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In a political gamble, UK PM Sunak says 18-yr-olds will have to do mandatory nat'l service if his party wins July 4 election. Says it will help unite society in an 'increasingly uncertain world', P 10

Over 670 feared dead in Friday's Papua New Guinea's landslide, says Int'l Organization for Migration. The UN agency bases its toll estimate on info that over 150 houses were buried, P 10

Elon Musk plans to build a supercomputer to support development of his AI startup xAI. It will be 'at least four times the size of the biggest GPU clusters that exist today' P 10



Swati Maliwal alleges receiving rape & death threats following 'orchestrated campaign of character assassination' by AAP colleagues and posting of 'one-sided video' by a YouTuber, P 6



'Celebration across Bengal': Didi wishes KKR

Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee wished Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) for their superlative victory over Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) in the IPL finals held at the MA Chidambaram Stadium on Sunday. "Kolkata Knight Riders' win has brought about an air of celebration all across Bengal. I would like to personally congratulate the players, the support staff and the franchise for their record-breaking performance in this season of the IPL. Wishing for more such enchanting victories in the years to come!" **TNN**



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 13 & 14

Loaded dumper crashes into bus, 12 killed

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 going to Purnagiri temple in Uttarakhand on Saturday night. A 10-year-old boy, 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 the restaurant where the bus had stopped, asked their son to keep a bag inside the bus. The 15-year-old died but his parents survived. **FLAP OPP**

Club near Porsche crash spot sealed

Excise officials on Saturday sealed 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. Officials said the pub served liquor without verifying customers' age. **FLAP OPP**

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

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New Delhi: Overall voter turnout in the LS polls' sixth phase held on Saturday stood revised at 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 Election Commission at 11.45pm on Saturday had put the phase 6 turnout at 61.2%. It has since been constantly updated via EC's voter turnout app as more polling parties returned and submitted their reports, resulting in a 2.2 percentage-point 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 10pm on Sunday, is almost final as no repoll was scheduled af-

FIGURE REMAINS UNCHANGED IN UP

State	Phase 6 Voter Turnout %	
	At 11.45 pm, May 25	On May 26 (as per voter turnout app)
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

ter scrutiny held on Sunday in the presence of candidates 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.

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 11.45pm on Saturday to 74.5% on Sunday evening.

> Uptick in Haryana, P 8

At 82.7%, Bengal's highest in phase 6

During the sixth phase of elections in eight LS seats on Saturday, Bengal recorded its highest turnout of all phases, with the average polling percentage at 82.7. In phase I of polls on April 19, this figure was 81.9%. At 5pm on Saturday, the polling percentage was 77.9% and there was an addition of less than 5% votes in the final hour. In the earlier phases, polling had increased significantly in the final hour. **P 6**

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

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 so," he said during a campaign stop in Mirzapur.

> '3 big conspiracies', P 8

MP murder: Dhaka detective chief in city, says suspect fled to US

Tamaghna Banerjee & Dwaipayan Ghosh | TNN



Disaster management group personnel search for the MP's body in Bhangar on Sunday

Kolkata: Almost a fortnight since the alleged murder of Bangladeshi MP Anwarul Azim Anar in a flat in New Town, a team of policemen from Dhaka, headed by their detective chief, reached Kolkata and said they suspected mastermind Akhtaruzaman Shaheen — a childhood friend of Anar — had fled to the US.

Bangladesh is seeking Interpol's help to catch him. The cops said a fallout between the MP and Akhtaruzaman over the proceeds from a gold smuggling racket may have been the motive for the former's murder in cold blood.

The Bangladeshi detective chief went to Bagjola canal in Polerhat, off Bhangar, where cops were using fishing nets and underwater drones to trace the chopped-up body parts without suc-



Disaster management group personnel search for the MP's body in Bhangar on Sunday

cess. "The mastermind left the city on May 10," said Mohammad Harun-or-Rashid, chief, Dhaka Metropolitan Police's Detective Branch (DB), adding, "He fled to Delhi, from where he fled to Kathmandu and Dubai. We suspect he is now hiding in the US. We, along with the Kolkata CID, are seeking help from Interpol to nab him."

> 'Extradition treaty', P 4

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

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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 on Saturday, was a student at the country's cradle of cinema and TV

> EDIT: All We Can Create

when she braved chants of "go to Pakistan" for participating in a 139-day protest in 2015 against the appointment of actor Gajendra Chauhan as the institute's chairperson.

She, along with 34 other former students, continue to



She had protested in 2015 against Gajendra Chauhan's appointment

wage a legal battle over a case filed by the then institute's director, Prashant Patrabhe, alleging their involvement in gheraoing him and vandalising his office that year.

But a day after conquering Cannes, there was not a 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 Maimam 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.

> FTII batchmates..., P 9

S Africa fines SBI for violating laundering laws

The Prudential Authority, South African Reserve Bank, has imposed administrative sanctions and a monetary penalty on SBI for violating the country's anti-money laundering laws. SBI said the action on the South African branch included an immediate payment of 5.5 million rand (Rs 2.5 crore) and 4.5 million rand (Rs 2 crore) payable over 36 months. SBI said the penalty was imposed in terms of Section 45C of the Financial Intelligence Centre Act 38 of 2001, "for not complying with certain provisions of the FIC Act or any other order or directive made in terms of the act". **P 11**

Bangalir Mone Modi

Your city will be enchanted by Modi's magic

The Honorable Prime Minister in Kolkata

Historical road show of Shri Narendra Modi

28th May, Tuesday, 4pm

Shyambazar Panch Matha More

Swamiji's Residence, Vivekananda Road

You all are invited

Phir Ek Baar

Modi Sarkar

Bhartiya Janata Party, West Bengal

Published By: Bharatiya Janata Party, 6A, Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Marg, New Delhi



Agencies toil through Sun to reduce Mon pain

KMC Shuts Hooghly Lock Gates, Deploys Tree Cutters; BMC, NKDA Issue Advisory

Saikat Ray & Suman Chakraborti | TNN

Kolkata: Civic agencies in and around Kolkata worked through Sunday to take guard against cyclone Remal, which made landfall late on Sunday evening.

More than 14,000 KMC workers were deployed across the 144 wards to combat disruptions and all lock gates to the Hooghly were shut to prevent possible flooding triggered by an active high tide, said Kolkata mayor Firhad Hakim.

Taking a lesson from the devastating effects of Amphan, KMC has kept tree cutters, dumpers, payloaders and heavy-duty cranes ready to remove uprooted trees, said Hakim, appealing to residents of insecure buildings to take refuge at the camps set up in several KMC primary schools. The mayor made it clear that though KMC was ready with hundreds of heavy-duty pumps to flush out storm water, in the event of continuous downpour, it may take time to free the city of waterlogging.

While the sewerage and drainage department officials checked the conditions of drainage pumping stations, KMC's parks department officials set up teams of tree cutters and deployed them at vulnerable points across 16 boroughs. On Sunday, civic workers removed 15 trees that were uprooted across the city. The buildings department has formed teams to keep vigil on the highly insecure buildings that might collapse due to heavy rain. The lighting and electricity department, in association with CESC, has been identifying and repairing loose wires around feeder boxes of street lamp posts to prevent electrocution if streets get flooded.

The drainage department officials are worried about a



(Top) A girl takes a selfie in front of the Hooghly on Sunday; (above) an uprooted tree near Babughat

Lakes and parks closed

KMDA shut Rabindra Sarobar (in pic) for 24 hours from 3 pm on Sunday as a safety measure ahead of Remal. Other lakes and parks, like Subhas Sarobar, Satyajit Ray Park, Paatuli floating market and Benubanachhaya, were also closed. "We closed all lakes and parks maintained by KMDA from Sunday 3 pm till Monday 3 pm. All clubs of Sarobar were intimated," a KMDA official said. KMC also shut its parks and gardens, including Millennium Park. A Calcutta Rowing Club notice said it will remain closed till 5 pm on Monday. Authorities said there were apprehensions that trees may be uprooted and the situation will be assessed on Monday morning. TNN

high tide in the Hooghly. According to a KMC source, the civic body on Sunday decided to close all lock gates along the

Hooghly from 1.30 pm to 6 pm due to the presence of a 16.28-ft high tide. "We will also need to close

Shows cancelled

South City authorities suspended all movie shows after 5 pm on Sunday. The South City mall, too, was shut early, at 8 pm. City Centre management didn't cancel shows. The shows are automatically cancelled if people don't turn up, an official said. TNN

the lock gates in the morning and afternoon on Monday for the same reason. We fear if heavy rain lashes Kolkata, several areas will go under water for long hours as the lock gates will remain closed," said a KMC official.

Areas like the Garden Reach-Metiabruz belt, Behala, Garia, and neighbourhoods off Bypass, which don't have an underground drainage system, could get inundated easily after a downpour. "We are keeping portable pumps ready," said an official.

In Salt Lake, New Town and Sector V, Bidhannagar Municipal Corporation (BMC), New Town Kolkata Development Authority (NKDA) and Nabadiganta Industrial Township Authority (NDITA) opened control rooms with disaster management teams ready. NKDA issued an advisory

Exams deferred

Exams and events scheduled for Monday have been pushed back. Presidency University registrar Debajyoti Konar issued a notice saying UG and PG 2nd-sem exams were deferred to June 18. St Xavier's College rescheduled the 2nd and 4th sem exams to May 30 and June 3. JU and CU also rescheduled exams and said new dates will be announced later. Scottish Church College's drama club workshop has also been pushed back. TNN

for housing societies and residents' welfare associations to check that roofs, terraces and balconies were clear of loose items. Residents were advised to keep vehicles inside the parking bay and builders and developers were asked to secure loose materials at construction sites with proper net covers. NKDA also supplied drinking water for an extended period on Sunday, apprehending a possible disruption on Monday. The authorities kept additional pumps on standby to drain out excess storm water from the streets and a team of civil defence volunteers was deployed from Saturday morning.

BMC also issued an advisory for residents of Salt Lake and Rajarhat Gopalpur to remove flower pots and iron items from the railings on roofs and balconies, fill up water tanks and keep mobiles charged. BMC has kept a team ready to remove uprooted trees and street poles.

The urban development and municipal affairs department set up a control room and issued guidelines for all civic bodies. All fire stations across districts are on alert and divisional fire officers were in touch with CESC, state electricity board and disaster management authorities to act in emergency situations.

Air fares soar: ₹79k for Chennai, ₹39k for Del

Subhro Niyogi & Tamaghna Banerjee | TNN

Kolkata: A mad scramble for tickets to fly out of the city on Sunday morning took air fares to stratospheric levels before Kolkata airport shut down for 21 hours, from noon on Sunday to 9 am on Monday. Between midnight and 12.16 pm, the airport hosted 12,833 passengers who left aboard 71 flights and 10,283 who flew in on 63 aircraft. Airlines said most of the vacant seats were booked on Saturday night and in the early hours of Sunday.

On Sunday morning, Air India offered the quickest travel option to Chennai — in 7 hours and 40 minutes. But one had to fly to Mumbai and switch to a Chennai-bound flight. The fare worked out to Rs 79,403 at 7.30 am. Seats on direct flights to other major cit-

21-HR AIRPORT CLOSURE

ies on nearly all airlines had been booked to capacity at that time. Only a few seats were empty on a few flights of Air India and associate carriers Vistara and Air India Express, which sold at sky-high prices.

By 7.30 am on Sunday, there was no viable flight to Hyderabad. The limited seats on a direct Vistara flight to Delhi at Rs 33,458 were booked fast, following which the fare increased to Rs 39,663 on an AI flight. A few seats were available on a direct AI flight to Mumbai for Rs 33,340. An AI Express direct flight to Bengaluru had seats for Rs 19,883. AI had seats for Guwahati at Rs 20,193. But there was no option available to fly to Bagdogra. Airport officials said people had queued up before booths at the departure

RUSH FOR MORNING TICKETS



A rain-drenched Kolkata airport on Sunday morning

- Flights have been parked inside hangars and wheels secured with chains
- Trolleys tied with ropes
- Closed glass doors strengthened by placing sand sacks on both sides
- DigiYatra gates covered with plastic sheets; electricity to DigiYatra kiosks disconnected and cable lines taped
- Solar panels and high mast lights to be lowered
- Electronic display boards outside the terminal to be lowered

level, a rare sight given that most bookings now happen online. "When people reached the counter, they were either shocked at the fare or learnt that there was no flight option," said an official.

The last to fly out on Sunday was an IndiGo flight to Bengaluru at 12.16 pm. More than an hour earlier, the last flight to arrive was an IndiGo aircraft from Varanasi.

Many who were unaware of the closure had reached the airport only to be turned away. "I was booked on a flight to Bagdogra and didn't get any message about the closure. I reached the airport with my family of three only to learn that operations were suspended.

"They have rescheduled me on a flight two days later," said Waahid Shah.

Nine flights departing Kolkata before noon were cancelled as airlines opted to use the carriers on other sectors.

Mitali Chatterjee, who was to take a flight to Bhubaneswar at 11.05 am, said, "Our flight was before noon but it was cancelled. Our schedule has gone haywire," she said. "After a six-day trip to USA and Mexico, I landed in Delhi on Sunday. I was looking forward to going home but was told flights to Kolkata were suspended till 9 am on Monday," said industrialist Sanjay Budhia.

