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Delhi Police visit twice, wait for hours at Rahul's house to serve ...



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After halting CBI, SC asks Telangana Police not to continue probe into BRS MLAs poaching case

▶ **THREE PERSONS - RAMACHANDRA BHARATI ALIAS SATISH SHARMA, NANDU KUMAR AND SIMHAYAJI SWAMY, NAMED AS ACCUSED - HAVE ALREADY BEEN GRANTED BAIL.**

▶ **ACCORDING TO THE FIR, MLA ROHITH REDDY ALLEGED THAT THE ACCUSED IN OCTOBER LAST YEAR, OFFERED HIM RS 100 CRORE FOR LEAVING THE BRS.**

▶ **IT WAS ALSO ALLEGED THAT THEY ASKED REDDY TO BRING SOME MORE BRS MLAS BY OFFERING RS 50 CRORE EACH TO JOIN THE BJP.**

▶ **IN NOVEMBER LAST YEAR, THE STATE GOVERNMENT HAD FORMED AN SIT, COMPRISING STATE POLICE OFFICERS TO INVESTIGATE THE MATTER.**



Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Friday asked the Telangana Police not to continue its investigation into the alleged criminal conspiracy behind an attempt to poach BRS MLAs allegedly by the BJP. The development comes after the apex court, earlier this week, asked the CBI to not begin its probe in accordance with the Telangana High Court direction.

Senior advocate Dushyant Dave, representing the Telangana Police, contended before a bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and M.M. Sundresh that on the last date of hearing on March 13, the matter was mentioned for hearing as no formal notice was issued. The apex court said the Telangana Police can't continue with

its probe, while issuing notice to the central agency, the BJP and others.

On March 13, the Supreme Court said the CBI should put on hold its investigation into alleged criminal conspiracy behind an attempt to poach BRS MLAs allegedly by the BJP, while hearing an appeal filed by the Telangana Police against the high court order in the matter.

The top court orally observed that the CBI should not proceed with the matter, while listing the matter for further hearing in July.

Dave had vehemently opposed transfer of probe to the CBI. The top court was informed that the case materials have not been handed over to the central agency so far. The bench said it is making it very clear that the CBI probe should not be continued while the matter is sub-judice.

Delhi HC refuses to entertain PIL seeking compulsory voting in Parliament, Assembly polls

New Delhi: The Delhi High Court on Friday refused to hear a PIL moved by BJP leader and practicing lawyer Ashwini Upadhyay seeking compulsory voting in Parliament and Assembly elections.

Upadhyay had moved the plea on Wednesday.

A division bench headed by Chief Justice Satish Chandra Sharma said that voting is a choice and judges are not lawmakers who can pass such directions.

The bench, also comprising Justice Subramonium Prasad, said that it cannot force a person in Chennai to come back to his home town in Srinagar and vote there.

To Upadhyay saying that he will not press his prayer for compulsory voting, the CJ remarked: "It can't be that when you are confronted with something, you will say you are not pressing it."

The bench further remarked that if the plea is not withdrawn, it will impose costs.

The petitioner then proceeded to withdraw his PIL.

Issue of simultaneous polls with Law Commission for further examination: Govt

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The issue of simultaneous elections to Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies is with the Law Commission for further examination to work out a practicable road map and framework.

It was informed by Minister of Law and Justice, Kiren Rijiju in a written reply in the Lok Sabha on Friday.

The Department Related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice had examined the issue of simultaneous elections to Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies in consultation with various stakeholders including Election Commission of India. The Committee has given certain recommendations in this regard in its 79th Report. The matter now stands referred to the Law Commission for further examination to work out a practicable road map and framework for simultaneous elections to Lok Sabha and State Assemblies," said the reply.

The Minister informed that the simultaneous elections would result in huge saving to the public exchequer, avoidance of replication



of effort on part of administrative and law and order machinery in holding repeated elections and bring considerable savings to political parties and candidates in their election campaigns.

Further, asynchronous Lok Sabha and Legislative Assembly elections (including bye-election) result in prolonged enforcement of Model Code of Conduct with its concomitant adverse impact on developmental and welfare programmes, the Minister's reply said.

However, major impediments or imperatives for synchronisation for Lok Sabha and Legislative Assembly elections include bringing amendments in not less than five articles of Constitution, namely, article 83 relating to duration of Houses of Parliament, article 85 relating to dissolution of the House of the People by the President, article 172 relating to duration of the State Legislatures, article 174 relating to dissolution of the State Legislatures and article 356 relating to the imposition of President's Rule in the states.



