mounted on a budget of ₹600 crore, the recently released **Kalki 2898 AD** stars Amitabh Bachchan, Prabhas and Deepika Padukone

**KALKI 2898 AD TO SIKANDAR: WHEN NORTH MEETS SOUTH**

**From Ayan Mukerji directing Jr NTR in War 2 to Gopichand Malineni teaming up with Sunny Deol, some interesting crossovers between Hindi and South cinema have got underway**

**DOUBLE ISMART; KD - THE DEVIL**  
Marking his Tollywood debut, actor Sanjay Dutt plays a character named Big Bull in Puri Jagannadh's Double ISmart, the sequel to his highly successful iSmart Shankar (2019). Dutt will also be seen in his second Kannada film after KGF: Chapter 2 (2022) — KD - The Devil, directed by Prem and starring Dhruva Sarja and Shilpa Shetty Kundra.

**VISHWAMBHARA**  
After starring in the 2018 film Devadas, actor Kunal Kapoor returns to Telugu cinema with Malidri Vassista's Vishwambhara. The film will see Chiranjeevi, Trisha Krishnan and Meenaakshi Chaudhary in the lead roles. Kapoor recently announced that the role is a 'challenging' one in an 'ambitious' film.

**THEY CALL HIM OG, G2**  
Actor Emraan Hashmi will be seen in two Telugu films — They Call Him OG and G2. The former, directed by Sujeeth, will see actor Pawan Kalyan in the lead role, while the latter features actor Adivi Sesh. G2 is the remake of the film Goodachari (2018) and OG is a gangster drama set in Mumbai.

**SDGM**  
The film will see Telugu director Gopichand Malineni work with actor Sunny Deol. The film was launched in Hyderabad on June 20 and went into production on June 22. Nothing much about the movie is known yet, but it's expected to be a massy action drama, also starring Saiyami Kher.

**SIKANDAR**  
Tamil director AR Murugadoss is returning to direct his first Hindi film in eight years. Actor Salman Khan's next much-anticipated project, Sikandar also stars Animal actor Rashmika Mandanna. The director recently shared a behind-the-scenes picture on X showing Khan in a new avatar. The film is expected to release around Eid next year.

**BABY JOHN**  
Varun Dhawan and Keerthy Suresh-starrer Baby John is the Hindi remake of filmmaker Atlee's Tamil film Theri (2016). Directed by Kalees, the remake tells the story of a non-violent man who runs a bakery, but is forced to face his violent past when his daughter's life is threatened.

Illustration: Shutterstock  
Neeshita Nyayapati

# Stars under fire for sexual misconduct allegations

As a wave of sexual assault allegations sweeps through the industry, prominent names in Western entertainment are facing a moment of reckoning. While some have denied the allegations on record, others chose to stay mum. Here's a roundup

Compiled by Navya Kharbanda

**Kanye West**

Kanye West is facing allegations of sexual harassment in a lawsuit filed by a former employee. According to Rolling Stone, Lauren Pisciotta, who worked with West on his Yeezy women's line and his album Donda (as his executive assistant/personal assistant), claims to have endured explicit messages, masturbating in front of her and sex acts performed while on the phone with her. Pisciotta alleges intentional infliction of emotional distress and seeks \$3 million in damages.

**Stars under fire for sexual misconduct allegations**

**Shangela**

Drag performer Shangela is facing accusations of sexual assault or coercion from five members of the LGBTQIA+ community. This comes after a previous rape case against them that was settled through mediation in February. The accusers recount incidents alleging assault or attempts to render individuals unable to consent due to intoxication. Shangela, known for appearances on RuPaul's Drag Race and We're Here, is under scrutiny following these allegations.

