

Georgia's capital Tbilisi to host gala concert on New Year's Eve

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Georgia's capital Tbilisi to host gala concert on New Year's Eve



The First Republic Square in Georgia's capital Tbilisi will host a gala concert on New Year's Eve, with Georgian artists, choirs, ensembles and dancers participating in "an impressive" two-hour show under the title "From European City to Europe".

The gala concert programme, set to begin at midnight, includes a total of 30 musical performances, with more than 200 performers participating in the event.



The National Philharmonic Orchestra and maestro Nikoloz Rachveli will also feature in the show. The audience will enjoy new versions of well-known and beloved Georgian songs, including Christmas songs, as well as foreign hits.

New Year's Eve will be celebrated around the country with various events and activities, as all 10 regions of Georgia are welcoming the holidays in a festive mood with illuminations and Christmas trees.

Georgian regions celebrate New Year with stunning decorations for holidays



The different regions of Georgia are welcoming the New Year in a festive mood with all cities decorated with illuminations and Christmas trees.

New Year's Eve events are organised in all 10 regions of the country, by the decision of the Government Administration, with celebrations set to run till January 14.

Illuminations and New Year's decorations were given to all cities by the Administration's initiative, aimed at expanding official holiday season celebrations beyond the capital Tbilisi and the largest cities.

Georgia's main Christmas tree was lit up in central Tbilisi in front of the Parliament building on December 16, and the Christmas village is hosting visitors till January 7 at Orbeliani Square and Dedaena Garden Park on the right bank of river Mtkvari.

Georgian PM: country among global top 10 in "democratisation progress"

Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili on Tuesday said Georgia was in the top 10 of the world's 180 countries with its decade of "democratisation progress" in comments at the annual Ambassadors' Conference in Tbilisi.

We had a very strong, very fast progress on the road to democratisation, and it is no coincidence that among 180 countries, Georgia is in the top 10 in the world. Georgia ranks first in the region of Eastern Europe and Central Asia in the Rule of Law Index", Garibashvili said in reference to the World Justice Project's 2023 ranking.

The Prime Minister told the gathering of the country's envoys other ratings published by international organisations had "objectively reflected" the country's progress and improvement of its global positioning.

He named the following selections in the comments:

- Global Competitiveness Report of the World Economic Forum, where he said Georgia was ahead of "many" EU and NATO member states. In the ranking of corruption control, Georgia ranked 20th in the world, 11th in Europe, and second among post-Soviet countries
- Corruption Perception Index 2022 by Transparency International, where the country Georgia ranked 41st among 180 countries and as the leader in the region
- The World Justice Project's 2023 Rule of Law Index, placing Georgia among the top 20 in Europe and ranking first in the Eastern Europe and Central Asia regions, and sixth among middle-income countries



- Fraser Institute's report of Economic Freedom of the World 2023, where the country was among the top 25 states with the freest economies
- Improvement of Georgia's position in the European Research Centre for Anti Corruption and State-Building's latest Transparency in the Time of War index from 54th to 17th
- Freedom on the Net by Freedom House, in which Georgia was listed ninth among 70 countries with 76 out of 100 points
- Global Corruption Index 2023 by Global Risk Profile, where Georgia was promoted by two places and in 43rd spot among 200 countries
- Garibashvili said the outcomes were the result of the Government's work over the past 11 years, adding the country had become a "European state" and this process was "irreversible".

Georgian PM praises Gov't, citizens for "shared commitment" in achieving EU candidacy



Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili on Tuesday commended the "shared commitment" of his Government and the country's public in obtaining the European Union membership candidate status this month.

Addressing the annual Ambassadors' Conference in Tbilisi, the PM stressed the efforts had "achieved remarkable success this year" in fulfilling the "key aspiration". "This stands as a monumental accomplishment attributed to the collective efforts of our Government and people, reflecting our shared commitment", he told the event bringing together the country's diplomatic representatives abroad.

The head of the Government also extended his "sincere gratitude" to the envoys for their "unwavering dedication, hard work, and patriotism".

Recognising challenges facing the work for the accomplishment, Garibashvili also said his office acknowledged the "substantial contributions" made by both the Parliament and the Government, as well as the country's diplomatic missions in achieving the goal.

The tangible results we see today are a testament to our joint endeavors", he said.

