









EDITOR'S SPECS

Major bureaucratic reshuffle on the cards in UP

A major bureaucratic reshuffle is on the cards this month in Uttar Pradesh. Several district magistrates and police chiefs who did not discharge their duties "honestly" during the recent Lok Sabha elections, will find their names on the transfer lists. Changes are also expected in the chief minister's secretariat since additional chief secretaries, S P Goyal and Devesh Chaturvedi, are set to proceed on central deputation. Three more IAS officers -- K V Pandian, Anil Dhingra and Kumar Ravikant Singh - have also been empanelled for central posting. Besides, UP chief secretary Durga Shankar Mishra's tenure is also due to end on June 30. Mishra has already received three extensions from the Centre and it is unlikely that he may get another one. A new chief secretary is, therefore, expected to take over in the coming weeks. The state cabinet, meanwhile, has already approved the new transfer policy for 2024-25 and an increase in the salaries of employees retiring on June 30 and December 31. Under this policy, Group A and B officers who have completed three years in the district and seven years in the division can be transferred. Transfers are also imminent because Uttar Pradesh will soon face Assembly by-elections on about a dozen seats and the administrative reshuffle has to be done before the model code of conduct comes into force.

Congress's New Dilemma: Will Rahul Agree to Be Leader of Opposition?

Shubhabrata Bhattacharya

Rahul Gandhi's dilly-dallying in accepting the Congress Working Committee's (CWC) June 8 unanimous decision asking him to be the leader of the opposition (LoP) in the Lok Sabha highlights a grievous chink in the armour of the grand old party: indecisiveness. Having been acknowledged as the face of the campaign that propelled Congress from 52 to 99 seats in Lok Sabha, Rahul ought to have promptly thanked the party for reposing faith in him and accepted the offer.

All that party general secretary K.C. Venugopal, a trusted aide of Rahul, said post the meeting was that after having heard the sentiments of the members, he would take a decision soon.

The position of LoP has existed in India's parliamentary system since the days of the Central Legislative Assembly in British India. Motilal Nehru held that position in 1923. During his tenure, he managed to delay legislation, including finance bills, of the Raj. Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi never held the position. Nehru was a three-term Prime Minister; Indira Gandhi lost power and also failed to get elected in 1977. Thus, during the Janata Party's rule, Yashwantrao Chavan and C.M. Stephen functioned as LoP.

For a leader to be formally recognised as LoP, a party in opposition requires a minimum of 10% of the total strength of the House. Until the Congress split in 1969, the Lok Sabha had no LoP. Ram Subhag Singh of the Congress (O) was accorded this recognition in 1969 when more than 10% of MPs joined the exodus against Indira Gandhi. However, the privilege of an LoP getting the status and facilities of a cabinet minister had to wait until 1977, when the Janata regime of Morarji Desai amended the rules.

Rajiv Gandhi was LoP in 1989-90; the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) L.K. Advani and Atal Bihari Vajpayee took turns as LoP between 1990 and 1996. P.V. Narasimha Rao served in that position for a fortnight during Vajpayee's short-lived premiership. Sharad Pawar was the Congress party's LoP for just over a year in 1998 before Sonia Gandhi took over the party's reins and also became LoP in the Lok Sabha (1999-2004). During the decade of Congress-led United Progressive Alliance rule (2004-2014), L.K. Advani and Sushma Swaraj were the LoPs in the Lok Sabha.

In the past decade, as no party has had a 10% share - the grand old party got 44 seats in



2014 and 52 in 2019 - the leader of the Congress in Parliament in 2014 (Mallikarjun Kharge) and 2019 (Adhir Ranjan Choudhury) were not accorded LoP status. However, for purposes of selecting key government positions, where the statute requires consultation with LoP, they were invited to selection meetings.

