









EDITOR'S SPECS

75% Indians fear tech will replace their jobs unless they upskill

Technological disruptions are driving Indians' increased desire to upskill, with as many as three out of four working professionals believing that technology will replace their jobs if they do not continue to develop their skill set, according to a report on Monday. The Emeritus Global Workplace Skills Study 2023 report by edtech company Emeritus showed that the professionals from finance and insurance (72 per cent), software and IT services (80 per cent), healthcare (81 per cent), technology and innovation (79 per cent) and professional services/consulting (78 per cent), among other industries are the most concerned about technology replacing their jobs if they do not upskill. Most Indians expressed concerns around experiencing a skill gap and feeling pressure to keep up in the fast-changing job market. Further, the study showed that the most sought-after topics for the professionals included digital marketing, data analytics, finance, management and Artificial Intelligence (AI). The need to increase self-confidence, increase their job security and enhance their skill sets, were among the key motives for Indian techies working in software and IT services to upskill. As a result of upskilling opportunities, Indian professionals also expressed satisfaction at the workplace. About 80 per cent of the respondents said they would be more loyal to their employer if they invested in continued education. The report is based on a survey of 6,600 professionals aged between 21 and 65 across 18 countries, including India, US, China, UK, Brazil, Mexico, and UAE, to understand how the global workforce is leveraging online education to navigate through uncertain times. The study surveyed a total of 1,720 Indians aged between 21 and 65 years, hailing from across 20 tier-I and II cities in India.

PAKISTAN IS REPEATING ITS MODUS OPERANDI IN PUNJAB

D.C. Pathak

Slowly but steadily the Pak-supported Khalistan movement is raising its head among the Sikh diaspora in the four countries -- Canada, Australia, the US and the UK -- where it is significant number-wise. There is an upswing in this activity since 2022, evidently under external instigation as the call for a 'referendum' on Khalistan was given by elements known to be in cohort with Pak ISI. Khalistanis abroad are taking to violence in a manner that was designed to produce consequences in India - particularly in Punjab. Vandalism against India's diplomatic Missions abroad, defacing of temples and glorifying past incidents pertaining to Khalistan terror in India, have been resorted to in a planned way for this purpose. In an event that marked a point of sharp escalation on the graph of this violence, the Indian Consulate in San Francisco, US was set on fire in July 2023 by a group of Khalistan separatists belonging to the newly established 'Sikhs for Justice'. This organisation put up posters calling for the 'killing' of India's top diplomats posted in Canada, the US, the UK and Australia - this was in response to the murder of Hardeep Singh Nijjar, a wanted terrorist killed in British Columbia, Canada by masked gunmen in June 2023. Khalistan separatists in Brampton, Canada took out a 5-km-long parade on June 4, 2023, in which a float displayed the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi by Khalistan loyalists. The 'Sikhs for Justice' conducted a 'referendum' for a separate Khalistan, in Canada, the US, the UK and Australia in 2022. In Canada, one crore Sikhs out of a total of eight crores took part in it which was not insignificant. In Australia, the event was organised at Federation Square Melbourne in January 2023 and it led to a clash between Khalistanis and pro-India supporters. In an early incident of communal violence, Khalistan and India supporters -- numbering 400-500 -- clashed in Mississauga Ontario, Canada on the eve of Diwali in October 2022. While Canada witnessed several incidents of defacing of temples, events also occurred in January 2023 in Australia in which three major temples were defiled by way of painting of anti-India slogans on their walls. In February 2023, the Indian Consulate in Brisbane, Australia was targeted by pro-Khalistan separatists who installed a Khalistan flag on its premises. On March 19, 2023, a group of Khalistan activists in an audacious act, vandalised the Indian High Commission in London, took out the Indian flag, and tried to install a Khalistan flag there. What is clearly a cause for serious concern

