

Bengali version of Pushpa 2 song Kissik goes viral, catches Sreeleela's attention

A Bengali version of Pushpa 2 dance number Kissik has caught the attention of actress-dancer Sreeleela, who features in the original music video alongside Allu Arjun.

"Damn Bengali version hits different," wrote Sreeleela, sharing the dubbed clip with her fans on her Instagram story.

Available to stream on JioSaavn, the Bengali version of the song is sung by Ujjaini Mukherjee.

Directed by Sukumar, Pushpa 2 is the sequel to Allu's 2021 film Pushpa: The Rise, which became a massive box-office success with a worldwide collection of approximately Rs 350 crore.

Pushpa: The Rise starred Allu as Pushpa Raj, a lorry driver



rising through the ranks of a red sandalwood smuggling syndicate.

In the sequel, released theatrically on December 5, Allu reprises his role as Pushpa Raj and Fahadh Faasil returns as SP Bhanwar Singh Shekhawat.

The music for Pushpa 2: The

But Pushpa has expanded his sandalwood smuggling syndicate over the years, and is now operating at a global level.

The latest instalment features Rashmika as Pushpa's wife Srivalli.

The music for Pushpa 2: The

Rule has been scored by Devi Sri Prasad, while Miroslaw Kuba Brozek has handled the cinematography.

Pushpa 2 emerged as India's biggest opener of all time, breaching the Rs 180-crore-mark at the domestic box office on Day 1. With this, the film smashed the record set by Prabhas-starrer Kalki 2898 AD, which amassed approximately Rs 92 crore nett in India on its first day.

At the time the report was filed on Saturday, Pushpa had minted Rs 1004.35 crore nett at the domestic box office, according to industry data-tracking site Sacnilk.

As per media reports, Allu is already gearing up for the third film of the franchise, Pushpa 3: The Rampage.

Payal Kapadia's All We Imagine As Light to compete in main categories at 97th Oscars

Despite missing out on becoming

India's entry for the best international feature at the 97th Oscars, Payal Kapadia's debut feature, All We Imagine as Light, will now compete independently for all the categories, including best picture, director and best original screenplay at the Academy Awards, co-producers Slideshow announced on Saturday.

The Film Federation India chose Kiran Rao's Laapataa Ladies as India's Oscar entry over All We Imagine as Light. But Rao's satirical film that explores patriarchy in rural India failed to make it to the Oscar shortlist unveiled earlier this week.



All We Imagine as Light premiered at 2024 Cannes International Film Festival in May where it won the prestigious Grand Prix award. On Friday, All We Imagine as Light also took home the award for best international film at the Florida Film Critics Circle. It has earned two nominations at the London Film Critics' Circle Awards — Best foreign language film of the year and best film of the year.

This recognition adds to the growing list of accolades for Kapadia's film. All We Imagine As Light was named best international feature film at the 2024 Gotham Awards, New York Film Critics Circle, Los Angeles, Chicago Film Critics Association, San Diego Film Critics Society, Phoenix Critics Circle, Toronto Film Association, Lumiere Awards and Asia Pacific Film Awards.

Mufasa: The Lion King has its moods and moments but lacks spirit and soul

If the 2019 reboot of The Lion King, that came out 25 years after the original, also called The Lion King, taught us anything, it is that one should never tamper with anything that has made a place for itself not only in the hearts of the audience but also in cinema history.

Mufasa: The Lion King, though not a reboot or remake, can be added to that list. Serving as a prequel to the 2019 film, it takes us back in time to when Mufasa and Taka — as Scar was once known — were young cubs roaming the plains together.

Much before he was king, we get to know that Mufasa (voiced by Aaron Pierre) didn't belong to royalty. As a cub, he was separated from his parents in a freak flood and rescued from the jaws of crocodiles by Taka (Kelvin Harrison Jr), the royal heir to a mighty pride ruled by Obasi (Lennie James) and



Eshe (Thandiwe Newton).