With Congress bouncing back with 99 seats (the strength has since grown to 101 with two independents, both Congress members before polls, joining the Congress in Parliament), the decade-long 'banishment' is now over, and the party is looking towards Rahul to be its face against Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

If Rahul accepts the job, it will require his presence in Parliament for most days of a session. His attendance as an MP, both from Amethi and Wayanad, between 2004-2019, has not been too encouraging. He went on sojourns abroad when Parliament was in session, and his record in asking questions and participating in debates has been dismal.

During the 2024 Lok Sabha campaign, Rahul boasted about his knowledge of the government system as an insider for years. The real test awaits him now: to provide effective leadership to the 232 INDIA bloc MPs at a time when Narendra Modi heads a coalition of 293-member NDA.

It may be worthwhile to recall a note in the diary maintained by Indira Gandhi's de facto number two in her last dispensation as Prime Minister. The views of Pranab Mukherjee, who became the President of India, have been recorded in Sharmishtha Mukherjee's book, Pranab, My Father: "He [Rahul] has all the arrogance of his Nehru-Gandhi lineage without their political acumen... Maybe politics isn't his calling."

As LoP, Rahul will have to follow rules and procedures. Frequent absences from House proceedings will not go down well. LoP has to be cautious and responsible.

Apart from this dilemma, the Congress is facing another crunch in the Rajya Sabha. After Sonia became the party President in 1998, the Congress constitution was amended to provide that the party chief shall be the chairperson of the Congress in Parliament, even if he or she is not an MP. Sonia's election to the Lok Sabha in 1999 saw her occupying both posts for over two decades. Though she is no longer the Congress President or a Lok Sabha MP, being a Rajya Sabha MP, she has now been re-elected as chairperson of the Congress in Parliament. Thus, Mallikarjun Kharge, the party chief, will be the LoP in Rajya Sabha, with Sonia adorning the front benches of the Opposition.

If Rahul Gandhi indeed becomes the LoP, he may like to carry forward the parliamentary legacy of Feroze Gandhi, the original Rao Bareilly MP (1952, 1957), as well as dust the records of his great-great-grandfather, Motilal Nehru, who as the LoP could stall and delay legislation of the British Raj in 1923.

Parliament of India's first successful scam-busting was done by Feroze Gandhi, which led to the resignation of the then-finance minister in February 1958. The then Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, could not find fault with Feroze Gandhi's well-researched, articulated diatribe, which was carried out as per parliamentary rules and procedure. Precedents set in that debate endure in the form of the Speaker's rulings to date.

Will Rahul Gandhi, who has turned the fortunes of his party and nipped the talk of a 'Congress-mukt Bharat', measure up to the expectations expressed in the CWC's resolution? Or will he choose to shun responsibility once again - just as he had winked at Manmohan Singh's offer, supported by Pranab Mukherjee during the UPA regime, that he become a minister and gain administrative experience?

international

Talks with Ukraine if it withdraws troops from Donbas, other conflict areas: Putin

Moscow | Agencies

Days ahead of the Ukraine peace summit in Switzerland, Russian President Vladimir Putin on Friday said that his country was ready for talks with Ukraine, provided it completely withdraws its troops from the Donbas, Kherson, and Zaporizhzhia regions. "As soon as Kiev declares that it is ready for such a decision and begins a real withdrawal of troops... and also officially announces that it has abandoned plans to join NATO, our side will immediately... receive an order to cease fire and begin negotiations," he said in an address to top Foreign Ministry officials, RT reported.



damentally recognised at the international level, followed by the removal of Western sanctions against Russia, he said. The Russian President termed the Swiss-hosted Ukraine peace summit scheduled for June 15 and 16 "nothing more than a trick, seeking to give the current government in Kiev some legitimacy", given Ukrainian leader Volodymyr Zelensky's presidential term expired last month after he cancelled this year's presidential election.

He disclosed that early in the Ukraine conflict, Moscow was, in principle, ready to let Kiev retain sovereignty over Kherson and Zaporizhzhia Regions, now made parts of Russia, on condition that it guaranteed the security of a land corridor to the Crimean Peninsula.