is that these subversive activities abroad have been accompanied by some violent actions in India as well. Indian Intelligence found that there was infiltration of Khalistan protagonists in the farmer's agitation of 2020 and Amritpal Singh, a known advocate of Khalistan and promoter of the Bhindranwale cult, came to India from Dubai and visited sites of protesting farmers. On January 26, 2021, farmers instigated by Khalistan elements entered Red Fort in Delhi and hoisted the Nishan Sahib flag there. The 'Sikhs for Justice' announced a reward of Rs 2.5 crores for unfurling the Khalistan flag at the Indian Parliament. In February 2023, Amritpal Singh along with thousands of his supporters some of them armed and also carrying Guru Granth Sahib, raided Ajnala Police Station near Amritsar and secured the release of Lovepreet Singh Toofan, an aide of Amritpal Singh who had been earlier arrested for violence. Amritpal Singh who had in the meanwhile visited village Rode in Moga district - the birthplace of Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale - as part of his plan to imitate Bhindranwale and spread the ideas of the founder of the Khalistan movement, was arrested in April 2023. It may be recalled that Canada had in 1980 provided sanctuary to dreaded Khalistan terrorists like Jagjeet Singh Chauhan and Talwinder Singh Parmar. Designated terrorist Arshdeep Singh Gill of Khalistan Tiger Force is also sheltered in Canada. The threat of Khalistan terror has in a major way originated and sustained by Canada since Prime Minister Trudeau had been politically dependent on the support of the Sikh separatists there. India has now taken a serious view of Canada pursuing this unfriendly line towards this country because of 'vote bank politics'. On March 2023, Indian High Commission had to cancel an event in British Columbia, Canada as some 200 Khalistanis - some with swords - gathered before the venue to protest against the arrest of Amritpal Singh in India. Over these last two years, the activities of Khalistan separatists have gathered pace both in countries like Canada, Australia, the US and the UK as well as in India, clearly indicating the desperation of Pakistan about reviving the terror profile of the Eighties in the border state of Punjab. The prolonged spell of Khalistan terror in Punjab in the 1980s was broken by a highly successful Operation Black Thunder in 1988 after which the violence had tapered off there. This had compelled Pakistan to launch a new phase of militant separatism in Kashmir in the name of Jihad - in replacement of the slogans of Plebiscite and Aazadi - in what came to be known as the K2 plan of the ISI.

Pakistan is now active in recreating trouble in Punjab because India had made progress in controlling cross-border terrorism in Kashmir in the period following the abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution. This replay of Pak ISI's plan against India is being firmly countered by this country. Pakistan is replicating the modus operandi that had been successfully used by it in Punjab in the 1980s - reflected in the three-fold strategy of pressing into the use of locally fabricated IEDs like a 'cycle bomb' to create an atmosphere of fear, spreading 'Amritdhari' movement through Gurdwaras and precipitating the communal divide in the state by instigating violence against Hindus - resulting in cases of massacre of Hindu passengers travelling by bus. Attacks on our diplomatic missions and cases of vandalism of temples abroad are aimed at injecting an atmosphere of communal divide in Punjab. This time around, however, Hindu-Sikh unity in Punjab against any return of terrorist violence there has proved to be the biggest obstacle in the path of the adversary. Nonetheless, the spread of the 'Amritdhari' cult is going on particularly in the sensitive border districts of the state through selected Gurdwaras for the purpose of raising potential militants. Communal division if instigated in a sustained way - in a state where there is a history of religion being mixed with politics - can grow how so ever slowly. The planned use of locally made IEDs would comparatively be an easier part in Punjab where arms and drugs are being dropped by the enemy through the deployment of drones and this can be set in motion at the opportune time. The learning for policymakers and the national security set-up is that an all-out effort has to be made to nip the trouble in the bud, in Punjab. Diplomatic, political and police measures have to be put in place to stop in time any further deterioration of the situation in Punjab. India has already stepped up its diplomatic offensive to warn countries like Canada, Australia and even the UK not to allow militant anti-India activities of Khalistan separatists on the tenuous plea of freedom of expression and named Canada for inaction on account of considerations of 'vote bank' politics. India has to counter the pro-Pak lobbies active internationally and supported by China in pursuance of the Sino-Pak axis that had become particularly strong after the takeover of Kashmir by the Centre here. There is a possibility of Islamic militancy and Khalistan separatism working together. The present state government in Punjab has to rise