नरेंद्र मोदी
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निर्णय वेगवान #महाराष्ट्र गतिमान



एकनाथ शिंदे
मुख्यमंत्री

गतिमानतेचे प्रमुख टप्पे -

साखर उत्पादनात महाराष्ट्र देशात पहिल्या क्रमांकावर. शेतकऱ्यांना सर्वाधिक १००% एफआरपी, ४२ हजार ६५० कोटींची एफआरपी ची रक्कम वितरीत.

भूविकास बँकेचे कर्ज घेतलेल्या ३४,७८८ शेतकऱ्यांना ९६४ कोटींची कर्जमाफी.

राज्यात ६९ हजार हेक्टर शेतजमिनीवरील भूविकास बँकांच्या कर्जाचा बोजा कमी.

नियमित कर्ज परतफेड करणाऱ्या शेतकऱ्यांना प्रोत्साहनपर लाभ. आत्तापर्यंत १२ लाख ७९ हजार शेतकऱ्यांच्या कर्ज खात्यात सुमारे ४६६७ कोटी जमा.

समृद्ध शेतकरी, सशक्त सहकार पाठीशी खंबीर, जनतेचे सरकार!



एकनाथ शिंदे
मुख्यमंत्री

देवेन्द्र फडणवीस
उप मुख्यमंत्री



EDITOR'S SPECS

K'taka to witness high-voltage campaign by PM Modi, Rahul

As Karnataka is heading for the Assembly elections, major political parties are vying with each other to make an impact on voters. The ruling BJP and opposition Congress are roping in their top leaders in the coming week intensifying the competition. Through these programmes, both parties are showing off their strength. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is visiting Davanagere on March 25 and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi will address a mega public rally in Belagavi on March 20. The Vijaya Sankalp Yatra launched by the BJP on March 1 from four directions of the state is congregating at Davanagere on March 25. The programme is being organised in a 400 acre ground behind MIT college and the party is hoping that minimum seven lakh people will attend the rally. The party senior leaders have been asked to gather a 10 lakh crowd for the programme. Following the repeated visits of PM Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah, the Congress is getting Rahul Gandhi to be in the state on March 20. He will attend 'Yuva Kranthi Convention' at Belagavi and leaders are striving to make it a historic rally. The Belagavi city of Karnataka has hosted the first AICC session and Rahul Gandhi is attending a public rally for the first time after the Bharat Jodo Yatra in Karnataka.

UKRAINE-RUSSIA MILITARY CONFLICT: CAN THERE BE A UNIVERSALLY ACCEPTABLE MEDIATION?

D.C. Pathak

The Ukraine-Russia military confrontation has stretched longer than expected largely because the plan of Russian President Vladimir Putin to establish a protective presence in the eastern provinces of Ukraine for the Russian-speaking population there through a quick military operation went awry because of the determined move of US-NATO combine to pump in war material in the hands of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky on a big scale. Russia might not have been deterred by the thought of Western sanctions as it had become familiar with them ever since it had annexed Crimea in 2014 following an armed revolt led by Islamic fundamentalists there who apparently enjoyed the US support. Presently, the US-led West is keeping up aid and military support to Ukraine in a 'proxy' mode, believing that for Russia the war was inflicting costs that might become unbearable, that the world opinion was gravitating in favour of peaceful negotiation between the two warring sides and that certainly an escalation into a nuclear dimension would be totally unacceptable for the international community. It is not going unnoticed by observers that Zelensky was taking to an aggressive jargon - all on the strength of US support though - setting demands like immediate withdrawal of Russian troops and talking of an ultimate Russian defeat. Coming from a leader in his precarious situation this was understandable. There is little doubt however, that the world favours an honourable peace pact between Russia and Ukraine. India became the voice of sanity as Prime Minister Narendra Modi reached out to both Putin and Zelensky - he was the world's first leader to do that - and called for peace negotiations. His pithy reminder later that 'this is not a time for war' has swung international opinion in favour of a cessation of armed hostilities. India maintained a non-partisan approach to the conflict and abstained from US-sponsored anti-Russia resolutions at the UN. What is noteworthy, however, is that India retained a bilateral friendship with the US and the UK, as well as the leading European powers like France and Germany. A situation has arisen where any initiative for bringing a halt to the Ukraine-Russia military conflict that has prolonged without creat-