Speaking about the country's progress on its EU path, the PM highlighted Georgia's "transformative journey" since 2012, emphasising the shift from an "authoritarian regime"- in reference to the former United National Movement Government - to the country becoming a "top-10 global leader in democratisation" within 11 years under the current Georgian Dream authorities.

Before 2012, Georgia was distancing itself from Europe, forming an authoritarian, dictatorial regime. We recall vividly that no specific steps towards European integration were initiated. Instead, Georgia seemed to be moving further away with each passing year. In the span of 11 years, our nation has emerged as a leading force in democratisation on the world stage. Today, after over a decade, we proudly hold the EU candidate status", he said.

Garibashvili attributed the initiation of the 2014 Association Agreement with the EU and the adoption of visa-free travel with the Schengen Area states to efforts of the Government and claimed they represented developments that had been "unthinkable" before 2012.

Such a milestone never materialises spontaneously, but is hinged on the transformative turning point Georgia experienced in 2012", he told the event.

The Prime Minister added the progress under the administration of Bidzina Ivanishvili, the founder of GD and former PM, and "continued efforts" of the current authorities had ensured the result, adding "the progress continues".

Georgia obtained the EU candidacy on December 14 and received conditions for opening accession talks with the bloc.

EU Ambassador: "Personal New Year's wish" came true - Georgia starts 2024 as EU candidate country



Paweł Herczyński, the European Union Ambassador to Georgia, on Saturday said his "personal New Year's wish did come true" and Georgia was starting 2024 as an EU candidate country.

In his New Year message, Herczyński noted that during his time as the EU Ambassador, he had "not met a single Georgian" who did not wish for the country's candidacy, "so let's celebrate the New Year and Christmas with this historic achievement [being granted the bloc's candidate status in December] by Georgia".

Further progress should lead to the fulfilment of another wish – Georgia becoming a member of the EU. By joining forces and advancing reforms, I truly believe this common wish will come true", the EU Ambassador emphasised.

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Georgia's 2022 gross domestic product estimated at \$26 mln - National Statistics Office



The gross domestic product of Georgia at current prices amounted to €72.265 million (\$26.870 mln) in 2022, data published by the National Statistics Office of Georgia on Tuesday shows.

The release of figures also showed the country's capital Tbilisi had the largest share by 51.2 percent, followed by the Black Sea region of Adjara with 9.4 percent and western Imereti region 8.8 percent.

The largest shares in GDP by sectors in Tbilisi were displayed by: Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles (24.6 percent)

Real estate (11.2 percent)

Construction (9.7 percent)

The main sectors in Adjara included:

Construction (16.2 percent)

Real estate (13.5 percent)

Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles (10.5 percent)

In Imereti the largest areas in GDP were:

Manufacturing (16.9 percent)

Agriculture, forestry and fishing (10.3 percent)

Real estate (9.4 percent)

The domestic economy grew 7.5 percent year-on-year in the second quarter of 2023, while the nominal gross domestic product amounted to €19.28 billion (\$7.35bln), the Office said in September.

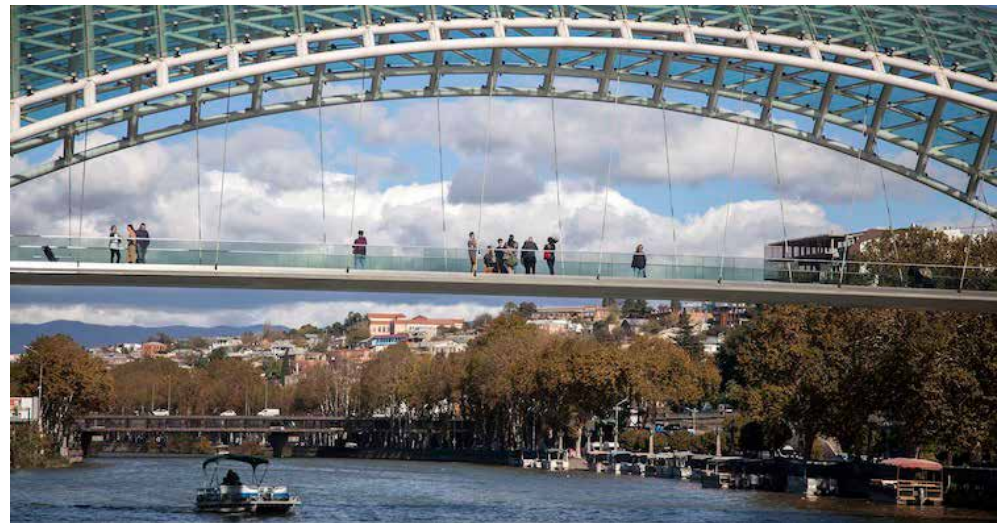
Tourism Administration hosted over 350 foreign journalists, tour operators for promotion in 2023



The Georgian National Tourism Administration on Friday said it had hosted more than 350 foreign journalists and tour operators this year in order to promote the country as a visitor destination.