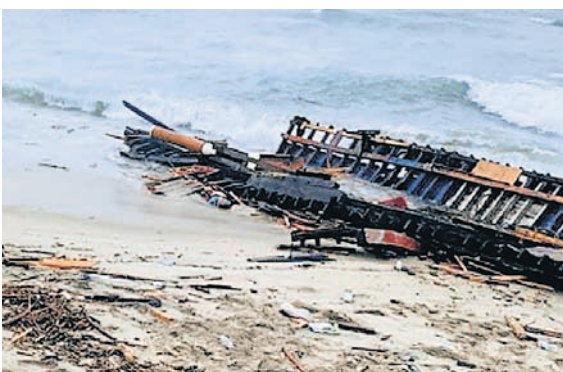
above any approach of political ambiguity while handling the emerging problem and become aware of the dire need for keeping politics above issues of national security. Unity of Punjabis rooted in the common belief in the values taught by Guru Nanak has to be preserved and promoted. It is advisable to consider putting Punjab under a Governor with national security background to suitably guide the state and educate the state government on the developing situation. A civilian who had direct knowledge of the way terrorism had grown in Punjab in the '80s and who was adept at dealing with the Army on a note of mutual respect, should fill the bill. Punjab needs mature handling in liaison with the national security set-up and calls for a smooth Centre-State relationship for advancing the larger interest of the state and the nation. The developing scene of revival of Khalistan separatism in Punjab has to be seen in the context of the national security horizon of India which is presently marked by a rising trend of external threats becoming the main cause for endangering our internal security. The return of the Taliban Emirate at Kabul gave a strategic advantage to Pakistan over India in Afghanistan, deepening of strategic partnership between Pakistan and China that worked primarily against India internationally and the emergence of social media as a weapon of 'information warfare' and an instrument for 'radicalisation' and recruitment of terrorists, are the major areas of security concern for India that required an effective new strategy and added to the challenges facing the Intelligence agencies. China and Pakistan are working in collaboration to exploit whatever opportunities they had for fishing in the troubled waters here. Apart from the faith-based terrorism Pak ISI could foment in India taking advantage of communal discords that this country remained prone to, the Sino-Pak axis could be working to create further problems in Kashmir, Punjab and the North East through clandestine funding, weapon supply and dropping of narcotics using drones. This is already happening on a significant scale adding a new dimension to the proxy war India was facing for years. It is in this context that Punjab needs urgent attention and steps directed at countering the threat of Khalistan militancy that was evidently raising its head there. (The writer is a former Director of the Intelligence Bureau. Views expressed are personal)

international

41 MIGRANTS FEARED DEAD IN LATEST MEDITERRANEAN SHIPWRECK

Rome | Agencies

Some 41 migrants were feared dead in the latest shipwreck on the treacherous route across the central Mediterranean. The deaths were reported by four survivors of the tragedy who were brought to the southern Italian island of Lampedusa on Wednesday, reports Xinhua news agency. According to media reports, the four survivors were rescued by the Rimona, a Maltese cargo ship. The victims were taken to the Italian coast guard, which brought them to Lampedusa for treatment on Wednesday. The survivors said the boat carrying 45 would-be asylum seekers left Tunisia for Lampedusa on August 3. It appears the vessel capsized either late August 3 or in the early hours of the next day, and the four survivors



managed to stay afloat by clinging to wreckage of the boat. They subsequently found an empty boat at sea, before being rescued by the Rimona. In a joint statement, the International Organization for Migration, the UN Refugee Agency, and the UNICEF expressed their "deepest condolences for the loss of dozens of lives" in the

shipwreck. "Today's numbers add to the growing death toll of shipwrecks in the Central Mediterranean. According to IOM's Missing Migrants Project, more than 1,800 people have already been reported dead and missing along the route this year," said the statement. On Sunday, about 57 people were rescued after two ships sank between Tunisia

and Lampedusa within a few hours of each other, while 32 people were declared dead or missing from the two vessels. Also on Sunday, 34 refugees were rescued after being stranded for 36 hours on a steep cliffside in Lampedusa, after their ship hit rocks just off the island. Rough waters made a rescue by sea impossible, but the victims were eventually lifted to safety by helicopter. According to the Italian Interior Ministry, nearly 92,000 refugees from Africa, the Middle East, and beyond have landed on the country's shores so far this year, more than double the amount that arrived in the country during the same period last year, and three times the number from 2021. The IOM has reported nearly 134,000 migrant arrivals in Europe so far in 2023.