ing any definite advantage for either side would receive a global endorsement. Ukraine is bearing the losses and yet seeking a further upgradation of the US armament support while President Putin might be aware that Russia was running into an image problem as a 'big power' that could not score a decisive 'victory' over a smaller neighbour. Putin can not be serious about injecting a 'nuclear dimension' in the name of using tactical missiles with that special capability. India's balanced approach has already been hailed by the world. It can be surmised that both the US and Russia would welcome any role India could play in bringing about a ceasefire - the US and India would not like Russia to be pushed into the Chinese camp deepening the revival of the Cold War. Any meaningful success of such an intervention would be a feather in India's cap during the G20 Presidency. India's NSA has been in touch with Russia and Ukraine at the highest levels and under his guidance, a track-2 team could quietly get into the act - an official engagement would be vulnerable to fault-finding in case the progress was not perfect. The team comprising a senior diplomat and a strategic expert chosen by NSCS, could possibly start consultations for peace and explore with the help of its counterparts from Russia and Ukraine, the possibility of evolving a framework of guidelines for negotiations. The fundamental point is that the negotiating team must consider concerns and sensitivities of both sides. When the Cold War ended with the success of the anti-Soviet armed campaign in Afghanistan - a battle run on the war cry of Jihad - that resulted in the dismemberment of the USSR and literally the demise of International Communism, the cause of global peace for the future, would have been served better if the newly freed East European countries and the Central Asian Republics were encouraged to have peaceful relations with the residual state of Russia. NATO could be maintaining oversight on these regions but without getting into direct military involvement with the neighbours of Russia. Former US President Donald Trump struck a certain equation with Vladimir Putin despite the history of the 'Crimean war' but the relationship between the US and Russia soured as President Biden renewed emphasis on America's special bonds with NATO and apparently, looked upon Russia as an adver-

sary at par with China. The Democrats, it may be mentioned, had returned to power amidst widespread resentment over the alleged interference by Russia in the US Presidential election designed to favour Trump. The neighbours of Russia left on their own should have concentrated on building themselves as democratic regimes willing to deal with that country on merit - with such help as the international community could possibly extend to them. Annexation of the adjoining Crimea by Russia in 2014 - following the rise of the anti-Russia revolt led by Islamic militants there - had predictably marked the beginning of a constant decline of West-Russia relations. In the environment set by that event countries like Ukraine were nearly sucked into the NATO orbit for their self-defence. European Union saw Russia as a source of threat but Trump who welcomed the British on 'getting their country back' through Brexit, seemingly treated Russia as another European country and thought it could be handled according to what would be in the best American interests. Negotiators working for peace in the present would have to start with an acknowledgement that both Russia and Ukraine had security concerns that needed to be kept in view and that the matter was largely about two adjoining countries with different philosophies of governance, respecting each other and striking an arrangement for living in peace as neighbours. It would help if Ukraine declared that it is a democratic country run by a political executive elected on the basis of 'one man one vote' without any distinction of race, region or gender. Russian-speaking people of its eastern region would have an added confidence and feel they were on the same footing as the rest of the population. It is also - as a good starter - desirable for Ukraine to explicitly indicate that left to itself it would not seek membership of NATO. A ceasefire has to mark the launch of tripartite negotiations between the teams of Ukraine, Russia and the mediators and logically also to a scaling down of the Western supply of arms and ammunition to Ukraine. It would be necessary to let the two warring countries express their concerns and misgivings in the present and for the future. The more open they are about these the easier it would be for the negotiators to work around them and establish a reasonable level of

acceptance and lasting assurance on both sides. The intervention of the US-led West on the side of Ukraine was justifiable up to a point but not the strategy of running a proxy war through that country in the hope of weakening Russia - particularly when this was happening at the cost of a friendly Ukraine. The real challenge for the negotiators would be to do the groundwork for facilitating a Peace Pact between Russia and Ukraine that will create certain checks and balances to the satisfaction of the international community, and see to it that an arrangement both sides could trust would be created - embracing Crimea's status too - and bring in the democratic world as a whole for possible assistance in completing that groundwork. The pact will have to envisage global funding for the reconstruction of Ukraine - with Russia also making a symbolic contribution in keeping with its status as the much bigger power, in the bilateral conflict. A relevant issue would be to fix a reasonable sizing of Ukraine's Defence forces required to preserve the sovereignty of a democratic country and provide internal security in the areas where the Russian-speaking population lived. Conditions would have to be created for a gradual withdrawal of the Russian military from Ukraine in pursuance of the Peace Pact as also a matching lifting of 'sanctions' imposed by the US-led West on Russia. The Russia-Ukraine military conflict had been a prolonged one - adversary impacting the entire geopolitics and global economy - and untangling the complex issues that precipitated it in the first instance will have to be done patiently and with an understanding of what was bothering the two sides. Shared economic growth is a guarantor of peace and the negotiations should give due attention to whatever could provide mutual benefit to the two countries in future. The Ukraine-Russia military conflict had in one sense, a localised dimension involving two neighbours and it cannot be allowed to land the entire world in a crisis. Peace negotiations have to be free of political tints, have to be guided by what was good for the world and had to be conducted upfront on the strength of the bona fides of the mediators. (The writer is a former Director of the Intelligence Bureau. Views expressed are personal)