(With inputs from Mayukh Sengupta)

TRACKING REMAL

Remal is first pre-monsoon cyclone this year. Cyclones in the Bay of Bengal usually occur in May and Oct

- May 22 | Low-pressure area over southwest Bay, off coasts of north TN and south Andhra Pradesh
- May 23 | It turned into a well-marked low-pressure area over west-central Bay
- May 24 afternoon | Depression at east-central Bay; Bengal under pre-cyclone watch
- May 24-25 morning | Deep depression in east-central Bay of Bengal. System moving north-

eastward at 15 kmph

- May 25 afternoon | Severe cyclone in east-central Bay. By evening, system moving northwards at 12 kmph
- May 26, 11 am | Remal in north Bay, 260 km southwest of Khepupara and 240 km southeast of Sagar Island, moving with wind speed of 90 kmph-100 kmph, gusting up to 110 kmph at cyclone's centre
- May 26 afternoon | Kolkata gets first spell of thunderstorm linked to Remal till afternoon
- May 26 night | 23.9 mm rainfall in Kolkata till 8 pm

The name 'Remal' has been given by Oman, meaning 'sand' in Arabic

MAJOR BAY OF BENGAL CYCLONES SINCE 2009

- Aila | The severe cyclone hit the coastal parts of Bengal, particularly in S & N 24 Prgns on May 25, 2009, with wind speed ranging between 120 kmp & 130 kmph
- Phailin | The very severe cyclonic storm struck the Odisha coast on Oct 10, 2013. The next day, it became equivalent to a Category 5 hurricane on the SSHWS
- Fani | The extremely severe cyclonic storm was the most severe tropical cyclone to strike Odisha since the 1999 Odisha cyclone. Fani originated from a tropical depression that formed west of Sumatra in the Indian Ocean on April 26, 2019
- Amphan | The super cyclone was the most powerful and catastrophic

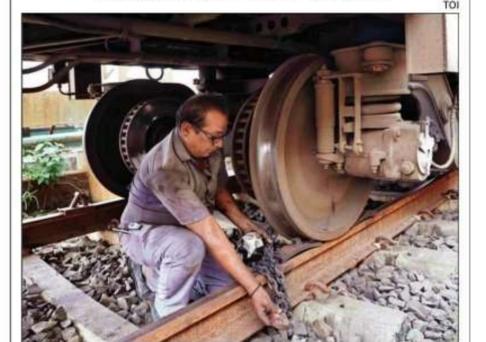


tropical cyclone, and caused widespread damage in Bengal and Odisha, and in Bangladesh, in May 2020. It was the strongest tropical cyclone to strike the Ganges Delta and the 4th super cyclone to hit Bengal and Kolkata since 2015. It triggered over 200 mm rain in Kolkata and a consistent wind speed of over 100 kmph

Truncated metro ops on N-S corridor

Kolkata: Metro started regulating services from 5.30 pm on Sunday as a safety measure against the inclement weather conditions. Services were suspended between Tollygunge and New Garia on the N-S line and truncated services were run on both directions between Dakshineswar and Mahanayak Uttam Kumar stations. There was no service on either East-West Metro, Joka-Majerhat or New Garia-Ruby Lines on Sunday. TNN

TAKING PRECAUTIONS



A worker secures a train coach with a chain at Shalimar station on Sunday

Help strays out in storm: Pet lovers

Sarthak Ganguly & Poulami Roy Banerjee | TNN

Kolkata: Amidst the precautions being taken to combat the impact of Remal, an appeal from animal lovers has been widely circulating on the social media urging people not to drive away stray dogs and cats if they come to take shelter. Some animal lovers, including pet owners, in the city have already opened their balconies to give shelter to the strays during the cyclone.

The strays have the right to live and don't force them to die, the appeal mentioned. Considering the adverse situations the strays might have to face after the landfall, the animal lovers have put up waterproof covers, kept food and stored towels and antiseptic medicines for them.

Some NGOs have also made arrangements for the strays in the city. For instance, Susmita Roy, who runs a NGO-cum-animal hospital at Maheshlata, said, "From Saturday, we have opened doors of our hospital's ground floor for the strays. I shifted a dog to the Remal-special shelter in the clinic after I spotted sitting under my parked car. Our team will move around the city and rescue the affected strays."

Somdutta Bhattacharya, a second-year M.A student and a resident of north Kolkata, said, "I have kept the balcony of my house ready for them. I

'LET THEM LIVE'



I have kept the balcony ready for them and arranged for towels, cardboard boxes and blankets

Somdutta Bhattacharya | A NORTH KOLKATA RESIDENT

I have put up a plastic sheet in the premises of my house. Instead of driving them away, contact NGOs

Pratim Chowdhury | A SALT LAKE RESIDENT

have arranged for towels, cardboard boxes and blankets for street dogs or cats that will come to my house in search of shelter. I am also keeping a bowl of fresh water and dry food for them. I have a medical kit at home and it will help me nurse the wounds of strays, if any."

Pratim Chowdhury, a Salt Lake resident, "I have put up a plastic sheet in the premises of my house. Instead of driving away the strays, people should contact NGOs and send them to animal homes."

Amphan lesson: Housing societies shut lifts, secure trees with ropes

Aaheli Chowdhury

Kolkata: Bracing for the impact of cyclone Remal, residents of high-rise housing complexes are fortifying their guards this time keeping in mind the shortcomings faced during Amphan four years ago. The residents' welfare committees circulated advisories and notices in their WhatsApp groups on Sunday to ensure the safety of residents.

In most of the high-rises, residents have been advised to keep their doors and windows shut, and abstain from keeping flower pots or trinkets in the balconies and terraces. "We have learnt from our previous mistakes, especially during Amphan that caused waterlogging and also damaged our lifts. This time, we have closed all lift rooms to ensure no water enters there and also kept ready pumps in the basement to drain out rain water," said Manov Mehra, president of Siddha Pines Welfare Association.

Mehra added, "During the landfall of cyclone Remal, we have planned to keep one lift open in each block in case of any emergency while the rest would be closed. Besides, we have also taken up precautions to ensure that water does not enter the electrical rooms."

Manoj Gupta, secretary

BRACING FOR REMAL

SAFETY STEPS

- Keeping all windows, doors, balconies and terraces shut
- Removing loose objects like flower pots and trinkets from balconies and terraces
- Emergency first-aid kits

We have closed all lift rooms and also kept pumps ready in the basement to drain out rainwater

Manov Mehra | PRESIDENT OF SIDDHA PINES WELFARE ASSOCIATION

We are prepared to face Remal by tying up all large trees

Manoj Gupta | SECRETARY OF SOUTH CITY APARTMENT OWNERS' ASSOCIATION

Precautions being taken to save trees and avoid flooding of electrical room



of South City Apartment Owners' Association, said, "During Amphan, one of the walls in our complex had collapsed and several trees had fallen. Even the lifts were inundated. We are prepared to face Remal by tying all large trees with ropes and keeping the lifts shut to avoid any waterlogging. All clubs and other facilities like the swimming pool have also been closed. Our complex's emergency team comprising fire-fighters, electricians and plumbers has also been kept ready to tackle any emergency."

Several high-rises have also charged the generators and arranged for extra fuel if there is power cut due to the cyclone. "We have asked residents not to use the terrace, keep windows closed, let lifts stay closed on the first floor, tie all tall trees, and advised the residents to remove any loose items from their balconies and window panes," said Rajesh Kumar, president of the Resident's Core Committee in Silver Spring. The committee has also requested CESC to inform them about any power-cut in advance.

Residents of City Center II have taken measures like keeping excess water in tanks, and storing diesel to run generator.

The president of the Residency Apartment Owners' Association, Kamal Kaul, said, "We have requested the residents to optimize the use of water. Also we have made accommodations for the housekeeping staff and other workers in the complex. So, they would not have to face any problem if they get stuck here due to the cyclone. Emergency medical kits have also been kept ready."

Hosps reschedule ops, admissions

Prithvijit.Mitra@timesgroup.com

Kolkata: Cyclone Remal sent hospital schedules haywire as several were forced to postpone their planned surgeries for the day and patients deferred scheduled admissions on Sunday and Monday, fearing disruptions.

A few hospitals chose to conduct some surgeries ahead of the schedule on Sunday morning while OPDs saw a huge rush during the first half of the day before the rains gained intensity by the afternoon.

Ruby General Hospital deferred six surgeries on Sunday and cancelled

new ones till at least Monday. A few admitted patients will be operated till 12 noon on Monday. "We have 24 admissions scheduled on Monday of which at least three could be deferred," said Ruby general manager — operations, Subhashish Datta.

At BP Poddar Hospital, seven surgeries — earlier scheduled on Monday — have been postponed. Eleven surgeries, some of which were due to be conducted on Monday, were done on Sunday. "We conducted 43 planned surgeries on Sunday, higher than the day's average. We will still have to conduct several on Monday since they can't be postponed further. Twenty-two planned admissions, however, were

postponed to later dates," said group advisor Supriyo Chakraborty.

Several patients' families stayed back at the hospital in suits and single cabins to avoid commuting during the cyclone and its aftermath.

Desun Hospital postponed 50% of planned surgeries scheduled on Sunday and Monday. "In consultation with doctors and on request from families of patients who will have to travel from a distance, we have rescheduled these procedures," said director Shaoli Dutta.

Ruby saw a bigger than usual OPD crowd till 1 pm afternoon which the attendance dropped to zero.

Charnock Hospital, too, braced for rescheduling procedures and admissions. "It's possible that weather conditions could impact patients' decisions to postpone planned admissions, especially if there are concerns about travel safety or if severe weather disrupts hospital operations," said Charnock MD Prashant Sharma. Peerless Hospital has not postponed surgeries or deferred admissions. "In case the disruptions turn out to be severe, we will reschedule admissions and procedures in consultation with patients and their families," said Peerless Hospital CEO Sudipta Mitra.

'FEAR OF DISRUPTION'

Rallies washed out, netas reach out to people with Remal help

Plans Hit On Last Sunday Before June 1 Election

RohitKhanna@timesgroup.com

Kolkata: Cyclone Remal disrupted the last Sunday campaign schedule for the June 1 poll, with several campaigns and roadshows being cancelled.

Chief minister Mamata Banerjee's scheduled roadshow from Harinavi Bazar to Narendrapur Ramakrishna Mission was cancelled, but

Dance of Democracy

she spoke at two public rallies. Trinamool general secretary Abhishek Banerjee's roadshow at Metiaburuz was also cancelled.

Union minister Sarbananda Sonowal's Jadavpur rally

ROADSHOWS CANCELLED

- CM Mamata Banerjee's roadshow from Harinavi Bazar to Narendrapur Ramakrishna Mission
- TMC general secretary Abhishek Banerjee's roadshow at Metiaburuz
- Union minister Sarbananda Sonowal's Jadavpur rally cancelled
- Bengal BJP president Sukanta Majumdar's north Kolkata roadshow cancelled
- Ward 108 councillor Sushanta Ghosh said they have cancelled roadshows in Chowbhaga, Anandapur



Several rallies and roadshows in and around Kolkata were cancelled on Sunday as rain started lashing the city ahead of cyclone Remal's landfall

was cancelled after the weather started turning bad. Bengal BJP president Sukanta Majumdar was scheduled to take part in a roadshow in north Kolkata. It was cancelled after the cyclone warning.

The June 1 polls are scheduled in Kolkata and its adjoining South and North 24 Parganas districts.

Abhishek told party workers, "For us, people's life is more important than politics. We can cancel all public meet-

ings for the next 24 hours if needed. Standing by the people is paramount importance. We must make sure that people of all age groups have all the support they need. I have directed Trinamool workers to look into this."

After mayor Firhad Hakim said he will be camping in the KMC headquarters overnight, Asim Basu, KMC councillor of ward 70, said that they have already opened a control room for the Bhowani-

pore, Ballygunge areas. "We have already provided a helpline number. We will continue to man the control room for 24 hours," said Basu.

Ward 108 councillor Sushanta Ghosh, "We had scheduled roadshows in Chowbhaga and Anandapur. They were cancelled. Overnight, we are keeping a watch to help people."

Pradesh Congress president Adhir Chowdhury on Sunday asked party workers

to provide a helpline number and focus on relief work in Kolkata and affected areas of the South 24 Parganas. A team of 50 Congress workers will also keep necessary medicine supplies and food supplies in store. It will have a separate team of bikers in Kolkata who can move faster during emergencies.

South Kolkata BJP unit has also asked party workers to stay alert on Monday. "We will focus on Bhowanipore, Kasba, Rashbehari, Kolkata Port and Behala zones. We are expecting waterlogging and our teams will be ready with relief material," said Rajarshi Lahiri, a south Kolkata BJP functionary. Tapas Roy, BJP candidate from Kolkata North, said, "I have decided to campaign on Sunday despite the inclement weather. Time is short and we cannot afford to lose a single day for campaigning."

At Raidighi, veteran CPM netas Kanti Ganguly has set up a relief camp. Ganguly said it can provide shelter to more than 200. Trinamool's Mathurapur candidate Bapi Halder reached vulnerable areas with relief material and food.

SPG focus on manholes ahead of PM roadshow

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Kolkata: From manholes to hawkers, the Special Protection Group (SPG) drill for PM Narendra Modi's roadshow in north Kolkata on May 28, is covering all aspects.

The SPG's multi-agency drill in Kolkata for PM Modi's roadshow comes in the backdrop of Met predictions of cyclone Remal, the impact of which can only be gauged on Monday.

