



Devotees arrive in huge numbers at Kedarnath Temple at Rudraprayag district in Uttarakhand.

Uttarakhand helicopter crash claims 7 lives

MI News Service, Gaurikund: A helicopter crashed near the Kedarnath shrine in Uttarakhand early Sunday, killing all seven on board.

Rudraprayag District Disaster Management Officer Nandan Singh Rajwar told that the accident took place above the forests of Gaurikund amid poor visibility due to bad weather.

The dead included six pilgrims and the pilot.

The helicopter took off from Kedarnath for Gup-takshi around 5:30 am and

crashed soon after.

Sources said the chopper belonging to Aryan Aviation Pvt Ltd crashed between Gaurikund and Trijuginarayan in Kedargha

ti and caught fire. Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami said in a post on X that a helicopter has crashed and the State Disaster Response Force and other agencies are engaged in relief and rescue operations.

The incident comes days after an Air India

flight to London crashed in Ahmedbad, killing 241 people on board and several others on the ground.

Earlier, on May 8, a helicopter going to Gangotri Dham crashed in Uttarkashi district in which six people were killed.

On June 7, a helicopter going to Kedarnath had to make an emergency landing on the road due to a technical fault soon after take-off in which the pilot was injured but the five devotees on board were rescued safely.

ISRO conducts first rocket launching test with payload

MI News Service, Ayodhya: In a landmark event for Uttar Pradesh, ISRO successfully conducted a rocket launching test here, marking the first time a payload was launched via a rocket from UP soil, officials said.

The test, in collaboration with Thrust Tech India Limited, saw the rocket ascend 1.1 km at 5:14:33 PM, a complete success.

ISRO scientist Abhishek Singh said, "The rocket was launched at 5:14 PM and 33 seconds, which went up to a height of 1.1 km. After this, a small satellite (payload) came out. As soon as it fell down to 5 metres, its parachute activated and the satellite landed within 400 metres on the ground." The 15 kg rocket also descended safely.

This test was a prelude to a larger event in October-November, where around 900 youth-built satellites will be tested. Vinod Kumar, Director of Thrust Tech India, confirmed the company's motor test success, adding, "This event is being organised to generate interest in space technology among children across the region and the whole of India." Unlike previous tests in Ahmedabad using drones, this was the first time a satellite was directly launched by a rocket in UP, proving entirely successful, said ISRO scientist Abhishek Singh.

Nepal begins exporting 40MW power to B'Desh via India

MI News Service, Kathmandu/New Delhi: Nepal has begun exporting 40 MW of electricity to Bangladesh through an Indian transmission line. Nepal, India and Bangladesh signed a tri-lateral agreement on October 3, 2024 to export electricity produced by Nepal to Bangladesh via the Indian transmission line. A Nepalese official said the export

■■ Continued on Page 3

High-level panel to probe crash



MI News Service, Ahmedabad: Eleven of Air India's 33 Boeing 787 Dreamliners have undergone safety checks so far and a high-level committee has been formed to probe Thursday's air crash in Ahmedabad, the airline and the civil aviation minister said.

The directorate-general of civil aviation had on Friday directed Air India to

conduct additional maintenance checks on its fleet of 26 Boeing 787-8 and 7 Boeing 787-9 Dreamliners equipped with GEnx engines, including pre-departure inspections.

"Air India is in the process of completing the one-time safety checks directed by the Indian aviation regulator, DGCA. These checks are being carried out on the Boeing

787 fleet as they return to India, before being cleared for their next operations," Air India said in a post on its X account.

It said checks on 11 Dreamliners had been completed. The Dreamliner, feted for its advanced features, has come under scrutiny following the Ahmedabad crash, whose causes remain to be unravelled.

Civil aviation minister K. Ram Mohan Naidu announced the formation of a high-level, multi-disciplinary panel under the chairmanship of the home secretary to probe the causes of the crash and suggest long-term safety measures. While several aviation sector and forensic agencies are already investigating the crash, Naidu said he felt that another committee with experts from other fields would help conduct a

■■ Continued on Page 3

AAIB to probe Uttarakhand helicopter crash

MI News Service, New Delhi: Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) will probe a helicopter crash near Gaurikund in Uttarakhand, in which seven people, including an infant, were killed on early Sunday.

On Sunday morning, an Aryan Aviation Bell 407 helicopter VT-BKA operating on sector 'Shri Kedarnath ji- Aryan Heli-pad, Guptkashi' was involved in an accident.

"There were 5 pas-

sengers, one infant and one crew member on board. The helicopter took off from Guptakashi at 05:10 Hrs and Landed at Shri Kedarnath ji Heli-pad at 05:18 hrs. Helicopter took off again at 05:19 hrs for Guptkashi and crashed near Gaurikund," an official statement said.

Five pilgrims, the pilot and an employee of the Badrinath-Kedarnath temple committee were among those killed.

The statement issued by the civil aviation ministry said the accident will be investigated by AAIB.

As a precautionary measure, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has already reduced frequency of helicopter operations to Char Dham. The watchdog is carrying out the enhanced surveillance and reviewing the operation for any further action, the statement said.

three districts under the Narendra Modi-led government. Shah was speaking at a ceremony for the distribution of appointment letters to over 60,000 newly recruited police constables at the

Defence Expo Ground in Lucknow. "Naxalism was once rampant across 11 states. Today, it is confined to just three districts. Mark my words: by March 31, 2026, Naxalism will be wiped out com-

pletely from the country," Shah said. Citing a 53% drop in Naxal-related violence in the last ten years, Shah credited the Modi government's

■■ Continued on Page 3

Def HQ, oil depots destroyed

Israel strikes 400 targets including 80 new areas in Tehran

MI News Service, Tel Aviv: The already volatile Middle East has plunged into a new and dangerous phase of conflict as Israel and Iran openly traded blows over the past two days. Following a blistering Israeli assault on key Iranian nuclear and military installations, including the Natanz enrichment facility and a nuclear research site in Isfahan, Iran retaliated with a barrage of drones and an estimated 100 ballistic missiles targeting Israel. These attacks caused explosions over Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, leading to three deaths and over 170 wounded in Israel, while Iran reported 78 fatalities and over 320 injuries from the initial Israeli strikes.

Israeli officials claim their "widespread strikes" hit over 400 targets across Iran, including command centers and air defense systems, and killed several top generals and scientists involved in Iran's nuclear pro-

gram. Satellite imagery shows extensive damage to the Natanz facility, with experts suggesting repairs could take "much more than a few weeks." Amidst the tit-for-tat attacks, Israel's Defense Minister Israel Katz warned "Tehran will burn" if missile attacks continue, while Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu promised even stronger action. Conversely, Iran's top diplomat, Abbas Araghchi, condemned Israel's "war-mongering" and called on the United Nations to intervene, also deeming ongoing nuclear talks "unjustifiable." Oman confirmed the postponement of a planned round of indirect US-Iran nuclear talks. The US, while denying direct involvement in Israel's strikes, confirmed aiding Israel in intercepting Iranian missiles. The escalating violence, including a report Israel continued its bombing campaign against Iran on Sunday, striking a defence facility and fuel

depots, as the two long-standing rivals engaged in their most intense confrontation to date. The escalation followed Iranian missile attacks that killed at least 10 people overnight, bringing the death toll in Israel to 13 since Iran began retaliatory strikes on Friday.

Heavy smoke rose over Tehran after Israeli jets hit two fuel depots. Long queues have formed at petrol stations across the city amid fears of shortages. Iranian media later confirmed a strike on a defence ministry-linked facility in Isfahan, reporting "possible damage."

Israel's military said it targeted "more than 80" sites in Tehran, including the defence ministry, nuclear facilities, and fuel tankers. US President Donald Trump distanced Washington from the strikes, though he warned that any Iranian attack on US interests would be met with "full strength and might."

Iran's enrichment plant at Natanz destroyed: IAEA

MI News Service, Tehran: The above-ground pilot enrichment plant at Iran's Natanz nuclear site has been destroyed, U.N. nuclear watchdog chief Rafael Grossi told the Security Council. "At present, the Iranian authorities are informing us of attacks on two other facilities, namely the Fordow fuel enrichment plant and at Isfahan," the International Atomic Energy Agency's Grossi told the 15-member council. "At this moment we do not have enough information beyond indicating that military activity has been taken place around these

facilities as well." All we know about the Israeli strike on South Pars, Iran's giant gas field

Israel has reportedly launched its first strike on Iran's oil and gas sector, targeting the South Pars gas field — the world's largest — in a move that significantly raises the stakes in the escalating conflict in West Asia. According to Iran's semi-official Tasnim news agency, the Saturday attack caused a fire at a processing facility tied to Phase 14 of South Pars, forcing a partial suspension of gas production. The hit disrupted 12

million cubic meters of daily output, the Iranian oil ministry confirmed, adding that the fire has since been extinguished.

Shared with Qatar — where it's known as the North Field — South Pars lies offshore in Iran's southern Bushehr province and provides the lion's share of the country's natural gas. Iran, the world's third-largest gas producer after the US and Russia, generates about 275 billion cubic meters of gas annually, most of which is consumed domestically due to sanctions that limit exports.