The Administration said "influential" media outlets such as The Guardian, Forbes, The Financial Times, Elle, The Times, Marie-Claire, National Geographic, Saveur, Vogue, The Sunday Times, The Huffington Post, Sueddeutsche Zeitung and others had promoted Georgia through articles, blogs, reports and videos.

Georgian economy grows 6.9% in January-November



The Georgian economy grew 5.9 percent year-over-year in November, while the average real GDP growth between January and November equalled 6.9 percent, the National Statistics Office of Georgia said on Friday.

Last month the estimated real growth was influenced by financial and insurance activities, construction, professional, scientific-technical activities and trade, while declines were registered in manufacturing, energy, transportation and storage, the body said.

Based on the economic growth data published today, we can already summarise the economic growth trends of 2023. The Georgian economy maintains the high economic growth rate that was recorded in 2021-2022, and we expect that in 2023 it will grow by about seven percent", he said.

We expect 2024 to continue with even more positive trends. The positive dynamics that have been recorded in the Georgian economy for the past three years will be preserved and will continue", Tsintsadze added.



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Georgian National Museum hosting Tbilisi display of Etruscan civilisation



A display of Etruscan civilisation is on display for the first time for visitors of venues of the Georgian National Museum network, with the exhibition highlighting exhibits and history of the ancient community hosted at Tbilisi's Museum of Georgia.

Coming as the latest chapter in the GNM network's collaboration with the Italian Embassy, the event is offering a chance of exploring the "mysterious" world of the pre-Roman civilisation and discovering their customs, traditions, writings and beliefs on the afterlife, the diplomatic office noted.

It brings to the venue exhibits sourced from the National Archaeological Museum of Florence, the Chianciano Terme museum of Etruscan history and the National Etruscan Museum in Chiusi.

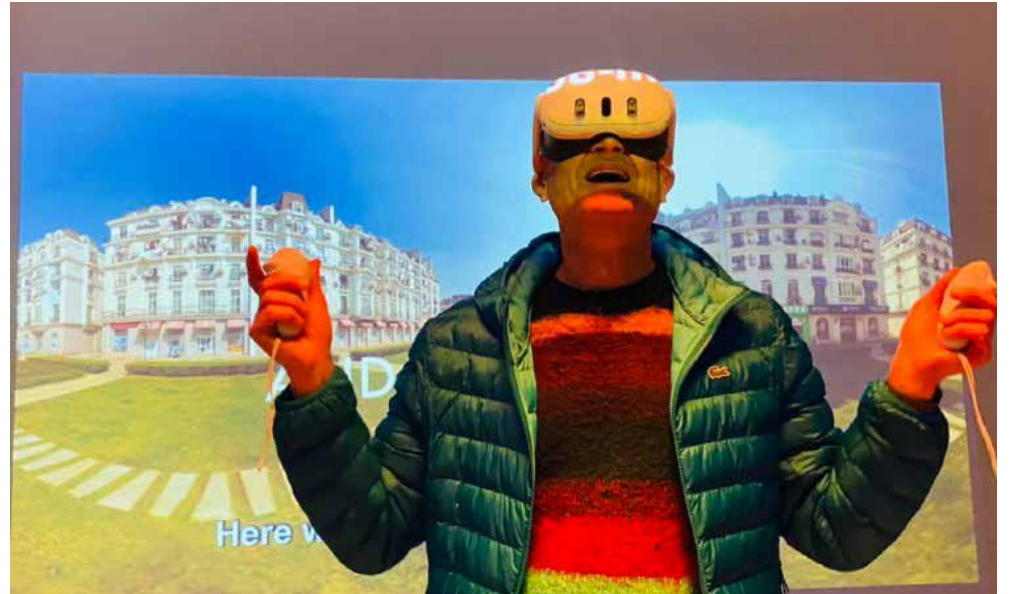
It showcases urns discovered in archaeological digs in the Chiusi area that served as storage of ashes, as well as sculptures, bucchero ceramics, bronze vessels and gold objects.