international

DEATH TOLL IN MALAWI FROM CYCLONE FREDDY REACHES 326

Lilongwe | Agencies

The death toll from tropical cyclone Freddy in Malawi has increased to 326, President Lazarus Chakwera announced. In an address to the nation late Thursday, he also said that number of people injured and those still missing have risen to 201 and 796, respectively, Xinhua news agency reported. "The number of people displaced has more than doubled to 183,159, as has the number of households displaced, which now stands at 40,702," he said. The country has set up 317 camps across the stormed region to mitigate the situation, according to Chakwera. The Malawi leader has re-emphasized the need for more humanitarian support from local and international organisations and individuals, describing the devastation and desperation as "unbelievable and over-



whelming." Local business people have pledged to mobilize up to \$1.5 million towards supporting residents affected by the cyclone. Meanwhile, health experts raised concerns that the cyclone-induced floods, strong winds and mudslides, could cause waterborne diseases such as cholera. Charles Mwanamboto, the Secretary for Health, has acknowledged those

risks, but he said the government is working closely with health agencies to minimize the threat. "The ministry and other health agencies are working hand in hand to tighten the efforts and make sure that the response is immediate," Mwanamboto told Xinhua. Malawi Red Cross Society director of programs and development, Prisca Chisala, said that many of the victims residing in evacuation camps are at high risk of contracting cholera due to lack of sanitation facilities. "It has become increasingly challenging to regulate the provision of clean water and food, posing a potential threat to the lives of many," she added. Civil society organizations in Chikwawa and Nsanje districts in Lower Shire Valley, have also sounded the alarm about the potential cholera outbreak in the camps, as many victims lack toilets and other water, sanitation, and hygiene facilities. The country has already recorded 54,120 cholera cases with 1,660 deaths since March 2022, according to the health authorities. Freddy is the strongest tropical cyclone on record and could also be the long-lasting one, according to the World Meteorological Organization. On Sunday, it struck Mozambique as a cyclone -- for the second time in a less than a month after battering the island nation of Madagascar in the Indian Ocean, causing severe destruction. It has been difficult to determine the extent of the damage caused in Mozambique and the number of deaths as power supply and phone signals were cut off in some parts of the affected areas. Freddy also broke records for the strength it has accumulated over the 8,000-km path it travelled across the Indian Ocean from north-western Australia.

Italy gives green light to build world's longest suspension bridge

Rome | Agencies

Italy's Council of Ministers has approved a decree that will allow for the building of the world's longest suspension bridge between the island of Sicily and the Italian mainland. Such a bridge has been discussed since ancient times, but it is the first time the project has received this level of formal authorisation, Xinhua news agency reported. In a statement on Thursday, the ministry of infrastructure and transport said the bridge would be "the crown jewel of Italian engineering". The north-eastern most tip of Sicily is clearly visible from the western shore of Calabria, but deep water and fast currents between the two land masses mean building a bridge is a daunting challenge for engineers. According to technical specifications, once completed the bridge will be 3,666 meters long, with a single span of 3,300 meters. This means the central span will be over 50 percent longer than the 2,023-meter central span of the Canakkale Bridge in Turkey, currently the world's longest suspension bridge. The Turkish structure, which connects the European part of Turkey to the Asian part, was completed a year ago. The bridge took six



years to build, and reportedly cost at least \$2.7 billion. The timetable and budget for the Italian Messina Bridge project have not yet been announced, but according to previous estimates the project will take at least six years to complete, at a cost of around 8.5 billion euros (\$9 billion). As far back as 251 BC, the Roman historian Pliny the Elder wrote about plans to construct a floating bridge to connect Sicily to the Italian mainland, and other projects were discussed in later centuries. The first modern-day project was announced in 1981, and a blueprint for the project was produced in 2005.

XI JINPING TO VISIT RUSSIA

Moscow | Agencies

Chinese President Xi Jinping will make a state visit to Russia next Monday, the Kremlin and the Chinese Foreign Ministry have revealed, media reported. The trip will last until Wednesday. Xi will meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin to discuss "aspects of further development of comprehensive partnership," according to a statement from the Kremlin. There will also be a discussion of the international agenda and cooperation between the two nations in world affairs, the Kremlin added. Russian and Chinese officials are expected to sign a number of bilateral agreements, RT reported. Putin invited Xi to Russia during a phone call in late December, but the date of the trip was not previously announced. The two Presidents have been in frequent contact after Moscow launched its military operation in Ukraine in early 2022, both in person at international events and via video link. Last month, Beijing revealed an ini-



tiative for a settlement to the conflict in Ukraine. Moscow said it would consider the proposal, but reiterated that Kiev's refusal to acknowledge the new reality on the ground is a major obstacle to negotiations, RT reported. The Ukrainian government has stated that its goal is military victory over Russia and the expulsion of Russian troops from all territories that Kiev claims to be under its sovereignty. It has also prohibited any negotiations with Moscow as long as Putin remains in office.

