

## Couple that prays together, stays together, ft. Janhvi-Shiku



Actor Janhvi Kapoor and her beau, entrepreneur Shikhar Pahariya, began 2025 on an auspicious note by visiting the Tirumala Tirupati temple in Andhra Pradesh on Saturday. While the couple has been going strong for a while, the presence of Pahariya's mother with the duo got fans wondering if wedding is on the cards for Kapoor and Pahariya this year.

PHOTOS: X



## Sparks of Trouble for Coldplay Gujarat gig!

A head of its highly anticipated India tour, British rock band Coldplay is making headlines again! After a lot of frenzy around the concert tickets flying off the shelf in seconds, now, the District Child Protection Unit (DCPU) in Ahmedabad has issued a notice to the band frontman, singer Chris Martin, and the organisers of the concert. They have been instructed to not use children in any form on stage during the shows.

The organisers have also been instructed to ensure that no children are allowed entry at the venue on January 25-26 without earplugs or hearing protection. The

DCPU has highlighted that sound levels exceeding 120 decibels during the concert could significantly risk children's health.

The notice was issued in response to a complaint filed by Pandit Rao Dharnevar, a professor from Chandigarh. Speaking to ANI, Dharnevar stated that involving children in concerts featuring loud sounds and bright lights can harm their physical and mental health. Earlier, he had also filed a complaint against singer Diljit Dosanjh's New Year's Eve concert in Ludhiana (Punjab), specifically calling for a ban on songs allegedly promoting alcohol.

PHOTO: INSTAGRAM/THISISDSP



## DSP: I was prepared for Kissik and Oo Antava comparisons

Rishabh Suri

rishabh.suri@htlive.com

As long as you don't let success get to your head, you are not bothered by the outcome," says composer Devi Sri Prasad, also known as DSP, who is pleased with the reception of his music for *Pushpa 2: The Rule*. However, he is also aware that a section of listeners has criticised the tracks on social media, especially targeting the dance number *Kissik*, featuring actors Allu Arjun and Sreeleela. Some dismissed it, claiming that *Oo Antava*, starring Samantha Ruth Prabhu, from *Pushpa: The Rise*

(2021), was better. Ask about it, and DSP responds, "I was prepared for the comparisons. We make hundreds of romantic songs and each one's different. But in case of item songs, the new one is always compared to the previous one, especially when it is a franchise film. However, this time, I felt *Kissik* would pick up later, whereas *Oo Antava* did it quickly. The latter addressed the male gaze, whereas *Kissik* underlined the misuse of a girl's photo."

The Hindi version of the lyrics also faced backlash: "Sometimes, we go with similar-sounding words to make the song interesting."



Samantha Ruth Prabhu in *Oo Antava*; (right) Sreeleela in *Kissik*

Maybe that's what happened with *Kissik*. We just wanted to retain the original song's lyrics' feel."



# RAB NE BANA DI JODI, TAKE TWO!

This year will see many directors and actors reunite on screen. Here's a dekko

■ Akash Bhatnagar

## PREVIEW 2025 ▶



**SHASHANK KHAITAN - VARUN DHAWAN AND JANHVI KAPOOR**

He directed actor Varun Dhawan in *Humpty Sharma Ki Dulhania* (2014) and *Badrinath Ki Dulhania* (2017), and actor Janhvi Kapoor in *Dhadak* (2018). Now, director Shashank Khaitan has brought the actors together for *Sunny Sanskari Ki Tulsi Kumari*, an April release.



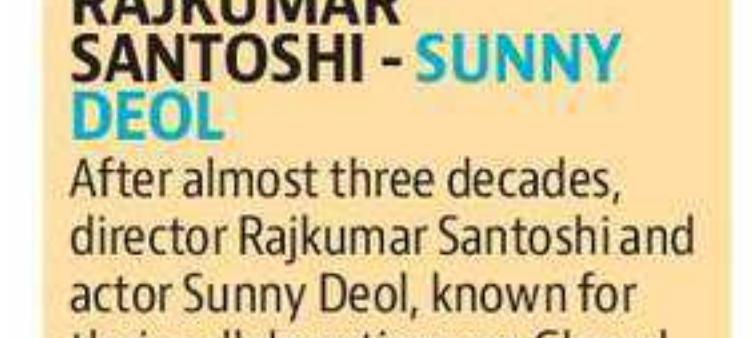
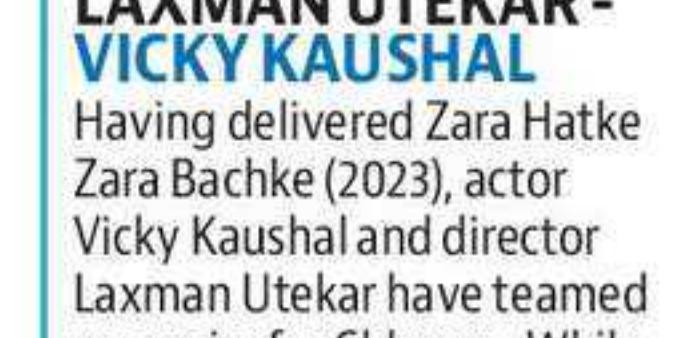
**RAJ KUMAR GUPTA - AJAY DEVG**

Director Raj Kumar Gupta and actor Ajay Devgn worked together on *Raid* (2018), which told the story of an IRS officer who uncovers corruption in his area. The duo is now coming up with *Raid 2*, the film's sequel that's scheduled to release on May 1.