The security team has asked the civic body's drainage department officials to share details about the location and number of manholes in Bidhan Sarani between Shyambazar five-point crossing and the ancestral house of Swami Vivekananda. After receiving a verbal communication on this matter, the KMC sewerage and drainage department officials swung into action and started an on-the-spot survey of the 2.5 km stretch on Bidhan Sarani.

Sources in the KMC sewerage and drainage department said after getting an intimation from the SPG, a team of civic officials spotted the manholes on the said stretch and took note of their condition. "We have spotted about 50 manholes on the



The security team has asked the civic body's drainage department officials to share details about the location and number of manholes in Bidhan Sarani between Shyambazar five-point crossing and the ancestral house of Swami Vivekananda

stretch between Shyambazar and Swami Vivekananda's house. Whatever we have found will be communicated to the SPG. If it is the PM's security, we cannot take chances," said the civic official, adding that "jetting-cum-suction machines" will be used for cleaning, if asked.

Apart from keeping a watch on the manholes, PM's security personnel have also asked Kolkata Police to identify hawkers at Hatibagan and their stalls to ensure that no floating hawkers are allowed in the area a day before the PM's roadshow. "We have been given a special sticker

for our stalls. We will need to keep our stalls shut on the day of the PM's roadshow," said a hawker at Hatibagan, who sells junk jewellery.

Despite Cyclone Remal, Bengal BJP leaders on Sunday claimed that there has not been any change in the schedule of Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday. While there will be bikes and cars, the BJP will keep a tab on the numbers of vehicles as per the Election Commission of India guidelines.

However, the party brass has asked the Bengal BJP not to bring supporters from outside Kolkata.

More than a lakh shifted to cyclone shelters

Monotosh Chakraborty, Suman Mandal & Sarthak Ganguly | TNN

Kakdwip/Digha/Kolkata: Over a lakh living in the low-lying coastal zones in Bengal were evacuated to cyclone shelters in South 24 Parganas and East Midnapore on Sunday. Among those evacuated was a pregnant woman from the Sundarbans. She was admitted to a primary health centre in Gosaba on Sunday.

According to cops, she was waiting at Sukumari ghat in Satjelia with her husband Bikash Mondal, a daily labourer. Since there was no ferry service, Mondal took his wife to another ghat, about half a kilometre away, to get a boat and cross the river to reach the primary health centre.

Debobrata Debnath, a volunteer of the civil defence te-



Heavy rainfall in Digha on Sunday afternoon; (R) a Mousuni Island embankment in a precarious condition



am, came to know about it and after obtaining nod from the local SDO office, he reached there with a team to rescue her. They took the woman on a boat to the primary health centre and admitted her there. Doctors said the woman was in advanced stage of pregnancy and she was likely

to give birth either on Sunday night or Monday.

The state has 117 flood centres in Sundarbans. The administration is also using school buildings for accommodation of the evacuees. DM of South 24 Parganas Sumit Gupta said, "People have already been evacuated from Ganga Sagar,

Namkhana, Kakdwip, Gosaba, Basanti, Canning and other parts of Sundarbans."

The rescue operations in the Sundarbans were carried out by NDRF, DMG and civil defence teams while health dept was ready with medical teams at flood centres.

People were also evacua-

ted from villages in Digha and shifted to flood centres, said Shouvik Bhattacharya, chairman of Digha Shankarpur Development Authority. Uttam Barik, chairman of East Midnapore District Council, said, "We have made arrangements for dry food, tarpaulins and generators."

Alipore zoo takes Remal guard

Kolkata: Alipore zoo, on Sunday, lined up a slew of measures against the possible impact of Remal. From keeping animals in night shelter to water tanks full, it left no stone unturned. Apart from checking power connections and switch boxes, teams with equipment like power chain saw were kept ready for removal of broken branches or fallen trees.

"Batteries for search lights, walkie-talkies have been kept fully charged. POS machines are also ready to start issuing tickets in case there's internet failure on Monday," said a zoo official, adding that a team of veterinary officials is also in place to tackle any emergency. TNN

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When will Kolkata's oldest tram route be back, ask commuters

'Doing Away With Dalhousie Loop May Badly Hit 11 Other City Routes'

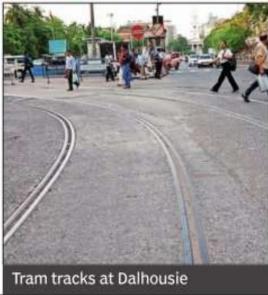
Krishnendu.Bandyopadhyay
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Kolkata: Uncertainty shrouds the operation of the oldest tram route in the city in its 151st anniversary year, with the West Bengal Transport Corporation's (WBTC) reluctance to relay the Dalhousie tram loop after the metro authority cleared the place for tram movement. Significantly, the metro authority has already paid WBTC the cost for restoring the loop and compensation for the tram's non-operation because of the temporary closure of the Dalhousie loop to build the BBD Bag station of East-West Metro.

The tram track running through B B Ganguly Street from Dalhousie to Sealdah is part of the oldest tram route along which the first horse-drawn tram of the city ran from Armenian Ghat to Sealdah (3.9 km) on Feb 24, 1873. Tram was the only mode of transport available for hund-

ROUTES THAT MAY FACE THE IMPACT

Route No	Alignment
3	Shyambazar-Esplanade via Chitapore
4	Shyambazar-BBD Bag via Chitapore
6	Shyambazar-BBD Bag via College Street
7	Bagbazar-BBD Bag via Chitapore
14	Rajabazar-BBD Bag
16	Bidhannagar-BBD Bag
21	Park Circus-BBD Bag
25	Gariahat-BBD Bag (now ends at Esplanade)
24/29	Tollygunge BBD Bag and Ballygunge-BBD Bag
36	Kidderpore-B B D Bag



Tram tracks at Dalhousie

reds of Sealdah-bound passengers from Dalhousie every evening during the peak hours. Now, in the absence of the tram service, hundreds of passengers walk down BB Ganguly Street to reach Sealdah to catch trains.

"WBTC floated a tender for building the Dalhousie loop. But in the last few months, they did nothing to restore the

loop, quite contrary to the definite Calcutta High Court order. When we inquired, they said that it is because of city police objection that they could not invest in building the loop," said Calcutta Tram Users' Association (CTUA) president Debasish Bhattacharya, who has been relentless in his struggle against the willingness of doing away

with tram by successive state govts. A senior WBTC officer refused to comment on this on the pretext of the tram being a 'sub-judice case'.

Doing away with the Dalhousie loop would cause the death of as many as 11 tram routes. "Besides being the oldest tram route, the Dalhousie loop has immense significance. It is as important a fulcrum of

the city's tram operation as the Esplanade loop is. This reluctance to create the Dalhousie loop will be a very costly blunder and doing away with it is akin to abolition of the city's tram," said Bhattacharya.

By not restoring the tramways, the authorities have shown disrespect to the high court order where the chief justice specifically instructed them to "restore, maintain and preserve" the system. "They have done nothing in this direction. The authority is indirectly sabotaging all tram depots and the rolling stocks," he added.

Ex-CTC staff of Nonapukur Workshop Subir Bose said, the work culture at Nonapukur is as efficient as before. A single coach tram can be built there for around Rs 14 lakh. Most of the staff are keen to ensure preservation of trams. He added that tram manufacturing machines and tools are being sold off from the workshop, a recent development.

2 zero-shadow days in Kol over next 2 months

Krishnendu.Bandyopadhyay
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Kolkata: Residents of Kolkata are in for a celestial treat as they will experience zero-shadow days at precisely 11.35 am on June 5 and again at 11.41 am on July 7. According to Bipash Das Gupta, a scientific officer at the MP Birla Institute of Fundamental Research, MP Birla Planetarium, Kolkata, the timing of this phenomenon will only vary by a few seconds across different locations within the city.

Zero-shadow days are bi-annual events occurring in regions between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn. An opaque object typically casts a shadow when illuminated by a light source from behind. On zero-shadow days, however, the Sun's position directly overhead results in the shadow of any object falling directly underneath it, creating the illusion of no shadow. This phenomenon is closely linked to the Earth's diurnal and annual motions and offers insights into the seasonal changes and the processes of tides, said Das Gupta.

YEARLY AFFAIR

> Occurrence: Twice a year for locations between the Tropic of Cancer (23°30' North) and the Tropic of Capricorn (23°30' South)

> Phenomenon Duration: While the actual alignment lasts for a small fraction of a second, the effect can be

observed for a minute to a minute and a half

> Preparation: Observers are advised to be ready at least half an hour before and after the event to capture shadows' sequential disappearance and reappearance

Zero-shadow day provides an excellent opportunity for scientific observation and photography. People can take sequential photos at regular intervals to document the vanishing and reappearance of shadows.

The Earth's axis is tilted at an angle of 23.5° to its orbital plane around the Sun. This tilt causes the Sun's rays to hit different parts of the Earth perpendicularly at different times of the year, leading to zero-shadow days. The Sun's apparent movement along the ecliptic path, from 23°30' South to 23°30' North, is responsible for this event. When the Sun is at its zenith, directly overhead at local apparent noon, objects and people lose their shadows

momentarily, explained Das Gupta.

Zero-shadow day is not just a visual spectacle but also a valuable educational experience. It helps in understanding fundamental astronomical concepts such as the Earth's rotation, the angle of sunlight, and the changing seasons. For scientists and astronomers, it provides crucial data on the movement and position of the Sun, aiding in the study of the Earth's tilted axis and the Sun's path across different regions.

In India, the Tropic of Cancer passes through eight states, including West Bengal. For instance, it crosses the outskirts of Krishnanagar, just 2.5 kilometers away.

At 3,839 units, Apr home registration best in 5 years

Subhro.Niyogi@timesgroup.com

Kolkata: The Kolkata Metropolitan Area (KMA) reported registration of 3,839 units in April 2024. While the figure represents a 69% growth over the previous April, data from the state Directorate of Registration and Stamp Revenue pegged it as the best April registration count in five years. The data encompasses transactions in both new and resale markets for residential apartments.

The share of unit sizes up to 500 sq ft scaled down from

in four years.

Knight Frank India senior director (east) Abhijit Das said, "While the city sees steady velocity in registrations, the share of larger homes of 1,000 sq ft and more is significantly low. This indicates a slower demand for more expensive homes in the city, indirectly pointing to reduced buyer confidence, despite steady home loan rates and prices.

Thus, stronger efforts must be made by authorities to build the state's profile amongst various segments

KOLKATA REGISTRATION STATS



46% in April 2023 to 43% at the end of April 2024. In contrast, apartments ranging from 501 to 1,000 sq ft witnessed their share rise from 38% in April 2023 to 50% in April 2024. The share of unit sizes over 1,000 sq ft reduced from 16% to 7% during the same period.

A drastic reduction has been witnessed in the registrations of units sized above 1,000 sq ft in the past one year, especially since the beginning of this calendar year when the share of this category shrunk to single digit percentage for the first time

like IT/ITES, financial services, manufacturing that can attract more talent and alleviate the real estate sector on a holistic basis."

Among the zones, south accounted for 36% apartment registrations, up from 19% a year ago. North zone emerged at the second highest position in apartment registrations tally with a 35% share, down from 42%.

The west zone witnessed its share rise to 15% from 8% a year ago. The share of other zones largely remained stable in the past one year.

Two more JU engg depts get NBA accreditation

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Kolkata: The National Board of Accreditation (NBA) has accredited two more engineering departments at Jadavpur University—Computer Science and Engineering, and Electrical and Electronics & Telecommunication. The university was informed by the NBA on Sunday that the two courses had been accredited till 2030.

An NBA team conducted a three-day visit to the two departments from April 26 to assess if the standards set by the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) were being followed. The departments of Power Engineering, Information Technology, and Instrumentation & Electronics had been accredited last year for three years till 2026. With the new addition, a total of five engineering courses now have NBA accreditation out of a total of 14 engineering departments. JU's officiating VC, Bhaskar Gupta, said, "It is now mandatory for conducting engineering courses, and we are hopeful that other engineering departments will follow the same path. After applying for the NBA accreditation, none has been refused." Gupta took charge on April 22.

Girl hangs self after posting photo on social media

Sanjib Chakraborty | TNN

Kolkata: A class XII girl, who had recently been rejected by her boyfriend, killed herself shortly after posting her photo on social media, showing herself with a saree around her neck. Alarmed by the post, her friends rushed to her home in Bongaon and found her hanging on Saturday night.

The girl's family lodged a complaint for abatement to suicide against her lover with Bongaon police station on Sunday. According to local sources, the girl, a resident of Chapaberia, was having an affair with a local youth for three years. "Recently, the youth broke up the relationship and asked her mother to tell her daughter to delete all their photos from social media. Otherwise, he threatened to harm my daughter," her father said.

According to her family, after being jilted in love, she broke down and got depressed. "On Saturday night, she went to her room and locked the door. It was her friends who noticed her social media post and alerted us. But it was too late," her mother said. "It appears to be a case of suicide," said a police officer.

'Extradition treaty with US may help nab accused'

> Continued from P 1

TOI had reported on Friday that senior cops from Bengal CID had hinted that India's extradition treaty with the US would help investigators nab the accused in the Bangladesh MP murder case.

