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Issued by: Bharatiya Janata Party, 6 A, Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Marg, New Delhi

Fani kills 8 in Odisha, loses steam into Bengal

Strongest cyclone in 20 years barrelled at 175km/hr uprooting trees, damaging houses

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Cyclone Fani (also known as Phani, meaning "hood of the snake" in Bengali) rolled through Odisha's Puri on Friday, bringing rain and windstorm that gusted up to 175 kmph, leaving at least 8 people dead, and blowing away thatched houses, uprooting trees, electricity poles, cutting off power supply, and swamping towns and villages in the State.

The strongest cyclone in India in 20 years made landfall around 8 am in Puri, with roaring winds flattening huts, enveloping the pilgrim town in sheets of rain, and submerging homes in residential areas.

The extremely severe cyclone Fani, a name given by Bangladesh, weakened from an "extremely severe" to "very severe", and is predicted to further weaken to a "severe cyclone" before moving to West Bengal.

In several videos doing rounds on social media showed the impact of the powerful gale and heavy rain. In videos posted by Sitangshu Kar, the

Director General of the Press Information Bureau, the roof of an undergraduate hostel in the Bhubaneswar AIIMS was seen being blown off. Later the wind speed of Fani came down to around 140-165 kmph.

According to officials, large areas in Puri and other places were submerged with water as heavy rain battered the entire coastal belt of the State. Several trees were uprooted and thatched structures destroyed at some places, including Bhubaneswar. All flights from Bhubaneswar have been cancelled since Thursday midnight, and Kolkata airport is shut from 3 pm on Friday till 8 am on Saturday. 140 trains, including 83 passenger trains, have been cancelled so far.

In Bhubaneswar, people took shelter under shades as the heavy rain lashed the city. They said their "homes were shaking". After crossing Odisha, cyclone Fani is likely to move towards West Bengal before tapering off. Cyclone Fani also triggered heavy rain in parts of north coastal Andhra Pradesh, where gusty winds with speed reaching up

to 140 kmph uprooted trees and electricity poles, officials said.

The Odisha Government has evacuated over 11 lakh people, including at least 600 pregnant women, to camps on higher grounds.

"I assure the affected people that the nation and the centre are with them," Prime Minister Narendra Modi said at a rally in Rajasthan. He said over ₹1,000 crore had been released in advance for the states affected by Fani.

The Union Health Ministry has announced cancellation of Bhubaneswar as a centre for the AIIMS PG 2019 examination due to Fani.

"AIIMS PG exam is scheduled on May 5. Due to cyclone Fani, AIIMS Delhi is cancelling the exam centre in Bhubaneswar. Another exam will be conducted for students affected by this cancellation as soon as normalcy returns (sic)," Union Health Secretary Preeti Sudan tweeted.

KJ Ramesh, Director General of the India Meteorological Department (IMD), predicted light to mod-

erate rain in northeastern States — Arunachal Pradesh, Assam & Meghalaya and Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura due to cyclone while heavy to very heavy rain predicted over Arunachal Pradesh and Assam on May 4 and 5.

"After making landfall this morning, cyclone Fani has started weakening and it's likely to enter Bangladesh by Saturday evening," he said.

No cyclone ever had such a long duration in April. The Home Ministry said an eye of cyclonic storm "Fani" "completely moved into land" by 10 am on Friday weakening its fury, but heavy rainfall is still predicted in Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal and parts of the northeastern States. The system is likely to weaken gradually and emerge into Gangetic West Bengal as a "severe cyclonic storm" by the early morning of May 4. Thereafter, it is expected to move further north-north-eastwards and emerge into Bangladesh by May 4 evening as a cyclonic storm.

Continued on Page 7



Damaged structures and uprooted trees lie along a road in Puri after Cyclone Fani hit Odisha on Friday

CAPSULE

EC CLEAN CHIT TO MODI IN ALL COMPLAINTS

New Delhi: The EC concluded on Friday that Prime Minister Narendra Modi did not violate the model code or its advisory on armed forces in his speech in Varanasi. With this, the EC has decided on five complaints against Modi and gave him a clean chit in all matters.

AKSHAY SAYS HE HOLDS CANADIAN PASSPORT

Mumbai: Setting to rest speculation about his citizenship, actor Akshay Kumar on Friday said his aim is to make India a stronger nation even though he holds a Canadian passport.

KEJRIWAL GETS NOTICE FROM POLL AUTHORITIES

New Delhi: Poll authorities in Delhi have issued a showcause notice to Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, asking him to submit certificate obtained by a panel, after receiving a complaint that a recorded audio message was allegedly sent by the party to mobile phone users.

Cong candidate raps Shatrughan for campaign for 'Samajwadi' wife

AGENCY ■ LUCKNOW

The Congress candidate from Lucknow on Friday took strong exception to party leader Shatrughan Sinha canvassing for his wife, who is the Samajwadi Party candidate in the constituency.

Shatrughan was present during the filing of nomination papers by his wife, Poonam Sinha. He attended an election meeting on Thursday with Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav.

"From the behaviour of Shatrughan Sinha, it appears that although he has joined the Congress, but has not yet resigned from the RSS," Acharya Pramod, the Congress Lucknow candidate, tweeted.

Shatrughan Sinha quit the BJP recently and is the Congress candidate from the Patna Sahib constituency in Bihar. Poonam is the SP-BSP-RLD alliance candidate from Lucknow, who is contesting against Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh and Pramod.

Polling will be held in Lucknow on Monday.

Shah confident of landslide win in UP

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

BJP president Amit Shah exuded confidence that despite being opposed by the 'mahamilavati' (adulterated) Samajwadi Party-Bahujan Samaj Party alliance, his party would win 74 Lok Sabha seats in Uttar Pradesh.

"In 2014, along with our ally, the BJP won 73 Lok Sabha seats in Uttar Pradesh. I want to assure you that in 2019 the tally of our seats will not be 72, it will be 74. Since January this year, I have visited 284 Lok Sabha constituencies and in all four corners of the country, I hear people chanting 'Modi, Modi' Amit Shah said on Friday while addressing an election meeting here to solicit support for BJP candidate Rajnath Singh.

"The chant of Modi by the people is not a mere poll slogan but the blessings of the common man to Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Over 125 crore people of

India have already decided that they want Narendra Modi again as Prime Minister after May 23," the BJP president said.

Counting of votes after the completion of seven phases Lok Sabha elections on May 19 will be taken up on May 23.

Referring to the strike by the Indian Air Force at the terror camp in Balakot deep inside the territory of Pakistan following the killing of 40 jawans in Pulwama, Shah said, "The entire country celebrated the air strike but I am at my wits end why there was mourning in the offices of Samajwadi Party, Bahujan Samaj Party and Congress."

Shah said, "Earlier only two countries were known for surgical strikes — USA and Israel. The Narendra Modi government added a third country to this list — the India."

Listing the achievements of the Narendra Modi gov-



BJP president Amit Shah at a public rally in Lucknow on Friday

ernment, the BJP president said the list was endless. He said the NDA government not only improved the economic lot of 22 crore poor people of India, it also secured the nation from terror strikes.

"Narendra Modi is a leader who has a 56-inch chest. During the Manmohan Singh government, the bod-

jholi mein daal do' and Uttar Pradesh will become the number one state of India.

He said during the Manmohan Singh-led UPA government, Rs 3 lakh crore were given to Uttar Pradesh by the Centre from 2009 to 2014 while during the five years of Narendra Modi government, there was sharp hike in fund allocation to UP and it increased to over Rs 10 lakh crore.

Lauding the leadership of Rajnath Singh, the BJP president said "the troika of Rajnath-Modi-Yogi has proved to be very lucky for UP as Lucknow and rest of the state has achieved development in all fields."

"Lucknow has the distinction of electing Atal Bihari Vajpayee for five consecutive terms. Rajnath Singh is the true inheritor of the legacy of Atalji. Right now the issue at stake is not the victory of Rajnath Singh but the victory margin which should be

Continued on Page 7

Burhan Wani's last 'Tiger', 2 other Hizbul terrorists shot

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

A joint team of security forces early on Friday morning dealt a body blow to top Hizbul Mujahideen (HM) commanders active in Kashmir Valley by neutralising Lateef Ahmad Dar, alias Tiger of Dogripora Pulwama, the lone surviving member of Burhan Wani group, along with two other local terrorists in a fierce firefight in South Kashmir's Shopian district.

Timing of the clinical operation is set to boost the morale of the security forces deployed in the area to ensure peaceful polling in the final phase in Shopian and Pulwama districts on May 6.

After the killing of HM's poster boy Burhan Wani in July 2016, several other top commanders were neutralised by the security forces.

If Cong equations work, the die is 'caste' in Jaipur, Bharatpur

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■ JAIPUR (RURAL)/ BHARATPUR

The Jaipur Rural Lok Sabha seat is all set to witness a very interesting contest between two Olympians — sitting BJP MP Union Minister Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore and Congress' Krishna Poonia. An equally keen contest is on the cards in the neighbouring Bharatpur, a stronghold of Jats, between two Dalits — a retired bureaucrat and a daughter-in-law of three times BJP MP Gangaram Koli. Both the seats will go to polls on Monday.

While Rathore is a Rajput and an Olympic gold medalist, Poonia is a Jat from Haryana and married in Rajasthan. She is also a sitting MLA and international gold medal-winner in discus throw and three times Olympic participant.

In 2014 Jaipur Rural Lok Sabha polls, Rathore defeated Congress veteran CP Joshi by

over three lakh votes. But in the November 2018 Assembly elections for the eight Assembly seats in this Lok Sabha constituency, four were bagged by the Congress, three by the BJP and one by an Independent.

Poonia has been working on a successful caste equation by banking on the support of Jats, and a combination of Ahirs (Yadavs), Dalit and Muslim. Faced with such challenging scenario, Rathore is relying on the charisma of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

"While Modi magic can work on youths and middle class, a large section of voters here are upset with Rathore, claiming that he confined himself to inaugurating projects and remaining inaccessible. But Poonia worked at grass-roots with her husband (athlete Virender Poonia) and thus has a chance this time," said Sukhbir Chauhan of village Jomwar Ramgarh.



2019 Elections Battleground LOK SABHA

Given the caste equation of Bharatpur Lok Sabha seat, Congress candidate Abhijit Kumar Jatav, a retired bureaucrat, seems to have an edge over BJP's Ranjeeta Koli. In the recent Assembly elections, the Congress and its alliance partner RLD won six of the eight Assembly seats in Bharatpur the Parliamentary constituency. While the BSP bagged the remaining two seats, the BJP failed to even open its account. Ranjeeta will also have to face the backlash from the supporters of sitting party MP Bahadur Singh Koli, who was denied the ticket.

Though the Congress has an upper hand in Bharatpur, it has to guard against BSP's

Suraj Jatav. The Congress is working hard to end the enmity between Jatavs and the Jats arisen in the 1992 Kumbher massacre when Jats set ablaze more than 100 houses of Jatavs. Erstwhile ruler of Bharatpur and a Minister in the Ashok Gehlot Government, Vishvendra Singh, has been deputed by the party to win over Jats for the purpose.

Once represented by tall leaders of the Congress such as Natwar Singh, Rajesh Pilot, Raj Bahadur and Vishvendra Singh, the Jat Kingdom was declared a reserved constituency for SC in 2008 delimitation. The Congress won in 2009, but lost to the BJP in 2014 in the heat of Modi wave.

Sonakshi seeks votes for mom

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Bollywood actress Sonakshi Sinha on Friday appealed to Lucknowites to vote for her mother Poonam Sinha, who has been fielded by the Samajwadi Party. She said she had come to Lucknow as a daughter and not as a heroine and she wanted the people of Lucknow to vote in large numbers for her mother to ensure her victory.

Dressed in a light blue chikankari lehenga, the actress elicited a lot of excitement at GPO park from where the roadshow started. Huge crowd of people, including the Samajwadi Party workers, waited anxiously for the actress.

Loud cheers rent the air after it was announced that Sonakshi was going to address the gathering. The first word that she uttered was "khamosh" in her father's style. She then expressed happiness for the kind of support that she was witnessing for her mother.

"I am so happy to see such a huge crowd supporting my mother and for that, I wish to thank the people of Lucknow," she said. She said her mother, who used to call her ten times a day, had completely forgotten her ever since she started her poll campaign. "She is now devoted to you," Sonakshi said.



Poonam Sinha, Sonakshi Sinha and Dimple Yadav during the roadshow in Lucknow on Friday

"I can see that my mother is working very hard and I am very proud of her. I want you all to vote for her," she added.

Speaking on the occasion, Poonam said a government which had not performed could not be brought back to power. She said that it was important for the Samajwadi

Party to win with the vision of party chief and former Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav.

"I assure you I will not let you down. I feel that I am one of you and we have to work hard to reach the number one position," she told the crowd.

Dimple Yadav also appealed to the voters to vote

for Poonam Sinha. She said the BJP had stopped all the developmental work carried out by the Samajwadi Party. "They stopped work at Agra Expressway, 1090 Women Power Line and other schemes. They are merely following the divisive politics and we have to stop them," Dimple said.

Roadshow, awareness programmes result in traffic snarls



(Top) Crowd of youths at voting carnival in Hazratganj, and (above) commuters stranded in traffic jam on Friday

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Friday proved to be a day of traffic snarls at Hazratganj because of several programmes held in the area and due to VIP movement. The traffic diversions implemented because of the voting carnival at Hazratganj added to the trouble of commuters in and around Hazratganj.

The district administration organised a voting carnival on Friday to attract first-time voters. A portion of Hazratganj from GPO crossing up to St Francis' crossing was closed for traffic. District Magistrate Kaushal Raj Sharma said they were targeting the youths who would be voting for the first time. He said there were over one lakh new voters. A signature wall and selfie point were also set up. The roadshow of SP candidate Poonam Sinha, who was accompanied by daughter and actor Sonakshi Sinha, moved from GPO, Lal Bagh to Novelty and also the old parts of Lucknow, resulting in traffic snarls at various points.

Schools getting over in the afternoon only added to the problem. With the Hazratganj road closed due to the carnival, the traffic was diverted towards the back side in Nazirabad, which created problems because of the traffic coming from Saharaganj. At GPO where the Samajwadi Party workers were collecting for the roadshow, there was a row of cars, creating bottlenecks for vehicles moving from here towards Ashok Marg or Vidhan Sabha Marg. The rush of crowd to have a glimpse of Sonakshi Sinha resulted in a logjam.

SP Traffic, Purnenda Singh admitted that it was a chaotic and hectic day. "The portion of the Hazratganj street being closed, the traffic around it was impacted. Several other programmes were also being held in the area simultaneously and it also led to snarls," he said.

"We tried our best to ensure smooth traffic flow despite the diversions and we also used cranes to remove the vehicles not parked properly," he added.

Model code of conduct to hit Akshaya Tiritiya sales

Lucknow (PNS): The model code of conduct is sure to adversely affect the sales on the occasion of Akshaya Tiritiya. Organising secretary, Lucknow Sarrafa Association, Adheesh Jain said Akshaya Tiritiya was falling on May 7 and in view of the model code of conduct, people would not be able to carry big amount of cash with them, and therefore, the sales would be hit. He said most of the transactions were made through cash. "With even a thin chain costing not less than Rs 70,000, we do not expect the gold sales to be huge," he said.

Asked as to why people preferred cash transactions

now that purchases through e-wallets and debit/credit cards were in vogue, Jain said most of the buyers were not comfortable with the idea and still dealt in cash.

As per figures vis-a-vis Akshaya Tiritiya, provided by sarrafa market, 100 kg gold worth Rs 9.5 crore was sold in 2007 while 75 kg gold worth Rs 9.38 crore in 2008, 70 kg gold worth Rs 10.43 crore in 2009, 50 kg gold worth Rs 9.20 crore in 2010, 65 kg gold worth Rs 13.65 crore in 2011, 75 kg gold worth Rs 25 crore in 2012, 45 kg gold worth Rs 13 crore in 2013, 42 kg gold in 2014, 36 kg in 2015, 41 kg in 2016, 40 kg in 2017 and 40 kg in 2018 were sold.

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NO PERMISSIONS NEEDED FOR 3 YEARS

Every Indian must be free to dream and dreams need no permissions! If we are to solve our jobs crisis, we need young entrepreneurs across sectors to start lakhs of new business that employ crores of young job seekers. To encourage this, we must first free them from the yolk of excessive regulation and red tape.

Our promise is that no new business will need permission from the Government for the first 3 years of its existence. We will abolish the Angel Tax that has hurt the flow of funds to new ventures. We will ensure that bank credit and other financial incentives are available to all new businesses that generate employment.

We cannot have justice while our entrepreneurs struggle to bring their dreams to life.

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Mala, Helen, Nargis: How are cyclones named?

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Mala, Helen, Nargis and Nilofar may sound like the names of yesteryear Bollywood actors, but they are, in fact, lethal cyclones that have brought violent winds, heavy rains and wreaked destruction. As Cyclone Fani pounded the Odisha coast on Friday, the name 'Phoni', which was suggested by Bangladesh, also evoked curiosity. How the Cyclones named?

Mritunjay Mohapatra, the Additional Director General of the India Meteorological Department (IMD), said Fani, pronounced as 'Foni', means a snake's hood.

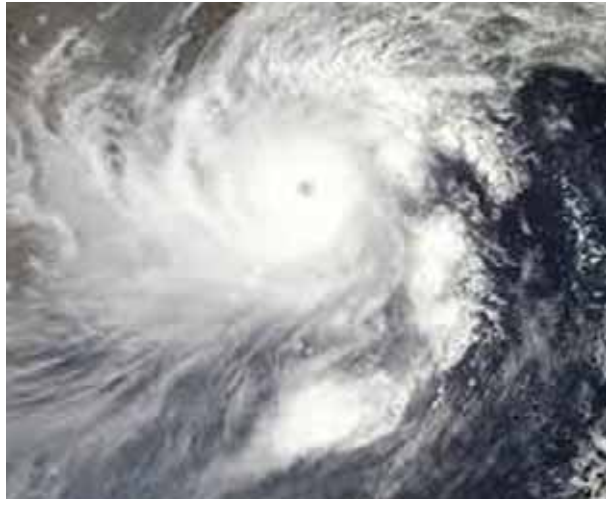
The World Meteorological Organisation/Economic and Social Commission for Asia

and the Pacific Panel on Tropical Cyclones, at its twenty-seventh session held in 2000 in Muscat, Oman, agreed to assign names to the tropical cyclones in the Bay of Bengal and Arabian Sea.

After long deliberations among the member countries, the naming of tropical cyclones over north Indian Ocean commenced from September 2004.

The eight countries along the Bay of Bengal and Arabian Sea suggest names that are sequentially listed. The nations suggest names alphabetically - Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Myanmar, Oman, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Thailand.

The Regional Specialised Meteorological Centre (RSMC) based here gives a tropical cyclone an identification from



the names list. The identification system covers both the Arabian Sea and the Bay of

Bengal. So, for instance, Bangladesh suggested 'Onil' the first in the list. Onil origi-

nated in Arabian Sea, off the Gujarat coast between September to October 2004. It made landfall in the state, but impacted both India and Pakistan.

Cyclone Phetai, suggested by Thailand, originated in the Bay of Bengal and made landfall in Andhra Pradesh, ravaging the coastal districts in December last year.

The next cyclone, whenever it originates, will be named 'Vayu', suggested by India.

Of the 64 names suggested by these eight countries, 57 have been utilised. Some of the names suggested by India are Agni, Jali, Bijli, Akash, while Mala, Helen and Nilofar were suggested by Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Pakistan respectively.

These lists are used sequentially and they are not rotated every few years, unlike the Atlantic and Eastern Pacific lists. "A storm causes so much death and destruction that its name is considered for retirement and hence is not used repeatedly."

"If the public wants to suggest the name of a cyclone to be included in the list, the proposed name must meet some fundamental criteria," a circular on naming the cyclones over the North Indian Ocean said.

"The name should be short and readily understood when broadcast. Further, the names must not be culturally sensitive and must not convey some unintended and potentially inflammatory meaning," it added. The name can be

communicated to the director general of the IMD.

According to the IMD, in the beginning, storms were named arbitrarily. Laxman Singh Rathore, a former director general of the IMD, said the practice of naming the storm first started in the United States. This helped identify it and also aided the researchers.

