

OPINION 8
SELECTIVE
AMNESIA

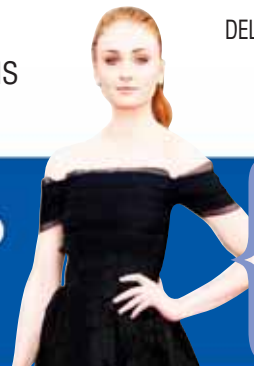
WORLD 12
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CHANDIGARH, FRIDAY MAY 3, 2019; PAGES 16 ₹2

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8L evacuated as Fani set to rip through east coast

Super cyclone to make landfall near Puri between 8 am and 10 am today

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a massive evacuation exercise aimed at minimising possible damage from the "extremely severe" cyclonic storm Fani that is expected to make landfall at India's south-eastern coast on Friday, the Odisha Government shifted more than 8 lakh people away from low-lying areas close to the sea on Thursday. More than 100 trains have been cancelled in view of the approaching cyclonic storm.

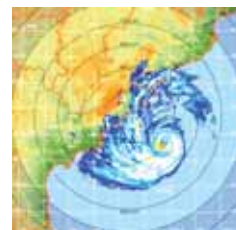
People living in vulnerable areas along the coast were put in buses and smaller four-wheelers and then in trains and brought to cyclone shelters specially prepared for them. Cyclone Fani is expected to make the landfall near the temple town of Puri on the coast of the Bay of Bengal in Odisha between 8 am and 10 am on Friday (May 3), according to the latest forecast by India Meteorological Department (IMD), and it will continue till 12 noon.

IMD says 19 districts of Odisha, West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh are likely to be hit by Fani. Even red warning has been issued to some districts of Uttar Pradesh. Parts of north coastal Andhra Pradesh started receiving heavy rain as Fani in the Bay of Bengal neared the coast.

The IMD on Friday warned that Fani is moving northwards with a speed of 5 km per hour in last six hours and is likely to make landfall at Odisha coast between Gopalpur and Chandbali anytime after Friday afternoon, with wind speed of up to 200 km per hour. Currently, Fani lay centred over West Central



Villagers at the beach as dark clouds hover above the sea ahead of Cyclone Fani, in Puri on Thursday



This satellite image acquired from the Indian Meteorological Department shows Cyclone Fani in the Bay of Bengal on Thursday

pose. Boats have been kept in a state of readiness.

The Railways on Thursday said around 102 trains have been cancelled in the last two days in view of the cyclonic storm, while three special trains pressed into service to ferry stranded passengers from affected areas. Four trains have been diverted, it said.

According to the Director General of Civil Aviation, no flights will take off from Thursday midnight for the next 24 hours from Bhubaneswar airport, while Kolkata airport will be out of bounds for flights between 9.30 pm of May 3 and 6 pm of May 4.

The Airport Authority of India (AAI) has issued alerts to all coastal airports, asking that all precautions and standard operating procedures be put into place immediately in view of Fani.

"Situation will be monitored at the highest level. Airlines and all others to be fully ready," tweeted Civil Aviation Minister Suresh Prabhu. He also said that all authorities concerned are on high alert.

Bay of Bengal about 430 km south-southwest of Puri in Odisha, 225 km south-south-east of Vishakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh and 650 km south-southwest of Digha in West Bengal.

The IMD predicted that the cyclone will first hit Puri district after which it will move northwards towards Khurda, Jagatsinghpur, Cuttack, Kendrapada, Jajpur, Bhadrak, Balasore and Mayurbhanj. IMD bulletin said storm surge of about 1.5 metre above astro-

nomical tide is likely to inundate low lying areas of Ganjam, Khurda, Puri and Jagatsinghpur districts of Odisha at the time of possible landfall. Several areas are likely to receive rainfall up to 20 cm under the impact of the cyclone.

According to IMD, maximum damage is expected in Kendrapada, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Balasore, Ganjam, Gajapati, Khurda, Puri, Jagatsinghpur districts of Odisha and east and west Medinipur, South and

North 24 Parganas, Howrah, Hoogli, Kolkata districts of West Bengal and Srikakulam, Visakhapatnam and Vijayanagaram districts of Andhra Pradesh. The cyclone is likely to enter West Bengal as a 'severe cyclonic storm' of 90-100 kmph gusting to 115 kmph. It is likely to emerge into Bangladesh on the evening of 4 May as a cyclonic storm with a wind speed 60-70 kmph gusting to 80 kmph.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi reviewed the prepared-

ness for Fani and instructed Government officials to maintain close coordination with officials of the affected States to ensure preventive measures.

Modi also asked the officers concerned to take effective steps for relief and rescue operations. He was briefed on the likely path of the cyclone, and the ongoing precautionary and preparatory measures being undertaken.

All the 880 cyclone centres have been readied for the pur-

'Hood of snake' may climb to 180-205 kmph

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

lates to "the hood of a snake". The IMD has predicted that the storm wind could climb to 180-205 kmph.

Fani is the most severe cyclonic storm since the super cyclone of 1999 that claimed close to 10,000 lives and left a trail of destruction in vast swathes of Odisha, according to the Joint Typhoon Warning Centre. IMD said it is also the first cyclonic storm of such severity to have formed in April in India's oceanic neighbourhood in 43 years.

The super cyclone of 1999 had affected at least 1.3 crore people, including 33 lakh children, 50 lakh women and nearly 35 lakh elderly. And over 3,15,886 cattle died.

Cyclone Fani has been named by Bangladesh. It is pronounced "Foni" and trans-

lated to "the hood of a snake". The IMD has predicted that the storm wind could climb to 180-205 kmph. IMD officials said April to December is the cyclone season but over 65 per cent of all cyclones occur in the last four months of the year. Cyclones are classified on the wind speed around the low pressure area. Wind speed of over 62 kmph is classified as a tropical cyclone and assigned a name.

It becomes a severe cyclonic storm if the speed is between 89 and 118 kmph and a very severe cyclonic storm if the speed is between 119 and 221 kmph. Those with higher speeds are categorised as super cyclonic storms.



A fisherman runs between the docked fishing boats amid strong winds at Chandrabhaga beach in Puri on Thursday

Decide complaints against Modi, Shah before May 6: SC to EC

EC's clean chit to Modi on third complaint 'nuke not for Diwali'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

After the Supreme Court's directions to decide on the complaints pending against Prime Minister Narendra Modi and BJP chief Amit Shah before the apex court hear the case on May 6, the Election Commission (EC) on Thursday gave clean chit to Modi on the third of the nine complaints in which he had said "nuclear bomb is not for Diwali" at Barmer in Rajasthan during a poll campaign on April 21.

The poll body also held that Rahul did not violate the model code of conduct for calling Shah a murder accused.



The EC told the SC that it has already decided two out of the 11 complaints which were filed by the Congress against Modi and Shah for the alleged violation of the model code.

Senior advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi, appearing for Congress Lok Sabha member Sushmita Dev, who has filed a petition in the SC on the issue, told the court that they have given 11 representations to the EC against the PM and Shah

but the EC has taken decision only on two.

"After about five-and-a-half weeks, they (EC) have decided only two representations," Singhvi told the SC.

The EC said, "By Wednesday (May 8), we are likely to consider all these representations."

However, the SC ordered, "The remaining representations shall be decided by the EC before we hear the matter again on Monday (May 6)."

Court asks EC to take call on plea for poll from 5 am during Ramzan

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday directed the Election Commission to take a call on a plea seeking to advance the voting timing to 5 am for the remaining phases of the Lok Sabha election due to heat waves and Ramzan.

The petition was filed by advocates Mohammed Nizamuddin Pasha and Asad Hayat, who mentioned it for urgent hearing before a Bench headed by Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi and also consisting of Justices Deepak Gupta and Sanjiv Khanna. The Bench asked the counsel appearing for the Election Commission to take a decision on the issue.

The petitioners said they had given a representation to the Election Commission on Monday in this regard, but the EC has not responded to it.

Cong banks on old guards in Alwar, Dausa

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■ ALWAR/DAUSA

In the keenly-contested Lok Sabha polls in Rajasthan, Alwar and neighbouring Dausa parliamentary constituencies figure prominently among the few seats where the Congress is banking on old guards. The BJP had won all the 25 seats in 2014 LS polls in Rajasthan.

The Congress is riding high on Alwar old-timer Bhanwar Jitendra Singh, who has been trying hard to convince the electorate about the popularity of "Gehlot Sarkar" highlighting the failures of the BJP Government in providing gainful employments.

On the other hand, the BJP is relying on communal polarisation by fielding a spiritual leader Mahant Balak Nath in Alwar. Balak Nath is a disciple of late Mahant Chand Nath, who fought on the BJP ticket in 2014 to defeat Jitendra Singh.

Karan Singh Yadav of the Congress was elected in the Alwar by-election last year



against BJP's Jaswant Singh Yadav. The Congress won Alwar Lok Sabha by-election with a margin of over 1.97 lakh votes and Ajmer with 84,000 votes in the January 2018 Lok Sabha by-polls necessitated by the death of the MPs of the two constituencies.

The bypolls turned out to be a litmus test for the Vasundhara Raje Government in Rajasthan, where people vented their ire by coining slogan "Vasundhara teri khair

Others on the spot concurred with him.

"We have voted for the Congress and will do once again because the bypolls in the two seats and the Assembly elections were clearly a signal against misrule of Vasundhara Raje," said Manav from Dausa, who has to travel to neighboring Alwar for his studies.

The stakes for the Congress is high also in the Rajesh Pilot's political "Karm Bhoomi" Dausa where two women contestants — former Union Minister Jaskaur Meena (BJP) and Savita Meena (Congress) — are locked in a straight fight.

While Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been talking about bravery of Wing Commander Abhinandan Vartman for his role in shooting down a Pakistan fighter jet, Sachin Pilot still wields considerable influences here.

Harish Chandra Meena won the Dausa seat in 2014 polls on a BJP ticket and switched to the Congress last year.

CAPSULE

AMRAPALI CAN COUGH UP ₹9.5K CRORE, SC TOLD

New Delhi: Forensic auditors told the Supreme Court on Thursday that ₹9,590 crore can be recovered from the embattled Amrapali Group which has diverted ₹3,523 crore of homebuyers money. Of the money diverted as much as ₹455 crore can be recovered from persons, including directors of the realty firm, their family members and individuals holding managerial position, the Forensic auditors told the apex court.