At New Town PS, Mohammad Harun-or-Rashid, Bangladesh detective chief, and his team spoke with several officers from the Bidhannagar Commissionerate and CID officials on Sunday. They then went to the bungalow at Sangeeta Gardens near Aquatica Water Park, which Akhtaruz-

B'DESH TEAM SPEAKS TO CID

zaman had rented, allegedly to commit the murder, on May 13. The MP had come to Kolkata on May 11 for medical treatment. Police suspect he was lured by a Bangladeshi woman, Celesty Rahman, to the luxury apartment in New Town on May 13 and was killed within 15 minutes of his arrival.

Police had earlier said that the MP's body was dismembered by Jihad Howlader, a Bangladeshi butcher, who used to stay in Mumbai. CID arrested him on Thursday. Jihad had told the investigators that the body was flayed and cut into small pieces. Turmeric was applied on the chopped-up body parts, packed, and thrown into the Bagjola canal. But in spite of four days of search, nothing has yet surfaced.

(Inputs from Mayukh Sengupta)

Swedish man gets 18 yrs for Bengal scholar's murder

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Kolkata: Richard Johansson (29), a Swedish computer programmer, was sentenced to 18 years in prison last Wednesday by a Swedish district court, for the murder of Roshni Das (31), a research scholar at Umea University in Sweden last Sept at her apartment. Das was from Durgapur.

According to Oskar Soderberg, the lawyer who represented Das's family, Johansson did not have any previous criminal record and had met Das through a dating app. "The two had met a few times before the murder but did not have a relationship. The murderer had a girlfriend living in Germany," he said.

In Nov, while the police investigation was still in progress, TOI reported that Das's body was flown back to India, retrieved by five family members and was taken to their native village Kandi, in Murshidabad. Following Wednesday's verdict, Roshni's cousin, Supradip Das told TOI, "When we received her body we could not recognise her face at all. We were told after the investigation that her face had been slashed 41 times. Now we are glad that justice has been served swiftly. However, the family is still under bereavement. Roshni's mother, Mamata, is still undergoing psychological counselling."

According to the judgement by Umea District Court, Johansson was sentenced to 18 years in prison for the murder of Roshni Das. Johansson said he had killed her.

The neighbours subsequently called an ambulance and the police discovered her body in her apartment on Sept 30.

"The family regrets that the murderer was released from police custody after allegedly attacking his cousin. If not for that, perhaps Roshni would have still been with us," said Supradip.

Bengal academic's body found in Sweden flat, kin cry murder

Swedish prosecutor An-lundberg noted during the verdict that Johansson had been living with his cousin just prior to the murder. He had been in police custody after allegedly threatening to assault the cousin. Upon release on Sept 29, Johansson contacted Das asking for a place to sleep. When neighbours who had seen Das with Johansson asked the latter about Das's whereabouts, Johansson said he had killed her.

The neighbours subsequently called an ambulance and the police discovered her body in her apartment on Sept 30.

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Social media helps 2-month-old with rare syndrome get vision

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Kolkata: Social media has given a new lease of life to a two-month-old girl from Rajasthan, who was born with Fraser syndrome, a congenital eye defect. The baby flew back home after undergoing an eyelid surgery at a private eye hospital in Barrackpore, fringes of north Kolkata last week.

Rajesh Sharma, a business man in Jaipur and her wife Priya, a homemaker, were devastated when their newborn, Aradhya, was diagnosed to be suffering from abortive cryptophthalmos (a rare congenital anomaly of the eye with skin passing from the forehead to the cheek over a malformed eye), upper eyelid coloboma (partial or complete absence of lid structures) and corneal exposure — the symptoms of Fraser syndrome. The couple had run from pillar to post for the newborn's treatment but most of the doctors avoided taking the risk of doing the surgery on the infant.

This, however, did not diminish the spirit of the couple who used social media to connect with eye surgeons in various hospitals across the country. "My wife's mental health was also getting affected as she was unable to come to terms with the fact that Aradhya would never be able to see the world around her. We did not give up hope, rather we searched for critical eye treatment facilities in different states and posted about the problem of my daughter. Finally,

CHALLENGING CONDITION

- > Two-month-old baby from Rajasthan diagnosed with Fraser syndrome, a congenital eye defect
- > She suffered from | Abortive cryptophthalmos, upper lid coloboma and corneal exposure
- > Cryptophthalmos | A rare congenital anomaly of the eye with skin passing from the forehead to the cheek over a malformed eye)
- > Upper eyelid coloboma | Partial or

- complete absence of lid structures
- > Her parents connected with eyecare facilities across the country through social media
- > They landed in Kolkata from their hometown, Jaipur, with the baby in March
- > Treatment started at Disha Eye Hospital at Barrackpore
- > Last week surgery was conducted on the baby and her eyesight restored

Along with my team of doctors and medical staff I had planned the oculoplastic surgical procedure on the patient whose tender age posed hurdles to us. We were prepared to tide over the challenges and the surgery was successful — Joyeeta Das | OCULOPLASTIC SURGEON

we got a response from Disha Eye Hospital at Barrackpore," recounted Rajesh.

In March, the couple took their newborn to the private eye hospital at Barrackpore, about 1,500km away from their hometown, for her treatment. "Her condition was challenging but the doctors showed us a glimmer of hope that her eyesight could be restored. After getting this assurance, we stayed back in the city and my daughter's treatment started. Finally, she got her eyesight back after the surgery and we returned home last week," said Priya.

The surgery was done under the supervision of Joyeeta Das, an a. Das said,

"When the girl was brought to us, her condition was challenging and she was in need of immediate medical intervention. Along with my team of doctors and medical staff I had planned the oculoplastic surgical procedure on the patient whose tender age posed hurdles to us. However, we were prepared to tide over the challenges and the surgery was successful. After the surgery, we monitored the baby closely before discharging her."

Rajesh said, "Doctors have said my daughter will be able to lead a normal life and this is a big relief for both of us."

BSF seizes 89 gold biscuits worth ₹12cr

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Kolkata: Eighty-nine gold biscuits weighing 16 kg and worth Rs 12 crore were seized by BSF on the Indo-Bangla border in Bongaon on Saturday. They also arrested a smuggler in connection with the incident.

Acting on intelligence, BSF conducted a special operation at Haldarpada village of North 24 Parganas. Officials said the criminals had smuggled gold consignments from Bangladesh to India and were hiding it at the home of a villager be-



The seized consignment

fore further delivery. According to AK Arya, DIG and spokesperson of South Bengal Frontier, a special operation was launched and the house was cordoned off.

The arrested smuggler and the seized consignment have been handed over to the DRI, Kolkata.

Kol cine-fraternity elated over city link to Cannes Grand Prix win

Priyanka.Dasgupta@timesgroup.com

Kolkata: Immediately after the announcement of Payal Kapadia's Grand Prix win for 'All We Imagine As Light', Mithu Das spoke to her at Cannes. Her elder son, Ranabir Das, is the cinematographer and co-producer of the Grand Prix winner that created history for India at Cannes. "Well done! That's what I told him. Payal too is family and I was elated at the win," the proud mother told TOI on Sunday.

CM congratulates winners

Chief minister Mamata Banerjee has congratulated the winners at Cannes. "Congratulations to Anasuya Sengupta for winning the Best Actress Award at Cannes. A girl of Bengal and a student of Jadavpur University, she makes us proud by being the first Indian to win this laurel. Congratulations to Payal Kapadia as well for winning the prestigious Grand Prix!" She also congratulated Santosh Sivan and Chidananda S Naik for winning accolades.

On Saturday, her younger son—Dhritiman—who is the film's music director—was at home. "It was my 32nd birthday. My friends had come home and all of us including my parents watched the awards together," Dhritiman said.

Mithu recollected that this was not the first win for Payal and Ranabir's work. "I know how good they are as filmmakers. I have watched the first cut, it is



The team of 'All We Imagine As Light' at Cannes

very well-made. Before the win, my son had said that the organisers asked them to stay back. I immediately knew they would win something," she said.

Her family friend, director Anik Dutta, is also equally thrilled. Ranabir had started assisting Dutta when he made advertisements. "He was the special assistant director in 'Bhooter Bhoobisoyot'. He even acted in one small sequence for my film. I am very proud of his achievement," said Dutta.

Cinematographer Aavek Mukhopadhyay had met Ranabir during the shooting of the same film. "His work in the trailer is raw yet it retains a dreamlike quality. The cold city palette is translated well," Mukhopadhyay said.

Tridib Poddar is a proud teacher today. Sometime in 2008-09, Poddar had joined the Mass Communication & Videography department at St Xavier's College, Kolkata as a professor where Ranabir en-

rolled as a student. Poddar still remembers the 19-year-old's script submission for a project. "I had gone through it and shared my opinion with Gopalan Mullik, who was then teaching film studies at St Xavier's. I appreciated Ranabir's sense of abstraction, of what he tried to express through his writing," said Poddar.

"Ranabir's images are full of the nuances. This collaboration between Ranabir and Payal is important at various levels. He has complemented her well," added Poddar, whose diploma film at SRFTI was officially a part of Cannes' Cinefondation in 2002.

Mullik said "The trailer has an international look, it doesn't look earthy in the Indian context. It is great that a cinematographer from Kolkata has his work appreciated at Cannes. The last time an Indian film with a Bengali cinematographer was nominated for Palme D'Or was Soumendro Roy's 'Ghare Baire' in 1984."

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

NITISH KUMAR'S COPTER RUNS OUT OF FUEL DURING CAMPAIGN, BIHAR CM CONTINUES BY ROAD



Picked Saayoni as Jadavpur needs strong MP, says Didi

Tamaghna Banerjee
@timesgroup.com



Kolkata: CM Mamata Banerjee talked about outgoing Jadavpur MP and actor Mimi Chakraborty at two election rallies, in Sonarpur and Baghajatin, on Sunday. Introducing Trinamool Congress candidate Saayoni Ghosh, Banerjee said: "I have given you Saayoni because last time you did not get as much service. However, it was not her fault. It was more our fault and we have rectified it this time."

The CM said that apart from being a popular Tollywood star, Ghosh was a very active politician and, on recognising her political acumen, Banerjee had made her state president of Trinamool Youth Congress.

Chakraborty had submitted her resignation to the CM before the announcement of TMC candidates, and hasn't been seen campaigning for the party.

"Mimi is a very good girl and a good actor. But she is very busy with her acting career... She had tried her best. Whenever I asked her to do something, she did it. In fact, even before the election, I offered to have her contest from some other seat. But in this seat, I wanted Saayoni because some people cause a lot of trouble here — something a soft person can't handle. I needed someone strong here. Someone who can argue for the sake of the people and work with a lot of determination," Banerjee said at a rally in Baghajatin.

Does God speak ill of others and do politics, asks Mamata

Can Build Temple But Never Bow To Oppression: CM On PM 'Godsent' Remark

Tamaghna Banerjee & Monotosh Chakraborty | TNN

Kolkata/Sonarpur: Criticising PM Narendra Modi for his "sent by God" comment, CM Mamata Banerjee said on Sunday: "Does God speak ill of others?"

"He claims he has been sent by God. So, he is a God himself. But does a God speak ill of people? Does he do politics? Does he instigate a riot? If it pleases you, we can build a temple and worship you. But we will not bow down to your oppression," Banerjee said at a campaign rally for Jadavpur candidate Saayoni Ghosh.

The CM added that BJP had been moving court against any developmental activity she had planned for the state. "They have made people lose jobs. I still have 10 lakh posts to fill but the moment I try to make the appointments, they will move court challenging it. While you fight in court, we will fight on votes," she said.

Banerjee said now that BJP's "Plans A and B" of causing a disturbance in Sandeshkhali and fuelling a riot-like situation, respectively, had failed, they were trying to loot votes.

"See what they did in Nandigram (on Saturday). They killed one of our functionaries at Mahishadal, kidnapped a booth agent at Khejuri and drove six to seven AITC agents out of the booths. But even then, Gaddar (an oblique reference to Suwendu Adhikari) is suffering from haratanka (fear of defeat) disease. They are trembling in fear," Banerjee said at the Sonarpur rally.

At Baghajatin, she took on the Left, alleging some CPM members in the Land & Land Reforms Department had sent notices to people living on refugee land in Jadavpur, disrespected 5 crore women in Bengal by hatching such a heinous conspiracy. Did anyone imagine that BJP functionaries made women sign blank paper and then complaints were sent to NCW?" he said.



CM Mamata Banerjee at a campaign rally in Pallysree on Sunday

drove six to seven AITC agents out of the booths. But even then, Gaddar (an oblique reference to Suwendu Adhikari) is suffering from haratanka (fear of defeat) disease. They are trembling in fear," Banerjee said at the Sonarpur rally.

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disrespected 5 crore women in Bengal by hatching such a heinous conspiracy. Did anyone imagine that BJP functionaries made women sign blank paper and then complaints were sent to NCW?" he said.

Banerjee asserted that "anti-Bengal" forces trying to malign the state would be rebuffed. "BJP already suffered fractures on its head, waist, hands and legs in the past six phases of the polls. The seventh phase, in which you will also play a crucial role by casting your votes, will destroy it completely," the TMC general secretary said.

May 4 clip decided Basirhat result: Abhishek

Sanjib Chakraborty | TNN

Baduria (North 24 Parganas): Trinamool Congress general secretary Abhishek Banerjee said on Sunday that the election outcome in Basirhat was effectively determined on May 4, when a video exposed BJP's alleged conspiracy in Sandeshkhali.