PHOTOS: INSTAGRAM, AP AND X

**'I can never break the ceiling here, the way foreign actors in the West have'**

**Terius Gesteelde-Diamant**

The record producer and musician, who is also known as The-Dream, is being sued for rape, sexual battery, and sex trafficking by a former mentee, Chanaaz Mangroo. On June 4, Mangroo accused Gesteelde-Diamant of luring her into an abusive and violent relationship under false promises of career advancement. Gesteelde-Diamant, a longtime collaborator of artists such as Beyoncé and Rihanna, renowned for hits like Single Ladies and Umbrella, faces legal action.

**Sean Diddy Combs**

The hip-hop and R&B icon is entangled in multiple civil lawsuits alleging sex trafficking, sexual abuse and rape, which he and his team have vehemently denied. In March, federal agents raided his properties in Los Angeles and Miami (USA). Lawsuits, including one from former partner Cassie, alleging years of abuse, and another from producer Rodney Lil Rod Jones, accusing Combs of unwanted advances and involvement in sex-trafficking parties, have surfaced against the rapper.

**O-Yeong-su**

O Yeong-su, known for his role in Squid Game, has been convicted of sexual misconduct by a South Korean court. In March this year, a district court found O guilty of inappropriate touching, including hugging, hand-holding, and kissing a fellow actor in 2017. O received an eight-month prison sentence and a two-year suspension.

**Samarth Goyal**  
samarth.goyal@htdigital.in

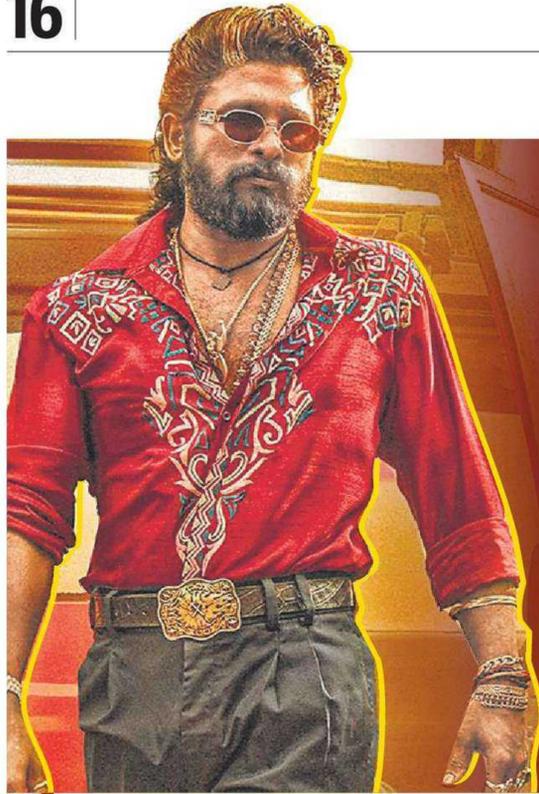
Mark Bennington's journey in Indian showbiz is a compelling tale of resilience. The American actor, recently seen in *Maharaj* and *Heeramandi: The Diamond Bazaar*, shares his experiences: "There are several challenges here in India. For instance, in the West, you never get a script at the last minute; you have time to work on your character. Here in India, it's often last minute, so I find myself learning lines on a flight or on my way to the set. Another difference is that in the West, actors never negotiate their fees directly; they have agents who handle that. Here, it's only now that I have an agent."

When asked about being typecast based on his White heritage, Bennington says, "I usually get offered characters from the British Raj and have turned down several of them. Roles like the one I had in *Saas Bahu Aur Flamingo* (web show) are very rare." He adds that his focus is on making the roles he takes on "as real and interesting as possible".

Bennington also accepts that he might not be able to ever "break the ceiling" here, like foreign actors in the West do: "I don't think there has been a non-Indian star in showbiz, except maybe Tom Alter — but that's also because he was born in India, and his Hindi and Urdu were excellent. So, I am looking at getting into writing and directing, to be able to write and create stuff that is away from this typecasting."