43 injured in blast at Moscow plant: Authorities

Moscow | Agencies

Forty-three people have been injured so far in a blast at an optical-mechanical plant in the city of Sergiev Posad in the Moscow region, local authorities said. The explosion happened on Wednesday morning at around 10:40 a.m. local time at a pyrotechnics warehouse, which was being rented out on the optical-mechanical plant's territory by a private company, said Governor of the Moscow Region Andrei Vorobiev in a Telegram post. Among the injured, five are currently in critical condition, according to preliminary information provided by local authorities. Moreover, five people could still be trapped in the rubble. Vorobiev said people have been evacuated from all the buildings and workshops of the plant, as well as from a kindergarten close to the factory, Xinhua news agency reported. He also added that a sport complex near the plant had been damaged, as well as windows in nearby residential buildings. Local media, citing a State Duma deputy, suggested that the blast could have occurred due to a "violation of technological processes". In response, Russia's Investigative Committee has initiated a criminal case into the incident.

Death toll in landslides, floods in Nepal rises to 41

Kathmandu | Agencies

The death toll in monsoon-induced disasters, including floods and landslides, in Nepal in the last two months, has risen to 41, according to the country's home ministry. As many as 50 out of 77 districts were affected, said the ministry, and at least 55 people were injured in rain-related incidents in the districts, Home Ministry's Disaster and Conflict Management Division Chief, Joint-Secretary Mahadev Panth said. According to the ministry, loss of lives has been reported in 20 out of 50 disaster-hit districts. Likewise, people from six districts, including Sankhuwasabha, Taplejung, Panchthar, Dolakha, Makawanpur, and Mahottari, went missing in the disastrous incidents, Panth informed. As per the data compiled by the ministry, 55 people from 28 districts have sustained injuries. In the incidents, a



total of 130 houses were completely damaged while 193 houses partially damaged. A huge loss of lives and properties was reported in the eastern districts of Nepal, including Panchthar, Sankhuwasabha, and Taplejung. The incidents of intermittent downpours during the monsoon triggered floods and landslides in different districts. Some districts are yet to witness rainfalls in the monsoon. Still, the country is reeling under the risk of monsoon-induced disasters like landslides, floods, and inundation.

Dam partially collapses in Norway amid extreme flooding

Oslo | Agencies

A dam at a Norwegian power plant partially collapsed after extensive flooding caused by storm Hans. The dam in Braskereidfoss, about 150 km northeast of the capital Oslo, spans Norway's longest river, the Glomma, reports Xinhua news agency. An unexpected deluge caused by a technical malfunction on Wednesday prevented the dam's floodgates from operating properly. Police evacuated 15 to 20 nearby households as the Glomma's water levels continued to rise. Aviation restrictions were also put in place around the Braskereidfoss power plant, specifically targeting non-essential flights. Akershus Energi, which



operates three power stations downstream from Braskereidfoss, has emphasized its contingency measures for floods. These include the removal of river debris, such as large trees. Storm Hans has been battering Norway since Monday, resulting in over 4,000 reports of damages to properties. According to the Norwegian Nature Damage Pool and Finans Norge, the

organisation for compensation for natural disasters in Norway, the destruction could cost an estimated 900 million kroner (\$88 million). With 114 county roads and many national roads now inaccessible due to flooding and landslides, the Norwegian Public Roads Administration has deployed a national emergency response team to the most-affected areas, especially Innlandet.

Man who threatened Biden shot dead during FBI raid

Washington | Agencies

A man who allegedly made threats against US President Joe Biden ahead of the latter's trip to the state of Utah, was shot dead during a Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) raid, media reports said. The raid occurred on Wednesday in Provo, about 65 km south of state capital Salt Lake City, while FBI agents were attempting to serve an arrest warrant against the accused person, Craig Robertson at his home, just hours ahead of the President's planned visit, reports the BBC. The agents were giving commands to the man when he pointed a gun at them, CNN quoted a law enforcement source as saying. The FBI has not provided any further information on the incident. Robertson was facing three federal charges, including threats against the President as well as influencing, impeding and retaliating against

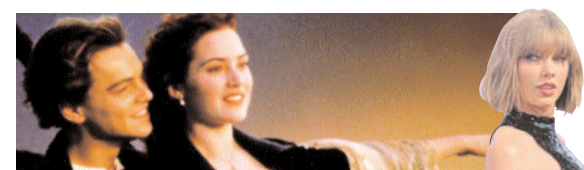


federal law enforcement officers by threat. Investigators noted that

Robertson appeared to own "a sniper rifle" and several other firearms.