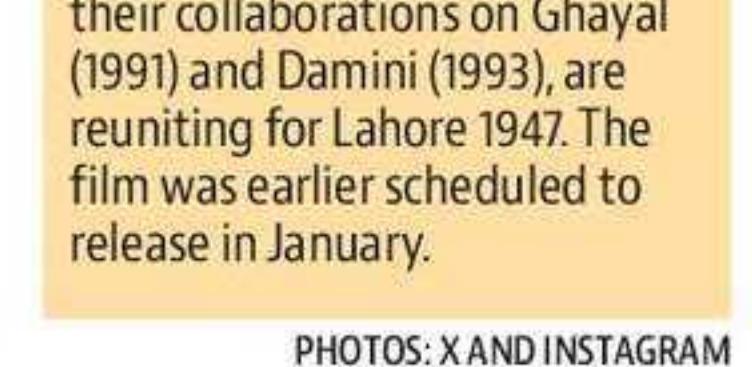
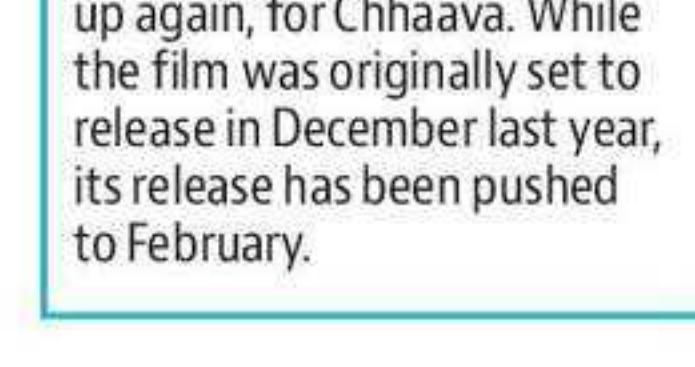
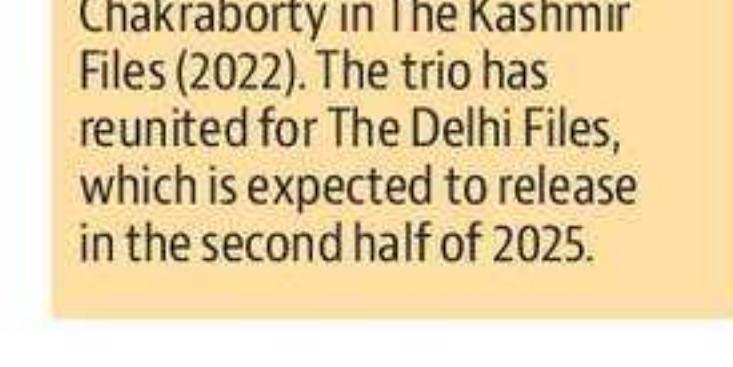
**SUBHASH KAPOOR - AKSHAY KUMAR AND ARSHAD WARSI**

After directing actors Arshad Warsi in *Jolly LLB* (2013) and Akshay Kumar in *Jolly LLB 2* (2017), Subhash Kapoor is now bringing both the actors together for the franchise's third instalment, *Jolly LLB 3*. It will reportedly feature the arc of Kumar vs Warsi, and is expected to release in the first quarter of 2025.



**TARUN MANSUKHANI - ABHISHEK BACHCHAN**

Abhishek Bachchan starred in Tarun Mansukhani's directorial debut *Dostana* (2008). Now, 17 years later, the duo is reuniting for the fifth instalment of the *Housefull* franchise, which is likely to release in June.



**VIVEK AGNIHOTRI - ANUPAM KHER AND MITHUN CHAKRABORTY**

Vivek Agnihotri directed actors Anupam Kher and Mithun Chakraborty in *The Kashmir Files* (2022). The trio has reunited for *The Delhi Files*, which is expected to release in the second half of 2025.



**LAXMAN UTEKAR - VICKY KAUSHAL**

Having delivered *Zara Hatke Zara Bachke* (2023), actor Vicky Kaushal and director Laxman Utekar have teamed up again, for *Chhaava*. While the film was originally set to release in December last year, its release has been pushed to February.

PHOTOS: X AND INSTAGRAM

**STOP PRESS**



Actor Akshay Kumar made a cameo appearance in the 2024 release *Street 2*. Now, his future in the horror universe has been confirmed by producer Dinesh Vijan. At an event on Sunday, Vijan said that Kumar will be a part of *Street 3*, adding, "Of course, he's a part of the universe. He's our Thanos."

PHOTO: YOGEN SHAH

## Aubrey's husband, director Jeff Baena, dies by suicide

Aubrey Plaza and Jeff Baena PHOTO: X



Actor-comedian Aubrey Plaza is mourning the loss of her husband, director Jeff Baena, who died at the age of 47. He was found dead in his Los Angeles home on Friday morning by his assistant. Police arrived around 10:30am to begin a death investigation, although the circumstances surrounding his passing have not been disclosed. Baena is reported to have died by suicide.

According to E! News, records from a Los Angeles medical examiner have confirmed the cause of death.