The display also brings to the museum space two exhibits related to western Georgia's ancient Colchis Kingdom - a clay vessel dated back to between 400-380 BCE and a bronze mirror from between 300-275 BCE - with the items illustrating the theme of the ancient myth of the Argonauts.

The launch event saw diplomatic corps, academic community and representatives of Italian museums, with Mario Iozzo, the Director of the National Archaeological Museum of Florence, Alessia Autuori, the head of the Glocal Project Consulting and Antonella Magagnini, the curator of the exhibition also in attendance.

The Tbilisi venue will host the exhibition through March 31, before it runs at the Vani Archaeological Museum in Georgia's west through August 31.

Georgia's capital hosts first edition of Tbilisi VR Days



Georgia's capital has been hosting the first edition of the Tbilisi VR Days from Friday till Sunday, showcasing the latest award-winning French films in virtual reality and "travel through different fictional realities by immersive storytelling", the French Embassy in Georgia said.

The guests of the event, hosted by the Center of Contemporary Art in Tbilisi, with the support of a media production company - Film XR, have the opportunity to get acquainted with the new Georgian virtual reality works.

Held within the competition 'Novembre Numerique' of the French Institute of Georgia, the Tbilisi VR Days offers three programmes in the selection - French interactive experience, French immersive films and Georgian VR films.

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Olympic Champion Lasha Talakhadze named Best Athlete in Georgia by Olympic Committee



Georgian National Olympic Committee on Friday awarded the outstanding athletes of 2023, among which the Georgian weightlifter, two-time Olympic champion, seven-time world champion, and seven-time European champion, Lasha Talakhadze was named the best athlete of Georgia.

At the ceremony, held at Pullman Tbilisi Axis Towers hotel, athletes were awarded in ten categories. The Georgian fencer Sandro Bazadze got the award for "consistently" having high sports results at the Olympic Games, World and European Championships, and European Games.

A nine-time Olympian sport shooter Nino Salukvadze received the special award - Pride of Georgian sports, the Olympic Committee said.

The Best Athlete in Sports award for men was received by the captain of the Georgian national basketball team and player for Virtus Bologna of the Lega Basket Serie A - Tornike Shengelia, as for the women the award went to Georgian figure skater Anastasiia Gubanova.

The Georgian national judo team and its coach Lasha Gujejiani received the Best Sports Team and the Best Coach awards.

The event, held with the support of the Sports Ministry, was attended by Minister Thea Tsulukiani, members of the Olympic Committee and representatives of regional organisations and sports federations, as well as other invited guests and media representatives.

Georgian para judo team claim five medals at Tokyo Grand Prix



The Georgian para judo team claimed one gold and four bronze medals at the IBSA Judo Grand Prix in Tokyo on Tuesday.

Revaz Chikoidze won the gold medal in +90 kg category after defeating his Kazakh rival. Nukri Migrijanashvili and Giorgi Kaldani earned bronze in the -60 kg and -73 kg weight categories respectively after earning wins against Kyrgyz and South Korean rivals.

Ina Kaldani also claimed bronze in the -70kg category, while Zviad Gogochuri defeated Georgia's Lasha Kizilashvili to win the -90kg bronze.

Georgian national futsal team defeats reigning world, European champion - Portugal



The Georgian national futsal team on Wednesday claimed a historic victory over the reigning world and European champion Portugal in the last qualifying match of the FIFA Futsal World Cup.

Coached by Avtandil Asatiani, the Georgian team defeated Portugal by 2:1, with Giorgi Ghavtadze and Chimba scoring for the national team.

Despite winning the game, the Georgian team will not be able to play at the World Cup, as the team was deprived of six points, moving from second place to the last in the group, due to the complaints of the Portuguese and Finnish teams.

Georgian women's national football team defeats Luxembourg at UEFA Nations League



The Georgian women's national football team on Friday defeated Luxembourg with a score of 4:2 in the fifth round of the UEFA Women's Nations League.

The visiting team of Luxembourg led the first half of the match, which was held at the Mikheil Meskhi Stadium in the Georgian capital city of Tbilisi.