"Later, however, the residents of those two regions expressed the desire to join Russia, which was realised at referendums in the fall of 2022," he added.

He contended that the Ukraine war was not a conflict between the two culturally close nations, but rather the result of "aggressive" and "reckless"

Western policies that started long before February 2022.

President Putin termed all the West's statements about "decolonising" Russia were nothing but bids "to partition it along ethnic lines, after conducting six waves of NATO expansion closer to its borders".

He termed the Western decision to freeze Russian assets "theft" and vowed that it would not go unpunished. He further claimed that the move to transfer Russian money to Ukraine would shatter the global financial system and only tarnish the West's image among international investors.

Debunking Western claims that Russia could attack NATO countries as "utter nonsense", and geared at those seeking to instigate an arms race, he said that the main threat to Europe comes not from Russia, but rather from its "critical, ever-increasing and almost total dependence on the US" in military, political, technological, and ideological areas.

He said that his country and NATO have no choice other than to co-exist and work together as they are located on the same continent, and this reality will continue despite the current degradation of ties. It is time to start a serious debate on collective security in Europe and Asia, and the reduction of the military presence in both regions, President Putin urged.

Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov was also present on the occasion.

Nearly 27,000 residents evacuated as heavy rainfall lashes China's Fujian



Fuzhou | Agencies

A total of 27,000 residents have been evacuated from China's Fujian province, which has been recording heavy rain for the past few days, according to local authorities.

During this period, more than 3,133 hectares of crops were damaged in Fujian, reports Xinhua news agency, citing the provincial flood control authorities.

From 8 a.m. on June 9 to 6 a.m. on June 14, 386 townships in 55 county-level areas

across Fujian recorded accumulative precipitation of more than 100 mm.

The highest precipitation was reported in Huangkeng Township of Nanping City, topping 581.8 mm, local meteorological authorities said.

After heavy downpours hit the province, local emergency repair staff, equipped with power-generating vehicles and electric power generators, have helped affected households in Nanping restore power supply.

Afghanistan seeks to establish political, economic ties with all countries: Caretaker govt



Kabul | Agencies

The Afghan caretaker government's Supreme Leader, Hibatullah Akhundzada, on Friday said that Afghanistan seeks to establish political and economic relations with all countries across the world.

"The Islamic Emirate seeks to establish political and economic relations with all countries within the framework of Sharia, particularly with Islamic countries, and has fulfilled its obligations in this regard," Akhundzada said in a congratulatory message for the upcoming annual Muslim festival of Eid al-

Adha.

Akhundzada noted that Afghanistan has faced severe challenges due to floods, rainstorms and other disasters, which have resulted in significant losses and hardships for Afghans, reports Xinhua news agency.

He also condemned the Israeli attacks on Muslims in Gaza. "We call on other countries to fulfil their obligations effectively to prevent these heinous crimes and brutal atrocities," the message read.

The country will celebrate Eid al-Adha on or around June 17, depending on moonighting.

Four killed in Nepal landslide

Kathmandu | Agencies

Four members of a family were killed in a landslide in Taplejung district in northeastern Nepal, a local official said on Friday.



A couple and their twin daughters died in Phaktanglung Rural Municipality after their house was buried in the debris on Thursday night, reports Xinhua news agency.

"All four were killed on the spot. Their bodies were

recovered on Friday morning," said Rajan Limbu,

Chairperson for the rural municipality. Limbu told

Xinhua that some 50 goats and dozens of chickens bred by the family also perished in the disaster. Monsoon clouds entered eastern Nepal on Monday and have brought heavy rainfall, according to the Department of Hydrology and Meteorology.

Rain-induced disasters are common in Nepal, and the Nepali authorities have estimated that over 1.8 million people could be affected this year.

Haj begins as Saudi Arabia expects 2 million pilgrims

Riyadh | Agencies

Muslims from around the world started the Hajj pilgrimage in Saudi Arabia on Friday, with authorities expecting 2 million people to gather this year amid sweltering heat.