Plaza has not yet publicly commented on her husband's death by suicide. However, her representatives provided a statement to Deadline, which read that "the family is devastated and asks for privacy at this difficult time".

They got married in 2021, 10 years after they began dating, and had no children from their marriage. Plaza, known for her roles in *The White Lotus* and *Parks and Recreation*, revealed her marriage to the indie director via an Insta post, where she congratulated him for his work, *Spin Me Round* (2022) and referred to him as her "darling husband". Baena was known for his works such as *Josh* (2016) and *Horse Girl* (2020).

## #thatshot



## GET INNOVATIVE WITH U.S. TURKEY &amp; U.S. DUCK

Indulge in delicious recipes featuring U.S. Turkey and U.S. Duck! From creamy turkey pot pie to Indian-inspired duck galouti kebab, create unforgettable gourmet dishes. Elevate your January dining experience with a touch of elegance. Explore more at [usapeec.in](http://usapeec.in)

## PUNJAB SCHOOLS ADD DESI SWEETS

In a winter-special move, the Punjab government has revamped mid-day meals for students up to Class 8 in government schools. Seasonal treats like kheer and ghee ka halwa will be served weekly from January 8 to 31. Aimed at enhancing nutrition and cultural connection, the initiative covers 19,000 students.



## VIRAL 'ICE CREAM BIRYANI' FERS PANNEED ONLINE

Mumbai-based content creator Heena Kausar Raad's unusual creation, ice cream biryani, has gone viral on social media. Raad shared it to celebrate her course completion at a baking academy. While some social media users praised the creativity, others criticised it leaving comments like, "Trauma main hai," and "The biryani is crying inside."



**A DEcadent TREAT WORTH INDULGING**  
A chocoholic's dream, Choko La Hazelnut Hot Chocolate blend is an indulgent drink for any season. The combination of rich chocolate and premium hazelnuts creates a smooth, indulgent drink. It can be mixed with hot milk for a cozy winter evening or blend it with cold milk and ice for a refreshing summer twist, making it a versatile drink for any season.  
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**Available at:** [chokola.in](http://chokola.in)



PHOTOS: SHUTTERSTOCK



## Cityfoodies on Monday

For all the food buzz, follow on Insta: @delhifoodees.htcity



The integration of AI, personalised experiences through technology, and a focus on local flavours are set to dominate the culinary landscape in 2025

## CULINARY TRENDS TO WATCH OUT FOR

## PREVIEW 2025

Ruchika Garg

[ruchika.garg@hindustantimes.com](mailto:ruchika.garg@hindustantimes.com)

The ever-evolving culinary landscape is all set for some new trends this year. Here's the take of some leading chefs and food bloggers.

## LOCAL FLAVOURS ON THE GLOBAL MAP

There has been a collective yearning for authenticity and a deeper connection to our heritage of late. "India's artisanal creations—whether it's cheeses redefining Indian terroir, or Indian gins and chocolates making waves in global markets—are perfect examples of how tradition can innovate and lead on the world stage," says chef Varun Inamdar.

## EXPANDING THE USE OF AI

AI will be instrumental in curating menus that blend diverse culinary cultures for occasions. "Imagine an Indian marrying a Korean and needing a menu that fuses both cuisines—AI can be a fantastic tool for creating such unique culinary experiences," explains chef Kunal Kapur.

## PERSONALISATION



Foodies increasingly seek meals tailored to their tastes, health requirements, and budgets. Technology is enabling such customisation. "In the hospitality sector, technology will map customer preferences to deliver a highly personalised dining experience," says Kapur.

## PLANT-BASED DINING

The plant-based movement continues to gain momentum, with chefs elevating vegan and vegetarian dishes to new

Kapur predicts.

**IMMERSIVE DINING**  
Dining in 2025 will be focus not only on food but about fully engaging the senses. Live-fire cooking and concept-based pop-ups will be the norm. "These immersive methods will appeal to Gen Z and drive viral food trends," notes food blogger Mehak Dhawan.

**FUSION FOOD**  
Fusion food will remain a crowd favourite, blending global techniques with Indian flavours. "Dishes like butter chicken bao exemplify this trend, offering exciting combinations that delight food lovers," says Dhawan.



Expect extraordinary dishes crafted from ordinary ingredients.

KUNAL KAPUR,  
Chef

Indian creations show how tradition will innovate and lead the world.

VARUN INAMDAR,  
Chef

Immersive [dining experiences] will drive the food trends (this year).

MEHAK DHAWAN,  
Food blogger

PHOTOS: INSTAGRAM AND FACEBOOK



## { DAILY HOROSCOPE }

Monday, January 06, 2025

Dr Prem Kumar Sharma (Astrologer and Vaastu expert) can be contacted at: Delhi: 011-47033152, 40532026 (Sat to Mon); Panchkula: 91-172-2562832, 2572874 (Tues to Thurs); Mumbai: 09716145644 (Last week of every month)

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## ARIES

MAR 21-APR 20

**♈** Your health may demand attention today. At work, focusing on your mission brings clarity; take steps to align your tasks with aspirations. A joyful family event fills your day with celebration.

