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6 Newborns Killed, 5 Battling For Life As Fire Razes East Delhi Pvt Hospital

No Emergency Exit, No Fire Extinguisher

Abhay & Siddhvi Singh | TNN

New Delhi: Six newborns died after a massive fire broke out at New Born Baby Care Hospital in east Delhi's Vivek Vihar late on Saturday night. Five babies rescued from the fire are battling for their lives in another hospital. The hospital owner and the on-duty doctor have been booked for culpable homicide and other offences, cops said.

► **EDIT: Tragedy Foretold**

The fire department received a call around 11.30pm and rushed to the spot. Witnesses said the hospital building turned into an inferno in just a few minutes and was followed by multiple blasts that possibly originated from the oxygen cylinders stored there. In all, around a dozen children were pulled out, but only five survived.

► **After DNA match, P 2**



Witnesses said the hospital building turned into an inferno in minutes and that was followed by multiple blasts

Licence had expired, facility owner held

Probe revealed that the hospital's licence had expired on March 31 this year, yet it continued to operate without any obstacles. Police have arrested the facility owner, Dr Naveen Kichi, besides Dr Akash, who was on duty on Saturday night. P 2

Police probe illegal oxygen filling racket

Police are investigating the possibility of an illegal oxygen cylinder filling operation at the hospital. This line of inquiry was initiated after a large number of cylinders were found at the scene and neighbours reported suspicious activities. P 2

Could've saved kids if we were there: Kin

Many families found out about the incident only on Sunday morning. They all expressed regret that they weren't present to try and save their babies. The hospital allegedly only allowed families to visit for two hours when they collected daily bills. P 2

E-bike on charge sparks bldg fire, leaves 3 dead

New Delhi: Three people were killed and 10 were injured after a fire broke out in a four-storey house in east Delhi's Krishna Nagar on Saturday night. The fire started in the still parking area due to a suspected short circuit. Residents claimed that commercial activity was being carried out on the ground floor of the building, report Siddhvi Singh & Abhay.

Cops found that the owner of an electric two-wheeler had left his vehicle on charge. The vehicle apparently caught fire, which spread to the electricity meter and then engulfed all three floors of the building, cops suspect.

According to fire officials, they received a call at 2.35am. The fire was doused by 7.20am. Delhi Fire Services chief Atul Garg said five fire tenders were rushed to the spot. Thirteen people were rescued.

► **Smoke on staircase, P 3**

PM: Oppn wants to turn India's majority into 2nd-class citizens

Cites Manifestos, Past Moves To Target SP, Cong

Pankaj Shah & Shalabh | TNN

Lucknow: PM Narendra Modi upped the ante on Sunday against INDIA bloc constituents Congress and SP over "Muslim reservation", alleging that repeated attempts of the two allies to snatch the rights of backward communities and appease their vote bank would someday "turn the country's majority community into second-class citizens".

"To illustrate how dangerous they (SP and Congress) are, let me put this on record. In 2012, during assembly polls in UP, SP declared in its manifesto that just as Dalits and OBCs enjoy reservation, so will Muslims. SP went to the extent of saying it would even rewrite the Constitution to do

Before 2014, a method Cong explored was to change the laws overnight, declaring thousands of schools, colleges and universities minority institutions. SC/ST/OBC quotas provided in these were completely abolished

— PM NARENDRA MODI

so," he said during a campaign stop in Mirzapur. The PM said SP repeated its pledge in 2014. "Not just that, SP said it would allocate 15% quota to Muslims in police and PAC." At Deoria, Modi said he wasn't surprised that "jihadis across the border" were backing SP and Congress's campaign for a "vote jihad". He accused both parties of working on the agenda of "anti-national powers".

► **PM rakes up... P 11**

Tejashwi: Gujarat itself gave OBC quota to Muslims

Bihar leader of opposition and ex-deputy CM Tejashwi Prasad Yadav on Sunday wrote to PM Modi, claiming that BJP-governed Gujarat allowed Muslim OBC quotas. He attached with his letter a purported 'central list of OBC Muslims for Gujarat' to buttress his point, reports Manoj Chaurasia. "Perhaps, you are not aware (of this, though)... you served as CM for 13 years," Tejashwi wrote, advising Modi against "spreading confusion and hatred". Dubbing PM "anti-backward and anti-Dalit", Tejashwi said he had repeatedly urged him to allow quota hikes under the Constitution's Ninth Schedule for deprived castes in the light of 2023 Bihar caste survey, but claimed that PM didn't pay heed. P 10

BJP has already crossed majority mark, will get 370+ seats in all: Nadda

Akhil Singh @timesgroup.com

New Delhi: BJP president JP Nadda expressed confidence of the party winning over 370 seats in Lok Sabha polls. He said it would make significant gains in states like Bengal, Odisha, Telan-

gana and Andhra Pradesh while retaining its dominance in north and central India. "BJP on its own has already crossed the majority mark... some guesstimates suggest it has won 310 seats after five phases. After seven ph-

ases, NDA will go past 400. People trust Narendra Modi and are voting for BJP to make him PM again," Nadda said.

► **TOI INTERVIEW | P 10**

DANCE of DEMOCRACY

► Prasanta Jagadev, BJP's MLA candidate from Odisha's Khurda, held for allegedly vandalising EVM and beating up an election official

► UCC will be implemented across India in next five years, says Amit Shah

► Cong prez Kharge calls Modi 'jhothon ka sardar' (master of lies), alleging he did not fulfil any promise he had made to voters P 10

In twist of fate, man loses son & a boy loses father. 10 others also die in accident

Kanwardeep.Singh @timesgroup.com

Bareilly: Twelve pilgrims, including three children, were killed in Shahjahanpur when a gravel-laden dumper truck crashed and overturned on a parked bus carrying about 50 people on their way to Purnagiri temple in Uttarakhand on Saturday night.

The incident saw a couple of deaths which can best be described as tragic twists of fate. A 10-year-old boy who was sent to fetch a bottle of water by his father moments before the accident, survived while his dad, still in the bus, was killed.

Another passenger and his wife, having dinner at



Rescue work underway after a dumper truck fell on a bus in Shahjahanpur Saturday night

the restaurant where the bus had stopped, asked their son to keep a bag inside the bus. As the 15-year-old was doing so, the dumper truck came hurtling onto the bus. The teenager died while his parents survived.

► **Next to eatery, P 11**

Getting rape & death threats, claims Maliwal

New Delhi: AAP Rajya Sabha MP Swati Maliwal on Sunday claimed that she has been receiving rape and death threats, attributing the hostile environment to her party colleagues and YouTuber Dhruv Rathee for inciting "negative sentiments" against her.

"After the leaders and volunteers of my party i.e. AAP orchestrated a campaign of character assassination, victim shaming and fanning of emotions against me, I have been getting rape and death threats. This got further exacerbated when YouTuber @Dhruv.Rathee posted a one-sided video against me," Maliwal posted on social media platform X. TNN

► **Will report to cops, P 4**

Rahul reiterates pledge of ₹8.5K payout, 30L jobs

Congress and INDIA bloc have set themselves "a realistic target" of filling 30 lakh job vacancies as soon as the alliance comes to office, unlike PM Modi's "false promise" of providing employment to two crore people, MP Rahul Gandhi said while campaigning in HP on Sunday. Rahul, who previously announced that women from poor families would each receive Rs 8,500 in their bank accounts "on June 5", accused Modi of "serving the interests of a handful of corporates like Ambani and Adani".

He declared Congress would also waive crippling farm loans and scrap the allegedly ill-conceived Agri-veer scheme for recruitment to the armed forces. P 10

Audi crushes Noida man on morning walk

A 53-year-old man on a morning walk was crushed by an Audi in Noida Sector 53 Sunday. The collision was so powerful that Janak Dev Shah was flung into the air and landed 20 metres ahead on the road. P 4

'Poison' beer kills 2 jawans in MP

Two Special Armed Force personnel in their mid-50s died on Sunday from suspected poisoning after drinking beer on Saturday night in Chhindwara district of MP. P 8

Army defuses 3 IEDs in Imphal East

Army defused 3 powerful IEDs near Maphou dam in Imphal East Saturday, averting a major loss of life and property. Electronic detonators were also found alongside the IEDs. P 8

SA central bk fines SBI over compliance

South African Reserve Bank has imposed administrative sanctions and a Rs 4.5-crore penalty on SBI "for not complying with certain provisions of Financial Intelligence Centre Act". P 13

Do not miss Education Times, a 20-page pullout with today's issue

Weight-loss meds linked to stomach paralysis: US study

A new US study suggests that medications like Wegovy and Ozempic, effective for rapid weight reduction, may come with the risk of uncommon yet serious side effects, including abdominal paralysis, a condition characterised by delayed stomach emptying, reports Durgesh Nandan Jha.

Abdominal paralysis can cause unintended weight loss, malnutrition and other complications that may require medical or surgical intervention. Wegovy and Ozempic are not legally available in India. However, reports suggest that these drugs are being sold by many through the grey market at premium. P 9

Rajkot fire toll rises to 28, no victim identified so far, 2 accused arrested

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Rajkot: Gujarat police filed an FIR against seven partners of TRP Game Zone in Rajkot for culpable homicide not amounting to murder and arrested two of them on Sunday, following a devastating fire that spread rapidly and claimed 28 lives at the recreational facility packed with a

► **HC calls Rajkot tragedy 'man-made disaster', P 8**

large weekend crowd the previous evening.

The fire left the bodies charred beyond recognition. According to the FIR, the 28 recovered bodies included 15 males, six females, and three children. The gender of three

NO FIRE NOC

► **FIR names 7 partners of TRP Game Zone, says facility lacked sufficient fire safety equipment and operated without a fire NOC**

► **28 bodies recovered include 15 males, six females, 3 kids; DNA analysis may take 7 days**

► **Forensic team in Rajkot to collect samples from site**

bodies could not be determined due to severe burns, while only partial remains of one person were recovered.

Forensic experts are now tasked with the challenge of identifying the victims through DNA analysis, a process

5 of family dead, 3 friends missing

Five members of a family, including a 15-year-old boy, perished in the devastating fire at TRP Game Zone. Among the 'missing' were a newly married couple in their 20s and their sister-in-law, as well as three friends from Dhrol in Jamnagar who had come to the gaming zone. P 8

that could take up to seven days. This step is crucial for providing closure to grieving families. A forensic team has arrived in Rajkot to collect samples from the site.

► **Govt forms SIT, P 11**

CYCLONE REMAL STRIKES WB, KOL AIRPORT HALTS FLIGHTS



A man moves his cart away from the seashore in South 24 Parganas district Sunday, before Cyclone Remal made landfall around 9pm along the coasts of Bengal and Bangladesh — between Sagar Island and Kheupura — about 100km from Kolkata. More than 1 lakh residents from low-lying coastal zones were evacuated to storm shelters. Kolkata airport has been shut down for 21 hours, from Sunday noon till 9am Monday, sending fares soaring | P 11

Army chief gets unusual 1-mth extension

The Centre Sunday granted a month's extension to Army chief General Manoj Pandey (62) just six days before his slated retirement. This unusual move could impact the line of succession in the force, reports Rajat Pandit. The delay in announcing Pandey's successor had triggered widespread speculation of a supersession in the hierarchy.

The latest move will add further grist to the mill since the two next senior-most officers, vice-chief Lt-Gen Upenendra Dwivedi and Lt-Gen Ajai Kumar Singh, are slated to retire on June 30. P 8

Sitars made in Bengal village travel far & wide

The nondescript village of Dadpur in Uluberia, in Bengal's Howrah district, literally rises with string melody and sleeps with it as most of its 250-odd households are engaged in making sitars, surbahars and guitars, reports Kamalendu Bhadra. Dadpur's instruments have travelled far and wide, across the country and abroad. Many in the village have shifted to making instruments from other professions.

However, most craftsmen complained that they did not make enough money in spite of their full-time engagement and the high market value of their instruments. P 8

For Kapadia, before her triumph at Cannes was trouble at FTII

Ardhra.Nair@timesgroup.com

Nine years are all it took for FTII graduate Payal Kapadia to go from "anti-national" to toast of the nation. The young filmmaker, whose 'All We Imagine as Light' clinched the Grand Prix at Cannes Saturday, was a student at the country's cradle of cinema and TV when she braved chants of

► **EDIT: All We Can Create**

"go to Pakistan" for participating in a 139-day protest in 2015 against the appointment of actor Gajendra Chauhan as the FTII chairperson. She, along with 34 other former students, continue to wage a legal battle over a



Kapadia had protested in 2015 against Gajendra Chauhan's appointment as FTII chairperson

trace of rancour in Payal's words. All she reflected was the afterglow of an unprecedented triumph that she gracefully shared with fellow filmmakers from India. "It's a great feeling to receive this prize because there are so many good films from India alongside ours, and we feel a part of the larger family of filmmakers. We have three films from FTII directors this time. My FTII batchmate Maisam Ali's film 'In Retreat' is the first Indian entry to Cannes' ACID sidebar (Association for the Diffusion of Independent Cinema)," she told TOI from the French Riviera.

► **Film on FTII stir, P 11**

KKR ROUT SRH, WIN THEIR 3RD IPL



Team KKR celebrate in Chennai. Only CSK and MI have won more IPL titles than KKR

- **KKR beat SRH by 8 wickets to win their third IPL title.** Spearheaded by Starc (2/14) & Russell (3/19), KKR dismissed their opponents for just 113, the lowest-ever total in an IPL final, before Venkatesh (52*) & Gurbaz (39) won it in 10.3 overs
- **It was KKR's hat-trick of wins over SRH** this time, having beaten them both in the league stage and also in the qualifier
- **It was a special night for KKR mentor Gautam Gambhir, who captained the franchise to IPL titles in 2012 and '14**
- **The spell of 8/81 by KKR pacers** (Starc 2, Russell 3, Rana 2, Arora 1 wkt) is the **2nd best performance by a pace attack in a playoff game in IPL**, behind 9/107 by MI vs CSK at Eden Gardens in 2013 final

FULL COVERAGE | P 15 & 16



Voter turnout revised to 58.7%, North East continues to top the chart with 62.9% | 4

TIMES CITY
THE TIMES OF INDIA, NEW DELHI | MONDAY, MAY 27, 2024

45.4° MAXIMUM | 27° MINIMUM

FORECAST: Mainly clear sky. Maximum and minimum temperatures will be around 46°C and 28°C

SUNSET 7.12 PM (MON) | MOONSET 9.31 AM (TUE)
SUNRISE 5.25 AM (TUE) | MOONRISE 11.04 PM (MON)

Heatwave spell likely over next four days | 5

190
AQI IN DELHI ON SUNDAY (MODERATE CATEGORY)

Daily water supply in the capital down by a quarter of its need | 6



Innocent Lives Snuffed Out On Dark Night

Among Bereaved, Man Who Had Yet To See His Baby & Couple Who Lost 2 Kids Earlier

Bodies to be handed over after DNA match: Police

Abhay & Siddhivi Singh | TNN

WHAT HAPPENED
6 newborns died and 5 were severely injured after a fire broke out at Baby Care New Born Hospital in Vivek Vihar

Time
11.30pm

ARRESTED
Naveen Kichi, owner of the hospital
Dr Akash, on duty at the time

He learned about the deadly blaze from a cousin in Delhi and arrived at the hospital to discover that his baby was among those who had perished. Chaudhary had not yet found the strength to inform his wife and family about the heartbreaking loss.

Many family members of the survivors and the deceased only found out about the incident on Sunday morning. Pawan Kasana, a 27-year-old UP Police constable from Baghpat, lost his six-day-old daughter, who was being treated for an infection, in the fire. Kasana was on election duty when he heard about the birth of his first child and had not even seen her once. The family had yet to inform the baby's mother, Bharti, about the tragedy, blaming the hospital's negligence for the child's death.

The situation outside a nearby rescue centre where some of the rescued babies were taken was chaotic. Rajkumar, 26, from Ghaziabad, shared his story: "I admitted my baby girl four days ago as she had fever. She was supposed to be discharged today. I've been frantically running from hospital to mortuary to the rescue centre, trying to find out if my child has survived. I have been looking at photos, videos and body tags." Rajkumar and his wife had lost their first child, and the family was praying that their baby girl was alive, but police said they could only confirm her

WHAT HAPPENED
6 newborns died and 5 were severely injured after a fire broke out at Baby Care New Born Hospital in Vivek Vihar

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ARRESTED
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Dr Akash, on duty at the time

ABOUT THE FACILITY

- A ground floor, a first floor and a terrace
- Testing machines for kids on ground floor; kids admitted on the first floor
- Several oxygen cylinders kept at the main entrance
- Residents say hospital had been running for the last 3-4 years
- Victims' families say no one was allowed to stay at the hospital; parents were allowed to meet babies from 2pm-4pm



RESCUE OP AND GOOD SAMARITANS

- The firefighters entered the hospital from the rear entry
- They placed a wooden ladder, broke the window glass
- Removed small cabins under which the babies were kept
- Newborns were taken out and handed over to residents
- Residents took them to hospital in their cars



WHAT HAPPENED

- Fire broke out at 11.25pm; firemen and cops received SOS alert by 11.30pm
- 12 fire tenders, 70 firefighters sent to the spot
- Witnesses said several blasts occurred and oxygen cylinders were thrown up in the air
- A dozen babies were rescued with help from residents; they were rushed to another hospital where six were declared dead



POLICE ACTION & PROBE

- 304 (culpable homicide not amounting to murder), 308 (attempt to commit culpable homicide) of IPC
- Raids conducted in Rajasthan and Haryana to nab owner, last location was traced to Jaipur
- Cops probing if an illegal oxygen cylinder filling exercise was being carried out; ascertaining if the fire started in the generator and a nearby pole; will contact electricity department and experts
- Delhi Medical Council will be asked for a report

well-being after a DNA match.

Every family at the scene and mortuary expressed one significant regret: that they weren't present to try and save their little ones. The hospital allegedly only allowed families to visit the babies between 2 pm and 4 pm when they collected the daily bills. Shakuntla, a relative, said, "If they couldn't protect our children, why did they tell us to leave? We could have slept on the road. We regret spending so much and putting our child in a private unit. Our baby might have been safer in a govt hospital; at least they would have let us see her; at least they would have informed us when it happened."

ret spending so much and putting our child in a private unit.

"The previous year, they experienced the tragic loss of a stillborn baby, and prior to that, they suffered the heartbreaking loss of another child shortly after conception. The child's father, Vinod Sharma, operates an online business," Sharma said. Shaheenaz Khatoon, 44, the grandmother of a five-day-old baby, said: "When our grand-

child fell sick, *hum paise ke peche nahi gaye, bache ke peche gaye*" (we didn't think about the money, but only about our child). We were referred from a hospital in Bhajanpura to this facility. We did everything we could, collecting money every 24 hours, spending thousands by borrowing or dipping into savings. Imagine hearing about the death of your own child through a newspaper?"

child fell sick, *hum paise ke peche nahi gaye, bache ke peche gaye*" (we didn't think about the money, but only about our child). We were referred from a hospital in Bhajanpura to this facility. We did everything we could, collecting money every 24 hours, spending thousands by borrowing or dipping into savings. Imagine hearing about the death of your own child through a newspaper?"

Hospital licence had expired, doctors not qualified for newborn care: Cops

Abhay@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: An investigation by police has uncovered glaring lapses in the operations of New Born Baby Care Hospital in Vivek Vihar where a devastating fire occurred on Saturday night, resulting in the deaths of six newborns.

The probe revealed that the hospital's licence had expired on March 31 this year; yet it continued to operate without any obstacles. Further, it appears that the doctors lacked the necessary qualifications and expertise to provide care for newborns requiring neo-natal intensive care.

According to DCP (Shahdara) Surender Chaudhary, their inquiry disclosed that the doctors held only BAMS (Bachelors in Ayurvedic Medicine) degrees. The hospital also lacked a fire extinguisher and an emergency exit, which are crucial in case of any unforeseen events.

Police are also investigating the possibility of an illegal oxygen cylinder filling operation at the hospital. This line of inquiry was initiated after as many as 32 oxygen cylinders were found at the scene and neighbours reported suspicious activities. The hospital did not possess an NOC from the fire department, but the arrested owner claimed it was not required as the hospital building was under 15 meters in height. The fire department plans to evaluate the building's height on Monday to ascertain if an NOC was indeed necessary.

Concerning the expired licence, a senior officer stated, "The licence, issued by Director General of Health Services — which comes under Delhi govt — was valid only until March 31. Even as per the expired licence, the hospital was supposed to be operational for five beds only. However, at the time of the incident, 12 newborn children were admitted there."

Police said initial probe showed the hospital had four branches, with the others located in Punjabi Bagh, Faridabad and Gurgaon. They will also inspect these centres. The accused owner, Naveen Kichi, claimed to have pursued an MD in paediatric medicine, while his wife, Jagriti, a dentist, was involved in running the hospital too.



Naveen Kichi, owner of baby care hospital

Police are now concentrating on definitively determining the cause of the fire. Some witnesses said there was a fire in the generator and a nearby pole, which led to the incident. Cops have contacted Delhi govt's electricity department and experts to assess the reason behind the fire. "An electric inspection report from an electric inspector is being obtained. A report is also being obtained from Delhi Fire Service," said a police officer. Delhi Medical Council has been contacted as part of the ongoing investigation as well.

New Delhi: Firefighters and locals faced a daunting task as the hospital quickly became engulfed in flames. Despite the challenges, they managed to rescue around a dozen infants through their bravery and quick thinking, although not all could be saved.

Fire chief Atul Garg described their strategy, which involved setting up two teams. "One team started firefighting because there was a blast of cylinders... there was, in fact, a chain of blasts... So, we had to save the firemen as well. The second team simultaneously started rescue operations for babies," he explained.

The firefighters, unable to enter through the front, accessed the building from the rear with the help of a ladder provided by a local resident. They entered through the windows and carefully handed the babies to the residents outside, who then rushed them to another hospital. "We removed all 12 babies from the burning hospital, but unfortunately, we could not save all of them," Garg added.

Siddhivi Singh & Abhay | TNN



Firefighters had a daunting task on their hands as the blaze spread quickly

The residents of C Block in Vivek Vihar were quick to respond to the emergency. Indrpreet Singh and several women placed a ladder against the building, receiving the infants from the firefighters and transporting them to hospitals in their vehicles.

Vinay Narang, the RWA president of Vivek Vihar, shared his experience with TOI. Awakened by



Firefighters had a daunting task on their hands as the blaze spread quickly

screams and explosions, he attempted to enter the hospital but found no way in. "I navigated through the chaos, with nurses breaking glass from behind to evacuate the children. I took five children from their hands and put them in my car, rushing them to a hospital. Sadly, one of them died due to lack of oxygen," he recounted. Narang also described how they blocked the road to

protect motorists and pedestrians from the exploding cylinders, which were flung hundreds of meters away. He questioned the legality and safety of refuelling cylinders on the ground floor of such a sensitive area and called for govt action to prevent similar tragedies.

Jitender Singh Shunty, a local politician, also participated in the rescue and relief operations alongside his son, alerting ambulances to transport the babies to another hospital. Nurses from the hospital assisted in the rescue efforts, unlocking cabins to remove the infants. Arunima Sharma, a school administrator from Dilshad Garden, joined the nursing attendants in rushing the babies to another hospital in Narang's car. "These courageous actions led to the miraculous survival of at least five babies. Dinesh Kumar, a 42-year-old man, expressed relief upon learning that his eight-day-old niece had been rescued from the blaze. "I was delivering milk in the area when I saw a crowd at the hospital and informed my brother, Madhura. We were so relieved to know she had been rescued," he said.

66 hospital blazes in 2 yrs in city and why it takes an extra toll on firemen

Abhay@timesgroup.com

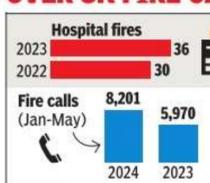
New Delhi: On February 26, a massive fire erupted at Nayak Hospital in central Delhi, necessitating the evacuation of more than 50 individuals, including patients and staff, from the seven-story emergency block building.

There was a series of similar occurrences in the past year, such as the rescue of 20 infants from a newborn hospital in Dwarka and the evacuation of over 100 patients due to a fire in endoscopy unit at AIIMS. In the last two years, Delhi has experienced 66 hospital fire incidents, with 30 cases reported in 2022 and 36 in the previous year.

Atul Garg, director of Delhi Fire Service, emphasised that responding to hospital fires was one of the most demanding challenges faced by their department. Fire officials elaborated on the need for additional personnel and time to evacuate patients while simultaneously fighting the flames.

When a hospital reports a fire, the fire services dispatch the maximum number of re-

OVER 8K FIRE CALLS IN 1st 5 MTHS



What to do if a fire breaks out in a confined space

- Evacuate immediately
- Take the stairs
- Don't jump out from the building in panic
- If exit is blocked, stand near the windows, break the glass

How to ensure safety in buildings

- Use advanced smoke detectors, sensors, fire alarms
- Install automatic sprinklers
- Ensure fire extinguishers are accessible, maintained
- Regularly inspect electrical wirings and equipment
- Store flammable material at designated, secure areas
- Keep clear evacuation routes
- Don't lock the terrace, don't keep anything at staircase

scue vehicles to the location, recognising the potential for a large number of people to be affected. The presence of patients with varying levels of mobility complicates the evacuation process, requiring tailored emergency plans. The challenge intensifies when dealing

with a children's hospital. "Unlike typical fire rescues, firefighters cannot use ladders or physically lift people. This necessitates careful planning between staff and responders to ensure patient safety throughout the evacuation, prioritising well-being and mi-

nimising harm," he said.

Fire officials pointed out that most hospitals have inadequate arrangements, including the need for wider staircases. When hospitals apply for a non-objection certificate from the fire department, they are instructed to build staircases with a larger width to facilitate the easy evacuation of patients on stretchers during a rescue.

Another fire official emphasised the importance of compartmentation on every hospital floor, allowing for the swift relocation of patients in an emergency. "During a fire, they have five to six minutes to rescue the trapped people. So, there is a need for compartmentation," the official said.

Compartmentation is a building design and construction technique that effectively manages risks by dividing a building into separate sections using fire-resistant materials. The official also stressed the necessity of proper smoke evacuation passages in hospitals to remove smoke buildup during fire incidents.

Delhi govt orders magisterial inquiry into tragedy

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Delhi govt on Sunday ordered a magisterial inquiry into the fire tragedy in east Delhi that killed six newborns. Divisional commissioner Ashwani Kumar directed the district magistrate to inquire into the fire that occurred on Saturday night.

Earlier in the day, alleging that the health secretary was not responding to calls and messages, Delhi health minister Saurabh Bharadwaj directed the chief secretary, through a letter, to ensure a speedy inquiry into the incident. "Though this incident occurred around

11.30 pm on May 25, I got to know about it through a media flash on the morning of May 26. I tried calling the secretary (health) multiple times and left him many WhatsApp messages, but he

has not responded yet. Therefore, I visited the incident spot alone," he claimed.

Bharadwaj said that as he was "not" able to communicate with secretary (health), who



REDUCED TO ASHES

heads department of health, he was sending this note with a copy to the chief secretary so that a quick inquiry could be launched into the matter. The chief secretary did not respond to Bharadwaj's comments.

Bharadwaj, meanwhile, sought to know the names and designations of officers or private individuals responsible for the negligence that caused the fire. "Ensure free treatment of rescued children in the best private hospital (under Farishteh scheme) and expedite the compensation to the families of the deceased and injured," he said. He also demanded the expedited arrests of those running the hospital.