Earlier, the storm was named after the coast it hit, Rathore added. "Then the mid-1900s saw the start of practice of using feminine names for storms. In the pursuit of a more organised and efficient naming system, meteorologists later decided to identify storms using names from a list arranged alphabetically," the IMD said explaining the genesis of the naming process.

"Before the end of 1900s, forecasters started using male names for those forming in the Southern Hemisphere. Since 1953, Atlantic tropical storms have been named from lists originated by the National Hurricane Centre. They are now maintained and updated by an international committee of the World Meteorological Organisation," the IMD added.

Storms over South Pacific and Indian Ocean are known as cyclones. In the North Atlantic, central North Pacific, and eastern North Pacific, the term hurricane is used.

The same type of disturbance in the Northwest Pacific is called a typhoon, according to the National Ocean Service of the US' National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration.

Pictures: PTI



WHAT MAKES FANI SPECIAL

- Timing and strength are two factors that make Cyclone Fani, pronounced as Foni, different from most other tropical cyclones in this time of the year. Cyclone Fani started developing around April 25 and has made a landfall this morning in Odisha on the east coast
- Traversing for nearly 10 days over the sea allowed Fani to gather such strength that it is now classified as an extremely severe cyclone. Generally, tropical cyclones over the Bay of Bengal have a lifespan of four-seven days. But Cyclone Fani is different

Between 1965 and 2017, India was hit by 145 cyclonic storms that were classified as severe, very severe, extremely severe and super cyclonic storm. Of these, only 7 were in April and 27 in May

Most of these cyclones (90 i.e. 62%) were generated between October and December

7 DEADLIEST CYCLONES HAVE HIT INDIA SINCE 1970s

Indian subcontinent experiences cyclones from 2 basins: Bay of Bengal basin and Arabian Sea basin. Of the two, more cyclones are generated in the Bay of Bengal and cyclones here have also been more severe than the one generated over the Arabian Sea	One of India's strongest cyclones was the one that affected Andhra Pradesh in 1977. With the lowest pressure of about 919 mbar, the cyclone claimed the lives of as many as 50,000 people	low-pressure system in the Andaman Sea. Over 124 deaths were reported during the time
The reason why tropical cyclones are more prone to the Bay of Bengal is that its surface temperature is more than that of the Arabian Sea. Tropical cyclones generally need a temperature of around 28 d Celsius. The Bay of Bengal is more conducive to this than the Arabian Sea	The 1999 Orissa (now Odisha) super-cyclone claimed the lives of over 15,000 people. Winds reached the speed of 260 kmph	The Gujarat cyclone in 2015 claimed the lives of over 84 people when it hit the western regions of India
	The Machilipatnam cyclone in 1990 claimed the lives of over 950 people. The lowest pressure of the cyclone was about 920 mbar	Cyclone Thane in 2011 was a strongest tropical cyclone, which majorly affected Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh. The cyclone left at least 33 people dead
	Cyclone Hudhud in 2014, which hit major parts of eastern India and neighbouring Nepal, originated from a	Cyclone Phailin in 2013 caused the deaths of over 23 people. It affected mostly the regions of Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha and Jharkhand

AIIMS cancels exam in Bhubaneswar

New Delhi: Due to Cyclone Fani that hit hard eastern coast of Odisha on Friday, the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, (AIIMS), Delhi has canceled the AIIMS PG Exam 2019 examination centre at Bhubaneswar. In the notice released by AIIMS, the examination, which is scheduled for this Sunday May 5, 2019 would not be conducted in Bhubaneswar. Exam would be conducted on a different date for the affected candidates.

Union Health and Welfare Secretary Preeti Sudan tweeted that, "AIIMS PG exam is scheduled on 5th May. Due to cyclone Fani, AIIMS Delhi is cancelling the exam centre in Bhubaneswar. Another exam

Centre with people hit by Fani: PM

Jaipur: Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Friday that the Centre stood with the people in states hit by cyclone Fani. Modi said, "I want to assure the families affected by the cyclone that we are with them at this point of hour. We have collected fresh updates from the officials and had released a fund of Rs 1,000 crore for relief work on Thursday.

"Rescue teams have been operationalised. The National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), Indian Coast Guard, Indian Navy and Indian Army — all have been working with the administration. Coming together to combat bad times is the spirit of India." IANS

BENGAL ON ALERT CM postpones poll programme

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

With super-cyclonic storm Fani ravaging Odisha coastal belt and appearing in no mood to spare Bengal the State Government went on maximum alert state with Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee cancelling her election rallies for the coming 48 hours.

The Chief Minister who was currently camping at Kharagpur some 50 miles from the sea was personally monitoring the situation even as the state administration evacuated several lakh people from the coastal regions.

Tourists had been evacuated from beach joints of Digha, Mandarmani, Shankarpur, Tajpur, Home Ministry sources said adding hotels at the mouth of Bay of Bengal in Bak Khali, Ganga Sagar, Namkhana, Sajne Khali

in Sundarbans had been evacuated and local villagers had been shifted to those places.

"Taking lesson from Aila," that struck Bengal causing extensive damages in 2009 the Government had taken unprecedented measures, a senior official said.

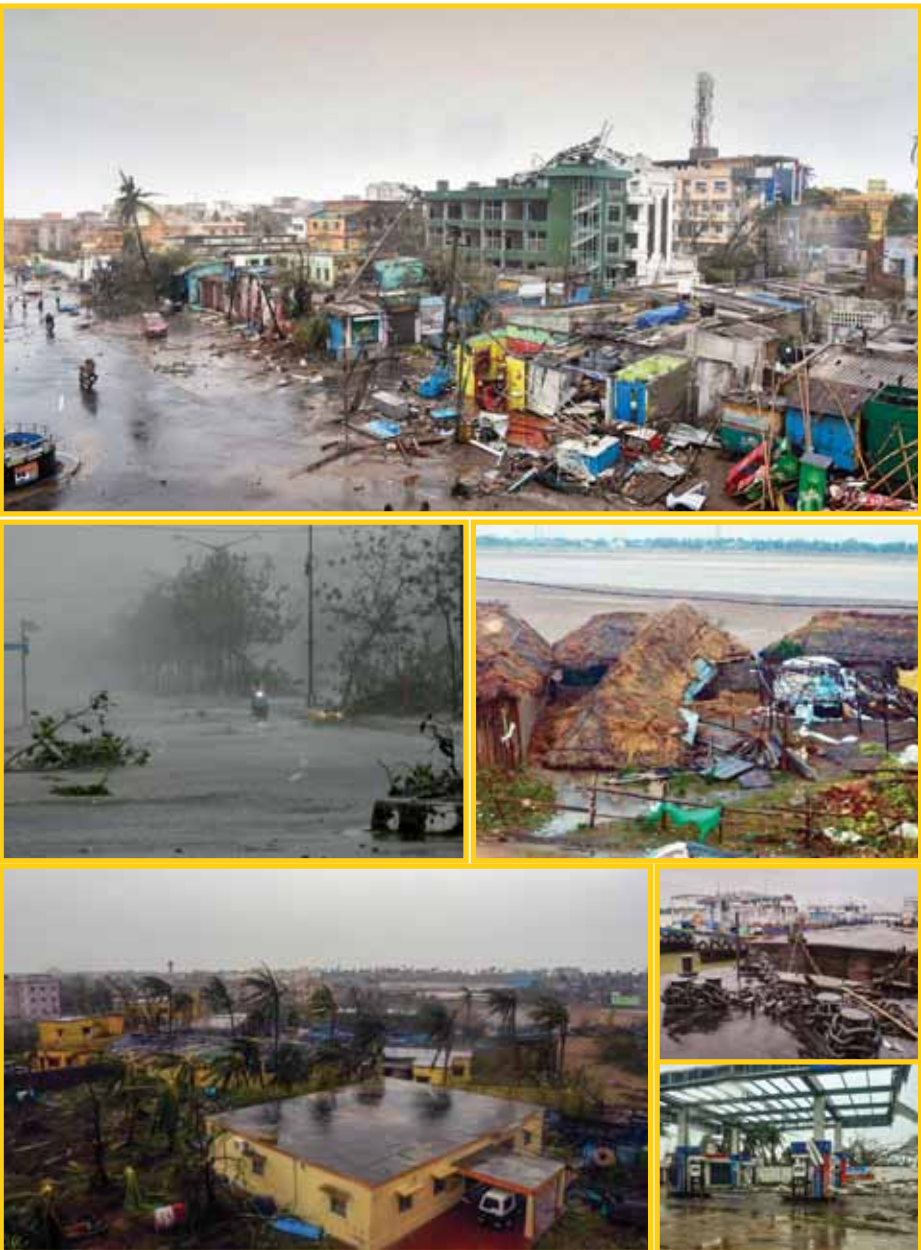
The Chief Minister said "be alert, take care and stay safe for the next two days but don't panic. I am personally supervising the situation on war footing. All the election-related programmes have been postponed for the next 48 hours."

In Kolkata Mayor Firhad Hakim ordered evacuation of people from shanties and hutments. "Several thousand people have been shifted to community halls and roadside shops have been closed," a senior Kolkata Metropolitan Corporation official said adding. The "extremely severe

storm is likely fade into a "severe cyclonic depression" by the time it would enter Bengal sometime in the wee hours of Saturday, weather office said advising "chances should not be taken and people should be on maximum alert."

The State Government had directed owners of "The 42" the tallest building in India to remove the tall crane affixed to it. While the Railways cancelled a number of local trains moving down south to Sunderban regions of Diamond Harbour, Canning, Namkhana causing massive passenger snarl at Sealdah Railway Station. "Trains are being run sparingly considering the entry time of the storm," an Eastern Railway official said. Flights out of Netaji Subhas International Airport had also been suspended for several hours till Saturday causing great inconvenience to the North-East bound passengers sources said.

"Our flights have been cancelled and we are stranded in Kolkata without any boarding facility being provided by the airline authorities," said a Rakesh Sinharoy a passenger appealing to the authorities to make arrangements for the trapped passengers. Meanwhile, the with electoral code of conduct lifted from the affected zones political parties found a great opportunity to do pre-electoral service to the masses even as many of them jumped into action as hordes of mini trucks loaded with relief materials rushed coastwards.



SIDELIGHTS

COASTAL ANDHRA ESCAPES 'FANI' FURY

Coastal Andhra Pradesh escaped the fury of extremely severe cyclonic storm 'Fani', which hit Odisha coast near Puri on Friday, officials said. Though the cyclone had an impact on 700 villages in north coastal Andhra, the calamity passed off without causing any loss of life or major property damage. The cyclone triggered heavy rain in parts of Srikakulam, Vizianagaram and Visakhapatnam districts. Srikakulam district bordering Odisha witnessed the maximum impact. The gusty winds speeding up to 140 km per hour uprooted trees and electricity poles, affecting power supply and road transport. Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu told reporters after a review meeting in the state capital Amaravati that 733 villages were affected and restoration works were completed in 408 villages by Friday evening.

ASSAM ON ALERT AS FANI LIKELY TO HIT TODAY

The Assam Government has sounded an alert in all districts of the state following a warning that Cyclone Fani will lash Assam and other parts of the northeastern region for two days starting Saturday early hours. The Regional Meteorological Centre (RMC) at Guwahati said that there will be heavy to very heavy rains in most of the northeastern states including Assam on April 4 and 5 and strong surface winds with speeds of up to 40 km per hour. "Extremely severe cyclonic storm, Fani (pronounced as 'Foni') over west central Bay of Bengal has already hit coastal region of Odisha. It is very likely to impact Assam and other northeastern states on late Friday night or Saturday early morning. There will be heavy to very heavy rain accompanied by strong winds," said Sanjay O'Neill Shaw, Deputy Director General of the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) based in Guwahati.

BOLLYWOOD CELEBS PRAY FOR SAFETY OF PEOPLE

A slew of Bollywood celebrities including Abhishek Bachchan, Tamannaah Bhatia and Riteish Deshmukh have prayed for the safety of those who have been affected by the cyclonic storm Fani. The extremely severe cyclonic storm Fani with wind speed touching nearly 200 kmph that made landfall earlier on Friday on the eastern coast wreaking havoc in Odisha, will cross several districts in the state before advancing to neighbouring West Bengal.

EC RELAXES MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT IN ANDHRA

The Election Commission on Friday relaxed the model code of conduct (MCC) in four districts of Andhra Pradesh to facilitate rescue and rehabilitation works in the wake of the extremely severe cyclonic storm, Fani. Chief Electoral Officer of Andhra Pradesh had requested the EC to relax the provisions of MCC in East Godavari, Visakhapatnam, Vizianagaram and Srikakulam districts.

CYCLONE FANI TO AFFECT WEATHER IN NEPAL

Extremely severe cyclonic storm Fani which made landfall in the Indian state of Odisha on Friday, is expected to affect the regular pattern of weather conditions in some parts of Nepal, weather officials said here. Although the cyclone is not likely to make its way to Nepal, light to moderate rain coupled with lightning and strong winds will occur in some parts of the Himalayan nation's eastern and central regions on Friday and Saturday, according to the Nepal Weather Forecast.

CYCLONE FANI TO HAVE NO MAJOR IMPACT ON LANKA

Tropical cyclone Fani will not have a major impact on Sri Lanka in the coming days. Sri Lanka's Disaster Management Centre (DMC) said here on Friday. The powerful cyclone slammed into India's eastern coastline on Friday, bringing torrential rain and winds of up to 200 km/h. It is one of the most severe storms to hit the region in recent years. Assistant Director of DMC Pradeep Kodippili said that cyclone Fani was expected to increase wind speeds up to 200 km per hour and although there was no major threat to Sri Lanka, officials were deployed in several districts in case of an emergency.

EC TAKES ALL MEASURES TO PROTECT EVMS, VVPATS

With Cyclone Fani barreling its way to West Bengal from Odisha, the Election Commission has taken all measures to protect strongrooms where EVMs and VVPATS have been stored, a senior EC official said on Friday. The EVMs and VVPATS are for use in the seven parliamentary constituencies going to the polls in the fifth phase in the state on Monday, he said. EC officers in the state held video conferences with district magistrates and telephonic meetings during the day with senior officials on precautionary measures needed to be taken for the VVPATS and the EVMs.

RLYS TO TRANSPORT RELIEF MATERIAL AT NO COST

The railways will transport aid and relief materials free of cost to cyclone 'Fani' affected Odisha, West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh, the national transporter said on Friday, in the wake of large-scale devastation by cyclonic storm.

MEGHALAYA BRACES FOR CYCLONE FANI

The Meghalaya Government has sought deployment of a platoon of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) in the state in view of Cyclone Fani, officials said on Friday.



'BABY FANI' BORN IN ODISHA RLY HOSPITAL
A baby was born in an Odisha railway hospital as the extremely severe storm wreaked its havoc on Friday and her name came to officials in a flash — she could only be Lady Fani for them. The baby was born at 11.03 am in the railway hospital in Mancheswar, barely five km from the Odisha capital Bhubaneswar, officials said.

Genuine scores?

The high percentages in CBSE raise questions on marks moderation policies and testing standards in our schools



Should we celebrate the high scores of the CBSE's Class XII results or worry about imposing unrealistic performance pressure on the younger generation, considering that only a skimming layer of five to 10 per cent students will get into good colleges? Or should we stop to wonder if we are building an unfair expectation of deservedness among our young and not preparing them for a failure in a realistic competitive scenario that's not based on marks or grades but application of imbibed knowledge? These are questions we

must seek answers to considering that with the results hitting almost 100 per cent accuracy, the pressure is upon the universities to keep the cutoff percentages high. This year, a total of 17,690 candidates scored 95 per cent and above in aggregate, up 39 per cent from 12,737 in 2018. A staggering 94,299 scored 90 per cent and above, an all-time high for the CBSE. And with greater excellence showed by students in Delhi/NCR, many from other boards are worrying that their chances of making it to prestigious national colleges are next to nil.

While there is much debate going on about CBSE's marks moderation policy, which allows grace space to students and sets a grammar for a more equitable assessment code, question is of the status of the average students who may not have breached the 90s' barrier but aren't too bad either. Also, what of those who have not peaked the expectation levels that keep cresting year after year? Clearly, standardisation of marking protocols is building up more complexities in the system of higher education. Testing methods are being simplified and made more objective without factoring into account analytical ability or subjective assessment, the last being the preserve of humanities. Isn't it extraordinary that tests for non-quantitative subjects such as English or History can yield perfect scores? St Stephen's, one of the country's premier arts colleges, had a cut-off that went up to 99.25 per cent in one of the recent years! The problem with such a testing format is that it encourages learning by rote rather than priming creative thinking or challenging teaching quality. In the process, merit, too, is being compromised as two students with different real capacities, maybe one 80 per cent and the other higher, are being flat-planed on a performance graph. This formula is also setting off an unhealthy competition among boards which are inflating the marks of the students to get better results. In this androidish rush, all we are producing is overhyped talent and attempting an artificial bridging of divides. Something that has consistently been reflected in the series of Annual Status of Education Reports (ASERs), which show how students fail in simple language and mathematical ability when tested outside the format. Improving scorelines does not necessarily mean achieving high outcomes in actual learning. The solution clearly lies in a more realistic evaluation mechanism in our school system. While it is good to know that we have a high percentage of young people with a competitive edge, it is imperative that we make our higher institutions of learning as competitive when it comes to teaching standards and create more berths for students at the state level rather than have them flock to Delhi or known hubs. At the same time, more disciplines need to be developed so that students can stream into their chosen vocation with a specific qualifier entry test matching their skills. Till we arm every student with an opportunity to make good, the larger purpose of education in developing potential will be unmet.

Unveiling some truths

A Kerala institution's decision to prohibit women from wearing *niqab* is about right interpretation of texts



The decision by the Kerala-based Muslim Educational Society (MES), prohibiting female students from wearing veils in its institutions across the country, is not only about keeping to its reformist legacy but more about challenging the theological discourse set by powerful revisionist groups, who control mosques and madrasas. It is a brave attempt to uphold the true spirit of the holy texts and the Prophet amid a sea of interpretations by variant scholars, some of which have set the rigid template of Islam in our perception. It is about reinstating the position of women in Islam as it was intended and not circumscribing them by patriarchal interventions and culture constructs of the later years. At a time when Islamophobia has overpowered a true understanding of the religion, such voices are needed to dispel mistruths and begin where it is needed most, in education. The group runs 35 colleges, 72 schools and has around one lakh students, the future generation which MES president PA Fazal Ghafoor believes should be mainstreamed rather than feared, feel respected rather than reviled. In its circular, the MES even quoted a Kerala High Court order from December 2018, which dismissed a plea filed by two female students of Christ Nagar Senior Secondary School in Thiruvananthapuram, seeking to wear headscarves. The rationale being that the disadvantages of being marked out narrow down the advantages of maintaining parity. Although it would appear that the IS-operated blasts in Sri Lanka and the resultant swoop in South India may have set a precautionary context, Ghafoor has been consistent in his stand against veiling for far longer, saying it was un-Islamic and a cultural import. He had also said that wearing the *niqab* continuously can cause Vitamin D deficiency in Muslim women. Most importantly, such a move would actually uphold the identity of women as the misuse of the veil as a subterfuge has cost the community, the latest suicide bombers turning what should be a matter of choice to a matter of concern. Many purist scholars, too, maintain that the *Quran* does not specifically mention the *burqa* or tell women to wear confining clothes and cover their faces. Instead, it instructs men and women to dress and behave modestly in society and lower their gaze when interacting with each other. Much of the legitimacy of the *burqa* is drawn from the *Hadith* or traditions of life in the days of Prophet Muhammad and are, therefore, attributed to him. These have been conflated to embody the very idea of religiosity. However, he himself had always professed followers to go by the *Quran*. Besides, women in his times were progressive, were allowed to work unveiled and even today, they are not allowed to cover their faces during Haj, the idea being there should be no barrier between the devotee and her experience of divinity.