**LOVE FOCUS:** Express gratitude for your partner's unwavering support.  
**LUCKY NUMBER:** 5 **LUCKY COLOUR:** Purple

## LEO

JUL 23-AUG 23

**♌** Concerns about your retirement budget may arise; careful planning ensures future stability. At work, focus on boosting morale by engaging with your team. Creative property solutions offer promising opportunities today.

**LOVE FOCUS:** Build trust and transparency to dissolve jealousy.  
**LUCKY NUMBER:** 3 **LUCKY COLOUR:** Grey

## SAGITTARIUS

NOV 23-DEC 21

**♐** A plant-based diet energises you. Tax experts can optimise your financial plans—make the most of their advice. Cherish the wisdom shared by grandparents as it holds valuable lessons.

**LOVE FOCUS:** Celebrate your unshaken bond with small gestures of love.  
**LUCKY NUMBER:** 4 **LUCKY COLOUR:** Silver

## TAURUS

APR 21-MAY 20

**♉** Balancing stress is the key to thriving today. Focus on skill-enhancing opportunities for career growth. Opt for simpler travel plans. Address property concerns swiftly to avoid future complications.

**LOVE FOCUS:** Reflect on emotional challenges and prioritise self-care.  
**LUCKY NUMBER:** 9 **LUCKY COLOUR:** Yellow

## VIRGO

AUG 24-SEP 23

**♍** Energy-boosting detox routines can bring clarity and vitality. Financially, capitalise on positive portfolio performance to secure gains. Professional insights from research keep you ahead. Consider innovative modular homes.

**LOVE FOCUS:** Moments of togetherness deepen your bond.  
**LUCKY NUMBER:** 9 **LUCKY COLOUR:** Red

## CAPRICORN

DEC 22-JAN 21

**♑** Communication efforts at work may need clarity; focus on this for smoother interactions. Explore food trucks during travel for a fun experience. Real estate ventures show potential.

**LOVE FOCUS:** Share emotions to fulfil your craving for a deeper connection.  
**LUCKY NUMBER:** 6 **LUCKY COLOUR:** Golden

## GEMINI

MAY 21-JUN 21

**♊** Take the day to rejuvenate with rest and mindfulness. Financially, diligent expense tracking ensures stability and a healthy cash flow.

**LOVE FOCUS:** Align priorities with your partner to bring shared dreams closer to reality.  
**LUCKY NUMBER:** 11 **LUCKY COLOUR:** Pink

## LIBRA

SEP 24-OCT 23

**♎** Seasonal health issues will be manageable with preventive care. At work, tour leadership shines, inspiring team to achieve success. Family interactions foster peace.

**LOVE FOCUS:** Openly communicate to bring lasting love closer.  
**LUCKY NUMBER:** 17 **LUCKY COLOUR:** Saffron

## AQUARIUS

JAN 22-FEB 19

**♒** Starting your day with an effective warm-up routine helps prevent injuries and boosts energy. Financial risks feel manageable with meticulous planning. Focus on prioritisation at work.

**LOVE FOCUS:** Actions that align with loving glances speak volumes.  
**LUCKY NUMBER:** 8 **LUCKY COLOUR:** Blue

## CANCER

JUN 22-JUL 22

**♋** Financial progress may seem slow. Adaptability to workforce trends can keep you ahead. Nostalgic moments with family strengthen bonds.

**LOVE FOCUS:** Separation might feel challenging.  
**LUCKY NUMBER:** 6 **LUCKY COLOUR:** White

## SCORPIO

OCT 24-NOV 22

**♏** Look for new professional opportunities. Capture skyline views during travel to preserve awe inspiring memories. Organised commercial property management offers stability and excellent results.

**LOVE FOCUS:** Share sincere feelings to enrich relationship with depth.  
**LUCKY NUMBER:** 11 **LUCKY COLOUR:** Maroon

## PISCES

FEB 20-MAR 20

**♓** Health motivation is strong today; setting small, achievable goals keeps your momentum high. Expense analysis reveals areas for improvement—adjust spending to stay on track.

**LOVE FOCUS:** Celebrate relationship with thoughtful gestures and gifts.  
**LUCKY NUMBER:** 17 **LUCKY COLOUR:** Saffron

**fever**  
HAPPENING HAI

# New Year, New Mornings Brand New Show!

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## A NIGHT OF STYLE

Before the Golden Globes take centre stage, Hollywood's finest dazzled at the 36th annual Palm Springs International Film Awards in California with standout style moments. Take a look at the best-dressed stars

**Selena Gomez**  
nailed sharp,  
modern elegance in a  
white Ralph Lauren  
three-piece suit with  
wide-legged pants and a  
mesh top featuring a  
sleek cut-out  
detail

**Demi Moore**  
dazzled in a  
tailored black Chanel  
suit, completed with  
strappy sandals and a  
chic oversized black  
bow for a touch of  
high fashion