CM, LG offer condolences, promise strict action

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Describing the death of six babies in the Vivek Vihar fire incident as "heartbreaking," chief minister Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday promised strict action against the guilty. "We stand with those who lost their innocent children in this accident. The govt and officials are busy providing treatment to the injured at the spot. The cause of the incident is being investigated, and whoever is responsible for this negligence will not be spared," the CM said. Lieutenant governor VK Saxena directed

the chief secretary to initiate a probe into the incident. In a post on 'X', Saxena offered his heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families. "I assure all relief and will ensure that the guilty are brought to book," he wrote.

Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva, along with the party's East Delhi candidate Harsh Malhotra, visited the site of the fire. Sachdeva expressed grief over the deaths of the children and assured that BJP was ready to assist the grieving families in every possible way. He also met the family whose house next to the hospital was damaged, leading to injury to three.

what the fault of those innocent children was even before they fully opened their eyes. This is not just an accident but a case of murder due to the negligence of Delhi govt. Whoever is guilty in this case should be severely punished," he stated.

Sachdeva alleged that there had been numerous incidents of major fires in Delhi, but the fire department had failed to carry out its responsibility. He further alleged that, like many other departments of Kejriwal govt, the fire department had also become a den of criminal negligence and corruption. Delhi govt did not respond to the allegations.

Smoke On Staircase Made Escape Tough For Residents

Only Mode Of Exit Was From Back Of Bldg Through Balconies

Continued from P1

Officials said that the charred remains of a 66-year-old woman, Promila Sath, were discovered on the first floor of the build-

ing. Two others, identified as 18-year-old Keshav Sharma and his mother, 39-year-old Anju Sharma, were declared brought dead by doctors. Survivors and neighbours recounted the harrow-

ing experience, stating that the staircase was filled with smoke, making it tough for residents to escape. The only mode of exit was from the back of the building through the balconies. "The blaze

spread to the first floor of the apartment while the second, third and fourth were also impacted by heat and smoke," a resident said.

Speaking about the rescue, a senior police officer said that they rescued two people from first floor while five people were rescued from the second floor. The third floor was vacant and others were rescued from the fourth floor. Neighbour Sapna Sath's hands trembled as she recalled the previous night and described it as staring death in the face: "I was awakened by blood-curdling screams from the back of the affected building. When I stepped out onto the balcony, I saw the entire building engulfed in smoke. I immediately rushed to the terrace and fetched my ladder."

Sadh and her husband, who live opposite the building, acted quickly, saving at least 7-8 lives. "I placed a ladder connecting our balcony to the other building, allowing several residents to escape from the back. Many sustained burn injuries," she said. "I was just praying that everyone in the building would be rescued."

DCP Chaudhary said they had registered an FIR under IPC Sections 285 (negligent conduct with respect to fire or combustible matter), 304A (causing death by negligence), 337 (causing hurt by act endangering life or personal safety of others) and 427 (mischief causing damage to the amount of Rs 50) at Krishna Nagar police station and investigation is being carried out. "Post-mortem of the bodies were conducted," said the police officer.

Prof moves HC against order quashing his appointment as pro VC

New Delhi: Professor Eqbal Hussain has approached Delhi High Court challenging a single judge's order quashing his appointment as the pro vice chancellor and subsequently as officiating Vice Chancellor (VC) of Jamia Millia Islamia.

Hussain's appeal is listed for hearing on Monday before a division bench of Justices Rekha Palli and Saurabh Banerjee. The high court had on May 22 quashed the appointment of Hussain as the pro VC and subsequently as officiating VC of Jamia, holding that the appointments were not made in conformity with the relevant statute.

It had, however, directed to ensure that the academic and administrative machinery of the university does not suffer or come to a complete halt and that fresh appointment to the post of officiating VC be made within one week.

The court had also asked the 'Visitor', who is the President of India, to order initiation of the process of appointing a regular VC in the meantime.

"A writ of Quo Warranto is issued quashing the appointment of respondent no.2 (Hussain) at the first instance as pro VC by office order dated Sept 14, 2023 and as officiating VC by office order dated Nov 12, 2023.

On Sept 14, 2023, then VC had appointed Hussain as the pro VC of JMI. P11

FIVE HOURS OF HORROR

Photos: Jatin Kumar

A fire broke out at a four-storey residential building, killing 3 and injuring 10

Time | 2.35am, Saturday

Location
West Azad Nagar, Krishna Nagar, east Delhi

VICTIMS

- First-floor resident Promila Sath (66)
- Fourth-floor residents Anju Sharma (39) and son Keshav Sharma (18)

CAUSE OF FIRE
Short circuit suspected



WHAT HAPPENED

- The fire originated in the stilt parking area, where at least a dozen two-wheelers were parked
- Five fire tenders, 30 firefighters rushed to the spot
- The blaze quickly spread to the first floor and smoke filled up the rest of the floors
- One charred body was found on the first floor
- 12 people rescued from upper floors and taken to hospitals
- Two people died during treatment

- About the building
- Ground (stilt) + 4 floors structure
 - Spread over 100-110 square yards
 - Around 13-14 residents
 - A single staircase was the only entry/exit point

Police action and probe

- Commercial activity was being carried out on the ground floor of the building
- Cops found that the owner of an electric two-wheeler had left his vehicle on charge
- The vehicle caught fire, which spread to the electric meter and then engulfed all three floors of the building
- FIR filed
- Cops will conduct probe before making any arrest, they said

- SECTIONS
- 304A (causing death due to negligence),
 - 285 (negligent conduct wrt fire),
 - 337 (causing grievous hurt),
 - 427 (mischief)

10 days after Class XII cheer, teen dies in fire

Siddhivi.Singh
@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: "Only 10 days ago, we celebrated my nephew's Class XII results. Now, I'm standing in a mortuary, awaiting his post-mortem results," said Sachin Sharma, the uncle of 18-year-old Keshav who was among the three people who died in the Krishna Nagar fire.

Keshav's mother and Sachin's sister, Anju (39) too died. The family — Anju, husband Devender, and Keshav — lived on the fourth floor of the building. The mother and son seem to have died of suffocation while trying to escape down the staircase.

Devender, the father and sole breadwinner of the family who has a shop nearby, is in a critical condition in a hospital.

In the mortuary, Sachin

was inconsolable. "By the time I reached, my sister and nephew were wrapped in sheets, my brother-in-law was on a stretcher. My sister, who was always there for my family in the good and bad times, is now gone. Now, I'll be carrying my nephew's body on my shoulder. He was like my son," he said amid wails.

The Sharmas described Keshav as a jovial and ambitious kid who wanted to join Delhi Police and was looking at IT courses for college. "Our entire family made sure that Keshav studied well and we did whatever we could so that he could receive the best education," Ashwini Sharma, another relative said.

Among the deceased was 68-year-old Promila Sath, who lived on the first floor. She was charred to death before she could escape, survivors

said. Neighbours described the Saths as cordial and loving. A friend of the family who wished to remain anonymous, said: "Sonam (Promila's daughter) worked as a yoga instructor in the city. Her mother Promila was a gentle soul, supporting the family in every way."

Residents said that when the fire erupted, Sonam rushed to save the family. While her son and father managed to escape, she braved the flames looking for her mother, who was charred by then. Sonam has suffered 15% burns and is in a hospital.

Loose hanging wires, narrow lanes and cramped buildings define West Azad Nagar, where the blaze happened. Residents voiced concern that on a mere 100-110-acre land, four-floor buildings were built without

any safety measures in place. "There are around 10 flats in the building with multiple people living there plus commercial units below," a neighbour said. They questioned how the authorities approved the building plan, which was a sitting duck to such a hazard.

At Chhachhi Building, Abhishek Agarwal (37), who was rescued, exited the charred building with nothing but a key in his soot-covered hands. He and his family of five lived at the back-side of the second floor. "The smoke and heat filled the entire building, jamming the doors and blocking vision. However, I managed to save my family by exiting through the other side," he said. "My house is just ashes. The sight of my neighbours dying in front of me has scarred my family," he said.

NCPCR team visits east Delhi hosp, to submit report today

Ambika.Pandit
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New Delhi: A team from National Commission for Protection of Child Rights visited the private children's hospital in east Delhi's Vivek Vihar where a fire left six newborns dead on Sunday. Based on the team's report whether the hospital was complying with fire safety, building code and other mandatory norms, the commission is likely to send its recommendations to Delhi govt on Monday.

In a post on X, NCPCR chairperson Priyank Kanoongo said the commission had taken cognisance of the fire and the newborns' deaths. "An NCPCR team visited the hospital and they will submit a report first thing on Monday morning. We will accordingly decide on what action needs to be taken," Kanoongo told TOI.

He said in 2021, the commission had taken cognisance of deaths of infants in hospitals due to fire in Bhandara in Maharashtra and Bhopal in Madhya Pradesh and written to chief secretaries of all states and Union Territories recommending measures and seeking action taken reports to prevent such incidents.

In his Nov 9, 2021, letter, Kanoongo cited the Bhandara and Bhopal cases and said, "To prevent recurrence of fi-

re incidents in hospitals, the commission recommends that fire safety audits should be undertaken in all hospitals/medical colleges/nursing homes having NICU, PICU, SNCU and other medical facilities for children."

He added, "We had sought compliance reports from all states. We will now review what was the district compliance status of Delhi. The commission will also write to all states again to focus on preventive measures."

The commission had also asked all states to ensure that medical facilities meant for children should get 'no objection certificate' from the fire department and renewal should be done only after they met the norms.

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Revised Voter Turnout For Delhi At 58.7%, NE Tops Chart At 62.9%

Seelampur In NE Delhi, Matia Mahal In Chandni Chowk Top 2 Assembly Areas

Atul.Mathur@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: The Election Commission of India revised the voter turnout in Delhi to 58.7% on Sunday through its mobile application.

The North East Delhi parliamentary constituency continued to top the turnout chart with 62.9% of the electorate exercising their right to vote.

The Delhi electoral office late on Saturday estimated the turnout in the seven Lok Sabha seats to be 58.7%. Sources

Sources said multiple factors — intense heat, the weekend and a general indifference — caused a drop in the turnout of more than 2.5 percentage points

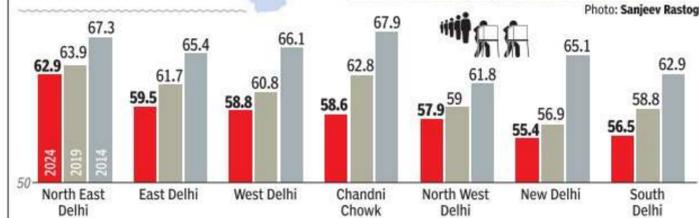
said multiple factors — intense heat, the weekend and a general indifference — caused a drop in the turnout of more than 2.5 percentage points compared to the last general election in 2019 when 60.6% of the electors voted. In the 2014 election, the voting percentage was calculated at 65.1%.

No updated data was provided by the Delhi electoral office on Sunday.

Delhi voted in the sixth phase of the election. Counting of votes will be on June 4.

The last two elections in 2014 and 2019 saw the BJP win all seven seats, while the Congress had swept the polls 7-0 in 2009.

On Saturday, North East Delhi was the only constituency where over 60% of people



came out to vote, while the New Delhi constituency saw the least turnout at 55.4%. Three more constituencies — East Delhi (59.5%), West Delhi (58.8%), and Chandni Chowk (58.6%) — returned figures more than the Delhi average. The late-night revision of

numbers also caused changes in the final turnout in different assembly segments.

As per the revised data, the Seelampur assembly area in North East Delhi returned with the best turnout of 68.68%, followed by Matia Mahal in Chandni Chowk at 67.18%.

Gokalpur (67.09%), Mustafabad (66.86%), Babarpur (66.03%), Seema Puri (64.79%), and Rohtas Nagar (64.66%) are the other assembly segments in North East Delhi where people came out in big numbers to vote.

Among the poor performers, Model Town in Chandni Chowk topped the list with just a 49.8% turnout, followed by Palam (50.1%), Mehrauli (51%), Okhla (51%), Tughlaqabad (52.4%), and Kasturba Nagar (52.8%).

Of the bottom 10 assembly segments, four — Palam, Mehrauli, Okhla, and Kalkaji — are part of the South Delhi parliamentary constituency, while three — Kasturba Nagar, RK Puram and Karol Bagh — are from the New Delhi Lok Sabha area.

Trilokpur (63.2%) recorded the highest voter turnout in the East Delhi parliamentary constituency, Rohini (62.6%) in North West Delhi, Madipur (62%) in West Delhi, Rajendra Nagar (59.4%) in New Delhi, and Ambedkar Nagar (58.6%) in South Delhi recorded the highest turnout in the respective seats.

Timarpur (54.6%) recorded the lowest voter turnout in North East Delhi, while Adarsh Nagar was the lowest in Chandni Chowk.

AAP claims poll norms flouted, BJP hits back

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: AAP candidate from New Delhi, Somnath Bharti, on Sunday alleged that BJP had flouted rules as its both in-charges at Malviya Nagar and RK Puram kept pamphlets with party symbol and photos of the Prime Minister and candidate on their table.

According to rules, no one can campaign inside booth, but presiding officer and police did not check their bags, alleged Bharti, claiming, "When two pamphlets were found in my colleague's car, the vehicle was seized, but no one said anything about BJP campaigning inside polling booth".

"AAP polling agents and those sitting on outside table were not allowed to wear white caps, but BJP's agent was sitting wearing saffron T-shirt and carrying saffron bags inside polling booths," he alleged.

Delhi BJP spokesperson Praveen Shankar Kapoor said that the AAP candidate was expressing disappointment over his sure defeat.

"Somnath Bharti could not match the personality of BJP candidate Bansuri Swaraj in any way, and that is why on hundreds of polling booths his table and polling agents went missing yesterday," he said.

"Bharti has known that he is losing because his colleagues did not support him during the campaign. In some constituencies, he could campaign thrice in three months because the legislators either did not hold meetings or cancelled them at the last moment."

Audi mows down AIR staffer out for a morning walk



Janak Dev Shah was flung in the air and landed 20 metres ahead

Avishek.Kumar@timesgroup.com

Noida: A 53-year-old man out for morning walk was crushed to death by an Audi near Gijhore village in Sector 53 on Sunday morning.

Police said Janak Dev Shah, who lived in Sector 53, was a Group D employee with All India Radio.

ACP Arvind Kumar said Shah was on his way back home when the accident occurred near a primary school around 6.30am.

"Preliminary investigation revealed that the man was walking on one side of the road when a speeding car ploughed into him from behind and crushed him under the wheels. The driver did not stop as the man slumped to the ground," Kumar said.

CCTV footage sourced from a camera on the road showed Shah walking with a

can in his hand when the white Audi crashed into him. The collision was so powerful that Shah was flung in the air and landed on the road 20 metres ahead.

Shah's family members lodged a complaint, following which a case was registered against the vehicle driver under sections 279 (rash driving) and 304A (death due to negligence) of the IPC.

"Two teams have been formed to trace the driver and carry out an investigation. We are checking CCTV footage of nearby areas. In one of the clips, a white car can be seen, but the number plate isn't visible," he said.

Shah's family members said he would go out for a walk every morning and return with milk. "Today, he left home around 6.20am. Merely 20 minutes had passed when we received a call from police about the accident," a relative said.

SUV crashes into Noida e-way divider & flips; man dies, 2 hurt

Avishek.Kumar@timesgroup.com

Noida: A 26-year-old man died and two of his friends suffered injuries when the SUV in which they were returning home to Delhi from a party crashed into a divider on the Noida Expressway in Sector 126 and turned turtle a number of times.

The XUV 500, police said, flipped past the service road after hitting the divider and landed on its side in the green area. The accident occurred around 1am.

Vijay, a businessman from Jaitpur in south Delhi, was declared dead on arrival at a hospital. Cousins Ashish Thakur (24) and Aryan Kumar (24), who are also from Delhi, are undergoing treatment for grievous injuries.

Pramod Kumar Singh, the station house officer (SHO) of Sector 126 police station, said the three were among a group of friends who were returning from a party in Greater Noida in two cars.

"The nature of the accident shows that the car was moving at high speed. After crashing into the divider, it landed on the green area after flipping a number of times. While Vijay was thrown out

VICTIM FLUNG OUT OF SUV AFTER CRASH

Sunday, 1 am | Three cousins returning home to Delhi in an SUV from a party in Greater Noida crash into a divider on Noida Expressway in Sector 126

- Car flips past the service road after hitting the divider and lands on its side in the green area
- Vijay (26) is thrown out of the SUV; he dies later

- His cousins Ashish Thakur (24) and Aryan Kumar (24) are stuck inside the mangled car & grievously injured
- A few of their friends, also returning from the party in a second car, rush to their rescue
- A vehicle patrolling the expressway also reaches the spot

of the SUV, Ashish and Aryan were inside the mangled car," said sub-inspector Yogesh Chaudhury of the Sector 126 police outpost.

Chaudhury was in a vehicle patrolling the expressway when the accident occurred. "We heard a loud crash and hurried towards it. The SUV had landed on its side in the green area off the expressway. One of the occupants who was thrown out of the car was taken to a private hospital, where he was declared dead on arrival," he added.

A second group of friends who were moving in a car ahead were alerted by the crash. "They saw the accident in the rear-view mirror. They

rushed back towards the SUV and rushed Ashish and Aryan to a nearby hospital. The two were then referred to a health facility in Delhi," the sub-inspector added.

The cops will investigate if the car was being driven under the influence of alcohol. "But first, we need to find out who was driving the car. They were returning from a party in Greater Noida when they crashed into the divider. We are trying to find out if they were drunk," Chaudhury said.

Vijay's body was handed to his family members after an autopsy. No complaint had been lodged into the case till late on Sunday evening.

Transfers, heat & holidays: Reasons why city's upscale areas saw lower turnouts

Abhinav.Rajput@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: The New Delhi and South Delhi Lok Sabha constituencies, home to the capital's most affluent areas and numerous high-profile residents, among them bureaucrats, judges and politicians, recorded the lowest voter turnouts of the seven parliamentary constituencies during Saturday's polling.

The turnout percentage in the New Delhi constituency was 55.4%, followed by South Delhi constituency at 56.5%.

In stark contrast, North East Delhi, which has the most undeveloped areas of the capital, saw the highest turnout at 62.3%.

Resident welfare associations and party insiders highlighted several factors that may have contributed to the low turnout in New Delhi and South Delhi.

One reason is the large number of govt officials and armed personnel residing in the New Delhi assembly constituency. Due to the nature of

their jobs, many had been recently transferred out of Delhi, but their names still on the electoral rolls. Delhi has a substantial presence of armed forces personnel, which may have impacted the voter turnout in these specific areas.

Besides this, the sweltering heat, coupled with summer holidays, could have dragged down the voting percentage further.

Officials said govt employees make up the majority of the New Delhi assembly seat's population. They have a transferable job. One of the reasons for low turnout could also be the relocation of govt employees from Sarojini Nagar. "It is one of the seven govt colonies identified by the Centre where the old quarters were to be made way for 25,000 new flats," he said.

Senior vice-president of Greater Kailash Residents' Association Mahesh Kumar said, "We made arrangements for e-rickshaws in the constituency so voting was good in the area. But overall, due to



New Delhi constituency recorded the lowest turnout among the 7 seats

the heat and summer holidays, many people had left."

"We do programme in our locality where we felicitate the meritorious students. Out of eight children who got award, two were out with family."

A senior BJP functionary said that for party workers also it was challenging to bring out people from posh areas as they live in gated colonies.

Rajendra Bharadwaj, a resident of South Extension, said that posh areas coming out less than other areas to vote was a trend and this time there was Buddha Purnima. So, some people made it a long weekend break.

New Delhi constituency has posh neighbourhoods such as Defence Colony, Greater Kailash, South Extension

while South Delhi has areas such as Vasant Vihar and Vasant Kunj where people from affluent sections live.

In South Delhi also has a sizable rural population with cluster of nearly 100 villages across Lado Sarai, Palam, Kapashera, and adjoining areas. A senior functionary of the INDIA bloc said that while overall percentage has also not been great, the cadres in South Delhi were not able to bring people out the way it did in other places. "This is for both parties AAP and BJP," he said.

Pramjeet Sejwal, a resident of Lado Sarai, said: "There was a culture in villages where elders used to huddle at a place at some distance from the polling station. Then they used to ensure that people come out of their homes. This was missing."

In New Delhi BJP's Bansuri Swaraj is contesting against AAP MLA Somnath Bharti. In South Delhi, BJP's Ramvir Singh Bidhuri is fighting against AAP's Sahi Ram.

Traffic near Bharat Mandapam to be hit

New Delhi: Traffic will be affected on roads surrounding Bharat Mandapam on Monday.

Police announced that a program would be organised at Bharat Mandapam at 11.30 am on Monday. "A large gathering is expected, which may affect traffic," the officer said.

No vehicle will be allowed to halt or park on Mathura Road and Bhairon Marg. General entry for the public is not permitted. "Vehicles found parked on these roads will be towed away and prosecuted. Towed vehicles will be parked in the Traffic Pit in front of Bhairon Mandir, Bhairon Marg," the officer explained.

Bhairon Marg, Purana Quila Road, Shershah Road, W-Point to Mathura Road, C-Hexagon, and India Gate are the routes that need to be avoided, police said. TNN

Right to be heard cannot be elevated to a right to be impeaded, says HC

New Delhi: Delhi High Court has observed that the right to be heard, given to a victim or a complainant in a criminal case, cannot be elevated to a right to be impeaded in a criminal revision.

Justice Navin Chawla, hearing a plea by a private company challenging a trial court order, dismissed its applications seeking impeachment and to be heard in all the pending revision petitions concerning a cheating case.

"The right would remain subordinate to that of the public prosecutor and, therefore, where the victim applies for a hearing in a revision petition, while the victim must be heard, there is no mandate in law to impead the victim as a party," said the single judge bench.

"...it is to be considered whether a right to be heard given to a victim/complainant in a State case can be uplifted to a right to be impeaded in a criminal revision if the complainant/victim applies for the same. In my opinion, the answer has to be in the negative," Justice Chawla added.

The bench, upholding the order, held that the petitioner company cannot be impeaded as a party to the revision petitions. However, it set aside the order as it restricted the petitioner's right only to assisting the court or to plead its case only through the public prosecutor. TNN

Will report threats to cops, says Maliwal

Continued from P1

Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal's aide Bibhav Kumar was arrested on May 18 in connection with the alleged assault on Maliwal. She had alleged that Bibhav brutally assaulted her on May 13 when she had gone to meet the CM. AAP has countered her allegations citing the whole incident to be a "BJP conspiracy" and alleging that Maliwal was made the face of this conspiracy to frame Kejriwal.

In her post on X on Sunday, Maliwal alleged that "as far as the party leadership goes, it is very clear that they are trying to intimidate me into withdrawing my complaint. However, for Dhruv, I tried my best to reach out to him to tell him my version but he ignored my calls and messages."

"It is shameful that people like him, who claim to be independent journalists, could act like other AAP spokespersons and victim shame me to the extent that I am now facing extreme abuses and threats," she added further.

The former Delhi Commission for Women chief highlighted in her post that "the manner in which the entire party machinery and its supporters have attempted to vilify and shame me, speaks volumes on their stand on women's issues".

Maliwal said she will report these rape and death threats to Delhi Police. "I hope they take strong action against the perpetrators," she added.

She also said in her post: "In any case, if something happens to me, we know who all instigated it." On Dhruv Rathee's video posted on May 22, Maliwal listed the "facts" that she alleged "he failed to mention in his 2.5 minute video".

Maliwal alleged that the video does not mention that "the party took a U-turn on its stand after accepting the incident has happened; the MLC report reveals injuries due to the assault; selected part of the video was released and then phone of the accused was formatted?"

She further highlighted that Rathee missed out on raising questions on issues like — "the accused was arrested from the crime scene (CM house). Why was he allowed to enter the place again? For tampering of evidence?"

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Mungeshpur Bakes At 48.3°C On Hottest Day Of Year So Far

Average Temp At 45.4°C, Expect Heatwave Spell For Next 4 Days

Priyangi Agarwal
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New Delhi: Delhi saw the hottest day of the year on Sunday. Safdarjung, the city's base station, recorded a maximum temperature of 45.4 degrees Celsius, five notches above normal, with dry and warm winds making the outdoors unbearable.

The feel-like temperature was 49 degrees Celsius. Mungeshpur in northwest Delhi sizzled at 48.3 degrees.

Heatwave to 'severe heatwave' conditions prevailed across the capital on Sunday for the second day in a row. The India Meteorological De-

partment (IMD) has issued a 'red' alert. The region is likely to be in the grip of an intense heatwave spell for the next four days.



The mercury is predicted to hover around 45-46 degrees Celsius at the base station until May 30. Some stations are expected to record temperatures two to three degrees higher. IMD's data shows that Saf-

darjung recorded the highest day temperature in two years on Sunday, leading to its first heatwave day this year. Last year, the highest maximum temperature was 43.7 degrees Celsius on May 23. However, many stations have reeled under a heatwave for some days this year.

The mercury was higher than at Safdarjung at many stations on Sunday — Najafgarh (48.1), Narela (47.8), Jafarpur (46.9), Pitampura (46.7), Pusa (46.8), Ayanagar (46.3), Palam (46.1) and Ridge (45.5).

Met officials said that according to Delhi's climatology, the peak temperature is recorded during this time of the year. On May 15, 2022, the day

temperature at Mungeshpur was 49.2 degrees Celsius.

The threshold for a heatwave is met when the maximum temperature is 45 degrees Celsius or above. A severe heatwave day is declared when the mercury is 47 degrees Celsius or above.

Though some areas of Delhi saw heatwave to severe heatwave from May 17 to 20 this year, the temperature dipped slightly on May 21 as easterly winds blew in the city, bringing moisture. However, westerly or northwesterly winds again started prevailing in Delhi from Saturday onwards, leading to heatwave conditions.

"Dry westerly or northwesterly winds come to Delhi from Rajasthan and Haryana, respectively, which are also recording high temperatures. In the absence of cloudiness, western disturbance or moisture, the mercury is predicted to remain high till May 30," said Kuldeep Srivastava, scientist and head, Regional Weather Forecasting Centre, IMD.

Since a 'red' alert has been issued for heatwave conditions, the Met department said, "There is an increased likelihood of heat illness symptoms in people who are either exposed to the sun for a prolonged period or doing heavy work. High health concerns exist for vulnerable people, including infants, the elderly, and those with chronic diseases, due to high temperatures."

A slight respite from heatwave conditions is predicted from May 31 as a western disturbance is expected to impact the region. It may cause a marginal dip in temperature to 43 degrees Celsius on May 31 and June 1. "Under the influence of a western disturbance, the city may see cloudy skies," said Srivastava.

No heatwave was seen at Safdarjung in 2023, but some stations were in the grip of a heatwave for three to five days. The year 2022 saw the longest streak of heatwaves — nine days in April and four in May.

The minimum temperature on Sunday was 27 degrees. Delhi's air quality, meanwhile, stayed in the 'moderate' category with an AQI of 190.

Of Shade And Shadows

CITY CITY BANG BANG

SANTOSH DESAI



The one thing everything in the world owns is a shadow. There is an air of mystery about the shadow; it is a nagging presence that one cannot shake off. Although it is directly related to us, it seems to have a mind of its own. It is amenable only to sight. Not to touch, sound or smell.

The shadow is an apparition, a cipher of darkness that approximates the human form. It is attached to our beings while being no part of us. It is the sun imprinting us on the earth. A tattoo that floats across the surface as we move. It is, strictly speaking, an absence of light, but it feels very much like a real thing, stubbornly clinging to us, changing shape and size freely as we go on about our lives. The light plays games with us, sometimes magnifying us, sometimes diminishing us, and always distorting us. As I type this article, my fingers converge with their own shadows, underpinning them and emphasising my actions as if they were collaborators. In that sense, we are never alone, never truly singular.