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Lorry violates signal to crush school girl; angry mob torches Lorry

MI News Service, Nadia: On the Father's Day, a minor daughter was crushed by a truck in front of father.A class nine schoolgirl was tragically killed after being hit by a speeding sand-laden truck that allegedly jumped a traffic signal on National Highway 12 near Dignagar-Senpur in Krishnanagar, Nadia district, on Sunday morning. The victim, identified as Riya Biswas, was crossing the road with her father when the accident occurred, a police sources said.According to eyewitnesses, the truck was moving at high speed and did not stop despite the red traffic signal. It rammed into Riya, killing her on the spot. Her father,



who was with her at the time, narrowly escaped injury.Immediately after the incident, the driver and his assistant reportedly fled the scene. As news of the incident spread, a large crowd gathered at the spot. Angry locals vandalised the lorry and later set it on fire, leading to major traffic dis-

ruption on the national highway.Police personnel from Krishnanagar Kotwali Police Station rushed to the scene to bring the situation under control. A fire engine was deployed to douse the flames. Authorities have since deployed additional forces to prevent any further escalation.The

girl's body was taken to Shaktinagar District Hospital, from where it was sent for autopsy. The incident has sparked widespread outrage in the locality, with residents demanding stricter enforcement of traffic rules and permanent traffic control measures on the busy highway stretch."Despite repeated complaints about rash driving and signal violations, no concrete steps have been taken. This tragic death could have been avoided," said a local resident.Police have launched a manhunt to trace the absconding driver and his assistant. No arrests had been made at the time of filing this report.

BSF 'sends' migrant to Bangladesh: Murshidabad worker 'disappears' from custody

MI News Service, Murshidabad: A 38-year-old migrant worker from Murshidabad, who Mumbai police detained on suspicion of being a Bangladeshi, was allegedly "pushed back" into Bangladesh by the BSF. Migrant worker Mehehub Sheikh's younger brother Majibur said they came to know his brother was handed over to the BSF in Siliguri on Friday night but then "disappeared". He claimed Mehehub was sent to Bangladesh.

Mehehub called up his wife in Murshidabad through an encrypted Internet voice call saying he was in Bangladesh since early Saturday and was badly beaten by the BSF, his brother Majibur alleged.

Mehehub, a resident of Hossainnagar village in Murshidabad's Bhagawan-gola, had gone to Mumbai to work as a construction labourer. He was held by cops there on suspicion of being a Bangladeshi, which his family in Murshidabad got to know on June 10.

"We contacted the Mumbai police with documents. Suddenly, on Friday night, I came to know through the panchayat chief that my brother had been handed over to the BSF in Siliguri," said Majibur.

The family got in touch with Mumbai police officers, who informed them that Mehehub had been handed over to the BSF in Siliguri on Friday. The police sent them a stamped receipt stating that the BSF had taken custody of Mehehub, a relative claimed.

Mehehub's family and Mahisasthali gram panchayat chief Sabbir Ahmed went to the BSF headquarters in Siliguri with documents on Saturday. Ahmed said Bhagawangola TMC MLA Reyat Hossain Sarkar informed him that Mumbai police handed over Mehehub to the BSF in Siliguri.

"The BSF received the complaint and did not deny it took custody of Mehehub from the Mumbai police. We have a copy of the document that the BSF received Mehehub from the Mumbai police. The BSF is not disclosing how he disappeared from their custody," said Ahmed, adding that the document showed that Mehehub was handed over to the BSF by the Mumbai police on June 13.

"My brother told his wife that some farmers in Bangladesh rescued him. He is so badly injured that he can't walk.



School Students participate in a Yogathon ahead of the 11th International Yoga Day in Kolkata on Sunday.

Bharat Sevashram Sangha's Initiative to Promote Education in Backward Regions of Sundarbans

MI News Service, Kolkata: Bharat Sevashram Sangha has been actively working to spread education in the poor and backward villages of the Sundarbans. A teachers' conference was recently organized with participation from over 300 teachers from 40 Swami Pranavananda Vidya-mandir schools run by the Sangha in the Sundarbans region.The conference was inaugurated at the Sangha's headquarters in Ballygunge by Swami Vishwatmananda Maharaj, the Chief Secretary of Bharat Sevashram Sangha. Swami Sanghat-



mananda, Swami Mahadevananda, and Swami Swagatanda were also present at the event.Swami Vishwatmananda Maharaj stated that Swami Pranavananda envisioned the holistic upliftment of the

poor through the spread of education. The Sangha is moving forward with that mission. Their goal is not just academic education but also to build ideal human beings through moral and value-based education.

We're safe, say workers from Darjeeling hills in Israel amid ongoing conflict

MI News Service, Darjeeling: Tremors of the ongoing Israel-Iran conflict are being felt in Darjeeling from where hundreds of youths have moved to Israel for work.

Israel is the preferred choice for many wanting to work as caregivers to the elderly. The salaries, which typically range between 1.2 and 2 lakh per month, are considered lucrative.

The ongoing conflict has left many worried in Darjeeling hills.

Bidhan Chhetri, a resident of Soom tea garden in Darjeeling who is currently working at Ramat Gan in Israel, spoke to over the phone on Saturday, saying that his mother was worried to the point of tears, but he tried to assuage her fears. "Early morning (Saturday) my mother called me and she was crying. I want to send a strong message to people in Darjeeling that we are safe and there is nothing to panic about. Wrong messages

are being circulated about the Israel situation which has left our families worried. This is disturbing for us," said Chhetri.

Chhetri stays at a place that is a "five-minute drive" from an army camp. "A missile did hit the army camp there last night (Friday) but we are all safe," said Chhetri.

Many people that this newspaper spoke to in Israel said that they get a warning to be inside bunkers at least 10 minutes in advance.

"There are bunkers everywhere, from residential complexes to shopping malls and even public pathways," said another Darjeeling youth working in Israel.

Many have also downloaded an app called Home Front Command for "regular updates".

Many youths admit that they have little choice but to carry on work in Israel given the huge expenses incurred in going to Israel.

The salary seems good, but the youths have to first shoulder the huge expense of paying a network of agents — in Darjeeling, Delhi and Israel — to land the job.

"We have to spend anything between 16 to 26 lakh to get a job in Israel. The salary is good but first we have to repay this amount," said another youth, adding they borrow money from family, friends and even moneylenders to pay agents.

Many said that it takes almost three years to repay the debt and start saving.

In many cases, both the husband and wife work in Israel but in separate places.

Those working in Israel said that they understood that the country was a "conflict-prone" area. "The security system is strong. Systems like the Iron Dome (missile interceptor) and others are in place," said a worker from Darjeeling in Israel.

Sunday at West Burdwan Raniganj Girls College

Nurul Islam Khan

Snday at West Burdwan Raniganj Girls CollegeCentenary Celebration of Bengali Library Council.Tapas Banerjee inaugurated the meeting. Shri Biman Upadhyay, Metropolitan Asansol Municipal Corporation, Nirmaly Adhikari Library Officer, Principal Rakta Chobi De, Dr. Shyam Sundar Kar, President of the Council, Ashok Goswami, Krishnapada Majumdar, Dr. Joydeep Chandra, Life Member of the Council, Shri Balachandra Mandal, Editor of the Bengali Encyclopedia, Poet Abdul Karim, Shri Sant Ghosh, Sutapa Bhui, Ashok Goswami, Laxminarayan Roy, Bishwaran Guha, Taiyab Khan, Dilip Naik, Sushmita Bose Goswami, Dr. Bela Mandal, Subarna



Centenary Celebration of Bengali Library Council

Chakraborty, etc. were present in the meeting. 280 librarians from different parts of the country spoke about the poor condition of the library. A librarian is in charge of three or four libraries. He claimed that the government's good eye is necessary.The Bengal Library

Council was started in 1925. The centenary is being celebrated through programs in about 15 places across the state.Abdul Karim called on everyone to join the Bengali Encyclopedia.The program was declared over with the national anthem.

Kurseong: Foresters install CCTV cameras to track elephants and minimise human-animal conflicts

MI News Service, Kurseong: The Kurseong forest division has installed 60 CCTV cameras at strategic locations and formed 11 quick response teams to monitor the movement of wild elephants and minimise human-animal conflicts.

Over 120 elephants are roaming across the foothills, where CCTV cameras will come in handy for surveillance.

The surveillance network covers the Bagdogra, Panighata, Tukuriajhar and Bamanpokhri ranges. A central control room has been established at the Bagdogra office to monitor real-time footage and coordinate field response.

"Digital monitoring is helping us reduce both crop damage and human casualties. The cameras also help us detect intrusions by elephants into human habitats and by people into forests despite warnings," Kurseong divisional forest officer Devesh Pandey said.

The forest department's efforts have already shown results.

While nine people died in elephant attacks last year, only one fatality has been reported so far in 2025. The department, which had paid 60 lakh in compensation last year, believes increased vigilance and awareness campaigns have played a vital role in minimising the number of deaths caused by animal attacks.

