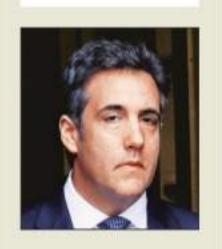
16 THE WORLD



MEANWHILE ARDERN 'SURPRISED' BY PROPOSAL

New Zealand PM Jacinda Ardern said she was surprised when her long-time partner proposed to her over the Easter holidays and has no idea when the wedding will be. She said the proposal was made when the couple, plus her security, some locals, and a dog who stole her chocolates, were at a "beautiful little lookout" in Hawke's Bay, New Zealand.

TOPOFTHE WORLD



Cohen was given a prison term over hushmoney payments to two women

USA

Trump's former personal lawyer to begin jail time

New York: Michael Cohen, the lawyer who once vowed to "take a bullet" for President Donald Trump but now calls him a "con man," on Monday will begin serving a threeyear prison sentence for arranging hush payments to two women who said they had sexual encounters with the president and lying to the US Congress. Cohen, Trump's longtime former personal attorney, must report by 2 pm to the Federal Correctional Institution in Otisville, New York, about 10 km northwest of New York City. He is expected to stay at the prison's minimum security camp.

PAKISTAN

Science minister says Hubble Telescope sent to space by Pak

Islamabad: Pakistan's Science and Technology Minister Fawad Chaudhry said that the Hubble Space Telescope was sent into space by the country's space agency Suparco, instead of NASA. Chaudhry, speaking on a talk show, claimed "The world's biggest telescope was sent by Suparco (Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission)". The minister's gaffe triggered hilarious reactions on Twitter. "May be NASA head will resign and also join the ministry of @fawadchaudhry as head of Suparco," one user tweeted.

CHINA

Missing student alleges abuse

Beijing: A missing student labour activist has accused Chinese police of abusing him over several days, including by forcing him to listen to a three-hour speech by President Xi Jinping, amid a crackdown on campus activism. In a video and written testimony published after he disappeared last week, Peking University student Qiu Zhanxuan said local police "tormented" him over a five-day period late February.

1 mn species at risk of extinction, need transformative changes: UN

SOWMIYA ASHOK & AMITABH SINHA BEIJING, PUNE, MAY 6

THE HEALTH of ecosystems that humans and other species depend on is "deteriorating more rapidly than ever", with up to one million species threatened with extinction, many within decades, a large-scale global assessment by a United Nations body has found.

Natural habitats are being destroyed at an accelerating pace, the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) report says, adding that the current rate of global species extinc-

tion is "tens to hundreds of times" higher compared to the average over the last 10 million years. "Even for global warming of 1.5 to 2 degrees, the majority of terrestrial species ranges are projected to shrink profoundly," it notes.

This 1500-page report is

amongst the most comprehensive health check-ups for the planet. Much like the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), which provides scientific assessments of climate change, the IPBES was set up in 2012, to provide a larger sustainability framework informed by the latest science. This is the IPBES' first report which can been seen as a 'state of nature' report. It



The current rate of extinction is "tens to hundreds of times" higher compared to the average over the last 10 mn years. AP

is compiled by 145 expert authors from 50 countries over the past three years and provides an assessment that combines science,

policy and knowledge.

It ranks "five direct drivers" that cause changes in nature that have the largest relative global im-

pact. In descending order, these include: changes in land and sea use, direct exploitation of organisms, climate change, pollution and "invasive alien species".

These "negative trends in nature" are expected to continue to 2050 and beyond in all of the policy scenarios explored in the assessment, "except those that include transformative change".

"The report is the best scientific assessment of the state of our natural ecosystems. It is an account of what science says has happened to our natural environment in the last few decades," Suneetha M Subramanian, policy researcher on biodiversity and human well-being, at the UN University Institute of Advanced Studies told The Indian Express. "Nature has been degraded in an unprecedented manner since the 1970s, primarily because of human interventions. It is not looking good at all. But the science-informed report also says that all is still not lost, and there is still an opportunity for human beings to live in harmony with nature. But we need to change the way in which we govern our natural resources, and change the way in which we

produce and consume things." IPBES Chair, Robert Watson, said the report presents an "ominous picture". "The health of ecosystems, on which we and all other species depend, is deterio-

AMID WORSENING TIES

rating more rapidly than ever. We are eroding the very foundations of our economies, livelihoods, food security, health and quality of life worldwide," he said.

A systematic review of 15,000 scientific and government sources and resources collected from indigenous and local knowledge were part of the assessment. The report finds that "three-quarters of the landbased environment and about 66% of the marine environment have been significantly altered by human actions". Notably, "On average these trends have been less severe or avoided in areas held or managed by indigenous peoples and local communities."