Some of the threats happened just ahead of Biden's planned trip to Utah on Wednesday evening. "I hear Biden is coming to Utah," one threat read. "Digging out my old Ghille suit and cleaning the dust off the M24 sniper rifle. Welcome buffoon-in-chief." The US Secret Service, which is responsible for protection of high-level government officials, including Biden, said that it is "aware of the FBI investigation involving an individual in Utah who has exhibited threats to a Secret Service protectee". Robertson also posted online threats in recent months against Attorney General Merrick Garland, Vice President Kamala Harris, New York State Attorney General Letitia James, California Governor Gavin Newsom and New York District Attorney Alvin Bragg. Biden will now make his first visit to Utah as president on Thursday, with a visit to a veterans' hospital and a fundraising event in Park City.





## MEGHAN MARKLE ATTENDS TAYLOR SWIFT'S ERAS TOUR

Los Angeles | Agencies



As Taylor Swift takes her Eras Tour to Asia, with her first stop being Japan, Meghan Markle was spotted the night before the singer headed out for the country in her Los Angeles gig, while her husband Prince Harry was in Tokyo for business reasons.

As reported by People magazine, the Duchess of Sussex is a Swiftie herself and was spotted in California where the pop sensation was wrapping up her North American leg of the tour.

As Swift went ahead to give the crowd the time of their lives and get them pumped up and excited, saying "Let's go back to high school!", Meghan jumped up out of her chair to sing along to the track 'You Belong with Me'.

But this is not yet the end, as on Wednesday, the Duke of Sussex arrived at Haneda Airport in the Japanese capital to speak at a summit organised by the International Sports Promotion Society (ISPS), Meghan will reportedly be joining her husband.

While Meghan's plans are unknown as of now, Harry will next travel to Singapore for the 2023 Sentebale ISPS Handa Polo Cup on Saturday.

Last week, Meghan celebrated her 42nd birthday early without Harry by seeing the 'Barbie' movie with good friend Portia de Rossi and a few other pals.

For Taylor Swift, things just don't seem to end as her Eras Tour has been quite the success, filling up stadiums wherever she has gone.

Indeed, two weeks ago only, her North American tour was extended on the insistence of Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, leading her to play in cities such as Ontario, Toronto and Montreal.

Taylor Swift just recently announced her latest re-recorded LP which will be a new version of her fifth album '1989 (Taylor's Version)' which will be coming out in 2023. Her Asian leg of the tour has commenced and it remains to be seen where else the country-pop singer will be headed off to next.

## KIM KARDASHIAN

gets 'life-saving' MRI scan for over Rs 2 lakh

Los Angeles | Agencies

Reality TV star Kim Kardashian has undergone a full-body MRI scan costing \$2,500, which is approximately over Rs 2 lakh. She says the Prenuvo can, which can detect 500 abnormalities and diseases, has been "life-saving" and "really saved some of my friends lives," reports aceshowbiz.com.

Alongside a picture of herself standing next to the machine, she wrote on Instagram: "I recently did this @prenuvo scan and had to tell you all about this life saving machine. The Prenuvo full-body scan has the ability to detect cancer and diseases such as aneurysms in its earliest stages, before symptoms arise. It was like getting a MRI for an hour with no radiation. It has really saved some of my friends lives and I just wanted to share."

Kim's mom Kris Jenner, 67, previously had the scan for her birthday because she wants to ensure she lives "to the fullest" like her 88-year-old mother, Mary Jo "MJ" Shannon.

Speaking on the family's Hulu show 'The Kardashians', she said: "My birthday's coming up and every time I have a birthday, I start focusing on my health and I start thinking about what I need to do to take care of myself and be the best that I can possibly be. Getting this scan is very important because it tells me if there's anything going on in the inside that I should be worried about on the inside."

She added in her confessional, "I plan on lasting a really long time. I need a lot of energy because I have this really crazy life. Six kids, 12 grandchildren, lots of other people in my life that need my energy, my attention."