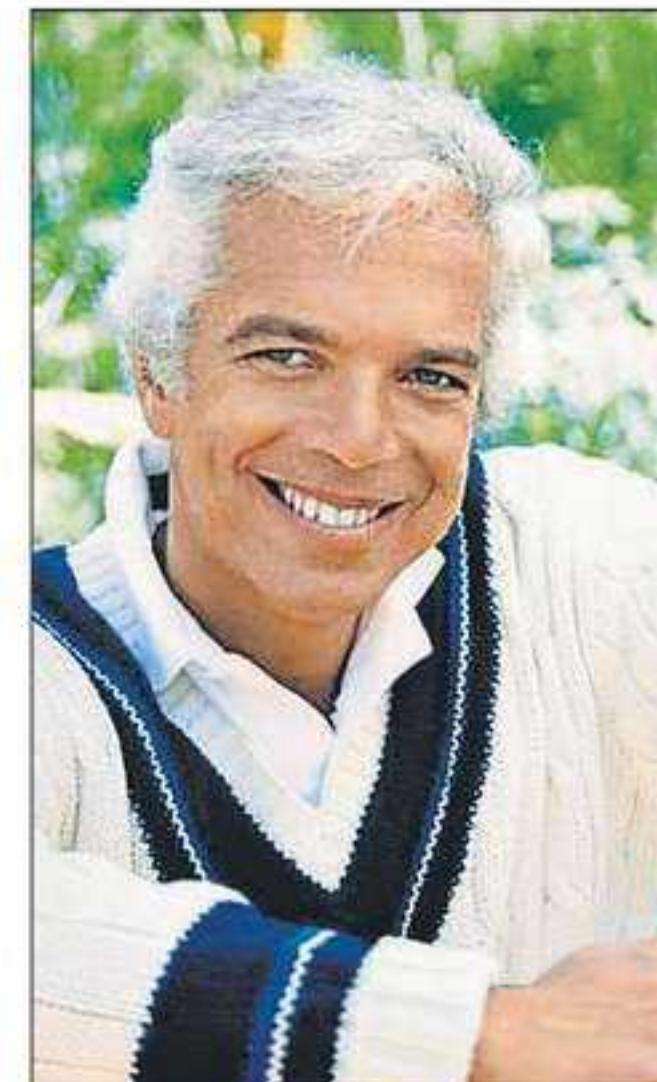
**Nicole Kidman**  
wowed in a custom Loewe  
outfit, featuring a  
metallic corset top and a  
silky skirt that  
exuded bold  
glamour

**Colman Domingo**  
turned heads in a  
Valentino embroidered  
jacket, with Indian-inspired  
detailing reminiscent of a  
Nehru jacket, paired with a vibrant  
scarf and tailored grey trousers

**Andrew Garfield**  
effortlessly showcased  
style in a custom  
Valentino pantsuit, blue  
shirt, and cream leather  
sneakers, exuding laid-back  
sophistication

Angelina Jolie kept it timeless  
in a black silk  
halterneck gown,  
complemented by  
soft waves and a side-swept  
fringe that added to  
her effortless  
elegance

Ralph Lauren makes  
history with  
Presidential  
Medal Of  
Freedom



Ralph Lauren became the first fashion designer to win the honour



**O**n Saturday, Ralph Lauren, 85, made history as the first fashion designer to receive the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the United States' highest civilian honour. President Joe Biden presented the medal during a White House ceremony. Lauren revolutionised American fashion with his iconic Polo brand, extending his influence to home décor, fragrance and more. Beyond fashion, his philanthropic efforts have supported cancer research, education, the arts, and environmental sustainability.

The Presidential Medal of Freedom recognises individuals who have made exceptional contributions to American life in fields ranging from the arts and sciences to social justice.

HTC

### #instastyle



The New Year is off to a stylish start, with celebrities setting major travel goals. Shilpa Shetty Kundra recently shared her London diaries on Instagram, giving fans a glimpse of the city's vibrant backdrop and her chic, radiant look. She captioned the post, "Light up the darkness, and you will find your way." Meanwhile, Preity Zinta is enjoying a vacation in Uruguay with her husband, Gene Goodenough, treating fans to a sneak peek of their luxurious getaway with stunning pictures on Instagram.

## my city

### Adopt A PET

If you're looking to adopt a sweet kitty, a friendly pup, or a calm companion, these paw-dorable pets are waiting to be your new best friend. Adopt, don't shop!



**Maria** is a 2.5-year-old loving Indie-Pom mix who is all about her humans! Sadly abandoned by her previous family due to a dog fur allergy, this sweet girl has been waiting for over 1.5 years at the shelter to find her forever home. Vaccinated, dewormed, and spayed, Maria is leash-trained and absolutely loves her walks. She's great with kids and thrives on being around people, ready to be the perfect companion and your new best friend. To adopt, WhatsApp: +91-9958049694

**Pista** is a 3.5-year-old affectionate female kitty who's spayed and litter-trained. Full of personality, she loves bird-watching from the window and thrives in an indoor-only home. She prefers being the sole pet and is ready to bring joy and warmth to a loving family. To adopt, WhatsApp: +91-9871507227

**Mishti, Chikki, Jalebi, Barfi, Kaju, and Ladoo** Meet the Sweet Six! Rescued from a sewage drain, these barely 25-day-old pups — Mishti, Chikki, Jalebi, Barfi, Kaju, and Ladoo — are looking for loving homes. Dewormed and full of potential, they deserve a life away from the filth they were rescued from. These loving pups are available to adopt together or separately. To adopt or foster, WhatsApp: +91-9981071081



**Kismat** is a 2-month-old female indie caramel beauty. Super friendly, great with humans and dogs, and healthy, she was abandoned after being separated from her mother. Despite her rough start, she's an absolute sweetheart, dewormed, and with her vaccinations started. To adopt Kismat, WhatsApp: +91-8860316406