PEPSICO TO WITHDRAW CASES AGAINST FARMERS

Ahmedabad: Food and beverages giant PepsiCo India said on Thursday it will withdraw the cases it has filed against potato farmers in Gujarat for allegedly growing a variety of the tuber for which the company claims Plant Variety Protection (PVP) rights.

Girls on top, transgenders surmount boys in Class XII results

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Once again girls have outshone the boys in the Central Board of Secondary Examination (CBSE) Class XII results with 88.70 pass percentage. The pass percentage for boys stands at 79.40 per cent. Transgenders have a pass percentage of 83.3 per cent, a senior board official said on Thursday while announcing the results.

Hansika Shukla, a student of Delhi Public School, Meerut Road, Ghaziabad, and Karishma Arora from Muzaffarnagar are joint all-India toppers scoring 499 marks out of 500.

The second position has also been shared by three girl students Gaurangi Chawla from Rishikesh, Aishwarya, Rae Bareilly, and Bhavya from Jind Haryana. All three secured 498 marks.



Hansika Shukla, CBSE Class XII topper, poses for a photograph with her mother after the results were declared, in Ghaziabad on Thursday



Mehak Talwar, who ranked third in the CBSE class 12th exam, celebrates her success with family members after the declaration of results in New Delhi on Thursday

Eighteen students, who scored 497 out of 500, secured third position. Of these, two students Mehak Talwar and Veeraj Jindal are from Delhi.

Schools in Delhi have shown improvement in the results with an increase of two per cent at 91.87 in comparison with last year's pass percentage

of 89. Differently-abled candidates performed well in the exam with 86.69 pass percentage. According to the CBSE, there is a 0.39 percentage increase in the results across India this year. The overall pass percentage this year is 83.40, while it was 83.01 per cent last year.

The pass percentage in Government schools is 87.17 per cent, while that in the Government-aided and the private schools stood at 96.06 per cent.

Region wise, Trivandrum and Chennai secured the top two positions with 98.20 and 92.80 pass percentage. Delhi secured the third position with a pass percentage of 91.87.

Among the candidates with special need, Lavanya Balakrishnan from the Heritage School, Gurugram topped with a score of 489 out of 500 marks.

PUBLIC NOTICE

M/S Green Valley Builders, Project name "Residential" situated at Village Singhpura, Zirakpur...

सार्वजनिक सूचना

श्री मन्मथराम निवासी म.नं.186 राम नगर अंबाला शहर का रहे हुए उन्को कृपे का स्वयंसेवक...

Public Notice

I Paranjot Singh w/o Swarn Singh r/o 17 kila talsi complex near PS. City of Rajpura (Patiala)...

Lost & Found

मैं, मोर धीर पत्नी स्व. प्रमोद धीर निवासी मकान नं० 1479, गोपाल रोड, सुखराम नगर...

'Disgusted' with Modi's attempts to use martyrdom of soldiers: Capt

The former army officer and Punjab chief minister Capt Amarinder Singh on Thursday expressed "total disgust" over what he called Narendra Modi's "shameful attempts to take political mileage from the martyrdom of soldiers and armed personnel."



"Anyone who wants to divide people on communal lines has no place in our civilised nation", said Capt Amarinder, addressing a Congress gathering, where he also took frank and direct questions from people who had come to hear him.

Classifieds

LOST AND FOUND

It is notified for the information that my original qualifying examination certificate of Main Secondary Examination of year 2017, Roll No. 2209869 issued by CBSE has been actually lost.

Public Notice

I, Hardev Singh S/O Ajit Singh R/O Hardochhain Road Gurdaspur. Tehsil/Dist-Gurdaspur. Declare That My Son Varanot Singh Is Wrong And Correct Name Is Varunot Singh.

Public Notice

I Satpal Singh S/O Chain Singh Loyal R/O Vpo. Mandial District Hoshiarpur Punjab Have Changed My Name To Satpal Singh Layah.

Public Notice

I Dhiljeet Singh S/O Sukhchain Singh R/O Vpo. Kokri Vehniwal (Moga) Have Changed My Name To Daljeet Singh.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Tilak Raj S/O Pritam Singh R/O Village allar Pind, Po. Ambala Jattan, Garhwalia Distt. Hoshiarpur, Punjab Have Changed My Name From Tilak Raj To Tilak Raj Singh.

Public Notice

I, Anushka D/o Kamal Arora R/O H.No. 226, Sector-5, Urban Estate, Kurukshetra, have changed my name from Tanika Arora to Anushka.

Public Notice

I, Harshdeep Garg S/O Ravi Parkash Singh R/O H.No. 2117, H.B. Colony Sector-3, Faridabad, declares that Harshdeep and Harshdeep Garg both are my names.

Public Notice

I, Daljeet Singh S/O Sukhchain Singh R/O Vpo. Kokri Vehniwal (Moga) Have Changed My Name To Daljeet Singh.

Public Notice

I, Richa Chhabra W/o Manoj Kumar R/O House No. 5376, Maloya Colony Chandigarh have changed my name from Richa Chhabra to Richa Chugh after marriage.

Public Notice

I, Anurinder Kumar Thapa S/O Gopal Singh Thapa, R/O H.No.122, Mohalla Ekta Nagar, Chughti, Jalandhar, Punjab have changed my name to Narinder Thapa.

Public Notice

I, Dajjeet Singh S/O Jaspal Singh R/O Vpo. Kular Distt. Ludhiana Have Changed My Name To Sukhvinder Kaur.

Public Notice

I, Poorva Sharma W/O Khushdev Singh R/O 1616 Kanpurpura Bazar Block-13 Ludhiana Have Changed My Name To Poorva Khurana.

Gadkari promises sky bus for Chandigarh

Union Minister for Road Transport & Highway, Water Resources and River Development, Nitin Gadkari on Thursday said Chandigarh will soon witness transport revolution with the introduction of double decker and sky bus to facilitate the daily commuters here.

Kher termed Gadkari 'instant decision maker' who strengthened the city's connectivity with other reaches of states. Kher highlighted cent percent spending of MPLAD funds, effective implementation of Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojna and Annapurna Akshay Patra Yojna and other schemes and projects benefiting the people of Chandigarh during her tenure.

Table with 2 columns: प्रबन्धक कमेटी दि नारनौद सहकारी विपणन एवं प्रसाधन समिति लि. नारनौद। and प्रबन्धक कमेटी दि नारनौद सहकारी विपणन एवं प्रसाधन समिति लि. नारनौद।

Public Notice

I, No. 1492992H Rank Hav, Chandan Singh, 72 Eng. Regt., C/o 58 APO, PIN-914072, my wife Dewli Devi wrongly mentioned in my Army record. Her correct name is Dewali Devi.

Public Notice

I, Manjeet Kumar S/O Sh. Tek Ram R/O Patel Nagar, Sonapat declare that in my Marksheets & Pancard my father name wrongly written as Tek Chand As Tek Ram and Tek Chand both name are same and one person.

Public Notice

I, Rajinder Kumar Mittal S/O Brahmanand R/O 136-B, Model Town, Jind Road, Kaithal informs that my son Chanchal Mittal & his wife Mahak are out of my & my family's control.

Public Notice

I, Joginder Kumar W/o Jagjit Singh R/O H.No.3091 Sector-22-D, Chandigarh declare that my son Manpreet Singh and his wife Nimrata Kingra are out of my control.

Public Notice

I, No. 2482446Y Seb Balwant Singh S/O Late Sh. Bidhi Chand, Serving in 500 DSC PL, TBRL, Ramgarh, Distt. Panchkula (Haryana) have changed my daughter name from Shakshi to Sakshi Rana in my service record.

Public Notice

I, Manish S/O Tara Singh R/O 7169 Sector-4 Urban Estate Kurukshetra have changed name from Manish to Manish Singh.

Public Notice

I, Kuldeep Kumar S/O Baldev Singh R/O Ward No.02 Balachaur District S.B.S. Nagar have changed my Minor Daughter's Name Anie To Anie Choudhry.

Public Notice

I, Sarjeet Kaur W/o Widow Jamal Singh R/O Dera Pindorya, Assandh, Distt. Karnal declare that my son Tajinder Singh and Daler Singh's from out of my movable and immovable property.

Public Notice

I, Suresh Kumar Jain S/O Om Parkash R/O 258, Sector 51-A, Chandigarh Have Changed My Name To Suresh Jain.

Public Notice

I, Manmeet Kaur W/o Manjit Singh R/O H.No.66, New Baba Deep Singh Colony San Sahib Road Amritsar have changed my name to Manjit Kaur.

Public Notice

I, Gurpreet Kaur W/o Harbhajan Singh R/O Village Sur Singh Patti Nangal Ki Tehsil Patti District Tarn Taran have changed my name to Parmjit Kaur.

Public Notice

I, Veena Tandon W/o Late Sh. Darshan Kumar Tandon, #710, Dashmesh Enclave, Zirakpur, disown my son Rajesh Tandon, his wife Shweta Tandon and their children, as they are beyond my control.

Public Notice

I, Gurmanpreet Kaur D/O Gunderpal Singh Padda R/O Village Bhikhari-Wal P.O. Bhikhariwal, Teh/Distt. Gurdaspur (Punjab). India. Have Changed My Name To Gurmanpreet Kaur Padda.

Public Notice

I, Jasbeer Singh S/O Tarlok Singh R/O Post Office Padhri Via Khassa Tehsil Ajnala District Amritsar have changed my name to Jasbir Kaur.

Public Notice

I, Karnail Singh S/O Sh. Baldev Singh R/O Friends Colony, Sirda declare that my son Vikram Singh is out of my control.

Public Notice

I, Kumari Preeti Singh D/o Kamlesh Singh, Resident of Ma Gayatri Dham Colony, Chhatrapur Shivpur, Tama, Varanasi (UP)-221003 Declares that my name Spelling Preetee is wrong.

Public Notice

I, Dharanvir S/O Sh. Jawahar Lal Sharma R/O Vll. Sultanpur, Teh. Hansi, Distt. Haryana hereby declare that I have changed my name from Dharanvir to Dharanvir Sharma for all purposes.