"Our teams are out every night, tracking the movement of elephants and ensuring that they don't stray into villages or farmlands. Rescuing people from the forest at night has become an additional concern," Pandey said.

In two separate incidents, forest guards recently rescued individuals who had ventured into elephant zones, one in the Panighata range and the other in the Bagdogra area. The foresters said major mishaps were averted because of swift action by patrolling teams.

While 32 CCTV cameras are installed in Bagdogra, 14 are placed at Panighata. Tukuriajhar and Bamanpokhri have seven CCTV cameras each. These locations were selected based on elephant movement patterns and prior instances of conflicts.

Pandey has urged people not to venture into forests, especially at night. "We urge people not to venture into forests, especially at night. Our awareness drives are going on, but more cooperation from local people is needed," the DFO added.

The department hopes the combination of technology, rapid response and community awareness will help minimise both damage and danger.



People pray for the lost souls who lost their lives in the recent Ahmedabad Plane crash during a 'Khuti Puj' in Kolkata on Sunday.



A machine for cold water was installed in Ward No. 5 and 6 of Rishra Municipality. It was inaugurated by Vice Chairman Zahid Hassan Khan.

TMC's Alifa Ahmed Slams BJP as 'Anti-Bengal' in Final Lap of Campaigning in Kaliganj



MI News Service, Kaliganj : Before the Kaliganj bypoll, Trinamool Congress candidate Alifa Ahmed intensified her campaign with a high-energy roadshow and a series of public meetings, flanked by senior party leaders.The day began with a massive roadshow from Baninathpur, led by TMC MP and actor Rachana Banerjee. The procession saw large participation from locals, especially women, who lined the streets in support. The enthusiasm was palpable as chants and party slogans echoed through the area.Campaigning continued through the day in areas like Panighata and Juranpur, where Ahmed was joined by Minority Cell president and MLA Mosaraf Hossain, and MLA Sayan-

tika Banerjee.Addressing a gathering, Alifa Ahmed launched a sharp attack on the BJP, calling the party "anti-Bengal". She said, "People haven't forgotten how the BJP vandalised Vidyasagar's statue in 2019. While the Prime Minister spends thousands of crores on his Central Vista residence, poor people in Bengal are being robbed of their basic shelter."She also hit out at BJP leader Suwendu Adhikari for his recent remarks allegedly targeting women beneficiaries of the Lakshmir Bhandar scheme. "Saying women sell their shankha-sindoor for a few hundred rupees is not just insulting to women, but to the entire scheme that has empowered lakhs across Bengal," Ahmed said.She warned that BJP has already made it clear they would scrap Lakshmir Bhandar if voted to power. "They do not talk about development. Their politics is based on division. People trust Mamata Banerjee's vision for Bengal, and I believe Kaliganj will stand with us."TMC leaders claimed that the public response to Sunday's campaign was a clear sign of growing support ahead of the June 26 bypoll.

TMC leader's stolen bike 'sold', finger at Nadia cop; inquiry ordered

MI News Service, Nadia: The officer-in-charge of the traffic guard at Chakdaha in Nadia, Kuntal Adhikari, has been accused of selling a "stolen" motorcycle, instead of returning it to its rightful owner.

The actual owner is a Trinamool Congress leader, who is the nephew of senior party figure Sankar Singh.

A departmental inquiry has been initiated by the superintendent of police, Ranaghat, following a formal complaint against Adhikari, who is attached to Chakdaha police station.

Sources in the Ranaghat police district

administration said the role of DSP (traffic) Sanjay Kumar was also being examined since the stolen motorcycle — a Royal Enfield Classic 350 bearing registration number WB90F1612 — had been reportedly handed over to another person right in front of him at the Chakdaha traffic guard office.

According to the complaint, the motorcycle belonged to Shib Shankar Singh, a civil contractor and leader of the INT-TUC-affiliated Toto Operators' union in Chakdaha. He had lent it to a friend, Debashish Debnath.

Gang of 4 loots ATM, escapes police chase in Jalpaiguri's Maynaguri

MI News Service, Maynaguri: A gang of four looted 54 lakh from an ATM in Maynaguri of Jalpaiguri district in the early hours of Saturday, prompting a high-speed police chase across multiple jurisdictions that ended in the criminals disappearing in the forest. The group used a gas cutter to break into the ATM kiosk and escaped in an SUV (Scorpio).

According to police sources, the incident occurred around 1am at Boulmari, along the Maynaguri-Malbazar road,

roughly 50km from Jalpaiguri town. The ATM belonged to a nationalised bank. Immediately after the incident, Maynaguri police alerted all nearby police stations and launched a coordinated pursuit. The gang, reportedly comprising four men, fled towards Siliguri. Rajganj police were alerted and they swiftly set up a barricade at Phatapukur toll gate near Siliguri town. However, spotting the blockade, the criminals made a sudden U-turn and diverted the vehicle into the Balakoba area.

Monsoon to advance in some parts of Bengal next week, heavy rain likely

MI News Service, Kolkata: The IMD on Sunday forecast heavy rain in West Bengal next week, owing to the likely advancement of southwest monsoon over some parts of the state and strong moisture incursion from the Bay of Bengal. In a bulletin, it forecast heavy to very heavy rainfall in the coastal districts of South 24 Parganas and Purba Medinipur on June 17, and moderate to heavy rain in the other districts of the region till the morning of June 19. Kolkata is likely to receive heavy rain on June 17 and June 18. Heavy to very heavy rain

is also expected in the north Bengal districts of Alipurduar and Jalpaiguri and moderate rainfall in some other districts, including Coochbehar, North Dinajpur, Darjeeling and Kalimpong, the IMD said. Squally weather with surface wind speeds reaching 35-45 kmph, gusting to 55 kmph, is very likely over the West Bengal-Odisha coasts from June 17 to June 18, it said. Sea condition is likely to be rough during this period, the IMD said, advising fishermen not to venture into the sea along and off the West Bengal-Odisha coasts.

High-level panel to probe...

►► **From PG 1**

more holistic probe. The panel, which meets on Monday, is expected to hand in its report in three months. It will assess the contributing factors to the crash, including possible mechanical failure, human error and issues relating to the weather and regulatory compliances. The commit-

tee will also examine the existing standard operating procedures and suggest comprehensive guidelines, covering the best international practices, to prevent and handle future crashes.

Its members will include representatives, not below the rank of joint secretary, from the state and central governments.

Nepal begins exporting...

►► **From PG 1**

of electricity to Bangladesh has started from Saturday midnight. As per the agreement, Nepal will export 40 MW of electricity from June 15 to November 15. The electricity will be transmitted to Bangladesh via India's 400-kV Muzaffarpur-Baharampur-Bheramara transmission line.

Last year, Nepal ex-

ported electricity to Bangladesh on November 15, for a single day, as a token to implement the agreement.

As per the bilateral agreement reached between Nepal and Bangladesh, Nepal will charge 6.4 US cents per unit of electricity.

Bangladesh has agreed to import electricity from Nepal for the next five years.

India will be Maoist free by...

►► **From PG 1**

security strategy and sustained counter-insurgency operations, particularly in states like Chhattisgarh. On May 21, security forces eliminated 27 Maoists in a major encounter, he noted.

The home minister also drew a sharp contrast between the present and past regimes in terms of internal security.

Referring to previous terrorist attacks in cities such as Ahmedabad, Jaipur, Coimbatore, and Delhi, Shah said that such incidents were common under Congress rule, while strong retaliation has become the norm under Prime Minister Modi.

"Pakistan tried to provoke India thrice during PM Modi's rule—at Uri, Pulwama, and Pahalgam—and received a befitting reply each time. Surgical strikes, air strikes, and most recently, Operation Sindoor, have made it clear that India's blood is not to be shed without consequence," Shah said.

India launched Operation Sindoor on May 7 in response to a terror attack in Pahalgam, Jammu and Kashmir.

The operation saw the Indian armed forces carry out precision strikes on

nine terror camps in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, killing over 100 militants linked to groups like Jaish-e-Mohammed, Lashkar-e-Taiba, and Hizbul Mujahideen.

Shah also lauded the scale of the Uttar Pradesh Police's recruitment drive, calling it the largest in the state's history. A total of 60,244 candidates—48,196 men and 12,048 women—were selected under the 'Civil Police Direct Recruitment' programme.

The minister said police modernisation in Uttar Pradesh began only after the formation of the BJP government in the state in 2017. "The Centre's reforms, started in 2014, weren't visible in UP until Yogi Adityanath became Chief Minister," he said.

Shah also projected a confident outlook for the country's future, stating, "India will emerge as a global leader by 2047, and Uttar Pradesh will be at the heart of this transformation."

The event was attended by chief minister Yogi Adityanath, deputy chief ministers Brajesh Pathak and Keshav Prasad Maurya, and other senior officials.

Rooftop hearings to resume after state govt approves draft SOP: Mayor

MI News Service, Kolkata: The hearings on alleged lapses of rooftop restaurants, pubs and lounges will resume after the state government approves a draft SOP that a committee formed to review the fire safety mechanisms in hotels, restaurants and public places will prepare, Firhad Hakim, the committee's chairperson, said.