After circling the Kaaba, a stone cube-shaped holy building inside the Grand Mosque in Mecca, pilgrims head to the nearby Mina Valley, where they will spend the night in a massive tent city.

On the second day, they head to Mount Arafat, around 20 kilometres east of Mecca, where they stay until sunset in what is considered



the peak of the Hajj pilgrimage.

As the temperature in and around Mecca is expected to

reach 43 degrees Celsius, authorities urged pilgrims to carry umbrellas to protect themselves during the rituals.

The Hajj, one of the five pillars of Islam, is a mandatory duty for all Muslims to make once in a lifetime - if they are physically capable of undertaking the journey to the birthplace of the prophet Mohammed and have the financial resources.

Men wear seamless white clothes, and women wear loose garments as they perform the same rituals in a demonstration of religious unity, equality and pursuit of spiritual renewal.

The pilgrimage takes place from the eighth to the 12th day of Dhu al-Hijjah, the last month of the Islamic lunar calendar.



# Sheena Bora's bones 'missing', CBI admits in Mumbai court

Team Absolute | Mumbai

In a bizarre development, the CBI has told a special Mumbai court that the bones and mortal remains purportedly of Mumbai executive Sheena Bora recovered by Raigad police after her murder 12 years ago, are reportedly "missing" and untraceable.



recovered, for identification by Dr Khan, but despite a diligent search, they could not be located. At the next hearing on Thursday, the CBI admitted that the two marked packets containing the evidence (bones) could not be traced, and the examination of the witness (Dr Khan) would continue without showing it to her, though it was crucial for the case.

## Woman held for operating Thane sex racket; two rescued

Team Absolute | Thane

The police in Friday said a 34-year-old woman has been arrested for allegedly running a Thane sex racket from her apartment in Maharashtra's Thane district, reported news agency.

## War Of Words Between BJP, Maharashtra Ally Over Article By RSS Leader

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The BJP and its ally in Maharashtra, the Nationalist Congress Party, seem to have hit a rocky road after their rivals, the INDIA alliance, won more Lok Sabha seats in the state.



termining the move "ill-advised". "Why was this ill-advised step taken? BJP supporters were hurt because they had fought against this Congress ideology for years and were persecuted.

out saying that when the BJP performs well, credit is given to the hard work of the RSS but a defeat is blamed on Ajit Pawar.

Team Absolute | Nashik

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has arrested the 6th accused in an international cyber fraud and human trafficking case from Maharashtra's Nashik, an official said on Friday.



ated by foreigners, linked with operatives in India, the UAE as well as contiguous South Asian countries of Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand, Laos, etc.

The case was first detected by the Mumbai Police but as its national and international ramifications emerged, the NIA took it over on May 13 after the preliminary probe indicated a nationwide nexus between the human traffickers and cyber fraudsters who were acting at the behest of the international syndicates.

## Consequences will be bad if process delays further, says CM Shinde's Shiv Sena leader

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Maharashtra CM Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena leader Sanjay Shirsat warned that if Maharashtra's cabinet expansion is delayed further, "consequences will be bad."



government comprising of the BJP, CM Shinde-led Shiv Sena and the Ajit Pawar-led NCP.

## Mumbai airport customs seizes 10.50 kg gold worth Rs 6.64 crore

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Mumbai airport customs has seized around 10.50 kg gold worth Rs 6.64 crore in different cases in the past several days, an official said.

It said, the gold was found concealed in various forms like gold dust in wax, crude jewellery, gold bars in an ingenious way inside the wheels of the trolley suitcase, under the seat of bus, on the body and in body.

intercepted and found carrying 24KT gold dust in wax having total net weight of 5,800 grams was found concealed in body.

## No day block on Sunday, WR to operate night jumbo block

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Western Railway (WR), in its Mumbai local train update, on Friday announced that there will be no day block on June 16 (Sunday) and it will operate a night block between Vasai Road and Bhayandar stations.