Public Notice

I, Manmeet Kaur W/o Manjit Singh R/O H.No.66, New Baba Deep Singh Colony San Sahib Road Amritsar have changed my name to Manjit Kaur.

Public Notice

I, Gurpreet Kaur W/o Harbhajan Singh R/O Village Sur Singh Patti Nangal Ki Tehsil Patti District Tarn Taran have changed my name to Parmjit Kaur.

Public Notice

I, Veena Tandon W/o Late Sh. Darshan Kumar Tandon, #710, Dashmesh Enclave, Zirakpur, disown my son Rajesh Tandon, his wife Shweta Tandon and their children, as they are beyond my control.

Public Notice

I, Rohit Kumar S/O Ranjeet Singh Vll. Norangabas Jatan, Charkhi Dabri. I have changed my name from Rohit Malik to Rohit Kumar.

Public Notice

I, Manmeet Kaur W/o Manjit Singh R/O H.No.66, New Baba Deep Singh Colony San Sahib Road Amritsar have changed my name to Manjit Kaur.

Public Notice

I, Gurpreet Kaur W/o Harbhajan Singh R/O Village Sur Singh Patti Nangal Ki Tehsil Patti District Tarn Taran have changed my name to Parmjit Kaur.

Public Notice

I, Veena Tandon W/o Late Sh. Darshan Kumar Tandon, #710, Dashmesh Enclave, Zirakpur, disown my son Rajesh Tandon, his wife Shweta Tandon and their children, as they are beyond my control.

Public Notice

I, Mandep Kaur W/O Karamjit Singh Village Attari Po-Bhikhariwal, Tehsil - Distt-Gurdaspur. Have Changed My Name To Mandip Kaur.

Public Notice

I, Reenu Devi S/O Pawan Kumar Gill R/O 5322, New Dilbag Nagar Extn., Near Shiv Mandir, Jalandhar, Punjab have changed my name to Sonia After Marriage.

Public Notice

I, Rajkumar S/O Shri Dhanna Ram Village, Gullarpur Teh.Nissing District Karnal declare that in my Army no 7779614P Rank NK/MP my son's name mentioned as Ritik Kumar and his date of birth is 10-10-2003. Which is wrong.

Public Notice

I, Rajkumar S/O Shri Dhanna Ram Village, Gullarpur Teh.Nissing District Karnal declare that in my Army no 7779614P Rank NK/MP my son's name mentioned as Ritik Kumar and his date of birth is 10-10-2003. Which is wrong.

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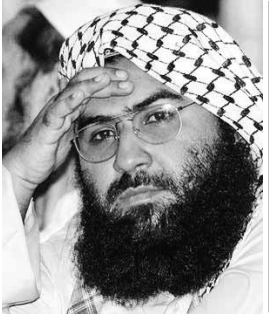
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PAPER WITH PASSION

Azhar nailed, finally

Now that the UN has tagged the Jaish chief a global terrorist, it is a diplomatic coup for India and its standing in the world



This is closure at so many levels, the UN declaration of Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) chief Masood Azhar as a global terrorist. For common Indians, this is comeuppance for a series of terror attacks that began with the Kandahar hijacking besides the brutal blasts and suicide squads that we have lived with for two decades. Besides costing us human lives, they have also hurt our institutional pride by attacking the Indian Parliament no less. It's a big win for Indian diplomacy, which has been in lobby wars from the Capitol Hill

to the UN, to convince the world that Pakistan-exported terrorism was not just a byproduct of regional conflicts but a sub-set of global terrorism and that the West had as much of a common cause as us. It's also the first time that India at least painted China into a corner with world opinion on its side, though it had to concede ground on the wording of the ban order, making it look equidistant from both India and Pakistan. Finally, though the final resolution did not mention the Pulwama attacks, the fact that the global ban follows the worst terrorist attack in Kashmir, that, too, on security forces, is acknowledgement enough of the context and Pakistan's hand in fomenting terrorism in Kashmir. Of course, the biggest political capital has been claimed by the Narendra Modi government, during whose tenure the impossible task of proscribing Azhar has been achieved. In the middle of the Lok Sabha elections, this only lends credence to the ruling BJP's twin planks of muscular nationalism and national security. It silences the criticism of Balakot being a misadventure, shows that Pakistan can be brought to book by staying well under the nuclear threshold and demonstrates to the world that a usually pacifist India will no longer be a pushover. As for Modi himself, who has already arrogated to himself the task of protecting the nation's interests, the US-led move posits him as a tall leader the world wants to do business with. Regardless of what concessions that superpower extracts from us, maybe a quid pro quo on Iran.

Getting China on board was the biggest obstacle despite India working with international allies relentlessly. Beijing had put a technical hold on the Azhar ban in the Security Council's 1267 Al Qaeda Sanctions Committee not once but four times. Given the strategic depth of the Sino-Pak friendship, one that is often reiterated by President Xi Jinping, it seemed unlikely that China would ever give in. Particularly considering Pakistan was wholeheartedly participating in its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and ensuring no IS activity was directed its way. But when the US pushed for an independent Security Council resolution, where China would have had to explain its veto and risk being tagged a pariah, the latter agreed to the ban albeit with conditions, prime among them being no mention of Pulwama or Kashmir. Besides, both India and the US also approved China's chairmanship of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) that caps terror funding and it did look the other way when Pakistan was put on the grey list. The US-India-China equation was calibrated so well that each side could factor in sensitivities of the other and accommodate each other without appearing to have cut a compromise. Given India's intransigence on BRI, China has already worked out an alternative space through the Wuhan dialogues. Even before the UN meeting, Indian Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale went to Beijing, held talks with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and shared evidence of JeM's involvement in the Pulwama terror attack. In fact, France, which spearheaded the UN resolution, was the only one which mentioned Pulwama as the last straw on the camel's back. "For many years now, French diplomacy has been relentlessly pleading for sanctioning Azhar, head of the terrorist group responsible, notably, for the Pulwama attack last February," it said.

What does it mean for Azhar and other terror networks in Pakistan? Yes, there will be an arms and funds freeze as well as a travel ban and confinement. But when it comes to Jaish and the Lashkar before it, they mutate in hibernation and cadres emerge with a new face, style and identity. By the time they are circled out, much damage is done. So clamping down on Pakistan's hydra-headed terror networks is still quite a bit.

Closing the web

Putin wants to isolate Russia's internet from the rest of the world, much like China. This is not a good thing



Vladimir Putin is the archetypal strongman; his "muscular" presence has allowed a Post-Soviet Russia to punch way above its weight in global geopolitics. Of course, it helps when you have tens of thousands of nuclear warheads at your disposal. Now, Putin wants to emulate the Chinese and create a purely Russian internet. According to a law signed by the President, November onwards, it will be possible for Russian authorities to cut off access to the wider world-wide web in certain situations and thus create a purely domestic internet. A simple reason for Putin to do so is to prevent the spread of information or misinformation on Western social media networks that can be used to destabilise a state. Twitter and Facebook, as well as other public social networks, have become 'enemies of the state' in several countries, particularly quasi-dictatorships. Russia has even acted against one of its homegrown networks 'Telegram,' an extremely secure instant messaging service favoured by terrorists across the world.

This action of Russia has sent shivers not just in other countries but also among activists. Can Putin's actions give ideas to the next Indian government? However, Putin has realised and so should Indian politicians that services like Twitter and Facebook are extensions of the United States' foreign policy. They can very easily manipulate information flows and how they serve up that information to transform electoral results. This is why defence analyst Abhijit Iyer-Mitra has filed a suit against these companies in the Delhi High Court, as their actions can manipulate (and are, according to some evidence) Indian elections. So should we also go down the same path and have a purely 'Indian' internet? No. The beauty of the internet is that it has democratised information flows as well as how people react and talk with each other. That has to stay. However, governments are right and must be concerned about how the internet has encouraged and enabled coercive activities. While the Supreme Court did enshrine the right to privacy, it does not allow anyone to work against the state. India should remain part of the world-wide web but protect its own interests. It should force foreign companies to not only store their data here but explain their actions when it comes to blocking users and their algorithms since these can be weaponised against Indians.

Selective amnesia

The Election Commission has been under scrutiny for not taking action against those who violate the Model Code of Conduct. It is now faced with the task of regaining moral authority



AJOY KUMAR

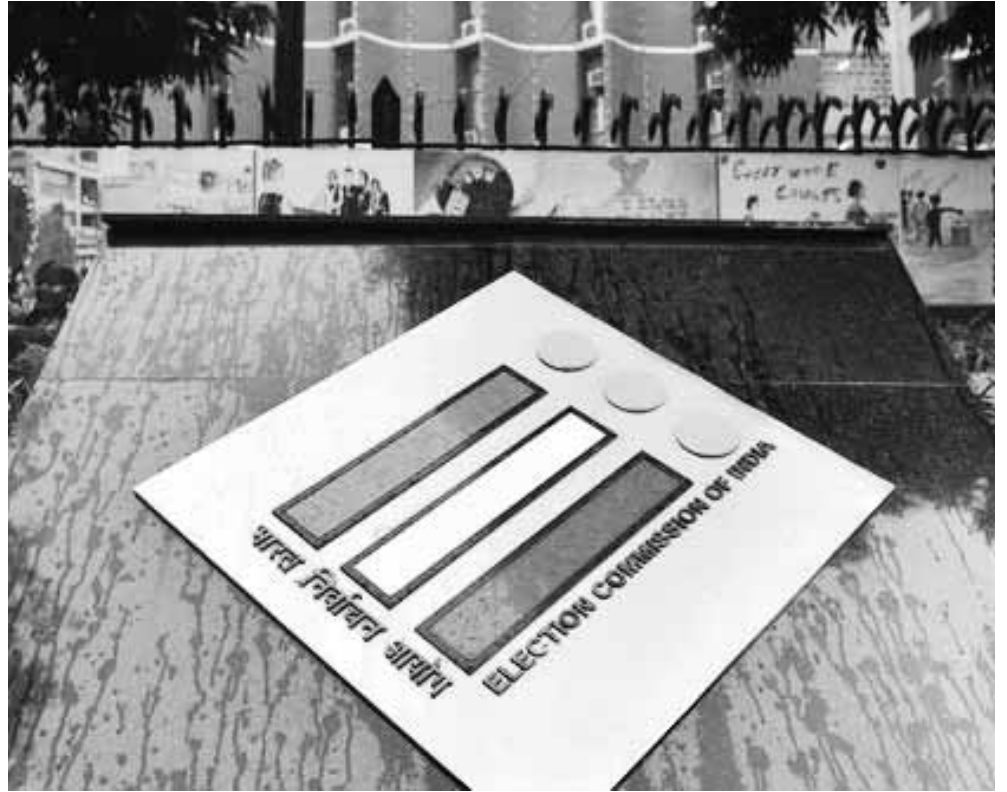
Last week, I read an excellent article in the *New York Times* by SY Quraishi, who was India's Chief Election Commissioner between 2010 and 2012. In this article, Quraishi shared a number of fascinating nibbles about the Election Commission of India (ECI). A particularly interesting fact highlighted by him was the sheer size of the Indian election and the poll panel's massive responsibility to ensure that each vote counts. He illustrated a lovely example of this task by narrating how Election Commissioners set up a polling booth in the Gir Forest National Park in Gujarat for the only living voter in the area: A Hindu priest.