"Basirhat goes to polls on June 1, with results expected on June 4. However, the true result was revealed on May 4 through a video that exposed the BJP's plot. BJP's Sandeshkhali mandal president confessed to a conspiracy or-



Abhishek Banerjee speaks at a public meeting in Baduria, under Basirhat LS, on Sunday

chestrated by both the party's central and state brass," Banerjee said at an election rally

in Baduria, in support of Trinamool Congress candidate Haji Nurul Islam.

Taking aim at BJP over Sandeshkhali, Banerjee termed it a "mega conspiracy after Independence to defame Bengal". He questioned whether CBI, which is investigating the alleged atrocities on women in Sandeshkhali as ordered by the Calcutta High Court, would probe the statements made by women in the videos shared by TMC.

"In an attempt to malign the image of Trinamool and Sandeshkhali, notorious BJP functionaries defamed and

At 82.7%, Bengal records its highest turnout in 6th phase

Debashis Konar
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Kolkata: During the sixth phase of elections in eight seats on Saturday, Bengal recorded its highest turnout as the average polling percentage was 82.7. In phase I of polls on April 19, this figure stood at 81.9%.

At 5 pm on Saturday, the polling percentage was 77.9% and there was an addition of less than 5% votes in the final hour.

In the earlier phases, polling had increased significantly in the final hour.

At 85.9%, Bishnupur LS recorded the highest polling percentage on Saturday. In 2019, it had an 87.3% turnout and during the 2021 assembly polls, the seat had a turnout of 89.1%.

Assembly segments under Bishnupur, Kotulpur and Indas, on Saturday recorded over 88% polling, while it was 86.3% for Khandoghosh and Sonamukhi. In 2019, Indas had recorded an 87.9% turnout while it was 89.5% in Kotulpur.

Again, the figures were higher during the 2021 assembly polls as Kotulpur had a 91.1% turnout and Indas had 90.1%. In 2019, Sonamukhi and Khandoghosh had

over 87% turnout, which improved further in 2021 to over 89%. There was a comparative dip on Saturday.

Close to Bishnupur was Jalpaiguri, which in phase I had recorded 83.6% polling. Two seats in East Midnapore, Contai and Tamluk, had an identical performance of 84.7% on Saturday. In 2019, Contai had an 85.2% turnout and Tamluk had 84.7%. The assembly segments of Contai — Chandipur and Khejuri — had over 86% turnout, while it was over 85% in Patashpur, Bhagabanpur and Contai North. Similarly,

Tamluk, from where ex-judge Abhijit Ganguly is contesting, had 84.7% turnout and its assembly segments of Tamluk, Mahishadal, Nandakumar and Haldia saw over 86% polling, in politically sensitive Nandigram, it was 82.7%.

Ghatal, from where actor Dev is seeking re-election, had 82.1% polling, which is lower than the 2019 figure, when it was 82.7%, by 0.6%. In 2021, Ghatal had an 84.8% turnout. Jhargram, which witnessed violence at Garbeta as BJP candidate Pranatudu was a victim of stonethrowing and a CISF man was hit on the head, recorded an 83.4% turnout. The figures were 85.4% in 2019 and 86.8% in the 2021 polls. On Saturday, Garbeta in Jhargram recorded 86.8%, while Salboni had an 87% turnout, the highest in Jhargram LS.

Midnaporesaw 81.5% polling on Saturday, while it was over 84% in 2019 and 2021. Bankura recorded 80.7% on Saturday, while in 2019 it was 83.1% and in 2021 it was 84.2%. Purulia on Saturday had the lowest turnout of 78.3%, though in 2019 it was 82.2% and in 2021 it was 81.8%. Para assembly in Purulia saw 75.5% polling.

TMC MLA gets death threats on WA

Sukumar Mahato | TNN

Behrampur: Former state minister and Trinamool MLA Jakir Hossain lodged a complaint at Suti police station on Saturday after receiving death threats on WhatsApp.

After preliminary investigation, police found that the threat messages were sent from Jharkhand. In Feb 2021, Hossain was injured in a bomb blast, along with 26 others, at

Nimita station under Suti PS in Murshidabad.

CID arrested two youths — Abu Samad and Sahidul Islam — in the case, which is now being probed by NIA.

Hossain, who also heads TMC's Jangipur unit, said: "I am not tech-savvy and do not check WhatsApp regularly. But day before yesterday, I found that someone had threatened to kill me, my wife and my entire family in bomb blasts. I am frightened as I have had a bitter experience at Nimita station. I am not yet fully healed and will undergo another surgery on my leg in Coimbatore next month. As my followers are scared and concerned, I have lodged a complaint. My senior leaders are busy with Lok Sabha polls. I would request Mamata di (CM Banerjee) to give special attention to this issue."

Jangipur SP Ananda Roy said: "We have started an investigation."

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Scuffle after CPM campaign stopped by cops

Kolkata: There was commotion in Kalighat area on Sunday after police disallowed campaigning by CPM candidate from Kolkata South Saira Shah Halim in a locality adjacent to the CM's residence. Police said as Section 144 CrPC was imposed in the area, the assembly of five or more persons was prohibited. After police refused, some CPM supporters started protesting by raising slogans. Some of them tried to break through the barricades, resulting in a scuffle with police. IANS

EC: BSF, not CISF, jawan removed from poll duty

Kolkata: The central force jawan who was removed from poll duty at Chawksahapur Primary School on Saturday for allegedly molesting a woman belongs to BSF and not CISF, an EC official clarified on Sunday. The incident allegedly took place when the jawan asked the woman for drinking water at her house. CISF, too, said in a statement that no company/battalion was stationed near the polling booth. Debra police said the survivor could not immediately distinguish between central force personnel, but it was later ascertained the accused was a BSF jawan. TNN

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Getting rape & death threats, says Maliwal

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: AAP Rajya Sabha MP Swati Maliwal on Sunday said she had 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 X.

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 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. 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 would report these rape and death threats to Delhi Police. "I hope they take strong action against the perpetrators," she added. She also said: "In any case, if

something happens to me, we know who all instigated it." On 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 said the video did 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?"

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

Kamalendu Bhadra
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Uluberia/Howrah: Each time a sitar virtuoso tugs at heartstrings, 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.



Most of Dadpur's 250-odd households make 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 serpentine lanes — almost resembling a painting in watercolour — Dipak was immersed in playing Raag Jaunpuri. The purity of the notes his fingers produced 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 village. 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 designing 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 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.

BJP candidate held for hitting poll staff, vandalising EVM

Bhubaneswar: Prasanta Jagadev, BJP MLA candidate from Odisha's Khurda, was arrested on Sunday for allegedly vandalising an EVM and assaulting a polling staffer in third phase of LS and assembly polls on Saturday, reports Debabrata 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. This was two

years after CM Naveen Patnaik's BJD expelled him for allegedly ramming his vehicle into some BJP workers in Khurda in March 2022.

Innocent lives snuffed out on dark Delhi night

Man Yet To See Baby, Couple Who Lost 2 Kids Among Bereaved

Abhay & Siddhvi Singh | TNN

New Delhi: Ritik Chaudhary, a farmer from Bulandshahr, had been visiting Baby Care New Born Hospital in Vivek Vihar daily for the past week, paying Rs 10,000 each time to see his baby, who was experiencing breathing difficulties. On Sunday, unaware of the tragic fire that had engulfed the hospital the night before, Chaudhary was on his way to get his child discharged for a ceremony back home.

He learned about the 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.

Pawan Kasana, a 27-year-old UP Police constable from Baghpat, lost his six-day-old



Many family members only found out about the blaze on Sunday

daughter, who was being treated for an infection. Kasana was on election duty when he heard about the birth of his first child and had not even seen him once. The family had yet to inform the baby's mother, Bharti, about the tragedy.

The situation outside a nearby rescue centre where some of the babies were taken was chaotic. Rajkumar, 26, from Ghaziabad, said: "I admitted my baby girl four days ago as she had fever. She was supposed to be discharged today. I've been 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." Police said

id they could only confirm her well-being after a DNA match. Rajkumar and his wife had lost their first child.

The hospital allegedly only allowed families to visit 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. 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."

At GTB Hospital mortuary, there were wails of despair. Amit Sharma, a relative of one of the infants who died, revealed that the family had already endured the loss of two children. "Last year, they had a stillborn. Prior to that, they lost another child shortly after conception."

Shahnaaz Khatoun, 44, said: "When our grandchild fell sick, we didn't think about the money, only about our child. We collected money every 24 hours. Imagine hearing about the death of your own child through a newspaper."

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

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Ahmedabad: A special bench of Gujarat High Court, 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 justices Biren Vaishnav and 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, Vadodara, Surat and Rajkot — and the state govt to come up with details about the provisions of law



The court observed that gaming zones had come up in the state without necessary approval

under which their authorities allowed such gaming zones to be set up and operated. The high court 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.

Newlyweds, five of a family among 'missing'

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Rajkot: Pradeepsinh Chauhan stood among many anxious relatives of the "missing" outside Rajkot civil hospital, enduring the sweltering Sunday heat without food or water, hoping for any positive news about their loved ones. None came. Chauhan said five members of his family perished in the devastating fire at TRP Game Zone the previous evening.

This included his 15-year-old son, his brother-in-law, and his sister's family. "Two of my family members went to the second floor to save the children, but they could not come out," Chauhan said. The toll touched 28.

Among the "missing" was a newly married couple—Vivek, 26, and Khushali Dusara,

24—and their sister-in-law Tisha. The family in Gir Somnath district spent a sleepless night, unable to reach the couple over the phone. Vivek and Khushali had tied the knot just two months earlier, adding to the heartbreak of their sudden loss.

Surpalsinh Jadejhad visited the game zone with two friends, but the trio was later listed as "missing". Kalpesh Bagda, 22, had been working at the game zone for the past two years. He is now presumed dead. Bagda, a resident of Amreli district, had been a source of hope for his family. His uncle Mansukhbhai lamented: "...now everything is gone." Monu Gaud, a 17-year-old who had come to work at the game zone just 20 days ago from UP, was also on the "missing" list.

Gaming zone lacked fire safety equipment: FIR

Continued from P 1

NA analysis is crucial for providing closure to grieving families. A forensic team has arrived in Rajkot to collect samples from the site. "It is one of the biggest disaster victim identification (DVI) cases in the country in recent years," said a senior official from directorate of forensic sciences.

The FIR revealed that the entertainment facility's structure which was the height of a three-storey building, lacked sufficient fire safety equipment. Police arrested Yuvrajsinh Solanki, 30, a partner in Raceway Enterprise, and Nitin Lodha, 45, the facility's manager and another partner. Lookout notices have been issued for the remaining accused: Dhaval Thakkar, Ashoksinh Jadeja, Kiritsinh Jadeja, Prakashchandra Hiran, and Rahul Rathod.

The accused face charges under multiple sections of 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.

(Inputs from Parth Shastri in Ahmedabad)

Hospital licence expired in March, docs not qualified for newborn care: Cops

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, reports Abhay. 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.

The hospital also lacked a fire extinguisher and an emergency exit, which are crucial in case of any unforeseen events. The 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.

le homicide), 308 (attempt to commit culpable homicide), 336 (negligent conduct with fire) and 34 (common intention) was filed.

The Municipal Corporation said: "The premises was found consisting of ground and first floor and was constructed in 2001-02 and the ba-

by care hospital in this building has been in operation since 2015. This building was built under the sanctioned building plan. In this context, 'Other Activities' (including nursing/hospital activities) are allowed under Chapter 15.0 Mixed Use Regulations of Master Plan.

Family on 2nd floor has lucky escape, loses shop in inferno

Continued from P 1

imilarly, there was a close escape for a woman and her two daughters who were living on the second floor of the building. They, however, lost their optical shop in the incident.

Rajni Oberoi, who lives adjacent to the hospital, said: "Initially, we thought there was an issue with the transformer when the blasts began. I heard three explosions, and by the time we reached the road in front of the hospital, 8-9 blasts had already occurred."

When cops started searching for the accused owner, they found him missing. Raids were conducted and he was summoned to join the investigation. He appeared before police in the evening and was arrested. An FIR under IPC sections 304 (culpable

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

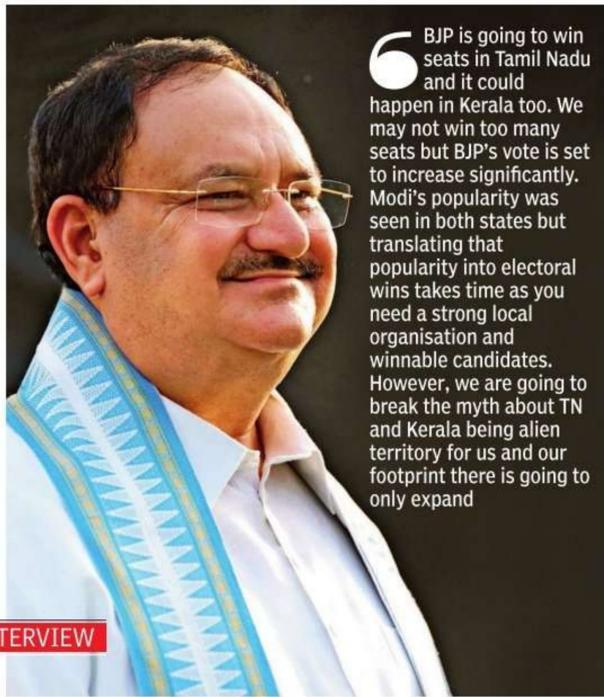
Confident of significant gains in states like West Bengal, Odisha, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh while equally sure of retaining dominance in north and central India, BJP president J P Nadda tells TOI's Akhilesh Singh his party is set to retain office with a thumping majority. Excerpts:

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 the way 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

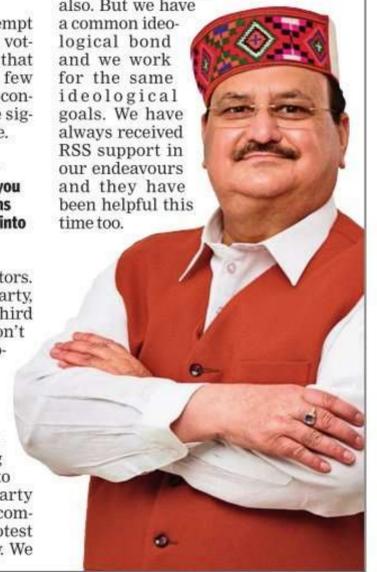
manage it. We also take cadres into confidence. There might be reservations in a few quarters but our internal democracy and structure are so inclusive that anyone joining the party feels the comfort.