The shadow is quite distinct from its cousin the reflection. The mirror stares back at us with a version of ourselves that floats in a space that doesn't quite exist, except in the recesses of a mirror. It gives us the illusion of a 3D image, but is equally elusive to grasp. It mimics us, makes faces at us when we do, and is exasperatingly accurate in capturing our flaws. The reflection creates self-awareness; the shadow self-doubt.

The shadow is an asset without value; it is form without content. It is to light what silence is to sound—an absence that our senses can pick up. It is a form of the self that accompanies us everywhere, but it lives in a peculiar kind of non-existence. One that undeniably is, but at the same time isn't.

The sun is the original progenitor of the shadow. Opaque objects block out the light of the sun, leaving their imprint on

the world in the form of a shadow. Shade is the sun providing relief against itself. It simultaneously produces light and darkness, heat, and cooling relief.

Carl Jung thought of it as the impulsive, often unexpressed side of our being that was in a state of tension with our more rational side. As he put it, "Unfortunately, there can be no doubt that man is, on the whole, less good than he imagines himself or wants to be. Everyone carries a shadow, and the less it is embodied in the individual's conscious life, the blacker and denser it is. At all counts, it forms an unconscious snag, thwarting our most well-meant intentions." The shadow is who we might end up being if not for the control we exercise over ourselves.

The shadow is an apparition, a cipher of darkness that approximates the human form. It is attached to our beings while being no part of us. It is the sun imprinting us on the earth. A tattoo that floats across the surface as we move

This idea has found widespread currency in popular culture, from the conception of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde to the Dark Knight, where Batman and Joker represent the two polarities of human consciousness. In Hindi films, we have the idea of identical twins, one good and the other evil, which is a variation on the same theme. The shadow is the inspiration for the idea that, from the same source, two radically different personae can emerge. The shadow self is ever present, flickering with malign intent, ready to disrupt the overt order in our lives.

The shadow is commonly used as a metaphor, but in some ways, the shadow by itself is like a metaphor. Something that captures the essence of a thing without being the thing itself. Language uses the idea of the shadow in multiple ways.

We shadow somebody or live in their shadow. We can be shadowy, we can cast shadows on people and things, we can emerge from the shadows, we act without a shadow of doubt, and we are afraid of our own shadows.

Photography, which is nothing but an attempt to capture the dance of light, uses shadows to paint a scene. The shadows fill up space and reveal something about the object that the thing itself cannot display. It allows us to imagine the world in a new way. B&W photography in particular is as much about the shadow as it is about light. In cinema too, shadows play a crucial role in making a scene come alive; the striking visual effect of Guru Dutt films has a lot to do with his brilliant use of the shadow.

Sun and shade are seen as two facets of life, but interestingly, their meanings are culturally fluid. In English, to find a place in the sun is to be someone, whereas to be put in the shade is to disparage them. In India, *dhoop* is the hardship of life, from which we seek the relief of *chhaanv*. The idea of the shadow has a much more benign meaning in India, understandably so, given the dramatically different value that each culture attaches to the sun. In the West, the sun is an invitation to strip down to the bare minimum and absorb as much sunshine as one can; in India, the sun is to be escaped from, relentless as it is in baking us brown.

The shadow self is increasingly finding public expression. Social media is the modern conduit through which our shadow selves find fluent expression. It cajoles us to shed our careful exteriors and submit to our shadow impulses. It encourages us to spend hours reacting to stimuli using the most reflexive part of our brains and induces a desire to express the baser parts of ourselves in the coarsest language possible. On social media, restraint is counterproductive.

To light a candle is to cast a shadow, writes Ursula Le Guin. We can have light without the accompanying darkness. The enigmatic nature of the shadow is what makes it so fascinating. Without a shadow of doubt.

santosh365@gmail.com

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FEEL-LIKE TEMP AT 49°C

Weather forecast at Safdarjung

Max temp in degrees Celsius

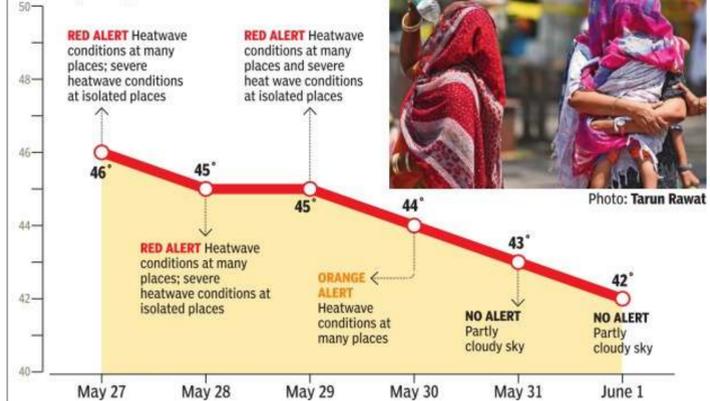


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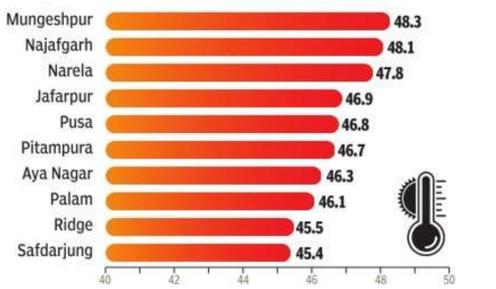
FACTORS CAUSING HIGH TEMP IN DELHI

- > Dry and warm westerly, northwesterly winds from Rajasthan and Haryana
- > Clear skies causing the surface to heat up faster

SUNDAY WEATHER

- > Heatwave to severe heatwave recorded
- > IMD advice | Avoid heat exposure; keep cool; keep drinking water, even if not thirsty

Temp recorded at some stations on Sunday



Man on run in police net for murdering friend

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: A 33-year-old man has been arrested for allegedly murdering his friend over a month ago. The suspect had an illicit relationship with the deceased's mother, police said.

The body of 23-year-old Harsh was found by his roommate in their rented accommodation in Khirki Extension on April 13, a senior police officer said.

"The post-mortem revealed that Harsh had been strangled to death. A case was registered under relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code for murder," said Rakesh Pawariya, DCP (crime branch).

Suspect Virender, a resident of Sonipat, was on the run since victim Harsh (23) was found dead, the DCP said, adding that during the investigation, police received a tip-off that Virender would be in Rajender Nagar area of Gur-

gaon to meet an associate. "A trap was laid, and Virender was nabbed. The suspect had been working, for a cab service in Delhi and Gurgaon area," the DCP added.

During inquiry, it was revealed that about two years ago, a friend of Harsh had caught Virender in an allegedly compromising position with his mother. This incident caused animosity between both but later they became friends. "On April 11, Harsh invi-

ted Virender to a beer party. During a drunken altercation, Virender strangled Harsh to death and fled the scene, attempting to stage the crime as a suicide by discarding Harsh's mobile phone in Rohini," the DCP said.

After the murder, Virender went into hiding in the NCR and avoided using mobile phones to evade capture, relying on train travel without tickets and sustenance from temples, the DCP added.

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Not scarce but scramble for water in Noida

Meenakshi Sinha
@timesgroup.com

Noida: Midway through yet another intense summer, residents in parts of the city are scrambling to meet their water needs—some purchasing water from private tankers, others simply rationing it.

Noida Authority insists there is no dearth in supply—the daily water needs of

the city is 407 MLD and the development authority supplies 480 MLD. Of this, 206 MLD is Ganga water that is supplied by a 24.5km pipeline from Ghaziabad's Pratap Vihar and Siddharth Vihar water treatment plants. A larger tranche—280 MLD—is sourced from its 11 Ranney and 410 tube wells.

Why then water is reduced to a trickle before it reaches

aches the taps?

Proximity to the national capital and an upcoming international airport has made the Noida-Greater Noida-Yamuna Expressway belt a burgeoning investment destination, one that has brought thousands of job-seekers from parts of the country over the years, many of whom have settled in its proliferating condominiums and gated societies. The rising population—as per Census 2011, the district had 16.5 lakh population; it is estimated to have doubled in 2024—has put pressure on its groundwater and its existing water infrastructure.

As per a recent study, Gautam Budh Nagar's groundwater level has plummeted from 30-40 metres in 2002 to 140 feet now,

depleting almost at the rate of 11 to 12 feet per year. High level of total dissolved solids (TDS) in the groundwater makes it brackish and unfit for consumption.

In parts of the city, including Barola, Nagli Wazidpur, Sorkha and Harola among others, residents blame the water department for mixing about 75% to 80% of groundwater with the otherwise sweet Ganga water. This, residents of these villages say, meant they had to buy drinking water regularly.

Frequent leakage in the city's nearly two-decade-old water infrastructure also exacerbates the crisis.

Meanwhile, Noida Authority said there was no shortage of water, and it was supplying 70MLD water more than the required 407 MLD.

Parts Of Delhi Parched In Peak Summer, Shortfall At 321 MGD

Problems Continue For Fifth Straight Day At Wazirabad Plant

Siddhanta Mishra
@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: Delhi Jal Board (DJB) has said in its latest report on Sunday that daily water supply in the capital has reduced to 969 million gallons per day (MGD) against the requirement of 1,290 MGD.

As residents battle a scorching summer, a shortfall of 321 MGD is likely to make daily life harder.

The water supply problem is manifold.

At the Wazirabad plant, problems continued for the fifth day as the pond where raw water from the Yamuna is collected has seen a gradual decrease. This is raw water treated by the plant for distribution.

However, the major fall in production is at Wazirabad, where, against a total water production capacity of 131 MGD, the plant is producing 102 MGD.

The Sonia Vihar plant, with a capacity of treating 140 MGD, is now treating 141 MGD. A day earlier, this plant was treating around 142 MGD—



The shortage is only going to make the summer harder for residents

one MGD more than its capacity.

At the Bhagirathi WTP, the treatment has been reduced from 112 MGD to 111 on Sunday, while the actual capacity of this plant is 110 MGD.

The continuous reduction in production at the Wazirabad plant has put a strain on the distribution system.

As the demand for water rises throughout the city, the lower-than-usual production at the plant is causing problems, which water minister Atishi recently highlighted.

Mukesh Kohli, president of the RWA South Extension 2, said that water tankers were requested from 96 houses on Sunday. "We have written to DJB several times about the problems in the pipeline, which is preventing many houses from getting water directly from the tap, so we order water tankers daily."

The sources of water for the DJB include the Yamuna, Ganga water from Uttar Pradesh, water from Haryana, and tubewells and ranney wells. The supply from all these sources is frequently disrupted, and DJB officials have privately said that this summer is expected to be worse than previous years.

Earlier, DJB stated that under its Summer Action Plan 2024, certain measures have been taken to address the issues faced by the public.

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CHIEF ENGINEER

School Buzz

Gyan Bharati School, Saket hosted an Indian classical music concert. Dev Swaranjali, in collaboration with school alumni association. The concert commenced with a welcome address by school director Lata Vaidyanathan. Renowned musician Grammy award winner Padma Bhushan Pt Vishwa Mohan Bhatt graced the stage, showcasing his virtuosity and passion for the ancient art form. Tantri Samar Pt Salil Bhatt, table wizard Pranshu Lal adorned the evening with their impeccable performances. School chairman Gopal Ansal felicitated the music maestros on stage. The melodious strains of the Mohan Veena and Satvik Veena danced in harmony with the intricate rhythms of

mellifluous guitarist and Prince of table Pranshu Lal. School principal Dr Mudita Sharma proposed the vote of thanks in the end.

GD Goenka Public School, Paschim Vihar conducted the academic excellence awards ceremony to acknowledge the students' hard work, perseverance



GD Goenka Public School, Paschim Vihar

and precision in achieving their academic goals. Members of the management, school principal Rekha Sharma and vice principal Monika Malik presented the achievers with trophies, badges and certificates. The series of cultural performances also took place.

The primary wing of **DPS, Mathura Road**, held its annual academic award ceremony to celebrate the stellar performance of its students. The ceremony commenced with the lighting of lamp. Rashi Dhir, alumnus was the chief guest for the award ceremony. The ceremony proceeded with the felicitation of the chief guest by school vice principal



DPS, Mathura Road

administration Naveen Kumar. In recognition of academic excellence, 89 students were awarded for their distinguished achievements in scholastic and co-scholastic domains. Sixteen underprivileged students received the Shalini Jha Charitable Trust Award, for outstanding academic performance. The event concluded with school headmistress Manisha Varma delivering a vote of thanks.

Ryan International School, Faridabad held its investiture ceremony for the academic session 2024-25 with great pomp and grandeur. As per the leadership vision of the revered Chairman of Ryan Group of Institutions, Dr A P Pinto and MD Madam Dr Grace Pinto, the newly elected council pledged their allegiance to the school. The ceremony was graced by esteemed guests Major General Sudhir Kumar Datt, recipient of Vishisht Seva Medal and Captain Rajneesh Singh Chha-



Ryan International School, Faridabad

wari, an alumnus of Indian Naval Academy, who were welcomed and felicitated by school principal Peeya Sharma with potted plants. The core student council comprising of cabinet ministers and deputy cabinet ministers, clad in their vibrant silken scarves, took the pledge to hold the school motto in high esteem. The newly elected president of the school council, Pushkar Nagar addressed the audience, expressing his optimism in performing his duties as the school president. The prime minister of the school council, Saksham Tomar extended a formal vote of thanks to the distinguished guests and parents.

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LOOK OUT NOTICE

I/C PP Canal Road Jammu vide communication No. 71/5-1/PPC dated 24.05.2024 intimated that one un identified male dead body was near Meat Market, Krishna Nagar, was shifted to GMCH Jammu. To ascertain the actual cause of death Inquest proceedings U/S 174 Cr.P.C., was initiated at PP Canal Road vide DDR No. 14 dated 21.05.2024 and dead body was shifted to mortuary room of GMCH, Jammu for identification.

As such, for the identification of an identified male dead body below description roll is required to be published on daily newspapers for identification / Public in general, having any clue related to the unidentified dead body, kindly communicate the same on the below mentioned contact/ Telephone numbers.

Description Roll :-

Age : 40 years (Approx.)
Height : 5' 7"
Dress : White colour T-Shirt and blue Pajama

Contacts Telephone Numbers :-

- DPO, Jammu : 0191-2547807, 0191-2561578
- SSP Jammu Mail I.D : sspjammu@jkpolice.gov.in
- PCR Jammu : 0191-2542000
- SP City North : 0191-2547038
- Dy. SP Hqrs. : 0191-2562259
- PS Nowabadd : 0191-2565274

For Sr. Superintendent of Police, Jammu.

DIP No:DIPIJ-721/24/25.05.2024

BANGALORE WATER SUPPLY AND SEWERAGE BOARD

INVITATION FOR TENDER (Only through kpp portal)

BWSSB invites tenders in Two cover system from eligible tenderers for the following works.

Name of the Work	Amount put to tender EMD
Office of the Engineer-in-Chief, 2nd Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, K.G.Road, Bangalore- 560 009.	
IFT No.: BWSSB/EIC/ACE(UFW)/TA/515/2024-25 Date: 24.05.2024	
Work of Construction of 4 ML capacity Ground level reservoir, providing and laying of 450mm dia MS water supply inlet feeder main to GLR from High Grounds service reservoir. Construction of pump house with service station and allied works at football ground, ward No. 60 Sagayapuram, Pulkeshinagara constituency under AECC-1-2 Sub-division, EEC division. (3rd Call).	Rs. 2615 Lakhs Rs. 26.15 Lakhs
IFT No.: BWSSB/EIC/ACE(UFW)/TA/525/2024-25 Date: 24.05.2024	
Work of Modernization & Remodelling of Water Supply Systems in Thyagarajanagara area of existing SW3DMA13 - under AEE(SW)-3 Sub-Division limits of BWSSB, Bangalore.	Rs. 468.58 Lakhs Rs. 7.05 Lakhs
IFT No.: BWSSB/EIC/ACE(UFW)/TA/529/2024-25 Date: 24.05.2024	
Work of Modernization & Remodelling of Water Supply Systems in Srinagara area of existing SW3DMA03 - under AEE(SW)-3 Sub-Division limits of BWSSB, Bangalore.	Rs. 461.78 Lakhs Rs. 6.95 Lakhs

The last date for uploading of completed tender document is on: 10.06.2024 upto 16:00Hrs. The Bids will be opened on: 11.06.2024 after 16:00Hrs. The details regarding the tender and participation in the e-procurement process can be obtained by logging on to <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in>. For further details contact the undersigned office during working hours.

Sd/-
Engineer-in-Chief.

DIPR/CP/RA/117/2024-25

PWD May Hold AI's Hand To Cross Roads With Potholes And Cracks

Survey For Better Monitoring Of Road Infra, Quick Remedial Action

Siddhanta.Mishra@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: Public Works Department (PWD) is planning to start an artificial intelligence-based survey of roads to identify any damage, potholes, and cracks. As the model code of conduct will be lifted soon after the polls, PWD plans to initiate measures for better monitoring of road infrastructure and quick remedial action, officials said.

The department has plans to start a pilot project using artificial intelligence (AI) in West Delhi roads section for monitoring and maintenance. In Oct last year, PWD hired a consultant to come up with a specific project plan for inclusion of

AI in the road maintenance work. PWD has decided to keep the roads under constant surveillance, with the help of AI-based monitoring. For this, it will hire an agency to conduct surveys with the help of vehicles fitted with CCTV cameras. The data collected by the live feed will be presented to senior officials for further action.

The AI-based monitoring also provides information on reasons for traffic congestion and if any changes are required in road design.

According to officials, a project where defects to the footpath, drainage, central verge, and greenery are all captured and alerted with the help of the software is underway, so that more systematic and

PWD has decided to keep the roads under constant surveillance, with the help of AI-based monitoring. For this, it will hire an agency to conduct surveys with the help of vehicles fitted with CCTV cameras

regularly repair work is carried out. As part of the survey and maintenance, the private contractor will have to take responsibility for several aspects of the road, except the main carriageway repair work. A different comprehensive maintenance plan is in place for that, officials said. Footpaths, which are covered un-

der the right of way, repair of existing curb stones, repairing of paver tiles, levelling of drain covers, painting of curb stones three times a year, removal of wild growth, and replacement of damaged street furniture will be carried out under this project. The poor status of footpaths has been highlighted in road safety audits done in the past, officials said.

PWD currently maintains 1,400 km road network across the city and over 50% of the total drainage network. For providing better navigation for the public, road signage will also be repaired and realigned as per the rules. The project aims to ensure that the road surface remains defect-free for five to seven years or more, officials added.

Another land grab attempt in Aravalis: One-acre plot found levelled in Mangar

Ipsita.Pati@timesgroup.com

Gurgaon: An acre of Aravali land protected under the Punjab Land Preservation Act (PLPA) has been found levelled in Mangar village.

The land is covered under sections 4 and 5 of the PLPA, a law that was enacted in 1990 to protect the forested area from erosion by putting a check on land excavations. This law protects Aravali land in 10 districts - Gurgaon, Panchkula, Ambala, Yamunanagar, Nuh, Palwal, Faridabad, Mahendragarh, Rewari and Bhiwani. Any kind of non-forest activity, be it felling

trees, grabbing land or starting any construction, is banned here.

Villagers expressed concern over growing illegal activities in the areas, saying they could lead to irreparable damage to the ecologically sensitive zone if not checked immediately and even disrupt the wildlife.

"Such incidents are being reported every now and then. The latest instance of a land grab attempt is a stark reminder of the constant threats faced by our environment and the urgent need for stringent enforcement of laws. Why can't authorities be a little more vigilant in

safeguarding our natural habitats," a villager asked TOI.

The divisional forest officer in Faridabad, Sunil Dhaka, said action had been initiated. "We have already filed a forest offence report. To stop encroachments and construction in the forest area, we will carry out plantations as well," he added.

Environmentalists, meanwhile, said the area came under the natural conservation zone of Faridabad municipal corporation.

Incidents of tree felling, Harsana said, aren't uncommon in Mangar and its surrounding areas despite the protection of the law.

NGT takes note of pollution in Smriti Van's Machli Talab

YOU READ IT HERE
South Delhi pond a sewage pool with defunct STP



New Delhi: Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) has asked Delhi Jal Board (DJB) to address the pollution in a pond, Delhi Jal Board (DJB) has asked Delhi Jal Board (DJB) to address the pollution in a pond, Delhi Jal Board (DJB) has asked Delhi Jal Board (DJB) to address the pollution in a pond.

April 19, 2024

DPCC has asked DJB to address the pollution in Machli Talab inside Vasant Kunj's Smriti Van.

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PUBLIC NOTICE

Our client proposes to acquire absolute ownership of the property currently bearing municipal corporation PID No. 197536 (old PID No. 38/4345), Plot No. 1+3+5+6+7 forming part of resurvey No. 106A, 107B, 108A and 109A together with commercial building popularly known as "Akshay Sky Mall" constructed thereon along with all the structures, building, plant & machinery, fittings and fixtures installed therein and situated at Village Krishnapur, Hobli Chabbi, Taluk Hubballi Nagara, District Dharwad, State Karnataka, more fully described in the schedule below together with all the utilities, amenities and facilities developed on the Building Plot and collectively, referred to as the "Property", from its owner, **M/s. Suresh Enterprises Private Limited**, (CIN No. U51109KA1993PTC014100), a company governed by the provisions of the Companies Act, 2013, having its registered office at 'Akshay Centre', Gokul Road, Hubli - 580 030, Karnataka (the "Owner"). The Owner has represented that, except for the lease deeds / leave and license agreements / letters of intent / term sheets entered into with prospective retailers for retail units developed at the Property, and the mortgage created in favour of M/s. Siddhasini Souharda Sahakari Sangha Niyamit, Vijaypur (formerly known as M/s Siddhasini Souharda Sahakari Niyamit) concerning the Property (collectively, referred to as the "Encumbrances"), the Owner has not mortgaged, created any lien or encumbered the Property or part thereof in any manner and that the Owner has not entered into any other agreement of sale/development agreement/memorandum of understanding/arrangement etc., with any person/s with regard to the Property. The Owner has further represented that it is the absolute owner of the Property having clear and marketable, right, title and interest therein and that apart from it, there is no other person/s having any right, title or claim over the Property. Any person/s, entity, trust, firm, HUF, institution (corporate or otherwise) having claims, demand, right, title or interest, minor's claim or any right of whatsoever nature capable of establishing such claim, demand, right, title or interest with respect to the Property shall lodge their written objections/claims together with all documentary evidence **within fourteen (14) days** from the date of this notice with the undersigned. Failing to do so, it shall be presumed that save and except the aforesaid Encumbrances, the ownership and title of the Owner with respect to the Property is clear, marketable, and free from all encumbrances of any kind whatsoever, and our client shall then proceed to complete the proposed sale transaction. Any claims or alleged interests, which are received without documentary evidence or received after fourteen (14) days from the date of publication of this notice shall be deemed to be invalid and not binding on the parties to the proposed transaction.

SCHEDULE

Description of the Property

All that piece and parcel of the land currently bearing municipal corporation PID No. 197536 (old PID No. 38/4345), Plot No. 1+3+5+6+7, which is a part of resurvey No. 106A, 107B, 108A and 109A admeasuring **1,34,198.73** square feet (equivalent to **12,467.67** square meters) ("the Building Plot"), together with commercial building constructed thereon and popularly known as 'Akshay Sky Mall' comprising of Cellar-1 + Cellar-2 + ground floor + 4 upper floors, having an approximate gross built-up area including common areas admeasuring **6,43,319.09** square feet (i.e., equivalent to **59,766.30** square meters) and units having an approximate carpet area of **3,21,214.13** square feet (i.e., equivalent to **29,841.77** square meters) and parking area of **97,156.02** square feet (i.e., equivalent to **9026.09** square meters) ("the Building") along with all the Building plant & machinery, fittings and fixtures installed therein ("the Fixtures") together with all the appurtenant utilities, amenities and facilities developed on the Building Plot and situated at Village Krishnapur, Hobli Chabbi, Taluk Hubballi Nagara, District Dharwad, State Karnataka - 580 030, in the registration District of Dharwad. The Building, Building Plot and the Fixtures together with all the appurtenant utilities, amenities and facilities developed on the Building Plot are collectively, referred to as the Property. The Building Plot is bounded on the:

East by: Plots No. 2 and 4 in resurvey numbers 106A, 107B and 109A and MCL Road;
West by: Plot No. 7 in resurvey numbers 98/4, 98/5 and 107/A2;
North by: 30 meter wide Gokul Road; and
South by: 12 meter road and plot No. 8 in resurvey numbers 106A, 107B and 109A.

Ms. Savitha K.G., Partner
Poovayya & Co., Advocates and Solicitors
The Estate, Level Four, 121 Dickenson Road, Bengaluru - 560 042

Place: Hubli
Date: 27.05.2024

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Bird-hit flight to Leh returns to Delhi airport

New Delhi: A SpiceJet flight from Delhi to Leh returned to Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA) on Sunday after a bird hit its engine mid-air. After the aircraft landed safely, all passengers were deplaned.

An airport official said the flight, which had taken off at 10.30 am, landed at the airport around 11 am. The flight requested priority landing at 10.49 am with the air traffic controller (ATC).

A SpiceJet spokesperson said, "On May 26, 2024, SpiceJet B737 aircraft operating SG-123 from Delhi to Leh returned to Delhi after suffering a bird hit on engine two. The aircraft landed back safely in Delhi and passengers were deplaned normally." The aircraft made a normal landing and not an emergency landing, the spokesperson added.

"The flight was carrying 135 passengers and landed safely around 11 am. The flight told the ATC there was vibration in the engine," said an airport official.

An Air India flight, which took off from Delhi with 175 passengers, returned to the IGIA, after a fire warning from its auxiliary power unit on May 17.

In July last year, a Kolkata-bound flight was forced to return mid-air to IGI due to technical glitch. In June 2023, a Delhi to Dehradun flight returned to IGI because of some glitch. TNN

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Duration: 2 Days | Course Dates: 01 & 02 Jun, 2024 | Timing: 10:00 AM to 5 PM

Venue: MSME- DFO Extn Centre, ESTC First Floor Opposite L-Block, Outer Circle, Connaught Place, New Delhi- 110001 Email Id: pd_estc@estcindia.com, Website: www.estcindia.com, Phone No: 011-20810492

Contents: Introduction to AR, VR & MR, Concepts and Applications, Introduction to Metaverse, 3D Modelling Basics (Maya), Unity 3D Basics for AR/VR Development Introduction to Augmented Reality, Developing AR Applications with Unity 3D Introduction to ARCore (Android), Vuforia, Best Practices in AR/VR Development HMDs (Head-Mounted Displays) Quest2, Vive Pro etc, Future Trends and Opportunities

Technical details-9458809275

Course Fees -5000/-+18% GST (Including Lunch & Tea)

Link for Registration and payment -> https://tinyurl.com/estcarvr

After successful completion, Govt. certificate will be issued

Scan QR Code for Registration & Fees Payment

Contact: 9999948317, 9456108524, 6399000710

Documents required: Aadhaar Card Copy, Educational Proof Copy, 2 Photos

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ALL INDIA INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL SCIENCES, BATHINDA

NOTIFICATION

Applications are invited from suitable candidates for Post-Doctoral Fellowship courses beginning from July 2024 at AIIMS, Bathinda. The interested candidates may kindly visit AIIMS, Bathinda website www.aiimsbathinda.edu.in - for the details, in regard to educational qualifications, terms and conditions for enrolling course. The last date of receiving application through online mode is 15 June 2024 till 5:00 PM.