The Indian election is remarkable. As the Constitutional watchdog of the voting process, the EC plays an important role to ensure free and fair polls. It is fully empowered to take any action for upholding the legitimacy of a democratic process. While each election is crucial, the ongoing edition requires the electoral body to demand more from itself. No other election was filled with as much misinformation, as much hatred, and as clear a blatant abdication of any form of responsible conduct than the 2019 Lok Sabha polls. This is especially evident from the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP's) conduct and transgressions in the ongoing elections. However, the EC has unfortunately been disappointingly silent through this most trying period.

One way through which the electoral body tries to ensure free and fair polls is by issuing guidelines for Model Code of Conduct, which come into force the day the election schedule is announced. This code is not a law. Instead, it is in the form of a moral code and the electoral body expects the politicians to adhere to the terms set by it. Crucially, it believes that leaders will have the integrity to adhere to such a code. Unfortunately, over the past few weeks, the moral authority of the EC and the Model Code of Conduct has been brazenly undermined by the Prime Minister, who has shown reckless disregard.

Take, for example, the directives of the Election Commission. On March 19, the electoral body issued a general advisory saying that "political parties/candidates are advised that their campaigners/candidates should desist, as part of their campaigning, from indulging in any political propaganda involving activities of the defence forces."

The order was aimed at curbing actions by political parties who claim votes in the name of the military because after all, India's armed forces are not owned by any political party. Therefore, one expects that any decent political party will not ask for votes in the name of its martyrs. However, in this election, we have campaigners like Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister



Yogi Adityanath, who termed the Army as "Modiji ki Sena."

The Prime Minister, too, during an election speech on April 9 said: "I wish to ask my first-time voters, can you dedicate your first vote to the brave martyrs of Pulwama"? Did Prime Minister Modi not get the memo or was he absolutely unaware of any repercussions? Since it is evident that the Prime Minister will not voluntarily subject himself to any authority, let alone a moral one, it is incumbent on the enforcers of the Model Code of Conduct to come down hard against such brazen violation of *diktats* of the institution.

However, the EC has been found terribly wanting. While it heard numerous complaints and representations against various leaders, till last week, it took no action against the various representations by Opposition parties against the comments and conduct of Prime Minister Modi. This forced the Congress to approach the Supreme Court in the hope that such an action would provide some explanation as to why numerous blatant violations by the Prime Minister were not examined and acted upon by the EC.

“
IRONICALLY, THE ELECTION COMMISSION WAS PROMPT IN DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS AGAINST OTHER CANDIDATES BUT FAILED TO DISPLAY THE SAME PROMPTNESS IN DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS AGAINST THE PRIME MINISTER AND BJP CHIEF AMIT SHAH
 ”

Ironically, the Commission was prompt in dealing with complaints against other candidates, but failed to display the same promptness in dealing with objections raised against the Prime Minister and BJP chief Amit Shah. Since then, we have seen Prime Minister Modi not being cautioned for several parts of his speech against Congress chief Rahul Gandhi, who is contesting from Wayanad, and the April 9 speech where the Prime Minister explicitly asked the voters to dedicate their vote to Pulwama martyrs. If this isn't "political propaganda involving activities of the defence forces," I am not sure what is.

Even after an inextinguishable delay, when it did choose to probe these charges and act, the EC cleared the Prime Minister on two counts. Even when his remarks were not that veiled and quite specific.

Other than this, there have been several instances like "no pending complaint against Prime Minister Modi" appearing on the poll panel's portal, despite the fact that several complaints have been lodged. The official defence is that there has to be a *prima facie* violation of the Model Code of Conduct. That means the vio-

lation should be obvious on the face of it. A look at some of the comments on social media and by wide sections of the political establishment will show that this basic standard has been met.

Similarly, the fact that the EC suspended an IAS officer, who searched Modi's chopper, and that this action of the electoral body was stayed by the Central Administrative Tribunal does not reflect well on it either.

Mahatma Gandhi had once said, "Moral authority is never retained by any attempt to hold on to it. It comes without seeking and is retained without effort." The Indian elections are a magnificent testimony to our commitment to democracy. However, it needs a strong moral authority to ensure that it remains so. Unfortunately, going by events of the past few weeks, the EC will need to put immense effort to regain its moral authority and fulfil the role it was meant to. And its office-bearers will at some point have to think about the sacredness of their jobs over political expediency.

(The writer is Jharkhand PCC president, former MP and IPS officer. Views are personal)

SOUNDBITE

Prime Minister didn't come anywhere close to either Indira Gandhi or Lal Bahadur Shastri. There cannot be any comparison between their greatness and the pettiness of the present regime.



Former Prime Minister — Manmohan Singh

I like to change things up fast and keep it fresh. I'd love to do a proper action film. Do my bit, and do it for the right reasons.



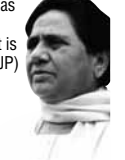
Actor — Rajkumar Rao

It's always good when all member states agree on something. We would of course hope that all members abide by those decisions.



UN Secretary-General — Antonio Guterres

Like the BJP, the Congress has started saying absurd things about the SP-BSP alliance. It is clear that both (Congress, BJP) have a tacit understanding.



BSP chief — Mayawati

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Unnecessary ruckus

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "In TinTin's footsteps" (May 2). Even if there is solid evidence that the footprints spotted by the Indian Army were indeed of the elusive Yeti, let us, for nature's sake, not disturb a pristine environment. We must learn not to endanger species who have been living and surviving in the lap of nature. Some things are best left alone.

M Pradyu Thalukavu

Diplomatic victory

Sir — The listing of Masood Azhar as a global terrorist by the UN Security Council is undoubtedly a huge diplomatic win for India in its long-standing fight against terrorism. Azhar was the blue-eyed boy of Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence and is also responsible for multiple terror attacks in India, including the Pulwama terror attack in which 40 Indian soldiers were killed in February. At a time when almost all nations across the world have

Mystery around Yeti only grows stronger

This refers to the editorial, "In TinTin's footsteps" (May 2). The reported sighting of mysterious footprints of Yeti, a mythical creature, by an expedition team of the Indian Army, was a welcome diversion from the exhaustive election news. Myth has it that the Yeti, otherwise known as the abominable snowman, resided in the snow-covered slopes of the Himalayas. The Army regards the "discovery of mysterious footprints of mythical beast Yeti" as sufficient and even clinching evidence for its claimed existence.

It is worth noting that DNA samples from bones, hair strands and faeces believed to be those of Yeti have turned out to be those of certain sub-species of black and brown bears. How did the Army come to the conclusion that the primate-like footprints were of Yeti is not clear. The scientific community sees it as "amateur speculation." Anindya Sinha, an Indian scientist, believes that the images as seen by the Army could be pugmarks of the Himalayan Brown Bears walking on fresh snow. Ever since, the Army has had to face a lot of ridicule for "propagating theories previously debunked by science." Those with a scientific bent of mind dismiss Yeti as a non-existent crypto zoological



phenomenon on par with Loch Ness Monster popularised by indigenous Lepcha people and mountaineers. They are unwilling to suspend disbelief and accept the Army's puerile claim. This is not to rule out the possibility that Yeti or a creature answering to the description — a human-like hominid — may have once existed in the mountainous terrain. Open-mindedness is a virtue when it comes to unravelling enduring mysteries.

G David Milton Maruthancode

Action Task Force (FATF), had not only drained all terror-financing options for Islamabad, but had also forced it to take action, albeit a cosmetic one.

India must side by side explore other options like taking pre-emptive action against terrorists, like the recent Balakot airstrikes. It must also put diplomatic pressure on Pakistan to take action against terrorists.

Srinivas Chennai

Election gimmick

Sir — It is strange that the Bharatiya Janata Party is resorting to every trick to retain power. After having accused the Congress of working in favour of Pakistan, it has now resurrected the issue of Congress president Rahul Gandhi's "citizenship." Why is the Home Ministry flogging a dead horse? Is the ruling dispensation running out of better ideas?

Abhishek Via web

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Small step forward

Sir — The UN's listing of Masood Azhar, the chief of Pakistan-based terrorist organisation, Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM), as a global terrorist is a symbolic move but is a small step forward towards India's fight

against terrorism.

It is noteworthy that Lashkar-e-Tayyeba (LeT) and its chief, Hafiz Saeed, too, were listed under the UN 1267 resolution. But as things stand today, such a move has done little to stop terror organisations from operating. In fact, the grey-listing of Pakistan by the Financial

FIRST COLUMN

Get set, go and never falter

Incubators are boosters that help businesses get off the ground. They add value to start-ups and ultimately benefit the wider ecosystem



PRAVIN KHANDELWAL

One of the major factors responsible for the high failure rate of start-ups in India is the lack of proportional growth of incubators. Ironically, the concept of incubators or accelerators — an organisation that shows the way for the start-up companies to speed up their growth and success — is still in the nascent stage while the start-up culture is flourishing with incessant growth. In a country where more than 1,000 start-ups are born every year, there are hardly 150 incubators and they, too, are failing to support a majority of endangered young businesses. Consequently, 90 per cent of the start-ups succumb to weak immunity even before their fifth anniversary. Though it's encouraging that India enjoys the status of being the world's third-largest start-up ecosystem, high failure rate is one big concern for all stakeholders, including foreign investors. To overcome barriers on the path of toddler businesses, there is an urgent need for a robust incubation system, one that runs parallel to the rising startup culture. But before ensuring sustainability to this culture, incubators must deal with the challenges they come across quite frequently.