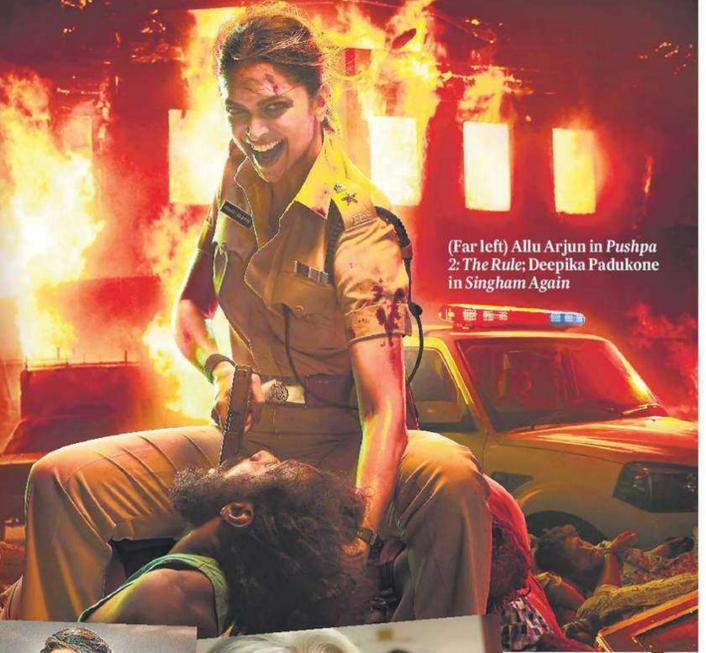
**I usually get offered the character from British Raj and have turned down several of them.**

**MARK BENNINGTON, Actor**



# KAHAANI BAAKI HAI: SEQUELS HIT A SIXER

Allu Arjun returns as smuggler Pushpa in the eponymous franchise and Deepika Padukone smoulders for the first time as a cop in a new Singham film — among a flurry of franchise revivals and sequels in the works this year. We dive deep into the phenomenon



(Far left) Allu Arjun in *Pushpa 2: The Rule*; Deepika Padukone in *Singham Again*

Mugdha Kapoor

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In recent years, particularly after the pandemic, a noticeable trend has emerged in films: the rise of sequels. In 2022 and 2023, several sequels achieved remarkable success. *KGF: Chapter 2*, the follow-up to the 2018 hit *KGF: Chapter 1*, became a pan-India sensation, breaking records and grossing over ₹1,200 crore worldwide. Similarly, *Drishyam 2*, a sequel to the 2015 thriller *Drishyam*, amassed both critical acclaim and strong box-office returns. *Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2*, a spiritual sequel to the 2007 horror-comedy, and *Gadar 2*, which hit theatres 22 years after the first part, also did well.

According to Ormax Media data, franchise films accounted for 17% of the Indian box office in 2019, but by 2023, this figure had risen to 45%. "The most anticipated Hindi films among regular theatregoers in India include *Stree 2*, *Pushpa 2: The Rule*, *Hera Pheri 3*, *Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3*, *War 2* and *Singham Again*," Sanket Kulkarni, head of business development (theatrical), Ormax Media, tells us, adding that the trend also applies to Tamil and Telugu films.

**THE COMFORT OF FAMILIARITY**  
"Sequels, by their very nature, bring with them a sense of continuity and

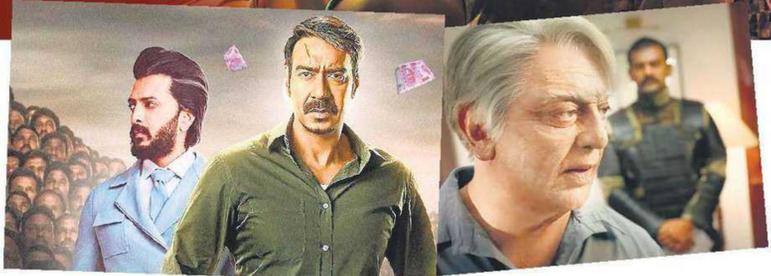
established connection with characters," says director Amar Kaushik, who is gearing up for the release of *Stree 2*. Elaborating, Kaushik says, "When a sequel is announced, viewers feel connected to the franchise because they have already loved the first part. The audiences think of such films as their own. Log expect karte hain sequel se, ki jitna maza unhein first part dekh kar aaya tha, next part bhi utna hi interesting bana hoga aur paisa vasool honge."