Meanwhile, the WR has installed dynamic digital display boards on the side panels of a local train's coaches to "enhance train travel experience of Mumbaiers".

## License plate error of Rolls-Royce which Maha CM & DyCMs rode rattles Singhania in Europe

Team Absolute | Mumbai

When the swanky new Mumbai Coastal Road (MCR) phase II was inaugurated on June 10, Raymond Group Chairman Gautam V. Singhania happily loaned his gleaming 94-year-old vintage Rolls-Royce 20/25 for the event.



2023, and no PUC after September 2022! Further deep dive revealed that the RR's papers had not been transferred from Maharashtra to Telangana for over two years despite getting NOC, and its number plate (MH-04-JU-4733) actually belonged to some truck!

uments, plus a physical check of the car, unveiled the 'culprit' hidden in full public view -- and they all burst out in laughter.





## Hailey Bieber Admits to Experiencing 'Lower Back Pain' Amid Pregnancy

Los Angeles | Agencies

There's just certain things about pregnancy that sneak up on you unexpectedly: cravings, aches, and pains. Hailey Bieber revealed that she's been experiencing lower back pains while she's expecting her first child in an Instagram post on Wednesday, June 12. The fashion icon shared a selfie of herself relaxing while dealing the pains. She still looked fabulous.

In the selfie, Hailey was getting some time in the sun, seated in a wooden chair. She had her hair tied back under a large set of headphones. She rocked a green half-zip sweater and black spandex shorts, where her baby bump could be seen subtly. "So who was gonna tell me about the lower back pain?" she wrote under the pic with a confused face emoji as well as two pregnant emojis.

Hailey was wearing a baby bump in a stunning white dress. The baby will be the first for both Justin and Hailey.

The new photo comes about a month after Hailey and her husband Justin Bieber publicly announced their pregnancy on Instagram back in May. The Rhode founder shared a montage and series of photos of the "Peaches" singer snapping photos of her while she showed off her baby bump in a stunning white dress. The baby will be the first for both Justin and Hailey.



## GERRY AND THERESA HAVE SETTLED THEIR DIVORCE

Los Angeles | Agencies

Gerry Turner and Theresa Nist are officially divorced. Two months after announcing their split on Good Morning America, the Golden Bachelor season 1 alums finalized their divorce in Indiana on Thursday, June 13. According to court documents obtained by Entertainment Tonight, Gerry, 72, and Theresa, 70, "lived together as husband and wife until April 12, 2024, at which time certain irreconcilable differences heretofore arisen between the parties culminated in their separation." That month, the former pair announced their separation on GMA, and they revealed that the reason was because of distance.

"Theresa and I have had a number of heart-to-heart conversations, and we've looked closely at our situation, our living situation and so forth, and we've kind of come to the conclusion mutually that it's probably time for us to dissolve our marriage," Gerry — who is from Indiana — explained. Theresa, for her part, lives in New Jersey.

Gerry added that he and Theresa are "dedicated" to their families, noting, "So, we look at these conversations, and we both think it's best for the happiness of each of us to live apart."

Later that week, Theresa took to Instagram with a positive mindset about her and Gerry's split. In her caption, the ABC personality encouraged her fans to "stay open to all experiences, opportunities and love that may come your way."

# Taylor Swift

Los Angeles | Agencies

Pop icon Taylor Swift's Eras Tour will not extend into its third calendar year with added dates in 2025. The singer-songwriter announced that her global trek will conclude with its currently scheduled final dates in North America in December of this year, reports 'Variety.'

Swift made this announcement during the 100th show of the tour on the first night of a weekend engagement in Liverpool.

"You know, this is actually the 100th show of the tour," she declared, a number already well-known to most Swifties in attendance.

The singer acknowledged that reaching the triple-digit mark 15 months into the tour blows her mind. Quoted by 'Variety,' she said: "That doesn't feel like a real statistic to me, because this has definitely been the most exhausting, all-encompassing, but most joyful, most rewarding, most wonderful thing that has ever happened in my life." The singer noted that the reality of the tour ending was just beginning to sink in, even though she still has six months left.