Executive Director, AIIMS, Bathinda

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KUSHWAHA SAYS NEXT NDA GOVT WILL TRY TO SCRAP 'UNDEMOCRATIC' COLLEGIUM SYSTEM

BIHAR CM NITISH TOOK CAR TO POLL RALLY AS HIS CHOPPER RAN OUT OF FUEL, SAYS AIDE



In unusual move, Cab panel OKs 1-mth extension for Army chief

No Decision On Filling Senior Posts Till Poll Process Ends: Official

Rajat.Pandit@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: In a highly unusual move that could impact the line of succession in the 12-lakh strong force, the govt on Sunday granted a month's extension to Army chief General Manoj Pande just six days before his slated retirement on May 31.



Gen Pande's extension comes six days before his slated retirement on May 31. The next two senior-most officers, vice chief Lt-Gen Upendra Dwivedi and Southern Command chief Lt-Gen Ajai Kumar Singh, are also slated to retire on June 30

The inordinate delay in announcing the successor of Gen Pande, who took over as the 29th Army chief in April 2022 and turned 62 this month, had already triggered widespread speculation that a supersession in the military hierarchy was in the offing, amid the continuing confrontation with China in eastern Ladakh as well as the impending move to create integrated theatre commands.

The extension by the PM-led Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) will add further grist to the mill since the next senior-most Army officer, vice chief Lt-Gen Upendra Dwivedi (Jammu and Kashmir Rifles), as well as the one after him, Southern Command chief Lt-Gen Ajai Kumar Singh (Gorkha Rifles), are both slated to retire on June 30.

The Army, Navy and IAF chiefs can serve till 62 or for three years, whichever is earlier, while a Lt-Gen rank officer retires at 60 unless he is approved for the four-star rank.

A top govt official, however, told TOI that "any speculation or controversy is unwarranted" because it had been decided that no senior post would be filled before the election process was completed.

"No top-level military or civilian posting has been done in the last one month. The next Army chief was scheduled to take over on May 31, one day before the last phase of polling. Now, the next govt can announce the new Army chief in mid-June, who will then take over from Gen Pande on June 30 (both Lt-Gens Dwivedi and Singh will still be in the reckoning)," the official said.

The election model code of conduct, however, did not prevent the govt from announcing on April 19 that Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi would take over as the new Navy chief from Admiral R Hari Kumar on April 30.

While Lt-Gens Dwivedi and Singh are both from the same course, the former be-

came GoC-in-C of the Udhampur-based Northern Command in Feb 2022 and then the vice chief in Feb this year. Lt-Gen Singh became GoC-in-C of the Pune-based Southern Command in Nov 2022.

The next three officers in seniority, whose names were also sent to the ACC, are Northern Command and Central Command chiefs, Lt-Gens M V Suchindra Kumar and NS Raja Subramani, and chief of integrated defence staff Lt-Gen J P Mathew.

While there have been a few supersessions for the top post in the hierarchy-conscious armed forces, the only available example of an extension being granted was when Indira Gandhi extended the tenure of Gen G G Bevoor (who had succeeded Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw's also slightly extended tenure as Army chief after the 1971 war) in 1975 to deny the post to Lt-Gen P S Bhagat. The NDA govt has junked

the long-enshrined seniority principle two times during its 10-year tenure. First, it superseded two senior Lt-Gens (Praveen Bakshi and PM Hariz) to appoint Gen Bipin Rawat as Army chief in Dec 2016, who later became the first chief of defence staff before he was killed in a helicopter crash in Dec 2021.

Then, Admiral Karambir Singh was appointed as the Navy chief in May 2019, superseding the then Andaman Nicobar Command chief Vice Admiral Bimal Verma. Both times, the govt contended it had taken the decision "based on merit, not just seniority".

There have been other exceptions to the seniority principle in the past as well. Indira Gandhi, for instance, superseded Lt-Gen S K Sinha to appoint Gen A S Vaidya as Army chief in 1983. Similarly, Air Chief Marshal S K Mehra became IAF chief by superseding Air Marshal M S Singh in 1988.

"Earlier, a new Service chief was announced two months in advance. These last minute decisions are not good for the morale of the armed forces. There is also increasing politicisation of the armed forces, with some top officers actively seeking out politicians to push their promotion claims," a senior officer said.

Army defuses 3 IEDs near dam in Manipur, averts tragedy

Guwahati: Army defused 3 powerful IEDs near Maphou dam in Imphal East on Saturday, averting a major loss of life and property, reports Mukut Das. Security forces found the IEDs — 2 weighing 2kg and one 5kg — planted on a road connecting Nongdam Tangkhul and Etham Tangkhul villages during routine area domination.

"Army columns swiftly cordoned off the area before the bomb disposal squad arrived," Army spokesman Lt Col Amit Shukla said on Sunday. Electronic detonators were also found alongside the IEDs.

The incident comes less than a week after nine militants of two banned outfits — Kangleipak Communist Party (Taibanganba) and Revolutionary People's Front (RPF)/People's Liberation Army (PLA) — were arrested.

2 women injured in Maoist IED blast at home in C'garh's Sukma

Raipur: Two women were injured in a Maoist IED blast at their house in a remote village, 10km from dreaded Maoist commander Madvi Hidma's home, in Chhattisgarh's Sukma district Sunday morning. Medical help could not reach the injured till late on Sunday in Bheemapuram village, home to battalion of Maoists. It's not known if Maoists stashed the IED in the house or planted it there, Sukma SP Kiran Chavan told TOI.

"We are in touch with the sarpanch. We have appealed to villagers to help the women leave the village for treatment. Police are trying their best. Sending troops to the naxal hub is risky," the SP said.

Chavan said that Maoists often hide IEDs and explosives in villagers's houses. TNN

9 die in 24 hours in T'gana rains; May toll hits 32

Hyderabad: Telangana reported 9 rain-related deaths on Sunday raising the toll to 32 in May so far, weeks before the onset of monsoon.

On May 8, a two-hour spell of torrential rainfall resulted in the death of 20 people across the state, followed by another three deaths due to lightning.

On Sunday, 2 people died in Hyderabad's Miyapur area.

Four construction workers died when the asbestos sheet along with a newly constructed wall collapsed on them in Nagarkurnool on Sunday. In another incident, a person died after a stone kept atop the asbestos sheet of a house flew off and hit their car's windshield. In another incident, two people riding a bike from Bommalaramam to Shamirpet died after a huge tree fell on them at Thimmaipalli in Keesara. TNN

HC takes suo motu notice, calls Rajkot fire 'man-made disaster'



Debris being removed on Sunday from the gaming zone in Rajkot where 28 were killed in a devastating fire

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Ahmedabad: A special bench of Gujarat HC, which assembled here on Sunday to take suo motu cognizance of the deaths at the Rajkot gaming zone, called the fire an "unfortunate tragedy" which was "prima facie a man-made disaster".

A bench of Justice Biren Vaishnav and Justice Devan Desai cited news reports and observed that such gaming zones and recreational facilities in the state have come up without necessary approvals from competent authorities. The judges directed four municipal corporations — Ahmedabad, Vadodra, Surat and Rajkot — and the state govt to come up with details about the provisions of law under which their authorities allowed such gaming zones to be set up and operated. HC has granted one day's time to the lawyers of these

municipal corporations to come up with replies.

The bench expressed shock at news reports that TRP gaming zone in Rajkot had taken advantage of the loopholes in the Gujarat Comprehensive General Development Control Regulations (CGDCR) to pave the way for creating illegal recreational activities. The court took notice of the fact that like Rajkot, such gaming zones have mushroomed in Ahmedabad, from Sidhu Bhavan Road to SG Highway and SP Ring Road, "which pose significant threat to public safety, especially innocent children".

On the issue of loopholes in CGDCR, HC directed the municipal corporations to show whether the gaming zones operating under their respective jurisdictions had undertaken compliance of fire safety regulations.

President of Gujarat HC Advocates' Association, Bri-

jesh Trivedi, and advocate Amit Panchal, who demanded HC's intervention in this matter, appeared before the court and drew the court's attention on how a stock of inflammable material was kept carelessly at the gaming zone in Rajkot. This led the court to say, "Prima-facie, a man-made disaster has occurred where many lives have been lost and families have grieved today for the loss of lives in their respective families..."

Advocate Panchal has sought action in this matter by filing an application in relation to a PIL which he had filed in 2020 about fire safety in hospitals. He pointed out that despite direction from HC and SC to the state govt to strictly implement the fire safety rules, this tragedy has occurred showing gross negligence on the authorities' part. HC has also directed to list the 2020 PIL along with the suo motu PIL on Monday.

19 students from Kyrgyzstan back home after 4-day arduous journey

Ujjain/Barwani/Khargone: After a four-day journey spanning three countries to flee violence in Kyrgyzstan, five youths from MP, among a group of 19 Indian medical students, finally arrived home on Sunday, report **Brijesh Parmar & Animesh Jain**.

Ravi Sarathe, Vivek Sharma and Rohit Panchal from Ujjain, Chetan Malviya from Barwani, and Kushagra Sawaner from Khargone are now worried for their friends back in Bishkek, especially those living in rented apartments as they have no security.

Chetan had posted a video few days earlier, pleading with Indian govt and MP CM Mohan Yadav to evacuate them. "We reached Bishkek airport on May 22 but were not allowed to enter. I hired a cab for Almaty in Kazakhstan, 425km away, with two students from Bharatpur and Dausa in Rajasthan," Chetan told TOI.

They arrived in Almaty on May 23, only to find there were no flights. "So, we left for Tashkent, 815km away, on May 24. We had to wait there 20 hours for a flight to Delhi," he said.

"It was a nightmare. Overnight, the behaviour of locals changed and they refused to offer help," said Ravi. Many universities in Kyrgyzstan have switched to online classes because of due to the violence.

As mercury soars, bodies pile up in Raj morgue beyond capacity of 40

Intishab.Ali@timesgroup.com

Jaipur: Bodies in Jaipur's state-run SMS Hospital's mortuary have piled up in the past two weeks and over-shot its capacity after several were picked up from roadsides amid Rajasthan's searing summer, fuelling fears many could be suspected heat-stroke victims.

On Sunday, Rajasthan confirmed its first heat casualty this year: 40-year-old Moti Singh of Sarana village in Ajmer. The granite worker fell ill Saturday while loading stones on a tractor trolley. He died on the way from a rural health centre to the district



Temperature has hit 50 degrees Celsius in some districts

hospital. Until now, the govt denied any heat deaths, though the mercury's march to 50 degrees Celsius in some districts led to claims about fatalities and grave illnesses. The numbers at SMS Hospital's mortuary — which

has a capacity of 40 — are telling. The bodies have almost doubled to 42 from 22 on May 10. Half are of unidentified individuals. Officials said these were typically found by police on the streets.

The situation has become increasingly challenging for the hospital staff as they struggle to accommodate the growing number of bodies within the limited space.

According to officials, the surge in unidentified bodies may be attributed to heat-wave deaths but cannot be officially categorised as such as elaborate guidelines are in place for declaring such fatalities.

2 MP security personnel dead after drinking 'poison' beer

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bhopal: Two Special Armed Force personnel died on Sunday from suspected poisoning after drinking beer on Saturday night in MP's Chhindwara. The deceased, head constable Dhaniram Uike, 55, was off duty, and constable Premal Kakodia, 54, was guarding the bungalow of the SAF unit commander from 8pm to midnight. "Two beer cans, two glass-

es, and a packet containing some powder were found in Dhaniram's scooter. Premal, in his dying declaration, said Dhaniram had brought the beer around 9pm, and they both drank outside the bungalow. There was no third person there," Chhindwara SP Manish Khatri told TOI.

After the drink, Premal resumed his duty and Dhaniram returned home. Soon, both fell ill. Dhaniram died on way to hospital. Premal

was admitted to a hospital, which informed police. He regained consciousness around 5am on Sunday and recorded his statement before death, said police.

"Whether one of them mixed some poisonous substance, or they did it mutually, or some other chemical caused their death will be clear after investigation. We have collected all the samples, including stomach wash, for the forensic test," the SP said.

3 workers feared dead in rat-hole mine in Assam: At least 3 coal miners, two from Meghalaya and one from Nepal, were feared dead in a rat-hole mine that caved in Sunday due to a landslide in Tinsukia, reports **Rajib Dutta**.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Know all men by these presents that our client **Sri. Poonam Choudhary**, S/o. Sri Kalam Choudhary, R/o Plot No. 1552 & 1553, Flat No. 501, Raja Rajeshwari Nagar, Kondapur, Beside Gem Motors, Kondapur, Ranga Reddy Dist., Telangana-500084, is intending to purchase **Scheduled Property-I**, a portion of the Plot No. 125, measuring to an extent of Ac. 2.495 Gts in Sy No. 172 situated at Bollaram (V), Narsapur Taluq, Medak-Dist., and bounded by: **NORTH:** Neighbours Land, **SOUTH:** remaining portion of the land in Plot No. 125 being sold to Auro enterprises Pvt.Ltd., **EAST:** Road No. 8, West: Plot No. 135 and **Scheduled Property II**, a portion of the Plot No. 125, measuring to an extent of Ac. 2.500 Gts in Sy. No. 172 situated at Bollaram (V), Narsapur Taluq, Medak-Dist., and bounded by: **NORTH:** remaining portion of the land in Plot No. 125 being sold to Manakisa Crowns Pvt.Ltd., **SOUTH:** Plot No. 124, **EAST:** Road No. 8, West: Plot No. 135, for a valuable sale consideration from **M/s. BKM Industries Limited** situated at Commerce House, 2nd Floor, Room No. 11, 2A, Ganesh Chandra Avenue, Kolkata - 700 013.

Therefore, our client is hereby calls upon the public in general that, if anybody is having any objection or interest over the said property, they may contact the undersigned with all the original documents within 7 (Seven) days from the date of this notice otherwise our client will proceed with sale transaction as if there are no objections from any quarter.

Sd/- **Nyapathi Jayapal**, Advocate, For RVR Associates, IPR Attorneys & Advocates, G-4, #3-4-543 & 544, Laxmi Nilayam Apartments, Narayanada, Hyderabad-27, Telangana +91 6300598501, +91 91021 10066

Hub of making sitars and guitars, Dadpur village in Bengal is seeped in string melody

Kamalendu Bhadra | TNN

Uluberia/Howrah: Each time a sitar virtuoso tugs at heart-strings, it might just be an ode to some nimble fingers in faraway Dadpur. The nondescript village in Uluberia in Bengal's Howrah district literally rises with string melody and sleeps with it. Most of its 250-odd households are engaged in making sitars, surbahars and guitars.

"This art is different from many others. It requires not just delicate craftsmanship but a refined sense of music too. That's achieved through rigorous training, passion and perseverance," said Shyamal Halder whose father Tarapada Halder started nearly 65 years back when he went to Lucknow as a youth and learnt to make stringed instruments. Shyamal's words about "training and passion" found resonance on the verandah of a house nearby. There, master craftsman Dipak Halder was engrossed in the task of "Joari" — fine-tuning a sitar. In the serenity of Dadpur's abundant greenery, ponds and ser-



Most of Dadpur's 250-odd households make sitars, surbahars and guitars

pentine lanes — almost resembling a painting in watercolour — Dipak was immersed in playing Raag Jaunpuri. The purity of the notes his fingers were producing was accentuated by the ambience. Dadpur's instruments have travelled far and wide, across the country and abroad. Many in the village have shifted to making instruments from other professions. "Sitar and surbahars are made in 12 workshops in this vil-

lage. At least one member from each household is into this," said Samar Mondal, who has been engaged in one of the workshops for 17 years. Crafting a sitar is an intricate task. Each part — body-making, curving, engraving, polishing and tuning — requires craftsmen specialising in that particular aspect.

Abhijit Mondal switched to instrument-making a few years back. He is now an expert in de-

signing sitars and surbahars. "Not a single part is made with the help of a machine. It is wholly dependent on human skills and acumen," said Abhijit.

Kolkata, Varanasi, Lucknow, Pune, Delhi and Patna are among the cities from where Dadpur gets big orders. "Apart from bulk sales, we get individual orders from across the country. Many popular brands take unfinished instruments from us," said Dipak. These brands later customise the instruments according to their specifications.

Eminent Kolkata sitar player Pundit Deboprasad Chakrabarty vouched for Dadpur's cachet. "They never compromise on quality. The price is reasonable, affordable even for beginners."

Ironically the comment about prices coincided with a jarring note in Dadpur — a refrain about low earnings. Most craftsmen complained that they did not make enough money in spite of their full-time engagement and the high market value of their instruments, especially when these were marketed by big players.

Cabinet Secretariat Department (Directorate of Aviation)
Patna Airport, Patna – 800014.
TEL. No.: 0612-2225659, 2224423
Fax 0612 2224614, e-mail-cadbiar@bihar.gov.in

Letter. No: CBN (misc.)-05-76/2023- 415

CORRIGENDUM

With reference to our Tender No.-**CBN (misc.)-05-78/2023-143 Dated- 27.02.2024 (PR.NO.018442 (CSD) 2023-24)** and Corrigendum No.- 263 Dt. 03.04.2024 (PR.No. 000035 (CSD) 2024-25) & No.- 383 Dt. 10.05.2024 (PR.No. 000704 (CSD) 2024-25) for hiring of One 7+2/8+2 seating capacity VIP/VVIP Configuration twin Engine Helicopter on wet lease for a period of 05 years, due to unavoidable Circumstances we hereby revise the Schedule of Events as below.

S/n.	Schedule of Events	Revised date and time
1.	Last date for submission of proposals & Technical bid opening	31.05.2024
2.	Presentation by Bidding organisations	05.06.2024 (11:00AM)
3.	Opening of Financial Bid	11.06.2024
4.	Award of Contract	18.06.2024
5.	Positioning of Helicopter	25.06.2024

2. Tender received before or on Technical bid opening date i.e. 21.05.2024 will be considered. Company or Firm who has already submitted the tender, need not submit it again.

3. Other terms and conditions of the tender and subsequent Corrigendums will remain unchanged.

This information is available on www.state.bihar.gov.in/prdbihar also

Director
Directorate of Aviation,
Cabinet Secretariat Department,
Govt. of Bihar, Patna

PR. No. 000934 (CSD) 2024-25

लोकसभा आम निर्वाचन 2024- कोई मतदाता न छूट

Study: Weight loss drugs up abdominal paralysis risk

May Necessitate Surgical Or Med Intervention

Durgesh Nandan Jha
@timesgroup.com



Wegovy and Ozempic are not legally available in India. However, reports suggest that these drugs are being sourced through the grey market

New Delhi: Medications like Wegovy and Ozempic, effective for rapid weight reduction, may come with the risk of uncommon yet serious side effects, including abdominal paralysis, a condition characterised by delayed stomach emptying, a new US study has suggested.

Abdominal paralysis can cause unintended weight loss, malnutrition and other complications that may require medical or surgical intervention.

The study, results of which has been published only in abstract form, found people who took Wegovy and Ozempic, also referred to as GLP-1 agonist drugs, were 30% more at risk of developing abdominal paralysis compared to those who did not. Glucagon-like peptide-1 receptor agonists (GLP-1RAs), also known as GLP-1 agonists, are a class of medications used to treat Type 2 diabetes and obesity.

The study, presented at a medical conference — Digestive Disease Week 2024 — in Washington on Saturday, is based on an analysis of the records of more than three lakh persons with diabetes and obesity of which 1.65 lakh were prescribed GLP-1 agonists that are known to slow stomach emptying and stimu-

late insulin production among other things.

Dr Prateek Sharma, professor of medicine at the University of Kansas, who led the study, told TOI that abdominal paralysis is a rare side-effect of these drugs but given the high usage of GLP-1 drugs, or weight-loss drugs as it is commonly referred to, it's important to warn people about it. "These drugs are new and while the positive effects are well-established and talked about, we are yet to discover the full extent of its long-term side-effects and that's why I feel people who are taking them should be careful," he said.

Wegovy and Ozempic are not legally available in India. However, reports suggest that these drugs are being sourced by many through the grey market at premium. Recently, a Denmark-based company called Novo Nordisk has launched 'Rybelsus' which has semaglutide — the main ingredient of Ozempic — in tablet form in India. It has been approved for diabetes

management but, doctors say, the drug is also being used 'off-label' for weight loss.

Wegovy and Ozempic were also initially approved for diabetes management. But when reports emerged that it could help lose 10-15% weight within a year, the US FDA allowed its limited use in people with obesity as well. Soon, the drug group took the world by storm as people, including celebrities such as Elon Musk and Oprah Winfrey, said they were using it.

Dr Anoop Misra, chairman, Fortis C-Doc, said Rybelsus is quite expensive with one month's prescription amount costing over Rs 10,000. "Given the popularity of these drugs, it is likely that we may have easy availability of the drug in near future and that too at lesser costs which is good as these drugs have proven to be effective in managing blood sugar, reducing weight, and even in managing chronic kidney disease. But the medical community as well as the public needs to be aware of its side-effects," he said.

According to Dr Randhir Sud, chairman of the department of digestive and hepatobiliary sciences at Medanta hospital, drugs like Wegovy and Ozempic work by slowing the stomach movement and thus reducing appetite. "Users can feel nausea and vomiting when they start taking the drug but in most cases these side-effects are likely to subside. I haven't come across any case of abdominal paralysis yet but these are early days of its usage in India," he said.

In the US study, Sharma and his colleagues used a large database to analyze healthcare records of over 120 million patients, focusing on those with diabetes and obesity. They compared patients taking GLP-1 drugs to a control group, matching them by demographics and health factors. Over one year, they found that 32% of GLP-1 users experienced gastrointestinal issues like nausea, GERD, and stomach paralysis. While GLP-1 users had more GI-related procedures, they had slightly fewer ER visits and hospital admissions. This suggests that while GLP-1 drugs increase GI side effects, they don't lead to more severe health crises requiring emergency care or hospitalisation, the Kansas University professor said.

"We aren't saying that one shouldn't use them. But our research clearly underscores the need for medical monitoring of gastro-intestinal side-effects such as abdominal paralysis that can impact quality of life," he added.

Block incoming int'l spoofed calls, govt tells telcos

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: To tackle cyber criminals, Govt has directed telecom operators to block all incoming international spoofed calls that display Indian mobile numbers.

The Department of Telecom (DoT) said fraudsters are making international spoofed calls displaying Indian mobile numbers to mobile users and committing cybercrime and financial frauds.

Such calls appear to be originating within India but

are being made by cybercriminals from abroad by manipulating the calling line identity (CLI) and have been misused in recent cases of fake digital arrests, FedEx scams, drugs or narcotics in courier, impersonation as govt and police officials, disconnections of mobile numbers by DoT or TRAI officials, etc.

"DoT and Telecom Service Providers (TSPs) have devised a system to identify and block such international spoofed calls from reaching any Indian telecom subscri-

er. Now directions have been issued to the TSPs for blocking such incoming international spoofed calls," an official statement said.

The incoming international spoofed calls with Indian landline numbers are being already blocked by the TSPs as per the directions issued by DoT.

"Despite best efforts, there may still be some fraudsters who succeed through other means. For such calls, you can help everybody by reporting such suspected fraud commu-

nications at the Chakshu facility on Sanchar Saathi," the statement said.

Last week, DoT had issued directives to the telecom operators to carry out immediate re-verification of 6.8 lakh mobile numbers within 60 days that are suspected to have been obtained using invalid, non-existent, or fake documents.

The department has flagged around 6.80 lakh mobile connections as potentially fraudulent after advanced AI-driven analysis.



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EXTRACT OF STATEMENT OF AUDITED FINANCIAL RESULTS (STANDALONE & CONSOLIDATED) FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31st MARCH, 2024 (₹ in crore)

PARTICULARS	STANDALONE					CONSOLIDATED				
	Quarter ended		Year ended		Quarter ended		Year ended			
	31.03.2024	31.12.2023	31.03.2023	31.03.2024	31.03.2023	31.12.2023	31.03.2023	31.03.2024	31.03.2023	
Total Income from Operations (Net)	2,065.22	2,012.66	1,852.38	7,784.29	7,049.46	2,065.22	2,012.66	1,852.38	7,784.29	7,049.46
Net Profit for the Period (before tax & exceptional items)	943.12	696.09	864.31	2,843.44	2,289.41	943.12	696.13	864.26	2,843.39	2,289.22
Net Profit for the Period before tax (after exceptional items)	943.12	696.09	864.31	2,843.44	2,289.41	943.12	696.13	864.26	2,843.39	2,289.22
Net Profit for the Period after tax (after exceptional items)	700.16	519.19	639.19	2,116.74	1,701.62	700.16	519.23	639.14	2,116.69	1,701.43
Total Comprehensive Income for the period (comprising Profit for the period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (after tax))	713.63	523.15	658.20	2,136.52	1,726.36	713.63	523.19	658.15	2,136.47	1,726.17
Paid up Equity Share Capital (FV - ₹ 10/- each)	2,001.90	2,001.90	2,001.90	2,001.90	2,001.90	2,001.90	2,001.90	2,001.90	2,001.90	2,001.90
Other Equity (excluding Revaluation Reserve)	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	14,612.40	13,443.35	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	14,610.66	13,441.66
Securities Premium Account	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	1.26	1.26	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	1.26	1.26
Net Worth	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	16,614.30	15,445.25	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	16,612.56	15,443.56
Paid up Debt Capital/ Outstanding Debt*	-	-	-	74,032.21	62,947.90	-	-	-	74,032.21	62,947.90
Debt Equity Ratio	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	4.05	3.96	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	4.05	3.96
Earning per Share (FV - ₹ 10/- each) (The EPS for quarters are not annualised)										
(i) Basic	3.50	2.59	3.19	10.57	8.50	3.50	2.59	3.19	10.57	8.50
(ii) Diluted	3.50	2.59	3.19	10.57	8.50	3.50	2.59	3.19	10.57	8.50
Debt Redemption Reserve** (as at year end)	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	2,726.11	2,896.95	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	2,726.11	2,896.95

* Outstanding Debt excluding Ind AS Adjustments ** Debt Redemption Reserve as on 31st March 2024 and 31st March 2023 respectively.

NOTES:

- The above Financial Results of the Company have been reviewed by the Audit Committee and subsequently approved by the Board of Directors in their meeting held on 24th May 2024. These Financial Results have also been audited by the Statutory Auditors of the Company.
- The Board of the Company recommended a Final Dividend @ ₹2.65, per share of ₹10 each subject to approval in the AGM. The Company also paid Interim Dividend @ ₹1.50 per share. Thus, Total Dividend for FY 2023-24 is ₹830.79 Crore i.e. 41.50% of the Face Value of the shares.
- The above is an extract of the detailed format of Quarterly/ Yearly Financial Results filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulation 33 and 52(4) of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirement) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the Financial Results is available on the websites of BSE Limited (URL: www.bseindia.com/corporates), National Stock Exchange of India Limited (URL: www.nseindia.com/corporates) and the same is also available on the company's website (URL: www.hudco.org.in).
- There are changes and addition in existing accounting policies, which are only clarificatory in nature and have no financial implications on the Financial Statements of the Company.