**Eva** is a 2-year-old female Labrador with a heart full of love! Rescued from a slum with a tumour that has since been treated, Eva is now healthy, vaccinated, and spayed. Though she may be a little anxious in new environments, she quickly settles with love and care and gets along beautifully with both humans and other pets. To adopt Eva, WhatsApp: +91-9958049694



Inform us if you know of a pet who needs a home, write to [htcity.pets@gmail.com](mailto:htcity.pets@gmail.com)

### #dilse

**Dear M,** I have never felt like this. I love the way you talk, move, and take care of me. You are like nothing I have seen before. I love you so much my love. Always stay the same!!!  
Luv, R

**Nat,** someone rightly said that loneliness is a sign you are in desperate need of yourself. Find yourself so that I can stop quoting that someone that is Rupi Kaur.  
From Churi Kaur

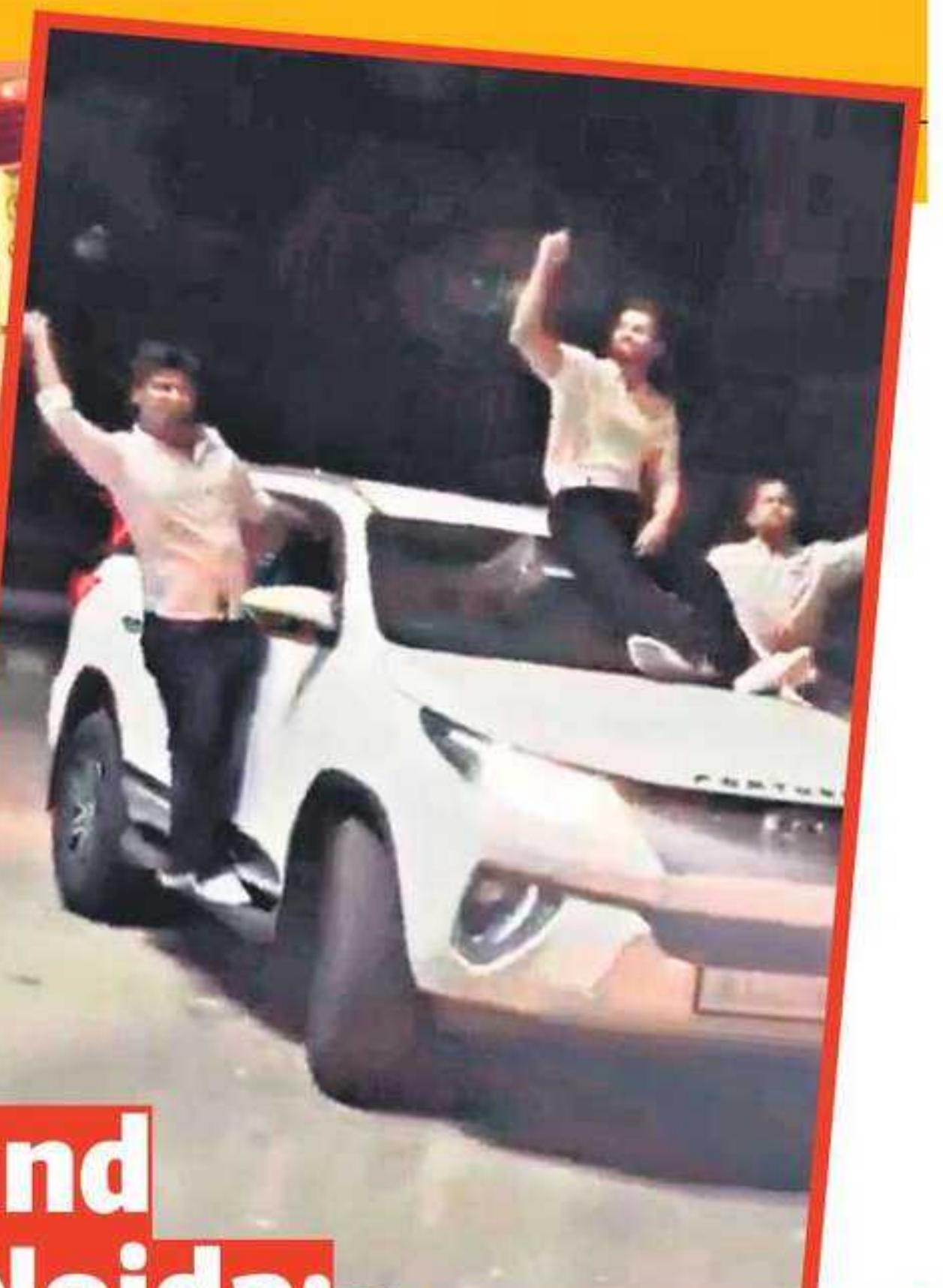
**To Peppa,** Happy Birthday in advance! Hope you remain in the best of health and be just the way you are...! With your rocking personality and charming demeanour, hope this day is your best yet.  
Regards, just a girl

**Dear Ola,** Now that you have taken this big step, I wish you feel at peace with it and enjoy your life to the fullest!  
Love, Jani

**To Rosie Pink,** I know we have drifted apart, and you might not even know I have sent a message to you. But happy birthday, I really cherished the bond we had, and I think it should be back. Happy Birthday.  
From your long lost friend

**To my noni,** Apake sath jina hai aapke sathe marha hai jindagi mein. I just want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for handling me and tolerating me. I absolutely run out of words when it comes to you. No matter what differences we've held in the past, we've conquered it all. I'll always be there in your hard times right by your side.  
From your Kiddo From your old friend

**DISCLAIMER:** Dil Se is a compilation of fun messages from our readers. The views expressed belong entirely to the senders and are not to be construed as an endorsement by the publication. Send your messages to [meandmycity1@gmail.com](mailto:meandmycity1@gmail.com).