The Georgian team scored four goals in the second half of the game with the ones of Teona Bakradze, Khatia Tchkonია, Nino Pasikashvili and Natia Danelia.

The Georgian squad, coached by Iris Antman, takes second place with five points in the C League's second group and is scheduled to face Turkey, a leader of the group, on Tuesday.

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Let's know more about the most important districts of Tbilisi

Kaklebi



Kaklebi (კაკლები) in Kartuli (the Georgian language) means walnut. It is because there are many chestnut trees there. These trees have been there since centuries ago; no man has ever planted any trees there; the greenery is completely and totally wild. That is why you can see many squirrels jumping from trees onto cables there. Knowing this, the government tries hard to protect the area and has stopped human intervention; accordingly, no construction permission has been issued since 2012 and the type of allowed construction for the limited, available land in the neighborhood is for villas. This is the reason why many athletes and major company CEOs reside there to enjoy the peace and quiet with their families.

Kaklebi is famous for its educated and rich residents. Many Georgians living here hold top managerial positions and have relatives living or working abroad. This is why it is considered a prestigious place, though it is not the only prestigious part in Tbilisi.

Tskneti



Tskneti is a suburb of Tbilisi located in Vake district, 8 kilometers away from the city center. The elevation in Tskneti is around 700 to 1100 meters above sea level, making the area so high and filled with spectacular mountains. Tskneti's summer is warm, with an average temperature of 20 degrees Celcius. The winter there is mild.

Generally speaking, Tskneti is a small town just up the hill from Tbilisi. You can go there by bus. The area has Populi and various tinier markets, several drug stores, and a few restaurants.

Tskneti is the optimum place for wealthy Georgians. It has a substantial entertainment infrastructure and a thriving nightlife, making it a memorable destination for travelers. There are many shops, cafes, residential buildings, and several squares.

Kakheti



As an absolute wine-producing region, Kakheti is stuck to the word "wine" like a magnet. This historical province is the nicest place in Georgia where you can discover people's hospitality, picturesque areas, wine, and many other things. If you like to change your mood, eat meat, and drink wine, Kakheti is where you can find all you need. Among transportation systems, you might find it best to use buses, mini-buses, and trains leaving Tbilisi to access Kakheti. The area lies at the east of Tbilisi – between the Greater Caucasus to the north, and Azerbaijan to the south.

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Georgian dishes for vegetarians

1) Tomato-cucumber salad



To begin with, many people eat this salad as an appetizer as well. In addition, spicy walnut dressing can make it fantastic. It is hard to believe but millions of tourists have recommended this traditional food so far. It includes fresh tomatoes, cucumbers, and greens. Georgia has a verity of dishes to offer to food lovers, and we didn't mention all of them. So, make yourself ready for more surprises in different regions.

2) Beetroot salad



If you are looking for nutrients and vitamins, this would be a good option for you. Don't hesitate to try it with a sour-sweet Georgian plum sauce Tkemali that is unique in the world.

3) Estragon pie



It is one of the most famous and beloved dishes among Georgians. Puff dough, Spinach pie with Wensleydale cheese, and boiled eggs are its ingredients. you can add green onion as well if you like.

4) Soko Kecze (mushroom in a clay pot)



Mkhvlovani is a Georgian pastry, similar to khachapuri (cheese-filled bread) and Lobiani (bread filled with mashed beans), but with a different filling. Its filling is a mixture of various kinds of herbs. It is usually made in the mountainous regions of Georgia.

What dishes to eat in Georgia?

Shkmeruli:



As Sean and Jen – an American couple – Describe Shkmeruli “after tasting it, it is

very clear that sometimes less is better. The rich flavor of crispy roasted chicken paired with the creamy garlic sauce is just perfect. We typically ordered chicken Shkmeruli along with some silky smooth mashed potatoes”.

Coming from the Racha region of Georgia, Georgians cook chicken in milk and garlic sauce, so this would be a perfect meal for travelers who don't eat lamb and beef.

Khachapuri Adjaruli



This is the national dish of Georgia which is on the list of the Intangible cultural heritage of this country. it is very popular both in restaurants and as Street Food. You will enjoy this cheese boat partly for lunch and partly for a snack. this delicious pizza in shape food has egg on top and being meatless has made it a good choice for people with special diets.

Ostri



Ostri (beef-based stew with tomato sauce)

This delicious beef-based stew with tomato sauce is very popular in Georgia. It is a spicy dish that served hot and the meat is tender when fully cooked.