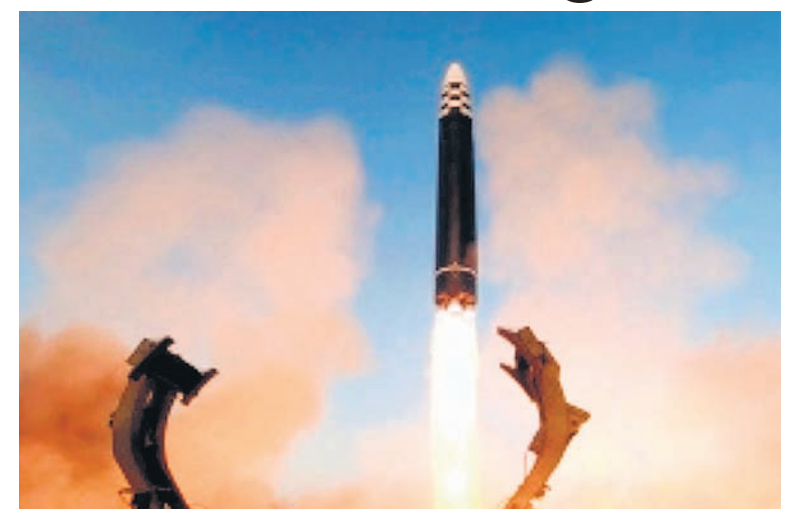
4 PALESTINIANS KILLED IN ISRAELI RAID IN WEST BANK

Ramallah: Four Palestinians were shot dead by Israeli soldiers who stormed the northern West Bank city of Jenin, the Palestinian Health Ministry said in a statement. Another 20 Palestinians were wounded, four of whom were in serious conditions, Xinhua news agency reported, citing the statement. According to Palestinian sources and eyewitnesses, heavy clashes between Israeli soldiers and Palestinian militants broke out in Jenin's main street after an Israeli undercover unit stormed the city. There has been no official statement from Israel on the shootings. Israeli security forces have regularly conducted raids in Jenin in the past few months, amid an escalation of tension between Palestinians and Israelis in the occupied West Bank. The Palestinian Health Ministry said that 84 Palestinians had been killed by Israeli soldiers since January. Meanwhile, official Israeli figures show that 14 Israelis were killed in attacks carried out by Palestinians.

North Korea test-fired missile in 'warning to enemies' holding drills

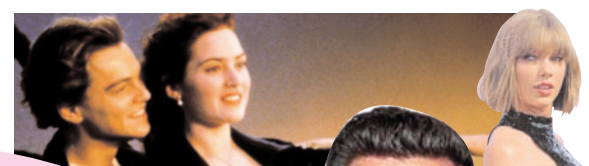
Seoul | Agencies

North Korea test-fired a Hwasong-17 intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) in a show of the "toughest response posture" of its strategic forces against "aggressive" massive combined drills by the US and South Korea, Pyongyang's state media reported on Friday. The nation's leader Kim Jong-un "guided" the launch on Thursday together with his young daughter Ju-ae, as it served as an occasion to "give a stronger warning to the enemies intentionally escalating the tension" on the peninsula, according to the North's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA). It cited the "unstable security environment" in the region attributable to "provocative and aggressive large-scale war drills", referring to the South Korea-US Freedom Shield (FS) exercise underway in a program coupled with major field trainings, reports Yonhap News Agency. The drill involving the Hwasong-17 was "aimed at confirming the mobile and normal operation and reliability of the country's nuclear war deterrent", the KCNA said. It confirmed "the war readiness of the



ICBM unit and the exceptional militancy of the DPRK's strategic forces and strictly verified their reliability," it added, using the acronym for the North's official name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.





TAYLOR SWIFT

REVEALED SHE WILL DROP 'FOUR UNRELEASED SONGS'

Los Angeles | Agencies

Singer Taylor Swift revealed she will drop four unreleased songs at midnight, on the eve of the first night of her Eras Tour. Three of the songs are part of Swift's massive re-recording undertaking, and one is a never officially released track that was written during the 'Lover' era, reports Variety.