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.



Hry, Odisha see significant uptick in voter turnout data

► Continued from P 1

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.

There was a climb of 4.4 percentage points in turnout 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 41.1 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, in J&K 0.5 percentage points and in Delhi, 1.1 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, 66.1% in Phase 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.

Oppn hatching three big conspiracies: PM

► Continued from P 1

The PM said SP repeated its pledge in 2014. "Not just that, SP said it would allocate a 15% quota to Muslims in police and PAC (Provincial Armed Constabulary)." PM Modi 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 SC/ST/OBCs, but that was completely abolished and reservations were now given to Muslims," he said.

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" by announcing they would repeal CAA and restore Article 370.

A few days ago, the PM had on social media shared a video of Congress MP Rahul Gandhi campaigning in UP "10-12 years ago", where he is purportedly heard accusing



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

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 big conspiracy of the 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 SC, ST and OBC. 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 and 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 SC verdict on Ram Janmabhoomi, 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."

Will enforce UCC in 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 PTL, 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.



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

Shah defended Modi's criticism of Congress's religious quotas and wealth redistribution promises, questioning the practicality and sincerity of such commitments.

"If they divide the truth into pieces to mislead people, isn't it our duty to put these pieces together and in-

form people," he said.

Shah debunked allegations about tampering of EVMs by citing the opposition's successes in West Bengal, Telangana, Himachal Pradesh and other states and said, "If those elections were fair, then this election is also fair."

The minister 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.

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'BJP-led Guj govt allowed Muslim quota under OBC category'

Manoj Chaurasia @timesgroup.com

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 ex-deputy CM Tejashwi Prasad Yadav on Sunday wrote to the former, alleging BJP-governed Gujarat govt allowed Muslim quotas 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 reservations under OBC category. You yourself have served as the CM 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 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 mangalsutras, 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".

INDIA to form next govt, Modi didn't fulfil any promise: Kharge

Manoj Chaurasia @timesgroup.com

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

"He (PM) had promised to give two crore jobs to youths every year; bring black money stashed in Swiss banks, increase the farmers' income, and make the cities smart. Did he do anything?" Kharge said at an election meeting.

Without naming NDA or Modi, he said: "Galti se agar wo aa gaye, toh dictator banke apko ghumana bana denge (If by mistake they form the govt, they will make you slaves under a dictator)." 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. "We waived loans of farmers worth Rs 72,000 crore," Kharge said.

On the unemployment issue, Kharge said former Bihar deputy CM Tejashwi Prasad Yadav alone gave around five lakh jobs to the youths in a single state. "Just imagine how many jobs could be given in the whole country," he said. "This time neither Modi nor Nitish (Kumar) would come to power... Is baar gathbandhan aayega (INDIA bloc will form the next govt)," he said.

Slamming CM Nitish Kumar for going back to the NDA fold, Kharge advised Tejashwi not to take him back to the Grand Alliance in future.

Cab panel OKs 1-month extension for Army chief

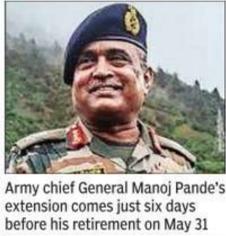
'No Senior Post Will Be Filled Before Polls End'

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.

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



Army chief General Manoj Pande's extension comes just six days before his retirement on May 31

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 corps, the former became 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 are Northern Command and Central Command chiefs, Lt-Gens M V Suchindra Kumar and N S Raja Subramani, and chief of integrated defence staff Lt-Gen J P Mathew. The only available example of an extension being granted was when Indira Gandhi extended the tenure of Gen G G Bewoor (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 P M Hariz) to appoint Gen Bipin Rawat as Army chief in Dec 2016.

FTII batchmates instrumental in shaping my ideas, says Payal

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 scholar-

Historic feat has made India proud: PM

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."

ship 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 the dissemination of different cinematic ideas. "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." Payal's peers and seniors see her as a film aficionado perpetual behind the camera.

As mercury soars, bodies pile up in Jaipur morgue

Intishab.Ali@timesgroup.com

Jaipur: Bodies in Jaipur's state-run SMS Hospital's mortuary have piled up in the past two weeks and overshot 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 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 fatal-



The temperature has hit 50 degrees Celsius in some districts

ities 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.

According to officials, the surge in unidentified bodies may be attributed to heat-wave deaths but cannot be officially categorised as such.

Mum hoarding site not ours: Rlys

Mumbai: Indian Railways has sent a letter to Mumbai crime branch saying that the Ghatkopar plot, where a hoarding collapsed on May 13 claiming 17 lives, does not belong to them, report Ahmed Ali & Sanjeev Devasia. The letter thus confirms that the plot belongs to the Maha-

rashtira govt which allotted the land to GRP.

The accused, Bhavesh Bhide, secured approval from GRP though it needed civic clearance as it was not central govt land. "For doing anything on it, they had to follow civic regulations," an official said.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Pankaj Saboo son of Sri Nemi Chand Saboo, Residing at 89/378, PARK RESIDENCY, 4th Lane, Bangur Park, P. O. & P. S. - Rishra, District - Hooghly, Pin - 712248, my wife name has been wrongly recorded as Priya Saboo in the place of Smt. Upma Saboo in my Passport. I declared that my wife henceforth be known as Upma Saboo as declared before the Learned 1st Class Judicial Magistrate, Serampore, Hooghly, vide Affidavit No. 4833 dated 22/05/2024. Priya Saboo and Upma Saboo both are the same one and identical person.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Know all men by these presents that our client Sri. Poonam Choudhary, S/o. Sri. Kataran Choudhary, R/o. Plot No. 152 & 153, 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, admeasuring to an extent of Ac. 2.495 Gts in Sy No. 172 situated at Bollaram(V), Narasapur 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, admeasuring to an extent of Ac. 2.500 Gts in Sy. No. 172 situated at Bollaram(V), Narasapur Taluq, Medak-Dist., and bounded by: NORTH: remaining portion of the land in Plot No. 125 being sold to Manaksha 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 IPRA Attorneys & Advocates, G-4, #3-4-543 & 544, Laxmi Nilayam Apartments Narayangauda, Hyderabad-27, Telangana +91 6300598501, +91 91001 10066

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DEAR WEEKLY LOTTERY

₹1 CRORE WON BY PURBA MEDINIPUR RESIDENT



as first prize in Dear Weekly Lottery in the draw held on 07.01.2024. His winning ticket number is 97119340. He has submitted his prize-winning ticket along with the prize claim form to the Nodal Officer, Nagaland State Lotteries located at Kolkata. "I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to Dear Lottery and Nagaland State Lotteries for this golden opportunity which has made me a Crorepati. My life will get more financial support with the prize money of One Crore rupees which I have won from Dear Lottery," said the winner.

Mr. GAUTAM NAYEK from PURBA MEDINIPUR, WEST BENGAL has won Rs. 1 Crore

CHITTARANJAN LOCOMOTIVE WORKS

Locos as per Drg./Specn. No. CLW/MS/3/035 ALT-4, (01 set consist of 04 items as per set details attached) [Warranty Period: 30 Months after the date of delivery]; 706.00 Set; ₹ 787260.00; 24/06/2024 at 11:00 AM, [3]; 75244082; Filter Frame Assy (FLY SCREEN) for WAG-9HC Loco as per DRGNO. 1209-11-235-173 Alt. 1 & 1209-11-235-174 Alt. 1, Cat. No. R/9/0078, [Warranty Period: 30 Months after the date of delivery]; ₹ 894.00 Set; ₹ 182860.00; 14/06/2024 at 11:00 AM, [4]; 75243709; Brake Gear Arrangement & Details for WAG-9HC Loco. Scope of supply as per Category No. - V/9/0001A (Copy attached with the tender documents) [Warranty Period: 30 Months after the date of delivery]; ₹ 872.00 Set; ₹ 2000000.00; 19/06/2024 at 11:00 AM, [5]; 75244088; WINDOW for WAG-9HC Loco, as per Drg./Specn. No. CLW/MS/3/014 Alt-5, Category No. R/9/0017, [Each Set is a Loco Set consisting of 2 items] [Warranty Period: 30 Months after the date of delivery]; 291.00 Set; ₹ 406560.00; 26/06/2024 at 11:00 AM, [6]; 75243838; PCMM/CLW/Chittaranjan, Blind Installation (LH & RH) for WAG-9HC

BANGALORE WATER SUPPLY AND SEWERAGE BOARD

INVITATION FOR TENDER (Only through kpp portal)

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

Name of the Work	Amount put to tender
Office of the Engineer-in-Chief, 2nd Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, K.G.Road, Bangalore- 560 009.	EMD
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, Pulikeshinagara constituency under AEEC-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. DIPRC/PRA/117/2024-25

RETHINKING, RENEWING, REINVENTING WASTE MANAGEMENT

₹ 872.9 Cr.

TOTAL REVENUE FROM OPERATIONS

₹ 201.8 Cr.

EBITDA

₹ 109.1 Cr.

PROFIT BEFORE TAX

Figures are for FY24

We are India's first listed company in solid waste management, and are leading the transformative movement against climate change through our innovative recycling and waste-to-energy efforts. With our strong environmental commitment, we manage over 5 million tonnes of waste yearly. Join us in promoting #SustainabilityWithGrowth!

ANTONY WASTE HANDLING CELL LIMITED

CIN : L90001MH2001PLC130485. Reg. Off. : A-59, Road No. 10, Wagle Industrial Estate, Thane (West) - 400 604, Maharashtra, India

antony-waste
@antonywaste
www.antony-waste.com

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. Siddhasiri Souharda Sahakari Sangha Niyamit, Vijaypur (formerly known as M/s Siddhasiri 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 107/2A;
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

Declaration about Criminal Cases

[As per the judgment dated 25th September, 2018, of Hon'ble Supreme Court in WP (Civil) No. 536 of 2011 (Public Interest Foundation & Ors. Vs. Union of India & Anr.)]

Name and Address of Candidate : SOUGATA RAY, 162D/593, Lake Gardens, Kolkata-700045

Name of Political Party : ALL INDIA TRINAMOL CONGRESS (Independent Candidates should write "Independent" here)

Name of Election : Parliamentary Election 2024
Name of Constituency : 16, Dum Dum

I Sougata Ray (Name of Candidate), a Candidate for the abovementioned Election, declare for Public information the following details about my criminal antecedents :

(A) Pending criminal cases				
Sl. No.	Name of Court	Case No. & Dates	Status of Case(s)	Section(s) of Acts concerned and brief description of offence(s)
1.	CBI/ACB/KOLKATA	RC0102017 A0010 16.04.17	Pending	U/s. 120B of IPC & Sec 7, 13(2) r/w 13(1)(a) & 13(1)(d) of PC Act 1988 Public Servant accepting or agreeing to accept illegal gratification, committing offences of habitual acceptance of illegal gratification, criminal misconduct and criminal conspiracy.
(B) Details about cases of conviction for criminal offences				
Sl. No.	Name of Court & date(s) of order(s)	Description of offence(s) & Punishment Imposed	Maximum Punishment Imposed	
	N.A	N.A	N.A	

* In the case of Election to Council of States or Election to Legislative Council by MLAs, mention the Election concerned in place of name of constituency.



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 on 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. NVT

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.



digging sticks, spades, large agricultural forks to remove the bodies buried under the soil," Aktoprak said.

The IOM said an elementary school, small businesses and stalls, a guesthouse, and a petrol station were also buried. The UN's Papua New Guinea office said five bodies were retrieved from an area where 50 to 60 homes had been destroyed, and a number of injured reported, including at least 20 women and children. IOM said the community in this village was relatively young and it's feared that the most fatali-

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 de-



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

fence. 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

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 Clownday. 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.

uggle sessions, in which supposed offenders were sometimes beaten or tortured. But the idea is the same: harnessing ordina-

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. NVT

MUTUAL FUN by HSBC Mutual Fund



An Investor Education & Awareness Initiative by HSBC Mutual Fund



Mutual Fund investments are subject to market risks, read all scheme related documents carefully.