Distance barriers: Ideas and entrepreneurs can be born anywhere and anytime — not just in Delhi or Mumbai but also in other big and small cities that have become a breeding ground for businesses. Despite the fact that 70 per cent of India's population lives in rural areas, the maximum incubators are located in metro cities and Tier-I cities. Distance keeps many potential start-ups out of the reach of enabling systems. Although India's communication infrastructure has improved significantly, everything related to business cannot be shared and understood over phone and emails. So, first of all, incubators must increase their physical reach to tap the growing opportunities in smaller cities and towns.

Lack of compatibility: Many a time, the aim of an entrepreneur does not align well with the vision of the incubating team because of the asymmetry between ambition and viability. It's really difficult to convince a budding entrepreneur as to why an idea, as shared by him/her, scores low on feasibility and viability. Often, the entrepreneur wants to go with the original ideas without even considering the alternative of an incubator. This opinion clash reduces the enthusiasm of the mentors and the end result is that neither the client nor the incubators is satisfied. The best way to prevent these kind of conflicts is by conveying all probable challenges in the initial rounds instead of throwing light on them in the middle of the journey. So, keeping clarity during official as well as non-official communication is the best antidote for communication barriers.

Funding vs revenue: Enabling a business to generate good revenue is more profitable than improving its traction for more funding. Here, the focus of an incubator should be to maintain a balance between fund management and revenue growth. In the initial phases, most incubators focus on luring the investors and care little about untapping the market potential for business. Though this one-dimensional approach helps secure required funds for the business, slow growth in revenue increases the financial liability of the company even in the infancy stage. Hence, the goal of funding should be smooth functioning, market penetration and achieving revenue targets. If funding is merely increasing the liability of a firm and revenue is not growing simultaneously, then it is an alarming situation for the startup.

Ensuring scalability: High scalability means better sustainability — this principle applies to almost every business but is more applicable to startups, which should be more flexible to mould themselves as per changes in micro and macroeconomic environment. In fact, if a start-up aims to achieve high in the long run, scalability should be in its DNA. A young entrepreneur high on passion and less on experience cannot easily understand the need for scalability of his/her business. But a coach or mentor can never ignore it. So, incubators must help start-ups in adopting a flexible and agile framework through counseling as well as devising feasible modules.

Value addition: Start-up incubation is not only about immutability of a business through appropriate funding, availability of space, recruitment of top management and exploration of market. The most promising attribute for any start-up is 'value addition', which offers an edge over its competitors. Usually, incubators serve all the needs. Such confined services can never ensure a better future. In contrast, incubators, that help start-ups in increasing their market share with value-added products or services, always succeed in achieving mutual goals.

(The writer is leadership and motivation director of a startup accelerator firm)

CONGRESS WILL WIN SEATS WHERE OUR CANDIDATES ARE STRONG. WHERE OUR CANDIDATES ARE SLIGHTLY LIGHTWEIGHT, WE WILL CUT INTO BJP'S VOTE SHARE.

—CONGRESS GENERAL SECRETARY PRIYANKA GANDHI VADRA

POINT COUNTERPOINT



I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THE CONGRESS HAS FIELDED WEAK CANDIDATES ANYWHERE. PEOPLE ARE NOT WITH IT. THIS IS WHY THEY ARE MAKING EXCUSES.

—SP CHIEF AKHILESH YADAV

Men have rights too

Male sex workers have been around through history but are a legally neglected lot. They should attract sanctions and restrictions like their female counterparts



HASAN KHURSHID

Prostitution is an age-old profession, the term derived from the Latin word *prostituta*, which involves the practice of engaging in sexual relations in exchange for money or some other material benefit. Its practitioners have now mutated to the more acceptable moniker of "sex workers", indicating a respect for their work rights and a more structured rule of engagement. Although a majority of sex workers are women, there are also gay, lesbian and heterosexual male ones, the last commonly known as gigolos. In fact, there is a significant emerging market for liberated women, who pay for sexual pleasure from men. Around 80 per cent of the estimated 42 million sex workers worldwide are female. This means that the remaining 20 per cent comprises male escorts. Yet they have got left out of the discourse on shedding taboos and are denied legitimacy by law.

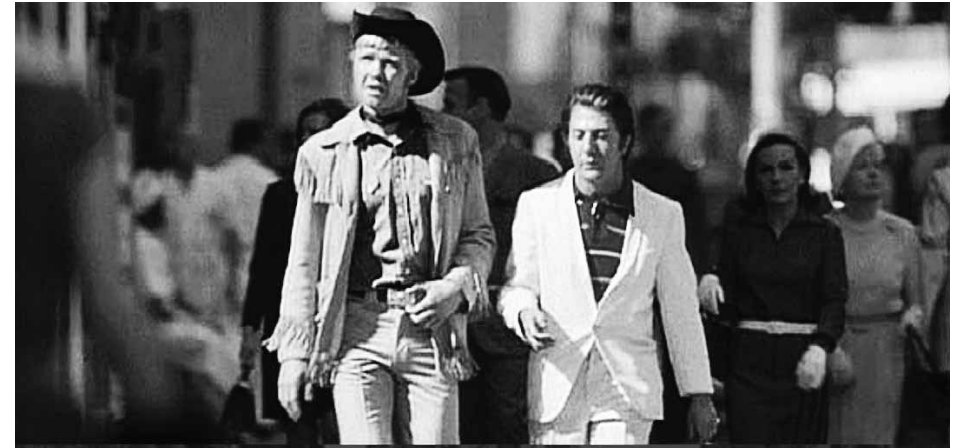
A survey of websites in 61 countries has found that a quarter of Australia's 516 male sex workers are now catering to women. Meanwhile, researchers from QUT's Crime, Justice and Social Democracy Research Centre and the Kirby Institute at the University of New South Wales, in the United Kingdom, found out that 50 per cent of the 5,487 male escorts cater to women and couples. In 2008, a scholarly paper revealed 300,000 male practitioners (serving either sex) were under the age of 16 years. New technologies like internet and mobile phones have promoted awareness of male sex work. The internet has also helped in safeguarding privacy and anonymity for potential male/female clients. There is no more need for gigolos to cruise public places, running the risk of arrest or violence. Professional escorts (indoor sex workers) usually advertise in print media through spa services or else on male escorting websites. However, such websites may face legal problems. In 2015, a well-known American website, *Rentboy.com*, was shut down by the United States Department of Homeland Security and its operators were charged for facilitating prostitution. However, recent research suggests a substantial growth in the number of online escorts worldwide.

Although not openly acknowledged as royal mistresses or concubines, royal histories across the world do have mentions of gigolos. It has been found in almost all modern and ancient cultures, though its prevalence has not been so common and prominent as that of female prostitution. In ancient times, male and female sex workers are believed to have plied their trade in sacred shrines. Yet the trade is horribly askew vis-a-vis men.

The isolation and stigma of male sex workers has been portrayed effectively in novels and cinemas in the West since the 1960s. Quite often, male prostitutes have been portrayed as tragic figures in films such as *Midnight Cowboy* (1969), which is about a tragic gigolo and won the Oscars, too.

Still male sex workers, compared to women (who have more slotted roles), have to provide varied services under different terminologies on mutually acceptable fee-for-service arrangement. They may be referred to as dancing partners, nude models, masseurs, rent-boys, male escorts,

“AS MALE PROSTITUTION HAS NOT BEEN EXPLICITLY AND EXPRESSLY MENTIONED IN THE ITPA, THE INDIAN JUDICIARY IS EXPECTED TO INCORPORATE THE RULES OF NATURAL JUSTICE, UTILISE THE DYNAMIC METHODS OF STATUTORY INTERPRETATION AND GIVE MEANING TO THE WORD AS PER ITS BEST JUDGEMENT



MIDNIGHT COWBOY

gigolos (implying female customers) and hustlers (more common for those soliciting in public places), among others. A large number of escorts catering to men and women engage in "non-tactile" services such as romance, tenderness, massage therapy and companionship, suggesting that sex is only part of the holistic service, where intimacy and emotional comfort is equally important to sexual pleasure.

Professor John Scott in his survey report quoted Maxime Durocher, a male sex worker since 2011, as saying, "Many of our clients come to see us saying (sometimes in tears) that they love their partner and they want to stay with them but they are missing something that needs to be addressed. They can't continue living like this. They might need more tenderness, understanding, somebody to talk to, satisfying sex, certain sexual acts, or simply variety, diversity, novelty, something new." Durocher continued, "Whatever they need, there are only two solutions: Getting it or leaving their partner. So by satisfying their missing desires, we provide them the opportunity of not breaking up relationships. We are most of the time the glue that keeps them together with spouses."

In January 2010, Ian Daly had written about a 25-year-old gigolo, 'Markus' (his working name), who had been registered as the first legal male sex worker of America. Expressing his views, Markus had said that to become successful in this type of venture, he had to act not as a service provider but as a surrogate lover, encompassing everything that's required of you, not only physically but emotion-

ally and psychologically too. That's even more difficult than the woman sex worker. "You can't necessarily say, oh, it's just a job. You actually have to say it's a passion. This actually isn't about selling my body. This is about changing social norms. I view myself as an artist, a performer. It's a craft. Whichever woman may walk through my door, she is appreciated. A surrogate lover will love that woman for a whole hour and she will be leaving much more empowered and much more confident of herself."

In the absence of male brothels, gigolos usually operate through internet or walk down certain selective locations of metropolitan cities, including Delhi and Bengaluru. Apart from the money, they are also offered costly gifts besides the agreed amount.