Seeing characters that they have loved, and looking forward to new journeys for them, makes it

compelling for audiences, notes *Gadar 2* director Anil Sharma. "So, the allure lies in revisiting familiar worlds and characters they've grown to love," says Sharma, adding that that's exactly why "characters and film ka essence same hona chahiye, jo pehle part mein tha, bas".

#### FINANCIAL INCENTIVES AND MARKETABILITY

The financial aspect of making sequels is a significant driving force behind the proliferation. "When a sequel is made, financing and selling become much easier. Studios and investors are more willing to back a



(Left) Ajay Devgn and Riteish Deshmukh in the poster of the upcoming *Raid 2*; Kamal Haasan in *Indian 2*

#### Sequels v/s stand-alone films

Are sequels in abundance because of a lack of original scripts and the failure of stand-alone, big-ticket films to draw audiences? "There's no dearth of original scripts. Films such as *Pathaan* (2023) and *Jawaan* (2023) have done extremely well," says trade analyst Taran Adarsh, adding, "Even biopics like *Srikanth*, which is also an original script, have done well." Meanwhile, concurring, film exhibitor Akshay Rath notes that films across genres — from *Laapataa Ladies* (2023) and *Animal* (2023) to the recent *Munji* — are working well at the box office.

#### Look forward to:

The lineup of upcoming films is dominated by sequels — *Stree 2*, *Singham Again* and *Raid 2* — demonstrating that sequels are a mainstay in the cinematic landscape.

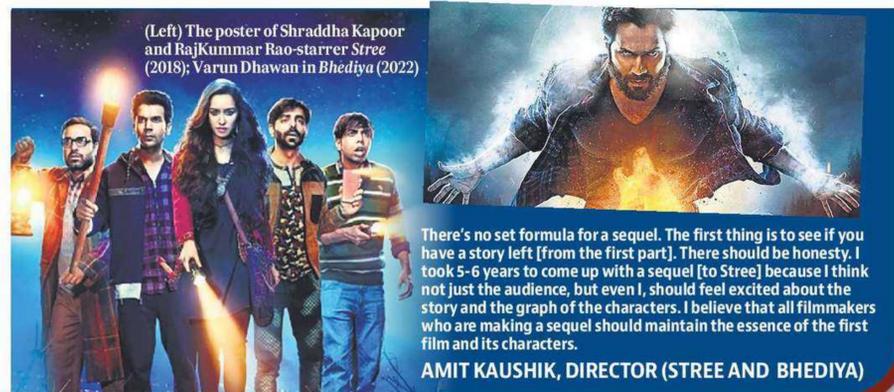
- *Stree 2*
- *Pushpa 2: The Rule*
- *Singham Again*
- *Raid 2*
- *War 2*
- *Indian 2*
- *Welcome to the Jungle*
- *Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2*
- *Borler 2*
- *Hera Pheri 3*
- *Kantara A Legend: Chapter 1*
- *Bhediya 2*

project with a proven track record, just as audiences are more inclined to watch a continuation of a beloved story. These factors make sequels an

attractive proposition for everyone involved," says Sharma.

Film exhibitor Akshay Rath opines, "[For industry stakeholders,

too], sequels are a sure shot recipe for success as filmmakers build on the popularity of a movie that's already touched the hearts of the people."



(Left) The poster of Shraddha Kapoor and Rajkummar Rao-starrer *Stree* (2018); Varun Dhawan in *Bhediya* (2022)

There's no set formula for a sequel. The first thing is to see if you have a story left [from the first part]. There should be honesty. I took 5-6 years to come up with a sequel [to *Stree*] because I think not just the audience, but even I, should feel excited about the story and the graph of the characters. I believe that all filmmakers who are making a sequel should maintain the essence of the first film and its characters.