The singer made the announcement on her Instagram story, writing: "In celebration of The Eras Tour I'm releasing four previously unreleased songs tonight at midnight."

The tracks include 'Eyes Open (Taylor's Version)', 'Safe & Sound (Ft. Joy Williams and John Paul White) (Taylor's Version)', 'If This Was a Movie (Taylor's Version)' and 'All of the Girls You Loved Before'.

'All of the Girls You Loved Before' is an unreleased track that was considered for Swift's 2019 'Lover' album.

The song was leaked in February this year, only for it to go viral on TikTok and be met with fans' requests for its official release. As it was recorded after she left Big Machine for Republic Records, a re-recording was not necessary, making it the only one of the four tracks that doesn't carry a 'Taylor's Version' tag.

The rollout of tracks includes two 'Hunger Games' soundtrack cuts fans might have worried would be orphaned in her re-records, since they never appeared on a Swift album.

'Safe & Sound' had the Civil Wars officially co-billed when it was first released in 2011; since the two artists who made up that duo have long since broken up, it appears Williams and White re-recorded their parts separately and will be billed on the remake as respective solo artists.

That song and 'Eyes Open' were featured on 'The Hunger Games: Songs From District 12' and were released in December 2011 and March 2012, respectively.

'If We Were A Movie', meanwhile, precedes a yet-unannounced deluxe version of Swift's album 'Speak Now', which many fans speculate will be the next re-recorded album the singer releases.



ZACHARY LEVI SAID YES TO THE 'SHAZAM' SEQUEL EVEN BEFORE READING THE SCRIPT

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actor Zachary Levi has talked about how the amped-up action, new worlds, stakes of mythological proportion, roster of aspirational heroes, exceedingly menacing villains and signature brand of humour made him sign on for the David F. Sandberg-directed "Shazam! Fury of the Gods", an easy "yes" for him. Said Levi: "I thoroughly enjoyed the pitch before I even got to read the script. When David and Henry told me what the whole concept of the second movie was going to be, I was in." "I thought, 'These are great ingredients for building a really wonderful sequel to what we had already created,' so I was very excited about that and about getting back together with all of the cast and crew I loved so much, and it's just a really fun role to play. I mean, I get to be a Super Hero, and a really fun one at that."

'Shazam! Fury of the Gods' stars returning cast members Zachary Levi, Asher Angel, Jack Dylan Grazer, and Adam Brody. Joining the cast is Rachel Zegler, with Lucy Liu and Helen Mirren.

Directed by David F. Sandberg, Warner Bros. Pictures is set to release the film pan India on March 17 in English, Hindi, Tamil and Telugu language.



BEN AFFLECK REVEALED WHAT HE SAID TO JLO DURING AWKWARD GRAMMY'S MOMENT

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood star Ben Affleck finally revealed what he and singer-actress Jennifer Lopez were whispering about during the viral moment at the Grammy Awards 2023. The A-list duo took the internet by storm when they were spotted having a seemingly tense exchange during the glitzy awards show at the beginning of February while host Trevor Noah filmed a segment next to them, reports mirror.co.uk.

People were convinced that the Get Right singer 'snapped' at her husband Ben while they 'didn't know the cameras were rolling'. Over a month later, Ben has stepped forward to set the record straight on the awkward television moment.

"I saw (host Trevor) and I was like, 'Oh God.' They were framing us in this shot, but I didn't know they were rolling," the actor explained. "I leaned into her and I was like, 'As soon they start rolling, I'm going to slide away from you and leave you sitting next to Trevor.'" He added to The Hollywood Reporter: "(JLo) goes, 'you better f***ing not leave.' That's a husband-and-wife thing."

The original video showed Ben leaning in towards Jennifer while whispering something in her ear. She then quickly moves away.

Her expression quickly changed after clocking live television cameras are pointed right in her direction as she sits up straight and laughs at Trevor's jokes.

Another shot seems to show Ben talking to Jennifer as she somewhat blanks him, turning her attention to her mobile phone on the table. People were so invested in the supposed drama that lip readers and seat fillers chimed in on the conversation.

Seat filler took to TikTok to explain what really happened and it wasn't as negative as people portrayed it to be.

"JLo showed Ben Affleck the phone and was like, 'Oh my God, honey. Look at this meme circulating about you' and he was like, 'Oh God, this again'. He knew during the performance that he was a meme. He knew and just chose not to change his expression."

She added: "I know she was on her phone and saw it and was like, 'honey, this is so funny. Look at this'."

According to the seat filler, they were 'super lovey dovey' and their 'hands were always intertwined'.



