

HT CITY wishes all readers a happy REPUBLIC DAY

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BIGG BOSS HOUSE GUTTED DUE TO SHORT CIRCUIT

The house featured in TV reality show Bigg Boss was burnt down in a huge fire in the wee hours of Friday, two weeks after the show went off air. The fire broke out at 2.30am due to a short circuit in the house, which is in Lonava, Maharashtra. After the security guards at the place noticed the blaze, they called up the police, and fire brigades doused it out by 5.30am. But reportedly, by then, everything inside the house was gutted down. There has been no loss of life.



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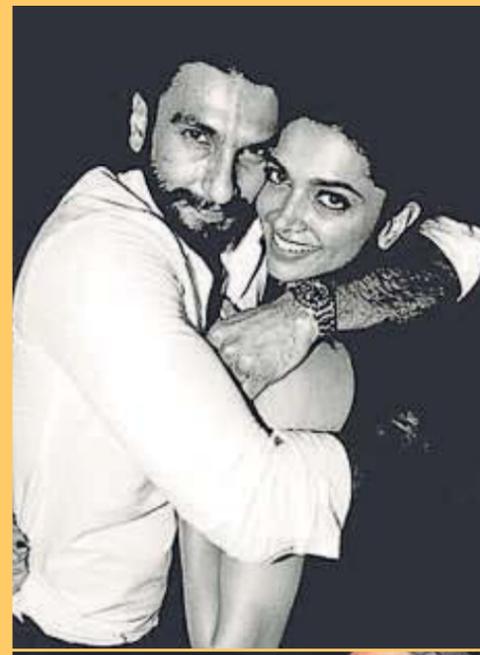
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What's going on, fellas?



What you see in the picture above is either a clever marketing ploy, or some serious sparks flying. The new 'it' couple in Bollywood, Deepika Padukone and Ranveer Singh, having been sharing as much of an intimate chemistry off-screen as they do on screen, in their upcoming Sanjay Leela Bhansali film, Ramlleela.

The two, who otherwise maintain the 'just good friends' status, flew to Dubai to enjoy each other's company at a nightclub where they danced through wee hours. And, a close, cuddly picture of the actors from their revelry has gone viral, making tongues wag.

Many say the two took off to Dubai for some private time to avoid paparazzi. Deepika was there to promote Race 2, while Ranveer decided to accompany her. When Padukone was quizzed about her equation with Ranveer at a press meet in Dubai, she said, "I don't understand this fascination people have with my personal life. I am single."



Deepika and Ranveer are reportedly spending lots of time together. Top: At the nightclub

DON'T JUST CELEBRATE... BRING ABOUT CHANGE

Bollywood tones down celebrations on Republic Day, says we should commit ourselves to transformation



This Republic Day, I am in no mood to celebrate. We should hang our heads in shame. Let us all take responsibility for what has happened. Till we accept that what has happened is wrong, we can never hope to change it

**Chitrangda Singh, actor**



I respect that it's the day our Constitution took shape but as a gay person, it's the same democracy that has denied us our democratic rights for more than half a century. I will celebrate when the Constitution truly creates a space of respect and freedom for all citizens without discriminating

**Onir Anirban, filmmaker**



After something as traumatic as the gang-rape, I don't think Republic Day calls for any celebrations. On January 26, I'll be shooting. I will hoist put up our flag outside my windowpane. In our country, enough is said but nothing is done

**Neha Dhupia, actor**

If we collectively believe that boycotting Republic Day Celebrations will lend support to the non-negotiable demand for a swift judicial system in its entirety, then I am in complete support

**Dia Mirza, actor**

On Republic day, let us take a pledge to go out and vote, and select the government. If we abstain from participating in Republic Day, we are giving away our responsibility as citizens

**Rakesh Omprakash Mehra, filmmaker**

Mrs Obama's chosen one

**Snigdha Ahuja**  
snigdha.ahuja@hindustantimes.com

Naeem Khan, the India-born American fashion icon who is known for being one of US First Lady Michelle Obama's favourite designers, is set to make his "homecoming". The 54-year-old designer, who will showcase at the Lakme Fashion Week in Mumbai in March, says, "I was just waiting for the right time for it to happen. Showing in my country will be extremely special — it's like homecoming for me."

Khan's creations, famous for their exquisite embellishments and layered silhouettes, have been worn, both by international stars such as Beyonce, Eva Longoria, Lady Gaga and Katy Perry, and desi stars such as Deepika Padukone and Katrina Kaif. The front row faces at his shows have included the likes of Matt Damon and Padma Lakshmi.

We ask him for his celeb favourites. "It's very difficult to choose but I am biased towards the beautiful Bollywood stars. People like Sonam (Kapoor) have been really kind."



**I am biased towards Bollywood stars. People like Sonam (Kapoor) have been really kind**

**Naeem Khan, designer**

About Michelle Obama, who has worn his designs numerous times, including at a recent outing in an appliqué ensemble for the National Prayer Service, Khan says, "I felt like I was the chosen one. She had so many American designers to choose from, but she decided on me. I can't tell



**MICHELLE OBAMA'S NAEEM CONNECTION**

While the first lady of the US has worn Khan's designs on many occasions, her champagne coloured gown during her 2009 visit to India has been the critics' favourite. She wore it to the state dinner where PM Manmohan Singh and wife Gursharan Kaur were guests. Michelle had added a desi twist by wearing bangles.



Extended weekend, but with no booze to party!

**Namya Sinha**  
namya.sinha@hindustantimes.com

Young Delhiites looking forward to a beer-in-the-sun long weekend are in for bad luck. Today being Republic Day, and yesterday being Id-E-Milad, Delhi is seeing two consecutive dry days. While some managed to stock up on liquor supplies in the

preceding weekdays, others feel their party stands spoiled, thanks to no access to alcohol during these days.

"Sad weekend = Republic day (Dry day)," tweeted @Itrydvooonce.

@BhopalHouse wrote, "I do not understand the logic behind selective prohibition. #dryweekendcomingupinIndia."

In the same vein, Rishi Bahl, 28, a Delhi-based MBA student, says, "How does one celebrate Republic Day if not go out for parties with friends?"

Soni Mahajan, 32, says, "Most people I know would have stocked up by now and will make merry at home. So making it a dry day doesn't serve the purpose at all. They should realise that it's a day to unwind."

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