Adopted into the family, Mufasa's presence became increasingly contentious. Adored by Taka and nurtured by the kind Eshe, he was, however, scorned by Obasi, who perceived him as a threat. "Some day, he will betray you," Obasi tells Taka. "That is what strays do." Mufasa, as we know from the previous films, eventually becomes king of the Pride Lands, but not without strife and conflict. He faces the dangers of tribalism and quickly learns about tyranny.

The story is told in flashback to Kiara (Blue Ivy Carter, making her debut), the young offspring of Simba (Donald Glover) and Nala

(Beyonce), who have left their daughter in the babysitting care of Timon (Billy Eichner), Pumbaa (Seth Rogen) and the wise mandrill Rafiki (John Kani).

This is definitely not the Lion King story that audiences are familiar with. That alone should have placed Mufasa: The Lion King at an advantage right from the outset. Unfortunately, it doesn't.

Mufasa: The Lion King, apart from a few inspired moments here and there, is mostly a joyless and overstuffed addition to the franchise. It is a nostalgia-pandering photorealistic prequel whose impressive graphics cannot make up for its plodding pace and predictable story.

Shreyas Talpade says he is happy that Kangana Ranaut's Emergency got clearance for release

Shreyas Talpade says "Emergency" by actor-filmmaker Kangana Ranaut is a fantastic film and he is happy that the movie has been cleared for release by the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC).

The political drama, written, directed, and co-produced by Ranaut, was earlier scheduled to be released on September 6 but missed the date as it failed to get a clearance from the CBFC.

It was also caught up in controversy after Sikh organisations, including the Shiromani Akali Dal, accused the film of misrepresenting the community and getting facts wrong. "I'm very happy for 'Emergency' that finally we got clearance because it's a good film being made on a good subject. Kangana has made the film with a lot of hard work and passion and the film should come out," Talpade told PTI in an interview.

"It's difficult for the producers to think, 'Forget all that has happened' because they faced financial loss. I'm passionately looking forward to the film getting released and watching it



because it is a fantastic film," he added.

Also starring Ranaut as former prime minister Indira Gandhi, "Emergency" delves into the emergency that was imposed by her for 21 months from 1975 to 1977 and its aftermath.

Talpade plays the role of the former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee in the film, which will now release in theatres on January 17.

For the actor, "Emergency" turned out to be a rare opportunity where he got to showcase his versatility. He recalled being stereotyped by

the industry during the earlier years of his career.

"I was launched with a film like 'Iqbal' and when the era of comedy and multi-starrer films started at that time, I was not cast in them. I was told said, 'You've a serious image because of 'Iqbal', so we are not sure if people will accept you in comedy roles or will you be able to do it or not.' "Luckily, 'Golmaal' happened and things changed for me. Today, after a spate of comedy films people are like, 'Will I be able to do a serious role or not,'" said Talpade, who has also been part of movies like "Dor", "Om

Shanti Om", "Welcome to Sajjanpur", "Housefull 2", and "Chandu Champion".

Talpade's latest work is the animated film "Mufasa: The Lion King". The actor has lent his voice to the fan-favourite character of Timon for the Hindi-version of the movie.

The film, directed by Barry Jenkins, serves as both a prequel and sequel to the "The Lion King", the 2019 remake of the 1994 animated movie. It explores the journey of Mufasa from an orphaned cub to becoming a king.

"What is most important is what we are teaching kids through this film. Like, a story like this will always stay relevant, the story of the triumph of the underdog, so all the kids will feel, 'Even I can achieve whatever I want despite all the obstacles'," he said.

Superstar Shah Rukh Khan has voiced the title role of Mufasa in the Hindi version along with his son Aryan Khan lending his voice as Simba and youngest son AbRam Khan as Mufasa (cub).

"Mufasa: The Lion King" released in theatres on Friday.