AMIT KAUSHIK, DIRECTOR (STREE AND BHEDIYA)

PHOTO: INSTAGRAM/THEDALERMEHNDIOFFICIAL

## Daler Mehndi says he rejected a role in the Kajol-starrer *Kuch Khatti Kuch Meethi*

All my friends said *Kuch Khatti Kuch Meethi* is a huge production, but I responded, 'Mera abhi singing ka kaam hai, main ussi par focus kar leta hoon; Abhi itna time pada hai, filmein toh hoti rahengi.'

DALER MEHNDI, Singer



The poster of *Kuch Khatti Kuch Meethi* (2001)

Navya Kharbanda

While singer Daler Mehndi gears up to make his acting debut in the Akshay Kumar-starrer *Welcome to the Jungle*, he reveals that this is not the first time he has been offered an acting role.

"I was offered a role back in 1998 in the Kajol-starrer *Kuch Khatti Kuch Meethi* (2001)," says the singer, adding, "I remember meri baat hui thi [with the producers] and I asked them for more money than the hero of the film. After a meeting for about 15-20 minutes, I finally decided that I didn't want to do the movie. All my friends said it's a huge production and a great movie, but I responded, 'Mera abhi singing ka kaam hai, main ussi par focus kar leta hoon; Abhi itna time pada hai, filmein toh hoti rahengi'."

It has been over two decades since Mehndi has been writing and singing songs, and he admits that he "never felt the need" to transition into acting. "I didn't want to spend my own

money to make a movie. But I always thought if any producer or director felt I'm needed or had the talent to play a particular character, they would call me. Now I feel ki ab time hai, gaane main jhande gaad diye, ab acting mai gaaadne hain. If god wants, I'll excel in acting as well," shares the 56-year-old singer.

Mehndi, who has already shot some of his parts for *Welcome to the Jungle*, feels grateful to filmmaker Ahmed Khan for considering him for a role in the film. He shares how he is looking forward to being a part of an ensemble cast that includes actors Arshad Warsi, Raveena Tandon, Disha Patani, Jacqueline Fernandez, Suniel Shetty among others.

Talking about how the role came about, he says, "He called me and said, 'Paaji, maine ek jagah aapki haan kardi hai, na mat kijiyega'. He is

my brother and an amazing human being, [so] I just couldn't say no. I'm glad that he thought I could do a role in his film."

He continues, "Everyone has been treating me with such love and respect. While filming, we keep laughing all the time on set, and I can't imagine how much the audience will enjoy it. Akshay [Kumar] paaji itna hasaate hain, bahut maza aa raha hai."

For most, balancing his acting career with music might seem like a challenging task, but Mehndi isn't perturbed. "Technically, I started acting in my song *Na Na Na Re* (1997), so I don't think it's that difficult for me or I'll have to work hard on it separately. I feel I have it in me," he shares and adds, "Baaki bhagwaan ne chaaha toh aur acting projects bhi aayenge, I am willing to grow more in this arena. I am also hoping to balance both acting and music in the future."

## 'After winning the National Award, it took me six years to score a big break'

Navya Kharbanda

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PHOTO: INSTAGRAM/HAAJJIHARSH

Harsh Mayar became a household name when the web show *Gullak* first released in 2019. Five years on, with the show's fourth season recently out, the actor feels "overwhelmed" that audiences continue to love the show.

"*Gullak* has gotten so much love from people. Everything is content driven these days," says Mayar, who also made his musical debut with the track *Feeling Nayi Hai* in the latest season.

However, Mayar, who won a National Award for the Best Child Artist for *I Am Kalam* (2011), reveals that despite the award, opportunities were

hard to come by. "I got my first big break with *Hichki* (2018) after six years [of waiting], and I couldn't believe it. Agar pehle nahi bhi mila kaam, mujhe koi complaint nahi hai."