Yet they continued to be a nebulous entity in the eyes of the law, which still has been worked to protect women from being preyed upon. There is no clarity as to the working rights of the male sex worker. There is the Suppression of Immoral Traffic in Women and Girls Act, 1956 (SITA), as the nation was a signatory to the United Nations International Convention for the 'Suppression of Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of Others' of 1950. SITA was amended twice in 1978 and 1986. The 1978 amendment enhanced punishments for certain offences in the Act. The 1986 amendment changed the nomenclature of the Act as "The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956" (ITPA). One of the significant changes in the Act was that the phrase "women and girls" was replaced with "per-

son" throughout the Act. This was done to include all persons, regardless of whether male or female, who were abused sexually for commercial purposes. Section 2(f) of the ITPA specifically says that the term "prostitute" is to be construed accordingly — which is to say that the word is to be interpreted as per the facts and circumstances of each individual case. The key is to interpret the statute with the legislative intent in mind, what was the intention of the Parliament when it first drafted the statute. Surely, the Parliament had no intention that it would protect the female but leave aside the male. The phrase "female prostitutes" was used only because in those days female prostitution was more common. As male prostitution has not been explicitly and expressly mentioned in the Act, the Indian judiciary is expected to incorporate the rules of natural justice, utilise the dynamic methods of statutory interpretation and give meaning to the word as per its best judgement.

Unless the male sex workers are protected, they will continue to be vulnerable to sexually transmitted diseases and prone to social exclusion, loss of esteem and drug and alcoholic dependence. It is, therefore, vital that males be legally protected with as much sanctions and restrictions like female sex workers. As the phrase of "women and girls" was substituted by "person" in the ITPA Act, all types of sex workers and their clients should be prosecuted at par, failing which it will be the violation of Article 14 of the Indian Constitution.

(The writer is a legal journalist)

Debate on parliamentary reforms

There is understandable scepticism in Pakistan about the calls for adopting a presidential system of Government. But aside from its history, it's instructive to look at whether such a model is actually more politically stable



NADEEM PARACHA

In his controversial book, *Pakistan's ISI: Covert Action and Internal Operations*, Owen L. Sirrs writes that Pakistan's first elected Prime Minister, ZA Bhutto, wanted a presidential system to replace the parliamentary one that had elected him. Economist and author Shahid Javed Burki, in his 1980 book, *Pakistan under Bhutto, 1971-1977*, also mentions that Bhutto desired a presidential form of democracy.

Sirrs writes that Bhutto had enjoyed numerous executive powers when he replaced Yahya Khan as President and Chief martial law administrator in December 1971. However, his Government transformed Pakistan into a parliamentary democracy in 1973 and Bhutto became Prime Minister. Burki suggests

that Bhutto did this because his party's manifesto had advocated parliamentary democracy. Nevertheless, since the fate and workings of the executive in parliamentary democracy are closely related to the legislative assemblies, this meant that Prime Minister Bhutto had to let go of the powers that were at his disposal as President.

Even though his party had a majority in the National Assembly, Bhutto struggled to navigate around the interests of his party's elected legislators, to fully enact the kind of reforms he wanted to. On many occasions, he had to compromise to keep his own MNAs and MPs happy, let alone dealing in this context with the Opposition. Being an ambitious politician, he wanted to wield power without the many Constitutional checks and balances, which Assemblies are armed with, including having the power to dismiss a Prime Minister through a "no confidence" move.

In a presidential system, the executive and the legislature are independent bodies. The Assemblies cannot dismiss a President who is directly

elected by the electorate. The President can also appoint non-elected members as Ministers in his/her Cabinet. Former ideologue of Bhutto's PPP, Mubashir Hasan, in his 2001 book, *The Mirage of Power*, more than alludes that Bhutto was looking for a big win in the 1977 election so that he could use his party's majority in the Assemblies to constitutionally change Pakistan's parliamentary form of Government to a presidential one.

Bhutto was confident of winning a majority. But once it was realised that a united Opposition alliance had the potential to curtail his ambition in this respect, Government officials, handling the polling, went overboard in rigging the election on various seats, especially in Punjab.

All four military dictators, who ruled Pakistan during various stages, preferred the presidential system. This is one reason why even the mention of this system raises many eyebrows. Recently, as the establishment-backed PTI Government of Imran Khan faces increasing criticism on its handling of the country's floundering economy, talk of replacing Pakistan's

parliamentary system with a presidential one can be heard again from certain quarters. The perception being developed by such talk is that PTI's wafer-thin majority in the National Assembly and lack of elected ministerial talent within the party has left Prime Minister Khan's reformist agenda reeling.

What has made this (coy) call for a presidential system even more suspect is that some are calling it an "Islamic Presidential system." Truth is, anything in Pakistan with the prefix "Islamic" has and should draw immediate scepticism because it has always been cynically used — often causing more confusion than resolution. Ideas in this regard have been nothing more than convoluted rhetorical drivel.

Some are suggesting that an "Islamic Presidential system" has something to do with Allama Iqbal's idea of democracy. But according to LA Shirvani's 2005 book, *Writings, Speeches and Lectures of Iqbal*, Iqbal believed that a Muslim polity should elect a National Assembly made up of members, who were well-versed in both Islamic as well as modern (sec-

ular) sciences, laws and philosophies. Such an Assembly would make sure that the political and economic interests of the polity are advanced according to the progressive spirit of its faith and a consensus (*Ijma*) is reached which is representative of the electorate. Iqbal was also in favour of *ijtihad* (independent reasoning). Jinnah had interpreted this as parliamentary democracy, which it was. But one should also keep in mind that Iqbal was a poet and philosopher par excellence and not a political scientist.

But what if we investigate the presidential system without scepticism associated with it in Pakistan? Spanish sociologist Juan Jose Linz in his essay *The Perils of Democracy* and Harvard University's Prof S Mainwaring in *Presidentialism, Multipartyism and Democracy* write that historically, the parliamentary system performed better and provided stable democracies than presidential systems. Since the executive and the legislature are independent from each other in the presidential system, Linz and Mainwaring find the gap between the two as a flaw that can lead to a clash. Linz worries

that "the rigidity of presidential system can create a profound suspicion of the personalisation of power." The President is not accountable to the legislature as a Prime Minister is in a Parliamentary system.

According to Mainwaring's 1993 study, "presidential systems have not fared well. Only seven of 31 (22.6 per cent) presidential democracies have endured for at least 25 consecutive years, compared with 25 of 44 parliamentary systems (56.8 per cent). Linz points out that smaller parties lose out in the presidential system. This can become an issue in multicultural nations where groups represented by smaller parties may find themselves left out from the legislative process.

However, the West African researcher J Luengo's 2006 essay, *Democracy and Civil War in Sri Lanka* demonstrates how the adoption of parliamentary democracy by Sri Lanka (formerly Ceylon) in 1948 actually sent the country into a deadly spiral of ethnic tensions and warfare. Sri Lanka's Sinhalese majority had felt that during the British rule, it had been subjugated by the

region's pro-British Tamil minority. After independence, parliamentary democracy brought populist Sinhalese nationalist parties into power, who began to implement policies which alienated the Tamils. According to Luengo, this was the seed which gave birth to the long-drawn civil war in Sri Lanka between the Sinhalese and the Tamils. In 1978, the country adopted a "semi-presidential system" in which the Prime Minister is a secondary figure. It's a hybrid system like the one practised in France. But this system can cause problems when the directly elected President belongs to a party that fails to bag a majority in Parliament. The result can be a deadlock.

There is nothing wrong in debating what democratic system should Pakistan adopt. But this debate is premature in a country where parliamentary democracy has not yet been given the kind of uninterrupted run that it requires before one can seriously critique it or, moreover, advocate its replacement with a presidential democracy.

(The Dawn)

Markets end modestly lower on macro data, global cues

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmarks ended on a negative note after a volatile session on Thursday as investor sentiment remained on the back foot amid lacklustre macroeconomic data and mixed overseas cues.

Auto stocks skidded following weak April sales numbers, while IT counters tumbled as the rupee strengthened above the 70 per dollar mark.

The BSE Sensex settled 50.12 points, or 0.13 per cent, lower at 38,981.43. During the day, the index swung over 300 points, hitting an intra-day low of 38,882.99 and a high of 39,189.95.

In similar movement, the broader NSE Nifty slipped 23.40 points, or 0.20 per cent, to close at 11,724.75. It also saw an intra-day movement of 89.75 points.

Globally, stock markets struggled after the US Federal Reserve decided to keep its benchmark interest rate unchanged amid mixed signals about the direction of the American economy.

In the Sensex pack, Tata Motors was the biggest loser, shedding 3.29 per cent, followed by ICICI Bank, Infosys, HCL Tech, Axis Bank, TCS, HUL, Asian Paints, Sun Pharma, SBI, Tata Steel and NTPC, which dropped up to 3.23 per cent.

On the other hand, Yes Bank was the top gainer, rebounding 3.45 per cent.

PowerGrid, HDFC, HDFC Bank, Hero MotoCorp, Bajaj Auto, Bharti Airtel, Bajaj Finance, Kotak Bank, RIL, L&T, Vedanta, ITC, ONGC and Maruti too ended in the green, rising up to 1.88 per cent.

"As we enter the final stages of the 2019 general elections, one can expect the volatility in the market to remain high. Q4 FY19 earnings so far has been lacklustre, slowdown in sectors such as consumption and auto has hurt investor sentiment.

"Rising oil prices continue to be a threat to the domestic markets. However, due to the ongoing general elections the government has kept domestic oil prices stable and has not undertaken any steep hikes," said Hemang Jani, Head - Advisory, Sharekhan by BNP Paribas.

Sectorally, BSE IT, teck, consumer durables, bankex and auto indices ended in the red, falling up to 1.84 per cent. The broader BSE Midcap and Smallcap gauges closed in line with the benchmarks, shedding up to 0.61 per cent.

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

RUPEE DARTS UP 19 PAISE

The rupee, meanwhile, appreciated by 19 paise to 69.37 against the US dollar on Thursday, registering its third consecutive session of gain amid

easing crude oil prices and weakening of the greenback against other major currencies overseas.

Forex dealers said selling of the American currency by exporters and sustained foreign fund inflows also propped up the rupee.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the domestic unit opened at 69.60 per dollar and advanced to a high of 69.62 during the day. It finally settled at 69.37, registering a rise of 19 paise over its previous close. The rupee had settled at 69.56 against the US dollar Tuesday.

Currency market was shut on Wednesday on account of Maharashtra Day.

Brent crude futures, the global oil benchmark, slipped 0.93 per cent to USD 71.51 per barrel. Crude prices have recovered significantly from their six-month high of USD 75.60 per barrel. "Oil prices fell today, pulled down by record US crude production that led to a surge in iXWventories. Brent is set for a weekly loss, which would break its longest string of weekly gains for a year," said V K Sharma, Head PFC and Capital Markets Strategy, HCG Securities.