For and on behalf of the Board of Directors
Sd/-
Sanjay Kulshrestha
Chairman & Managing Director

Place: New Delhi
Date: 24th May, 2024



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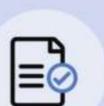
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'AAP netas a bunch of propagandists who believe in Goebbels' principles'

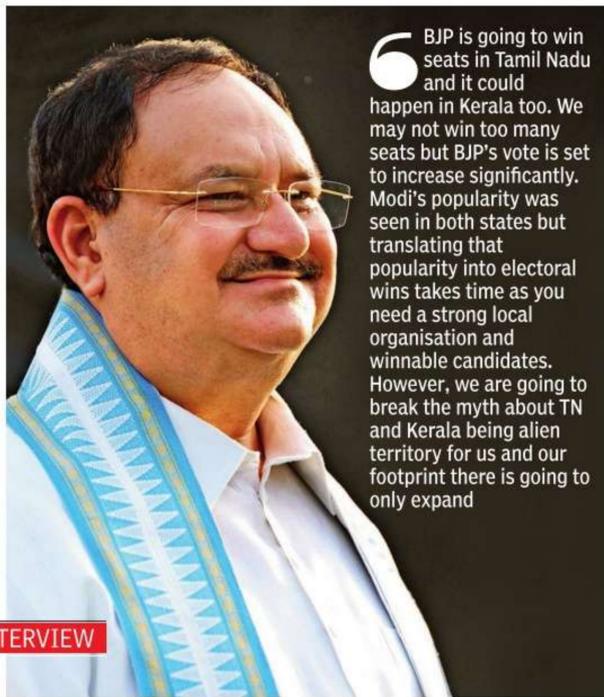
Confident of significant gains in states like West Bengal, Odisha, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh while equally sure of retaining dominance in north and central India, BJP president J P Nadda tells TOI's Akhilesh Singh his party is set to retain office with a thumping majority. Excerpts:

Just one phase of polling remains. What is your assessment of BJP and NDA's performance?

■ See, BJP on its own has already crossed the majority mark... some guesstimates suggest the party has won 310 seats after five phases. After seven phases, our party is poised to cross 370 seats and NDA will cross 400. The mood across the country is very positive for the BJP-led alliance. Voters trust Narendra Modi and they are voting for BJP to make him PM again. There is no ambiguity among them, which makes us confident of winning with a bigger margin. Even opposition parties have started acknowledging that BJP is winning and they are sounding distressed. Their tone changed from the third phase onwards as they realised that there is a wave for BJP and PM Modi.

Which factors do you think are working for BJP?

■ Modi ji's leadership has been the key factor. There is a general feeling, I think unanimity, across the country that PM Modi has brought about a paradigm change across the social spectrum, including the political culture of the country... politics of report card, politics of accountability, performance, last-mile delivery, saturating implementation of social welfare schemes. There is unflinching trust in PM Modi's leadership among diverse sections. Be it educated or semi-educated, urban or rural resident, they have all been beneficiaries and they have global perception about the image of the country has changed has resulted in optimism and enthusiasm. Before 2014, there was indifference towards governance and political leadership of the country. PM Modi changed that. Let me give you a few examples. We entered the poll fray in Tamil Nadu and Kerala in a big way and our candidates had to face entrenched regional players like AIADMK and DMK in TN and the two alliances (LDF, UDF) in Kerala. However, thanks to the Modi factor, we are expecting seats from these states also. If you look at the popularity chart, Prime Minister Modi has trumped and



TOI INTERVIEW

BJP is going to win seats in Tamil Nadu and it could happen in Kerala too. We may not win too many seats but BJP's vote is set to increase significantly. Modi's popularity was seen in both states but translating that popularity into electoral wins takes time as you need a strong local organisation and winnable candidates. However, we are going to break the myth about TN and Kerala being alien territory for us and our footprint there is going to only expand

there is hardly anyone raising questions about his leadership. Ease of living, and empowerment of women, poor, farmers and youth created a pro-Modi wave. Besides, people are feeling proud about the focus on cultural heritage as we have a slogan 'Vikas Bhi, Virasat Bhi', which underlines our aim to move on with the times and yet remember our legacy.

Reports suggest that BJP is not improving its performance in Tamil Nadu and Kerala and its struggle for a foothold in the two states continues.

■ I have no idea about your source of information but let me tell you that our party is going to win seats in Tamil Nadu and it could happen in Ker-

ala too. We may not win too many seats but BJP's vote is set to increase significantly. Modi's popularity was seen in both states but translating that popularity into electoral wins takes time as you need a strong local organisation and winnable candidates. However, we are going to break the myth about TN and Kerala being alien territory for us and our footprint there is going to only expand.

What is your reaction to AAP's allegation that their Rajya Sabha MP, Swati Maliwal, is a 'BJP agent'?

■ See, AAP leaders, and I say with full responsibility, are urban Naxals in disguise. And in a way, their style of functioning is to create disorder in

society. Therefore, spreading lies and falsehoods come easily to them. They had pledged not to join politics, they floated a political outfit, they ruled out alliance with Congress but they are now allies. They claim to be anti-corruption but have been proven to be, despite being a young outfit, the most corrupt. They assured respect for women, look at the way they have behaved (Maliwal's assault). There is a huge gap between what they say and what they do. The liquor scam and assault on a woman MP have exposed them. Swati Maliwal's case has exposed Arvind Kejriwal personally, his true face is now there for people to see. This is their way of functioning that they first commit sin (paap) and then make wild allegations to divert attention. They believe in anarchy. They have no ideology... their only ideology is to grab power and hold it at all costs. When they are caught red-handed, then their conduct gets more outrageous. Maliwal is Kejriwal's party MP, the incident happened in his house, and they released the video, his party MP made the allegations and lodged an FIR and they have to call her a BJP agent. AAP leaders are propagandists, who believe in Goebbels' principles.

You sound confident that NDA will win 400 seats but reports suggest that BJP is not doing too well in Uttar Pradesh despite there being no SP-BSP alliance like 2019. Moreover, construction of Ram temple has taken place but it seems a sweep by BJP is far-fetched.

■ Ram temple is an issue of faith for us and not a political issue, we have maintained it for years and still feel so. If you remember, the alliance of the two caste-based parties (SP and BSP) in 2019 was said to be formidable and it was believed BJP won't repeat its success of 2014. However, political pundits were proven wrong and BJP won 62 seats and the alliance's tally was 64. Again, there has been an attempt to set the poll narrative on caste and communal lines. However, the groundswell is so different from the reports you are talking about. There is a one-way wave in favour of BJP and people have made up their minds to make BJP the winner again.

There is no denying that an attempt in Rajasthan was made to divide voters on caste lines and I can say that the opposition succeeded in a few seats. I agree that there are tough contests in a few seats but I don't see significant damage happening there

Maharashtra and Karnataka played a big role in helping BJP cross 300 seats in 2019. But the political situation in both states has changed.

■ There will not be much of a difference in the two states. BJP will achieve 90% of its targets.

Similar reports are coming from Rajasthan as well.

■ There is no denying that an attempt in Rajasthan was made to divide voters on caste lines and I can say that the opposition succeeded in a few seats. I agree that there are tough contests in a few seats but I don't see significant damage happening there.

Your tenure as BJP president has witnessed induction of outsiders. Don't you think there will be a clash of ambitions and interests and that may translate into disappointment among the old party members?

■ We focus on three important factors. First, BJP is an ideology-based party, second we are cadre-based and third we have a mass following. We don't accept all but we follow a long process of due diligence and assess them on the three parameters. We assess what strength is added, our old cadres are not disturbed and our ideology is not compromised. Our party is a big family, and we ensure a balance to safeguard the interests of the party cadre and accommodating a newcomer. You haven't heard of any protest against anyone joining the party. We

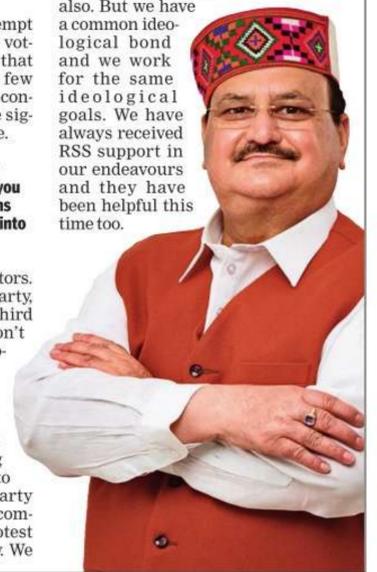
manage it. We also take cadres into confidence. There might be reservations in a few quarters but our internal democracy and structure are so inclusive that anyone joining the party feels the comfort.

BJP won 303 seats in 2019 but your target is to win 370 this time, which states do you think the party is improving?

■ West Bengal is for sure, look at the way Mamata Banerjee is behaving. She is set to be wiped out. I won't be surprised if BJP wins 18 seats in Odisha. We are headed for double-digit figures in Telangana and doing well in Andhra Pradesh with our allies. North-east and north India will be intact.

There is discussion that RSS has not been very active in the ongoing polls?

■ Not at all. RSS is a social organisation and not a political outfit. You can't expect it to work like a political organisation, it won't be acceptable for its leadership also. But we have a common ideological bond and we work for the same ideological goals. We have always received RSS support in our endeavours and they have been helpful this time too.



Phase 6 turnout rises to 63.4%, exceeds polling in previous lap

With 82.7%, Bengal Clocks Highest Voting Across India

Bharti.Jain@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: Overall voter turnout in the Lok Sabha election's sixth phase held on Saturday stood revised to over 63.4% by Sunday evening, beating the Phase 5 polling percentage that at 62.2% remains the lowest so far. However, the turnout for Phase 6 is still way lower than the polling in first four phases.

Polling data officially shared by the Election Commission at 11.45 pm on Saturday had put the Phase 6 turnout at 61.2%. It has since been constantly updated via the EC's voter turnout app as more polling parties returned and submitted their reports, resulting in a 2.2 percentage points jump over the polling day figure. Also, the Phase 6 turnout is now 1.2 percentage points higher than Phase 5 polling, notwithstanding the high temperatures recorded in many of the constituencies that went to polls on Saturday.

The turnout data for Phase 6, as available on the EC app at 10 pm on Sunday, is almost final as no recounts were scheduled after scrutiny held on Sunday in the presence of can-

FIGURE REMAINS UNCHANGED IN UP

State	Phase 6 Voter Turnout %	
	At 11.45 pm, May 25	On May 26 (as per voter turnout app)
West Bengal	79.5	82.7
Odisha	69.6	74.5
Jharkhand	63.8	65.4
Haryana	60.4	64.8
NCT of Delhi	57.7	58.7
Bihar	55.2	57.2
J&K	54.3	54.8
Uttar Pradesh	54	54
Overall	61.2	63.4

didates or their agents, sources told TOI. However, the current turnout figures for all the phases are based on EVM votes and do not factor in postal ballots since the latter are counted only on results day.

The overall turnout in NCT of Delhi stood revised to 58.7% on Sunday evening from 57.7% at 11.45 pm on Saturday. This is, however, still lower than the 60.6% turnout recorded in 2019. All the seven parliamentary constituencies in Delhi too have clocked lower turnouts as compared to the last Lok Sabha election.

As per data available on the voter turnout app on Sunday evening, North East Delhi

parliamentary constituency witnessed the highest polling in the state at 62.8%. Like 2019, New Delhi clocked the lowest turnout at 55.4%, followed by South Delhi at 56.4%. The polling percentage on Sunday evening was 57.8% in North West Delhi, 58.6% in Chandni Chowk, 58.8% in West Delhi and 59.5% in East Delhi.

Statewide turnouts, as updated in the voter turnout app by Sunday evening, show the biggest rise of 4.9 percentage points in Odisha, up from 69.6% at Saturday 11.45 pm to 74.5% on Sunday evening. Also, there was a climb of 4.4 percentage points in Haryana, up from 60.4% at Saturday 11.45

pm to 64.8% on Sunday evening. The uptick was also significant in Odisha; the revised turnout was 4.1 percentage points higher than the 69.6% polling declared by EC towards the end of polling day.

West Bengal saw a 3.2 percentage point jump from 79.5% to 82.7%, possibly due to polling parties having taken time to return from the remote polling stations. The rise in turnout in Jharkhand was around 1.6 percentage points, in Bihar 1.9 percentage points, and in Delhi, 1 percentage points.

The turnout figure for UP was almost the same as Saturday.

The Commission had on Saturday said it will publish the updated voter turnout figures for Phase 6 by May 30.

Turnouts — which are presently based on EVM votes and do not include postal ballots which are counted only on results day — have fluctuated through the phases, with Phase 4 having recorded the highest polling at 69.2%, followed by 66.7% in Phase 2, 66.1% in Phase 1 and 65.7% in Phase 3. The graph dipped to the lowest at 62.2% in Phase 5 but has since climbed back to 63.2% in Phase 6.

NDA-3 will implement UCC in next 5 yrs: Shah

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Home minister Amit Shah, confident of a third term for the Narendra Modi-led govt, has asserted that Uniform Civil Code will be implemented across the country in the next five years and justified the PM's strident opposition to Muslim quota by saying that if opposing it was religion-based campaign, then BJP would continue doing so.

In an interview with PTI, Shah claimed BJP had not engaged in religion-based campaign. He accused Congress of misleading people on Muslim reservations, asserting that BJP's stance was consistent with its policies in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. Shah defended Modi's criti-



Amit Shah at an election rally in Bihar's Sasaram on Sunday

'Mann govt won't last long beyond June 4'

Home minister Amit Shah predicted on Sunday the end of the Bhagwant Mann govt in Punjab after June 4, saying it was a mystery to him whether the latter wanted to govern the state or be AAP convener and Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal's "personal pilot", reports Nidhi Bhardwaj. "He (Mann) accompanies Kejriwal in a helicopter. The saving grace is that he did not go with Kejriwal to jail," Shah said in Ludhiana, where he was campaigning for BJP candidate Ravneet Singh Bittu. "Mann should have been controlling corruption in Punjab. But Kejriwal has to fight his case and needs to pay (legal) fees. He gets it from 'Punjab ATM', his den of corruption. He uses the 'Mann credit card' and takes the money to Delhi," Shah said.

about tampering of EVMs by citing the opposition's successes in West Bengal, Telangana, Himachal and other states and said, "If those elections were fair, then this poll is also fair." Shah said Congress had realised that it was headed for another defeat and had started cooking up excuses to pre-

emptively explain the impending loss. Shah claimed BJP would achieve a larger victory in opposition-governed states due to a "positive mandate" for Modi. He reiterated BJP's confidence that its alliance would cross the 400-seat mark, calling it a well-thought-out goal rather than a mere slogan.

THEN IS NOW RK LAXMAN TOI ARCHIVES



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If voted to office, will fill up 30L vacancies: Rahul

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Kullu/Shimla: Congress-led INDIA bloc has set itself "a realistic target" of filling 30 lakh job vacancies as soon as it comes to office, unlike PM Modi's "false promise" of providing employment to two crore people, Rahul Gandhi said in Himachal on Sunday.

He declared Congress would also waive crippling farm loans and scrap the allegedly ill-conceived Agri-path scheme for recruitment to the armed forces.

Rahul said PM Modi had been "openly saying" the Congress govt in Himachal

would be toppled, but he said the party was made of sterner stuff. "BJP toppled the Goa, Arunachal and MP govts by giving bribes in crores of rupees. But you won't be able to do the same in Himachal because people of this state know you too well," he said in Una. Modi had said in Mandi, where BJP has fielded actor Kangana Ranaut, that the Congress govt's days were numbered. Calling Modi the "epicentre of corruption", Rahul asked why the govt was not revealing the names of those who donated under the electoral bond scheme.

BJP-led Guj govt allowed Muslim quota under OBC category: Tejashwi to PM

Manoj Chaurasia @timesgroup.com

INDIA bloc to form next govt: Kharge

Patna: A day after PM Narendra Modi accused INDIA bloc of planning to give reservations meant for OBCs/SCs/STs/EBCs to Muslims, Bihar leader of opposition and deputy CM Tejashwi Prasad Yadav on Sunday wrote to the former, alleging BJP-governed Gujarat govt allowed Muslim quota under OBC category. Tejashwi also attached with his letter a purported "central list of OBC Muslims for Gujarat" to buttress his point.

"Perhaps, you are not aware that various Muslim castes are availing reservation under OBC category. You yourself have served as the chief minister of Gujarat for 13 years," Tejashwi wrote in his two-page letter to the PM, advising against "spreading confusion and hatred".

The RJD functionary mentioned how the Centre "discovered a unique way to end reservations" granted under the Constitution. "Reservation is available only in govt jobs under Articles 15 and 16 of the Constitution, but since you

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Sunday called Prime Minister Narendra Modi "hoothon ka sardar" (master of lies), alleging that he did not fulfil any promise he had made to the voters, reports Manoj Chaurasia.

Claiming that INDIA bloc, and not NDA, would form the next govt at the Centre, Kharge said Congress regimes in states did what they promised before assembly polls.

have abolished govt jobs from railways, army, and other departments, the concept of reservation automatically stands cancelled," Tejashwi said. He also addressed the issue of reservations in the private sector, which he claimed the PM has ignored.

Tejashwi also slammed the PM over his "mujra" remark. "After buffaloes and mangal-sutras, the PM now uses the term mujra. Should the language of a PM be like this?" the RJD leader asked.

Tejashwi accused the PM for "publicly threatening" to send him to jail and "undermining the importance of the central agencies".

BJP pick held for hitting poll staff, vandalising EVM

Bhubaneswar: Prasanta Jagadev, BJP MLA candidate from Odisha's Khurda, was arrested Sunday for allegedly vandalising an EVM and assaulting polling staffer in the third phase of the polls on Saturday, reports Debraj Mohapatra. The 55-year-old two-time MLA, earlier booked in 11 criminal cases and known for unruly conduct, had joined BJP ahead of the elections on Feb 29 this year. Jagadev was waiting to vote at a booth when he assaulted polling staff for delays in voting, police sources said. He ransacked the booth, causing polling disruption and damaging an EVM.

EC FIR against UP man over false VVPAT claim

Lucknow: Election Commission has lodged an FIR against a man in UP's Azamgarh for falsely claiming that his VVPAT slip was different from the party he had voted for in Saturday's polls. The action followed a video-graphed "test vote" that debunked the claim.

Poll officials initially told Arvind Rajbhar (25) that he had a misunderstanding, but he stuck to his stand. "The test vote was then conducted in front of all agents and VVPAT remained the same. The procedure was recorded as evidence," UP chief electoral officer Navdeep Rinwa said.

Rajbhar was later handed over to police. TNN

Guj gov forms 5-member SIT to probe Rajkot game zone fire

Continued from P 1

It is one of the biggest disaster victim identification (DVI) cases in the country in the recent years, said a senior official from directorate of forensic sciences in Gandhinagar, comparing it with last year's Balasore train accident that claimed more than 200 lives.

In response to the tragedy, a special bench of Gujarat high court convened Sunday, taking suo motu cognisance of the deaths and calling the fire a "man-made disaster." Concurrently, a team from National Disaster Response Force began clearing debris from the site.

The FIR revealed that the entertainment facility's structure, which was the height of a three-story building, lacked sufficient fire safety equipment. The facility also operated without a necessary fire no-objection certificate (NOC).

The operators had never applied for this certificate, knowingly putting lives at risk, according to the FIR.

Police had arrested Yuvraj Singh Solanki, 30, a partner in Raceway Enterprise, and Nitin Lodha, 45, the facility's manager and another partner. Also, lookout notices have been issued for the remaining accused — Dhaval Thakkar, Ashoksinh Jadeja, Kiritsinh Jadeja, Prakashchandra Hirani, and Rahul Rathod.

The accused face charges under multiple sections of Indian Penal Code (IPC), including culpable homicide not amounting to murder, attempt to commit culpable homicide, causing hurt by acts endangering life or personal safety, and causing grievous hurt by acts endangering life or personal safety.

Rajkot police commissioner Raju Bhargava said local police granted a booking licence to the gaming zone in Nov 2023, which was renewed for 2024. The facility, operational since 2021, had obtained licences under different names over the years.

"Gujarat Police Act allows police to regulate the fees of amusement and entertainment activities. We had issued the licence after getting opinions from the roads and building department and the electrical department about structural stability," Bhargava said.

A special investigation team (SIT) led by ACP Vidhi Choudhary has been formed, with a request made to the home department to appoint a special public prosecutor to expedite the trial.

Gujarat gov't has also constituted a five-member special investigation team (SIT) headed by ADGP Subhash Trivedi to investigate the fire thoroughly.

"The inquiry will begin immediately to find those responsible... We will work with a commitment and complete honesty and integrity to provide justice to the victims," Trivedi assured after meetings with city officials.

(With inputs from Parth Shastri in Ahmedabad)

1L evacuated along coast as cyclone Remal makes landfall

Kolkata On Alert As 135Kmph Winds, Heavy Rain Predicted

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Kolkata: Over one lakh residents from low-lying coastal zones were evacuated to storm shelters by Sunday afternoon before Cyclone Remal made landfall around 9pm along coasts of Bengal and Bangladesh — between Sagar Island and Khepupara — around 100km from Kolkata.

The cyclone, categorised as "very severe", brought wind speeds ranging from 110kmph to 120kmph, with gusts up to 135kmph, accompanied by heavy rainfall.

In Kolkata, it disrupted life, causing moderate rainfall of 23.9mm, with forecasts predicting heavy rain between 70mm and 110mm Monday. Transportation services, including air, rail, and road, experienced disruptions. Kolkata airport suspended operations for 21 hours, affecting 394 flights, while Eastern and South Eastern Railways cancelled several trains. Kolkata port also suspended cargo and container handling for 12 hours.

Relief materials, such as dry food and tarpaulins, have been sent to coastal areas. Quick response teams, consisting of trained civil defence volunteers and vehicles, have been deployed and are ready for action.

Indian Coast Guard and Navy deployed measures to ensure safety of those at sea, including broadcasting alerts to fishing vessels and



A rail worker ties a train to the track with chains as a precautionary measure in Howrah on Sunday, ahead of landfall of cyclone Remal

PM reviews readiness with MHA, NDRF

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday chaired a high-level meeting in New Delhi with his principal secretary PK Mishra and other senior officials from National Disaster Management Authority and home ministry and reviewed the response and preparedness for cyclone 'Remal', likely to make a landfall on the Bengal coast sometime Sunday midnight.

The PM was informed that National Crisis Management Committee is in regular touch with West Bengal gov't. He said Centre has extended full support to the state and asked home ministry to monitor the situation and take a review after landfall of the cyclone in order to extend necessary assistance for restoration. Modi has instructed that apart from 12 NDRF teams already deployed in West Bengal and one in Odisha, more teams be kept on standby for any emergency. He said ports, railways & highways be kept on high vigil to avoid any untoward incidents. **TNN**

deploying ships equipped with disaster relief and medical supplies.

India Meteorological Department's eastern regional head Somnath Dutta cautioned about surface wind speeds reaching 135kmph and warned of potential damage, although less severe compared to Cyclone Amphan in 2020.

Bengal minister Akhilesh Ghosh affirmed the state's readiness, citing deployment of 117 flood centres in Sundarbans and the use of school buildings for evacuee accommodation. "People have been evacuated from Ganga Sagar, Namkhana, Kakdwip, Gosaba, Basanti, Canning and other parts of Sundarbans," South 24 Parganas district magistrate Sumit Gupta said.

As Cyclone Remal continued its course, authorities remained vigilant. Aircraft were safely parked inside hangars at the airport, with their wheels secured with chains. Passenger trolleys were securely tied with ropes in the bay, and sandbags were placed to reinforce glass doors.

21-hr Kol airport closure sparks scramble, sends airfares soaring

Kolkata: A mad scramble for tickets to fly out of Kolkata on Sunday took air fares to stratospheric levels before Kolkata airport shut down for 21 hours (from noon on Sunday to 9am on Monday), report **Subhro Niyogi & Taghna Banerjee**.

Between midnight and 12.16pm, the airport hosted 12,833 passengers who left aboard 71 flights. Airlines said most vacant seats were booked on Saturday night and early on Sunday.

On Sunday, Air India offered quickest travel option to Chennai, in 7 hours and 40 minutes. The fare worked out to Rs 79,403 at 7.30am.

Airport officials said people had queued up before booths at the departure level, a rare sight given that most bookings now happen online.

(With inputs from Mayukh Sengupta)

Kolkata MC and resident welfare associations took precautionary measures, urging residents to secure loose items, keep vehicles parked indoors, and avoid vulnerable structures.

Kolkata mayor Firhad Hakim said teams are on standby, equipped with tree-cutters, dumpers, bulldozers, & cranes to remove uprooted trees.

(Inputs from Aheli Banerjee, Saikat Ray, Suman Chakraborty, Monotosh Chakraborty, Suman Mandal, Sarthak Ganguly)

Payal's film on 2015 FTII stir had also won Cannes laurel

Continued from P 1

Also, an FTII student's (Chidananda Naik) film, titled 'Sunflowers Were the First to Know', won the main prize in La Cinef section. It's fantastic for us and FTII." Payal's batchmates and other alumni recall that the 2015 protest was "against the appointment of people who had no achievement in filmmaking" but were allegedly included in FTII's governing council for political reasons.

Harishankar Nachimuthu, ex-president of FTII Students' Association and spearhead of the agitation, said Payal always had a vision about where she wanted to go and was willing to fight it out. "She was denied a scholarship and a foreign exchange opportunity for participating in the four-month protest. But even she would agree that FTII made us better filmmakers, better human beings, and responsible citizens," he said.

Payal credited her teachers and students at FTII for her success, saying that while not everyone needed to go to a film school, the institute benefited her with a structure that facilitates the dissemination of different cinematic ideas. "It is also a great place to meet people who share a love for cinema. My batchmates were instrumental in shaping my ideas. At FTII, we got to see films from all over the world and this exposure helped me make my film."

PM: India proud of Kapadia for her feat

PM Narendra Modi on Sunday congratulated Payal Kapadia for her historic win at Cannes for her film 'All We Imagine as Light', for which she received the 'Le Grand Prix' award. The PM wrote on X: "India is proud of Payal Kapadia for her historic feat of winning the Grand Prix at the 77th Cannes Film Festival for her work 'All We Imagine as Light'. An alumna of FTII, her remarkable talent continues to shine on the global stage, giving a glimpse of the rich creativity in India. This prestigious accolade not only honours her exceptional skills but also inspires a new generation of Indian filmmakers." **TNN**

Payal's peers and seniors see her as a film aficionado perpetually behind the camera, documenting various subjects, and relentlessly pursuing any project she takes up to fruition.

Ajayan Adat, winner of the 53rd Kerala State Film Awards for best sound design, was Payal's senior by two years in college. He said her big qualities were patience and diligence. "She was pained by the then gov't attitude against the students' protest. So she took out a camera and started filming everything. She made hours of footage into a documentary titled 'Night of Knowing Nothing'. It won the L'Œil d'Or at Cannes in 2021."

Rlys says it does not own Mum hoarding site; GRP 'lie' exposed

Mumbai: Railways have sent a letter to Mumbai crime branch confirming that the Ghatkopar plot, where a hoarding collapsed on May 13 claiming 17 lives, does not belong to them. The letter thus confirms that the plot belongs to Maharashtra gov't which allotted the land to GRP for police housing and welfare, report **Ahmed Ali & Sanjeev Devasia**.

Accused Bhavesh Bhide, director of Ego Media which erected the billboard, had managed to secure approval from GRP to put up the structure though it needed civic clearance as it was not central gov't land. "For doing anything on it, they had to follow civic regulations," an official said.

BMC notices to GRP on the hoardings were countered by GRP officials on grounds that BMC had no jurisdiction over the plot. Additional municipal commissioner Ashwini Joshi said, "The hoardings were illegal, which is why we issued notices. But GRP responded that the notices are without jurisdiction and should be withdrawn."

Civic officials said GRP had refused to be subjected to BMC jurisdiction on licenses and fees for hoardings on their plot. GRP claimed that it fell within the definition of railways though it is under state gov't. Under BMC rules, hoardings have to be restricted to a size of 80x30-ft. However, Ego Media erected four hoardings flouting the rule with GRP's protection.