Paris Hilton created her 'Barbie doll fantasy life' on TV as a 'trauma response'



Los Angeles | Agencies

American socialite Paris Hilton said that her on-screen persona was a "trauma response" and a way to deal with the pressures in her life. The TV personality was catapulted to fame in the early noughties in show 'The Simple Life', where she and pal Nicole Richie swapped their lavish lifestyles for humble homes, reports Mirror.co.uk.

However, the person she was while the cameras rolled and on the red carpet was a "mask", the star said as she appeared on 'The One Show'. Paris spoke to Rylan Clark and Jermaine Jenas this evening about her book, 'Paris Hilton: The Memoir', where she recalled the terribly dark times in her teenage years.

The new mum has spoken of how she was drugged and raped aged 15, groped by a teacher, and sexually abused while attending

boarding school in Utah.

Mirror.co.uk further states that as an heiress and model, Paris was already known in the NYC social scene, then scooping 'The Simple Life' in her early twenties, which ran for four years.

"The One Show" host Jermaine asked the entrepreneur whether she had "two characters", and if she found "herself trapped between two versions of Paris Hilton, the real Paris Hilton and the characters she's created?"

The TV star replied: "I think that what I went through it was a trauma response where I created this character, this Barbie doll fantasy life so I didn't have to think about what I went through, and then I got 'The Simple Life', and then I had to continue playing that character season after season and then almost got stuck in it because I got so used to doing it. It was sort of a mask to deal with all of the pressures."

'I DIDN'T HAVE A PLAN'

Lucy Liu didn't have a plan when she decided to become a single mother

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Lucy Liu, who played the femme fatale O-Ren Ishii in Quentin Tarantino's cult classic 'Kill Bill', "didn't have a plan" and just "pulled the trigger" when she decided to become a single mum.

The actress welcomed a son named Rockwell in 2015 via gestational surrogate and she's now admitted she did very little research before making the life-changing decision because she worried she would "think" herself out of it, reports 'Female First UK'.

In an interview with The Cut, Lucy explained: "I didn't have a plan. I just thought, 'I want to change the conversation a little bit'. I didn't mull it over too much. I didn't do a lot of research, I just pulled the trigger."

She said, quoted by 'Female First UK', "I can think myself out of something easily. If I think too much I won't do it. It's better for me to feel something and just go for it. A lot of people read books about parenting, I didn't do any of that. I was like, 'When the child is here, I'm just going to figure it out.'"

The screen star went on to explain why she chose to raise Rockwell in her home town of New York City, insisting she wanted him to see more of the world.

She added, "I definitely wanted to raise a kid in New York. People will say, 'It's not convenient, you don't even have a car,' but this way, they're going to see all the things. You're going to show them what's safe and what's not, and they're going to understand that through experience. It's hard to build common sense when you're in a car all the time. They're going to smell the smells."



NICOLETA VACULOV JOVANOVIC



KAREENA REVEALS HER SON DOESN'T EAT UNTIL HE HEARS 'NAATU NAATU'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood actress Kareena Kapoor Khan, whose streaming talk show 'What Women Want', released its fourth season on Friday, has revealed that her younger son Jehangir absolutely loves dancing to the Oscar winning song 'Naatu Naatu' and that he doesn't eat unless the song is played for him.

The actress said, "Jeh only eats his dinner when we play 'Naatu Naatu' and he wants the original version not the Hindi dub version of the song. The song touches a 2 year old's heart, it shows that they have created something spectacular with the film and the song".

With India bagging two Oscars at the 95th Academy Awards, it has brought a sense of pride for every Indian. Kareena feels proud to be a member of the fraternity that's bringing accolades for the country on the international platform.

She said, "I'm very proud to see the audience watching more movies, be it Hindi films, regional films, parallel films or documentaries. People are taking Indian cinema a lot more seriously and as a member of the fraternity it fills my heart with so much pride and gratitude towards our audience".

The fourth season of 'What Women Want' is available to stream on the YouTube channel of Mirchi Plus.



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Rani Mukerji spoke candidly about why the film 'Mrs Chatterjee Vs Norway' speaks to her.

Rani in an exclusive BTS clip shared with IMDB, said: "The film resonates with one emotion which is the mother's emotion. This movie is a reminder to all children in the world that there's no greater emotion or relationship than with a mother. As a mother, I couldn't place myself in Sagarika's shoes because it is a painful thought to be separated from your child. She added: "I can't even imagine it. Animals too have a natural instinct with their children that if someone tries to take their children away, the mother will straightaway attack. It is the same with human mothers as well. If you try to do something with their child, they will not spare you."