The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, slipped 0.05 per cent to 97.63. Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) remained net buyers in the capital markets, putting in Rs 11.4 crore Tuesday, according to provisional exchange data.

India's mfg sector growth slows in April amid poll uncertainty: PMI

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The country's manufacturing sector performance eased to an eight-month low in April as new business growth moderated, curbed by the elections and a challenging economic environment, a monthly survey showed on Thursday.

The Nikkei India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index declined from 52.6 in March to 51.8 in April, reflecting weakest improvement in business conditions since August 2018. This is the 21st consecutive month that the manufacturing PMI remained above the 50-point mark. In PMI parlance, a print above 50 means expansion, while a score below that denotes contraction.

April PMI data indicated that softer increase in new orders restricted growth of output, employment and business sentiment

"Although remaining inside expansion territory, growth continued to soften and the fact that employment increased at the weakest pace for over a year suggests that producers are hardly gearing up for a rebound," said Pollyanna De Lima, principal economist at IHS Markit and author of the report, said.

When looking at reasons provided by surveyed companies for the slowdown, disruptions arising from the elections was a key theme, Lima said, adding that "firms also seem to have adopted a wait-and-see approach on their plans until public policies become clearer upon the formation of a government". On the prices front, input cost inflation eased to a 43-month low while the rate of charge inflation was marginal and below its long-run average.

"With price pressures in the manufacturing economy cooling and growth losing momentum, it's increasingly likely that the RBI may cut its official rate for a third successive time in June," Lima said. The next meeting of RBI's Monetary Policy Committee is scheduled on June 3-6.

BUSINESS CORNER

MRF Q4 NET PROFIT DROPS 15%

New Delhi: Tyre major MRF on Thursday posted 14.91% decline in its standalone net profit at ₹293.83 crore for the fourth quarter of 2018-19 fiscal. The company had posted a net profit of ₹345.32 crore in the year-ago period. Revenue from operations, however, rose to ₹4,073.45 crore during the fourth quarter as compared with ₹3,835.50 crore in the same period of 2017-18, MRF said in a regulatory filing. For the 2018-19 fiscal, the company reported a net profit of ₹1,096.87 crore, up marginally from ₹1,092.28 crore in 2017-18. Revenue from operations rose to ₹15,837 crore in 2018-19 fiscal as compared with ₹15,181.05 crore in 2017-18. The company's board recommended a final dividend of ₹54 per share, which along with two interim dividends of ₹3 each already paid, works out to ₹60 per share for the year ended March, 31 2019.

BANDHAN BANK Q4 NET RISES 68%

Kolkata: Net profit of private sector Bandhan Bank during the last quarter of FY18-19 increased 68% at ₹650.87 crore as compared to ₹388 crore the same period previous fiscal. Net profit for the whole financial year 2018-19 increased 45% y-o-y at ₹1951.50 crore as against ₹1346 crore in the similar corresponding period, the bank said in a statement on Thursday. Net interest margin (NIM) of the bank in the current quarter stood at 10.69% against 9.32% in the corresponding period of the previous year. Total advances of the bank grew 38.46% at ₹44,776 crore as on March 31, 2019, as against ₹32,339 crore as on March 31, 2018. Total deposits increased by 27.64% at ₹43,232 crore as on March 31, 2019, compared to ₹33,869 crore as on March 31, 2018, the statement added. Gross NPAs as on March 31, 2019 stood at 2.04% against 2.41% as on December 31, 2018. CASA ratio of the bank at 40.75% of total deposits, compared to 34.32% in the corresponding period last year. Operating profit for the quarter increased by 63.92% at ₹1,154 crore against ₹704 crore in the corresponding quarter of the previous year.

DABUR NET PROFIT FALLS 6.4%

New Delhi: Homegrown FMCG major Dabur India Ltd on Thursday reported a fall of 6.46% in consolidated net profit to ₹371.49 crore for the fourth quarter ended March 2019. The company had posted a net profit of ₹397.18 crore in the January-March quarter a year ago. Dabur India said in a BSE filing. Its total income stood at ₹2,194.25 crore, a rise of 4.18% as compared with ₹2,106.15 crore of the year-ago quarter. Dabur's total expense was ₹1,729.59 crore as against ₹1,603.56 crore a year ago, up 7.85%. For the entire financial year 2018-19, Dabur's profit stood at ₹1,446.25 crore as against ₹1,357.74 crore in the previous year.

RADICO KHAITAN Q4 NET PROFIT UP 14% TO ₹39 CRORE

New Delhi: Liquor firm Radico Khaitan ON Thursday reported 14.24% increase in its standalone net profit to ₹39.05 crore for the fourth quarter ended March 31. The company had posted a net profit of ₹34.18 crore during the January-March a year ago, Radico Khaitan said in a regulatory filing. Its total income during the quarter under review stood at ₹1,981.85 crore, up 18.51% against ₹1,672.30 crore in the corresponding quarter previous fiscal. Radico Khaitan's total expenses surged 18.78% to ₹1,925.19 crore compared to ₹1,620.74 crore. For the entire 2018-19, Radico Khaitan's profit stood at ₹188.06 crore, up 52.33%, as against ₹123.45 crore in the previous year. Total income in the last fiscal stood at ₹8,071.29 crore, up 28.54%, from ₹6,279.03 crore in 2017-18.

ORIENT PAPER Q4 NET PROFIT SURGES OVER TWO-FOLD TO ₹32.42 CRORE

New Delhi: CK Birla group firm Orient Paper on Thursday reported over two-fold jump in its standalone net profit to ₹32.42 crore for the fourth quarter ended March 31. The company had posted a net profit of ₹15.78 crore during the January-March a year ago, Orient Paper said in a regulatory filing. PTI

NIFTY 50

Table with columns: SCRIP, OPEN, HIGH, LOW, LTP, CHANGE. Lists various stocks and their price movements.

BSE 500

Table with columns: SCRIP, OPEN, HIGH, LOW, LTP, CHANGE. Lists various stocks and their price movements.



NIFTY NEXT 50

Table with columns: SCRIP, OPEN, HIGH, LOW, LTP, CHANGE. Lists various stocks and their price movements.

Table with columns: SCRIP, OPEN, HIGH, LOW, LTP, CHANGE. Lists various stocks and their price movements.

BULLION | Last 7 Days

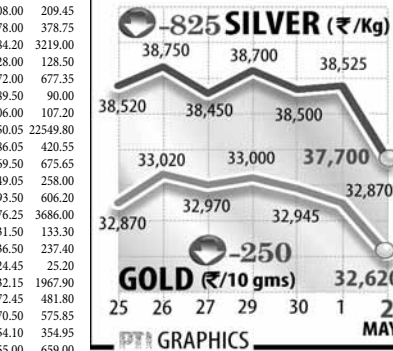


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PURE GENIUS

Messi inspires Barcelona step closer to Champions League title after beating Liverpool 3-0 in 1st leg

AFP ■ BARCELONA

Jürgen Klopp admitted Lionel Messi was "unstoppable" on Wednesday after he left Liverpool needing a miracle to reach the Champions League final. Luis Suarez poked in against his former club before Messi hit a late double, the second a stunning free-kick for his 600th Barca goal, as his team took a 3-0 lead from a pulsating semi-final first leg ahead of next week's return at Anfield.

"He's unstoppable," said Klopp afterwards. "Obviously we couldn't defend the free-kick. What a strike. He's a world-class player but I knew that already. It's no surprise."

Klopp could only smile after Messi's curling shot nestled in the top corner but this result was harsh on his side.

They matched Barcelona in the first half, dominated them early in the second and could still have left with an away goal after Messi's brilliant brace, only for Mohamed Salah to hit the post.

"I said to the boys I was proud of how we played against a side like this," Klopp said. "If you lose away it's not a massive problem as long as you score a goal. That's our problem tonight - it doesn't make our life any easier."

Messi and Suarez did what they have done all season, their tallies now at 47 and 27 goals respectively in all competitions.

It had been a breathtaking contest befitting two of Europe's most exhilarating teams. The first half was electric, a reel of chances, breaks and blocks, while the second was tense, a tactical battle where Barca dared Liverpool to over-exert.

The comeback will be even tougher for them given Barcelona, with La Liga wrapped up, will surely rest a host of players against Celta Vigo this weekend while Liverpool, a point behind Premier League leaders Manchester City, will have



to be at full throttle again away at Newcastle on Saturday. "They can still make us suffer," said Barca coach Ernesto Valverde. "The result is good but the tie is open."



SCINTILLATING

Messi was already fresh, after playing just over half the La Liga minutes he could have done in April, and he looked sharp early on, weaving through the centre while for Liverpool, the sensational Sadio Mane raced down the left.

The attacks were scintillating but the defending was good too. Andy Robertson scrambled across to block Messi's finish from six yards and moments later it was Sergi



Robertson on the slide, preventing Mane from sprinting clear.

Messi wanted a penalty when the ball jumped up on Joel Matip and Naby Keita went off injured in the 25th minute, replaced by Jordan Henderson.

A minute later came the goal. Arturo Vidal sprayed the ball left to Philippe Coutinho, who cushioned back for Jordi Alba. Alba shaped to cross but instead curved a perfectly weighted pass to the near post, where Suarez nipped in.

Liverpool came again. Mane scampered in behind then flicked the ball round Sergio Busquets. He should have scored too, Henderson's cross finding him free from eight yards but the shot flew over.

Barca took control just as Suarez began to lose it, irked by James Milner barging Messi into the sideboards after the Argentinian had danced past

Robertson. But Liverpool were re-energised at the start of the second half. Marc-Andre ter Stegen pushed away shots from Milner and Salah, and held a Milner drive.

Then Messi intervened, striking twice in seven minutes. His own run started the first, setting Sergi free to square to Suarez. Off balance, Suarez could only knee the ball against the crossbar but it came back for Messi, who chested and finished into an open net.

Two was tough on Liverpool but Messi was not done. The free-kick was central, 30 yards out. He whipped it over the wall and into the top corner.

Barca were delirious but Liverpool almost grabbed an away goal when a clearance on the line fell kindly for Salah, who hammered against the post. It could have been a lifeline. Liverpool are on the brink.