## Squid Game's round and round goes wrong in Noida; men spin into ₹33,000 fine

**N**oida recently witnessed a dangerous re-enactment of the infamous "round and round" scene from *Squid Game* Season 2, as three men transformed a busy roundabout into their personal stunt stage. Using a Delhi-registered Toyota Fortuner SUV, the trio performed a risky stunt late at night. One man was seen precariously perched on the SUV's windshield while two others clung to its doors.

The shocking act quickly went viral, sparking outrage on social media and prompting immediate police action. The Noida Police issued a challan of ₹33,000 to the vehicle owner, citing violations including dangerous driving, lack of valid insurance, tinted windows, failure to wear seatbelts and other breaches of road safety regulations.

**SPARKS OUTRAGE**  
Social media users were quick to voice their concerns, criticising the stunt for its blatant disregard for traffic laws and public safety.

One comment read, "₹33k fine isn't enough for offenders with a Fortuner. Punishment should be stricter to deter wrongdoing. We aren't against video reels, but spreading harmful messages is

unacceptable. The government must act against such societal harms." Another user remarked, "What is wrong? They are following their leaders and film stars."

**A GROWING TREND**  
This incident adds to a worrying trend of reckless stunts performed for social media fame. In Fatehpur, Uttar Pradesh, Sheikh Bilal recently went viral for pouring petrol on National Highway-2

to spell "2024" and setting it on fire, raising serious concerns about public safety.

In Meerut's Mundial village, Intezaar Ali, driving his Mahindra Thar SUV, performed a high-speed stunt with mud piled on top of his vehicle. Footage showed the vehicle speeding along, with mud flying in all directions, creating a hazardous situation for everyone on the road.

Malipal Singh Chouhan

**NOIDA POLICE SLAPPED THE VEHICLE OWNER WITH A ₹33,000 FINE FOR RECKLESS DRIVING, USING TINTED GLASS, DRIVING WITHOUT INSURANCE, AND NOT WEARING SEAT BELTS**

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JANAKPURI B-1/2, Main Najafgarh Road, Opp. Metro Pillar 543  
NOIDA, Nirula's Sec-2, Near Metro Station, Sec-15, Noida, UP  
LAJPAT NAGAR, 49, Main Ring Road, Adj. Haldi Ram, Near Moolchand Crossing



**OTT has shifted the tone: Shreyas on the missing magic of comedies**

Rishabh Suri  
rishabh.suri@htlive.com

**S**hreyas Talpade's journey in cinema began during a golden era for comedy films — one that produced timeless classics including *Golmaal* (2006), *Phir Hera Pheri* and *Garam Masala* (both 2005). Today, these films are hailed as benchmarks in Hindi comedy, with Talpade contributing to their legacy as he has multiple comedy hits under his belt. However, modern comedy films often lack the same charm. When asked about this, Talpade acknowledges the shift, saying, "I know about the sentiment... Every film I do must have moments where people laugh... We need to make more of such films. What has happened today is OTT."

Delving deeper, he explains, "OTT platforms offer a lot of content, but much of it leans towards dark or serious themes. The demand for comedy is there — films such as *Bhagam Bhag* (2006) and *Golmaal* were genuinely funny. While a few comedies still emerge, they're scarce. I recently revisited *Good Newwz* (2019) and enjoyed *Kunal Kemmu's Madgaon Express* (2024). People crave such films. I'm currently working on *Housefull 5* and *Welcome to the Jungle*, both beloved franchises. And Rohit Shetty has announced another *Golmaal*, which fans are eagerly waiting for."

As for his involvement in Shetty's next *Golmaal* instalment, Talpade shares, "Rohit only reaches out to actors once his script is ready. I believe he's still working on it, but I'm eagerly waiting for that call."

## International Icon: India's international singing talent hunt concludes third season



MUMBAI'S DWAYNE GAMREE (TOP RIGHT) TAKES THE TITLE WITH HIS POP-CHART-READY ORIGINAL TRACK RUN, WHILE YOUNG TALENTS AMAIRA SHAH (RIGHT) AND JULIANNE S DEKA (ABOVE) SHINE AS RUNNERS-UP



Mentors: KiDi (above), Jamie Miller (right) and Veronica Fusaro (bottom)

**I**nternational Icon, presented by Radio One International in collaboration with Hyperlink Brand Solutions and 9122 Records, recently returned for its third season. The contestants were guided by international mentors including KiDi (Ghana's Afropop sensation), Jamie Miller (global star with over a billion streams), and Veronica Fusaro (celebrated performer at Glastonbury and Montreux Jazz).