CL 1380

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

Buying By Domestic Investors May Cushion Foreign Players' Selloff

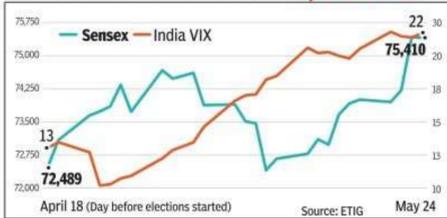
TIMES NEWS NETWORK

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 20,000 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.

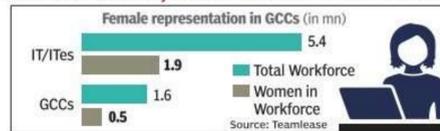
With a mere 6.7% of women in executive roles in GCCs, there is a considerable decrease in the available talent pool of women as they move up the career ladder, showed a Pure Storage and Zinnov report. At the senior level (9-12 years of experience), the representation was at 15.7%, the report said. India has nearly 1,600 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

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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

\$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 has 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.

TOI IN THE CLASSROOM

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.

Invesco Mutual Fund

An investor education and awareness initiative

For Know Your Customer (KYC) guidelines along with the documentary requirements and procedure for change of address, phone number, bank details, etc., please visit the Education and Guidance section on www.invescomutualfund.com. Investor should deal with only SEBI registered Mutual Funds, details of which can be verified under "Intermediaries/Market Infrastructure Institutions" on <https://www.sebi.gov.in/index.html>. For any grievance / complaint, please call us on 1800-209-0007 or write to us at mservices@invesco.com. Alternatively, complaints can be registered on the SEBI SCORES Portal at <https://scores.gov.in>

Mutual Fund investments are subject to market risks, read all scheme related documents carefully.

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



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.

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

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 Pulp Films and France's Arte France Cinéma. Kapadia herself pulled 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.

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, we radiate outwards and energise the air, earth, water, vegetation, wildlife, and the world.



THE SPEAKING TREE

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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 ended 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

Arnab.Seal@timesgroup.com

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
score of 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.

Poor shooting leads to Deepika's downfall

Archiman.Bhaduri
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Kolkata: Just two months before the Paris Olympics, the Indian recurve archers returned empty-handed from Archery World Cup Stage II at Yecheon, South Korea, on Sunday.

India's medal hopes rested on **Deepika Kumari** but the seasoned campaigner failed to pick up successive World Cup medals after making a comeback to the international arena since becoming a mother.

After ending up with their highest tally of medals in a single World Cup bagging eight in Shanghai last month, the archers managed just two medals (one gold and one silver) in the compound section this time.

It was a poor day in office for Deepika who went down to top-seeded Korean Lim Sihyeon 2-6 (26-28, 28-28, 27-28, 27-27) in the semifinal. The 20-year-old Korean was not at her best, but Deepika managed just three 10s while hitting three 8s too in the match to go down to

her World No. 2 opponent for the second time in less than a month.

If it was bad against Lim, it was worse against Alejandra Valencia as the former World No. 1 lost 4-6 (26-29, 26-28, 28-25, 27-25, 26-29) in the bronze-medal playoff match. In spite of enjoying a better head-to-head win record against her Mexican rival, Deepika was a bundle of nerves as she shot four 8s in first six arrows to trail 0-4 early on. She did manage to make it four-all but a poor 26 in the fifth and final set saw her falling by the wayside with the 29-year-old Indian ending up hitting six 8s in the match.

Deepika will have plenty to improve during her training with South Korean coaching legend Kim Hyung Tak for a second stint in six months before taking aim in the final Olympic qualification at World Cup Stage III in Antalya next month.

Chase leads WI to T20I series win over SA

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 T20I 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 World Cup which gets under way on June 1 in the United States, will face South Africa again on Sunday to conclude the series.

It was a strong all-round performance from the Caribbean team coached by Daren Sammy, who captained the West Indies to the T20 World Cup title in 2016.

Brief scores: West Indies 207/7 in 20 overs (King 36, Mayers 32, Chase 67 n.o., Fletcher 29, Shepherd 26; Ngidi 2-41, Peter 2-32, Phehlukwayo 2-51). South Africa 191/7 in 20 overs (Hendricks 34, De Kock 41, Van der Dussen 30; Motie 3-22). **West Indies won by 16 runs.**

McCoy replaces injured Holder in WI squad

St John's (Antigua): The West Indies on Sunday named Obed McCoy as Jason Holder's replacement for the upcoming T20 World Cup, with the latter being ruled out due to an injury which he sustained while playing the County Championship. Without providing specific details of the injuries to Holder, the Cricket West Indies said in a release that the player will require a recovery period and the team's medical staff will provide all support "to ensure his swift and complete recovery".

"Jason is an experienced player in our set-up. His absence will undoubtedly be felt both on and off the field. We look forward to having a fully fit Jason with us again soon," lead selector and former player Desmond Haynes was quoted as saying in the CWI release.

The squad: Rowman Powell (c), Alzarri Joseph (vc), Johnson Charles, Roston Chase, Shimron Hetmyer, Shai Hope (wk), Akeal Hosen, Shamir Joseph, Brandon King, Obed McCoy, Gudakesh Motie, Andre Russell, Nicholas Pooran (wk), Sherfane Rutherford, Romario Shepherd.

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 all-round 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.

Riyen 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 bowling 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



JASPRIT BUMRAH

GALLERY

Boxers Jamwal, Dev move up in Olympic qualifiers

Indian boxers continued their dominant run on day three of the second World Boxing Qualifiers for Paris Olympics as Abhinash Jamwal (63.5kg) and Nishant Dev (71kg) comfortably won their bouts in Bangkok on Sunday.

India eves lose to Argentina: The Indian women's hockey team continued its winless streak in the Belgium leg of the FIH Pro League, slumping to 0-3 defeat against Argentina in Antwerp on Sunday. Celina Di Santo (1st minute), Maria Campoy (39th) and Maria Granatto (47th) scored for Argentina in India's final match of the Belgium leg.

Golfer Grayson Murray, 30, dies by suicide

Murray died by suicide, his parents confirmed in a statement Sunday morning. The death of Murray was announced by commissioner Jay Monahan on Saturday, one day after the 30-year-old golfer cited illness following his withdrawal from the Charles Schwab Challenge at Fort Worth, Texas.

Sriharis binged silver: Ace India swimmer Sriharis Nataraj clinched a silver medal in the 50m backstroke event at the 30th Mare Nostrum swimming tour at the Canet-en-Roussillon, France. Nataraj, who competed at the Tokyo Olympics, clocked 25.50s. Nataraj's personal best in the event is 25.11s.

Atwal at T-29: Indian golfer Arjun Atwal rose to T-29 with a card of 68 in the third round of the KitchenAid Senior PGA Championship in Benton Harbor, USA. Atwal's first two rounds were 69 and 75 and he's now 1-under for three rounds. Ernie Els birdied his final hole for a 2-under 69, giving him a share of the lead with Greg Chalmers going into the final round.

Diksha in top 10 of LET Order of Merit: Indian golfer Diksha Dagar secured the ninth spot on the Ladies European Tour's Order of Merit after a creditable T-20 finish at the Jabra Ladies Open in Evian-les-Bains, France. Diksha shot even par 71 on the final day for a total of 2-over 215.

Southampton back in the Premier League: Southampton secured an immediate return to the Premier League on Sunday by beating Leeds 1-0 at Wembley Stadium in the Championship playoff final.

EFI contemplates legal options after court appoints administrator: The Equestrian Federation of India (EFI) is contemplating legal options after the Delhi High Court appointed an ad-hoc panel to manage its affairs, saying the verdict will put a huge financial burden on a "poor sports body" that can either manage the fee of panel or work for the growth of the game.

ACTION TODAY

TENNIS: French Open: 2:30pm, 8pm and 12am Tuesday (Sony).

Sizzling Alcaraz tames Wolf

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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.

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

SELECT RESULTS

Men: Lorenzo Sonego (Italy) bt Ugo Humbert (x17, France), 6-4, 2-6, 6-4, 6-3; Andrey Rublev (x6, Russia) bt Taro Daniel (Japan) 6-2, 6-7 (3), 6-3, 7-5; Grigor Dimitrov (x10, Bulgaria) bt Aleksandar Kovacevic (USA) 6-4, 6-3, 6-4; Carlos Alcaraz (x3, Spain) bt Jeffrey John Wolf (USA) 6-1, 6-2, 6-1; Hubert Hurkacz (x8, Poland) bt Shintaro Mochizuki (Japan) 4-6, 6-3, 3-6, 6-0, 6-3.

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-minutes. Alcaraz had 27 winners in the match, 15 of which came from the forehand side, which augurs well for him.

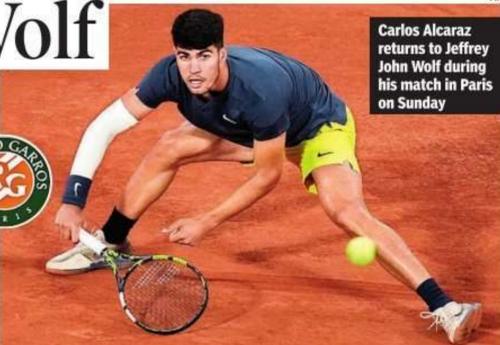
Alcaraz, who appeared to be debating with his box during a break in play, perhaps on holding back on power, said the performance sleeve was proposed to him by his physio Juanjo Moreno.

"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 sported bright yellow shorts, which helped light up the dank, dismal conditions on a rain-hit afternoon. "The arm is 100 per cent. 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 needed three sets to defeat Italy's 48th-ranked Lucia Bronzetti on the showpiece Court Philippe Chatrier, 6-1, 4-6, 7-5. The 26-year-old fired 31 winners, including six aces, and 45 unforced errors in a match where she gave up a 4-0 lead in the decider before finding herself 5-4



Carlos Alcaraz returns to Jeffrey John Wolf during his match in Paris on Sunday

Osaka beats Bronzetti in three sets

Paris: Naomi Osaka swept to her first victory at the French Open in three years on Monday, setting up a potential showdown with world number one Iga Swiatek, as Roland Garros prepared to possibly bid farewell to Rafael Nadal.

Osaka needed three sets to defeat Italy's 48th-ranked Lucia Bronzetti on the showpiece Court Philippe Chatrier, 6-1, 4-6, 7-5. The 26-year-old fired 31 winners, including six aces, and 45 unforced errors in a match where she gave up a 4-0 lead in the decider before finding herself 5-4

down. However, she rallied strongly to register her first win at a Grand Slam since the 2022 Australian Open.

Former champion and ninth seed Jelena Ostapenko overcame a rusty start in both sets to beat Romania's Jaqueline Cristian 6-4 7-5 and reach the second round.

Two-time quarterfinalist Andrey Rublev, the sixth seed, defeated Japan's Taro Daniel in four sets. French number one Ugo Humbert, the 17th seed, crashed out 6-2, 6-7 (3/7), 6-3, 7-5 to Italy's Lorenzo Sonego. AGENCIES

Neeraj not injured, Ostrava pullout 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 organisers of the prestigious meet said he has decided to skip the event due to an injury he sustained while training two weeks ago. PTI

Leverkusen clinch German Cup for first-ever domestic double

Berlin: Granit Zhaka's early strike was enough for Bayer Leverkusen to win the German Cup final 1-0 over Kaiserslautern for an unbeaten domestic double on Saturday.

Zhaka fired the ball in under the crossbar from distance in the 16th minute. It proved to be enough against second-division Kaiserslautern despite losing defender Odilon Kossounou to a second yellow card just before the break.

Leverkusen won the Bundesliga unbeaten, an historic feat. The only blip on the record of Xabi Alonso's team this season was losing the Europa League final to Atalanta 3-0 on Wednesday in Dublin. That ended Leverkusen's record 51-game unbeaten run across all competitions. It was its only loss in 53 games this season.

"The whole journey, the whole season was wonderful," the Spanish coach said after doubling Leverkusen's trophy haul in just one season.

"What we did this season is unbelievable."



PSG's Kylian Mbappe given a farewell

Mbappe glad to leave PSG on winning note: France forward Kylian Mbappe said he is leaving Paris St Germain with his head held high after the Ligue 1 champions' 2-1 victory over Olympique Lyonnais in the French Cup final.

Mbappe announced this month he would leave the French club at the end of the season after a seven-year stay during which he became their all-time top scorer, with 256 goals. His last game for the club came in Saturday's final with first-half strikes from Ousmane Dembele and Fabian Ruiz securing a win for PSG.

Madrid fans see off Kroos in Betis draw: Real Madrid supporters bade farewell to midfielder Toni Kroos in his final La Liga game for the club at the Santiago Bernabeu on Saturday, a 0-0 draw against Real Betis. Earlier, Atletico Madrid, fourth, finished their campaign with a 2-0 win at Real Sociedad and Athletic Bilbao beat Rayo Vallecano 1-0.

Milan draw in Giroud, Pioli farewell: AC Milan ended their Serie A campaign with a 3-3 draw against Salernitana on Saturday in what was the last game at the club for coach Stefano Pioli and striker Olivier Giroud. AGENCIES

RESULTS: La Liga: Osasuna 1 (Budimir 30), Villarreal 1 (Morales 57); Real Sociedad 0, Atletico Madrid 2 (Lino 9, Mandava 90+3); Almeria 6 (Melero 48, Arribas 51, 86, Zaldua 57-og, Suarez 65, 71), Cadiz 1 (Ocampo 30); Rayo Vallecano 0, Athletic Bilbao 1 (Nico Williams 67); Real Betis 0, Real Madrid 0. **Serie A:** Juventus 2 (Chiesa 26, Alex Sandro 28), Monza 0; AC Milan 3 (Leao 22, Giroud 27, Calabria 77), Salernitana 3 (Simy 64, 89, Sambisa 87).