The SOP will be drafted after the second meeting of the committee next week.

The fate of the rooftop restaurants, pubs and lounges, now closed, will depend on the hearings after the SOP is finalised, he said. The crackdown on rooftop restaurants, bars and cafes came after mayor Firhad Hakim announced on May 2 that Calcutta's rooftop cafes, lounges, bars and restaurants would be shut down.

The announcement came a day after chief minister Mamata Banerjee visited the fire-ravaged Rituraj Hotel in central Kolkata, where 14 people died on April 29, and asked the business community to follow fire safety norms or face government action. A KMC team demolished portions of a party hotspot at Celica Park on Park Street the next day after the chief minister visited the hotel.

The fire safety committee was formed in the wake of the events.

Kolkata Police had prepared a list of 83 cafes, bars and restaurants and inspected them.

Some of the establishments on the list were not located on the roof, but on

a lower floor. Civic body officials said inspections revealed that some of the establishments on the lower floors encroached on space that was meant to be a fire refuge.

"The committee will have its second meeting next week. We will prepare the SOP and send it for approval. The hearings will be held after the SOP is approved. Their fate will depend on the SOP," Hakim said.

Hakim, who heads the committee as the state's urban development minister, said the observations of the fire services directorate will have topmost priority while deciding on rooftop establishments.

"The consent of the fire brigade is most important. The KMC's building department will be there, but the fire brigade's role is most important," he said.

The KMC heard three rooftop establishments last month. The three establishments had moved the high court challenging the KMC notice to stop operations. The high court asked the KMC to conduct a hearing for the establishments.

The KMC heard only three establishments following the court's order.

There was uncertainty on what would happen to the 80 others on the police's list that were also served "stop operations" notices.

Hakim's statement on Friday that the rooftop establishments will be heard after the SOP is finalised cleared the air to some extent.



A little charriot maker prepares a charriot at a shop in Kolkata on Sunday ahead of Rathatra Festival.

Shyama Prasad Mookerjee Port, Kolkata, sets a new record of Cargo and Container Traffic handling in April-May 2025

MI News Service, Kolkata: Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port, Kolkata has commenced the financial year 2025-26 on an impressive note, registering a substantial growth of 27.56% in overall cargo throughput during April-May 2025 as compared to the same period last year. The Port successfully handled 11.252 million metric tonnes (MMT) of cargo during the first two months of FY 2025-26, up from 8.821 MMT handled during April-May 2024. Haldia Dock Complex (HDC) contributed 8.139 MMT, while Kolkata Dock System (KDS) handled 3.113 MMT. This compares to last year's figures of 6.386 MMT and 2.435 MMT at HDC and KDS respectively, resulting in impressive growth rates of 27.45% at HDC and 27.84% at KDS. The Port witnessed significant increases in specific cargo segments. HDC recorded notable growth in POL Products, Other Liquids, Vegetable Oil, Coking Coal, Other Coal, Metallurgical Coal, Fly Ash, Container



Sanjoy Kumar Mukherjee, Sr. Public Relations Officer, SMP Kolkata.

tonnage and TEUs. KDS also showed strong performance with finished fertilizers, pulses, container tonnage, and TEUs surpassing the previous year's volumes. Additionally, several commodities, including Thermal Coal, Raw Petroleum Coke, and Iron & Steel (0.29 lakh tonnes) were handled at HDC for the first time during this period. Similarly, KDS handled Coking Coal, Timber, and Food Grains, all of which were not handled in

April-May 2024. In container traffic, SMP, Kolkata handled 1,53,037 TEUs (KDS: 1,24,733 and HDC: 28,304) during April-May 2025, marking a growth of 31.23% over last year's 1,16,620 TEUs (KDS: 1,00,555 and HDC: 16,065). This surge reflects SMPK's growing efficiency and capacity in container handling, especially at HDC, which recorded a phenomenal 76.18% increase. Speaking on this occasion, Shri Rathendra Raman, Chairman, SMP, Kolkata, congratulated the officers, staff and stakeholders of both the dock systems for their commitment and performance. "The growth we have achieved in just the first two months of this financial year is not only commendable but also a testament to the dedication and synergy between our teams, stakeholders, and partners. I wholeheartedly congratulate the employees of both Kolkata Dock System and Haldia Dock Complex for their exemplary efforts.

State Min wants more food processing units in Bengal

MI News Service, Kolkata: Minister-in-Charge of state Food Processing Industries and Horticulture (FPI&H) Arup Roy urged food processing industries to set up units in Bengal and promised to offer all possible government assistance for such industries.

"Various types of crops, including a variety of fruits and vegetables are produced in Bengal. However, due to lack of processing infrastructure, we need to send them to other states for processing and then the processed product comes back to our state for consumption.

In this backdrop, under the directions of our Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee we are encouraging food processing industries in Bengal," said Roy addressing the three-day Agro Food & Beverage Exposition & Conference organised by Bharat Chamber of Commerce at Netaji Indoor Stadium.

Muchipara: Police arrest hawker for killing elderly woman

MI News Service, Kolkata: A 53-year-old man, who would go around various areas in the city buying and selling old items, was arrested from Mograhat in South 24-Parganas, three days after he allegedly killed a 76-year-old woman in Muchipara. Maimur Ali Gazi had allegedly strangled Namita Pal to death after he entered the septuagenarian's house, where she lived alone, on Serpentine Lane in Muchipara on Wednesday. He stole some gold jewellery, including earrings, a chain, two rings and four bangles from the house, police said.



Eminent personalities from state government including TMC top brass participate in the auspicious 'Khuti Pujo' rituals for the 80th year celebration of Durga Pujo at the prestigious Samaj Sebi Sangha in South Kolkata.

Bengal govt for more industrial parks in state

MI News Service, Kolkata: Bengal government is prepared to extend full support for the development of more industrial parks in the state and is open to facilitating a defence-specific park as well, if there is sufficient demand. "We would like to work with you and hold round-table discussions to understand your specific requirements. We have already developed close to 200 industrial parks, including the leather park in Bantala, and a hosiery park in Howrah. We are also in the process of setting up a rubber park. There is scope for developing more such industrial parks and if there is demand, we can provide assistance in developing a defence-specific park," said Rajesh Pandey, principal secretary of the state MSME

and Textiles Department, while addressing a Defence MSME Manufacturers Forum organised by the Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC). Pandey added that in the last edition of the Bengal Global Business (BGBS) held in February, the state government had hosted a special session on Defence Manufacturing. "We are working with the Bengal Chamber and now we are coordinating with ICC also. Bengal intends to deepen collaboration with defence players and associations to create a dynamic vendor ecosystem," he told leading players in the defence manufacturing sector present in the programme. He further pointed out that the Eastern Command, being the largest command of the Indian Army, is located in Bengal.

Behala College gets A++ grade by NAAC; pushes for autonomy from CU

MI News Service, Kolkata: A government-aided college in the city that received the highest possible rating from the national accreditation body has written to the University Grants Commission (UGC) seeking autonomous status and freedom from Calcutta University's control.

Behala College earned an A++ grade from the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) — making it one of only four colleges in Bengal to achieve this distinction. The council, in its post-accreditation recommendation, said that the college has the potential to become autonomous and introduce post-graduate courses, particularly in physics, zoology, and geography.

"It is high time that the college becomes autonomous and starts more PG courses according to the needs of the students, especially in physics, zoology, geography..." the council said.

The college sought autonomous status from Calcutta University, to which it is affiliated. Not getting any response, it applied to the UGC for autonomous status in July 2024. But even the UGC has yet to respond. Principal Sharmila Mitra contacted UGC officials on May 23 seeking an update on their application.

Autonomous status would allow Behala College to begin undergraduate admissions immediately after Class XII results are published, rather than waiting for the state's centralised portal. This timing advantage is crucial — autonomous and private institutions can start their admission process right after board results, while government and aided colleges must wait.

"Over the past two years, admission through the portal starts more than a month after the Plus-II board results," principal Mitra explained. "The delayed admission is one of the reasons why government-aided colleges like ours are missing out on bright undergraduate students." Last year, the centralised portal opened on June 24 — six weeks after board results were published. This year's

portal will open on June 18, still more than a month after results were announced.

Autonomy would also enable the college to introduce new courses more easily and modify syllabi to stay current with industry needs.

Before approaching the UGC directly, Behala College repeatedly sought autonomous status from Calcutta University, to which it is affiliated. Despite multiple attempts since receiving the NAAC recommendation, the principal said, the university has not responded.

"Since we did not receive any response from the university despite repeated attempts, we submitted the online proposal to the UGC seeking autonomy on July 8, 2024," Mitra said. The college even followed up with the university in October, requesting official comments on their autonomy proposal as per UGC procedure, but received no reply.

Principal Mitra expressed disappointment with the university's inaction: "That the university has shown no concern for our college, despite it being the only undergraduate college affiliated to Calcutta University with an A++, is very unfortunate."