While the actor feels social media might play a role in a celebrity's life, it is only good work that attracts audiences. "My focus is only on acting and not be bothered about this," he tells us and adds, "I never used to pay heed to social media, but my wife said, 'You rap, sing, dance and act, so you should maintain your social media'. That's when I started focusing on it. People are liking [my social media] now! Phir bhi, zaroorat se zyada kuch nahi karna chahiye, it should just be a medium to stay connected with fans," he concludes.

## Acting is not a 9 to 5 job, says Dibyendu Bhattacharya

S Farah Rizvi

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Actor Dibyendu Bhattacharya says, after years in the film industry, he has finally learnt to balance work and life.

The actor, who is known for his web shows such as *Poacher* and *Undekhi*, shares, "After being in this profession for 24 years, I can say that I learned and unlearned a lot about life. It's not easy to go with the flow as acting is not a 9-5 job. In all these years, my only point was ke khali nai baithna hai. The only thing I do at my end is not to repeat myself as an actor, ek hi jaisa dikha na actor's death."

Bhattacharya adds that there is "no such thing" as a bankable actor. He explains, "Acting is a slippery field, and you never know what will work and what will not. Kuch

bhi bankable nahin ho sakta is industry mein. Yes, your directors can trust you to play a certain role to the best of your ability and that's it. But the twist is that as actors, some of our projects don't get to see the light of the day. A few of my films, including *Chakda Express*, that is very close to my heart still await release."

The actor, who began with directing plays, says that he's still close to theatre: "Theatre se lag ho nai sakte. I have a few things on my bucket list that I will direct once again, as I used to in my theatre days in the late 1980s."

Ask about the projects he has lined up next, and Bhattacharya replies, "For now, I am constantly on something or the other. I am wrapping a series with director Sriram Raghavan and my film *Ek Ruka Hua Faisla* is in post-production."





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Consumer trends are rapidly evolving, with a growing emphasis on health and nutritious consumption. People are increasingly mindful of what they eat, seeking products that offer greater health benefits and nutritional value. This shift is evident in the dairy sector, where consumers are moving away from traditional, mass-produced dairy products and adopting traceable, farm-based alternatives. They demand transparency, wanting to know the origins of their food and ensuring it is produced ethically and sustainably. This change reflects a broader desire for high quality, natural, fresh and pure products.

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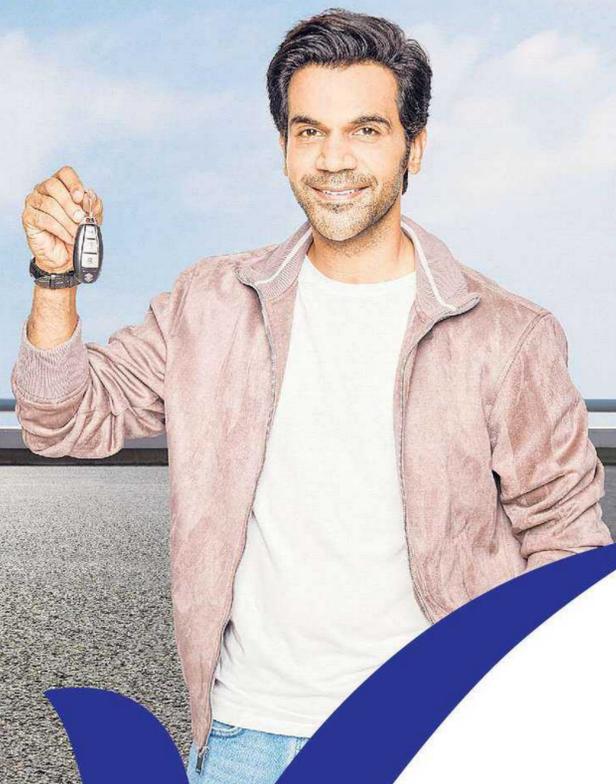
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