Meanwhile, court has remanded Bhide to police custody till May 29.

PM rakes up 'Cong's pre-2014 plan' to 'create' minority institutions overnight

Continued from P 1

Modi also raked up Congress's "pre-2014 plan to declare schools, colleges, and universities as minority institutions."

"For this, Congress swiftly changed laws overnight and declared thousands of educational institutions as minority institutions. Previously, these institutions provided reservations to SCs, STs, OBCs, but that was completely abolished and reservations were now given to Muslims," he said.

A few days ago, the PM had on social media a video of Congress MP Rahul Gandhi campaigning in UP "10-12 years ago", where he is purportedly heard accusing the late SP patriarch Mulayam Singh of going back on a promise to provide reservation to Muslims.

In Ghosi, where he addressed another large gathering, Modi said, "Today, I have come to alert the people of Purvanchal and Ghosi about the



PM Narendra Modi and UP CM Yogi Adityanath during a public meeting for Lok Sabha elections in Mirzapur on Sunday

big conspiracy of INDIA bloc." Citing the opposition alliance's three "big conspiracies", he said, "First, they will change the Constitution so that reservation can be given based on religion. Second, they will end reservations for SCs, STs and OBCs. Third, they will distribute the entire reservation basket among Muslims."

Modi said a new conspiracy was being hatched to achieve their objective. "They are declaring Muslim

castes as OBCs overnight. Recently, Calcutta high court rejected OBC reservations for 77 classes in West Bengal. The vote-hungry Congress and SP want to change Ambedkar's Constitution so that their nefarious designs can't be challenged in court."

Attacking SP & Congress again for turning down the invitation to attend the Ram temple's consecration, the PM said their senior functionaries tried to even find fault in the construction of the shrine

when nothing else worked. He said this was the same opposition that conspired to overturn the Supreme Court verdict on Ram Jannabhoomi, just like the Shah Bano case. "When I expose them, they start raising slogans about digging my grave."

He cautioned voters that INDIA bloc wanted castes like Rajbhar, Kushwaha, Gond, Kurmi, Brahmin, Rajput, Kayastha, and Sindhi to fight among themselves and eventually get weaker. "Caste divides will benefit the alliance, which wants to divert people's attention from actual issues."

Doc was drunk or on phone, say Mumbai cops on Sion accident

Mumbai: Police investigating the Sion Hospital accident, where a 60-year-old woman from Mumbai was killed, suspect that Dr Rajesh Dere, head of forensic medicine at the hospital, was either under the influence of alcohol or using his cellphone when he allegedly ran over her. They claimed that Dere misled them by stating that Rubaida Shaikh was found unconscious and intimated the authorities of her death only after 18 hours, report **S Ahmed Ali & Sumitra DebRoy**.

Dere, who was arrested under IPC Sections 304-A, 338, 279, and 177, was produced before a Dadar court and remanded in judicial custody. He was later granted bail for Rs 20,000.

Shaikh's son, Shahnawaz, alleged on Sunday that the 18-hour delay was sufficient to eliminate traces of alcohol from Dere's system. After carrying out the final rites, he expressed surprise that Dere had been granted bail.

"We are waiting for Dere's blood test report and have asked the mobile service provider for call detail records to determine if he was using his phone during the accident," said a source.

Speeding dumper struck bus parked next to eatery

Continued from P 1

Yashraj, 10, travelling with his father Pramod Kumar, 30, who passed away in the accident, recounted to **TOI** the sequence of events.

"Our bus had halted at an eatery and my father and I had dinner together. We then moved towards the bus but my father realised we needed a bottle of drinking water for the journey. So, he asked me to get one. Minutes later, a speeding truck came and crashed into the bus. All the passengers, including my father, were buried under the truck loaded with stones," said the boy, who still hasn't been able to come to terms with the fact that his father is no more.

Similarly, Rupesh Kumar was inconsolable after the accident. "I was having dinner with my wife and two children. We sent our son Ajeet, 15, to the bus to keep a bag. Ajeet was about to enter the bus when it was hit by the truck. Who could tell that we'll lose him like this... I can't believe that this has happened," Kumar said,

tears flowing down his face. Another passenger, Raj Karan, 19, too, lost his mother, Sonwati Devi, 45 in a somewhat similar manner. Karan was at the eatery finishing his meal while his mother had gone inside the bus to sleep. She was killed instantly when the dumper collided with the bus.

Providing details about the casualties, SSP Ashok Kumar Meena said, "Eleven pilgrims were killed on the spot and one died at Shahjahanpur hospital. Nine people were injured. The bus was parked next to a roadside eatery on the Gola state highway in Khuthar where passengers were having dinner. Around 11.10pm, a speeding dumper from the opposite direction first hit the bus and then overturned. Cranes were used in the rescue operation which lasted for nearly five hours."

SSP Ashok Kumar Meena further said: "An FIR has been registered against the truck driver under IPC sections 304 (culpable homicide) and 269 (rash driving). He is absconding."

Pune pub near Porsche crash spot sealed, officials allege liquor-serving rule violations

Pune: Excise officials sealed late Saturday a Pune pub in front of which a 17-year-old driving a Porsche Taycan hit and killed two bike-borne techies on May 19. The officials said the pub, Ballr, had violated licence norms and served liquor without verifying customers' age.

When the excise sleuths walked into the pub in Kalyani Nagar around 11.45pm, nearly 500 patrons were enjoying drinks and dance. Amid jeers, the officials told the DJ to stop the music and directed the patrons to clear out. Minutes later, the pub was sealed.

No tech issues with vehicle: Pune RTO

Bolstering the prosecution's case in Porsche's fatal Kalyaninagar crash on May 19, the initial probe by Pune RTO found no technical problems with the vehicle. Meanwhile, the crime branch is searching for a black BMW allegedly used by the 17-year-old's grandfather to coerce their family driver into taking the blame for the crash, reports **Joy Sengupta**.

Pune regional transport officer Sanjiv Bhor told **TOI** on Sunday, "Prima facie, the car is without any technical issues. However, it is a high-end electrical vehicle (EV) belonging to a foreign car manufacturer, and hence, a technical expert from Porsche has been called in to assist with the car's inspection. The final report is expected to come out in two or three days."

"We registered a case against the pub Thursday after we found internal changes on the premises and the register was not maintained as per its FL-III (liquor) licence. The pub was also selling liquor to guests without verifying the age," excise superintendent Charan Singh Rajput told **TOI**.

According to Rajput, a report on the violations was prepared and submitted to the collector's office. "On Saturday, the collector issued an order to seal Ballr," Rajput said. Ballr brand owner Heramb Shelke claimed they had already submitted papers and footage to the excise department. "We are cooperating with the authorities. Action has been taken against 71 such establishments in the city," Shelke said. Moments after the sealing, a **TOI** reporter saw disappointed youngsters cursing last week's crash and the minor who caused it for spoiling their fun. Many stood on the road for a while before cops shoed them away. **TNN**

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 Shabnam Sinha Lead Education Specialist, South Asia Region, The World Bank	 Prof. Ganesan Kannabiran Director, National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC)	 Anand Kumar Indian Mathematics, Super30	 Ryan Pinto CEO, Ryan Group of Institutions	 Dr. Sanjay Salunkhe Chairman & Managing Director, Jaro Education
 Gagan Agrawal Leader-Academic Partnerships, IBM India	 Ashish Watal Director Public Sector & Education, Google Cloud	 Vinay Kumar Swamy Country Head, Pearson India	 Hari Mohan Gupta Chairman - Jagan Social Welfare Society, Chancellor - Jagan Lakshmi University, Bhopal	 Abhishek Mohan Gupta President, Board of Management - Shrewsbury International School India, Pro-Chancellor - Jagan Lakshmi University, Bhopal
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CONTRAPUNTO

He knows nothing and thinks he knows everything. That points clearly to a political career

-GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

Tragedy Foretold

Rajkot, Delhi fires point to familiar stories of official negligence that allow shady businesses to flout norms

A horrifying weekend – fires killing at least 9 children along with 28 adults and counting in a Rajkot gaming/recreational set-up, and 7 newborns in a private children's hospital in Delhi. Post-tragedy, Indian authorities are all too efficient at making arrests, filing FIRs, hand wringing, chest-beating, announcing compensation – while courts do their thing. In a few months' time, little would have changed and in all likelihood, it'll be business as usual. Owner of the Rajkot facility that operated in tin sheds has been arrested for culpable homicide, as it should be. The tragedy was one waiting to happen.

Loophole in urban plan | But the Rajkot facility's owner is not alone to blame. As TOI reported, a glaring loophole in Gujarat's development regulations (CGDCR) allowed illegal recreational activities to flourish. Implemented in 2017 to regulate urban development, CGDCR has zero construction and safety guidelines for recreational facilities, which private players have exploited, erecting temporary structures for gaming facilities, without any approvals.



Here then, it is policy itself that poses a significant threat to public safety, especially for children. Per reports, numerous such establishments have cropped up, even in bigger cities like Ahmedabad and Gandhinagar. Most are functioning without mandatory fire safety or town planning sanctions. Privately owned plots hosting such activities often sidestep regulatory scrutiny altogether. On the Rajkot premises, 2,000 litres of petrol were stored onsite along with numerous tyres.

Fires & accidents routine | Oxygen cylinders exploding triggering fatal fires, as was the case in the Delhi hospital yesterday, are nothing new for commercial premises, even though their storage is supposed to be strictly regulated. The Mumbai billboard tragedy is a recent case of criminal negligence. It is when authorities turn away from brazen flouting of norms that fatal accidents occur. In fire after fire or bridge collapses – Morbi (135 deaths), Kollam temple fire (109 deaths, 2016), Varanasi flyover collapse (at least 18 deaths, 2018), or Delhi's Mundka fire (27 deaths, 2022) – at fault is official oversight, lax enforcement of safety norms and audits, and lack of accountability for low-quality construction and maintenance across India.

Pin the blame | Experts have long cautioned against this pan-India disregard for safety regulations. As court takes note, and investigation proceeds, it is the system of ignored rules, avaricious bureaucrats and crooked businessmen that must be in the dock. Nothing will lower the probability of future tragedies more than swift and exemplary punishment of the powerful.

All We Can Create

What Cannes Grand Prix for a young director tells us about beyond-Bollywood Indian cinema

As already noted, the Cannes Grand Prix for Payal Kapadia's *All We Imagine As Light* is a big moment for Indian cinema. Kapadia's feature directorial debut is the first Indian film in 30 years and the first by an Indian woman director to be showcased at the main competition. The question to ask, though, is why did it take so long for an Indian film to feature in Cannes' main draw.

Bollywood to regional | While Bollywood continues to dominate India's reach and soft power in global cinema, the last few decades have also seen regional cinema get more play. Thanks in large measure to streaming platforms like Netflix, Amazon Prime and myriad others, even small-budget, non-Hindi Indian films today have a shot at reaching larger Indian and, sometimes, global audiences.



Global collaborations | This in turn has provided a fillip to global collaborations in films. For example, Kapadia's film was produced by Thomas Hakim and Julian Graff through their France-based company Petit Chaos, in co-production with Indian companies Chalk & Cheese Films and Another Birth, as well as by the Netherlands' BALDR Film, Luxembourg's Les Films Fauves, Italy's Pulpa Films and France's Arte France Cinéma. Kapadia herself used money from the Huub Bals grant and Cinéfondation to live in Europe to plan the film's production.

Many Kapadias | The success of *All We Imagine As Light* also highlights the depth of Indian cinematic talent. India's Nehruvian socialist past had a propensity to view cinema as elitist unless it served national projects. This began to change after liberalisation. But the state still displays a control mindset when it comes to cinema, especially through censorship. Kapadia herself was disciplined for protesting against the appointment of Gajendra Chauhan as FTII chairperson in 2015. Her success today should tell officials that talent needs nurturing, not monitoring.

My favourite Alice

Short stories that last long

Shinie Antony



Of all the Alices who wrote, only one Alice stuck to short stories. Despite declaring that her ambition was to write a novel before she died and penning interlinked stories now and then, Alice Munro gave us story after story, all of them short. Intense, raw, drawn from real life, in prose that dissolved into tragic truths, she drew you in with the deceptive promise of brevity, to keep it short. But as one story led to another, and you vanished into the Munro-esque world of fiction that felt like facts, your sense of size altered. In her shortest story was the fastest novel.

Much-awarded and maniacally-read, her tales are a tight close-up of human ties that were initially dismissed as domestic. Kitchen, babies, the urge to write, the sudden appearance of an unsuitable man...

A headline once said of Munro: 'Housewife finds time to write short stories.' A housewife who went on to pick up the Booker and a Nobel. 'Relationships' had been a pink and fluffy word pre-Munro, what women writers were thought to harp on because they knew nothing of the larger world of stocks and shares, war or bankruptcy. With a recent Harvard study on happiness bypassing career and cash to tick relationships, Munro's preoccupations proved bang-on prescient.

Munro's women are complex, carrying too much of you and me to be entirely knowable. They up and leave when we expect them to stay put. They flirt with a stranger after getting drunk. They leave their baby alone in a train compartment to cavort with a man they just met. In 'Dimension' (a story in *Too Much Happiness* that Munro said she couldn't re-read), Doree takes three buses to visit her husband. His crime and her forgiveness are both unbearable. And this is what she states: 'I could say that I was crazy then but what does that mean? Crazy. Sane. I am I.' Munro never interrupts when her characters talk.

Munro's death seems fictitious. 'The things within things' she said she wrote about have no expiry date. We know the bare facts: Canadian, dropped out of university to marry early, opened a bookstore, divorced, remarried, mom to four daughters...

With books titled *Something I've Been Meaning To Tell You* and *Who Do You Think You Are?* and multiple versions of the same story, she can never go away. Alice Munro is a two-word short story in herself.

So, What's On UP's Mind?

Modi brand is still strong. Yogi's impact is visible. What's new is murmurs for a 'stronger opposition', as INDIA makes its presence felt. Nine observations and a short story from the fields of east and west UP

Avijit.Ghosh@timesgroup.com



Caste holds | Everyday struggles of life and livelihood – *roti, kapda aur rojgaar* – are part and parcel of any poll talk in east and west UP. But the centrality of caste and community in electoral discourse remains. Broadly speaking, BJP's social alliances (upper castes + non-Yadav OBCs like Patels, Nishads and others) and Samajwadi Party's (Yadavs + Muslims) remain intact. SP's ally Congress brings a sliver of vision and a certain assurance to the combo in urban constituencies. BSP is still the go-to party for most Dalits, but a section of non-Jatav Dalits is likely to migrate.

'Betiyan mahfooz hain' | Cab driver Deepak Mishra, a Modi supporter, lives on the outskirts of Allahabad. A father of four daughters, two in their teens, says 'law and order' has improved during the Modi-Yogi rule. For him and many like him, 'law and order' is a synonym for women's safety in their daily lives. Ghaziabad fruit-seller Shamim, critical and uneasy of Centre's new law on citizenship, says the only positive thing about governance in recent years is "betiyan mahfooz hain (daughters are safe)." Law and order is a state subject. But janta doesn't distinguish. Safety is what they experience first-hand on the ground.

POLLITICS Special Series on Elections

Temple flags | Not so long back, party flags fluttering on rooftops was a common sight in UP. BJP flags were dominant in towns, but visibly diminished as one moved towards the mofussils, kasbahs and villages, where SP and BSP flags were prolific. Now party flags have vanished. Various types of Ram Mandir and Hanuman flags are the most visible, even in homes of non-BJP Hindu voters. Ayodhya Ram Mandir has earned BJP enormous goodwill. But religion isn't a major point of discussion among the public.

Free grain welcome | Of all NDA govt schemes, 5kg free grain per person appeared to be the most effective and far-reaching. Irrespective of caste or community, most people that one spoke to in the hinterland admitted to receiving the handout, and the needy were genuinely appreciative.

Modi brand endures but... | Still all-pervasive, conversations and votes centre on Modi, not BJP nor the

candidate. The party appears to have become secondary to the leader. Yadavs are mostly committed to SP. But Varanasi railway porter Manu Yadav says he'll vote for PM. "Ghar ka mukhiya ek hona chahiye. Unke ghar ka mukhiya kaun hai (A head of family is needed. Who's their leader)," he asks of INDIA. Even some who're not voting Modi are appreciative of him. Jai Singh Yadav, a voter in Chandauli LS constituency, says, "It's hard to find someone like Modi, but I'll vote SP to help create a strong opposition."

Supporters believe Modi has raised India's prestige (*rashtra samman*) abroad and protects national interest (*rashtra hit*). But a few also feel Modi



is 'overexposed', that the brand is reaching a stage of diminishing returns. "He can be encashed in 2024, not 2029," is Santosh Singh's take, a voter in Chandauli.

Yogi's clout grows | Former armyman Pawan Sharma of Ghaziabad travelled to Maharashtra, MP, Rajasthan and Gujarat last month. He found people referring to UP in 'Yogi' terms – "Aap Yogi ke yahan se aaye hain (oh, you've come from Yogi's

UP)." It's not often a state is synonymous with its CM as early as the second term. Sharma found Yogi's name has travelled beyond his state.

Akhilesh, Rahul gain in stature | Voters and sympathisers have a definite improved perception of both Rahul and Akhilesh. Messages of Congress's manifesto, with its specific plans to address unemployment, have made a positive impression among a section of urban youth. Unemployment is a major issue, and for most 'job' means a govt job.

Don't quote me | It was common for journalists covering elections to be at the receiving end of the expression, "Aur poochhiye (Ask away)". That has disappeared. People from every community still speak freely. But villagers frequently refuse to be quoted, asking half-mockingly, "Why do you want to know my name? Do you want to send ED after me?" It is interesting how 'ED' has entered the lexicon and psychology of hinterland India, just as Bofors had four decades ago.

EVM story | EVMs caused intense debate before the polls. The din subsided after Supreme Court ruled out problems with EVMs. But there is lingering cynicism about their integrity and vulnerability, primarily among non-BJP voters in both rural and urban areas. The yearning for ballot paper is strong, while completely non-existent is the memory of the days when ballot papers were routinely looted, found dumped in drains and rivers.

Tailpiece | A group of students in Prayagraj in a huddle on the other side of the river is preparing for a competitive examination. They don't want to talk about the polls. "We don't like politics. It is of no use," one of them says. "Will you vote?" "I will," she replies. "Nota".

UP votes on June 1 (13 seats) in the last of its 7-phase polls

Uday Deb

Britain's Poor Little Rishi Rich

UK's first Indian-origin PM, almost certainly headed for a poll drubbing, had a chance to make a mark. But he saw 10 Downing Street as just another job and mucked it all up

Rashmee Roshan Lall



For Rishi Sunak, there is history and then there is his story. The history books will record Sunak as Britain's first prime minister of Indian origin, its youngest in 200 years and the wealthiest occupant of 10 Downing Street, far richer along with wife Akshata Murthy than the country's monarch King Charles III. But then there is his story.

Rishi's meteoric rise | After a 20-month premiership, Sunak has called a general election for July 4, which opinion polls indicate he is on course to lose. If so, Sunak will have helped pull down the curtain on 14 years of governance by his Conservative Party, which is currently some 20 points behind in the polls to the main opposition Labour.

It would be an unusual milestone in Sunak's customary high-flying trajectory, which a British TV interviewer once told him on air was "one of life's success stories". Indeed, Sunak was headboy at his expensive private school, went to Oxford and Stanford universities, had a profitable career in finance, married the daughter of Infosys co-founder Narayana Murthy and entered the British parliament just seven years before his dizzying elevation to PM. Along the way, he acquired an apartment in Santa Monica, California, the sixth most expensive address in US.

And the fall | By every measure, Sunak has proved himself a thoroughbred winner. If his streak of success is now unmade, at least some of this could be charitably ascribed to the vagaries of Britain's current political climate, with Conservatives as enervated as the country they led through the self-inflicted chaos of Brexit, the once-in-a-century pandemic and the risible parade of five PMs.

And yet, his story at this point, may underline a

quite different failure than the predicted election loss. For Sunak, the prime ministerial role seems to have been a job like any other rather than a historic chance by a multicultural man to punt for real change.

The voting public and political pundits have been as quick to pick up on Sunak's apparent disinterest in fighting for a new vision of 21st century Britain as they



have noticed his failure to articulate one. Sunak's personal ratings have fallen precipitously in recent months. According to a YouGov survey in May, his net favourability score is a dismal -51, compared with -49 for Conservatives as a whole.

Wobbles galore | Sunak's personal political heavy weather hasn't been helped by his decision to pull the trigger on an error-strewn start to the six-week election campaign, spawning multiple mocking memes on

social media. He announced the election date in the pouring rain outside Downing Street, sans an umbrella or even, as one commentator trenchantly noted, without "a weather app on his phone".

A sinking ship | The "soggy Sunak" story would only be displaced by Sunak of the "sinking ship" when he travelled on day one of the campaign to Titanic Quarter; the historic but unhappily named regeneration site in Belfast, Northern Ireland, where the famous vessel was built and launched, only to sink on its maiden voyage. On his way back from Belfast, he injudiciously posed next to an aeroplane sign spelling out a four-letter word – exit. And he has faced the daily humiliation of an ever-larger cohort of prominent Conservative MPs announcing their renunciation of the rough and tumble of politics – 78 have decided not to stand for re-election this summer.

No rescue in sight | Meanwhile, Britain deals with high taxes, low growth, crumbling infra and little hope of the sunlit uplands of economic success any time soon. Through it all, Sunak has stuck to his months-long "plan-is-working" slogan, delivered in the robo-call tones that have now become staples of British radio comedy shows.

Exit plan? | It has given rise to perhaps the worst aspersion cast on a politician navigating a perilous stretch – he is on the point of doing a runner. The rumour mill is whirring with speculation that Sunak suddenly announced the election for the last day of his younger daughter's school term, presumably permitting the family to make a near-immediate getaway to California if it all goes badly. At least one unnamed Conservative MP has been quoted to indicate it's all very well for Sunak to call an election at a bad time, but "I don't own a ranch in California".

In fact, neither does Sunak. He has an apartment there, but also the pain of being cast as Rishi Rich.

Lall writes on international affairs

Calvin & Hobbes



Sacredspace



Think of the life you have lived until now as over and, as a dead man, see what's left as a bonus and live it according to Nature. Love the hand that fate deals you and play it as your own...

Marcus Aurelius

Empowerment Practices To Boost Inner Strength

Brahma Kumari Shivani

Bharat embodies a tapestry woven with threads of rich culture, history, and spirituality. However, this tapestry has knots of diseases, discord and moral decline tugging at its fabric today.

Societal well-being hinges on spiritual well-being; therefore, we must prioritise it by embracing principles that help in transcendence. Our collective spiritual wellness will provide fertile soil for happiness, health, and harmony to flourish again.

To foster a clean and healthy society, instead of pointing fingers at others or situations, we take personal responsibility for our thoughts and emotions. We refrain from seeking peace from places, love from people and happiness from objects.

The depth of our emotional resilience redirects our mindset from stress to

calmness, fear to faith, comparison to self-respect, competition to cooperation, and complaining to gratitude. In times of challenge, we do not sink in despair. Knowing everything aligns with the law of karma, we focus on elevating our present karma.

Daily empowerment practices boost inner strength, equipping us to gracefully navigate failure, loss, separation, and grief. As powerful souls, we bounce back from setbacks with renewed energy. Forgiveness, releasing the past, and letting go happen naturally. Therefore, healing past traumatic experiences becomes feasible.

Perceiving the individual self as a body, we think, 'I am unwell... I am in pain.' This mindset intensifies our suffering since it is always mind over matter. Realising that we are souls, we grasp the truth – 'I, the soul, am perfect.

My body is unwell.' Such detachment lessens pain and distress.

Many illnesses are psychosomatic, indicating that our thought patterns, radiating to every cell of the body, cause disease, apart from our lifestyle.

Releasing emotional blockages and shifting our mindset from fear to faith and from complaint to gratitude initiates the body's healing. Awareness that we are eternal souls, and the body is just a perishable costume eliminates our deepest fear of death. Overcoming the fear of death dispels numerous other worries.

We connect as souls, transcending labels of relationship, role, position, or age. This wipes away ego clashes and nurtures soul-to-soul connections. By acknowledging everyone as fellow souls, we surpass barriers of religious differences and catalyse the shift from

intolerance to unity. We understand that gender applies solely to the body, not the soul. Despite individuals inhabiting male or female bodies, we affirm the equality of all souls.

This stance eradicates gender discrimination and ensures independence and dignity for people of every gender. It marks a crucial shift from lust to purity, abuse to respect, and bias to equality. Choosing a healthy response in every interaction, we transform from ego to humility, anger to compassion, hurt to forgiveness, expectation to acceptance, and attachment to love.

Our every karma enhances soul power, leading to a natural state of contentment. This prompts us to buy things out of necessity, not for happiness or social validation. Thus, we adopt a minimalist lifestyle. When we raise our vibrations, they radiate outwards and energise the air, earth, water, vegetation, wildlife, and the world.



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D-St braces for volatility as LS elections enter last leg

Buying By Domestic Investors May Cushion Foreign Players' Selloff

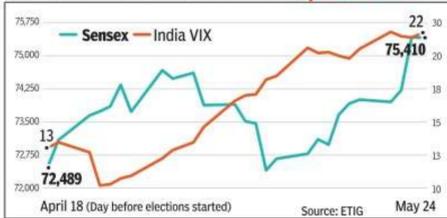
TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: Dalal Street investors are likely to face volatility this week with the final phase of Lok Sabha elections ending on June 1. Foreign investors may continue selling despite the booster from RBI's record Rs 2.1 lakh crore dividend to govt even as domestic institutions are seen supporting the market, as has been the trend in the past few weeks.

The Sensex and Nifty scaled new life-time highs last week. Since April 18, on the eve of the first phase of Lok Sabha elections, the two indices have seen increased volatility. The volatility index has risen nearly 70% — a level not seen since Sept 2022, even as the Sensex has gained 2,921 points (4%) while Nifty is up 961 points (4.4%) in the period. The Sensex closed the week at 75,410 points while Nifty was at 22,957.

The recent rally in the stock market came despite substantial volatility, mainly on the back of strong sel-

Volatility Index Jumps Nearly 70% Since Start Of Polls Even As Sensex Gains 2,921 Points



ling by foreign funds, market players said. So far in May, foreign portfolio investors have net sold stocks worth a little over Rs 22,000 crore, CDSL data showed.

In contrast, domestic institutional investors have net pumped in nearly Rs 40,800 crore so far in the current month, BSE data showed. This is what has led to the up move in the leading indices, market players said.

According to V K Vijayakumar, chief investment strategist, Geojit Financial

Services, the selling by FPIs — which began as a trickle in April and turned into a flood in May — was triggered by the massive outperformance of Chinese stocks in recent months, which in turn led to a 'sell India, buy China trade'.

"The (Lok Sabha) election-related jitters too might have influenced FPI selling," he said.

Vijayakumar, however, feels that the situation is once again slowly changing and market players feel that the ruling BJP-led govt will come back to power on June

4. "Also, the massive selling (by FPIs) has eased and they have even turned buyers in recent days. Going forward, as clarity emerges on the election front, FPIs are likely to buy in India since they cannot afford to miss the post-election rally. Actually, the rally may begin even before the election results," he said in a note.

Among the stocks, Adani Ports & SEZ and Wipro would be among the large caps to watch out for in the next week. This is after the BSE, after markets closed on Friday, announced the inclusion of the Adani group firm into Sensex while excluding Wipro from it, effective June 24. Usually, after such rejigs, investors tend to buy the stock that's being included into the index while they sell the one being excluded.