Of course, one must understand that in the backdrop of a growing Islamophobia, the veil has returned as an identity marker of the revivalist fervour of the times. This has resulted in the veil being politicised and tokenised as a tool for impact. Little wonder then that the extreme rightists at home raised the issue of banning the veil given its misuse by terrorists in Lanka. So long as it continues to be a power tool to perpetuate the politics of religion, the veil can only generate controversies and be used for point-scoring. Real victory is when women themselves are comfortable about choosing or shunning it.

opinion

An evolving democracy

Despite the Constitution being a comprehensively written document, ambiguities remain, which have been resolved by smart interpretations



KK PAUL

The selection of a Prime Minister is a relatively smooth affair in case the results of a general election are decisive. In such cases, the Prime Minister virtually selects himself. But this is not always the case. There have been instances post a general election, as also a mid-term poll, where Presidents have had to undertake strenuous exercises before making the final selection. Some such cases — where the decision-making was not so smooth and conventions were not followed — will be recalled in this column.

India's Constitution is one of the longest in the world. Its drafting took almost three years and was debated extensively before being finalised. Despite being a comprehensively written document, ambiguities remain, resulting in varying interpretations, sometimes leading to controversies.

Article 74 of the Constitution is modelled on Section 9 of the Government of India Act, 1935, which lays down the basis of a Cabinet system (Council of Ministers) with the Prime Minister as the head of the Cabinet to aid and advise the President. Article 75 lays down that the Prime Minister shall be appointed by the President. Obviously, it is left to the latter to take a decision and appoint the former. As per the Constitution, the Prime Minister and the Council of Ministers are responsible to the House of the People. Article 75(3) says such a person chosen as the Prime Minister has to have the confidence of the House. Though not mentioned explicitly in the Constitution, ultimately, it becomes the weightiest factor in the selection process with the President.

In the case of a single political party or a pre-poll alliance having majority, who have chosen a leader, the decision-making is uncomplicated and smooth. Complications arise in cases where claims of relative strengths conflict and overlap. For such situations, too, over a period of time, conventions and precedents have evolved, facilitating the decision-making process.

Presidents have adopted varying yardsticks for different situations, which are now part of our Constitutional history. After the sixth general election in March 1977, Morarji Desai of the Janata Party had become the Prime Minister. He had to resign mid-term on July 15, 1979, on account of certain intra-party stress factors, even though he continued to be the leader of the Janata Party. The next day, the then Deputy Prime Minister Ch Charan Singh broke away from the Janata Party and formed his own party. As per the convention, the then President Neelam Sanjeev Reddy invited Leader of the Opposition YB Chavan to form the Government. Expressing his inability, Chavan suggested to the President that a combination of parties had emerged led by Ch Charan Singh, which could form the Government. The President at this stage set a precedent when he asked for lists of



supporting MPs, both from Morarji Desai as well as Ch Charan Singh. Ultimately supported by the Congress, Charan Singh was sworn in as the Prime Minister on July 28, almost two weeks after Morarji Desai's resignation. He was supposed to prove his majority during the Monsoon Session of Parliament but had to resign on August 20 for want of support from the Congress.

While resigning, he had advised the President to dissolve the House for a fresh election. Strictly following the convention, the advice of a Prime Minister, who had failed to win the confidence of the House, was not binding on the President. In this case, President Neelam Sanjiva Reddy, instead of making an offer to Jagjivan Ram, then Leader of Opposition, dissolved the House and Ch Charan Singh continued as the caretaker Prime Minister for almost five months till the seventh general elections were held in December 1979. It has been often observed that this decision was propelled by the previous history of the President and Jagjivan Ram from their days together in the Congress at the time of its split in 1969.

The precedent of obtaining lists of MPs in support was later repeated in 1999 by President

KR Narayanan, when one of the claimants was unable to furnish the requisite numbers, leading to the post-Kargil war general elections in September 1999.

Earlier in November 1989, after the ninth general election, as no party had secured an absolute majority, President R Venkataraman invited Rajiv Gandhi in his capacity as the leader of the largest party in Parliament to form the Government. After his refusal, VP Singh, with letters of support from the Left Front as well as the BJP, formed the Government. As the latter withdrew their support on October 23, 1990, VP Singh was asked to prove his majority in the House. Having lost the vote 142 to 346, he had to resign on November 7, 1990. The Congress was once again asked to form the Government, but they instead supported Chandrasekhar's breakaway group. Accordingly, Chandrasekhar was sworn in as the Prime Minister. Later, in March 1991, after the withdrawal of support from the Congress, he resigned, advising dissolution of the Lok Sabha, which was accepted by the President.

At least on one occasion, the principle of making the first offer to the largest party appeared to be embarrassingly impractical. In 1996, the then

President Shankar Dayal Sharma had invited Atal Bihari Vajpayee to form the Government, as the BJP was the largest party with 161 seats, its allies having 34, thus making it a total of 195.

On the other hand, the United Front had a total of 318, including the Congress' support. Embarrassingly, also for the President, Vajpayee failed to secure the vote of confidence and had to resign within 13 days of being sworn as the Prime Minister. Obviously, while extending the invitation to Vajpayee, his capacity to win confidence of the House had not been considered.

Ultimately, what matters is the satisfaction of the President that his choice would be able to win the confidence of the House. Based on this principle, after Indira Gandhi's assassination, Giani Zail Singh as President had invited Rajiv Gandhi to be the Prime Minister in 1984, even though at that time, he had not been formally elected as the leader of the party.

In 2004, the difference between the Congress (145) and the BJP (138) was very small, but the then President, APJ Abdul Kalam had invited the Congress to form the Government not only because it was the largest party but also

because it had the largest pre-poll support (UPA) in numbers.

The modalities of the selection process were looked upon in detail by the Sarkaria Commission, which had recommended that the President should invite the leaders of the parties in the following order: (i) Leader of the largest pre-poll alliance of parties, (ii) Leader of the single largest party, (iii) Leader of the post-poll alliance.

Later, the Commission, to review the working of the Constitution chaired by former Chief Justice of India MN Venkatachali, had suggested that in certain ambiguous situations, the President could send a message to the Lok Sabha to choose a leader, who would then be appointed the Prime Minister. Such a procedure would do away with the requirement of a vote of confidence in the House. Ever since our independence, despite our initial lack of experience in running democratic institutions, it is heartening that we have, as the world's largest democracy, evolved in a manner to set an example to the rest.

(The writer is a former Governor of Meghalaya and Uttarakhand and a former Commissioner of Police, Delhi)

SOUNDBITE

I was member of Lok Sabha for three decades. I am getting a feedback that Lok Sabha will miss me.



Lok Sabha Speaker —Sumitra Mahajan

I don't understand the unwarranted interest about my citizenship. I have never hidden or denied that I hold a Canadian passport.



Actor —Akshay Kumar

You (Modi) are protecting people from Pakistan's aggression. This is a big achievement. Everyone is happy. But you should also protect the fields of farmers.



Congress leader —Priyanka Gandhi

I don't like Prime Minister Modi and BJP president Amit Shah but I don't see Congress president Rahul Gandhi as the Prime Minister either.



Lyricist —Javed Akhtar

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Keep up the momentum

Sir — This refers to the editorial, 'Azhar nailed, finally' (May 3). The Pulwama terror attack on February 14 was, perhaps, the deadliest that occurred in the Valley in the past three decades of militant activity in Kashmir. This Pakistan based-terror outfit, the Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM), claimed responsibility for the attack and was also responsible for many other attacks in India, including on the Parliament, Pathankot and Uri among others.

For the last 10 years, India had relentlessly tried to put him on the terror list but China's opposition was the thorn in India's side. It was only after Pulwama that the US, the UK and France moved a fresh proposal in the UN Security Council on February 27 to designate JeM chief Masood Azhar as a global terrorist. The efforts put by these countries as also by the Modi Government, which raised the costs for Pakistan's sponsorship of terrorism, led to this diplomatic victory. Times are becoming harder for Pakistan day by day. It stands isolated and

Gambhir cannot play down debates

Elections in Delhi, which are scheduled for May 12, are all set to witness high-octane contests. One among them is the East Delhi seat where BJP's Gautam Gambhir is taking on Atishi Marlena of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP). Gambhir, a former cricketer, was handed the ticket as soon as he joined the BJP. His popularity in this constituency is a mystery. Most know him as a temperamental player with a history of brawls on the field. On the other hand, Atishi is credited with 'transforming' the face of Government schools in the constituency in her capacity as an advisor to Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia. Meanwhile, Gambhir turned down a 'debate' offer by Atishi.

By refusing to take up the gauntlet, he played down the seriousness of the debate and ridiculed the role of discussions in politics. Gambhir was an intense cricketer, who played his game with a grim face and spoke little; though he refused to take sledges and intimidations of the opposition lying down. Gambhir, on a debating level, is no match for Atishi, whose *alma mater* includes Oxford University and he may come a poor sec-

ond. Debates and discussions are essential for parliamentary democracy. An exemplary orator has always excelled in Parliament. Questions of importance have to be taken up with due diligence. If Gautam wins the seat, he may have to learn the intricacies of debates in the literal minefield that politics is.



Ganapathi Bhat Akola

Citizenship row

Sir — There seems to be an acrimonious controversy over the Indian citizenship of Congress chief Rahul Gandhi. The Ministry of Home Affairs has sought for clarification from Gandhi on the basis of allegations made by none other than

BJP leader Subramanian Swamy.

The Congress says such doubts had been clarified in 2016 itself and this charge was old wine in a new bottle. Now that the Supreme Court has agreed to hear the case in the coming week, matters should be resolved once and for all.

Nimai Charan Swain
Bhubaneswar

Half-baked action

Sir — This refers to the editorial, 'Azhar nailed, finally' (May 3). Kudos to the European countries, the US and the UK, who played an important role in pressuring China to toe the line. New Delhi should now mount pressure on the UN as also those nations who are a witness to terrorism like India, to fight collectively and ensure that the most wanted terrorists are extradited to face trial in Indian courts.

Ahbinay Kumar
Via email

Irresponsible conduct

Sir — Congress chief Rahul Gandhi should have put the matter to rest by admitting his mistake for attributing the phrase 'chowkidar chor hai' to the Supreme Court. The top court's stand, asking him for an apology, will act as a deterrent against being irresponsible.

Anish
Via web

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

Riding rough seas of book piracy

UNESCO's 'Open Access' policy is promoting a flow of ideas and helping narrow the knowledge gap between industrialised and other nations



ERIC FALT

In recent years, publishers, authors and booksellers have been plagued by piracy, copyright infringements and resulting sales losses. Book pirates directly threaten publishers by running websites that offer quick and free downloads of e-versions of the books. Thus, online book piracy poses the same threat to legitimately produced and distributed books that pirates and buccaneers pose to lawfully registered boats on the high seas.

The Association of American Publishers claims that the book publishing industry in the United States alone loses \$80 to \$100 million to online piracy every year. Other art forms such as films and music have also fallen prey to piracy. According to the UK-based piracy tracking company MUSO, members of the illegal downloading community paid more than 300 billion visits to pirate websites in 2017.

As internet connectivity and bandwidth have continued to grow, so has online piracy. Recently, in a decisive step, publishing giants, including Penguin Random House and HarperCollins, took legal action against OceanofPDF, an e-book piracy website, which led to its deactivation. However, OceanofPDF is just one of thousands of websites that mushroom every day and sprout back under different domain names when discovered.

Online piracy has both technical and socio-economic implications. While the rapid proliferation of creative products online often makes it almost impossible to check their authenticity, or to distinguish between the real and the fake, pirated books may understandably have a certain appeal for those keen to obtain books at cheaper prices or for free. Unsurprisingly, more than four million e-books — or 17 per cent of all e-books — are pirated.

Unfortunately, piracy of popular books is rampant in India, too. Best-selling author Jeffrey Archer was once famously approached by a vendor at a traffic light who tried to sell him a pirated version of one of his own books. Indeed, reproducing a book along with its jacket is one of the most common forms of piracy in India, and often dupes readers into buying pirated books.

Piracy in the education sector is also widespread. As recently as March, over 30,000 pirated National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) books worth ₹5 million were seized by the Delhi Police. Despite their low prices, piracy of school and college textbooks in India tends to be alarmingly high. The delayed availability of books creates an artificial scarcity that pirates capitalise on.

UNESCO lauds the Government of India's efforts to protect the book trade through successive amendments to the Indian Copyright Act (1957). These amendments have sought to make the infringement of copyright a punishable offence. However, there have also been occasional setbacks relating to the recognition of copyright in the country.

For instance, a prominent case in 2016, involving a leading academic publisher and a photocopy service provider, saw the Delhi High Court rule, "Educational institutions do not require a licence or permission from publishers for making and distributing course packs to students if the copyrighted materials included in them [are for] instructional use." With escalating demand for educational resources in India, it is imperative that we build a robust culture of honouring copyright and appreciating its importance.

At UNESCO, we have chosen to make all our electronic publications freely accessible and downloadable. We are proud that our adoption of an 'Open Access' policy is legitimately promoting the unrestricted flow of ideas and helping narrow the knowledge gap between industrialised and other countries. Besides, since 2010, UNESCO has maintained the World Anti-Piracy Observatory (WAPO), a free online platform to raise awareness on copyright legislation, news and announcements of events related to the fight against piracy worldwide. Going forward, sustained advocacy campaigns targeting students and teachers at various levels can contribute effectively to the ethical consumption of creative and educational content.

In a world where the internet is uber-present, copyright infringements have become rife and the lines between the authentic and inauthentic are often blurred, let us arm ourselves against book pirates and expose piracy for the crime it is.

(The writer is Director, UNESCO and a representative to Bhutan, India, Maldives and Sri Lanka)

MULTIPLE SURGICAL STRIKES WERE CONDUCTED DURING UPA'S TENURE BUT THE THEN GOVERNMENT DID NOT NEED TO RIDE ON THE ARMY'S ACHIEVEMENTS.

—FORMER PRIME MINISTER
MANMOHAN SINGH

POINTCOUNTERPOINT



CONGRESS SPEAKING LIES. I THINK SUCH LEADERS PLAY VIDEO GAMES AND PERHAPS ENJOY SURGICAL STRIKES THINKING IT OF SOME GAME.

—PRIME MINISTER
NARENDRA MODI

A long haul lies ahead

The listing of Masood Azhar as a global terrorist is a notable diplomatic victory for India. But the coming months are going to be very critical for us not only diplomatically but militarily as well



ANIL GUPTA

India has secured a big diplomatic victory with the listing of Masood Azhar, Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) chief, as a global terrorist by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) after China decided to lift its earlier imposed technical hold. It has been a long struggle for the Indian diplomatic corps since the issue had been hanging fire for almost a decade now. Incidentally, the JeM had already been listed as a global terror organisation by the UN since 2002. However, Azhar continued to avoid the listing due to Chinese patronage. The decision from the UN Security Council's 1267 Al Qaeda Sanctions Committee came after China lifted its technical hold, imposed on March 13, on a proposal made by the US, the UK and France to this end. Even before that, China, a permanent member of the UNSC, had been blocking India's attempts to secure designation of Azhar for almost a decade.

Certainly, India's consistency has paid off. It was not an easy task to propel China to change its mind, especially when it had clarified after the Brics summit declaration that it was "for banning terrorist organisations but not individuals." China still had three months to lift the technical hold but stretched it to the last limit. Now that it has given in, it is definitely a victory of the Modi Government. The declaration, coming as it does in the midst of the electoral battle, indicates the respect the Chinese leadership has for the current leadership in India with Modi at the helm. It is a spin-off of the Wuhan spirit and definitely a win-win for India.

In diplomacy, there are no clear cut winners or losers until a decisive victory in a war has already declared the winners. In the instant case, both India and China had been pursuing their national interests. The latter was also treading the path very carefully. Chinese national interests were under attack from America as a result of the ongoing trade war between the two countries that had begun much before Pulwama. China's GDP was on a decline. Many companies are contemplating shifting their manufacturing units to India. China, which considers itself as an emerging global power, can ill-afford a declining economy. Also, China's image as a responsible member of the global community was being dented due to its continuous support to Azhar, thus labelling it as pro-terror. The recently held second summit of the Belt Road Initiatives (BRI) also forced China for a re-think. India's persistence to stay away from the initiative and not very encouraging response from those who attended, including Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan, made the Chinese think-tank a bit nervous.

China was feeling the heat of international isolation with majority nations not aligning with it in the matter of terrorism. America's threat to take the matter to the UNSC further weakened China's insistence because it was hardly left with any allies. The fear of losing a huge market like India — one of the major trading partners of China — also weighed heavily in the minds of the Chinese leadership. It was, therefore, perceived by China that in its national interest, it can no longer afford to be seen as a pro-terrorist nation. However, it also did not want to offend its only ally, Pakistan, with whom it pronounces its friendship as stronger than the Himalayas. Hence, China ensured that no reference was made to



Kashmir and Pulwama, a face-saving gimmick for Pakistan, in the Sanction Committee's declaration listing Azhar as global terrorist.

"On this listing issue, China has been communicating with relevant parties in a constructive and responsible fashion. Recently, relevant countries revised and re-submitted the materials for the listing proposal to the 1267 Committee. After careful study of the revised materials and taking into consideration the opinions of relevant parties concerned, China does not have objection to the listing proposal," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said in a press statement.

"The proper settlement of the above-mentioned issue again shows that in international counter-terrorism cooperation, we have to uphold the rules and procedures of relevant UN body, follow the principle of mutual respect, resolve differences and build consensus through dialogue, and prevent politicising technical issues," he added. In his statement, Geng pointed out that Pakistan has made "enormous contributions to fighting terrorism", which should be recognised by the international fraternity. Thus, it is a win-win situation as far as China is concerned. It is a win-win situation for France, the US, Britain and other members of 1267 Committee as well.

Pakistan is also claiming a win-win situation on the pretext that no mention has been made of Kashmir and Pulwama since India has been blaming Azhar as the mastermind and JeM as the executor of the dastardly Pulwama terror attack. Let Pakistan rejoice but the bare fact remains that it has been recognised and designated globally as a fountainhead of terror. The Damocles' Sword in the form of Financial Action Task Force (FATF) continues to hang on its head. A fragile and failing economy is an issue, which cannot allow this rejoicing to be a long lasting pleasant experience. India should also not particularly worry about the fine print because the intent was to have Azhar

declared as a global terrorist and that has been achieved. With the JeM already on the ban list and now its chief also meeting the same fate, it would be a Herculean task for Pakistan to defy the Sanctions. It will have to act, and act swiftly.

A word of caution: The deep state in Pakistan has mastered the art of circumventing international sanctions as is evident from its past behaviour. The banned organisations appear in a new avatar or with a different name and their leaders assume charge again though ostensibly of a different outfit, generally portrayed as a philanthropic organisation. But the watchful eye of FATF may make the task difficult for Pakistan this time.

Undoubtedly, India has secured a huge diplomatic victory but this should not be the end. India has to tread its path carefully to ensure that this victory is not turned into defeat through a Sino-Pakistan collusion. India also has to be prepared for the immediate consequences of this decision. The JeM sympathisers in Kashmir may carry out a sensational attack to show their solidarity with Azhar and as a protest to his listing. Pakistan is already singing a different tune. It says that by not naming Kashmir and Pulwama in the declaration, the global community has accepted their contention that what is happening inside Kashmir is an internal resistance movement. Indirectly, both China and Pakistan have continued to support their consistent policy of "good" and "bad" terrorists. Pakistan has also made its intentions clear that there would be no laxity as far as Kashmir is concerned and that it will continue to follow its policy of "thousand cuts".

India will have to ensure that Pakistan and China are compelled to give up their policy of classifying terrorists to suit their convenience. As far as China is concerned, India has to keep its counter-narrative active and play the 'Tibet card' tactfully. In view of the ensuing summer, when passes in the Himalayas are open, India will have

to be vigilant and guard against any Sino-Pakistan collusion militarily. After the Balakot strikes, both India and Pakistan continue to maintain the stand-off. It is the conventional edge that the Indian armed forces enjoy over their counterparts in Pakistan and the international pressure that has kept Pakistan reined in so far. A misadventure from Pakistan to avenge Balakot with the collusion of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) is a possibility that cannot be ruled out straight away. A lot would also depend on the electoral results on May 23 that would determine the new Government in New Delhi. Before resorting to any misadventure, Pakistan will like to determine the thresholds of the new regime. In a nutshell, the coming months are going to be very critical for India not only diplomatically but militarily as well.