Celebrating the 100th show, she said: "For me, this is the very first time I've ever acknowledged to myself and admitted that this tour is gonna end in December. Like, that's it." "And that feels like so far away from now. But then again, it feels like we just played our first show on this tour."

Because you have made this so much fun for us that we wanted to do a hundred shows, 150-something shows that we have on the whole tour," she added.



## ANNOUNCED THE 100TH SHOW OF THE TOUR ON THE FIRST NIGHT OF A WEEKEND

## Jennifer Lopez & Ben Affleck Attend His Son's Graduation Ceremony

Los Angeles | Agencies

Jennifer Lopez was seen with Ben Affleck at his son Samuel's graduation amid divorce rumors on Wednesday, June 12.

The 54-year-old singer, who was dressed in a cream long sleeved dress, heels, and topped off the look with a purse, and sunglasses, was seen walking solo into the ceremony, while the 51-year-old actor was snapped wearing a navy blue suit, walking in with his mother, Chris Anne Boldt.

Alongside the two was the Batman actor's ex-wife Jennifer

Garner — who shares Samuel, Violet, and Seraphina with Ben. Once the commencement was over, the whole crew went out to eat lunch at the Baltair Restaurant in Los Angeles.

The family outing comes shortly after speculation of J. Lo and the Gone Girl actor's marriage going downhill.

Despite the two not being spotted together at The Met Gala and the "Jenny From The Block" artist's premiere for her film Atlas, the wedded couple have made some appearances, such as at Ben's daughter Violet's graduation party.



## HUNTER SCHAFFER JOINS MICHELLE YEOH IN 'BLADE RUNNER 2099' SERIES

Los Angeles: Actress Hunter Schafer, who is known for 'Euphoria' and 'The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes,' has been roped in to star opposite Michelle Yeoh in the upcoming 'Blade Runner 2099' TV series.

The show is a sequel to both the original 'Blade Runner' film and the follow-up film, 'Blade Runner 2049,' reports 'Variety.'

The storyline is being kept under wraps, and no details are available on Schafer's character, but sources have said that Yeoh will play a character named Olwen, described as a replicant near the end of her life.

As per 'Variety,' Ridley Scott, the mastermind behind the original 1982 sci-fi thriller 'Blade Runner,' first announced 'Blade Runner 2099' was in the works in November 2021, with Amazon revealing it was in development at the platform in February 2022.

Schafer made her acting debut playing Justice opposite Zendaya's Rue in HBO's Emmy-nominated drama 'Euphoria,' and most recently appeared in Lionsgate's 'The Hunger Games' prequel 'The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes' as Tigris Snow. Up next, Schafer can be seen in A24's 'Mother Mary' opposite Anne Hathaway and Michaela Coel and in Yorgos Lanthimos' 'Kinds of Kindness' with Emma Stone and Jesse Plemons.



## Anthony Mackie recollects being vomited upon by fan while taking a picture

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood actor Anthony Mackie, known for 'Twisted Metal' and 'Captain America 4,' recounted a story about how a fan once vomited on him while seeking a photo. The actor shared the story with (understandably horrified) a group of actors, including Ricky Martin, John Goodman, Kelsey Grammer, Theo James, and Bowen Yang, reports 'Entertainment Weekly.'

Mackie told the actors gathered for The Hollywood Reporter's Comedy? Actor Emmy

Roundtable, "I was in Vancouver, shooting 'Altered Carbon', and I see this young lady across the bar. The way she was acting, I thought she had special needs. So I tell the bartender, 'Yo, tell her to come over and say hello'. She makes her way around the bar, and everybody in the restaurant's like, 'He's so nice.' As per 'Entertainment Weekly,' Mackie explained that the woman asked to take a picture with him, and he agreed as long as it was "discreet."