In addition to poll results, global cues and the final phase of the earnings season would decide the market's trend in the coming few days, said Ajit Mishra of Religare Broking.

SA central bank fines SBI over compliance

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: The Prudential Authority, South Africa's central bank, has imposed administrative sanctions and a penalty on SBI for violating anti-money laundering laws in the country.

In a statement to the exchanges, SBI said that the 10 million rand (Rs 4.5 crore) penalty was imposed "for not complying with certain provisions of the Financial Intelligence Centre Act". Section 45C of South Africa's Financial Intelligence Centre (FIC) Act 38 of 2001 empowers the FIC to issue directives to ensure compliance with the Act. This section enables the FIC to take measures to address issues related to money laundering.

SBI said that the action on the South African branch included an immediate payment of 5.5 million rand (Rs 2.5 crore) and an additional 4.5 million rand (Rs 2 crore) payable over 36 months.

Ex-cabinet secy Sinha is ICICI chief

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: Former cabinet secretary Pradeep Kumar Sinha will take over as chairman of ICICI Bank from G C Chaturvedi, who retires, the bank said in a notification to the exchanges.

RBI approved Sinha's appointment on May 24 for a three-year term effective July 1, 2024. Sinha joined the Indian administrative service in 1977 after completing his Masters in Economics from the Delhi School of Economics in 1976. He graduated in economics from St Stephens College, Delhi.

EaseMyTrip posts its highest ebitda at ₹228cr

New Delhi: EaseMyTrip has achieved its highest ebitda in FY24 at Rs 228.2 crore, which is 19% growth year-on-year.

Ebitda (earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortization) is used to evaluate a company's operating performance. The company also disclosed a consolidated revenue from operations of Rs 590.6 crore for the same period — a 32% increase compared to the year-ago period. ANI

GCCs look to get more women techies on board

Representation In Global Capability Centres Increases To 30% In FY24 From 27% In FY20

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Bengaluru: The representation of women technologists in global capability centres (GCCs) has seen a modest increase, reaching 30% in FY24 compared to 26.6% in FY20, according to data from staffing firm Quess Corp. However, the number of women in mid and senior-level positions remains significantly lower, creating a talent void.

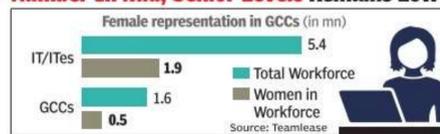
With a mere 6.7% of women in executive roles in GCCs, there is a considerable decrease in the available talent pool of women as they move up the career ladder, showed a Pure Storage and Zinnov report. At the senior level (9-12 years of experience), the representation was at 15.7%, the report said. India has nearly 1.6 million GCCs. In 2022-23, GCCs added 2.8 lakh employees, taking its talent base to over 1.6 million. The report stated that family and caregiving responsibilities, limited access to career advancement and leadership opportunities, and poor work-life balance are some

of the key factors influencing women's attrition.

Vidya Munirathnam, HR head of Lowe's India, attributes the skill gap and difficulty in upskilling after a maternity break as reasons for women leaving the workforce. "When a woman co-

28% at the vice-president level and above. Similarly, at Thales India, women at senior manager and above levels constitute less than 20%, despite the organization's overall ratio being 31%. Sekhar Sahay, HR head of Thales India, acknowledges the difficulty in overco-

Number In Mid, Senior Levels Remains Low



mes back from maternity leave, which is usually for 6 months, they find that suddenly things have changed from a technology point of view. Most organizations are undergoing a tech transformation where legacy systems are being replaced with more updated platforms. There is a skill gap, and many a time, they find it easier to just quit than figure a way to upskill," she said.

At Lowe's India, the representation of women drops from 60% at the junior level to

ming societal norms worldwide, despite having flexible HR policies like hybrid work.

Companies are implementing various programmes to support women returning from career breaks and to boost their confidence in taking up senior roles. Ushashi Tirumala, executive vice president and general manager at Manhattan Associates, believes that connecting women with successful female role models is crucial for retaining and developing women associates.

Shipments to Russia jump but exporters are wary of sanctions

Sidhartha@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: Russia's war with Ukraine and the consequent sanctions helped push the export of engineering goods, machinery and machine parts as well as aircraft spares from India during the last financial years, while traditional items such as pharmaceuticals, tea, coffee and tobacco stagnated or fell.

While trade bodies say there is tremendous interest to import goods from India, the fear of sanctions and reluctance of banks to complete the transactions have made exporters wary of pushing their goods. But industry experts believe that some of the goods to Russia may be routed via UAE, which has significantly benefited from the tension in Ukraine and Russia.

Thanks to massive oil imports, Russia has emerged as India's fourth largest trading partner with total trade estimated at \$65.7 billion. After China, India had the second highest trade deficit with Russia, pegged at over

MACHINES, ELECTRONICS, PARTS LEAD

India's exports to Russia (\$mn)	2023	2024	% change
Electrical machinery & parts	121.1	347.8	187.2
Meat	26.8	55.9	108.6
Machinery & parts	320.9	650.3	102.6
Optical, precision instruments	75.4	140.6	86.5
Iron & steel	159.1	282.4	77.5
Fruits	23.9	37.0	54.8
Inorganic chemicals	145.2	210.4	44.9
Oil seeds	49.2	70.9	44.1
Organic chemicals	307.1	336.4	9.5
Fish	138.7	149.4	7.7
Pharma	429.6	386.7	-10
Coffee, tea	117.9	100.7	-14.6
Total exports to Russia (\$mn)	3,147	4,261.3	35.4

Source: Commerce dept

\$57 billion. Although there has been a buzz about recent moves to allow Russian exporters, who receive the payment in rupees, to invest more freely, the norms have always been there since RBI put in place the mechanism. There have also been several trade missions to explore ex-

port opportunities in Russia, some of which can use the rupee balances.

But exporters are shy, arguing that banks are reluctant. "Most Indian banks don't want to take up this business, fearing possible sanctions," said a large Indian exporter. While Russian entities

such as Sberbank are willing to route funds through their Indian branch, domestic players want to avoid these transactions. "My advice to fellow exporters has been to route all exports through a small subsidiary so that the other parts of the business are not exposed to any sanctions," said another exporter, who has stopped all business with Russia for the last two years. A German buyer is, however, sourcing goods from this exporter and then exporting to Russia.

Sectors such as auto components had seen a lot of interest post-sanctions but the exposure of Indian companies to American buyers and global car giants has seen them stay away.

Latest official data showed that in 2023-24, exports to Russia climbed over 35% to \$4.3 billion, when India's cumulative goods exports were more than 3% lower. Of the \$1.2 billion increase, nearly a half was on account of machines and machine parts, including electronics.

GAIL starts India's largest green H2 plant

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: State-run gas utility GAIL has started the country's largest green hydrogen (GH2) project based on the latest PEM (proton exchange membrane) technology at its Vijapur complex in Madhya Pradesh, becoming the first company to launch megawatt-scale operation for producing what is referred to as 'fuel of the future'.

The 10MW (megawatt) plant, built with an investment of Rs 231 crore, marks a major step towards achieving company's target of net-zero status by 2040. The unit uses Canadian PEM electrolyzers and will produce 4.3 tonnes per day of GH2 with a purity of 99.99%, the company said. GAIL is currently sourcing renewable power from the grid under the open access policy.

Increase in personal income tax due to dividend income: Report

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: Taxes paid on dividend income accounted for 60-65% of the surge in personal income tax during the last four years, a report by Motilal Oswal said.

According to the report, the dividend tax explains the strong growth in personal income tax even as personal disposable income growth has moderated in recent years. Income taxes paid by entities other than corporations (personal income taxes) have increased at a compounded rate of 20% during FY21-24. They have grown to 3.5% of GDP in FY24, up from 2.5% in the pre-pandemic years. Personal disposable income (and GDP) growth, meanwhile, has been more modest at less than 10%. In her 2020-21 Budget speech, the finance minister had

Has Grown Faster Than Disposable Income

- In FY21, the dividend distribution tax was shifted from corporation taxes into personal income taxes
- After the move, the tax rate on dividends changed from 15% (plus surcharges and cess) to the personal income tax applicable to the individual taxpayer
- The change explains the

60-65% surge in personal income tax. Their compounded 20% rate increase during FY21-24 has come even as personal disposable income (and GDP) growth have grown more modestly at less than 10%

➤ If dividend taxes were excluded, PIT growth aligns with nominal GDP growth, rising to 2.8% of GDP in FY24

said, "...to remove the dividend distribution tax and adopt the classical system of dividend taxation under which companies would not be required to pay DDT. The dividend shall be taxed only in the hands of the recipients at their applicable rate..."

This means that DDT ended in its erstwhile form in FY21, and was shifted from

corporation taxes into personal income taxes. "With such a shift, the tax rate on dividends was also changed from 15% (plus surcharges and cess) to the personal income tax applicable to the individual taxpayer. These two related changes — to our mind — explain about 60-65% of the surge in PIT in the post-pandemic years," the report said.

Opt For Systematic Transfer Plans To Beat Mkt Volatility

Investors who are bullish on long-term prospects of the Indian equity markets, but believe valuations have run ahead and that markets can be volatile over the next few months, can stagger their investments using a systematic transfer plan (STP).

What Is A Systematic Transfer Plan?

STP is a way to stagger money typically from a liquid or ultra-short-term fund to an equity fund over a period of time. An investor with cash wanting to make a lump sum investment but worried about near-term corrections uses this method. The big advantage is that you earn a return from the liquid/ultra-short-term fund and simultaneously stagger money into your equity fund.

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What is The Process To Start An STP?

The first step is to choose the liquid/ultra-short-term fund to park your money in and the equity fund in which you ultimately want to invest. Both these schemes need to be from the same fund house. Most fund houses have a daily, weekly or monthly option to transfer money. For example, an investor can decide to transfer ₹2,500 every week to an equity fund or even something like ₹10,000 every month.

How Does An STP Work?

To start an STP, you need to put in a lump sum amount in a debt scheme (liquid or ultra-short-term fund) and transfer a predefined

amount into another scheme, typically an equity fund. The scheme in which the lump sum investment is made is called a 'source scheme' or 'transferor scheme' and the scheme to which the amount is transferred is called 'destination scheme' or 'target scheme' or 'transferee scheme'. Typically, investors do this exercise for a period ranging from six to twelve months. Investors could transfer this money daily, weekly or monthly using this strategy.

How Do Investors Benefit From STPs?

The big benefit of using an STP is that till the time the money remains invested in a liquid or ultra-short-term fund, it earns an extra return, which is generally higher than a savings bank account. Currently, investors could earn 7-8% returns in such funds. In addition, STP helps in averaging out the cost due to volatility in the stock market. Some investors use this route to rebalance portfolios. If your investment in debt increases, money can be reallocated to equity funds through STPs, and if investment in equity goes up, money can be switched from equity to debt funds using STP. —PRASHANT MAHESH



CHER ROCKS BLACK BODYSUIT SIMILAR TO ONE SHE WORE FOR '89 HIT 'IF I COULD TURN BACK TIME' AT CANNES EVENT

NICKI MINAJ'S UK GIG CANCELLED AFTER SHE WAS BRIEFLY DETAINED & FINED ON SUSPICION OF 'POSSESSING SOFT DRUGS' IN AMSTERDAM



Hamas fires missiles at Tel Aviv, setting off sirens 1st time in mths

Israel Says Firing Came From Rafah, Cites It As Proof Militants Operating There

Hamas launched missiles at Tel Aviv on Sunday, setting off sirens in Israel's financial centre for the first time in four months, as the Islamist Palestinian group sought to show military strength despite Israel's Gaza offensive.



A US Army landing craft is seen beached in Ashdod on Sunday. Four US Army vessels supporting the pier broke free of their moorings in heavy seas and ran aground on Saturday. Israel is aiding the recovery effort.

The Israeli military said eight projectiles were identified crossing from the area of Rafah, the southern tip of the Gaza Strip where Israel kept up operations despite a ruling by the top UN court on Friday ordering it to stop attacking the city. A number of the projectiles were intercepted, it said. There were no reports of casualties. In a statement on Telegram, the Hamas al-Qassam Brigades said the rockets were launched in response to "Zionist massacres against civilians". Rafah is located about 100 km south of Tel Aviv.

Israel said it wants to root out Hamas fighters holed up in Rafah and rescue hostages it says are being held in the area, but its assault has worsened the plight of civilians and caused an international outcry.

On Sunday, Israeli strikes killed at least five Palestinians in Rafah, according to local medical services. The Gaza health ministry identified the de-

Spain slams Israel over 'scandalous' flamenco video

Spain condemned as "scandalous" a video posted by Israeli foreign minister Israel Katz suggesting Hamas would be grateful to Spain. The video shows the Spanish flag then a couple dancing to flamenco music. Film of Hamas fighters is interspersed including people fleeing during the Oct 7 Hamas attack on Israel. The video posted by Katz on X says "Hamas: Gracias Espana" ("Hamas: Thanks Spain"). Spain last week announced it would recognise Palestine as a state. REUTERS

After threat to quit, Gantz wants probe into war conduct

Benny Gantz, a member of Israel's war cabinet who recently threatened to quit the govt, said he was seeking to establish an independent commission to probe Israel's failure to stop the Hamas-led attack on Oct 7, as well as its conduct in the war. Under Gantz's proposal, the commission would also probe whether Israeli military and political officials had acted in accordance with international law. He has submitted his proposal to cabinet. NYT

ad as civilians. Israeli tanks have probed around the edges of Rafah, near the crossing point from Gaza into Egypt, and have entered some of its eastern districts, residents say, but have not yet entered the city in force since the start of operations in the city earlier this month. Israeli war cabinet minister Benny Gantz said rockets fired from Rafah "prove that the (Israel Defense Forces) must operate in every place Hamas still operates from". Itamar Ben Gvir, a hardline public security minister who is not part of Israel's war cabinet, urged the army to hit Rafah harder. "Rafah with full force," he posted on X.

Nearly 36,000 Palestinians have been killed in Israel's offensive. Israel launched the operation after Hamas-led militants attacked southern Israeli communities on Oct. 7, killing around 1,200 people and seizing more than 250 hostages.

Fighting also continued in the northern Gaza area of Jabaly. During one raid, the military said it found a weapons storage site with dozens of rocket parts and weapons at a school. It denied Hamas statements that its fighters had abducted an Israeli soldier. REUTERS

12 hurt as Qatar Airways flight hits turbulence, says airport

Dublin: Twelve people travelling on a Qatar Airways flight from Doha to Ireland were injured during a bout of turbulence, Dublin Airport said on Sunday, adding that the plane landed safely. Flight QR017, a Boeing 787 Dreamliner, landed shortly before 1pm Dublin time (1200 GMT), the airport said.

"Upon landing, the aircraft was met by emergency services, including Airport Police and our Fire and Rescue department, due to 6 passengers and 6 crew (12 total) on board reporting injuries after the aircraft experienced turbulence while airborne over Turkey," Dublin Airport said.

Irish broadcaster RTE, citing passengers arriving at the airport, said the incident lasted less than 20 seconds and occurred during food and drinks service. Qatar Airways said that a "small number" of passengers and crew sustained minor injuries during the flight and were receiving medical attention.

The airline did not directly comment on the turbulence, but said the matter is subject to an internal investigation. The incident took place five days after a Singapore Airlines flight from London to Singapore was forced to land in Bangkok due to severe turbulence, which killed a 73-year-old British man and left 20 others in intensive care. REUTERS

Landslide buries 150+ homes in PNG, 670+ feared dead: UN

Sydney: More than 670 people are assumed to have died in Papua New Guinea's massive landslide, the UN migration agency estimated on Sunday as rescue efforts continued.

Media in the South Pacific nation north of Australia had previously estimated Friday's landslide had buried more than 300 people. But more than 48 hours later the International Organization for Migration (IOM) said the death toll may be more than double that, as the full extent of the destruction is still unclear and continuing dangerous conditions on the ground are hampering aid and rescue efforts. Only five bodies had been retrieved from the rubble so far.

The agency based its death toll estimates on information provided by officials at Yambali Village in the Enga province, who say more than 150 houses were buried in Friday's landslide, Serhan Aktoprak, the chief of the agency's mission in Papua New Guinea said in an email statement.

"Land is still sliding, rocks are falling, ground soil is cracking due to constant increased pressure and ground water is running thus the area is posing an extreme risk for everyone," Aktoprak said. More than 250 houses nearby have been abandoned by the inhabitants, who had taken temporary shelter with their relatives and friends, and some 1,250 people have been displaced, the agency said. "People are using



People digging at the landslide site of Yambali Village in Papua New Guinea's Enga Province



ties would be children of 15 years or younger. Social media footage posted by villagers and local media teams show people clambering over rocks, uprooted trees and mounds of dirt searching for survivors. Women could be heard weeping in the background.

The landslide hit a section of highway near the Porgera gold mine, operated by Barrick Gold through Barrick Niugini Ltd, its joint venture with China's Zijin Mining. The Porgera Highway remains blocked, IOM said, and the only way to reach the Porgera Gold Mine and other localities cut off from the rest of Enga Province is via helicopter. The geographic remoteness and the tough, hilly terrain is slowing rescue and aid efforts. REUTERS

25 arrested, 450+ booked after mob attacks Christians in Pak's Punjab

Lahore: Police in Pakistan's Punjab province on Sunday booked over 450 people and arrested 25 of them under terrorism and other charges for attacking members of minority Christian community and police personnel on the issue of alleged desecration of a religious book.

An enraged mob led by radical Islamist Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan activists on Saturday attacked Christians in Mujahid colony of Sargodha district, some 200 kms from Lahore, and injured two Christians and 10 policemen. The mob burned and ransacked the homes and properties of Christians.

11 TTP militants arrested for their role in Chinese engineers' killing: Pak

Pakistani authorities have arrested 11 militants who were involved in the suicide bombing that killed five Chinese engineers in March in the north of the country, officials said Sunday. The arrested men belong to local Taliban, also known as Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). A phone which the suicide bomber had been using to communicate with his local handlers led to the arrest, the officials said. REUTERS

According to the FIR, over 450 people surrounded the residence and shoe factory of elderly Christian man, Nazir Masih, accusing him of desecration of the religious book. The mob set fire to the shoe factory, some shops and a couple of houses. "The mob also torched Masih but timely arrival of a heavy contingent of police saved the life of Masih and 10 other Christians," the FIR says. "The enraged mob pelted stones at police personnel when they resorted to baton charge to disperse it."

Police said Masih has been shifted to hospital for treatment, and a case will be instituted against him if he is found guilty of desecration of the religious book. The man's family denied desecration of the religious book and said he is falsely being accused. Over 2,000 policemen have been deployed in the area to maintain law and order. PTI

Sunak sees 78 Tory MPs exit ahead of July poll, surpassing '97 exodus before Tony Blair's win

Mandatory national service for 18-yr-olds if Tories win: Sunak

There were tears, anger and frustration as many Conservative lawmakers digested their PM Rishi Sunak's decision to call the UK elections on July 4, much earlier than they had expected. Some of those fighting to retain their seats feared the six weeks left to convince skeptical voters to back them would not be enough. For others planning to stand down, it meant an abrupt end to their political careers, forced to clear out their offices months earlier than planned. Trailing Labour by over 20 percentage points in polls, Sunak, analysts said, is betting that the Tories can cut their losses by facing the voters.

But a grassroots Conservative campaign coordinator said that the morale was the lowest he had known in five decades. Tory members of parliament seem to share this sense of futility: 78 of them have opted not to contest their seats, an exodus that includes Michael Gove, who once vied for party's top post and has been at the he-

All 18-year-olds in Britain will have to perform a year of mandatory military or civilian national service if the governing Conservative Party wins the July 4 national election, the party said Sunday. PM Rishi Sunak pledged to bring back a form of national service for the first time in more than 60 years, seeking to energise his election campaign. The UK introduced military conscription for men and some women during WWII, and imposed 18 months of mandatory military service for men between 1947 and 1960. Since then Britain has had an all-volunteer military whose size has steadily shrunk.

Under the plan, a small minority of 18-year-olds — 30,000 out of an estimated 700,000 — would spend 12 months in the military, working in areas such as logistics or cyber defence. The rest would spend one weekend a month working for charities, community groups, or organisations such as hospitals, the police and the fire service. Sunak said the programme would help "create a shared sense of purpose among our young people and a renewed sense of pride in our country." It remains unclear how it will be made compulsory. Home Secretary James Cleverly said no one would be forced to serve in the military. AP



PM Rishi Sunak, wife Akshata Murty attend an election campaign event.

B'DESH IN EYE OF THE STORM



Cyclonic storm 'Remal' made landfall in Bangladesh on Sunday night as authorities evacuated over 800,000+ people from low-lying southwestern coastlines to shelters. Officials said a youth is believed to have been swept away by tidal waves in SE Patuakhali. Police said an overcrowded ferry carrying over 50 passengers sank near Mongla Port. However, the people were rescued. Bangladesh meteorology department said Ramel is expected to reach wind speeds of up to 120kmp/h. PTI

Musk plans largest-ever supercomputer: Report

Washington: Billionaire tech mogul Elon Musk has told investors he plans to build a supercomputer dubbed "gigafactory of compute" to support the development of his artificial intelligence startup xAI, an industry news outlet reported Saturday.

Musk wants the supercomputer — which will string together 100,000 Nvidia chips — operational by fall 2025, and "will hold himself personally responsible for delivering it on time," Information said.

The planned supercomputer would be "at least four times the size of the biggest GPU clusters that exist today," such as those used by Meta to train its AI models, Musk was quoted as saying during a presentation to investors this month. Since OpenAI's generative AI tool ChatGPT exploded on the scene in 2022, the technol-



The planned supercomputer would be "at least 4 times the size of the biggest GPU clusters that exist today," such as those used by Meta to train its AI models, Musk was quoted as saying

ogy has been an area of fierce competition between tech giants Microsoft and Google, as well as Meta and start-ups like Anthropic and Stability AI.

Musk is one of the world's few investors with deep enough pockets to compete with OpenAI, Google or Meta on AI. xAI is developing a chatbot named Grok, which can access X, also owned by Musk, in real time. AFP

Zelensky, from ravaged Kharkiv, asks Biden & Xi to join peace meet



14 DIE IN KHARKIV ATTACK: A Russian strike on Saturday on a crowded DIY hardware store in Kharkiv killed 14 people and wounded dozens more, Ukrainian officials said on Sunday morning

Kyiv: Prez Volodymyr Zelensky appealed to US Prez Joe Biden and Chinese leader Xi Jinping on Sunday to attend his peace summit as Ukraine struggles to stave off unrelenting attacks by Russia in its 27-month-old invasion.

Ukraine hopes to host as many countries as possible at Kyiv-led talks in Switzerland next month aimed at uniting global opinion on how to halt the war and piling pressure on Russian Prez Putin, who has not been invited.

Zelensky spoke in an English-language video recorded in the northeastern city of Kharkiv, inside the charred remains of a printing house that was destroyed on Thursday in a Russian missile strike. He said more than 80 countries would attend.

But it was unclear whether Biden would be there, nor was Beijing, which maintains close ties with Moscow, said whether it would attend. A US official said on Sunday that the US will participate in the summit, but declined to say who or at what level.

In the video, Zelensky urged Biden and Xi to "show your leadership in advancing the peace — the real peace and not just a pause between the strikes." Kyiv, in its peace plan, calls for a full withdrawal of Russian troops and a restoration of its internationally recognised borders, something Moscow considers a non-starter. REUTERS

Man throws flaming liquid on NYC subway, rider hurt

New York: A man set a cup of liquid on fire and tossed it at fellow subway rider in New York City, setting the victim's shirt ablaze and injuring him. The random attack happened on a No. 1 train in lower Manhattan on Saturday afternoon, city police said, adding that the suspect was in custody.

The victim, a 23-year-old man, was recovering at a hospital. He told the New York Post that he shielded his fiancée and cousin from the burning liquid and his shirt caught on fire. He said he slapped himself to put out the flames. Doctors told him he had burns on about a third of his body, he said. "He had a cup," the victim told the Post. "He made fire and he threw it all."

The suspect, a 49-year-old man, was arrested later after police tracked a phone he allegedly stole from another subway rider to his location, authorities said. AP

6 hurt in stabbings in Massachusetts

A man was taken into custody after six people, including four girls at a movie theatre, were stabbed in separate attacks that may be connected, police in Massachusetts said. Police said a man came into the AMC Braintree 10 in Boston on Saturday and entered one of the theatres. The girls, ages 9 to 17, were inside the theatre. The man, unprovoked, suddenly attacked them before running out, the police said. The four suffered non life-threatening injuries. A video footage showed the man's vehicle and a license plate police said. A vehicle matching that description was later seen in Plymouth, 43 km south of Braintree. Police said it had left a McDonald's restaurant, where a 21-year-old woman and a 29-year-old man were found injured after stabbing. AP

AROUND THE WORLD



HONOUR WHIMSY, SAY CLOWNS: With red noses, extravagant shoes, colourful outfits and unique makeup, hundreds of clowns on Saturday gathered in the streets of Peru's capital to mark Clown Day. They have sought for years to gain official recognition of the day. The parade in Lima, which includes awards for the best costumes, makeup, routine and improvisation, takes place annually on May 25

Macron in Germany on 1st state visit by a French prez in 24 yrs



Macron (L) and German Prez Frank-Walter Steinmeier play table football match in Berlin

French ex-prez Hollande's 'love affair scooter' sells for €20,500: The scooter at the centre of a headline-grabbing love affair between then-French prez Francois Hollande and his actress lover Julie Gayet sold for €20,500 at an auction in France on Sunday. A huge scandal erupted in 2014 when French glossy magazine Closer said Hollande, who then lived with his partner Valerie Trierweiler, routinely hopped on a scooter to spend the night with his 41-year-old mistress, publishing pictures of the three-wheeler. Hollande went on to marry Gayet in 2022. The grey Piaggio MP3 125 was bought by Denis Breheret, owner of a car museum. Breheret wants to exhibit the scooter so that "everyone can enjoy it".

Xi Jinping's recipe for total control: An army of eyes and ears

Beijing: The wall in the police station was covered in sheets of paper, one for every building in the sprawling Beijing apartment complex. Each sheet was further broken down by unit, with names, phone numbers and other information on the residents. Perhaps the most important detail, though, was how each unit was colour-coded. Green meant trustworthy. Yellow, needing attention. Orange required "strict control". A police officer inspected the wall. Then he leaned forward to mark a third-floor apartment in yellow. The residents in that unit

changed often, and therefore were "high risk", his note said. He would follow up on them later: "I've built a system to address hidden dangers," the officer said, in a video by the local govt that praised his work as a model of innovative policing.

This is the kind of local governance that China's top leader, Xi Jinping, wants: more visible, more invasive, always on the lookout for real or perceived threats. Officers patrol apartment buildings listening for feuding neighbours. Officials recruit retirees playing chess outdoors as extra eyes and ears. In

the workplace, employers are required to appoint "safety consultants" who report regularly to the police. Xi has branded this effort the "Fengqiao experience for a new era". "Fengqiao" refers to a town where, during the Mao Zedong era, the party encouraged residents to "re-educate" purported political enemies, through so-called struggle sessions where people were publicly humiliated until they admitted crimes such as writing anti-communist poetry.

Xi, who invokes Fengqiao regularly in major speeches, hasn't called for a revival of str-



Volunteers from a neighbourhood committee keeping watch on a Beijing street. Reviving a Mao-era surveillance campaign, authorities are tracking residents, schoolkids & businesses to forestall any unrest

ry people alongside the police to suppress any challenges to the party and uphold party's legitimacy. The party casts this as a public service. It is also a bid to assert his political legacy.