Pakistan's mindset against India will change only if its Army changes its attitude towards India and stops projecting us as a quintessential threat. That can only happen when Pakistan's economy cannot be saved from a collapse. Fear of FATF sanctions may also, to some extent, force the Army to concede a bit. When IMF's bailout package becomes almost a certainty, the Pakistan Army will have no option but to relent. Islamabad will be forced to denounce terrorism as the instrument of state policy.

India has a long haul ahead. It has to ensure that it further tightens its grip against Pakistan through diplomatic, economic and military means. It also has to ensure that the global watch over Pakistan does not slacken. With all indications that Modi may return to power and India continuing with its tough policy against Pakistan, there is a hope that coming years may see a decline in cross-border terrorism. However, the universal fight against global jihadi terror will continue relentlessly.

(The writer is a Jammu-based political commentator, columnist and strategic analyst)

Ukraine has nothing left to lose

What is Zelensky going to do for Ukraine now that he has been swept into office with a landslide majority? Nobody actually knows and this may include Zelensky himself. But Ukrainian voters are no fools



GWYNNE DYER

Ukraine has a new President and he's a comedian. Oh, wait a minute, that's not such a big deal. Guatemala was the first country to elect a comedian as President: Jimmy Morales in 2015. Although Morales turned sort of serious once he took office: He's a Right-wing nationalist, who supports death penalty and opposes abortion. Whereas Volodymyr Zelensky hasn't turned.

Right through the presidential election campaign in Ukraine, Zelensky avoided speeches. Mostly, he just toured the country with a comedy troupe, performed in skits and did stand-up. And he's not just a comedian, he's a Jewish comedian — the very best kind. His style is south Ukrainian,

sort of vaudeville, with a distinctive Jewish inflection and people love it.

Congratulations to Ukraine, by the way, for having Jews as both President and Prime Minister (Volodymyr Groysman) at the same time in the heart of traditionally anti-semitic Eastern Europe and not even making a fuss about it. But what is Zelensky going to do for Ukraine now that he has been swept into office with a landslide majority (73 per cent)? Nobody actually knows and this may include Zelensky himself.

When Zelensky did offer more than jokes, in the short videos he released from time to time during the campaign, it still wasn't policies. More like mood music, really.

"He's from a family of Jewish Soviet intellectuals from a Russian-speaking industrial region (in eastern Ukraine)," Vyacheslav Likhachev of the National Minorities' Rights Monitoring Group in Kyiv told the *Haaretz* newspaper. "He has repeatedly made fun of over-the-top (Ukrainian) national patriotic discourse."

"Zelensky might make some symbolic gestures toward nationalist sen-



timent to fend off accusations that he'll sell us out to Russia," Likhachev continued, "but that seems unlikely to me. He probably realises that it'll be hard for him to win over the most nationalist-oriented part of society, so he'll wash his hands of them so as not to alienate the majority."

That will be a welcome change after five years of the pompous nationalist bilge of billionaire Petro Poroshenko, who won the presidency in 2014 after a popular revolt overthrew the pro-Russian stooge Viktor Yanukovich. In a video Poroshenko released just

before the sole presidential debate in Kiev's huge Olympic Stadium last Friday, he tried to play the patriotic card: "There's no room for jokes here. Being a President and supreme commander is not a game... it means being responsible for the people, for the country." It would have sounded more persuasive if Poroshenko had done something about the corruption that has made oligarchs like him rich.

Zelensky's response was lethal: "I'm not your opponent. I'm a verdict on you. I am the result of your mistakes." And by a majority of almost

three-to-one, Ukrainians voted to put their future in his hands. Although, to be frank, most of them doubt that he can really deliver the future of peace and prosperity that they hope for.

The only evidence they have of Zelensky's industry, honesty and wisdom is the television series he writes and stars in, *Servant of the People*. It's a heart-warming story of a humble high school history teacher, whose rant about the dreadful state of the country is secretly recorded by his students and goes viral when they upload it to YouTube. So he is elected President of Ukraine.

Zelensky is not a high school teacher; he is a show business millionaire with his own production company. He may be just as warm and sincere in person as Vasyl Petrovych Holoborodko, the former teacher and accidental President, whom he plays in *Servant of the People*. (It's one of Ukraine's most popular series and is now nearing 50 episodes). Or he may not be.

Journalists are now working their way through all the box sets of *Servant of the People*, trying to glean some clues

about what the new President has in mind. But that's a thankless task because a lot of the show is sheer fantasy (like the sequence where the frustrated Holoborodko machine-guns the entire Parliament).

Ukrainian voters are not fools. They know they are buying a pig in an poke. But they calculate that things might change if Zelensky becomes President, whereas they certainly wouldn't change if any of the usual suspects won the presidency. And things are certainly not good now.

Ukraine has become the poorest country in Europe — far poorer than Russia. Millions of Ukrainians have left the country seeking work in Poland or Russia and the low-intensity war against the Russian-backed separatists in the east drags on endlessly. No post-Soviet leader of Ukraine has made even a dent in the corrupt rule of the oligarchs. Indeed, most of them have been oligarchs themselves. So why not vote for Zelensky? Most Ukrainians feel that they have nothing left to lose.

(The writer's new book is Growing Pains: The Future of Democracy and Work)



NET-ZERO CARBON EMISSIONS

If we have to avoid the dangerous consequences of a warmer world, we must find ways not only to limit and mitigate the risks of physical changes; but also to make political ones. The kind of long-termism that climate change requires is not a good fit with modern electoral cycles — or 24-hour news. Finding ways to counter this is a challenge not just for politicians, environmentalists and civil society groups, but for human civilisation as a whole. *(The Guardian editorial)*

Markets end marginally lower; IT stocks drag

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Market benchmarks surrendered early gains to end with modest losses on Friday, led by selling in IT bluechips, as investors awaited fresh buying triggers amid frothy valuations.

After trading on a positive note through the day, the BSE Sensex ended 18.17 points, or 0.05%, lower at 38,963.26.

In similar movement, the broader NSE Nifty slipped 12.50 points, or 0.11%, to close at 11,712.25. During the holiday-truncated week, the Sensex fell 104.07 points, or 0.26%, while the Nifty shed 42.40%, or 0.36 per cent.

IT stocks came under pressure after tech giant Cognizant slashed its full-year revenue growth outlook. A strong rupee also weighed on the counters.

The US-headquartered Cognizant, which has a significant portion of its employees based in India, revised its full-year 2019 revenue growth outlook to 3.6-5.1% in constant currency terms, significantly less than 7-9% projected just months ago.

In the Sensex pack, losers included TCS, HUL, Tata Steel, HCL Tech, Infosys, Bajaj Finance, HDFC, IndusInd Bank, Asian Paints, ITC and Vedanta, shedding up to 3.70%.

HUL too ended in the red ahead of its quarterly results.

On the other hand, Bharti Airtel, ICICI Bank, NTPC, Yes Bank, Tata Motors, ONGC, Bajaj Auto, M&M, Maruti, Hero MotoCorp and Kotak Bank rose up to 3.11%.

"Market started on a positive note



supported by strong rupee and fall in oil prices. However, gains are capped due to the premium valuation.

"Fall in 10-year yield led the bank index to outperform. Market is likely to stay range bound due to weak global cues while better quarter results may provide opportunity to accumulate," said Vinod Nair, head of research, Geojit Financial Services.

Sectorally, BSE IT, teck, healthcare and FMCG indices fell the most, dropping up to 1.91%.

However, telecom, realty, auto and bank rose up to 1.56%.

The broader BSE midcap and smallcap indices followed the benchmarks to end up to 0.31% lower.

Meanwhile, foreign institutional investors (FIIs) bought equity worth ₹597.54 crore on Thursday, while domestic institutional investors (DIIs) sold shares to the tune of ₹791.69 crore, provisional data available with stock exchanges showed.

Elsewhere in Asia, Korea's Kospi and Hong Kong's Hang Seng ended on a mixed note, while other major bourses in China and Japan were shut for holidays. European equities started off on a firm footing.

The rupee, meanwhile, appreciated to 69.34 against the US dollar intraday. Global oil benchmark Brent crude was trading 0.62% lower at USD 70.31 per barrel.

India produces 32.11 million tonnes sugar in Oct-Apr

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Sugar output in India has reached 32.11 million tonnes in the first seven months of the ongoing marketing year that started October 2018, and the total production could touch a new record of 33 million tonnes, the industry body ISMA said on Friday. Much of the sugar has already been manufactured and only a few mills are in operation at present, it said.

The country's sugar output during the 2017-18 marketing year (October-September) was a record 32.5 million tonnes. The annual domestic requirement of India, which is the world's second largest producer, is only 26 million tonnes.

According to the Indian Sugar Mills Association (ISMA), mills have manufactured 32.11 million tonnes of sugar between October 2018 and April this year. Only 100 mills were in operation as on April 30. The country's top three sugar producing states — Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra and Karnataka — have produced 11.26 million tonnes, 10.7 million tonnes and 4.32 million tonnes, respectively, during the October-April period of the 2018-19 marketing year.

"Even though the quantum of sugarcane crushing in the current year is less than that in the last year, the sugar production in 2018-19 will be marginally more than last year," it said in a statement.

Sugar recovery in northern India has been substantially better than last year. In the other parts of the country, including Maharashtra and Karnataka also, the sugar recovery is better than last year, though not as high as it achieved in north India. "Therefore, the sugar production in the current year for the whole country is expected to be around 33 million tonnes, about 5,00,000 tonnes more than last year," the ISMA predicted.

Cognizant slashes full-year growth outlook; Q1 net income tumbles 15%

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

IT company Cognizant has reported over 15% drop in net income for the quarter ended March, and slashed its full-year revenue growth outlook.

The US-headquartered company, which has a significant portion of its employees based in India, revised its full-year 2019 revenue growth outlook to 3.6-5.1% in constant currency, significantly less than 7-9% projected just months ago.

Cognizant follows January-December as financial year. It cited "first quarter under-performance" and likelihood of slower growth in financial services and healthcare as reasons for the massive cut in full-year outlook.

The first quarter net income at USD 441 million was 15% lower than USD 520 million clocked in the year-ago period. The quarterly revenue rose to USD 4.11 billion, up 5.1% (6.8% in constant currency) from the year-ago period, the company's own estimates.

"Cognizant's growth and performance in the quarter leave room for improvement," Brian Humphries, chief executive officer of Cognizant, said in a statement.

Humphries, who took over the baton from the Francisco D'Souza on April 1, admitted

that the company, despite its client centricity and innovative spirit, was not yet delivering against the market opportunity.

"While I am encouraged by our client centricity, our employees' winning spirit and our innovation, we are not yet delivering against the market opportunity. We are committed to strengthening our execution to invest in growth and drive shareholder value," Humphries added.

Cognizant said its second quarter 2019 year-over-year revenue growth was estimated to be in the range of 3.9-4.9% in constant currency. In the coming quarters, the company intends to bring cost structure closer in line with the revised revenue expectations but will continue to invest in growth, talent, and innovation, McLoughlin said. Also, the strong balance sheet enables Cognizant to maintain financial flexibility while returning capital to shareholders.

HUL Q4 NET PROFIT RISES 13.8% TO ₹1,538 CRORE

FMCG major Hindustan Unilever (HUL) on Thursday reported a 13.84% increase in its net profit to ₹1,538 crore for the quarter ended March 31. The company had posted a net profit of ₹1,351 crore in the

January-March quarter of the previous fiscal.

Sales during the quarter under review stood at ₹9,809 crore, up 8.95%, as against ₹9,003 crore in the corresponding period a year ago, HUL said in a regulatory filing.

HUL's total expenses for the said period were ₹7,765 crore compared to ₹7,181 crore, up 8.13%.

CENTURY TEXTILES AND INDUSTRIES Q4 NET PROFIT ₹227.62 CRORE

Century Textiles and Industries Ltd (CTIL) on Friday reported a standalone net profit of ₹227.62 crore for the fourth quarter ended March 2019. It had posted a net profit of ₹108.69 crore in the January-March quarter a year ago, Century Textiles said in a BSE filing.

The company's total income during the quarter was ₹1,008.54 crore. It was ₹993.32 crore in the corresponding quarter of the previous fiscal. CTIL's total expenses stood at ₹765.38 crore.

Meanwhile, the company said its results were not comparable as it had granted right to manage and operate its Viscose Filament Yarn business, part of the textile segment, to Grasim Industries for 15 years from February 1, 2018, which has paid an upfront royalty of ₹600 crore.

The CTIL board has recommended a dividend of ₹7.50 per share of ₹10 each equivalent to 75% on paid-up equity share capital of the company for the year ended March 31, compared with 65% paid for the previous year for the year.

GCPL NET PROFIT RISES 51.5% IN MARCH QUARTER

Homegrown FMCG major Godrej Consumer Products Ltd (GCPL) on Friday reported a 51.53% increase in consolidated net profit to ₹935.24 crore in the fourth quarter ended March 31.

The company had posted a consolidated net profit of ₹617.19 crore in the corresponding period last fiscal, GCPL said in a BSE filing.

However, its total revenue from operations during the quarter fell 3.06% to ₹2,481.72 crore, compared with ₹2,560.14 crore in the corresponding quarter of the previous fiscal.

The firm's total expense stood at ₹1,974.73 crore, against ₹2,016.65 crore, a drop of 2.07%.

During the quarter, GCPL's India sales were marginally down 0.9% to ₹1,356.09 crore, compared with ₹1,369.76 crore in the year-ago period.

NIFTY 50

SCRIP	OPEN	High	LOW	LTP	CHANGE
NIFTY 50	11722.60	11770.90	11699.35	11712.25	-12.50
BHUSHANG	681.00	710.00	671.80	707.85	28.20
BHARTIARTL	324.45	333.85	324.45	332.75	8.55
NTPC	133.10	136.65	133.00	135.85	2.75
ICICIBANK	397.15	405.20	394.70	402.75	7.20
YESBANK	177.00	181.90	169.70	175.80	2.05
TATAMOTORS	205.00	213.65	203.05	209.55	2.25
ONGC	168.85	171.90	168.70	170.70	1.80
INFRATEL	272.55	278.55	272.10	273.75	2.90
BAJAJ-AUTO	3028.00	3066.00	3020.00	3059.80	29.25
KOTAKBANK	1406.40	1435.75	1400.20	1416.95	10.60
JSWSTEEL	308.00	310.45	305.10	308.90	2.25
TITAN	1145.00	1154.80	1135.05	1145.00	6.85
BPCIL	384.95	386.50	378.55	380.60	2.15
SBIN	309.00	311.80	308.80	309.70	1.55
HEROMOTOCO	2550.00	2587.00	2537.40	2563.20	11.50
BAJAJFINSV	7595.00	7669.90	7590.00	7610.00	31.15
HDFCBANK	2364.20	2378.00	2356.50	2365.00	9.20
UPL	961.20	974.00	959.05	967.65	3.75
POWERGRID	190.90	192.95	190.20	190.95	0.75
RELIANCE	1407.95	1417.50	1402.65	1409.90	4.85
AXISBANK	754.15	763.80	753.45	754.90	2.55
MARUTI	6675.00	6780.00	6675.00	6705.50	22.25
IT	1362.00	1373.20	1360.00	1362.50	3.75
HINDALCO	206.00	206.00	202.65	205.00	0.30
SUNPHARMA	455.00	456.20	448.85	454.25	0.25
ASIANPAINT	1443.80	1456.00	1432.20	1436.00	-0.60
M&M	645.05	652.50	642.85	645.00	-0.90
ITC	304.25	307.45	303.30	304.55	-0.45
GRASIM	900.00	909.95	881.55	897.00	-2.30
COALINDIA	253.05	256.00	251.30	251.70	-0.65
VEDL	168.70	169.00	165.80	167.70	-0.60
INDUSINDBK	1565.00	1579.00	1546.80	1554.15	-7.15
DRREDDY	2910.10	2932.75	2890.70	2906.10	-13.80
CIPLA	568.00	573.00	561.65	562.95	-2.65
GAIL	346.80	350.90	342.40	345.80	-1.75
BAJFINANCE	3130.10	3165.00	3102.30	3110.90	-20.85
WIPRO	293.50	293.70	288.55	291.65	-2.00
HDFC	201.50	203.60	200.00	200.80	-14.60
INFY	727.90	731.00	718.20	723.65	-7.15
EICHERMOT	20571.00	20600.00	20340.00	20356.00	-209.10
ULTRACEMCO	4620.50	4628.00	4552.00	4559.80	-56.50
TATASTEEL	554.00	556.00	546.60	547.70	-7.25
IOC	159.00	160.00	157.70	159.20	-2.20
HCLTECH	1144.00	1149.15	1126.25	1142.00	-18.05
ZEE	418.90	422.40	410.10	411.55	-6.90
HINDUNILVR	1720.00	1727.00	1682.00	1690.65	-32.90
ADANIPORTS	393.00	398.40	385.05	387.30	-8.00
TECHM	830.00	834.45	813.00	815.15	-21.85
BRITANNIA	2782.95	2803.85	2690.00	2702.50	-80.55
TCS	2185.00	2186.05	2125.00	2137.00	-78.40

BSE 500

Script	Open	High	Low	LTP	M&MFIN	396.40	405.80	396.40	402.10
YESBANK	176.80	177.90	169.95	175.60	COLPAL	1198.95	1198.95	1164.00	1169.50
RPOWER	5.48	6.67	5.41	6.48	CANFINHOME	341.80	344.60	330.75	333.30
JETAIRWAYS	125.10	137.95	124.25	135.50	TVSMOTOR	480.00	485.00	470.05	482.00
DELHIA	1407.00	1417.00	1401.40	1407.05	MOTHERSUMI	140.70	142.00	139.10	141.45
DHFL	135.00	142.75	131.30	141.35	BEL	88.30	89.25	86.85	88.35
TATAMOTORS	204.90	213.70	203.20	209.50	RAIN	119.95	119.95	114.80	115.55
SPICEJET	129.80	131.90	129.00	130.10	HDFPC	2030.00	2038.85	2006.00	2010.00
PATANGAL	133.00	139.35	132.25	136.50	CIPLA	564.95	572.45	561.65	564.40
RELCAPITAL	685.65	710.00	672.40	705.95	LICHSGFIN	490.05	495.30	480.00	485.10
PCJEWELLER	113.75	115.40	108.70	109.60	RAYMOND	740.00	764.95	735.85	759.30
TCS	2191.00	2191.00	2125.15	2132.50	EVEAREADY	111.95	114.55	107.05	108.25
IBREALEST	116.30	119.20	114.00	117.30	VOLTAS	609.25	620.85	601.20	604.20
BODMYPEING	134.00	134.00	125.50	126.50	NCC	97.95	98.90	97.95	96.80
INFY	723.75	730.60	719.00	723.75	HEXAWARE	341.80	342.80	333.35	334.40
HDFCLIFE	402.00	418.80	402.00	413.60	RBLBANK	664.95	673.90	663.60	671.20
SUZLON	6.85	6.86	6.70	6.74	COALINDIA	254.00	255.75	251.05	251.80
RELFINRA	111.15	112.20	108.25	110.00	INDIACEM	106.70	108.20	105.00	106.40
SBIN	308.10	311.50	308.10	309.15	ICICIGI	1105.00	1119.20	1082.35	1082.35
MARUTI	6669.15	6780.00	6669.15	6710.90	ZENSARTECH	264.00	267.00	240.50	246.50
ICICIBANK	397.45	405.25	394.75	401.85	BANKINDIA	89.10	90.65	89.00	89.65
ASHOKLEY	90.00	90.75	88.30	89.30	GRASIM	900.00	909.70	881.85	899.00
HEG	1736.05	1801.90	1710.00	1770.05	LUPIN	879.60	880.00	865.40	870.00
BIOCON	567.00	563.10	550.05	551.50	RECLTD	145.10	145.60	142.25	142.55
BRITANNIA	2785.50	2801.05	2688.20	2706.00	JUBLFOOD	1346.00	1361.30	1321.00	1329.00
MFL	422.00	424.95	415.00	422.25	INTELECT	262.05	228.55	216.55	217.65
INDIGO	1550.00	1604.25	1549.75	1570.10	DEEPAKNI	269.05	274.90	266.75	273.50
WIPRO	293.55	293.55	289.10	291.00	ULTRACEMCO	4620.40	4628.70	4557.50	4560.00
KOTAKBANK	1409.00	1435.50	1401.05	1418.15	NIITTECH	1290.00	1290.00	1248.20	1268.15
L&T	130.10	131.25	126.30	127.25	DISHTV	35.85	36.55	35.45	35.85
AXISBANK	754.95	763.30	753.65	755.00	WOCKPHARMA	406.50	410.80	402.70	407.00
BANKBARODA	117.00	121.00	116.55	118.95	EDELWEISS	140.00	144.30	139.00	142.25
CENTURYTEXT	934.00	954.00	9						

Pak issues order to freeze assets of Azhar, impose travel ban

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan has issued an official order to freeze the assets of and impose a travel ban on JeM chief Masood Azhar after the UN declared him a "global terrorist". Pakistan-based Azhar is also banned from selling or purchasing arms and ammunition. The UN sanctions committee on the Islamic State and Al-Qaeda on Wednesday announced the designation of Azhar, leader of Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), over its ties to Al-Qaeda.