"You forget to say thank you to your mothers and take them for granted. I am hoping after watching this film, a lot of sons and daughters will reach out to their mothers and give them tight hugs and kisses."

'Mrs Chatterjee Vs Norway' is directed by Ashima Chibber. It stars Rani Mukerji, Anirban Bhattacharya, Neena Gupta and Jim Sarbh. The film is the true story of an Indian couple, an adaptation based on the mother - Sagarika Chakraborty's autobiography titled 'The Journey of a Mother', whose children were taken away from them by the Norwegian Childcare System (Barnevernet) in 2011.

THE FILM RESONATES WITH ONE EMOTION WHICH IS THE MOTHER'S EMOTION: RANI



ANANYA, DAD CHUNKY PANDAY DANCES TO 'SAAT SAMUNDAR PAAR'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

It was a visual treat to see actress Ananya Panday dance with her father Chunky Panday on the song 'Saat Samundar Paar' at her cousin Alanna Panday's wedding held here on Thursday.

A video shared on Ananya's fan page, showed Ananya dressed in a powder blue and white saree dancing with Chunky, who sported a parrot green blazer paired with white pants. They were also joined by Ananya's cousin brother Ahaan, who looked dapper in a black suit.

The song 'Saat Samundar Paar' is from Chunky's 1992 film 'Vishwatma' directed by Rajiv Rai. It also stars Sunny Deol, Naseeruddin Shah and Divya Bharti among many others. The film follows Prabhat, an honest police officer, being sent to Kenya by the Indian Government to capture the dreaded crime lord Ajgar Jurrat and bring an end to his illegal businesses.

On the work front, Ananya will next be seen in Vikramaditya Motwane's untitled cyber crime-thriller, Farhan Akhtar's 'Khushi' and 'Dream Girl 2'.



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Richa Chadha, who will soon be seen in the Sanjay Leela Bhansali's web series 'Heeramandi', has shared that she was "stretched out of her comfort zone" while working on the project. The actress said: "Sanjay sir is a visionary, magician, and storyteller. I have never felt so stretched out of my comfort zone as a performer. So many times, I go on a set and the director tells me, 'aap to kar hi logi (for you, this is a cakewalk), you were so great in this film, that film.'" However, she said that it's not as easy as it looks because everyone keeps evolving. She continued: "Honestly, I feel like saying that was 10 years ago, I am not the same person I was even one year ago. I have evolved, I have grown. I am a director's actor; I love being pushed to my maximum potential. I like to be challenged till my throat is dry and I have nausea from nervousness. And hence, I loved working with Sanjay sir as he is so respectful of collaboration. He doesn't suffer fools easily and has high standards." 'Heeramandi' is her second project with Bhansali, the first one being 'Goliyon Ki Rasleela - Ram Leela', which has clocked almost a decade. "I'd rather work with a taskmaster who holds himself to a high standard than a director who coddles me but makes a shit film. Being associated with SLB and his project in any capacity is always an honour. And I feel lucky that I got that chance twice, the first one being Goliyon Ki Rasleela - Ram Leela.

But Heeramandi will always be special since it is one of many firsts. You will see," she added. 'Heeramandi', set in pre-independent India, is based on the life story of three generations of courtesans in Heeramandi district. The series also stars Sonakshi Sinha, Sharmin Sehgal and Manisha Koirala, and will release on Netflix.

Richa Chadha was pushed out of her comfort zone for web series

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Sunil Grover along with Satish Shah will be soon seen in the upcoming streaming series titled 'United Kacche'. The show is a light-hearted comedy based in the United Kingdom and has been shot in the UK. It follows the story of Tejinder 'Tango' Gill (played by Sunil Grover) from Punjab who aspires to migrate to a foreign land where the grass is greener. He inherited this dream from his late father and grandfather as they too wished to settle abroad for a better life.

He somehow manages to arrange for a tourist visa for the United Kingdom and takes off without planning much into the future. As his visa is about to expire, and he will be considered an illegal immigrant marking the beginning of the real struggle of living abroad.

The director of the show, Manav Shah said: "In India, everyone has an aspiration to go and settle abroad and they would do anything for it. 'United Kacche' is a light-hearted funny show that takes you into the lives of people who would do anything to settle abroad and how people from different communities and countries unite to support each other."

The show also stars Sapna Pabbi, Nikhil Vijay, Manu Rishi Chaddha, Nayani Dixit and Neelu Kohli in pivotal roles. The show highlights the living conditions of many such Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi citizens who are not permanent residents of England and are thus known as 'Kacche'.



SUNIL GROVER, SATISH SHAH STARRING SERIES HIGHLIGHT IMMIGRANTS' PLIGHT IN UK

INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Kangna Sharma