When contacted, Calcutta University registrar Debasish Das acknowledged the delay, explaining that the college's autonomy request needs to be discussed by the university's syndicate — its highest decision-making body.

"For some reason, this could not be done so far. It can be done in the future," Das said, declining to comment on whether the university supports the autonomy bid until the matter is formally discussed. Elite company

Behala College joins an exclusive group with its A++ rating. The other three A++ colleges in Bengal are Swami Vivekananda Centenary College, Rahara (autonomous), Ramakrishna Mission Vidyamandira, Belur (autonomous), and St Xavier's College, Calcutta, also autonomous.

Apply for UG from June 18: Higher Edu Dept

MI News Service, Kolkata: Undergraduate applications for admission to government and government-aided colleges will be accepted online from 2pm on June 18, the higher education department said. The applications have to be submitted by July 1. After this, college and course-wise merit lists and seat allotment will be done on July 6. Candidates will take admission to colleges of their choice from July 6 to 12. There will be an upgrade round for those who do not take admission after being allotted a seat. In this round, students can seek a seat in a better college or course. Seat allotment in this round will be published on July 17.

"Admission against seat allotment in the upgrade round will take place from July 17 to 20. Physical verification of admitted candidates at the institutional level will be held between July 24 and 31. Classes will begin on August 1, after phase I of admission," said a department official.

Phase II of the entry process, called a mop-up round, will start on August 2. Vacancy lists will be published on August 1.

Phase II would have applicants from phase I not allotted seats, those who cancelled their admission in phase I, and those who did not take admission after being allotted a seat. Students can apply between August 2 and 11. Fresh candidates can also apply in this round.

Merit lists and seat allocation will be announced on August 14, followed by admissions from August 14 to 17. "The mop-up phase, too, will have an upgrade round. The institution and course-wise seat allotment will be published on August 21. Admission against seat allotment in the upgrade round will be between August 21 to 24. Verification of admitted candidates will be held from August 28 to September 1," said the official.

Many private and autonomous colleges would have completed their ad-

mission by the time the application process starts in the centralised portal, said Siuli Sarkar, principal of the Lady Brabourne College.

"In a meeting with department officials early this year, we urged them to synchronise the admission to government and aided colleges with private institutions, which start their process after the publication of the plus-II board results. Fewer seats would have remained vacant then. But that did not happen. The schedule has been brought forward by just a week compared with last year," she said.

Last year, the admission window opened on June 24.

Form-filling for undergraduate courses in Jadavpur University's arts faculty — outside the centralised portal because it admits students based on entry tests — will start from June 17, acting registrar Indrajit Banerjee said.

"The science faculty schedule will be announced later," he said.

West Bengal students shine in NEET

MI News Service, Kolkata: Three students from Bengal have secured top ranks in the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) 2025, with two featuring among the national top 20 and another making it to the top 100. According to the results announced by the National Testing Agency (NTA), Rachit Sinha Chaudhuri of Hariyana Vidyamandir emerged as the state topper, securing an All India Rank (AIR) of 16. He was followed closely by Rupayan Pal of Burdwan CMS High School, who secured

AIR 20. Anik Ghosh from Murshidabad also made the state proud by securing AIR 67. Aakash Educational Services Limited (AESL) also announced the exceptional performance of its students from West Bengal Centres in NEET UG 2025. State topper of West Bengal Rachit Sinha Chaudhuri, secured an impressive All India Rank (AIR) 16 with a score of 670 out of 720, followed by Rupayan Pal, with state rank 2, has achieved a score of 666 out of 720, earning a spot at AIR 20.

Dona Ganguly's performance mesmerizes Cambridge



MI News Service, Cambridge/Kolkata: The historic halls of Jesus College, University of Cambridge, resonated with the timeless rhythm of Indian Classical Dance, as internationally acclaimed Odissi dancer Dona Ganguly (also wife of Saurav Ganguly) conducted the university's first-ever

workshop dedicated to this ancient art form.

Marking a significant milestone in the cultural history of Cambridge, the event brought together students, academics, and art enthusiasts for an immersive introduction to Odissi, one of India's eight recognized classical dance styles. Participants were guided through the fundamental movements, expressions, and philosophies of the form, gaining insight into its spiritual roots and rich 2,000-year-old heritage.

The workshop drew a diverse audience, many of whom were experiencing Indian classical dance for the first time. Emphasizing inclusivity and cultural appreciation, the event welcomed individuals from all backgrounds, with no prior dance experience required.

The initiative reflects a growing global interest in Indian classical traditions and underscores Cambridge's commitment to cultural diversity and global engagement.

US govt agency to assist in crash probe

MI News Service, Washington: A US government agency that investigates civil aviation accidents said it would be leading a team of American investigators to India to assist in the probe of the Air India crash in Ahmedabad. The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) said in a post on X that it would be “leading a team of US investigators travelling to India to assist the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau with its investigation into the crash of an Air India Boeing 787 in Ahmedabad, India, Thursday”. According to protocols under the International Civil Aviation Organisation, all information on the investigation will be provided by the government of India. “When an international incident occurs, that government leads the investigation. In the event assistance is requested, the NTSB is the official US representative, and the Federal Aviation Administration provides technical support. We stand ready to launch a team immediately in coordination with the NTSB,” the FAA, the US federal government agency that regulates civil aviation in the country, said.

Pune bridge collapse: Many tourists feared drowned

MI News Service, Pune: Some people are feared swept away after an iron bridge over the Indrayani River in Pune district of Maharashtra collapsed on Sunday afternoon, according to police. Three persons were rescued so far following the incident which occurred near Kundamala area in Maval tehsil, the cops said. NDRF teams are conducting rescue operations at the spot, an official said. “So far one person is believed to have been swept away while three others were rescued after the iron bridge over the Indrayani river collapsed as per the preliminary information,” the official from Talegaon Dabhade police station said.

Arunachal govt to develop World War II museum



MI News Service, Itanagar: The Arunachal Pradesh government will develop the World War II museum at Jairampur in Changlang, Deputy Chief Minister Chowna Mein said, emphasising the region's importance in the Burma Campaign. The museum is located at the historical Stilwell Road, a strategic World War II route. Chairing a meeting here, Mein noted the historical significance of the Pangsau Pass and the Stilwell Road.

Assam police arrests 5 with drugs worth Rs 6.5 cr

MI News Service, Sribhum/Guwahati: Five people were arrested with drugs worth Rs 6.5 crore in Assam's Sribhum district, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said. Acting on intelligence inputs, police seized 44,000 yaba tablets from the Veterbond area and arrested the five suspected peddlers, he said. Sarma congratulated the police on the success of the operation.



In this image via Indian Navy, the Indian Navy carries out operation to contain a fire aboard the ship MV Wan Hai 503, off the Kerala coast.

Air India crash toll touches 274

MI News Service, Ahmedabad: Closure still eludes most of the bereaved families two days after the Air India crash as they continue their long wait for the remains of their loved ones.

With most of the bodies charred beyond recognition, they can be handed over only after DNA identification, which normally takes 72 hours from the time the DNA samples have been collected. The death toll from the crash that killed all but one of the 242 people on board the Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner has risen to 274. This means 33 people on the ground died when the aircraft crashed into the B.J. Medical College hostel, close to Ahmedabad airport, moments after takeoff.

A news agency has quoted Dhaval Gameti, president of the junior doctors' association at the B.J. Medical College, as saying that 270 bodies had been brought from the crash site. A body, believed to be that of an airhostess, was retrieved while clearing the wreckage on Saturday. A cutter had to be used to extricate it. The black box — key to determining the cause of the accident — was recovered on Friday. Union civil aviation minister K. Ram Mohan Naidu said in New Delhi on Saturday that information from the flight data recorder was being decoded. On Friday, the authorities had handed over the remains of five people,



People praying for the lost souls who lost their lives in the recent plane crash at Ahmedabad.

who could be identified without DNA tests, to their families. The DNA of 19 victims has been matched with their family members so far, a senior government doctor at the B.J. Medical College here said on Saturday.

Dr Rajnish Patel, professor of surgery at the Medical College, told media persons that the process of matching DNA has to be done meticulously. It has legal and medical implications, so one cannot rush through it, he said. Vishwas Kumar Ramesh, the sole survivor, was stable and out of danger, Dr Patel added. On Saturday, Suresh Patni was waiting anxiously near the old post-mortem room at the Civil Hospital for the body of his 15-year-old son Akash.

The boy had come to deliver his mother Sita's lunch at the tea stall she runs near the airport. He was taking an afternoon nap when the jet dropped from the sky. “He was sleeping near the tea stall when a part of the plane fell on him. My wife tried to save him. She is in the ICU with severe burns and is not aware of Akash's death,” Suresh, 47, told The Telegraph. He said that all he wanted now was the body to be handed over without delay. Akash's sister Urmila wondered whether the family would receive any compensation. “We haven't heard anything from the government,” she said. Air India on Saturday announced a ₹25-lakh compensation for the families of the dead passengers. This is in ad-

dition to the ₹1-crore compensation announced earlier by Tata Sons, the holding company of the Tata Group that owns Air India.