The JeM has claimed responsibility for the Pulwama suicide attack that killed 40 CRPF soldiers and led to a spike in military tensions between India and Pakistan. The Security and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) ordered all non-banking financial institutions and regulating authorities on Thursday to block all investment accounts of Azhar. The SECP ordered that all companies should scan their data and inform the SECP within three days about the



necessary action being taken against the accounts of Azhar. An official of interior ministry said that Azhar was already on the Fourth Schedule of the Anti-Terrorist Act (ATA) and could not travel without permission of the police.

He was also barred from having any weapons due to the listing under the ATA. His name was also already on the list of proscribed persons maintained by the National Anti-

Terrorist Authority (NACTA). According to Foreign Office spokesman Mohammad Faisal, Pakistan would fully cooperate with the international community.

Pakistan's foreign ministry, in a notification issued Wednesday said: "The Federal Government is pleased to order that the Resolution 2368 (2017) be fully implemented" against Azhar. The government directed officials to take actions "as

appropriate for the implementation of sanctions" against the JeM chief, according to the notification. The UN designated Azhar as a "global terrorist" after China lifted its hold on a proposal by the US, the UK and France to blacklist him.

The US, the UK and France had moved the proposal to designate Azhar as a "global terrorist" in the UN Security Council's 1267 Al Qaeda Sanctions Committee in February, just days after the deadly Pulwama terror attack carried out by the JeM in Jammu and Kashmir.

Pakistan foreign office spokesman Mohammad Faisal on Wednesday said that Pakistan would "immediately enforce the sanctions" imposed on Azhar.

A veto-wielding permanent member of the UNSC, China was the sole hold-out in the 15-nation body on the bid to blacklist Azhar, blocking attempts by placing a "technical hold" and asking for "more time to examine" the proposal.

Pakistan uses 'terrorism as tool' against India: Ex-CIA director

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Pakistan, obsessed with India as a perceived existential threat, has "created terrorist groups to be a tool" in its struggle against India, a former top American spymaster has said. Former CIA acting director Michael Morell, in a podcast discussion with Kurt Campbell and Rich Verma on Thursday, alleged that Pakistan is one of the most dangerous countries in the world.

Pakistan has "created terrorist groups to be a tool" in their struggle against India, Morell said. Campbell, the former Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian Affairs and Verma, the former US Ambassador to India, now regularly host 'The Tealeaves' Podcast of the Asia Group.

"What they don't realise is that it's impossible to keep those terrorist groups under control. And that eventually comes back to bite you. You know, I believe that Pakistan, at the end of the day, maybe the most dangerous country in



the world," Morell said. Morell who played a key role in the Abbottabad raid that killed Osama bin Laden — the al-Qaeda chief and mastermind behind the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States — in a safe house in Pakistan, said that the population of this South Asian country is exploding, and the demographics are awful.

"The economy's going nowhere. It simply can't provide the jobs that need to be provided for the young people who are entering the labour force. The education system is literally broken. I went to Pakistan more often than I went to any

other country when I was deputy director," he said, referring to his impression about Pakistan when he was the deputy head in the CIA during the Obama administration.

There's no wonder that many Pakistani parents send their kids to madrasa and one knows what happens to a small percentage of the kids who go there. "The extremism is growing from a societal perspective. It's growing within the military. So, it is not impossible, not tomorrow, not next week, not next year, but five years from now, 10 years from now that you could have a color revolution, Arab spring style movement in the streets of Islamabad that ends up with an extremist government there with nuclear weapons. That's what so scary," Morell said.

According to Morell, then president Barack Obama's Pakistan policy in his first term was to get the Pakistanis to see their strategic environment in a real way. "They still see India and, I think, for foreseeable future, will see India as

an existential threat to the state of Pakistan. It's not, it's just not. India stopped focusing on Pakistan a long time ago. They're focusing on their economic future," he argued.

But because the Pakistanis are so obsessed with this perceived existential threat, they've both organised their society in order to protect themselves from that threat. So, they've given an immense amount of power to the military, and much less power to the civilian government, he said.

"The government therefore makes choices that I don't believe, and many people don't believe are in the best long term interest of Pakistan. Pakistan has spent more money on nuclear weapons than they do in education.

"And they use terrorism as a tool against the Indians... and then also in Afghanistan, because they fear Indian influence in Afghanistan. So they've created terrorist groups, right to be a tool of theirs in the struggle against India," Morell added.

'India's boycott of BRI not to affect trade ties with China: Indian envoy

PTI ■ BEIJING

India's decision to not join China's Belt and Road Initiative over sovereignty concerns related to the CPEC has not affected the bilateral trade ties which have seen an "exponential growth", India's Ambassador to China Vikram Misri has said.

India skipped China's 2nd Belt and Road Forum (BRF) held from April 25 to 27 aimed at showcasing its trillion dollar

Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) over its objection to USD 60 billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) which passes through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK).

India had also boycotted the first BRF held in 2017. New Delhi's reluctance to join the BRI has become a major irritant in the relations between the two countries. "We feel that the infrastructure connectivity



should be aligned with national priorities and should respect and follow certain well

respected or broadly accepted (norms) in the world, which include the elements of transparency openness, level playing field, social, environmental and financial sustainability," Misri said.

"These are the principles we follow in our own initiatives. The most important thing is that (they) must be aligned with national priorities. That is one basket. The other basket is that

these initiatives can be sustainable and successful only in so far as they respect issues related to sovereignty and territorial integrity," he said in an interview to China's state-run CGTN.

In an interview to the state-run Global Times in March, Misri signalled India's plans to stay out of the conference which was attended by 37 heads of state and governments, including Pakistan Prime Minister Imran

Khan.

Though the latest interview was recorded well ahead of the 2nd BRF meet, parts of it were telecast on May 1, according to a post on the CGTN website. In the full interview accessed by PTI, Misri said India had its own infrastructure connectivity projects in the neighbourhood and New Delhi's view is that all such projects should be aligned with national priorities.

"With regard to trade and BRI, despite the fact that we are not part of the BRI, there has been no impact on the bilateral trade between India and China. We have seen an exponential growth in bilateral trade with China," he said. "So, we don't necessarily need to look at India-China trade, or indeed the larger economic and commercial relationship through the prism of BRI. I think we can very well

progress on that front," Misri said.

The bilateral trade has grown to about USD 95.5 billion, inching towards the USD 100 billion mark, a target set by Chinese President Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Narendra Modi to be achieved by 2020. Misri said India has had its concerns over the way the BRI has been put out and New Delhi's views are not unknown or a secret.

Afghanistan 'loya jirga' demands 'immediate, permanent' ceasefire

AFP ■ KABUL

A historic "loya jirga" peace summit in Kabul ended Friday with delegates from across Afghanistan demanding an immediate and permanent ceasefire, and President Ashraf Ghani saying he was conditionally prepared to implement the call. This week's loya jirga, or grand assembly, saw about 3,200 religious and tribal leaders, politicians and representatives try to find a breakthrough in Afghanistan's gruelling conflict, which is now in its 18th year. "The government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the Taliban movement should declare and implement an immediate and permanent ceasefire," delegates said in a declaration at the end of the jirga.

They said the ceasefire should start at the beginning of the holy month of Ramadan, which gets underway in the coming days.

Afghan President Ashraf Ghani said he was "prepared to implement the fair and legitimate demand" for a ceasefire but stressed it "cannot be one-sided". "If the Taliban are fully ready for a ceasefire, then we can talk about the technical



Delegates attend the last day of the Afghan Loya Jirga meeting in Kabul Afghanistan, on Friday.

details," Ghani said in a speech. There was no immediate response from the Taliban, who currently are negotiating in separate talks with a US peace envoy in Qatar. The insurgent group has so far refused to even speak with Ghani, who they view as an American stooge. However, last year the Taliban announced a three-day ceasefire at the end of Ramadan after Ghani declared a unilateral ceasefire for eight days earlier in the month.

It was first formal nationwide ceasefire since the US-led invasion of 2001 and saw unprecedented scenes of reconciliation and jubilation in Kabul and across the country. This week's jirga was a remarkable gathering of Afghans from many walks of life. Emotions rode high with attendees sharing tears, recriminations and at least one fist fight as they revisited the horrors of Afghanistan's recent past. The talks between the Taliban and US peace envoy Zalmay Khalilzad this week focus on a potential deal that would see the withdrawal of foreign forces from Afghanistan in return for the Taliban guaranteeing terrorist groups could no longer operate in the country.

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Nepal Army officer dismisses Indian Army's Yeti claim

PTI ■ KATHMANDU

The Nepal Army and a wildlife expert have dismissed the Indian Army's claim that its soldiers have spotted footprints of Yeti, the mythical beast found in the Himalayas, near the Makalu Base Camp, saying they were likely that of a bear. On Monday, the Army claimed its mountaineering expedition team in Nepal found mysterious large footprints in the snow that they believe belong to Yeti, or the abominable snowman.

In Nepali folklore, Yeti is a mythical ape-like creature taller than an average human that is said to inhabit the Himalayas, Siberia, Central and East Asia.

"For the first time, an Indian Army Mountaineering Expedition Team has sited (sic) Mysterious Footprints of mythical beast 'Yeti' measuring 32x15 inches close to Makalu Base Camp on 09 April 2019. This elusive snowman has only been sighted at Makalu-Barun National Park in the past," the Indian Army tweeted on Monday night. The Army also released photos showing



large footprints in the snow which they claim belong to the creature. However, Director General of the Department of Wildlife and National Parks Man Bahadur Khadka has dismissed the Indian Army's claim, "According to our experts, it may be the footprint of a bear found in the Himalayas," he was quoted as saying by the Kantipur Daily. According to Nepal Army spokesperson Bigyan Dev Pandey, a liaison officer of the Nepal Army, who accompanied the Indian Army expedition team, had not directly seen the footprint. Pandey said some 3 to 4 years ago, a French expe-

dition team had reported a similar sighting of giant footprints.

At that time it was reported that the unusual footprints were seen in the mountain. When the wildlife experts were contacted for verification, they said that the Makalu Barun region is home to large snow bears and the footprints might belong to them, the officer said. An Indian Army team of 18 personnel led by Major Manoj Joshi embarked on an expedition to Mount Makalu in Nepal on April 2. On April 9, the team spotted "mysterious footprints" measuring 32 X 15 inches close to the Makalu base camp. Makalu is the fifth highest mountain in the world at 8,485 metres.

It is located in the Mahalangur Himalayas, some 19 kilometres southeast of Mount Everest, on the border between Nepal and Tibet, China. Stories of the Yeti first emerged as a facet of Western popular culture in the 19th century. Given the lack of evidence of its existence, the scientific community has generally regarded the Yeti as a legend.



Actress Kathryn Newton arrives at the premiere of 'Pokemon Detective Pikachu' at Military Island in Times Square on Thursday.

Actor Peter Mayhew, Chewbacca in 'Star Wars' saga, dead at 74

AFP ■ LOS ANGELES

Actor Peter Mayhew, who won over fans worldwide as the Wookiee warrior Chewbacca in the blockbuster "Star Wars" movies, has died at the age of 74, his family announced on Thursday. Mayhew died on Tuesday at his home in Texas, surrounded by loved ones, the family said in a statement released on the actor's Twitter account. "He put his heart and soul into the role of Chewbacca and it showed in every frame of the films from his knock-kneed running, firing his bowcaster from the hip, his bright blue eyes, down to each subtle movement of his head and mouth," the statement said.



Peter Mayhew.

seven feet three inches (2.21 meters), was working as a hospital attendant in London when he was discovered by film producer Charles Schnee. He was first cast in the film "Sinbad and the Eye of the Tiger," in an uncredited role. But he then was cast

in the role that would define his career — as the co-pilot and best friend of Han Solo (Harrison Ford) in the original "Star Wars" film released in 1977.

He would go on to appear in "The Empire Strikes Back," "Return of the Jedi" and

"Revenge of the Sith." The family said he had "fought his way back from being wheelchair-bound to stand tall and portray Chewbacca once more in 'Star Wars: The Force Awakens'."

He then worked to coach his successor in the role, Joonas Suotamo, the family statement said.

Co-star Mark Hamill, who portrayed Luke Skywalker in the iconic films, was quick to pay tribute to the "gentlest of giants — A big man with an even bigger heart who never failed to make me smile & a loyal friend who I loved dearly." "I'm grateful for the memories we shared & I'm a better man for just having known him," Hamill wrote on Twitter.

Mayhew is survived by his wife Angie and three children.

The family said a memorial service would be held on June 29 and a memorial for fans would take place in early December in Los Angeles at Empire Con, an event for "Star Wars" fans.

People love coffee, beer for buzz, not taste

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Our preference for coffee or beer is not based on the way the beverages taste, but how they make us feel, according to a study. Scientists from Northwestern University in the US searched for variations in our taste genes that could explain our beverage preferences, because understanding them could indicate ways to intervene in people's diets.

They counted the number of servings of bitter and sweet beverages consumed by about 336,000 individuals in the UK Biobank. The researchers did a genome-wide association study of bitter beverage consumption and of sweet beverage consumption.

The study, published in the journal Human Molecular Genetics, showed taste preferences for bitter or sweet beverages are not based on variations in our taste genes, but rather genes related to the psychoactive properties of these beverages. "The genetics underlying our preferences are related to the psychoactive components of these drinks," said Marilyn Cornelis, an



assistant professor at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine. "People like the way coffee and alcohol make them feel. That is why they drink it. It is not the taste," Cornelis said in a statement.

ingly preferred sugar-sweetened beverages. "It is counterintuitive. FTO has been something of a mystery gene, and we don't know exactly how it is linked to obesity," Cornelis said.

"It likely plays a role in behaviour, which would be linked to weight management," she said. "To our knowledge, this is the first genome-wide association study of beverage consumption based on taste perspective," said Victor Zhong, a postdoctoral fellow at Northwestern University.

"It is also the most comprehensive genome-wide association study of beverage consumption to date," he said. Beverages were categorised into a bitter-tasting group and a sweet-tasting group. Bitter included coffee, tea, grapefruit juice, beer, red wine and liquor.

Sweet included sugar-sweetened beverages, artificially sweetened beverages and non-grapefruit juices. This taste classification has been previously validated. Beverage intake was collected using 24-hour dietary recalls or questionnaires.

Alcohol intake is related to more than 200 diseases and accounts for about 6 percent of deaths globally, they said. Cornelis did find one variant in a gene, called FTO, linked to sugar-sweetened drinks. People who had a variant in the FTO gene — the same variant previously related to lower risk of obesity — surpris-

Trump admn urged not to end GSP benefits to India

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

The US should not terminate the GSP programme with India after the expiry of the 60-day notice period on Friday, a group of 25 influential American lawmakers has urged the US Trade Representative, warning that companies seeking to expand their exports to India could be hit. The Generalised System of Preference (GSP) is the largest and oldest US trade preference programme and is designed to promote economic development by allowing duty-free entry for thousands of products from designated beneficiary countries.

On March 4, President Donald Trump announced that the US intends to terminate India's designations as a beneficiary developing country under the GSP programme. The 60-day notice period ends on May 3. On the eve of the end of the notice period, the 25 US lawmakers made a last-ditch effort to convince the Trump administration from going ahead with its decision.

The 25 members of the US House of Representatives in a passionate letter urged US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer to continue negotiating a deal that protects and promotes jobs that rely on trade — both imports and exports — with India. They argued that terminating GSP for India would hurt American companies seeking to expand their exports to India.

"India's termination from GSP follows its failure to provide the United States with assurances that it will provide equitable and reasonable access to its markets in numerous sectors," Trump had said in a letter to Congress, providing a notice of his intent to terminate the designation of India as a beneficiary developing country under GSP programme. In his letter, Trump said that he was determined that New Delhi had "not assured" the US that it would "provide equitable and reasonable access" to the markets of India. "I will continue to assess whether the Government of India is providing equitable and reasonable access to its markets, in accordance with the GSP eligibility criteria," he wrote.

The USTR through a simple notification in federal register can formally terminate GSP benefits to India. Expressing concern over such a move, the lawmakers said that no party — in the United States or India — would benefit from terminating GSP



benefits. "American companies that rely on duty-free treatment for India under the GSP will pay hundreds of millions of dollars annually in new taxes. In the past, even temporary lapses in such benefits have caused companies to lay off workers, cut salaries and benefits, and delay or cancel job-creating investments in the United States. Terminating the GSP for India similarly would hurt, not help, companies seeking to expand their exports to India. Any progress made toward resolving issues over the last year of GSP negotiations seems unlikely to take effect if India is removed from the programme," the lawmakers said. "It would be a step back, not forward. Continuing negotiations is the only way to gain new market access for US exports to India," said the letter written by these lawmakers. Reaching a comprehensive solution that benefits both the US import and export interests is further complicated by the upcoming elections

in India, they said. Noting that the 60-day notice period expires in the middle of Indian elections that run from mid-April to late-May, the Congressmen said that it will be up to India's next government to resolve outstanding issues with the US, but seating that government and restarting negotiations also requires time. "A decision to terminate GSP in the midst of the elections risks politicising the issues further, with potentially negative consequences for broader relations with an important ally," the Congressmen wrote. The Congressmen urged Lighthizer not to terminate any GSP benefits until there is an opportunity to negotiate with India's next government. "The alternative is higher trade barriers all around, which would hurt American companies and workers that depend on strong two-way trade between the US and India," they warned. India's exports to the US in 2017-18 stood at USD 47.9 billion, while imports amounted to USD 26.7 billion, leaving a trade balance of USD 21.2 billion in favour of India. India is pressing for exemption from the high duty imposed by the US on certain steel and aluminium products, resumption of export benefits to certain domestic products under the GSP programme, greater market access for its products from agriculture, automobile, automobile components and engineering sectors.

Lanka authorities warn of more attacks

PTI ■ COLOMBO

Sri Lankan authorities on Friday warned that Islamist extremists, who carried out the country's worst terror bombings on Easter Sunday could be planning more attacks in the capital Colombo.

The security has been further beefed up following another leakage of a police internal circular which warned that some of the entry bridges to the city of Colombo and an overhead bridge north Colombo would be blasted by around May 6 by the same terror group which carried out the Easter Sunday attacks.

"Extensive cordon and search operations of the army and sister services across the country with assistance of the police are continuing in search of terrorists, hideouts, explosives, weapons and other warlike items... with the deployment of more and more troops as required," the Sri Lanka Army said in a statement.

Sri Lankan authorities have admitted that there was a failure to act on advance intelligence warnings of the deadly Easter Sunday attacks against churches and luxury hotels that killed 253 people and injured nearly 500 others.

President Sirisena said a friendly neighbour provided additional information but senior officials did not share the intelligence with him.

Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe also said he was not privy to the intelligence reports. Authorities earlier said they believed a little-known local militant Islamist group known as National Tawheed Jamath (NTJ) was behind the



UK Minister of State for Security Ben Wallace, second left, talks to a Catholic priest as he walks out of St. Anthony's church after a visit, in Colombo, Sri Lanka, Friday.

attack. However, the NTJ has not claimed responsibility for the attacks, Sri Lanka's worst. The Islamic State terror group said it had carried out the attacks, and released video of men it says were the bombers. The security has been conducting raids on radical Islamist groups and individuals with links to the bombings.