"So I take the picture, she looks at it, and she pukes from here all the way down to my shoes. This is after two dozen oysters, (and

a lobster." Mackie then told his fellow actors that the woman ran out of the restaurant. Luckily for him, a waiter swooped in to save the day. "(He) takes me back to the oyster wash-off, hoses me down on the (shucking table). They take my clothes. He goes across the street to T.J. Maxx and gets me some sweatpants and a graffiti T-shirt. I come back out, and this woman is like, 'I'm sorry, can I take a picture?'" At this point, Mackie clarified that it was a different woman who asked for this photo, not the one who vomited on him, but her comedic timing was perfect nonetheless.

## ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Lily Aldridge





## Sara remembered late actor Sushant Singh Rajput on his fourth death anniversary



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood actress Sara Ali Khan, who was recently seen in the streaming movie 'Ae Watan Mere Watan', remembered late actor Sushant Singh Rajput on his fourth death anniversary on Friday.

The actress took to the Stories section of her Instagram and shared a

throwback picture with Sushant, her co-star in 'Kedarnath' (2018).

In the picture, Sushant can be seen praying to god with folded hands with Sara seated next to him.

The actress did not write anything on the picture but added the song 'Namo Namu' from 'Kedarnath'.

Sara made her debut in 2018 with 'Kedarnath' opposite Sushant. The film, based on devastating floods in

Uttarakhand in 2013, follows the inter-faith love story between a wealthy Brahmin girl (Sara) and a Muslim boy (Sushant).

Sushant was found dead under mysterious circumstances at his Mumbai apartment on June 14, 2020, during the first Covid-induced lockdown. No suicide note was found on the site.

## Masaba Gupta turns co-producer with upcoming reality show

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Celebrated fashion designer and actress Masaba Gupta is set to don the hat of a producer with her upcoming reality television show. The upcoming yet-to-be-titled show, in which she serves as a co-producer, blends fashion with the emotions surrounding Indian weddings. It will feature glimpses of the unique sense and emotions of wearing the quintessential Masaba silhouettes.

The reality show focuses on real people, their candid stories, and the raw emotions that drive the celebration of love and the joy of getting married.

Co-produced with Lucifer Circus, the show promises to strengthen the idea of fashion beyond barriers and revolutionise traditional wear showcased by Masaba.

Talking about the new development, Masaba said: "I'm thrilled to bring you captivating stories of marriages, companionship, and everything in between. Join us as we go behind the scenes of one of life's most cherished moments for any Indian -- the wedding. Together, we'll showcase the joy, traditions, and heartfelt moments that make these celebrations truly special."

The show follows the success of her bridal collection, which paid tribute to the regal heritage of Hyderabad and Patiala.

Meanwhile, the latest bridal collection from her label, featuring Kareena Kapoor Khan, serves as a testament to her distinct aesthetics. Each ensemble curated by Masaba stands as a symbol of strength, independence, and empowerment.



## Anup Jalota, Talat Aziz unspool fond memories of Pankaj Udhas

Team Absolute | Mumbai

'Bhajan Samraat' Anup Jalota and Ghazal singer Talat Aziz recalled the fond memories of their friend Pankaj Udhas on the stage of the kids' singing reality show 'Superstar Singer 3'. In a new episode titled 'Ghazal Night', the young contestants showcased their singing prowess as they paid tribute to the ghazal samrat, Pankaj Udhas. The 14-year-old Laisel Rai from Mohali, Punjab, and captain Pawandeep Rajan won hearts with their rendition of the timeless ghazals 'Ghungroo Toot Gaye' and 'Chupke Sakhiyon Se'. Mesmerised by their singing, Anup complimented the duo, saying: "This cute little Laisel looks so much like a junior Neha Kakkar, and she has Neha's style in her singing; she performed so well with such clarity. Pawandeep and Laisel, you performed this ghazal so well. Keep it up."