The Gujarat branch of the Indian Medical Association has written to the Tata Sons chairman requesting assistance for the families of the doctors killed on the ground in the crash, as well as those injured. Less than half a kilometre from the medical college hostel, a resident, Shilpa Patni, shuddered as she recalled what she saw. “After lunch, we were sitting in a room. We suddenly heard an unusual noise — sort of a blast. We opened a window and saw that the airplane had hit the hostel,” she said. They feared the impact might damage their home, too. “I just threw on a dupatta (over the casual clothes she was wearing)... We all ran out with our children to save our lives,” Shilpa said. At the Civil Hospital, 192 vehicles were on standby to carry the bodies to their native places. The coffins had been made in Vadodara.

Rushabh, son of former Gujarat chief minister Vijay Rupani who died in the crash, arrived in Ahmedabad from the US on Saturday morning. Preparations have begun for Rupani's last rites in Rajkot. Investigation by different teams, including a forensic squad, continued at the crash site on Saturday.

Odisha: Internet suspension extends in Bhadrak



MI News Service, Bhadrak: The Odisha government extended the suspension of internet services in parts of the Bhadrak district by 12 more hours till 6 pm on Friday, a restriction imposed since June 12 following the death of a man during a clash over cattle smuggling.

The internet services will remain suspended in

Bhadrak, Tihidi and Dhamnagar blocks, and areas under the Bhadrak Municipality and the Dhamnagar Notified Area Council (NAC) till 6 pm, district magistrate-cum-collector Dilip Routrai told. The district collector said the situation was “well under control and there is no untoward incident so far”.

Delhi Police detains Bangladeshi woman

MI News Service, New Delhi: Delhi Police has detained a 23-year-old Bangladeshi woman who had been living illegally in the Vasant Kunj area, an official said. Kulsum Begam, the detainee, is a native of Jamril Danga village in Bangladesh's Narail district. “Kulsum Begam, who entered India illegally through jungle routes, was traced during a door-to-door verification



drive carried out in Vasant Kunj. She has been sent to the Foreigners Regional Registration Office (FRRO) deportation centre,” a police officer said.

Arunachal Police arrests NSCN operative

MI News Service, Itanagar: Arunachal Pradesh Police has arrested a National Socialist Council of Nagaland (K-YA) operative in Tirap district, an official said.

Acting on intelligence input by Assam Rifles, the state police's Tirap unit carried out an operation earlier this week that resulted in the arrest of NSCN (K-YA) cadre self-styled captain Kamwang Chakhtey, SP Sinjalta Singhpo said.

He said Chakhtey had been involved with the group since 1995.

Police arrest IIT student for raping 13-yr-old girl

MI News Service, Thane: A student from Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kharagpur has been arrested for allegedly raping a 13-year-old girl in Maharashtra's Thane city, police said. The police arrested the 23-year-old accused based on a complaint lodged by the girl's mother and registered a case under relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act against him, an official said. The accused, who lives in the Kalwa area, allegedly lured the differently abled girl with new clothes and sexually assaulted her, he said.

Monsoon likely to cover most parts of N-W India by June 25: IMD

MI News Service, New Delhi: The southwest monsoon, which regained momentum this week, is expected to cover most parts of northwest India, including Delhi, by June 25, well ahead of the usual dates, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said.

The primary rain-bearing system reached Kerala on May 24, marking its earliest onset over the Indian mainland since 2009, when it arrived on May 23. Aided by strong low-pressure systems over the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal, the monsoon advanced quickly over the next few days, covering parts up to central Maharashtra, including Mumbai, and the entire northeast by May 29.

However, it stalled from May 28-29 until June 10-11 before becoming active again. The lack of rainfall since early June led to a sharp rise in temperatures, triggering heat-wave conditions across large parts of northwest and central India since June 8-9.

According to the IMD's extended range forecast, the monsoon is now likely to cover the remaining parts of central and eastern India and some areas of northwest India by June 18. It is expected to advance over most of northwest India between June 19 and June 25.

An IMD official said the

system is likely to reach Delhi by June 22-23, ahead of the normal onset date of June 27. Meteorologists say the date of monsoon onset does not directly correlate with the total seasonal rainfall. An early or delayed arrival in Kerala or Mumbai does not necessarily indicate similar progress in other parts of the country. They say the monsoon is influenced by complex global, regional and local factors, marked by significant variability.

In May, the IMD forecast that India is likely to receive 106 per cent of the long-period average rainfall of 87 cm during the June-September monsoon season. Rainfall between 96 and 104 per cent of this 50-year average is considered “normal”. Above-normal rainfall is expected in most parts of the country, except Ladakh, adjoining areas of Himachal Pradesh, the northeast, and some parts of Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal and Odisha. Some isolated areas in Punjab, Haryana, Kerala and Tamil Nadu may record below-normal rainfall. The monsoon is crucial for India's agriculture sector, which supports the livelihood of around 42 per cent of the population and contributes 18.2 per cent to the GDP. It also plays a key role in replenishing reservoirs essential for drinking water and power generation.

Bihar govt mulls Spl drive against illegal firearms



MI News Service, Patna: The Bihar government is making massive efforts to check illegal arms and ammunition, with the aim of curbing the use of muscle power in the run-up to the assembly elections, Chief Secretary Amrit Lal Meena said on Sunday.

Meena said the state government is also planning various changes to licensing regulations, including modulating the allocation of bullets and increasing their cost, to strengthen gun control measures. “The district administrations and the police have launched a special drive to seize illegal weapons and unearth unauthorised arms manufacturing units, ahead of the assembly polls scheduled later this year. The drive is being carried out in a mission mode,” he told. Meena said officers have also been directed to ensure strict scrutiny of the licensed weapons. “Licenses of weapons are being verified, and officials have been asked to keep a close watch on licensed gun holders,” he said.

“Review meetings will also be held at divisional headquarters to assess the outcome of the drive after six weeks. Along with me, the additional chief secretary (home), and the DGP will be present in the review meetings,” he added. On the recent incidents of shooting in the state, Meena said the matter is being monitored by the police

headquarters, and instructions have already been given to deal with those who try to take the law into their own hands sternly. “The state government is also implementing changes to firearms licensing regulations to strengthen gun control measures,” he said. Officers concerned have been directed to ensure that details of arms licenses are uploaded on the portal of the National Database of Arms Licenses-Arms License Issuance System (NDAL-ALIS) on an urgent basis, he said. The district magistrates are the licensing authority for arms. All individual arms licenses not uploaded on the NDAL-ALIS portal, developed by the Ministry of Home Affairs, are considered invalid, as per the rules.

On the new regulations being prepared to strengthen gun control measures in the state, Meena said, “Ammunition allocation for license holders will be substantially reduced from 200 rounds per year to an initial distribution of 25 rounds.” “The cost of the bullet will also be increased. At present, the cost of each bullet is Rs 175 to Rs 200. Licensed holders will have to present used cartridge cases before receiving their next ammunition allocation,” he said. There are several licensed arms shops, which mostly remain closed, he said, adding that the licenses of these shops will be suspended.

Study finds how macrophages play critical role in immune system



WASHINGTON : Macrophages are essential to the immune system because they combat infections and help heal damaged tissue. It's critical to comprehend how these cells are triggered in various contexts in order to design novel medical interventions. The complexity of these cells and their reactions has made it difficult to identify and research macrophage activation.

The protein known as colony stimulating factor 1 receptor (CSF1R) was discovered by the study team to be a dependable marker for macrophages in tissues and monocytes and dendritic cells in blood, enabling the distinct identification and separation of various sample types. People of

all ages and genders can dependably use the new method. Dr Fernando Martínez Estrada, who led the research project and is Senior Lecturer in Innate Immunology at the School of Biosciences at the University of Surrey, said, "We have developed a method using CSF1R that can identify all types of Mononuclear phagocyte system cells in the body. This marker is incredibly useful for studying these cells in both health and disease, and it unlocks exciting new possibilities for cell isolation and quantification for diagnosing and monitoring various conditions with a single cell marker."

The study developed a set of tools to understand and check how these immune cells respond when

they are activated. These tools focus on signals in the body, including IL-4 (involved in healing and fibrosis), steroids (deactivation), IFNγ (fights infections), and LPS (a bacterial product that causes inflammation). The research team also described a novel concept that they call Macrophage Activation Mosaicism. This means that macrophages do not simply switch between the canonical two states previously described; instead, they can exhibit a mix of activation characteristics, reflecting the complexity of real tissue environments. Dr Federica Orsenigo, co-author of the study, explains further, "This discovery is significant because it changes how we perceive macrophage activation. "Recognising that macrophages can have mixed activation status helps us better understand their roles in different diseases and could lead to more targeted and effective treatments."

Emeritus Professor Siamon Gordon, co-author of the study from the University of Oxford, said:

"Therapies that seek to re-educate macrophages are widely sought. However, the tools to measure activation are underdeveloped. Having a robust multi-gene tool to study macrophage activation can help in drug screening, identify drugs that revert macrophage activation, and eventually help with patient characterisation and personalised medicine."