India-based photo journalist of Reuters given bail
An India-based photo journalist of Reuters news

agency was given bail on Friday after he was arrested by Sri Lanka police for alleged unauthorised entry into a school, officials said.

Siddiqui Ahamad Danish, who is based in New Delhi, was arrested on Thursday when he allegedly attempted to forcibly enter a school in Negombo city to speak to its authorities.

He was later remanded by the Negombo magistrate till May 15, police said. Through a special motion

filed on Friday, his lawyers pleaded bail for Danish. He was released on surety bail and was asked to appear in court on May 9.

Danish was here doing for the coverage in the aftermath of the Easter Sunday bombings that killed over 250 people and wounded nearly 500 others.

The western coastal town of Negombo was rocked by a suicide attack at the St Sebastian's Church, in which over 93 people were killed.

Maduro exhorts Venezuela military to fight 'coup plotter'

AFP ■ CARACAS/ MADRID

Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro on Thursday called on the armed forces to oppose "any coup plotter" after a military uprising in support of opposition leader Juan Guaido fizzled out, and subsequent street clashes left four protesters dead.

On Tuesday, Guaido — who has been recognized by more than 50 countries as the crisis-wracked country's interim president — urged the armed forces to rise up against the embattled leader. A small group heeded the call, but the movement failed to ignite — the military leadership ratified their support for the government, and Maduro is standing his ground despite international pressure.

"Yes, we are in combat — keep morale high in this fight to disarm any traitor, any coup plotter," Maduro said Thursday at a televised event with the military high command, at which he was surrounded by soldiers.

No one can be afraid — it is the hour to defend our right to peace," he said at a ceremony attended by 4,500 military personnel, according to the government. Defense Minister

General Vladimir Padrino said: "We've come to ratify our loyalty ... to the supreme commander of the armed forces, who is our only president, President Nicolas Maduro."

The failed uprising sparked two days of protests against the government in which four people were killed, including two teenagers who died of their injuries on Thursday.

Meanwhile, Venezuela's supreme court ordered the rearrest of influential opposition figure Leopoldo Lopez — who made a dramatic appearance alongside Guaido on Tuesday after he was freed from house arrest. Lopez has since taken refuge at the Spanish embassy.

The 48-year-old Lopez was a prominent opposition leader in 2014 when he was imprisoned after calling for protests against Maduro. He was transferred to house arrest in 2017.

In Washington, US President Donald Trump offered prayers at a White House service for "the people of Venezuela in their righteous struggle for freedom." "The brutal repression of the Venezuelan people must end, and it must end soon," he warned.

Opposition lawmakers and family members announced Thursday that two teenage protesters had succumbed to injuries sustained in the anti-government protests.

Yoifre Hernandez, 14, was hit by gunfire during Wednesday's clashes in Caracas, while 16-year-old Yosner Graterol suffered a gunshot wound during unrest in the northern town of La Victoria on Tuesday, lawmakers and relatives said.

Jurubith Rausseo, 27, died Wednesday after being shot in the head, the non-governmental Venezuelan Observatory of Social Conflict said on Twitter. Another person was killed in the northern state of Aragua on Tuesday.

Human rights organizations and health services reported that dozens of people were hurt on both Tuesday and Wednesday.

The government said more than 150 people were arrested on Tuesday. So far, 25 rebel soldiers have sought asylum at the Brazilian embassy. Speaking from the Spanish ambassador's residence, Lopez said the small rebellion on Tuesday would eventually lead to the end of Maduro's "dictatorship." "It's a crack that will become a bigger

crack ... that will end up breaking the dam," said Lopez.

Madrid said it would not hand over Lopez to Venezuelan authorities, nor would it ask him to leave. Tensions in Venezuela have soared since Guaido, who heads the national legislature, invoked the constitution to declare himself acting president on January 23, claiming Maduro's re-election last year was illegitimate.

The country has suffered five years of recession marked by shortages of basic necessities as well as failing public services, including water, electricity and transport.

On both Tuesday and Wednesday, security forces fired tear gas and rubber bullets at stone-throwing protesters. UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres warned Venezuela's authorities not to use deadly force against demonstrators, while the US and Russia accused each other of making the crisis worse, evoking their Cold War-era confrontations.

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov are to discuss Venezuela when they meet in Finland next week, a US official said.

"We're going to remain in

the streets until we achieve freedom for the Venezuelan people," Guaido told his supporters in Caracas on Wednesday. Pro-Maduro groups also marched through the capital on May Day. Padrino has described Guaido's moves as "child's play." The International Contact Group of 13 countries — including Britain, France, Germany and Maduro's ally Bolivia — announced a meeting in Costa Rica on Monday and Tuesday to discuss the latest flare-up in Venezuela's simmering crisis.

SPAIN REFUSES TO HAND OVER OPP FIGURE

The Spanish government said Thursday it would not hand over Venezuelan opposition figure Leopoldo Lopez, who is wanted by authorities in Caracas but has taken refuge in Madrid's embassy in Caracas.

The government "does not envisage in any circumstances handing over Leopoldo Lopez to the Venezuelan authorities nor asking him to leave the ambassador's residence", the Spanish foreign ministry said in a statement.

Lopez emerged on Tuesday from two years of house arrest to join opposition leader Juan Guaido at a demonstration as

the National Assembly president tried to incite a military uprising against Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro.

Later that day, Lopez sought refuge in the Chilean embassy with his wife and daughter before moving to the Spanish embassy. Lopez was first arrested in 2014 and accused of inciting violent protests against the government. He was handed a nearly 14-year sentence in 2015 and then transferred to house arrest in 2017.

Madrid published the statement following a meeting between the Spanish ambassador and Venezuela's Foreign Minister Jorge Arreaza. It said that Spain wanted to "find a solution as quickly as possible" but stressed that, under international law, diplomatic residences were inviolable.

Lopez's wife Lilian Tintori claimed on Twitter on Wednesday that their house had been robbed and ransacked while they were away. In statements made at the Spanish ambassador's residence on Thursday, Lopez said that the attempted uprising was "part of a process — it's a crack that will become a bigger crack... that will end up breaking the dam."



Lebanese foreign minister Gebran Bassil, left, receives his Spanish counterpart Josep Borrell, at the Lebanese foreign ministry in Beirut, Lebanon.

Vietnamese woman held in Kim Jong Nam murder case freed

Kuala Lumpur (AFP): A Vietnamese woman who stood trial for the assassination of the North Korean leader's half-brother was freed from prison Friday, bringing down the final legal curtain on a dramatic and often bizarre two-year murder mystery. Kim Jong Nam, the estranged relative of Kim Jong Un and once seen as heir apparent to the North's leadership, died in agony after having his face smeared with a banned nerve agent as he waited at Kuala Lumpur airport in February, 2017.

The sensational killing made headlines around the world, and sparked a furious diplomatic row as Seoul accused Pyongyang of an elaborate plot to murder a figure who had spent years in exile and been critical of his family's rule.

Doan Thi Huong from Vietnam and Indonesian Siti Aisyah were arrested after being spotted on CCTV approaching Kim but always denied murder. The women insisted they were tricked into carrying out the hit by North Korean agents who said it was a reality TV show prank and fled Malaysia after the killing. They went on trial, but in



March prosecutors dropped the murder charge against Aisyah after diplomatic pressure and she fled home.

Then last month they withdrew murder charges against Huong, who pleaded guilty to a reduced count of "causing injury" and was told she would be released in May at the end of her sentence.

More than two years after her arrest, the 30-year-old former hair salon worker was freed from prison outside the Malaysian capital at about 7:20 am (2320 GMT Thursday), her lawyer Hisyam Teh Poh Teik told

AFP. Journalists waiting outside the jail saw a van and a car with tinted windows race past, and a court official at the scene also confirmed Huong had been released.

She was expected to head to an immigration office in administrative capital Putrajaya to sort out documentation, before flying to Vietnam in the evening. "She's very happy," Hisyam said. "She's definitely looking forward to going home." While there is relief for the women, no one else is in custody over the murder and those behind the plot are unlikely to ever be punished.

Indian-origin man found guilty of bribing doctors to prescribe opioids

New York (PTI): A 76-year-old Indian-origin head of a US pharmaceutical major has become the first top executive of a drugmaker to be convicted of bribing doctors in America to prescribe addictive painkillers, fuelling a national opioid crisis which has claimed the lives of tens of thousands of people over two decades. John Nath Kapoor, the founder of Insys Therapeutics pharmaceutical company based in Arizona state's Chandler city, was found guilty of criminal conspiracy by a jury in Boston, Washington-based National Public Radio reported.

Kapoor, a onetime billionaire, was convicted on Wednesday along with four other former executives of the company.

They face up to 20 years in prison. Kapoor and his co-defendants were accused by the federal government of running a nationwide bribery scheme. India-born Kapoor founded Insys Therapeutics in 1990. Between

2012 and 2015, Insys allegedly paid doctors to prescribe its potent opioid medication and then lied to insurance companies to ensure that the expensive fentanyl-based painkiller would be covered, the report said.

The prosecutors claimed that doctors, who were bribed, often prescribed Subsys — approved in 2012 by the US Food and Drug Administration only for use in treating severe cancer — to patients even without cancer. This practice increased the sales for Kapoor's firm. Kapoor is among the highest-ranking pharmaceutical executives to face trial amidst a national opioid epidemic. He was arrested on the same day US President Donald Trump in 2017 declared the opioid crisis a national public health emergency that has caused tens of thousands of overdose deaths annually.



Britain's newly appointed Secretary of State for Defence Penny Mordaunt, foreground centre, and Prince William, Duke of Cambridge, behind, leave after attending a service to recognise fifty years of continuous deterrent at sea, at Westminster Abbey in London, Friday, May 3, 2019. Royalty, politicians and military chiefs are gathering at Westminster Abbey to mark half a century of Britain's sea-borne nuclear arms program — though organizers insist they are not thanking God for atomic weapons.

GALLERIA 45 MINUTES

ALL THAT JAZZ

This cruise line rivals Broadway and London's West End combined with 134 shows, 50 theatres

In a non-descript building in North Miami, two dozen dancers in bouncing yellow skirts are high kicking the can-can, aerialists are spinning perilously high from silk cords and frantic seamstresses are hemming outfits in a 20,000 square-foot costume shop. They are all part of a company that puts on more live productions a year than Broadway and London's West End combined.

Royal Caribbean International's cruise line directs 134 shows in 50 theatres on 26 ships around the world, including seven Broadway-originating shows, eight aqua shows, 18 ice shows and dozens of original musicals.

"We have a nightly audience of about 100,000. It is by scale a very, very large operation. Probably under one roof, the biggest in the world," said Nick Weir, senior vice president of entertainment. "At any one time, there's 1,500 to 1,800 cast members employed to make this all come to life."

It takes two to four weeks for an army of dancers, singers and aerialists to learn a show before they're dispatched to ports as far away as Australia and China.

On a recent afternoon, dancers roamed the halls in crop tops and buns. One stretched into a wide split on the floor. There are 14 dance studios, 15 rehearsal rooms, a recording studio, gymnasiums and auditorium. Exercise equipment lines some hallways. Nearby are living accommodations for 470 of the performers.

Often dismissed in the past as second-tier, cruise entertainment has evolved to a genre that Royal Caribbean says commands some of the best talent and technology around.

Several of the main characters in *Mama Mia* are from the Broadway version of the show. While New York theatre has struggled to turn profits with its small, intimate venues, fickle crowds and finite real estate, the cruise industry's onboard audience is growing exponentially.

Royal Caribbean is building five ships in the coming years, each with a custom-built theatre with sophisticated stages and high-tech effects. A few years ago, they built a small plane with a 22-foot wingspan that now flies over the audience in every production of *FLIGHT: Dare to Dream*.

"The stages that they have on the ships, the technology is far better than it ever was on a Broadway stage, even 10 years ago," said Greg



Graham, who was the resident choreographer for *Billy Elliot* on Broadway before coming to the cruise line to choreograph *Hairspray*.

Roughly 3,000 hopefuls showed up to recent auditions for *Hairspray* in New York and London.

Weir said the casting operation is massive, culling talent from 75 cities a year auditioning nearly 25,000 performers last year alone.

"At my audition, there were hundreds of girls... it's very competitive. There are so many people who want to be doing this," said Taryn Borman, a 21-year-old Australian dancer, who's performing on a ship for the first time in a new show with aerialists and contortionists. She'll head to Asia with the cast in a few weeks.

Singer and dancer Oli Reynolds, 26, wrapped up a starring role in London's West End production of *Mama Mia* and came back to Royal Caribbean where he's reprising the same role.

"I think there's still a stigma about cruise ship performing... historically, a lot of cruise lines didn't

put the focus on the performing, it was more about the destinations," said Reynolds, who stressed that's changed. "People come from Cirque du Soleil, they come from Vegas, they come from London, they come from Broadway and it is a progression in my career for me."

John Kenrick, a musical theatre historian and adjunct professor at New York University, says the evolution was inevitable as more sophisticated cruise audiences — accustomed to seeing shows in spots like Vegas and Atlantic City — are demanding better entertainment.

"It's certainly upped the game. (Cruise theatre) used to be a little better perhaps than summer stock just with better costumes," said Kenrick, adding "it's definitely improved. I can't say it's Broadway."

Each performance on every ship worldwide is rehearsed at the roughly 1,33,000 sq ft facility where the halls are literally alive with the sounds of music.

In one room, dancers with black top hats are perfecting choreography to *All That Jazz*. Across the



hall, six singers are harmonizing a number from *Once Upon a Time*. In a recording studio next door, the walls reverberate with what sounds like theme music from an adventure movie.

At the massive costume shop, the hum of a sewing machine where

a seamstress works on a gold glitter costume competes with the hiss of a steam iron. One of the head seamstresses is busy completing a white sequin ballroom dress, with flowing feathers and a rhinestone-studded bodice. The cruise line makes its own costumes and must



coordinate fittings for dozens of shows.

The cast on each ship performs not one, but three shows — a Broadway musical like *Hairspray* or *Grease*, a ballroom style show and a pop show. The shows are upbeat and family-oriented and chosen to appeal to a wide audience — nothing too sexual or intellectual.

Scheduling all the rehearsals is more precise than the choreography. The new casts arrive, rehearse and depart to sea at a dizzying pace every few weeks. It takes exactly 26 days to train a new cast to perform the musical *Cats*.

Typical theatre productions will rotate in new cast members periodically, but Royal Caribbean prefers to sign performers to roughly nine-month contracts. They spend a few weeks learning three shows from scratch and then head to sea. When it's over, the cruise line casts a new set of performers and begins again.

Staging a show at sea has its own challenges and quirks. Performers need extra core strength to adapt to rough waves and pitching ships. If a costume is ripped, there's no one to run to the store.

There are also perks that even the most legendary theatres on land can't compete with — picturesque ports, free meals, room and board, the chance to interact with the audience and the sense of onboard community not found at other venues where performers simply go home each night.

"You definitely become more of a family," said Mya Carpenter, a 22-year-old dancer who performed in Paris before joining Royal Caribbean. "You come to know people inside and out. They're friends for life!"

—AP

THE CAST ON EACH SHIP PERFORMS NOT ONE, BUT THREE SHOWS — A BROADWAY MUSICAL LIKE HAIRSPRAY OR GREASE, A BALLROOM STYLE SHOW AND A POP SHOW. THESE ARE UPBEAT AND FAMILY-ORIENTED AND CHOSEN TO APPEAL TO A WIDE AUDIENCE

CELEB TALK 30 MINUTES

Wearing it like armour

Game of Thrones is not just breaking the social media but also world records



and declare it officially — 'Most in-demand' TV premiere.

The Parrot methodology claims to use global, real-time and platform-agnostic TV demand measurements. Guinness and Parrot charted worldwide demand for all series premieres from April 2015 to the day of *Game of Thrones* season eight premiere to determine the measurement.

"The fantasy series amassed a per capita global audience demand of 25.46 on the premiere day. Compared to its per capita global demand of 24.74 on the day of its season seven premiere, the latest and final season has premiered 2.9 per cent higher globally. Premiere day demand has been particularly strong in the US, United Kingdom and France," said Samuel Stadler, Vice President of marketing, Parrot Analytics.

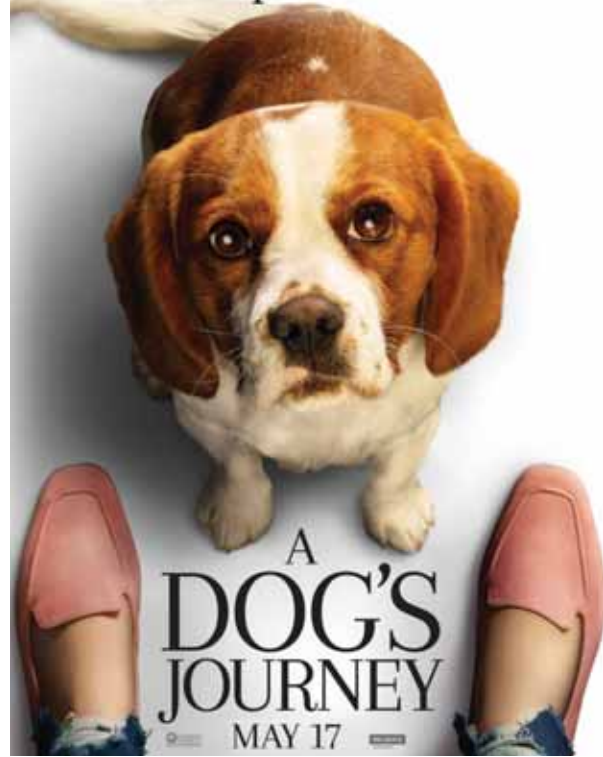
Craig Glenday, editor-in-chief at Guinness, said, "GoT looks like it's going to continue breaking records right up to the final, undoubtedly devastating episode."

Game of Thrones, based on George R.R. Martin's novels, is about the quest to claim the Iron Throne. But it also stands for complicated political gambits, scheming and the backstabbing nature of people and finding love in troubled times. The final season will wrap up on May 19. It is aired in India on Star World.

—IANS

An obvious choice

Some friendships transcend lifetimes.



Based on the eponymous novel by W. Bruce Cameron, *A Dog's Journey* is about a dog being on a mission to protect a person. The film, sequel to the global hit *The Dog's Purpose*, is directed by two-time Emmy award-winning director Gail Mancuso.

Producer Gavin Polone feels that since the film involved protecting a young girl it was most appropriate to have a female director for the film. Polone says, "The first

'The film A Dog's Journey is about a dog being on a mission to protect a person. Since it involved protecting a young girl, it was appropriate to have Gail Mancuso as its director'

film was about our dog going from person to person to get back to Ethan. But with this film, our dog is on a mission to protect one person: a girl who becomes a woman. Of course, the dynamics of issues with young girls and their mothers is a different perspective."

Since the makers of the film were, in particular, looking for a director with great deal of experience with comedy, Gail was an obvious choice. A women's perspective was key for the makers. Polan further adds, "I had worked with Gail Mancuso on *Gilmore Girls*, and there are things tonally and comedically that are reminiscent of that show with this movie"

An animal lover herself, director Gail says, "I loved the first film and when the opportunity was given to me to direct this one, it was a blessing. I have five dogs and truly love animals."

This heartwarming adventure of Bailey (dog) through multiple lives filled with love, friendship and devotion music and laughter is set to release in India on May 17 by Reliance Entertainment.

Don't understand the negativity around my citizenship: Akshay

Actor Akshay Kumar on Friday issued a statement regarding the controversy over his citizenship. He says he has never hidden or denied that he holds a Canadian passport and that he doesn't understand the unwarranted interest and negativity about it.

"I really don't understand the unwarranted interest and negativity about my citizenship. I have never hidden or denied that I hold a Canadian passport. It is also equally true that I have not visited Canada in the last seven years," Akshay tweeted.

"I work in India, and pay all my taxes in India. While all these years, I have never needed to prove my love for India to anyone, I find it disappointing that my citizenship issue is constantly dragged into needless controversy, a matter that is personal, legal, non-political, and of no consequence to others," he added in the statement.

He concluded by saying, "Lastly, I would like to continue contributing in my small way to the causes that I believe in and make India stronger and stronger."