Eye on potential tax relief for health and life insurance premiums at GST Council meeting

NEW DELHI, DEC 21

The GST Council will convene on Saturday at Jaisalmer, with discussions set to focus on potential tax relief for health and life insurance premiums.

While many are hopeful that the Council will reduce tax rates on insurance, officials suggest that any broad restructuring of Goods and Services Tax (GST) rates will require more time and detailed deliberation.

Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman will chair the 55th GST Council meeting, with state finance ministers in attendance.

The agenda includes proposals to exempt certain health and life insurance premiums from GST, as well as a review of recommendations from the Council's rate rationalisation panel, which has suggested adjustments across 148 items.



Sources close to the discussions indicate that term life insurance premiums and health policies for senior citizens are expected to be top priorities.

The Council is likely to consider exempting GST for health policies with coverage up to ₹5 lakh. Policies exceeding this threshold would continue to attract 18 per cent tax.

The proposed tax relief could result in a revenue loss of

approximately ₹2,600 crore annually, with ₹200 crore coming from term life insurance premiums and ₹2,400 crore from health insurance, according to insiders. However, some officials argue that the lower insurance premiums could spur demand, thereby offsetting the loss in revenue.

Despite these potential benefits, several states have expressed concerns about large-

scale rate changes, citing fears over revenue falls.

Sin goods

The Council is also set to address a proposal to maintain the existing four-tier GST structure — 5 per cent, 12 per cent, 18 per cent, and 28 per cent — while introducing a new 35 per cent slab exclusively for sin goods such as tobacco and aerated beverages. This higher rate would aim to boost revenues from luxury and demerit goods, which currently account for a significant portion of GST collections. Experts are divided over the long-term effects of the proposed changes. While some support targeted tax relief to stimulate demand for sectors like insurance, others warn that higher taxes on luxury and sin goods could lead to legal challenges and compliance issues.

SpiceJet inks pact with StandardAero to operationalise its grounded Boeing 737 MAX aircraft

NEW DELHI, DEC 21

Budget carrier SpiceJet has signed an agreement with US-based maintenance, repair, and overhaul (MRO) services provider StandardAero to operationalise its grounded Boeing 737 MAX aircraft, the airline said on Friday.

Three of the airline's seven grounded Boeing 737 MAX planes are expected to return to service by April 2025 under the agreement.

StandardAero, which also provides MRO services for CFM LEAP-1B engines that power the Boeing 737 MAX fleet, will assist SpiceJet in



restoring its grounded service of three Boeing 737-8 MAX aircraft, the company said in a statement.

The partnership with StandardAero follows earlier agreements with CFM International, the engine manufacturer, and aircraft lessors, paving the way for the phased return of the grounded planes.

"These developments pave the way for the ungrounding and return to funding.

Flipkart likely to shift domicile to India in bid to circumvent FEMA, FDI regulations

CALCUTTA, DEC 21: Flipkart — the Walmart backed e-commerce major — is reportedly considering a proposal to shift its domicile from Singapore to India.

This is a strategic decision to simplify regulatory and operational

processes ahead of its expected initial public offer, which could take shape in the next 12-18 months.

The relocation will allow the company to circumvent the complexities of India's stringent

Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA) and the foreign direct investment regulations.

It will also eliminate the rigours of dual oversight from Singapore and Indian authorities, as well as Tracxn shows that Flipkart, which had raised \$350 million from

structures. This strategic shift will also pave the way for smoother operations and IPO-related processes, making Flipkart more attractive to investors. Data from investors in 22 funding rounds. Besides Walmart, which owns 80.8 per cent in Flipkart, some of

Google in May as part of its series J funding, was valued at \$36 billion.

The company has raised an aggregate of \$12.1 billion from 114 investors in 22 funding rounds.

the marquee investors in the company include Tiger Global Management, GIC, Accel, Tencent, Softbank Vision Fund, Qatar Investment Authority and GIC (Government of Singapore Investment Corporation).

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