## Oscar winning folk song writer Rodriguez dies at 81

Los Angeles | Agencies



American songwriter Sixto Diaz Rodriguez, who is just called Rodriguez, died on August 8, aged 81. Having started his career in the 1970's, the singer is known for garnering an Academy Award for his 2013 documentary 'Searching for Sugar Man'; but after some brief folk rock hits, he quit the music industry for a quiet life. The singer's death was later announced on his official website which stated "It is with great sadness that we at Sugarman.org announce that Sixto Diaz Rodriguez has passed away." "We extend our most heartfelt condolences to his daughters - Sandra, Eva and Regan - and to all his family. Rodriguez was 81 years old." "May His Dear Soul Rest In Peace" The singer was heavily influenced by Bob Dylan and other 1960s-'70s folk musicians such as The Band and even some other

groups that used folk elements in their music as Led Zeppelin and Jethro Tull.

Early on, Rodriguez seemed a very promising success when his 1970 debut album 'Cold Fact' was released in Los Angeles and exploded in the US. The Detroit born singer was already familiar in his home state for his club and barroom performances, and with the success of 'Cold Fact' Rodriguez was hailed by some to become the next Dylan.

While the singer was unable to repeat his success later with albums such as 'Coming From Reality' which was released in 1971, the musician had no idea of the success that he had gained outside the US.

His two albums, and particularly the song 'Sugar Man' found a massive following throughout apartheid-era South Africa as well as New Zealand and Australia where by some metrics he is estimated to be even more popular than Elvis Presley.



## David Harbour already looking beyond 'Stranger Things' after end of Season 5

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actor David Harbour, who is well known for his role as police officer Jim Hopper in 'Stranger Things', has said that he is already looking to the future after completing his time in the 'Upside Down'.

According to Deadline, in an interview with the Insider, the 48-year old actor said: "The first year of 'Stranger Things', I remember having a discussion with a publicist and her saying, 'Maybe you don't want to be associated with the show so much,' and I was like, 'Why? I love this show. I love the character. And I do love the show. And I do love the character. But I don't want to be just that character. I don't want to be just that guy.'"

David has been in Hollywood for a long time, but never became as big a name until he starred in the sci-fi horror series which

suddenly skyrocketed his reputation, and gave him immense fame and success. Though late in his career, 'Stranger Things' earned him two Emmy Awards nominations, a Golden Globe nod and a win at the Critics Choice Television Award. Talking about his late achievement, Harbour said: "I have always been waiting for the main roles. My 20s never worked for me. For guys like me, we're always waiting to be 40, even when we're, like, 19. We're waiting for the hairline to go. Those are the guys that I admired growing up, and those are the guys I wanted to emulate." David went on to draw parallels with George Clooney, as he was another actor who achieved his success late before becoming the household name that he is today.

Seoul | Agencies

Singer Beyonce Knowles' fans were swooning over a member of her security who went viral for his good look and priceless reaction to the "mute" part during Bey's 'Energy' performance.

In a fan-taken video that made the rounds online, the security guard could be seen standing on the side of the stage in a sleek suit. When the crowds went silent following the Grammy winner's cue, the man could be seen giving Beyhives a little smirk of approval, reports aceshowbiz.com.

Fans later did a little investigation on the good looking bodyguard and quickly found his Instagram account. The man, who is now identified as professional body builder named James Plaza, further impressed fans with his posts on the photo-sharing platform.

I grew up watching these movies so don't mind me I'm just living a dream #rocky #rocky-balboa #boxing #tourist #movies #80s #running #happy #smile," he captioned a video that featured him running shirtless to the top of the stairs and reenacting Sylvester Stallone's character's iconic first pump. After the video went viral, James' Instagram followers have quadrupled. He, however, didn't seem to be comfortable with the sudden fame as his Instagram page is nowhere to be found as of Wednesday. It was reported on Wednesday that Queen Bey's July 29 and 30 performances at MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford marked the highest-grossing shows by a black artist ever. The "Break My Soul" hitmaker successfully generated \$16.541 million each night.



Beyonce's handsome bodyguard sends fans into frenzy with shirtless pics

## ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Rita Ora





## Kartik Aaryan blushes at getting proposed for marriage by a fan in Melbourne

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood's chocolate boy Kartik Aaryan was proposed by a fan in Melbourne, where his film 'Satyaprem Ki Katha' was being premiered. Kartik was seen attending the premiere of 'Satyaprem Ki Katha' at the Indian Film Festival of Melbourne. He connected with his Australian fans and shared the magic of his latest cinematic endeavor. Fans attending the event got the chance to ask questions and interact with him and capture memorable moments. One of the highlights was a girl who proposed marriage to Kartik who was left speechless with the gesture.