His absence from the polling booth made netizens think that it was due to his alleged Canadian citizenship.

In 2017, Akshay had said that he has been bestowed with an honorary citizenship by the Canadian Government, and hence, he carries the Canadian citizenship.

Akshay, who recently grabbed headlines for his "non-political" interview with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, was widely trolled for not casting his vote this year.

"Chaliye, chaliye (let's go, let's go)" is how Akshay responded when at a special screening of the film *Blank*, a mediaperson asked him about giving voting a miss. He then walked away.

The actor has featured in many films like *Kesari*, *Baby*, *Holiday - A Soldier Is Never Off Duty* and *Airlift*, with patriotism as a theme.

—IANS



SHORT CIRCUITS



BHUMI PEDNEKAR
Nowadays, there is space for every type of actor. Today, we are doing very good work and there is no scope for unhealthy competition. We all are supporting each others' work and want that our films should do well and get appreciation. All my colleagues are competent and brilliant so, I get inspired when I look at their work.



ADNAN SAMI
Whatever I am today and whatever I will be, it will be all because of her (singer Asha Bhonsle). I cannot thank her enough for supporting me during the tough phase of my career. I want to thank her for giving me a roof during my struggle as it is all because of her blessings it is where I have reached today.



ANANYA PANDAY
My father didn't give me any advice before my Bollywood venture because he knows that his time was really different as compared to mine. So he thinks that I cannot apply the things which he applied during his acting stint. But I have learnt a lot from his behaviour. He never changed because of his successes and failures, I want to be like that.



SANYA MALHOTRA
I like dressing up. At the same time, I know that I can't be perfect all the time. Actors don't have to be conscious all the time or up their game when it comes to fashion. I am a very lazy and a moody person. I'll only dress up if I'm in a mood. If not, I don't care if people judge me on social media. Everyone has an opinion. You can choose to not listen.

NICOLE KIDMAN
The greatest thing our family priest told us in our marriage was, 'Always kiss hello and goodbye.' It just keeps you connected. And when I got divorced, Hugh (Jackman) and Deb (Deborah-Lee Furness) were so much a part of my healing. They were some of my best friends through that period.



VERVE 45 MINUTES

Years after the Formula 1 failed at the Indian racing circuits, car racers ARMAAN EBRAHIM and ADITYA PATEL announce the X1 League, which will bring the thrill back to the tracks. CHAHAK MITTAL discovers the key moves made to implement the plan



PRIX GETS A NEW FACE

Super cars, classic sports cars, motors, single-seater racing cars, immeasurable race tracks — I had only witnessed them in dreams or while scrolling through my social media feed, until today. Even before I entered inside the main campus of the Buddh International Circuit at Greater Noida-Yamuna Expressway, the whizz of the racing cars as they ran through the tracks was audible. As I stepped into Pit 5 to attend the X1 Racing League Summit, the tracks were what immediately caught my attention. But the best was yet to be for we could experience life in the fast lane in a racing car alongside the driver. Even from far, I could hear the whizz of the car which made my spine tingle. The speed was equally thrilling. But let me confess, that my legs trembled at the thought of sitting inside the mean machine... yet I was extremely tempted to do so.

The next moment I was signing a declaration which said that the racing authorities wouldn't be responsible for any injury or death, if a mishap took place while I am on the track premises. As I sat in the car, with the harness strapped on and the helmet tightly fitted on my head, my heart was pounding

so hard that I could hear it above the din of the cars that were screeching past. But before I could change my mind (not that I had any intention to), we took off! The first few moments were the scariest but so was the thrill which was out of this world. All I could imagine was a huge audience cheering for us and the checked-white and black waving flag to announce that we had cleared the finish line in record time. The lap ended. Too soon, too fast. But it was certainly the experience of a lifetime. It was back from terra firma and to reality.

Indian car racers and young enthusiasts and aspirants lost their hopes of ever witnessing a Formula 1 Indian Grand Prix at the Buddh International Circuit after it was besieged with financial problems including a tax dispute with the government.

However, all that is set to change. The Summit saw the announcement of the X1 Racing League that begins from October 2019, the biggest feature of which is, "that it is backed by government and the Federation of Motor Sports Club of India (FMSCI) assuring long-term partnership rights for city-based 4W racing events and competitions in league format," said

'LOOKING BACK, F1 WAS NOT INDIA-CENTRIC, HAD NO CONNECTION WITH THE INDIAN PUBLIC, NO GOVERNMENT BACKING OR INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT. THESE HAVE BEEN KEPT IN MIND TO KEEP THIS ONE COMPETITIVE'

Indian car racer Aditya Patel, at the Summit.

Talking about what went wrong and how it could have had been encouraged after 2011-2013 (the first Grand Prix in India), Patel said, "F1 indeed had a lot of problems and unfortunately, even the government did not back it enough. So they themselves weren't willing to come back. I feel that if the government would have supported it financially, it would have certainly worked."

However, he said that with growing technological advance-

ments, more people becoming aware, involved, and interested as well as with more brand sponsors and investors, the racing industry has definitely evolved over the years.

The racing league, he said, would be the world's first professional franchise-based motorsport league, which will include a mix of track and street races. Racer Armaan Ebrahim, who is co-launching the racing league, said, "This will be a new face of car-racing in the country. India has never had a history of racing but this will initiate a legacy which will last for years to come. You learn from history." Looking back, he goes on to add, "F1 was not India-centric, had no connection with the Indian public, no government backing or international support. These have been kept in mind to keep this one competitive."

He added that the league, which includes participation by 32 drivers including both national and international, males and females, had been worked to keep in focus the factors which would "sustain in India and be suitable for it. We have gone in-depth to find such things out."

The league, he informed us, will go on for 12 weekends, have 24

race days and 40 races. "There was a need to revive this culture in India and encourage its interest in people in order that the charm of this sport is not lost. It's an unconventional sport choice which not many opt for freely in this country. To encourage more participation, this was very important. We couldn't have relied on F1 to come back after years. The young talents and aspirants need proper training and exposure and a platform which is specific to India. Also, such an initiative will bring people from the grassroots level," said Armaan. There are still a few training centres in India, he claimed, and they "need to grow."

For someone who has been following the evolution of racing culture as a part of the circuit for 15 years, he said, "It's been ever-evolving. There are certain companies who do host championships on small scales. The only need now is to take them to the next level. The rationale has been great since India has had so many international car racers as well over the past few years."

Well, the races, each of which will be of 45 minutes, will take place at the Buddh International Circuit and the MMRT in Chennai.



'Glad Nandita made a film on Manto'

Actor SHEKHAR SUMAN will soon essay the Urdu writer's role in a play

If Nandita had not made this film on Manto, probably he (would have) died in the memories of people... A play, movie or a series is the best way to reintroduce these great figures back to the society," said actor Shekhar Suman who will be essaying the role of late Urdu writer Saadat Hasan Manto in Randhir Ranjan Roy's play *Ek Haan*.

Manto, who died in 1955 at the age of 43, penned an impressive body of work touching various genres. He churned out about 22 collections of stories comprising a novel, essays, personal sketches and movie scripts. His work also gained attention for weaving stories around the ordeal of partition as well as sexuality.

Actor Nawazuddin Siddiqui brought the character to life in Nandita Das' *Manto*, which follows the most tumultuous years in the life of the writer and those of India and Pakistan which Manto inhabited and chronicled. Shekhar is glad that Nandita made the film.

But he has not seen it. "I haven't seen *Manto* though, which in a way is good as I want to have my own interpretation of the play and not get influenced by anything that I have seen before," Talking about Manto, Shekhar said, "Everybody knows who Manto was and now we are making it simpler to understand who Manto was. An intense writer who presented the world during the time when the reality was so harsh

to digest." Shekhar also played role of poet and lyricist Sahir Ludhianvi for a play *Ek Mulaqat* alongside Deepti Naval who essayed the role of novelist-poet Amrita Pritam.

"I enjoyed playing Sahir saab thoroughly and have followed Manto's work closely. It would be interesting to play him on stage," said the actor, who will begin readings and rehearsals with Suchitra Krishnamoorthi later this week. Suchitra will play a journalist in the play who navigates the life of the writer. She has started preparing for the role.

"My character of an Indian journalist visits him in Pakistan, just around the time of partition and through his stories, is trying to understand both the countries, the socio-political and emotional situation. She is also trying to understand herself through their conversation.

"There is a lot of imagery from that era of how women dressed, how would people speak among a lot of other things. So while I have a few references in mind I would like to explore some more as we proceed with the rehearsals. We would also be speaking a lot of Urdu and I am going to work very hard on my dialogues to get them right," said the actress.

Roy said "We will be in theatres in June this year." The production is by Panache Media, screenplay and direction is by Roy.

—IANS

STUDIO CHAT 30 MINUTES

May the Fourth be with you

Today is Star Wars day and here is a list of things fans could do to celebrate the saga created by George Lucas

May the 4th is here to be with you, which means it's that time of the year when you must leave everything aside to celebrate the iconic space saga by George Lucas, *Star Wars* and embrace the force within you. While it all started in a galaxy, far away, we can celebrate *Star Wars* in a galaxy, which is not so far away. Jaatin Varma, founder of Comic Con India suggests five different ways to celebrate the day.

Talk like Yoda with your colleagues and friends the entire day

There can be no better way to celebrate the day than starting with the oldest, wisest and the most powerful Jedi from that universe. His peculiar language, Yodish is similar to English but in a disordered sentence structure where the object comes first followed by the subject and the verb instead of the usual subject-verb-object order used in English sentences. So, "Yoda, talk like the entire day with friends/colleagues or throw a *Star Wars*-themed party and 'Yodish language at the party interact in'.

Invest in a *Star Wars* Lego Set and spend the day building it

Lego has introduced a new line of a 279-piece building set based on *Star Wars* to celebrate the classic saga's 20th anniversary this year. The set comes with three miniature figures of Anakin Skywalker, Luke Skywalker, and Padme Amidala.

The brand also has plenty of other building sets from the chronicle already on the shelves. So, invest in one and spend the day building your own model of Anakin Skywalker's custom-built podracer.



Do a *Star Wars* movie marathon

With all the events, Cosplay, merchandise, and other celebrations taking place everywhere, it's easy for them fans to miss out the crucial part of *Star Wars* Day, the movies.

The celebrations will not be complete without revisiting all the films that have made this series so beloved. And, make sure you get someone from your team, who has never watched the series before, join you in the movie marathon. Watch

all of them in the mentioned order: *Prequel - The Phantom Menace* (Ep: 1), *Attack of the Clones* (Ep: 2), *Revenge of the Sith* (Ep: 3); *Rogue One* (Spin-Off); *Sequel - A New Hope* (Ep: 4), *The Empire Strikes Back* (Ep: 5), *Return of the Jedi* (Ep: 6), *The Force Awakens* (Ep: 7), *The last Jedi* (Ep: 8) and *The Rise of Skywalker* (Ep: 9).

Save up for a once-in-a-lifetime trip to the new *Star Wars* land at Disney World

Your fandom for *Star Wars* will not be complete if you don't visit the much-anticipated Disneyland's new *Star Wars*-themed Galaxy's Edge land, which will open on May 31. Imagine getting a chance to fly the Millennium Falcon, join the Resistance, build a custom lightsaber and design a droid. Start saving up for this a once-in-a-lifetime trip to Disney World in Orlando.

Prepare for the *Revenge Of The Fifth* (of May)

This unofficial fan holiday celebrated on May 5, the day after *Star Wars* Day marks the louder side of the film. Rhyming with the *Star Wars: Episode III - Revenge of the Sith*, this day covers the dark side of the force universe, with all things silly and funny, which is not necessarily a part of the original trilogy. Lastly, the nostalgia will not be complete without remembering Late Carrie Fisher who portrayed the role of the popular self-rescuing Princess Leia and made her last appearance in *Star Wars: The Last Jedi*.



Another legend lost

Peter Mayhew, who became known to fans worldwide as the lovable Wookiee Chewbacca in the *Star Wars* galaxy of films, has died. He was 74. The actor died on Tuesday in his North Texas home with his family by his side. His official Twitter account shared the news on Thursday, as per the reports. Mayhew had undergone spinal surgery in July in an effort to improve his mobility.

The actor had done some minor acting — he played a minotaur in the Ray Harryhausen fantasy *Sinbad* and the *Eye of the Tiger* (1977) — and was working as a hospital orderly when he tried out for the part of Chewbacca. He got the role based on his physique, as writer-director George Lucas was in desperate need of someone who would be able to play taller than Darth Vader.

Lucas mourned the death of the actor, saying, "Peter was a wonderful man. He was the clos-

est any human being could be to a Wookiee: big heart, gentle nature... and I learned to always let him win. He was a good friend and I'm saddened by his passing."

Star Wars veteran Mark Hamill tweeted, "He was the gentlest of giants. A big man with an even bigger heart who never failed to make me smile and a loyal friend who I loved dearly. I'm grateful for the memories we shared and I'm a better man for just having known him."

Harrison Ford, who played the Han Solo also expressed his condolences.

"Chewbacca was an important part of the success of the films we made together. He knew how important the fans of the franchise were to its continued success and he was devoted to them. I and millions of others will never forget Peter and what he gave us all. Rest easy, my dear friend," Ford said. Mayhew is survived by his wife Angie, and three children.

—IANS



Arsenal's Alexandre Lacazette, center, controls the ball between Valencia's Gabriel, left, his teammate Mesut Ozil and Valencia's Cristiano Piccini, right, during the Europa League semifinal first leg match between Arsenal and Valencia at the Emirates stadium in London on Thursday

ADVANTAGE ARSENAL

Gunners overcome goal deficit to beat Valencia 3-1 in Europa League 1st leg semis

AFP ■ LONDON

Arsenal manager Unai Emery insisted his side's Europa League semi-final against Valencia is still "50-50" despite the Gunners taking a 3-1 first leg lead to Spain. Valencia's bright start at the Emirates on Thursday was rewarded with Mouctar Diakhaby's away goal. But Alexandre Lacazette quickly turned the game around with two goals in eight first-half minutes before Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang's late strike gave Arsenal a two-goal advantage to defend at the Mestalla on May 9. However, Emery, who managed Valencia between 2008 and 2012, knows the tie is far from over due to Arsenal's terrible away record this season. "It is a good result at home, but the second leg is going to be very difficult and maybe different. I consider for both teams it

is 50-50," said Emery. Arsenal are desperate not just for silverware in Emery's first season but the guarantee of Champions League qualification for next season that winning the Europa League would bring. A run of three straight Premier League defeats has left Emery's men needing more favours from Chelsea or Tottenham to stand any chance of Champions League qualification via a top-four Premier League finish. The Gunners had conceded three times in all three of those defeats to Crystal Palace, Wolves and Leicester and the same defensive deficiencies cost them again early on. Valencia had already missed a glorious chance to take the lead when Ezequiel Garay blazed over before Diakhaby forced the ball home at the back post for the vital away goal on 11 minutes. Emery has been reticent to

"WE CAN BE PROUD OF THE PLAYERS. IT IS NOT EASY TO BE CALM AND COME BACK WITH THAT RESULT AGAINST THIS TEAM."

—Unai Emery

"WE WANT TO WIN THE EUROPA LEAGUE TO GO STRAIGHT TO THE CHAMPIONS LEAGUE BUT ALSO TO WIN A TROPHY."

—Alexandre Lacazette

"WE PLAYED AGAINST TWO STRIKERS THAT ARE VERY GOOD WHICH IS WHY THEY COST THE MILLIONS THAT THEY DID. WITH THE SLIGHTEST ERROR THEY PUNISH YOU."

—Marcelino Garcia Toral

start Lacazette and Aubameyang together up front, but the game turned on one moment of magic from Arsenal's two prolific strikers. Lacazette played in Aubameyang and the Gabon international left his marker and Valencia goalkeeper Neto on the ground before squaring for his strike partner to roll into an empty net. Seven minutes later, Arsenal led as terrible defending allowed Lacazette a free header from Granit Xhaka's cross and a weak hand from Neto could not prevent the ball crossing the line. "We had the game completely in control until their first goal," lamented Valencia coach Marcelino Garcia Toral. Lacazette missed two glorious opportunities to complete his

hat-trick as he firstly failed to connect with an inch-perfect Aubameyang cross before Neto made a brilliant save at his near post to keep the Spanish side in the tie. At the other end Petr Cech also had to make a smart stop as he raced from his goal to deny substitute Kevin Gameiro. The veteran stopper has announced he will retire at the end of the season. And Cech's final game could well be against his former club Chelsea in next month's final as the Blues secured a 1-1 draw away at Eintracht Frankfurt in the first leg of the other semi-final. Arsenal still have work to do, but they moved much closer to booking their trip to Baku when Aubameyang turned home at the back post in the final minute.

'In no-man's land': Federer taking baby steps on clay return



AFP ■ PARIS

Roger Federer returns to clay court tennis for the first time in three years at Madrid next week, admitting it feels like a journey into "no-man's land". The 37-year-old last tested his ability on European dirt at the Rome Masters in 2016, before opting to concentrate on the world's hard surfaces and grass courts which have yielded the majority of his 101 titles. But with his career in its twilight, the Swiss has decided to re-enter a realm of tennis for so long dominated by rival Rafael Nadal — and Madrid seems the logical venue. Federer has won two of his 11 clay titles in the Spanish capital where the high altitude helps him negate the traditionally pedestrian pace of the dusty surface. "I'm very excited. It's a good challenge, a good test. Confidence, I don't know, it's in no-man's land. I have to start from scratch," said Federer after winning his most recent title in Miami. His long-term aim this spring is Roland Garros where he was champion in 2009 and where he has been a four-time runner-up in 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2011, losing on every occasion to Nadal. However, with 11-time French Open winner Nadal in something of a claycourt slump, having been deposed as Barcelona

and Monte Carlo champion in recent weeks, Federer saw a glimmer of hope. That shaft of light brightened when world number one Novak Djokovic exited Monte Carlo in the quarter-finals. "Roger is still very hungry," Federer's coach Ivan Ljubicic told Sky Sports Italia. "And he has got used to playing on clay again pretty quickly." Federer's last clay title was in Istanbul in 2015, the same year which saw his last Roland Garros appearance end with a quarter-final exit at the hands of close friend Stan Wawrinka. Rome in 2016 witnessed the Swiss star's most recent competitive outing on clay, a straight sets loss to Dominic Thiem in the third round seemingly convincing him that his dirt court career was done. "I'm not very confident going into this clay court season, I can tell you that — I don't even remember how to slide anymore," said Federer. "You know, I'm taking baby steps at this point. To be honest, I didn't play one point — not one shot on clay last year. Two years ago I played two days. Three years ago I played not feeling great in Monaco and Rome and all that. So it's been so little that I really don't know what to expect." Despite his caution, his longtime rivals are wary of under-estimating the 20-time Grand Slam champion next week.

You will do special things in World Cup: Yuvraj to Hardik

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Yuvraj Singh, hero of India's victorious campaign in the 2011 World Cup, is expecting "special performances" from all-rounder Hardik Pandya in the 2019 edition, beginning May 30. Pandya is back to his best, at least with the bat, following testing times which saw him serve an interim suspension. The 25-year-old has been in remarkable form this IPL and his Mumbai Indians teammate Yuvraj hopes that he extends his explosive run to the 50-over mega event. "I was actually having this conversation with him (Hardik) yesterday where I told him that 'you have a great chance of performing really well with the ball and bat', the kind of form he is in at the moment. "Definitely, the way he is batting at the moment, it is phenomenal and I hope he carries that form (into the World Cup). He has been bowling well in patches but as I said it is all about how you handle the pressure," said Yuvraj. Pandya has been in the form of his life and Yuvraj said that his 91 against the Kolkata Knight Riders was the best IPL innings he has seen.