The campaign strengthens Beijing's repressive abilities at a time of mounting challenges. With China's economy slowing, protests about unpaid wages and unfinished homes have risen. Tensions with the West have led Beijing to warn of omnipresent foreign spies. The party has also tightened scrutiny of groups like feminists, students and LGBTQ+ rights activists.

In the name of Fengqiao, the police have visited Tibetans, Uighurs and other minority groups in their homes, promoting party policies. Companies have been required to register their employees in police databases. Govt workers have given "anti-cult" lectures at churches. Police officers and judges have been installed in elementary schools as "deputy principals of law," keeping files on students' perceived risk levels. But by blocking even mild or apolitical criticism, the party could also erode the very legitimacy it is trying to project. NYT

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IPL TITLES

- KKR - 3**
- Beat SRH by 8 wickets in Chennai; (26-5-2024)
- Beat Punjab by 3 wickets in Bengaluru; (1-6-2014)
- Beat CSK by 5 wickets in Chennai; (27-5-2012)



VENKATESH IYER

1 Venkatesh Iyer has become the first KKR batter to post two fifties in the IPL finals - 50 vs CSK at Dubai on October 15, 2021 and 52 not out vs SRH at Chennai on May 26, 2024.

4 Number of successive fifties registered by Iyer in the IPL playoffs.

113 SRH have recorded the lowest-ever total in the history of IPL finals, eclipsing CSK's 125/9 off 20 overs vs MI at Eden, Kolkata (May 26, 2013).

21 Number of wickets captured by Varun Chakravarthi at 19.14 runs apiece in 15 matches - the second highest tally by a bowler in this IPL behind Parshat Patel's tally of 24 at 19.87 (14 matches).

—Stats: Rajesh Kumar

KOLKATA'S NIGHT

Unstoppable KKR Romp To 8-Wicket Win Over SRH In IPL Final

Dwaipayan Datta @timesgroup.com

Chennai: A team was curated with extreme care, a mentor par excellence was brought in to run the show, a diamond was picked for incredible price, and by the end of a two-month roller-coaster, the Knights became the 'Don' of IPL, all over again.

By the end of Sunday evening, the home of yellow was bathing in a wave of purple. Gautam Gambhir, who had led KKR to their first IPL triumph 12 years ago at the same venue, was celebrating his return to a team he calls his "second home". Gambhir's biggest punt of the season, Mitchell Starc for Rs 24 cr, proved to be worth every penny as the Aussie decimated Sunrisers Hyderabad for the lowest score of an IPL final. SRH were bowled out for 113 in the 19th over; 12 short of Chennai Super Kings' 125 at the 2013 Eden Gardens final against Mumbai Indians.

As the Shah Rukh chart-busters started blaring across Chepauk, the KKR batters had an on-field party running away with an eight-wicket win in 10.3 overs, to present 'King Khan' with his third IPL title. Venkatesh Iyer (52 not out off 26 balls) helped himself to some fireworks as KKR completed the most one-sided IPL final in its 17-year history.

But before all that, as Cy-



HEAD AND HEART! Gurbaz and Vaibhav Arora celebrate the wicket of Travis Head

clone Remal made its landfall in Bangladesh, the weather down the east coast was gloomy through the day, Chennai being no exception. There was a breeze on as well, making the conditions at Chepauk conducive for swing bowling. And when a bowler of the quality of Starc gets such conditions, there's a chance that he can turn absolutely unplayable.

SRH left-hander Abhishek Sharma got a feel of that quality in the first over itself as his off-stump was knocked back by a beautiful outswinger. Starc (2-14) created fear in the minds of the SRH top order with the movement that he was generating at a furious pace and Travis Head knew he had to take chances at the other end. Medium-pacer Vaibhav Arora was waiting for this chance and he, too, got the ball to move just a bit that found the edge of Head's bat to

send him back for his third duck in four games. The moment the dynamic opening duo was dismissed for virtually nothing, a sense of helplessness crept into the SRH ranks. Another in-form player, Rahul Tripathy was dismissed by Starc within the powerplay.

If SRH had to make a comeback, the middle-order of Aiden Markram, Nitish Reddy and Heinrich Klaasen had to rise to the occasion. But here too, the depth of the KKR attack came to the fore.

Once Starc and Arora were done with their first spells, medium-pacer Harshit Rana and the wily, old Sunil Narine came into operation. While Harshit used his subtle variations beautifully with the occasional slower balls - one accounting for Klaasen - Narine was his usual stingy self. If that was not enough, old pro Andre Russell (3-19) was equally brilliant.

SCOREBOARD

SRH: Abhishek Sharma b Starc 2, Travis Head c Gurbaz b Vaibhav Arora 0, Rahul Tripathi c Ramandeep Singh b Starc 9, Aiden Markram c Starc b Russell 20, Nitish Reddy c Gurbaz b Harshit Rana 13, Heinrich Klaasen b Harshit Rana 16, Shahbaz Ahmed c Narine b Chakravarthi 8, Abdul Samad c Gurbaz b Russell 4, Pat Cummins c Starc b Russell 24, Jaydev Unadkat lwb b Narine 4, Bhuvneshwar Kumar not out 0. **Extras:** (b-5, lb-2, w-6) **13; Total: (18.3 ov) 113; FoW:** 2-1,

6-2, 21-3, 47-4, 62-5, 71-6, 77-7, 90-8, 113-9. **Bowling:** Starc 3-0-14-2, Arora 3-0-24-1, Rana 4-1-24-2, Narine 4-0-16-1, Russell 2.3-0-19-3, Varun Chakravarthi 2-0-9-1.

KKR: Rahmanullah Gurbaz lwb Shahbaz Ahmed 39; Sunil Narine c Shahbaz Ahmed b Pat Cummins 6; Venkatesh Iyer batting 52; Shreyas Iyer batting 6. **Extras:** (b-4, lb-2, w-5) **11; Total: (10.3 overs) 114/2; FoW:** 1-11, 2-102. **Bowling:** Bhuvneshwar 2-0-25-0, Cummins 2-0-18-1, Natarajan 2-0-29-0, Shahbaz 2.3-0-22-1, Unadkat 1-0-9-0, Markram 1-0-5-0.

'Mitch Starc's arrival boosted confidence of our youngsters'

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Chennai: It was celebration time for the KKR camp after the dominant win over SRH in the IPL final.

KKR bowling coach B Arun was ecstatic with the performance of his bowlers. "I think it was pretty tough, the last two years. It was touch and go - we didn't qualify. It needed a lot of introspection and now we can savour this moment. (On Harshit Rana) He has been out-



STARC (C) CELEBRATES THE WICKET OF ABHISHEK SHARMA

8 KKR, with their 8-wicket win, have emulated the biggest ever triumph in terms of wickets in an IPL Final. CSK had won by eight wickets vs SRH at Wankhede Stadium, Mumbai on May 27, 2018.



standing. It's about backing your strengths."

Talking about Mitch Starc, Arun said, "I think Mitch coming into the team boosted the confidence of other youngsters in the side. He is probably the best bowler in the world. Once he understood the Indian conditions, he was excellent. Spinners mature with age, and with Sunny and Varun bowling in tandem, it was superb."

Batsman-wicketkeeper Rahmanullah Gurbaz, who left his ill mother to join the team for the final few games, said, "My mom is watching from the home. She is feeling

good now. I asked mom before the match if she wanted anything. She said just the win. When Phil Salt was playing, I wasn't expecting to get a chance but I knew it's a long tournament and I needed to be ready. Once I got the chance, I was well prepared."

Batsman Nitish Rana had a story to share. "GG bhalya (Gambhir) was named the mentor, I sent him a long message as I was really happy. He replied saying, "Thank you but I would be happy if we stand at the podium with the trophy in our hands." Today is that day and I will never forget that message."

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Dipa creates history with gold at Asian Championships

First Indian Gymnast To End On Top Of The Podium At A Continental Meet

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Kolkata: Dipa Karmakar has always loved making history.

From being the first Indian gymnast to take part in Olympics in Rio in 2016 to becoming the country's first woman to win a medal in the sport in Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, 2014, she has always been an inspiration. She was also the first to win gold in FIG Artistic Gymnas-

tics World Challenge Cup in 2018 in Mersin, Turkey.

And on Sunday she created history one more time as she won gold in Vault at Senior Women Artistic Gymnastics Asian Championships in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. Although Indian gymnasts, including Dipa, won bronze in the Asian meet four times earlier, it was the first time that an Indian finished on top of the podium. The girl from Tripura was expectedly over the moon after accomplishing the feat. "I have no words to express my feelings at the moment," she said after her historic feat.

After finishing 16th in the all-round category in Tashkent with a



DIPA KARMAKAR scored 46.166 earlier on Friday. Dipa came back with a bang on Sunday to win the gold in Vault with an average score of 13.566. Silver and bronze went to North Korea's Kim Son-Hyang (13.466) and Jo Kyong-Byol (12.966).

"I went through a lot of troubles, injuries and surgeries before I could make a comeback. It was a lot of hard work and I couldn't have done all this without the support of my coach and family who have always supported me and stood by my side through thick and thin," she said during a brief interaction with TOI trying to keep her emotions in check.

Her first vault on Sunday was a Tsukahara 720 degree turn from a straight body and she followed it up with a straight body front somersault 360 turn.

Asked about her performance on the day, Dipa said, "I could have executed it a bit better but there were

some penalties and the points were deducted."

Irrespective of the penalties, Dipa still finished strong and coach Bishweshwar Nandi couldn't have been more proud of his pupil. "What she had to go through was highly challenging but I never gave up and neither did she," added the Dronacharya Award-winning coach.

Sadly for Dipa though, she couldn't qualify for Paris Olympics and she is still hurting from it. In the Olympic Qualification Apparatus World Cup Ranking List in Vault, she finished fourth with a total of 52 points from where only the top two gymnasts qualified.

ARCHER TAKES 2 WICKETS ON RETURN IN ENGLAND'S T20 TRIUMPH OVER PAK

Birmingham: Pace bowler Jofra Archer claimed two wickets on his long-awaited return to international cricket as England beat Pakistan by 23 runs at Edgbaston to move 1-0 up in the four-match T20 series on Saturday.

This was Archer's first appearance on the international stage in 14 months, but he had not played for his country on English soil since 2020 after an injury-hit few years. He bounced back from an expensive first over which went for 15 runs to finish with 2-28 and help England dismiss Pakistan for 160 in pursuit of 184.

England's 183-7 was largely down to a blistering half-century from captain Jos Buttler, who struck three sixes on his way to 84. AFP

CHASE LEADS WI TO SERIES WIN OVER SOUTH AFRICA

Kingston: Roston Chase struck a magnificent 38-ball 67 as West Indies beat South Africa by 16 runs at Sabina Park to take an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match T20 series.

Chase led a strong batting performance from the home side who made 207-7 and while South Africa made a fast start they were unable to get close to the target. West Indies, who are co-hosts of the T20 WC which gets under way on June 1 in USA, will face South Africa again on Sunday to conclude the series. AFP

BANGLADESH RESTORE SOME PRIDE WITH WIN OVER USA

Miami: Bangladesh repaired some of their battered pride by beating USA by 10 wickets in the third and final game of the three-match T20 series on Saturday in Houston, with Mustafizur Rahman taking six wickets. The Americans could only manage 104-9 in their 20 overs and the visitors rattled that total off in 11.4 overs without losing a wicket.

USA, who stunned their higher-ranked opponents by winning the opening two games, claimed the series 2-1, a huge boost for their morale ahead of the T20 WC. The Americans will face Canada in the opening game of the tournament on Saturday in Dallas. AFP

HARBHAJAN'S 2024 IPL XI

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Chennai: Harbhajan Singh has been part of four IPL winning teams (thrice with Mumbai Indians and once with Chennai Super Kings). Bhajji is part of the commentary team and has been travelling the length and breadth of the country for the last two months. On the day of the final, Harbhajan sat down with TOI to choose 2024 IPL's best XI. "There have been some superb performances. It's tough with so much talent around, but this is my best XI," Bhajji told TOI.

HERE GOES THE TEAM:

Travis Head (SRH): It's not just the runs but the impact that he had in the tournament. "Head's batting has been a game-changer in many ways, the par-score in the powerplay has gone up from 50 to 75 and Head is central to that," Harbhajan said.

Sunil Narine (KKR): It's his impact with the bat and ball that helps him take the spot ahead of Abhishek Sharma. "What an allround show it has been from the veteran. Narine just doesn't stop," Harbhajan said.

Virat Kohli (RCB, captain): The legend came into this IPL with question marks about his strike-rate but he answered all those in style. The Orange Cap with 741 runs and a strike-rate of 154.43 belongs to the right-hander, and even though he opened for RCB, he will be equally

IMPACT SUBSTITUTES
Abhishek Sharma (SRH): Abhishek was quite superb with Travis Head and showed in Qualifier 2 that he can be a handy bowler too on helpful conditions.
Varun Chakravarthy (KKR): A very impactful mystery spinner, taking 21 wickets during the tournament.

good at No. 3. "Even though he wasn't the captain of RCB, his leadership qualities were on display as RCB went on a six-match winning streak to make playoffs," Bhajji said.

Shivam Dube (CSK): The left-hander graduated from being a designated spin-hitter of CSK to a player who can take any attack apart. It's his long levers that helped him unleash those huge shots scoring 396 runs at a strike-rate of 162.23. On the basis of his IPL performances, he found a place in India's T20 World Cup team. "At No. 4, he keeps the left-right combination going," Harbhajan said.

Riyun Parag (RR): He has been playing for a while, but this proved to be the right-hander's break-out year. It's not just about the 573 runs (strike-rate 149.2) that he scored, it was the way he did it, looking equally comfortable against pace and spin. "A massively improved

player, keep an eye on him for the future," Harbhajan said.

Heinrich Klaasen (SRH): "Klaasen is the best white-ball hitter at the moment," Bhajji said, explaining the wicket-keeper batsman's inclusion in the team. His 50 off 34 balls was

cornerstone of SRH's entry into the final after a difficult start. **Ravindra Jadeja (CSK):** Jadeja, with 267 runs, wasn't at his best with the bat, but he did come up with some important contributions for CSK when it mattered. "Eight wickets at an economy rate of 7.85 may not be his best, but at the No. 7

allrounder's slot, there was no one better than the southpaw," Bhajji said, while making Jadeja's case. **Kuldeep Yadav (Delhi Capitals):** He showed his wicket-taking abilities once again, taking 16 in 11 games and even though the economy was above 8, Kuldeep was quite brilliant with his wrist spin. "He is one of the

best in business, and he showed on difficult pitches how lethal he can be," Bhajji added.

Jasprit Bumrah (Mumbai Indians): Despite a poor show by Mumbai Indians, Bumrah was "comfortably the best bowler of the IPL." "Economy of 6.48 and all that are fine, we just hope

keeps doing this in the World Cup for India as well," Harbhajan said. **Trent Boult (Rajasthan Royals):** Sixteen wickets in 16 games at an economy rate of 8.3 may not be the best, but it's the impact that he had with his swing that went a long way in RR's entry into the playoffs.

"Don't think there was anyone better than Boult bowing left-arm swing in this IPL," Boult said. **Harshit Rana (KKR):** He was one KKR's finds in the tournament, bowling the difficult overs at the death. "Rana showed heart. It makes him one of the emerging stars," Harbhajan said.

ON TOP OF HIS GAME: Virat Kohli scored 741 runs at a strike-rate of 154.43 in the tournament



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'Skipping Ostrava event a precaution'

New Delhi: Olympic champion javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra on Sunday clarified that he is not injured but has pulled out of the Ostrava Golden Spike meet in Czech Republic on May 28 as a precautionary measure after he felt "something" on his adductor muscles during a recent training session.

Chopra said he would not want to risk injury in an Olympic year and hence decided to skip the prestigious meet.

"Following a recent throwing session, I decided not to compete in Ostrava as I felt something in my adductor. I have had problems with it in the past and pushing it at this stage can lead to injury," Chopra wrote on his Instagram.

"Just to clarify, I am not injured but I don't want to take any risk during the Olympic year so had to take this decision. Once I feel it's fully recovered, I will get back to competitions," he added.

Chopra's clarification came just hours after the organi-

sers of the prestigious meet said he has decided to skip the event due to an injury he sustained while training two weeks ago.

"Due to an injury that he sustained in training two weeks ago (adductor muscle) he will not be able to throw in Ostrava, but he will arrive at the event as a guest," the organisers of Golden Spike said earlier in the day.

The 26-year-old world champion will, however, attend the meet as a guest, according to the organisers. "This was to be Chopra's first foray in Golden Spike meet, a World Athletics Continental Tour Gold level event, which is a going to see a star-studded field, with Tokyo Olympics silver medallist and 2023 world championships bronze winner Jakub Vadlejch of Czech Republic and former world champion Anderson Peters of Grenada set to be in action. PTI

GALLERY

Sindhu ends runner-up in Malaysia

Kuala Lumpur: PV Sindhu's wait for a much-needed title extended further as she faltered at the finish line, going down in three games to world No. 7 Wang Zhi Yi of China in the summit clash here on Sunday. Fifth seed Sindhu, a double Olympic medallist, last won the Singapore Open and Commonwealth Games gold in 2022 and finished runner-up at the Madrid Spain Masters in 2023. The title here looked within her reach when world No. 15 Sindhu held a massive 11-3 lead in the decider but the former world champion suffered a shocking meltdown after the final change of ends to go down 21-16 5-21 16-21 in a 79-minute women's singles final.

Chebet breaks 10,000m record: Kenyan Beatrice Chebet shattered the women's 10,000 metres world record at the Prefontaine Classic on Saturday, as Britain's Josh Kerr beat arch-rival Jakob Ingebrigtsen in the mile race at the Eugene Diamond League meet. Chebet clocked 28 minutes 54.14 seconds, taking nearly seven seconds off the previous world record set by Ethiopian Letesenbet Gidey three years ago to qualify for the event at the Paris Olympics. The men's mile served up the biggest drama of the day as Kerr faced Norwegian Ingebrigtsen.

Southampton back in Premier League with playoff win over Leeds: Southampton won promotion back to the Premier League by beating Leeds United 1-0 in the Championship playoff final at Wembley Stadium on Sunday, earning an immediate return to England's top tier in a game considered the richest in world football. Adam Armstrong was the match-winner as his first-half goal was enough to see off a Leeds side that struggled to muster a meaningful response. AGENCIES

Sizzling Alcaraz tames Wolf in Rd 1

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Paris: Carlos Alcaraz's court coverage is something like a light and sound show. You see, but you don't really see it. It's in the shadows perhaps.

Alcaraz's feet barely skimmed the dirt when on the move in his first Roland Garros outing on Sunday.

FRENCH OPEN

The Spaniard ran around his backhand, moved in and fell back, brandishing his unbounded athleticism like a cutlass. He reached wide and stayed low for the softer touch or the firmer grip. A performance that was as much a physical test as it was a display of dimensions.

Alcaraz, 21, has been out on the injury carousel for a good part of the season so far, retiring from Rio de Janeiro in February after twisting his right ankle and playing just one tournament on clay in the spring swing, because of a right forearm injury.

Alcaraz, who has been practicing with a sleeve, took the court armed with the performance accessory against American lucky loser Jeffrey John Wolf, who goes with his initials J J Wolf on the Tour, but it didn't seem like he needed the support.

The world No.3, indexing his tennis miles on Court Philippe Chatrier, came through 6-1, 6-2, 6-1 in one-hour and 51-minute. Alcaraz had 27 winners in the match, 15 of which came from the forehand side, which augurs well for him.

Alcaraz, who appeared to be debating with his box during a break in play, perhaps on holding back on power, sa-



Carlos Alcaraz on Sunday

id the performance sleeve was proposed to him by his physio Juanjo Moreno.

"He told me it helps in a certain way. I don't know which way," the 21-year-old said. "I just wear it because everybody has told me that it helps my mind, just to try to forget everything in my forearm."

The Spaniard, who made the semifinals here last year, sported bright yellow shorts, which helped light up the dank, dismal conditions on a rain-hit afternoon.

"The arm is 100 percent. I'm still feeling weird, afraid to hit every forehand at 100 percent," Alcaraz explained. "It's still in my mind, but I didn't feel anything after the match, which is really, really good for me. So I can say it's fully recovered."

Alcaraz can be extravagant with his shot making. So much so that his shot selection often comes under the scanner, more recently in the opening Grand Slam of the season at Melbourne Park in January where he looked like he had lost a winning hand against Alexander Zverev in the quarterfinals.

Alcaraz said this time it was him holding back, and not his coach Juan Carlos Ferrero telling him to step off the pedal some.

Ferrari's Leclerc wins Monaco GP

Monaco: Ferrari's Charles Leclerc celebrated a dream Monaco Grand Prix victory on Sunday to become the first home winner of Formula One's showcase race since Louis Chiron raced around the city streets in 1931. It was the first time the 26-year-old had stood on the Monaco podium in six attempts and came after two standing starts from pole position in a race halted when

first-lap collisions took out a fifth of the field.

McLaren's Oscar Piastri finished runner-up, 7.1 seconds behind after 78 laps without a chance to overtake on a circuit that often produces professional races, and Ferrari's Carlos Sainz was third.

Red Bull's championship leader and 2023 Monaco winner Max Verstappen started and finished sixth. REUTERS

After the dream double...

ALONSO WANTS TO 'ENJOY' LEVERKUSEN'S INCREDIBLE SEASON

Berlin: Bayer Leverkusen coach Xabi Alonso said he "needed a bit more time to grasp" the club's "dream season", after lifting the German Cup on Saturday night to claim the double.

Midfielder Granit Xhaka scored the only goal in a 1-0 win over Kaiserslautern, with Leverkusen down to 10 men for more than half the match.

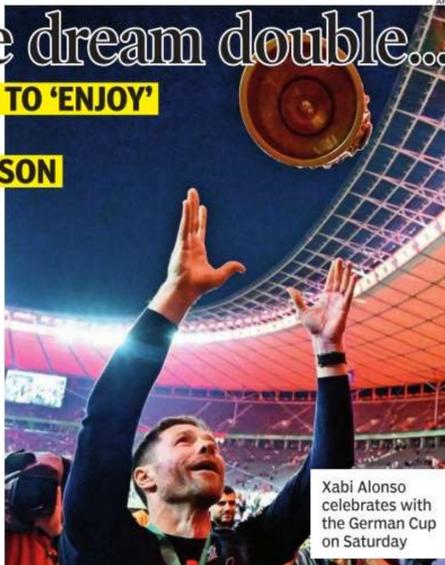
Alonso's first full season managing at the top level finished with a Bundesliga and German Cup double, a Europa League final - and a stunning record of just one loss in 53 games. Leverkusen's only loss came in Wednesday's Europa League final against Serie A side Atalanta, but Alonso's charges rebounded in dogged fashion.

"I need a bit more time to grasp it. It was a dream season. To be able to celebrate here is incredible - we need to enjoy it," Alonso told Germany's ARD network.

The coach, who rejected reported interest from Liverpool, Bayern Munich and Real Madrid to stay at Leverkusen this season, was serenaded with chants of "Xabi Alonso" by delirious fans whose club had only won two trophies before this season.

"Of course I'm happy but I'm especially proud of the players. The double is totally deserved."

The victory tested Alonso as he rarely has been this season, with Leverkusen reduced to 10 men late in the first half after centre-back Odilon Kosounou's second yellow. AFP



Xabi Alonso celebrates with the German Cup on Saturday

GIROUD SCORES IN HIS LAST MILAN MATCH ON A NIGHT OF FAREWELLS AT SAN SIRO

Milan: Olivier Giroud scored in his final match for AC Milan as the Rossoneri drew with bottom club Salernitana 3-3 on a Saturday night of farewells at San Siro. The 37-year-old Giroud, who helped Milan to the Serie A title in 2022, is leaving after three years and will join Los Angeles FC.

Giroud was given a standing ovation when he was substituted off six minutes from time, hugging all of his teammates and coach Stefano Pioli as the crowd sang his name.

Milan's last match of the season was also Pioli's final match in charge, bringing to an end a five-year stint that included the Champions League semifinal last year as well as the Serie A title.

The evening was about celebrating the 34-year-old Kroos. One of Real's most successful players of all time, Kroos announced on Tuesday that he will retire after this year's European Championship on home soil.

He fought back tears as he walked on to the pitch through a corridor formed by his team mates, who were wearing his number eight jersey as the fans held up a giant flag with

his face and the words "Thank you, legend" which covered the south stand. In the 85th minute, Kroos broke down in tears when, after receiving another standing ovation as he was substituted, he embraced his three children who were all crying on the sidelines. The game was stopped for several minutes as Kroos hugged each of his team mates and his coach.

Can go with my head held high: Mbappe

Lille: Kylian Mbappe said he was proud to leave Paris Saint-Germain with his "head held high" after winning Saturday's French Cup final, but said he would wait for the right time to confirm where he will be playing next season.

"To finish with a trophy in a final, there is no better way. It feels really good," Mbappe said after PSG beat Lyon 2-1 in the final in the northern city of Lille.

Mbappe's contract is now up and he recently confirmed he would leave at the season's end, with Real Madrid ex-

pected to be his next destination. "All I wanted was to end things well with my club, with a trophy. I think there is a time for everything and I will announce my future club in good time," he said. "There are only good memories and now I can go out with my head held high, with a trophy as well."

Mbappe did not score in Saturday's game and so leaves his hometown team with a club-record tally of 256 goals from 308 appearances. Ousmane Dembele and Fabian Ruiz netted for PSG. AFP



QUADRUPLE IS A 'DREAM COME TRUE': BARCELONA'S PUTELLAS

BARCA AVENGE LYON DEFEATS TO WIN THIRD WOMEN'S CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Bilbao: Barcelona playmaker Alexia Putellas said winning the quadruple was a "dream come true" after the Catalan giants beat Lyon 2-0 in the women's Champions League final on Saturday.

Two-time Ballon d'Or winner Putellas struck the second to ensure Barcelona won the

trophy for the third time after Aitana Bonmati put them ahead in Bilbao. "Winning the Spanish Super Cup in January, the months keep passing, the Copa de la Reina, Liga F, all won," Putellas told TVE.

"We wanted to win it all and reach the grand final, the Champions League, with all three trophies and the chance to win a fourth. Obviously it's a dream come true, what we have achieved." AGENCIES

Kroos bids emotional farewell to Bernabeu

Madrid: Toni Kroos bade an emotional farewell to Real Madrid fans at a sold-out Santiago Bernabeu on Saturday as the German midfielder played his final home game after a remarkable decade with the Spanish giants.

A goalless draw with Real Betis was largely irrelevant with Real confirmed as La Liga champions and all the European qualification and relegation spots decided, so

the evening was about celebrating the 34-year-old Kroos.

One of Real's most successful players of all time, Kroos announced on Tuesday that he will retire after this year's European Championship on home soil.

He fought back tears as he walked on to the pitch through a corridor formed by his team mates, who were wearing his number eight jersey as the fans held up a giant flag with



Real Madrid's Toni Kroos walks on the pitch with his children

AHLY WIN AFRICAN CL FOR THE 12TH TIME

Cairo: Egypt's Al Ahly were crowned African champions for the fourth time in the last five years after captain Rami Rabia scored early to beat Esperance of Tunisia 1-0 in Saturday's second leg of the Champions League final.

Home victory secured a 1-0 aggregate triumph, after last Saturday's goalless first leg in Tunisia, and a record 12th victory for Al Ahly in Africa's top club competition. AP