Kuchmanchi



Kuchmanchi is another traditional Georgian dish to eat. It can be made with pork/chicken or young beef hearts, livers, gizzards and usually garnished with pomegranate seeds and walnuts.

Kubdari



Kubdari (bread containing beef, pork, spices and onions)

Its name is taken from Svaneti that is one of the most beautiful mountains in Georgia. The bread contain beef, pork or a combination of them, spices and onions. Kubdari was also inscribed on the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Georgia list in 2015.

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Breaking: India to Open Full Service Consulate in Auckland



The Indian government has approved a proposal to open a full service consulate in Auckland, a move being described as one that will strengthen the South Asian giant's diplomatic footprint in New Zealand.

The cabinet chaired by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on December 27, 2023, cleared the opening of a new Consulate General of India in Auckland, likely within 12 months.

India's main diplomatic mission in Aotearoa currently operates out of Wellington, and an honorary consulate opened in 2017 in Auckland serves

Kiwi-Indians in this city.

The opening of that consulate was in line with established protocol, and a full service consulate will be the natural progression of that move, says Bhav Dhillon, the first and current Honorary Consul of India in Auckland. He expressed satisfaction and happiness that full services like passport renewal, OCI and visa issuance will now be available in Auckland.

"Thanks to PM Modi for accepting our long standing demand as a fully staffed and resourced consulate general was the need of the hour with now nearly 200,000 Indians in greater Auckland region.

"This will also help strengthen India's diplomatic presence in New Zealand. This will bolster India's increasing role in the world, especially in the Indo-Pacific region," he said.

The honorary consulate, called Consulate of India, Auckland, was opened nearly six years back with a view to providing a diplomatic channel and serving Kiwi-Indians, who had to liaise with the embassy in Wellington for all big and small needs.

According to a press statement from the Indian government, "Opening of Consulate General of India in Auckland would help in increasing India's diplomatic footprint and strengthen India's diplomatic representation in view of India's increasing global engagement.

"This will also help promote India's strategic and commercial interests and better serve the welfare of the Indian community in Auckland."

SOURCE: IWK RAVI BAJPAI

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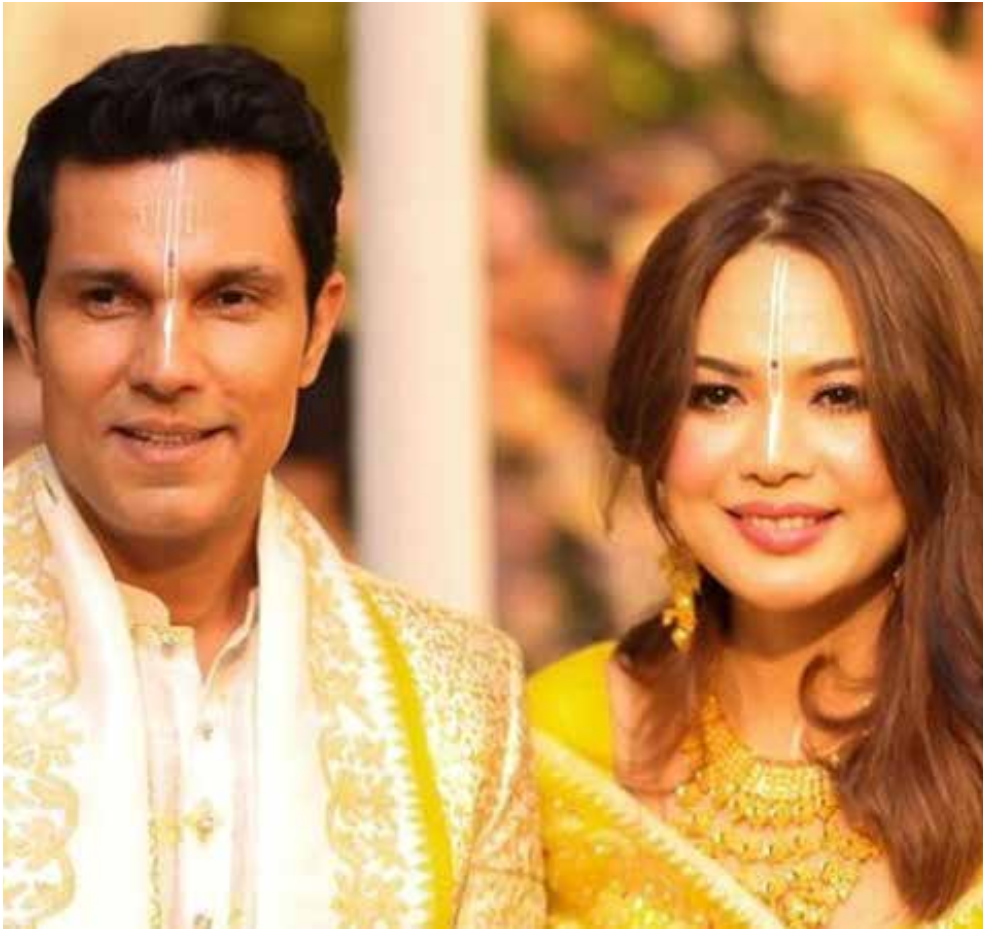
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Randeep Hooda and Lin Laishram plan grand wedding reception in Mumbai: Report