The season concluded with Dwayne Gamree, a 34-year-old musician from Mumbai, winning the title. His original track *Run* earned high praise, with KiDi calling it "pop-chart ready". He tells us, "Making it to the final round was nerve-racking because the girls all sounded great. They had great vocal

technique and range with powerful voices. But what sealed the deal for me and made me realise that I'm going to win this is when for the first round I sang my original *Run*."

Amaira Shah, a 12-year-old hailing from Delhi, secured the first runners-up title. Describing her journey as "incredible", she said that competing with such talented individuals "pushed me to work harder than ever". "I performed *Rise Up* by Andra Day. It reminded me why I love music so much," she recalls.

Second runner-up Julianne S Deka, a 17-year-old from Guwahati, shares, "I felt out of place initially because I've never had any training for singing as such... By this point, I was there to just have fun and do my best, winning was the farthest thing from my mind."

Episodes, including the grand finale, are now streaming on Radio One International's YouTube channel.

HTC

**I've done a lot of TV, and I was tired, so I left it, as one tends to lose excitement, says Aamir Ali**

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**A**ctor Aamir Ali has been a regular face on television for just a little under two decades, having been part of *Kahaani Ghar Ghar Kii*, *Kya Dil Mein Hai* and *FIR*. However, the 43-year-old says that the medium tired him out.

The actor was recently seen in the medical drama *Doctors*, in which he plays a neurosurgeon practising as a general physician after a botched surgery causes him partial paralysis. "He has a

demon he is battling. There's something he wants for himself in life, but he can't do it now, which drags him into a negative space. That was a wonderful thing to explore in the character," Ali shares.

Emphasising how OTT allows actors to play diverse roles with more detailed character arcs, he says, "I've done a lot of TV and I was tired. So I left that, and I came (to OTT) for a chance to do something refreshing that excites me. You lose your excitement doing the same thing over and over again."



## ALLU ARJUN DEBUTS NEW LOOK AS HE VISITS COURT TO COMPLETE BAIL FORMALITIES

The actor submitted sureties at a Hyderabad court after being granted bail in connection with the Sandhya Theatre incident, debuting a new look in the process



PHOTOS: X AND INSTAGRAM

**A**ctor Allu Arjun appeared before the police in Hyderabad on Sunday, adhering to the bail conditions set by a Hyderabad court in connection with the Sandhya Theatre stampede case.

As per the directives, Arjun is required to report to the SHO, Chikkadpally police station, every Sunday between 10am and 1pm. The actor visited the Metropolitan Criminal Court in Nampally on Saturday to submit sureties after being granted regular bail. The case stems from the tragic incident during the premiere of *Pushpa 2: The Rule* on December 4, 2024, which resulted in the loss of a woman's life and her nine-year-old son critically injured. In addition to his court appearance, Arjun unveiled a fresh look, shedding the long hair he had maintained for nearly five years for his role as Pushpa Raj. As per news agency PTI, the actor also cancelled his visit to the hospital to see the nine-year-old boy who is undergoing treatment.

While speaking to reporters, Arjun's lawyer, Ashok Reddy, clarified that the court's decision to grant bail was based on the conclusion that the case did not amount to culpable homicide. "The court was convinced this wasn't a case of culpable homicide not amounting to murder. The bail conditions include furnishing ₹50,000 with two sureties," he stated.

Reddy also mentioned that a quash petition is still pending before the Telangana High Court, with the next hearing scheduled for Jan 21, 2025. ANI

**ALLU ARJUN, SHEDDING HIS SIGNATURE PUSHPARAJ HAIRSTYLE, WHICH HE FLAUNTED FOR NEARLY FIVE YEARS, DEBUTED A STRIKING NEW LOOK THAT QUICKLY WENT VIRAL ONLINE**

## Ariana Grande's 'Botox and Juvederm' joke sparks backlash



**S**inger-actor Ariana Grande, who has received significant praise for her portrayal of Glinda in *Wicked* (2024), was honoured with the Rising Star Award at the Palm Springs International Film Festival 2025 on January 3. Although the night was meant to celebrate her achievements, her thank-you speech quickly sparked controversy on social media. After receiving the award from actor Jennifer Coolidge, Grande addressed the crowd, saying, "Thank you guys so much. You don't know how much it means to me. I've been performing since I was a child, so I never thought at the age of 31 I would be hearing the words 'rising star' again." She then added, "I wanted to start by thanking my two friends: Botox and Juvederm." The audience erupted in laughter as she continued, "I thought I'd be hearing 'slightly withering star' or 'drooping star' by now, so thank you!"

While Grande's remarks were intended to be lighthearted and self-deprecating, the speech quickly garnered backlash online, with many calling her comments "tone-deaf" and "ageist". One critic wrote, "She lacks professionalism, and she's only 31 — like how awkward for all the older women in the crowd. She hides her prejudice under the guise of a sense of humour." Another pointed out the irony, saying, "She literally posed with Nicole Kidman, who is twice her age... so for her to make an ageist comment about herself is problematic."

**FURTHER FUELLING THE CONTROVERSY, SOME SOCIAL MEDIA USERS QUESTIONED GRANDE'S PAST STATEMENTS ON BEAUTY STANDARDS, RECALLING A PREVIOUS VIDEO WHERE SHE HAD DISCUSSED DISCONTINUING BOTOX SEVERAL YEARS AGO**