



Indian Muslim students practice yoga ahead of International Yoga Day celebrations, at a school in Ahmadabad, India, Saturday. International Yoga Day will be celebrated on June 21.—AP

Pop superstar Beyonce gives birth to twins: Reports

Pop diva Beyonce and her rap mogul husband Jay Z have welcomed twins, according to US media reports on the two new members of music's royal family that already includes five-year-old Blue Ivy. News that the songstress had given birth, reported by entertainment outlets including People magazine and US Weekly, ignited social media, with the so-called "Bey hive" fan group buzzing

tographed Friday carrying a large bouquet of pink, blue and purple flowers complete with a card that appeared to read "B + J"—along with twin pink and blue balloons in the shape of feet that read "Baby Girl" and "Baby Boy."

A representative for Beyonce did not immediately respond to AFP's request for comment. Superstar Beyonce in February made the blockbuster reveal that she was expecting. Clad in panties

you for all your well wishes," she added, signing with Jay Z.

Guessing games

Speculation that Beyonce's due date had approached was fueled earlier this week when husband Jay Z, 47, was absent at the Songwriters Hall of Fame. The rapper, who grew up as Shawn Carter, took to Twitter to thank artists who had influenced him as well as former US president Barack Obama. Obama hailed the hip-hop mogul-who campaigned actively with Beyonce for the first African-American president-as a kindred spirit at the event in a surprise appearance by video. "Jay and I are also fools for our daughters, although he's going to have me beat once those twins show up," the former president and father of two joked.

Some fans clamoring for details on the twins took Obama's aside as a hint that the babies might be girls. But despite rumblings and guessing games no concrete details regarding sexes or names of the babies have been revealed. Beyonce and Jay Z are among the most commercially successful figures in music, with a combined net worth estimated at \$1 billion.

Big sister Blue Ivy

As an expectant mother Beyonce made a New Age celebration of women at the Grammy Awards earlier this year—putting on an extravagant, abstract performance while proudly displaying her baby bump cloaked in a flowing gold gown. She pulled out of her headlining spot at April's Coachella music festival in southern California, however, on the advice of her doctors. She still made a number of red carpet appearances while carrying the twins and documented her pregnancy via social media—to the joy of her adoring fans. Beyonce's mic-drop pregnancy announcement had triggered intrigue over the fact that it came a little more than nine months after her last album "Lemonade"—in which she strongly hinted that Jay Z was unfaithful.

One lyric warns an unfaithful man of a "final warning" that he's "gonna lose your wife" if his behavior doesn't change. A sullen Jay Z appears at the end of the film to embrace her, suggesting reconciliation. And on the couple's ninth wedding anniversary in April, Beyonce released an updated video for her romantic ballad "Die With You." It features home video-esque footage of tender moments between the couple as well as clips from Blue Ivy's birth and toddler years, ending with a scene of the new big sister of the family kissing her mother's pregnant belly.—AFP



Beyonce (left) and Jay Z perform during a Get Out the Vote (GOTV) performance in Cleveland, Ohio. —AP/AFP photos



This file photo shows US singer Beyonce (left) and her husband US rapper Jay Z (right) sitting in the players box to watch Serena Williams play against Germany's Angelique Kerber during the women's singles final of the 2016 Wimbledon Championships in Wimbledon, southwest London.

over the yet unrevealed sexes and names of the latest additions to the Carter Clan. US Weekly cited multiple unidentified sources as saying that the twins were born earlier this week. Entertainment news outlet E!, also citing unidentified sources, said the couple had been spotted at a Los Angeles area hospital on Thursday. Speculation grew when an unidentified woman was pho-

and a bra under a flowing veil, she commanded control of the internet by posting a picture of herself kneeling beside a human-size floral arrangement, her hands cradling her rounded belly. "We would like to share our love and happiness. We have been blessed two times over," the 35-year-old singer wrote. "We are incredibly grateful that our family will be growing by two, and we thank



Bill Cosby, center, gestures while exiting the Montgomery County Courthouse with his publicist Andrew Wyatt, second from left, after a mistrial was declared in his sexual assault trial in Norristown.—AP photos

Bill Cosby faces 2nd sex assault trial after jury deadlocks

Prosecutors found themselves back to square one Saturday after the jury in Bill Cosby's sexual assault case declared itself hopelessly deadlocked, resulting in a mistrial for the 79-year-old TV star facing accusations he first drugged then molested a woman more than a decade ago. Cosby's team declared victory, however temporary, as the comedian and actor once known as "America's Dad" for his TV role as paternal Dr Cliff Huxtable avoided a conviction on Father's Day weekend.

Excoriated by the defense for charging Cosby in the first place, District Attorney Kevin Steele vowed to put him on trial a second time, saying accuser Andrea Constand supported the decision. "She has shown such courage through this, and we are in awe of what she has done," Steele said. "She's entitled to a verdict in this case." By sowing doubt among one or more jurors, Cosby's lawyers managed to overcome two years of unrelenting bad publicity for their client after the public release of his damaging testimony about drugs and sex, as well as a barrage of accusations from 60 women who came forward to accuse him of sexual assault.

A very spiritual woman

Constand's 2004 encounter with Cosby at his suburban Philadelphia estate was the only one to result in criminal charges. She told jurors that Cosby gave her pills that made her woozy and then penetrated her with his fingers as she lay paralyzed on a couch, unable to tell him to stop. "She's ready to go again," said her lawyer, Dolores Troiani, of a retrial. "She's a very spiritual woman, she believes things happen for a purpose, and I think the purpose is ... it should encourage other women to come forward and have their day in court."

Troiani acknowledged the difficulty of the case, given the passage of time and the impact of the alleged drugging on Constand's ability to recall details. The jury deliberated more than 52 hours over six days before telling a judge they couldn't reach a unanimous decision on any of the three counts against the comedian, ending the trial without a verdict. Cosby's team immediately went on the attack. The entertainer's wife of 53 years, Camille, slammed prosecutors for bringing the case to court, calling Steele "heinously and exploitively ambitious" in a statement released after the trial. She also criticized the judge, the accuser's lawyers and the media. "How do I describe the judge? Overtly arrogant, col-

laborating with the district attorney," said her statement, which was tweeted by her husband and read by an associate of the public relations firm representing Cosby.

Cosby himself didn't comment, remaining stoic as the judge declared a mistrial, but Wyatt declared the star's "power is back. It has been restored." That seemed debatable. Cosby's career and good-guy image were already in tatters by the time his chief accuser took the witness stand, and the prosecution's decision to pursue a second trial keeps him in legal limbo.

Cosby had broken barriers as the first black actor to star in a network show, "I Spy," in the 1960s and, two decades later, created the top-ranked "Cosby Show." He also found success with his "Fat Albert" animated TV show and starred in commercials for Jell-O pudding. But it was Cosby's reputation as a public moralist who urged young people to pull up their saggy pants and start acting responsibly that prompted a federal judge to unseal portions of an explosive deposition he gave more than a decade ago as part of Constand's civil lawsuit against him.—AP



Bill Cosby listens to his wife Camille's statement being read aloud by Ebonee M. Benson outside the Montgomery County Courthouse after a mistrial in his sexual assault case.