The incident took place in the theatre, where the film was being screened. The fan said: "I might never get a chance to ask you this question ever again but 'will you marry me?'"

The crowd started cheering and hooting as Kartik was left speechless.

A blushing Kartik then said: "Seedha aapne...Ek yahan prem katha pooch rahe hai, ek yahan shaadi ka proposal diya. Ho kya raha hai? Yahan swayamvar lag raha hai mera. Great welcome at Melbourne." The fan then asked for a hug, to which he said: "You can get a hug." Kartik Aaryan shared his enthusiasm for being part of IFFM, stating: "I am truly thrilled to be a part of the Indian Film Festival of Melbourne. This is my first time in Melbourne and to be here for a screening of 'Satyaprem Ki Katha' on the day I just landed has been amazing."

"I'm overwhelmed with all this love and really means a lot that everyone is here. There's a feeling of togetherness and oneness here."

'Satyaprem Ki Katha' is about a middle-class boy Satyaprem in Ahmedabad, who is in one-sided love with Katha, who is coping with her breakup with Tapan. Through the journey, they discover each other's life and complement in accomplishing what was left halfway.



## AYUSHMANN KHURRANA: 'IT'S TOO DIFFICULT TO PLAY A WOMAN'

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Versatile actor Ayushmann Khurrana, who will be seen in an avatar of a woman in 'Dream Girl 2', said that he has realised that it is "too difficult" to be a woman and play a woman.

Ayushmann, who was present in the national capital for the launch of the song 'Dil Ka Telephone 2.0' from 'Dream Girl 2' spoke about the movie, the preparations and challenges he went through for this role, etc.

It was a challenging role for Ayushmann considering he constantly had to switch between the two roles of Karam and Pooja, while all along ensuring the punches and comic timing hit the right note.

Talking about the same, he said during media interactions: "The 2.0 version of 'Dream Girl' is not just about the voice, it's also about the 'being'. Its transformation, look, and after shooting for this film I have realised it's too difficult to be a woman. (Ladki banna bahot mushkil hai, or Ladki hona usse bhi jyada mushkil). Its all for feminism."

He said the movie is lot of fun, there is no deep message in this, it is just fully entertaining and laugh out loud moments in the film. "I loved playing a woman in the film."

Reminiscing the memories of his teenage years, Ayushmann said: "In this particular property (Priya cinema) I have come on many dates. I used to hide from my friends and family. Its so surreal to be here and this is really nostalgic. Ajay Bijli has this passion for cinema which really reflects the kind of work they do."

The lively song 'Dil Ka Telephone 2.0' has upbeat music and high energy. The song now boasts extra beats, extra mischief, and extra excitement. It features the musical composition of Meet Bros, with vocals provided by Meet Bros in collaboration with Jonita Gandhi & Jubin Nautiyal. The lyrics for the song are penned by Kumaar.

## Alia: 'We come from a school of thought that woman-led action film won't do well'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood actress Alia Bhatt is all set to make her international debut with 'Heart Of Stone', where she will be seen playing the antagonist in the Gal Gadot-starrer. Portraying Keya Dhawan, a fiercely intelligent tech prodigy adopted by an Indian pharma billionaire after her parents' untimely death, Alia embraces this challenging role in a high-octane thriller exploring espionage and cyber warfare. With dedication and commitment to authenticity, her portrayal of Keya Dhawan, one of the world's most talented and dangerous hackers, is expected to captivate the global audience and cement her status as an international talent.

Speaking about her role in Heart of Stone, Alia shared: "What's amazing is how the narrative throughout the world is changing. I've experienced that even back in India, where I headlined this film called Gangubai, which did really well in theaters and on Netflix all over the world. And this was a film that was headlined by a woman."

"We come from a certain school of thinking that a woman-led

film in an action franchise won't do very well."

She added: "But I think Gal shattered that myth when she did Wonder Woman. Because at the end of the day it's all about the characters and what you're putting out there.