"It is probably the best shape as a batsman to get in. I have been watching since the practice games, he was hitting the ball really well. I had told him 'it is going to be a special tournament for you, the way you are hitting the ball'," said the southpaw. "Over the years, as an experienced player you know if someone is hitting the ball well, he is in great shape. He got 91 from 34 balls against KKR, probably that is the best innings I have seen in the IPL

just because he hit four quality bowlers he was batting against. "When you are doing that, you know that someone is batting very well," added Yuvraj, who is known for hitting six sixes in the 2007 edition of WorldT20 in South Africa. The man of the tournament of the 2011 World Cup also backed Virat Kohli-led India, hosts England and Australia to do well in the mega event. "My first two teams are England and India. Obviously with (David) Warner and (Steve) Smith coming back, Australia will be in contention. West Indies also looked a very power-packed side. You can't say much at this stage. I think it would be India and England first, third would be Australia. Fourth I don't know," said Yuvraj. He also backed chinaman Kuldeep Yadav to do well in the World Cup. "I don't assess T20 cricket (form) over 50 over (cricket). I think Kuldeep has been a fantastic bowler for India and I'm sure he will bounce back quickly. He has been very effective against England, South Africa, Australia," said Yuvraj when asked whether Kuldeep's current form in the IPL was a concern ahead of the World Cup.

SMITH, WARNER BACK IN AUSSIE COLOURS

AFP ■ BRISBANE

Steve Smith and David Warner have been welcomed back to the Australian team with "no tension", coach Justin Langer said on Friday, with the World Cup offering another opportunity for redemption. The duo returned to the national side for a World Cup training camp on Friday in Brisbane after serving year-long bans for their part in the "sand-papergate" scandal in Cape Town. "There is no tension," a smiling Langer told reporters. "They're back in the team now. They've been selected, which is brilliant." The duo have enjoyed a solid comeback in IPL, with Warner in blistering form, topping the batting rankings with 692 runs from 12 innings. Langer acknowledged there would need to be some adjustments for the former team leaders, but said the team would be boosted by their experience. "When you come from the titled position of captain then there is going to be a certain degree of humility that comes with that," he said.



"One of our really strong values is humility, so there will be great opportunity to develop that." The Aussie coach welcomed the selection dilemma Smith and Warner added to the top order, joining Aaron Finch, Usman Khawaja and Shaun Marsh, made it "exciting to have those five 100-makers at our disposal". Australia are the reigning World Cup champions and have been in recent red-hot form winning eight one-day internationals on the trot, against India and Pakistan. "We have had great success in the past. While we celebrate that, it means nothing on how we play this (World Cup)," Langer said. He said the team needed to use every tournament on the calendar to "make Australians proud of us again". "We must make the most of every opportunity that comes up, including this World Cup," he said.

'Gambhir has no great records, just lot of attitude'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

They have never shared a great rapport on and off-the-field and now former Pakistan captain Shahid Afridi has gone a step further terming former India opener Gautam Gambhir as someone with "no great records and just a lot of attitude". In his just released autobiography 'Game Changer', Afridi launched a scathing attack on Gambhir, some of which termed out to be factually incorrect. "Some rivalries were personal, some professional. First the curious case of Gambhir. Oh poor Gautam. He & his attitude

problem. He who has no personality. He who is barely a character in the great scheme of cricket. He who has no great records just a lot of attitude," writes Afridi. Gambhir played 58 Tests, 147 ODIs and 37 T20 Internationals scoring more than 10,000 international runs across formats. Afridi played 398 ODIs for Pakistan with the average despite 8000 plus runs stand at less than 24 compared to Gambhir close to 40. In Tests, Gambhir has an average of close to 42 compared to Afridi's 27 plus. In fact, Gambhir was the top scorer with 75 against Pakistan in

the 2007 World T20 final. He retired from all forms of cricket in December last year. However that didn't stop Afridi from taking a sarcastic dig at Gambhir. "Gambhir behaves like he's a cross between Don Bradman & James Bond. In Karachi, we call guys like him saryal (grumpy). It's simple, I like happy, positive people. Doesn't matter if they are aggressive or competitive, but you have to be positive & Gambhir wasn't," he writes. Afridi, who also reveals his real age in the book making him five years older than what the official records state, recollected the



infamous heated exchange with Gambhir during an Asia Cup game when they nearly came to blows. "I remember the run-in with Gambhir during the 2007 Asia Cup, when he completed his single while running straight into me. The umpires had to finish it off or I would have. Clearly we had a frank bilateral discussion about each other's female relatives," Afridi recalled the uncharitable verbal exchange. Afridi featured in 27 Tests, 398 ODIs and 99 T20 Internationals. He retired from international cricket after the 2016 World T20 in India.

SINGLES

MBAPPE SLAPPED WITH 3 MATCH BAN PARIS: French World Cup winner Kylian Mbappe was banned for three matches on Friday following his sending-off for a reckless tackle during Paris Saint-Germain's French Cup final debacle against Rennes. The French football Federation (FFF) said they had also opened disciplinary proceedings against Mbappe's teammate Neymar for striking a Rennes fan following the shock defeat on penalties after extra time. Mbappe lunged with his studs into the knee of Rennes defender Damien Da Silva near the close of extra time on Sunday. Having already missed one game, Mbappe will miss Saturday's match against Nice and the trip to Angers the following week but will be available for the last two games of the season.

NABY KEITA OUT FOR THE SEASON LIVERPOOL: Liverpool midfielder Naby Keita will miss the rest of the season with an adductor injury that is set to sideline the Guinea international for two months, manager Jurgen Klopp said on Friday. Keita limped off midway through the first half of Liverpool's 3-0 loss to Barcelona at the Camp Nou during Wednesday's Champions League semi-final first leg. "Bad news, a high-grade adductor injury with the tendon rupture so it keeps him out for at least two months," said Klopp of Keita, who will now miss Saturday's trip to Newcastle, as well as home games against Barcelona and Wolves -- Liverpool's last match of the Premier League Africa Cup of Nations coming up. Not nice," German boss Klopp added.

PRANNOY CRASHES OUT FROM NZ OPEN AUCKLAND: H S Prannoy fought valiantly before losing to fifth seed Kanta Tsuneyama of Japan in the men's singles quarterfinal, drawing curtains on India's campaign at the New Zealand Open badminton tournament, here on Friday. Unseeded Prannoy squandered a one-game advantage before losing 21-17, 15-21, 14-21 to world number 11 Japanese shuttler in a marathon last-eight round match which lasted an hour and 13 minutes. The two shuttlers now enjoy a 1-1 head-to-head record against each other. Tsuneyama will play third seed and Jakarta Asian Games Gold medalist Jonathan Christie in the last-four round.

GHOSAL, JOSHNA ENTER ASIATIC SEMIS KUALA LUMPUR: India's Saurav Ghosal and Joshna Chinappa moved into the semifinals with convincing victories over their respective opponents in the Asian Squash Championship here on Friday. Ghosal's was the last match of the day and the Indian had hardly anything extra to take care as he disposed of Malaysia's sixth seed Mohd Nafizwan Adnan in straight games for an 11-4, 11-4, 11-3 win. Joshna on the other hand had a task in hand suppressing compatriot Tanvi Khanna before prevailing 12-10, 13-11, 11-7. Tanvi, who had made impressive strides in the championship and played with lots of motivation, continued in that vein against her senior. Unforced errors undid much of her spirited fight but it must be said to her credit, Tanvi stretched Joshna in the first two games before losing them over tie-break points. AGENCIES

LEADERBOARD	
RUNS	692 David Warner (SRH)
WICKETS	25 Kagiso Rabada (DC)
6S	671 Everyone knows Bumrah is the best in death, he bowled brilliantly in the last overs as well as the Super Over
4S	1448 — MOHAMMED NABI



Shubman shines as KKR knock Kings XI Punjab out of IPL

PTI ■ MOHALI

Shubman Gill showed maturity beyond years as Kolkata Knight Riders knocked out Kings XI Punjab by seven wickets on Friday to stay afloat in the Indian Premier League.

Chasing a target of 184, the 19-year-old Gill showed his range on his 'home turf' with an attractive 65 not out off 49 balls, anchoring the chase after Chris Lynn (46 off 22 balls) set the pace with some big hits in the Powerplay overs. Not only did KKR reach the target in 18 overs but they also improved the net run-rate as they now have 12 points with a must-win away game against Mumbai Indians left.

The opening duo added 62 in 6 overs before Lynn was dismissed having hit five fours and two sixes. Robin Uthappa (22, 14 abls) looked good but didn't stay long enough even as Gill, who hit five fours and two sixes carried on with minimum fuss.

Andre Russell (24 off 14 balls) hit a couple of sixes in the 50-run stand in only 4.2 overs to cut the chase short.

However Gill's batting was a treat for the eyes as he literally toyed with KXIP skipper Ravichandran Ashwin hitting him for 18 runs in an over. There was a six over long on where he came down the track and another slog sweep behind square. The half-century came with a deft late cut which prompted his happy father to break into a bhanga.

In the end, skipper Dinesh Karthik (21 off 9 balls) finished the match with a flourish.



Earlier, youngsters Sam Curran and Nicholas Pooran displayed belligerence as Kings XI Punjab put on a respectable 183 for 6 against Kolkata Knight Riders after being put into bat.

While West Indies' Pooran smashed 48 off 27 balls to give the innings initial impetus as he added 69 runs for the third wicket with Mayank Agarwal (36 off 26 balls), Englishman Curran walloped KKR bowlers to smash an unbeaten 55 off 24 balls to take the score past 180-run mark. For KKR, fast

bowler Sandeep Warrier (2/31) was the most impressive as he removed the opening pair of Chris Gayle (14 off 14 balls) and KL Rahul (2 off 7 balls) in quick succession.

However Pooran again showed his big-hitting prowess, hitting four sixes apart from three boundaries as he found an able partner in Agarwal.

Pooran was unlucky to miss out on a fifty as he was holed out in the deep mid-wicket region trying to hit a Nitish Rana half-track-

er for six.

Once Agarwal and later Mandeep Singh (25) got out, it seemed that KXIP will have to settle for less than 170 but Curran had other ideas as 32 runs came off the last two overs.

In the 19th over, Curran hit Andre Russell for a couple of boundaries, before launching into countrymate Harry Gurney, hitting him for 22 runs, which included three fours and a big six. In all, Curran hit seven fours and two sixes.



Up Next



Royals face DC to keep hopes alive

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Their play-off berth sealed, Delhi Capitals will aim for a big win against Rajasthan Royals to enhance their chances for a second-place finish when the two teams clash in their final league match here on Saturday.

A big win on Saturday will not only boost Delhi's morale after the 80-run hammering at the hands of CSK but it could also propel the side to the second position in the eight-team standings.

Delhi are currently sitting third with 16 points from 13 games, just behind Mumbai Indians (16 points) and table toppers CSK (18 points).

A win against Rajasthan will enhance Delhi's chances of featuring in Qualifier 1, giving them two shots at the May 12 final.

In the absence of Rabada, Delhi's bowling attack looked miserable, but it is the shoddy performance of the batting unit which would be a cause of concern for skipper Shreyas Iyer.

The likes of Prithvi Shaw, Shikhar Dhawan, Rishabh Pant and Colin Ingram would like to forget the disastrous outing against CSK and come out afresh in Delhi's last home game.

Rajasthan, on the other hand, are mathematically still alive in the tournament with 11 points from 13 games.

Live on Star Sports 1 & 2	HEAD TO HEAD
DC vs RR	M 19
NEW DELHI	DC 8
SATURDAY 4:00 PM	RR 11

They need to win against Delhi and hope for favourable results from other remaining games to secure a play-off berth as the fourth team.

But a win against Delhi might just not be enough for Rajasthan as it will take them to 13 points, after their last game against Royal Challengers Bangalore was washed away.

With Steve Smith having departed home for World Cup preparations, Ajinkya Rahane will return to captaincy duties. Ashton Turner is expected to replace Smith in the playing eleven.

The departure of Smith, Jos Buttler and Ben Stokes has weakened Rajasthan's batting, putting more responsibility on the shoulders of Rahane, Sanju Samson and Liam Livingstone but the team's bowling unit would be pumped up after the leg-spinner Shreyas Gopal's hat-trick in the rain-truncated match against RCB.

In the last encounter between the two sides last month, it was Delhi Capitals who came out on top in Jaipur by six wickets in a high-scoring affair.

Will work harder to earn Indian team spot: Samson

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Sanju Samson has always been considered as a bright prospect but he has not been able to break into the Indian team and the Kerala wicket-keeper batsman on Friday said instead of feeling frustrated he would work harder to earn a spot for himself.

Samson, who has played just one T20 International for India against Zimbabwe in 2015, has been one of consistent performers with the bat in this IPL with 337 runs from 11 games that included a century and a half-century.

Legends like Brian Lara have found it difficult to understand why a talented player like Samson has not even been considered in India's World Cup probabilities.

"It feels really great when legends like Lara talk highly of you. It boosts your confidence. I am very confident and happy the way I have been playing. But I am excitedly waiting for my opportunity to play for India," the Rajasthan Royals player said.

"There is no point in getting frustrated. You can use it as a motivation and push more. It's not easy to get into the Indian team. You need to work hard and earn that spot."

Insisting that failure is the secret of success, Samson said he has gone through many tough phases in his career which only made him a better, determined cricketer.

"If you talk about my career or anyone's career, there are definitely ups and downs. Going through such phases I feel is very lucky because when you go down then only you will know how to climb up."

"I am lucky that I have gone down many times in my career. I'm happy to have all these experiences."



To enter the Indian team you need to know how to make a comeback, you need to be strong enough and you only get strong when you fail. I failed a lot of times and now I am strong enough to play for India," he said.

Steve Smith has flown back to Australia to prepare for the World Cup but Samson said his team has good bench strength.

"Definitely, it (Smith's departure) is a great loss. First Jos Buttler, Ben Stokes and now Smith but we knew this before the tournament. We have enough bench strength to cover the losses," Samson said.

The Royals are mathematically still in the play-off hunt with 11 points from 13 games but to progress any further they will first have to win against Delhi Capitals and then hope for favourable results from the other remaining league games.

Rahane re-appointed RR captain following Smith's departure

NEW DELHI: Ajinkya Rahane was on Friday re-appointed captain of Rajasthan Royals following the departure of Australian Steve Smith.

Rahane returns to lead Royals for the game against Delhi Capitals on Saturday after Smith replaced him as captain in the middle of the season following the team's disappointing run which saw it lose six out of their first eight games.

However, there was a revival of fortunes of the side under Smith which led Royals to winning three out of the last four games, giving them a slender hope of making the play-offs with a game to go.

Smith has returned home to join

the Australian team ahead of the World Cup.

"We have requested Ajinkya to take on the captaincy of the team; as a true Royal he has shown great courage and character in graciously accepting the responsibility, which accompanies this role, whilst it would have been easier for him to take a back seat and focus solely on his batting," said Zubin Bharucha, Head of Cricket at Rajasthan Royals.

"A true team man and a true Royal, we are extremely fortunate to have characters like him playing this sport and even prouder he is part of Rajasthan Royals franchise." PTI

CSA call back Rabada, to miss remainder of IPL



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Injured Kagiso Rabada was on Friday ruled out of the rest of the IPL after South Africa decided to call the pacer back as a precautionary measure ahead of the World Cup.

Rabada had missed Delhi Capitals' last match against Chennai Super Kings due to stiff back and his unavailability is a severe blow to Delhi Capitals, who are striving to win their maiden title.

According to a statement from the Delhi Capitals, Rabada, the current Purple Cap holder, has been advised to return home by CSA.

"It is indeed very hard for me to leave the Delhi Capitals at this stage of the tournament," said the 23-year-old Rabada, who took 25 wickets from 12 matches that he played this season.

"But with the World Cup just a month away, a collective decision has been made for me in this regard. It's

been a tremendous season for me with the Delhi Capitals, both on and off the field, and I truly believe that our team can win the trophy."

Proteas team manager Mohammed Moosajee said Rabada's recall was precautionary based on his history.

"Kagiso experienced stiffness in his lower back a few days ago and was taken for scans for further investigation. The scan results, combined with further assessment by our physiotherapist Craig Govender who is fortunately in Delhi, led the CSA medical committee to the decision to withdraw him from the remainder of the IPL," Moosajee said in a Cricket South Africa statement.

"Kagiso has a history with back injuries and the CSA medical team is taking the best measures to ensure he is fully fit for the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup next month. He will consult with a back specialist upon his return and proceed with a treatment and rehab programme."

Delhi Capitals' head coach Ricky Ponting termed the development as "unfortunate".

"It's unfortunate that Rabada is having to leave us at this stage of the tournament. But I have full confidence in our team and I'm sure each and every member of this unit will step up to the occasion," Ponting said.

He is now banking on New Zealand pacer Trent Boult's experience in the upcoming play-offs.

"It's a massive loss obviously but it's a loss that we can cover. We have someone like Trent Boult, who is a world-class fast bowler. He had a terrific season for the Daredevils (erstwhile) last year. With him coming to the side now, we think we can cover for the loss of Rabada quite well."

We don't depend on few to take us over the line: Rohit

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Not depending on specific individuals and handling the pressure situations with aplomb has been key to Mumbai Indians' Play-off journey, an elated skipper Rohit Sharma said.

Mumbai Indians sealed their place in the Play-offs with a Super Over win over Sunrisers Hyderabad. They still have a game in hand.

"It's a good positive for us to qualify with one game to spare. In 2017, when we won the trophy, we qualified with two games in hand. As a team what

we have done well is that we have handled the pressure situations well," said Rohit.

"A lot of guys have put their hand up and taken the responsibility which is why we don't have anyone, barring Quinton (de Kock), in the top five (of the highest run scorers). It's not about one or two individuals."

"If you want to win the tournament everyone needs to do well. That's the hallmark of this team, whether it is (leggie) Rahul Chahar or Quinton. We don't believe in individuals to win the game on their own. We want everyone to chip in and take us over the line," he elaborated.



rated.

Rohit said the eight overs of spin bowling done in tandem by left arm Krunal Pandya (2-22) and Chahar (0 for 21) did the trick in stopping SRH from winning the game.

"They understand the conditions really well. Vijay Shankar and Manish were batting and they kept varying the length. Their eight overs were probably the turning point. They bowled really well with a wet ball, which is not easy," he said.

Looking ahead, Sharma said the team's batting order was flexible from positions 3-7 which gives them the option to send

big-hitters Hardik Pandya and Kieron Pollard higher.

"If you look at the whole tournament, they (Hardik and Pollard) have batted around the 14th or 15th overs and scored 70-80 runs the maximum number of times. Right from number 3-7 all our batsmen are flexible. They can bat anywhere at any given time which makes our job easier."

"And Pollard and Hardik we have that option. Polly has done it a few times — if you remember he had done that against (Kings XI) Punjab (batted at No 4 and made 83 off 31 balls). We will keep our options open."

Match After



Sunrisers eye Play-off berth against RCB

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Sunrisers Hyderabad would look to complete the unfinished business and seal their place in the IPL Play-offs when they clash with laggards Royal Challengers Bangalore, here on Saturday.

The defeat against Mumbai Indians via Super Over must be hurting but they need to shrug it off and add two points to take their tally to 14, good enough to stay in top-4.

Despite their defeat against Mumbai, Hyderabad's net run rate is +0.653, which is superior to others in contention for the Play-offs.

Even if Hyderabad lose their last match, they can still reach playoffs if Kolkata Knight Riders and Kings XI Punjab don't win more than one of their last two matches.

In the absence of their batting mainstay David Warner, young Manish Pandey (71 off 47 balls) shouldered the responsibility pretty well against Mumbai as he pushed the match into the super over.

But with just nine runs to win in super over, Pandya and Kieron Pollard took

Live on Star Sports 1 & 2	HEAD TO HEAD
RCB vs SRH	M 13
BENGALURU	RCB 5
SATURDAY 8:00 PM	SRH 8

Mumbai home with three balls to spare.

Captain Kane Williamson, all-rounder Vijay Shankar and comeback man Wriddhiman Saha will look to score in the key match.

Hyderabad bowlers have performed well in patches and need to get their act together against Bangalore's master blasters AB de Villiers and Virat Kohli.

The visitors boast of multi-pronged attack in which Afghanistan's Rashid Khan has been the standout performer.

Sandeep Sharma, Khaleel Ahmed and experienced Bhuvneshwar Kumar, along with the Afghan spin twins Rashid and Mohammed Nabi adding sting to Hyderabad attack.

Bangalore will be playing for pride after their hopes of entering playoffs went up in smoke after their match against Rajasthan Royals was abandoned due to rain.