Talat added: "This performance made me nostalgic, as this was one of the songs that Anup Jalota, Pankaj Udhas, and I performed together. This brought back such beautiful memories of those times when the three of us used to perform together. Those days were so beautiful, and I will always cherish them all my life." Host Haarsh Limbachiya further played a video of Pankaj, Anup, and Talat performing together, which left the latter two emotional. They also thanked everyone for reviving these treasured memories through the young talents' performances, which made for such a beautiful tribute to their friend, Pankaj Udhas. Pankaj Udhas passed away on February 26, 2024, due to a prolonged illness in Mumbai.



## ANKITA LOKHANDE REMEMBERS SUSHANT ; DROPS UNSEEN PIC OF ACTOR WITH HIS DOG FUDGE

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Ankita Lokhande Jain remembered the late actor Sushant Singh Rajput (SSR) on his fourth death anniversary by sharing an unseen picture of the 'Kai Po Che!' star with his pet dog 'Fudge'.

Ankita was in a romantic relationship with her 'Pavitra Rishta' co-star, SSR, from 2010 until they parted ways in 2016.

On his death anniversary, Ankita took to Instagram stories and shared a picture of Sushant wearing a grey sleeveless T-shirt and shorts, standing behind his favourite furry friend 'Fudge', who is

seen sitting in front of him.

The 'Manikamika: The Queen of Jhansi' actress did not write a caption for the post but added the tune of 'Heartbeat' by Shankar-Ehsaan-Loy from the movie 'Kal Ho Naa Ho'.

On June 14, 2020, Sushant was found dead at his residence in Bandra, Mumbai, reportedly having committed suicide. The dog was taken to Patna, Bihar, by the late actor's father and passed away three years after Sushant's death.

Actress Adah Sharma, known for 'The Kerala Story', now lives in Sushant's former residence in the Mont Blanc Apartments in Bandra, Mumbai.

On the personal front, Ankita is married to businessman Vicky Jain. The couple participated in the controversial reality show 'Bigg Boss 17'.



## DRASHTI DHAMI, NEERAJ KHEMKA EXPECTING HER FIRST BABY

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Drashti Dhami, who is known for 'Jhalak

Dikhla Jaa', 'Pardes Mein Hai Mera Dil', and 'Duranga', is expecting her first baby with her husband, Neeraj Khemka.

On Friday, the actress took to her Instagram and shared a cute video announcing the baby's arrival in October. In the clip, the couple is seen holding their drinks while displaying a poster that reads, "Could be Pink, Could be Blue. All we know is that we are due! October 2024."

Drashti and Neeraj's family members also appear in the video, celebrating the big news.

The actress captioned the post: "In a galaxy not so far away, a tiny rebel is joining our crazy tribe. Please send love, blessings, cash and french fries our way #BabyKOnBoard We can't wait for October 2024." Drashti and Neeraj tied the knot on February 21, 2015.

The actress was recently seen in the second season of her successful streaming show 'Duranga', which is inspired by the Korean show 'Flower of Evil'.

## Badshah reveals his conversation with spiritual guru Sri Sri Ravishankar

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Rapper Badshah, who appeared on the celebrity chat show 'The Great Indian Kapil Show', shared a conversation he had with the spiritual guru Sri Sri Ravi Shankar during the Covid, revealing that the guru asked him to sing a song for them.

While the guests shared some fun anecdotes from their lives, Kapil recounted a hilarious incident involving himself and Badshah during the Covid-19. Kapil said: "I remember

this incident. It was during Covid. Everything was happening on Zoom calls. A common friend told us (me and Badshah) that Sri Sri Ravi Shankar ji would have a chat with us and we could ask him questions."

"Ravi Shankar ji told Badshah to sing one of his songs. So, he rapped for a long time. He heard it. Later, he said, 'Now, please sing it,'" Kapil added.

Adding to this, Badshah said: "I performed the Independence Day rap so well. He was looking at me and then said, 'Now sing it for us'."



Sanam Shetty