IS-linked Lankan terror group has assets worth Rs 700 crore: Police

Two men arrested over sectarian clashes in Negombo; schools reopen to nearly empty classes

PTI& REUTERS NEGOMBO, COLOMBO, MAY 6

THE ISLAMIC State-linked Sri Lankan extremist group National Thowheeth Jamaath (NTJ), blamed for the Easter Sunday bombings, was found in possession of more than Rs 14 crore in cash and other assets worth over Rs 700 crore, police said Monday.

The assets and the cash were found during the investigations by the CID, police spokesman S P Ruwan Gunasekera said. "Half of the cash has been

taken under CID custody and the remainder was found deposited in several bank accounts. The CID has taken measures to suspend those accounts," Gunasekera said.

Clashes in Negombo

Police arrested two men after a personal feud led to clashes between two sectarian groups in a beachside resort north of the capital, the site of one of the deadliest Easter Sunday suicide bombings.

Two weeks after 257 people were killed by Islamist militants in hotels and churches across the country, police were hunting plot-

58 killed in Niger

tanker truck blast

FIFTY-EIGHT people died in

Niger's capital Niamey after an

overturned tanker truck ex-

ploded as crowds collected spilt

fuel, authorities and witnesses

near the international airport

Sunday night left the burnt

truck's wreckage, motorbikes

and debris scattered over the

road. Nearby houses were

ple were all around the truck

when it exploded all of a sud-

den," a local trader said. "I saw at

trying to collect petrol leaking

from the truck, which had over-

turned on railway tracks, when

the explosion happened.

Witnesses said people were

"Motorbike riders and peo-

The blast on the RN1 route

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NIAMEY. MAY 6

said Monday.

damaged by fire.

least 40 dead."



A shop damaged in clashes between two groups in Negombo's Poruthota village. Reuters

Archbishop of Colombo Malcolm Ranjith and some Muslim religious leaders visited the area in Negombo to try to defuse the tension and asked liquor shops to be closed after a personal feud escalated to sectarian violence

ters on the loose as fears grew of ethnic clashes targeting Muslims.

Gunasekera said a clash on Sunday between two individuals in Negombo, where 102 people attending an Easter service were

killed on April 21, quickly escalated. Government sources told Reuters that some Catholics and Muslims clashed, prompting an overnight curfew in Negombo.

A Reuters witness saw at least

one shop, an office, three motorbikes and three three-wheel taxis had been damaged. Gunesekera said there were no reports of any serious injuries.

Archbishop of Colombo

Malcolm Ranjith and some Muslim leaders visited the area to try to defuse the tension and asked liquor shops to be closed.

Sri Lanka's 22 million population is mostly Buddhist but includes minority Christians, Muslims and Hindus.

A brief ban on social media platforms imposed during the clash was lifted, but authorities said they would stay alert for threats against Muslims.

Schools reopen

Security remained tight across the country as state schools resumed classes on Monday, but many anxious parents kept their children at home.

Mid-to-upper stream classes resumed on Monday, a day after soldiers conducted a security sweep of schools. Lower grades are expected to resume on May 13.

Despite the tight security and military patrols, most classrooms were near empty. Private schools, including Catholic institutions, remained closed.

"I have decided not to send my son to school until the country returns to normal," said Sujeeva Dissanayake, whose son goes to the state-run Asoka College in Colombo.



The USS Abraham Lincoln in Norfolk, Virginia, last month. AP

ROBERT BURNS & **CATHERINE LUCEY** WASHINGTON, MAY 6

A WHITE House decision to dispatch an aircraft carrier and other military resources to send a message to Iran followed "clear indications" that Iranian and Iranian proxy forces were preparing to possibly attack US forces in the region, a defence official told the Associated Press.

The official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive information, said that the Pentagon approved the deployments and that US forces at sea and on land were thought to be the potential targets. The official declined to be more specific.

White House national security adviser John Bolton said in a statement Sunday night that the US is deploying the USS Abraham Lincoln Carrier Strike Group and a bomber task force to the US Central Command region, an area that includes the Middle East.

Bolton said the move was in response to "a number of troubling and escalatory indications and warnings." He didn't provide details, but said the US wants to send a message that "unrelenting force" will meet any attack on US interests or those of its allies. "The US is not seeking war with the Iranian regime, but we are fully prepared to respond to any attack, whether by proxy, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, or regular Iranian forces," he said.

Bolton's reference to the



US move not extraordinary, but language aggressive

THE US moving forces in and out of West Asia is not an uncommon occurrence, but the way in which the movement of the carrier strike group was announced by the US shows that it is trying to deter any possible Iranian action. Bolton's warning to Iran comes after the Iranian foreign minister recently said the country would continue to sell oil despite sanctions and warned the US would face consequences if it tried to stop sales. According to CNN, some US officials were worried at the time that Iran may target US assets in the region.