Men have greater risk of fractures from falls than women: Study

MASSACHUSETTS : A recent study titled "A meta-analysis of previous falls and subsequent fracture risk in cohort studies" found links between self-reported falls and increased fracture risk, as well as a slightly greater risk of fracture in men than in women. Published in Osteoporosis International, this international meta-analysis of data pooled from 46 prospective cohorts comprising over 900,000 individuals also recommended that previous falls are a factor that should be included in patients' histories used by fracture risk assessment tools like the FRAX (Fracture Risk Assessment) Tool to calculate a person's likelihood of getting a fracture over the next decade. FRAX is the most commonly used assessment to predict fracture risk.

"FRAX was developed using longitudinal data from studies around the world. Although previous falls have long been recognized as a significant risk factor for fractures, until now, they have not been factored into the FRAX algorithm," said Douglas P. Kiel, M.D., MPH, director of the Musculoskeletal Research Center and senior scientist at the Hinda and Arthur Marcus Institute for Aging Research at Hebrew SeniorLife, a nonprofit, Harvard Medical School affiliated institution. "In this newly updated FRAX dataset, previous falls were included as a risk factor and were found to increase the risk for fracture. These findings underscore that falls are an important contributor to fracture in both men and women, but interestingly, slightly more in men."

Key findings of the meta-analysis include Increased Fracture Risk: Individuals with a history of falls within the past year were found to have a significantly higher risk of any clinical fracture, osteoporotic fracture, major osteoporotic fracture, and hip fracture. One or more previous falls were significantly associated with an increased risk of death among women and men. Sex Disparities: The association between previous falls and fracture risk was observed to vary by sex, with men exhibiting higher predictive values compared to women.

Does physical activity alleviate pain in cancer survivors?

WASHINGTON DC : People who have had cancer commonly experience prolonged pain, but a new study suggests that being physically active may help to minimize its severity.

Wiley published the study in the American Cancer Society's peer-reviewed publication, CANCER.

Although physical activity has been demonstrated to alleviate a variety of pains, its impact on cancer-related discomfort is unknown.

To investigate, a team led by senior author Erika Rees-Punia, PhD, MPH, of the American Cancer Society, and first author Christopher T.V. Swain, PhD, of the University of Melbourne, in Australia, analyzed information about 51,439 adults without a history of cancer and 10,651 adults with a past cancer diagnosis.

Participants were asked, "How would you rate your pain on average," with responses ranging from 0 (no pain) to 10 (worst pain imaginable). Participants were also asked about their usual physical activity.

US guidelines recommend 150 minutes (2 hours 30 minutes) to 300 minutes (5 hours) a week of moderate-intensity, or 75 minutes (1 hour 15 minutes) to 150 minutes (2 hours 30 minutes) a week of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity.

Based on participants' responses, the investigators found that, for individuals who had cancer in the past as well as for those without a history of cancer, more physical activity was linked with lower pain intensity.

The extent of the association was similar for both groups of individuals, indicating that exercise may reduce cancer-related pain just as it does for other types of pain that have been studied in the past.

Among participants with a past cancer diagnosis, those exceeding physical activity



guidelines were 16 per cent less likely to report moderate-to-severe pain compared to those who failed to meet physical activity guidelines.

Also, compared with people who remained inactive, those who were consistently active or became active in older adulthood reported less pain.

"It may feel counterintuitive to some, but physical activity is an effective, non-pharmacologic option for reducing many types of pain. As our study suggests, this may include pain associated with cancer and its treatments," said Dr. Rees-Punia.

Study reveals how protein-rich breakfast can increase satiety, improve concentration



AARHUS, DENMARK : A new Danish study investigated the relationship between diet and cognitive function, and the findings show that a protein-rich breakfast can boost satiety and concentration.

This is important knowledge in a society with increasing obesity rates and lifestyle-related diseases, said researcher.

"Breakfast is the most important meal of the day." This is a well-worn platitude that has never had much basis in scientific evidence.

But a new Danish study has explored how different types of breakfast affect satiety and concentration and it has added new fuel to the old cliché.

The study followed 30 obese women aged 18 to 30 for three days, during which the women consumed a protein-rich breakfast, a carbohydrate-rich breakfast or no breakfast at all. The women's sense of satiety, hormone levels and energy intake were measured at lunchtime. Their total daily energy intake was measured as well.

The participants also had to complete a cognitive concentration test during the study.

"We found that a protein-rich breakfast with skyr (a sour-milk product) and oats increased satiety and concentration in the participants, but it did not reduce the overall energy intake compared to skipping breakfast or eating a carbohydrate-rich breakfast," says Mette Hansen, associate professor and PhD at the Department of Public Health, and one of the authors of the study.

The number of overweight people is increasing both in Denmark and across the globe. Obesity is often accompanied by lifestyle-related diseases such as type 2 diabetes. Previous studies have shown that people who eat breakfast have a lower BMI than people who do not eat breakfast, and protein-rich foods have generally been shown to have an increased satiety effect compared to carbohydrate-rich and high-fat foods with the same calorie content. The idea was

therefore to test whether a protein-rich breakfast could be a good strategy to achieving greater satiety during the day and thus reducing daily calorie intake.

However, the solution is not that simple, said Mette Hansen: "The results confirm that protein-rich meals increase a sense of satiety, which is positive with regard to preventing weight gain. However, the results also suggest that for this nutritional strategy to be effective, it's not enough to just eat a protein-rich breakfast."

The potential of replacing a carbohydrate-rich diet with a protein-rich diet can clearly be seen in the satiating effects measured in the study. Several of the subjects had difficulty consuming the entire protein-rich breakfast consisting of skyr and oats.

"It's intriguing that there can be such a big difference in the satiety effect of two different meals with the same calorie content. Had the women in the project been allowed to choose the size of the meal themselves, it's likely that they'd have consumed more food and thereby more calories on the day they were served bread and jam than on the day they were given skyr and oats," explained Mette Hansen. According to the researcher, although the study has provided important insights, it also has its limitations because only overweight young women participated in the study. The study is also based on relatively short-term observations, leaving open the question of how long-term dietary changes can affect health and weight. Mette Hansen therefore points out that the study underlines the need for further research to understand how different types of food affect health over time.

"We already have new data incoming from a trial where participants received either a high-protein breakfast or a low-protein breakfast. The objective was to study how the different types of breakfast affect body composition and other parameters such as microbiota and cholesterol levels," said Mette Hansen.

Research reveals brain processes speech, its echo separately

WASHINGTON DC : Echoes can make speech difficult to understand, and getting rid of echoes in an audio recording is a very difficult engineering task. According to a study published in the open-access journal PLOS Biology by Jiaxin Gao of Zhejiang University in China and colleagues, the human brain appears to successfully handle the challenge by splitting the sound into direct speech and its echo.

The audio signals in online meetings and auditoriums that are not properly designed often have an echo lagging at least 100 milliseconds from the original speech. These echoes heavily distort speech, interfering with slowly varying sound features most important for understanding conversations, yet people still reliably understand echoic speech. To better understand how the brain enables this, the authors used magnetoencephalography (MEG) to record neural activity while human participants listened to a story with and without an echo. They compared the neural signals to two computational models: one simulating the brain adapting to the echo, and another simulating the brain separating the echo from the original speech.

Participants understood the story with over 95% accuracy, regardless of echo. The researchers observed that cortical activity tracks energy changes related to direct speech, despite the strong interference of the echo. Simulating neural adaptation only partially captured the brain response they observed--neural activity was better explained by a model that split original speech and its echo into separate processing streams. This remained true even when participants were told to direct their attention toward a silent film and ignore the story, suggesting that top-down attention isn't required to mentally separate direct speech and its echo. The researchers state that auditory stream segregation may be important both for singling out a specific speaker in a crowded environment, and for clearly understanding an individual speaker in a reverberant space.

The authors add, "Echoes strongly distort the sound features of speech and create a challenge for automatic speech recognition. The human brain, however, can segregate speech from its echo and achieve reliable recognition of echoic speech."

Rare fat molecule helps drive cell death: Study

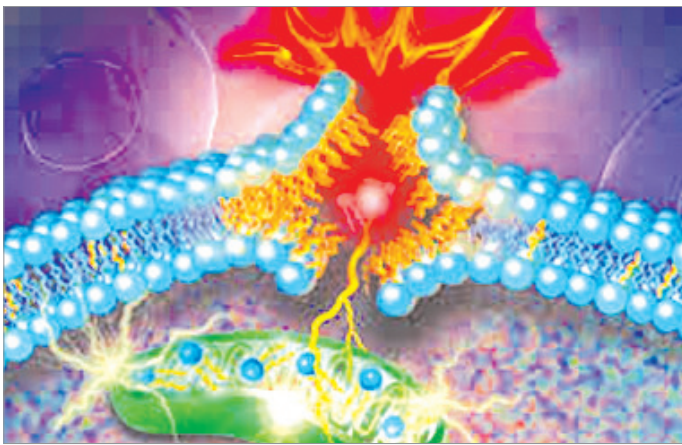
LOS ANGELES [US] : Researchers revealed that a rare sort of lipid plays a vital role in ferroptosis, a type of cell death described by Columbia professor Brent Stockwell.