FIGURATIVELY

8 Lionel Messi has scored eight direct free-kick goals from 56 attempts for Barcelona in all competitions this season; Cristiano Ronaldo is yet to score a direct free-kick from 24 attempts for Juventus.

4 Liverpool have now lost more matches in the Champions League this season (4 in 11 matches) than in all other competitions combined (3 in 38 matches).

3 Liverpool suffered their joint-heaviest Champions League defeat, also losing 0-3 to Real Madrid in October 2014.

600 Lionel Messi has scored his 600th goal for FC Barcelona in all competitions, exactly 14 years ago since his first goal against Alacete on 1st May 2005.

26 Lionel Messi now has 26 goals in 33 appearances against English clubs in the Champions League; no player has more against teams from a particular country in the competition's history (level with Cristiano Ronaldo v German clubs).

3 Lionel Messi is only the second player to score against three different English clubs in the same Champions League season (Spurs, Man Utd and Liverpool), after Thomas Muller in 2013-14 (Arsenal, Man City and Man Utd).

32 Only Raúl (33) has scored against more different Champions League opponents than Lionel Messi (32), with this his first goal in three appearances against Liverpool.

36 Luis Suárez has scored his first Champions League goal of the season, with his 36th shot of the campaign.



"We were the better team in the first half, but in the second half they pressured us and we couldn't get out of our half, but we got the goals and it is a good advantage." — Lionel Messi



"I don't know if we can play much better. But one moment there's Messi with an easy goal and the second was unsaveable." — Jurgen Klopp



"We know how good he is. We're not going to hide away from it. He's the best player in the world, but I thought we done relatively well against him." — Andrew Robertson



"I think he's the best player in the world and he's got that little bit extra as well that he's shown over the years." — Virgil Van Dijk



"We have made a great match, a very good result. But the euphoria has not reached the dressing room. We know that there is a return match and we have to go to win and without speculating anything." — Jordi Alba



"We know what Leo is, but he does not stop surprising us. He has pushed us to the brink [of the final] but we still have to play the second leg." — Ernesto Valverde

SINGLES

STEFAN URGES JAMES TO LEAVE BAYERN
MUNICH: Former Bayern Munich captain Stefan Effenberg has said that Colombian star James Rodriguez should leave the club in order to pick up more game time. "James should recognise that the right path for him is to leave Bayern," wrote Effenberg in his column for the German news website T-online on Thursday. The 27-year-old Colombian joined Bayern from Real Madrid in 2017, on a two-year loan deal which expires at the end of this season. Bayern have the option to buy Rodriguez permanently for 42 million euros (\$47.1m), but the midfielder has not been a first-team regular under Niko Kovac this season. "He has to play and enjoy his football, but he cannot do that if he is only allowed to play seven, 10, 12 or 15 minutes at a time," wrote Effenberg.

SEMENYA TO RUN IN DIAMOND LEAGUE
DOHA: Olympic champion Gaster Semenya, who lost her legal challenge against new IAAF gender rules, will race in the 800 metres in Friday's Doha Diamond League after making a late entry, organisers said on Thursday. Semenya, the double Olympic champion, was added to the start list for Friday's 800 metres on Thursday morning, a day after her appeal against the IAAF's rule regulating testosterone levels for women athletes was rejected by the Court for Arbitration of Sport. Doha organisers said the South African runner had waited for the outcome of Wednesday's CAS hearing in Lausanne, Switzerland, before deciding whether to run in the meeting that opens the Diamond League season.

ALEX HALES TO FEATURE FOR NOTTS
LONDON: Controversial England batsman Alex Hales will be available for Nottinghamshire for the rest of the white-ball season. Hales was axed from all England squads, including the provisional 15-man party for this year's World Cup, after reportedly failing a second test for recreational drugs. But his English county Nottinghamshire believes it is in the interests of "all concerned" for the batsman to return to playing cricket, starting with Friday's game against Durham. "The recent events in relation to Alex Hales have been difficult for everyone involved with Nottinghamshire County Cricket Club," a statement from the club read on Wednesday. "Following his withdrawal from all England squads this week, we have met with Alex to express our concerns and to re-iterate that such actions cannot continue."

PRANNOY STUNS SUGIARTO IN NZ OPEN
AUCKLAND: India's HS Prannoy stunned Tommy Sugiarto in straight games to sail into the men's singles quarterfinals even as his compatriot B Sai Praneeth crashed out in the second round of the New Zealand Open badminton tournament here on Thursday. Unseeded Prannoy shocked second seed Sugiarto 21-14, 21-12 in just 37 minutes to book his place in the last-eight round, where he will be up against fifth seed Kanta Tsuneyama of Japan. This was world No 26 Prannoy's maiden meeting against world No 13 Sugiarto. Earlier in the day, Praneeth suffered a straight-game 12-21, 12-21 loss to the legendary Lin Dan of China. Seventh seed Lin Dan, thus, progressed to the quarterfinals where he will be up against top seed Anthony Sinisuka Ginting of Indonesia. Indian men's doubles pair of Manu Attri and Sumeeth B Reddy too lost in the second round, going down against seventh seeds Goh V Shem and Tan Wee Kiong of Malaysia 17-21, 19-21.

Dhoni's contribution will be massive for India: Gavaskar



Mahendra Singh Dhoni bats during nets session. BCCI/Twitter

PTI ■ NAVI MUMBAI

Former India captain Sunil Gavaskar foresees Mahendra Singh Dhoni making a "massive" contribution in India's World Cup campaign and he feels it will not be limited to the talismanic player's much-admired instinctive reading of the game. Dhoni has been in superb form in the ongoing Indian Premier League and has so far amassed 358 runs from 11 matches for the Chennai Super Kings. Gavaskar feels the stumper-batsman will be cru-

cial to India posting defendable totals in the mega-event starting May 30 in the United Kingdom. "I think it will be very important because we have a fabulous top-three. But in case the top-three don't make their usual contribution, then Dhoni's contribution down the order, whether it's at number four or five, will make a big difference in India posting a defendable total," Gavaskar said. Gavaskar also spoke highly of Dhoni's wicket-keeping skills and how they aid skip-

per Virat Kohli in making field placements. "...We have seen the wicket-keeping skills that he has. But more importantly as somebody who stands close to the wicket, guiding the spinners where to bowl, guiding the other bowlers also where to ball and making those little field adjustments..." he elaborated.

"...(Virat) Kohli, whose brilliant fielding makes it imperative for him to stand in the deep, at long-off/long-on may be, is unable to see those little changes of the backward point fielder moving a little bit to his right or little bit to his left, similarly square-leg fielder moving.

"So those are the kind of changes Dhoni will be able to bring about with Kohli's, of-course, full backing as well," the scorer of 34 Test hundreds explained. Gavaskar also said the fact that Dhoni has already led India to the 2011 World Cup triumph would make his experience all the more valuable. "And when you have somebody who's actually been in a position where he's taken the stress and taken the team to a win as he did in 2011 (World Cup), that is invaluable in your team. "So Dhoni's contribution is going to be massive," Gavaskar signed off.



'Huge hunger' - Finch tips Warner to dominate WC

AFP ■ SYDNEY

Australia captain Aaron Finch believes David Warner will enter this year's World Cup desperate to prove himself as the disgraced batsman prepares to rejoin his teammates after a ball-tampering ban. Warner has been in red-hot form in the India Premier League after completing a 12-month suspension for cheating, averaging 69.20 in 12 innings, including a century and eight fifties. Finch expected the fiery batsman to also dominate on the international stage, providing a massive boost for Australia as the reigning champions chase a sixth World Cup trophy. "He's coming back with a huge hunger, not just to perform well for his franchise, but to dominate international cricket again," Finch told Melbourne

commercial radio on Wednesday. "When you have your dream taken away from you for 12 months, I can imagine there's something inside you that burns really strongly." Finch said the ban, imposed after Warner masterminded the "Sandpaper-gate" scandal in Cape Town last year, had given the 32-year-old a chance to refresh his game. "He's a super player, we know how destructive he can be," he said. "I think having time off to spend with his family and get away from the game (was important)." Warner and former Australian captain Steve Smith will officially rejoin the Australian squad for the first time at a training camp in Brisbane on Friday. Finch did not expect any problems re-integrating them into the team, even though the former captain and deputy will have to defer to a new leadership team. He said he would consult the pair about on-field tactics. "I'll be using them as much as I

can tactically because they've both captained a lot of cricket and are very good captains on the field," he said. "It would be really naive of me not to lean on them." Finch also revealed he feared for his own spot on the team after a recent barren run, although he believed he had now returned to form. "In the back of your mind you're thinking, 'Gee, the World Cup isn't far away, as a captain I could be left out of the squad,'" he said. "Then you start putting unrealistic pressure on yourself to perform." Finch had an unsuccessful spell in the Test side last year, averaging 27.80 in five matches, and conceded that at 32 his career in the long-form game was over. "My chances to play Test cricket again have probably slipped away," he said. "I'm still very grateful for the opportunity... I'm OK with that because I gave it everything I could."

WC will offer beautiful tracks for batsmen: Tendulkar

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Legendary cricketer Sachin Tendulkar on Thursday said the World Cup in the United Kingdom will offer beautiful batting tracks but he doesn't expect the ball to swing much in the hot conditions that will prevail there. The World Cup, which will kick-start on May 30, will see all 10 participating nations face-off against each other. "I am told it's going to be a hot summer. Even in the Champions Trophy the wickets

were superb when the sun was out. In the heat the wickets get really flat. I am sure they will give beautiful tracks to bat on," Tendulkar said on the sidelines of the inauguration of the MIG Club pavilion named after him. "I don't think there will be much difference in the conditions unless there is a heavy cloud cover. If there is a cloud cover, the ball might go around a bit. Even if that's the case I don't see that happening for a longer duration just the first over if at all," he added. Several Indian players,



I am told it's going to be a hot summer. Even in the Champions Trophy the wickets were superb when the sun was out. In the heat the wickets get really flat. I am sure they will give beautiful tracks to bat on

including captain Virat Kohli, Hardik Pandya and KL Rahul, are performing well in the ongoing Indian Premier League. Asked if that will help them in the World Cup, Tendulkar said: "A good performance in any format is good news because it gives the player confidence. If you are confident in any format, that's important." "The players have time to make some adjustments according to the conditions. All of them have played enough cricket to know what to do to improve," he added.