Central Command area would mean the Lincoln is headed to the Red Sea and perhaps then to the Arabian Sea or the Persian Gulf. AP

Israel-Gaza border falls quiet as truce takes hold

NIDAL AL-MUGHRABI & ARI RABINOVITCH GAZA, JERUSALEM, MAY 6

A SURGE in deadly violence in the Gaza Strip and southern Israel petered out overnight with Palestinian officials reporting that Egypt had mediated a ceasefire on Monday ending the most serious spate of cross-border clashes for months.

erupted three days ago, peaking on Sunday when rockets and missiles from Gaza killed four civilians in Israel. Israeli strikes killed 21 Palestinians, more than half of them civilians, over the weekend.

The latest round of fighting

Two Palestinian officials and a TV station belonging to Hamas, Gaza's Islamist rulers, said a truce had been reached at 4.30 am.

Israel did not formally confirm the existence of a truce with

Netanyahu's government spoke in more general terms of a reciprocal return to quiet, with one



old baby in Gaza. Reuters

suggesting that Iran had been behind the Gaza escalation.

Israel's military said more than 600 rockets and other projectiles had been fired at southern Israeli cities and villages since Friday. It said it shelled or carried out air strikes on some 320 militant sites.

The violence abated before dawn, just as Gazans were

Israel, which had gone off continuously over the weekend, did not sound on Monday and there were no reports of new airstrikes

AEROFLOT CRASH-LANDING TOLL RISES TO 41 The damaged Aeroflot Sukhoi Superjet 100 at Moscow's Sheremetyevo airport on Sunday. The pilot of the passenger plane

said lightning led to the emergency landing. The flight was on fire as it landed, and the blaze claimed 41 lives. Reuters

BABY IS SEVENTH IN LINE TO BRITISH THRONE

It's a boy! Prince Harry and Meghan welcome first child

GERRY MEY WINDSOR, MAY 6

MEGHAN, THE Duchess of Sussex and wife of Britain's Prince Harry, gave birth to a boy on Monday,

and described by his proud father as "absolutely to die for". The baby, who has not yet been named, was born in the early hours of the morning weighing 3.2 kg. Both Meghan and the baby, the couple's first

the seventh-in-line to the throne

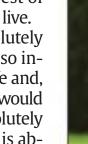
child, were healthy and well, the palace said. "How any woman does what they do is beyond comprehension but we're both absolutely thrilled and so grateful to all the lovely support from everybody

out there," a smiling Harry told reporters in Windsor, west of London where the couple live.

"It was amazing, absolutely incredible. As I say, I am so incredibly proud of my wife and, as every father and parent would ever say your baby is absolutely amazing, this little baby is absolutely to die for."

Harry, Queen Elizabeth's the couple at their home,

The queen and other mempalace said.



grandson, was present for the birth and Doria Ragland, Meghan's mother, was also with Frogmore Cottage, on the estate of Windsor Castle where they married in May last year.

bers of the royal family were delighted by the news, the



Prime Minister Theresa May this happy time," she told the

they plan to limit the baby's exposure to the press. Reuters

sent congratulations. "Wishing you all the best at

royal couple on Twitter. The baby is the eighth great

reigning monarch, and could be entitled to hold joint British and American citizenship according to nationality rules. However, the child will not automatically be a prince or a

grandchild of the 93-year-old

queen, the world's longest-

princess and any such title would have to be bestowed by the queen by issuing what is known as a letter patent. Albert, Philip, Arthur and James are the favourite names

bookmakers. Britain's royal family attracts huge media interest but the younger members, especially Harry, 34, and Meghan, 37, a USborn former actress, are treated like Hollywood superstars.

For some the child's birth will represent a significant moment for the monarchy, becoming the first mixed race baby born into a senior position in British royalty, for the child, according to according to royal experts. "It's symbolic of a more mod-

Unlike Harry's brother Prince

William and his wife Kate, who

posed for massed photographers

outside a London hospital just

hours after their three children

were born, Harry and Meghan

are expected to take part in only

a limited photo call in the

grounds of Windsor Castle,

within a few days of the birth.

ern monarchy. It appeals to people across the world," royal biographer Claudia Joseph said. "They will be able to identify with the royal family as never before." **REUTERS**

Hamas and its allied Gaza faction Islamic Jihad, militants that it, like much of the West, designates as terrorists. Officials in PM Benjamin

preparing to begin Ramzan. Rocket sirens in southern

in Gaza. **REUTERS**