So, similarly with HEART OF STONE, when we met and chatted about it, she said, 'You don't really see a spy thriller action franchise that is led by women, so I wanted to start something on my own.' I love that thought. It was so unique, relevant and current." 'Heart of Stone' debuts on August 11, on Netflix. The film also stars Gal Gadot and Jamie Dornan in this action-packed spy thriller. Directed by Tom Harper, the show follows an intelligence operative for a shadowy global peacekeeping agency races to stop a hacker from stealing its most valuable and dangerous weapon.



Team Absolute | Mumbai

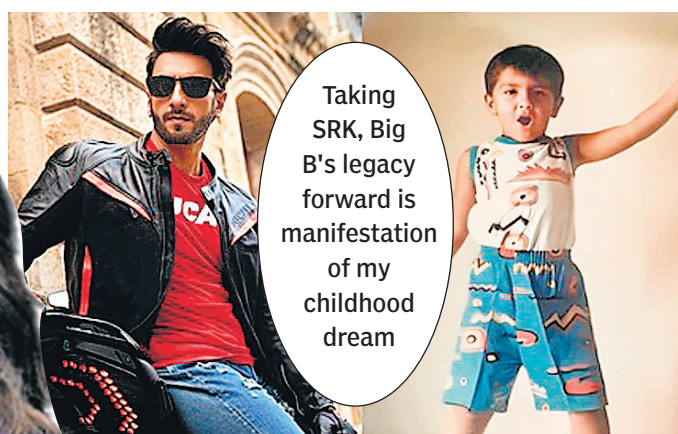
Actress Yami Gautam is all set to make a comeback on the big screen with Akshay Kumar-starrer 'OMG 2' and she couldn't be happier as it is her first film in theatres after the pandemic struck. Yami was seen in 'Lost', 'A Thursday', 'Chor Nikal Ke Bhaga' to now her upcoming movie 'OMG 2' is all set to release on the big screen. Before the pandemic hit, the actress worked in big hits such as 'Bala', 'Kaabil', 'Uri: The Surgical Strike'.

The actress said: "It feels really ecstatic to have a theatrical release after a brief period of what, 3 years? It's my first film on the big screen after the pandemic hit, and I couldn't be more excited for it." She added: "The surreal feeling of seeing yourself on the big screen, is really unmatched and unparalleled. It was a wonderful experience shooting for OMG 2 and I am really thrilled to see what this holds for me."

On the work front, Yami will be next seen in OMG 2 which will release on August 11. She also has 'Dhoom Dhaam' in the pipeline.

Yami began her career as a model and starred in television shows such as 'Chand Ke Paar Chalo' and 'Yeh Pyar Na Hoga Kam'. In 2012, she had her first Hindi film release in the comedy-drama 'Vicky Donor'. Ever since then, Yami has appeared in the thrillers 'Badlapur' (2015) and 'Kaabil' (2017), and greater success came for starring in the war film 'Uri: The Surgical Strike' and the satire 'Bala'. She has since starred in the streaming films 'A Thursday' (2022), 'Dasvi' (2022) and 'Chor Nikal Ke Bhaga' (2023).

**'It's my first film on the big screen after the pandemic': Yami**



Taking SRK, Big B's legacy forward is manifestation of my childhood dream

## Ranveer shares childhood pics

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood actor Ranveer Singh, who is set to take the 'Don' legacy forward with his portrayal of the titular character in the Farhan Akhtar's third directorial venture of the franchise, shared his childhood pictures as he expressed his gratitude.

Taking to Instagram, the actor said that taking Bollywood superstars Amitabh Bachchan and Shah Rukh Khan's 'Don' legacy forward is manifestation of his childhood dream.

After a series of misadventures on the box-office, Ranveer swung back in action with his latest release 'Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahani' which continues to garner positive response from the audience and the recent announcement of 'Don 3' has sent his fans in frenzy.

On Thursday, the actor took to his Instagram and shared an array of his childhood pictures as he penned a long note in the caption with regards to the opportunity that he has been entrusted with.

The actor wrote: "Gosh! I've been dreaming about doing this for a very, very long time. As a child I fell in love with the movies, and like the rest of us, watching and worshipping Amitabh Bachchan and Shah Rukh Khan - the two G.O.A.Ts of Hindi Cinema. I dreamed of growing up to be like them. They are the very reason I wanted to become an actor and a 'hindi film hero'."

He shared that their impact and influence on his life cannot be overstated. They've shaped the person and actor that he has become.

INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Rubina Dilaik