Leclerc wins maiden Grand Prix at home

Monte Carlo: Charles Leclerc finally broke his Monaco Grand Prix curse on Sunday as Red Bull had an off weekend with Max Verstappen sixth and Sergio Perez crashing out on the first lap.

Leclerc ended years of frustration at his home race by taking the jewel in the Formula One calendar from pole at his third attempt.

A tearful Leclerc said: "No words can explain this. It means a lot, it's the race that made me dream of becoming a F1 driver."

"Tonight is going to be a big night!" McLaren's Oscar Piastri followed the man from Monaco across the line with Carlos Sainz in the other Ferrari in third. Leclerc had started at the front of the grid at the circuit he used to travel along on the bus to school as a kid in 2021 and

2022 only for misfortune to stop him winning on both occasions.

With Ferrari now a much smoother run ship under Fred Vasseur this was a far slicker Ferrari team than then, and Leclerc dictated the pace perfectly from the front, until the end of the first lap.

That was when the red flag had to come out to stop the race after a three-car pile-up with Perez's Red Bull ripped apart. **MONACO GP RESULTS:** 1. Charles Leclerc (Ferrari); 2. Oscar Piastri (McLaren); 3. Carlos Sainz Jr. (Ferrari); 4. Lando Norris (McLaren); 5. George Russell (Mercedes); 6. Max Verstappen (Red Bull); 7. Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes); 8. Yuki Tsunoda (RB); 9. Alexander Albon (Williams); 10. Pierre Gasly (Alpine); 11. Fernando Alonso (Aston Martin); 12. Daniel Ricciardo (RB); 13. Valtteri Bottas (Sauber); 14. Lance Stroll (Aston Martin); 15. Logan Sargeant (Williams); 16. Zhou Guanyu (Sauber). **DNF:** Kevin Magnussen (Haas); Esteban Ocon (Alpine); Sergio Perez (Red Bull); Nico Hulkenberg (Haas).

Chebet smashes 10,000m WR

Eugene (USA): World champion Sha'Carri Richardson won her first 100m of the Olympic season on Saturday, clocking

10.83sec at the Eugene Diamond League where Kenyan **Beatrice Chebet** shattered the 10,000m world record.

Richardson, who won the world title last August in her personal-best of 10.65sec, was coming off a pair of sluggish 200m performances in China. But she signaled her intentions for next month's US Olympic trials with the second-fastest time of the year behind American Jacious Sears's 10.77 in April and came out on top of a stacked field in which Jamaica's Tokyo Olympic gold medalist Elaine Thompson-Herah finished last in 11.30.

Five-time Olympic gold medalist Thompson-Herah was launching her 2024 campaign and has work to do. AFP



THE TIMES

INCLUSIVE OF CALCUTTA TIMES & EDUCATION TIMES |

ARMY CHIEF GETS 1-MONTH EXTENSION JUST 6 DAYS BEFORE RETIREMENT. CENTRE'S UNUSUAL MOVE COULD IMPACT THE FORCE'S LINE OF SUCCESSION 9

Remal fury on coastline, brace for heavy rain today

4-Hr Landfall At Bengal-B'desh Coast From 9pm

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Kolkata: Cyclone Remal's landfall started around 9pm on Sunday at the coasts of Bengal and Bangladesh, a process that continued for four hours, between Sagar Islands and Khepupara, around 100km from Kolkata. The very severe cyclone brought wind speeds of 110kmph to 120kmph, gusting to 135kmph, when it hit land, triggering heavy rain along the coasts and a spell of 20mm to 30mm rain in Kolkata.

FULL COVERAGE: P 2
Agencies toil to reduce pain on Monday, P 2
Soaring air fares, P 2

A consistent, intense spell of rain started lashing Kolkata from 10.30pm, as predicted. It was accompanied by gusts of wind that reached speeds of 70kmph-80kmph. The downpour would continue till the early hours of Monday and beyond, said the Met office. Neighbouring districts of North and South 24 Parganas, Howrah, Hooghly and East Midnapore also experienced heavy rain.

Even as clouds heralding the progress of the cyclone gave Kolkata a moderate 23.9mm rain and disrupted life on Sunday, the Met office sa-

DISASTER MGMT TEAMS ON HIGH ALERT



Pic: Subhomoj Sen



(Left) A restive Hooghly on Sunday evening, hours before Remal made landfall on the Bengal-Bangladesh coast; (above) disaster management personnel in South 24 Parganas

REMAL'S PROGRESS

➤ **8 pm** | Outer cloud band over coastal Bengal & Bangladesh, 110kmph-120kmph at centre

➤ **8.24 pm** | 130km SSE of Canning, 110kmph-120kmph near centre

➤ **9pm** | Landfall process starts, continues for four hours

➤ **SUNDAY WEATHER**
 ➤ 23.9mm rain in last 24 hours

➤ From 10.30pm, around 20mm to 30mm rain per hour and 70kmph to 80kmph winds till early Monday

WHAT TO EXPECT TODAY

➤ Heavy rain, between 70mm and 110mm

➤ Wind speeds to reduce to 50kmph to 60kmph, gusting up to 70kmph

➤ Smaller spells of thundershowers to continue till Tuesday

Smaller spells of thundershowers to continue till Tuesday

HELPLINE NUMBERS

➤ **KMC Control room** | 033-22861212

➤ **Kolkata Police** | 9432610428, 9432610429

➤ **CESC** | 18605001912

➤ **KMDA** | 033-23580021, 23599087

➤ **NKDA control room** | 033-35050004, 033-35050030

➤ **BMC control room** | 6292234126



id there was a high chance of heavy rain on Monday — between 70mm and 110mm. Kolkata has also been warned about wind speeds ranging from 50kmph to 60kmph, gusting up to 70kmph, accompanied by smaller spells of thundershowers.

KMC teams were on standby, armed with tree-cutters, dumpers, payloaders and heavy-duty cranes to remove any uprooted trees, said mayor Firhad Hakim. He also asked

residents of insecure buildings to take refuge at camps set up in KMC-run schools. He warned that although the civic body was ready with heavy-duty pumps to flush out storm water, it may take some time to free the city of waterlogging if there was continuous rain, as the Hooghly was in high tide.

In Salt Lake, New Town and Sector V, Bidhannagar Municipal Corporation (BMC), New Town Kolkata

Development Authority (NKDA) and Nabadiganta Industrial Township Authority (NDITA) opened control rooms with disaster-management teams. NKDA issued an advisory for housing societies and resident welfare associations in New Town to keep terraces and balconies of flats free of "loose items", which might pose a threat.

Inputs from Aheli Banerjee, Saikat Ray & Suman Chakraborti

Army defuses 3 IEDs in Imphal East

Army defused 3 powerful IEDs — two weighing 2kg and one 5kg — near Maphou dam in Imphal East on Saturday, averting major loss of life and property. Electronic detonators were also found alongside the IEDs. **FLAP INSIDE**

Ex-cabinet secy to be ICICI chief

Former cabinet secretary Pradeep Kumar Sinha will take over as chairman of ICICI Bank from G C Chaturvedi, the bank said. RBI approved his appointment on May 24 for a three-year term effective July 1. **P 11**

'Poisoned' beer kills 2 jawans

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. **FLAP INSIDE**

WEATHER

Max 31.2°C (-3.9) Min 26.8°C (-0.4). Sunrise: Tue 4.52am. Sunset: Mon 6.15pm. Generally cloudy sky. Rain/thunder-shower with one or two intense spells (2-3cm/hr) with strong surface wind (70-80kmph) very likely during night/early hours. Max & min temp may be around 30°C & 25°C. Max humidity 98% min 68% Rain: 19.6mm

Weight-loss meds linked to stomach paralysis: 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. But reports suggest that these drugs are being sourced by many through the grey market at a premium. **FLAP INSIDE**

6 newborns killed, 5 battling for life after fire at Del hosp

No Emergency Exit, No Fire Extinguisher

Abhay & Siddhivi 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. Five babies rescued from the fire are battling for their lives in another hospital. Police have arrested the facility owner, Dr Naveen Kishi, besides Dr Akash, who was on duty on Saturday night. They have

➤ **Innocent lives snuffed out on dark Delhi night, P 7**
 ➤ **EDIT: Tragedy Foretold**

been booked for culpable homicide and other offences, cops said.

The fire department received a call around 11.40pm 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 in a complex operation by firemen and good Samaritans, but only five survived. The bodies will be handed over to the parents after DNA



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



match confirms their identities, cops said. Police suspect a short circuit triggered the blaze.

"During inspection of hospital and examination of staff, it was found that there was no fire extinguisher, improper entry exit, absence of emergency exit, deployment of BAMS doctor etc. Therefore, more stringent sections were added to the FIR," DCP (Shahdara) Surender Chaudhary said.

In all, there were seven deaths reported after the blaze. Confusion prevailed around the death of the seventh baby, who the hospital claimed had died at 9pm, before the blaze started. Cops said they would verify this from the autopsy report. The post-mortem of

the victims was conducted at GTB Hospital.

After receiving an SOS call, around 12 fire tenders, cops and crime and forensic experts rushed to the spot. Witnesses recounted the terrifying ordeal, describing a series of explosions that rocked the area. They reported seeing oxygen cylinders propelled into the air as the fire raged out of control. They heard at least six to seven blasts.

Sarika Jain, a resident living in close proximity to the hospital, was about to enter her home when an explosion occurred. The force of the blast flung her several metres, leaving her with injuries.

➤ **Lucky escape, P 7**

Rajkot fire toll rises to 28, two accused arrested

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 large weekend crowd the previous evening.

➤ **Related reports, P 7**

The fire left the bodies charred beyond recognition. According to the FIR, the 28 recovered bodies included 15 men's, six women's and three children's. The gender of three bodies could not be determined due to severe burns; only partial remains

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**

of one person were recovered. Forensic experts are now tasked with the challenge of identifying the victims through DNA analysis, which could take up to seven days. **TNN**

➤ **'Lacked fire safety...', P 7**

Sitars made in Bengal village travel far & wide

The nondescript village of Dadpur in Uluberia, in Bengal's Howrah district, 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 even abroad. Many in the village have shifted from other professions to making instruments.

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 6**

Study: Weight loss drugs up abdominal paralysis risk

May Necessitate Surgical Or Med Intervention

Durgesh Nandan Jha
@timesgroup.com

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



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

stimulate 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 gastrointestinal side-effects such as abdominal paralysis that can impact quality of life," he added.

In twist of fate, man loses son & boy loses dad in crash that kills 12

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 Uttarakhanda 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 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 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 pa-



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

rents survived.

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 Pramod.

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."

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

Army defuses 3 IEDs near dam in Manipur

Guwahati: The 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 spokesperson 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.

Mum accident: 'Doc was drunk or using phone'

Mumbai: Police investigating the Sion Hospital accident, where a 60-year-old woman from Mumbra was killed, suspect Dr Rajesh Dere, head of forensic medicine at the hospital, was either under the influence of alcohol or using his cell phone when he allegedly ran over her, report Ahmed Ali & Sumitra Deb Roy.

Police claimed that Dere misled them by stating that Rubaida Shaikh was found unconscious and intimated the authorities of her death only after 18 hours. Dere was produced before Shindewadi court in Dadar and remanded in judicial custody. He was later granted bail for Rs 20,000. Shaikh's son, Shahnawaz, alleged that the 18-hour delay was sufficient to eliminate traces of alcohol from Dere's system.

Excise dept seals club near Porsche crash spot

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Pune: Excise officials on Saturday sealed a Pune pub in front of which a 17-year-old driving a Porsche Taycan hit and killed two bike-riding 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.

"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. "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.

Govt: Block incoming int'l spoofed calls

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 said fraudsters were making spoofed calls displaying Indian mobile numbers and committing cyber-crime and financial fraud.

Such calls appear to be originating within India but are being made by cybercriminals from abroad. "DoT and Telecom Service Providers have devised a system to identify and block such international spoofed calls from reaching any Indian telecom subscriber. Now directions have been issued to the TSPs for blocking such incoming international spoofed calls," an official statement said. TNN

19 students from Kyrgyzstan back home after 4-day journey

Ujjain/Barwani/Khargone: After a marathon four-day journey spanning three countries to flee violence in Kyrgyzstan, 5 youths from MP, among a group of 19 Indian medical students, finally arrived safely home on Sunday, reports 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, es-

pecially those living in rented apartments as they have no security. Sawaner said he could return home only with the help of the Indian embassy. Chetan had issued a video a few days earlier, pleading with Indian govt and MP CM Mohan Yadav to evacuate them.

"We chose to go to Kazakhstan to escape the violence in Kyrgyzstan. The videos on social media were frightening and we were extremely worried for our safety," said Vivek Sharma.

2 SAF personnel die after drinking beer in MP, poisoning suspected

Bhopal: Two Special Armed Force personnel died on Sunday from suspected poisoning after drinking beer on Saturday 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 glasses, and a packet containing some powder were found in Dhaniram's scooter. Premal, in his dying decla-

ration, 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.

"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. TNN