Recently united in matrimony in a sacred ceremony in Manipur, Randeep Hooda and Lin Laishram are set to extend their celebration with a wedding reception in Bombay. The lovebirds, who opted for an intimate wedding attended by close friends and family, are gearing up for a grand reception, primarily for their industry acquaintances.

Swatanrya Veer SavarkarPhotos: Aamir Khan, Imran Khan and others attend Ira Khan and Nupur Shikhare's wedding receptionStar Studded 60th birthday celebration of Anand PanditPhotos: Shah Rukh Khan, Kajol and others attend Anand Pandit's birthday bashStar Studded Wedding reception of Randeep Hooda and Lin LaishramPhotos: Celebs attend Randeep Hooda and Lin Laishram's wedding receptionPhotos: Celebs snapped attending the Red Carpet of the 23rd ITA Awards in MumbaiPhotos: Vicky Kaushal, Rashmika Mandanna, Gauri Khan and others snapped at the airport
Next

As per reports from Hindustan Times, the newlyweds have already enjoyed an after-party in Manipur, and the upcoming Bombay reception is a continuation of their joyous festivities. While invitations have been dispatched to their industry friends, the venue remains undisclosed for the time being. The much-anticipated wedding reception is expected to take place on December 11.

A source close to the couple's family shared insights, stating, "Randeep and Lin have a huge circle of friends as they have worked extensively in Mumbai. So all of them have been invited. Besides that, Lin's close friend and immediate family will be traveling from Manipur to Mumbai to attend the reception. Just like their wedding, the couple will stick to their culture and don ethnic Manipuri outfits."

For the unversed, on Saturday, Randeep Hooda and Lin Laishram took to Instagram to inform their fans and followers about them tying the knot in a beautifully worded 'Save The Date' e-invite which read, "Taking a leaf out of Mahabharata where Arjun married Manipuri Warrior Princess Chitrangada, We are getting married with the blessings of our families and friends. We are filled with immense joy to share that our marriage will take place on the 29th of November 2023, Imphal, Manipur, followed by a reception in Mumbai. As we set to embark on this journey, we seek your blessings and love for this union of cultures, for which we are forever indebted and grateful. In love and light, Lin and Randeep."

SOURCE: BOLLYWOOD HUNGAMA

Ayushmann Khurrana talks about 'living his dream'; says, "I wanted to be a big screen hero"



Ayushmann Khurrana, who is riding on the box office success of his 100-crore hit Dream Girl 2, is currently thrilled to be living his childhood dream of being a big screen hero. The popular actor confessed that he always wanted to have this role in his real life and also revealed how cinema was a part of his daily life growing up.

Ayushmann Khurrana said, "I remember being supremely excited about going to the cinemas every single time. I loved the world films transported me into. I idolised the heroes. We used to always watch movies on TV too and then rented movies as time progressed. Cinema was always an important part of our daily lives." He continued, "So, I grew up being fascinated by the works of towering heroes like Amitabh Bachchan, Rajesh Khanna, Shah Rukh Khan, Anil Kapoor, Salman Khan, Aamir Khan, to name a few! I also wanted to be a big screen hero. So, I'm living my dream now and I consider myself extremely fortunate to have created a niche for myself. The industry has been extremely welcoming and the audience has given me a lot of love. I respect that from the bottom of my heart."

SOURCE: BOLLYWOOD HUNGAMA



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