The findings shed new light on how cells die during ferroptosis, potentially improving understanding of how to prevent ferroptosis in contexts where it is harmful, such as neurodegenerative diseases, or induce it in contexts where it could be beneficial, such as using it to kill dangerous cancer cells.

The study discovered that a diPUFA phospholipid, an uncommon type of lipid with two polyunsaturated fatty acyl tails, was present in a variety of situations where ferroptosis occurred, including aged brains and Huntington disease-affected brain tissue.

The finding indicated that the lipid is efficient at promoting ferroptosis.

The research was conducted by professors in Columbia's Department of Biological Sciences, Department of



The study discovered that a diPUFA phospholipid, an uncommon type of lipid with two polyunsaturated fatty acyl tails, was present in a variety of situations where ferroptosis occurred, including aged brains and Huntington disease-affected brain tissue.

Chemistry, and the Columbia University Irving Medical Center. Stockwell first discovered ferroptosis in 2012, when he found that certain cells were dying because their lipid layers were

and elsewhere have continued to investigate ferroptosis, discovering that it can occur naturally in ageing cells, in pathological contexts, and can be induced to treat disease. Another paper out this month with several co-authors found that a gene named PHLDA2 can sometimes promote ferroptosis by attacking a different lipid and that this gene can block some tumours from forming. Together, these papers show that specific lipids promote ferroptosis, so defining the driver lipids in specific cancers is important.

"The discovery that these diPUFA lipids are important drivers of ferroptosis deepens our understanding of this form of cell death, and these lipids' role in controlling a cell's homeostasis in general," Stockwell said.

"Harnessing these lipids may eventually help us identify where ferroptosis has occurred and deliberately manipulate them to either induce cell death or stop it. This can begin to give us both understanding and the power to control cell death."

Language, culture can influence how our brain processes emotional faces: Research

WASHINGTON : Understanding body language is an important aspect of communication. Humans are frequently considered to be able to perceive other people's emotions innately, but there is rising evidence that this ability is impacted by people's culturally shared knowledge of emotions.

A team of scientists in the US decided to investigate how cultural upbringing and access to emotion category words, which categorize and facilitate access to a complex set of emotional ideas, experiences, and responses stored in our memory, impact how we perceive others' emotional facial expressions.

"Here we show that access to emotion category words like 'disgust' differentially alters how brain regions interact with one another when people perceive emotions on others' faces. Importantly, this effect depends on one's cultural upbringing," said Dr Joseph Leshin, a researcher at Northeastern University and the study's first author. "Our findings contribute to growing evidence that emotional facial expressions are not universally produced and understood," added senior author Dr Kristen Lindquist, a neuroscientist at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, where the data for the Frontiers in Psychology study was collected.

A trigger for emotion recognition

Two participant groups - Chinese individuals, born and raised in mainland China, but now



living in the US, and non-Hispanic White Americans who were born and raised in the US - were recruited for the study. While undergoing fMRI, both groups viewed actors pose expressions for 'disgust' and 'anger' as they are typically displayed by White North Americans. Over four blocks, the participants viewed expressions which were either preceded by the relevant emotion category word or a non-word control text. "When primed with the word 'disgust' before viewing the corresponding facial expression, immigrants from mainland China showed decreased functional connectivity in brain regions related to semantic processing, visual perception, and social cognition," Leshin said. "Whereas White American participants tend to perceive wrinkling of noses and

scowls as evidence that someone else is disgusted, Chinese participants are less likely to clearly associate those facial muscle movements with disgust. Thus, their brains were likely working harder to disambiguate the meaning of posed disgusted facial muscle movements," explained Lindquist. Critically, presenting Chinese participants with the English language cue 'disgust' prior to viewing wrinkled noses and scowls changed how their brains processed those expressions. White American participants did not show the same differences in brain connectivity in the emotion word v. control text conditions, likely because the facial expressions are familiar to them. These findings suggest that seeing an English emotion category word before seeing the cor-

responding facial expression may help Chinese participants to understand the meaning behind the culturally-relative expression better. 'This also seems to apply even when the emotion is not central to a culture, as is the case with the notion of 'disgust' in Chinese culture, the researchers added. Understanding how people wear their hearts on their sleeves

The researchers said that their findings should be interpreted in light of some limitations, for example the modest sample size and the fact that the participant groups and the emotion category words used in this study do not represent the full spectrum of cultural or emotional diversity. A starting point for future research could be investigating if similar differences can be found amongst cultures that are more similar to one another than China and the US. Even subtle cultural differences could lead to variations in neural processing of emotions, the researchers said. To date, there is relatively little work that focuses on subcultures within the same country, for example within the US or China.

A further field of application of the team's findings lies in artificial intelligence. "Our study suggests that AI tools designed to read emotions from faces must account for cultural variation to avoid misinterpretation of people's expressions and highlights the need for culturally informed AI," Leshin concluded.

Israel hits Iran's Defence Ministry headquarters

MI News Service, Dubai: Israel launched an expanded assault on Iran on Sunday, targeting its energy industry and Defence Ministry headquarters, while Tehran unleashed a fresh barrage of deadly strikes. The simultaneous attacks represented the latest burst of violence since a surprise offensive by Israel two days earlier.

New explosions boomed across Tehran as Iranian missiles entered Israel's skies in attacks that Israeli emergency officials said caused deaths around the country, including four in an apartment building in the Galilee region.

Casualty figures weren't immediately available in Iran, where Israel targeted its Defence Ministry headquarters in Tehran as well as sites that it alleged were associated with the country's nuclear programme. Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard claimed that Iranian missiles targeted fuel production facilities for Israeli fighter jets.

Amid the continued conflict, planned negotiations between Iran and the United States over Tehran's nuclear programme were cancelled, throwing into question when and how an end to the fighting could come.

Both Israel's military and Iran state television announced the latest round of Iranian missiles as explosions were heard near midnight, while the Israeli security cabinet met.

World leaders made urgent calls to deescalate and avoid all-out war. The attack on nuclear sites set a "dangerous precedent," China's foreign minister said. The region is already on edge as Israel makes a new push to eliminate the Hamas in Gaza after 20 months of fighting. Meanwhile, the sixth round of US-Iran indirect talks on Sunday over Iran's nuclear programme will not take place, mediator Oman said. "We remain committed to talks and hope the Iranians will come to the table soon," said a senior US official, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss diplomacy. Iran's top diplomat said Saturday the nuclear talks were "unjustifiable" after Israel's strikes. Abbas Araghchi's comments came during a call with Kaja Kallas, the European Union's top diplomat.

The Israeli airstrikes were the "result of the direct support by Washington," Araghchi said in a statement carried by the state-run IRNA news agency. Iran launched its first waves of missiles at Israel late Friday and early Saturday. The attacks killed at least three people and wounded 174, two of them seriously, Israel said. The military said seven soldiers were lightly wounded when a missile hit central Israel, without specifying where. US ground-based air defence systems in the region were helping to shoot down Iranian missiles, said a U.S. official who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the measures.



People form a human chain to protest against the Assam government over cutting of tress for construction of a flyover, in Guwahati.

Israel 'greatest threat' to region's stability, Turkish president tells Saudi crown prince

MI News Service, Ankara: Israel is the "greatest threat" to the region's stability and security, said Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Saturday in a phone call with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. President Erdogan said "Israel, under the Netanyahu administration, poses the greatest threat to the region's stability and security, and this has been reaffirmed through its recent attack on Iran," Türkiye's Communications Directorate said in a statement on X. Erdogan and the Saudi crown prince, also known as MBS, discussed the Israel-Iran conflict and other regional and global issues during the conversation. The Turkish president said "the international community's silence in the face of the occupation and genocide in Palestine has emboldened Israel in its lawless and aggressive actions."

Israel's aggression on Iran, "at a time when efforts are ongoing to reach a compromise" through nuclear talks between Washington and Tehran is aimed at undermining peace efforts, Erdogan said.

He added that the attacks, which caused nuclear leaks, once again revealed "how irresponsibly Israel



threatens both regional and global security." The Turkish leader underlined that the region cannot endure another crisis, warning that a devastating war could trigger irregular migration waves affecting all countries in the region.

He said the nuclear dispute could only be resolved via continued talks. Israel launched a series of strikes against Iranian territory, targeting nuclear and missile facilities early Friday, killing senior military figures and scientists. The wave of attacks

has continued and resulted in the deaths of at least 78 people with 320 others injured, according to figures earlier announced by Iran's UN envoy.

Head of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Rafael Grossi told the UN Security Council on Friday that "the level of radioactivity outside the Natanz site has remained unchanged and at normal levels," but affirmed that attacks caused "radiological and chemical contamination inside the facilities."

British F-35 Fighter Jet Makes Emergency Landing At Kerala Airport

MI News Service, New Delhi: A British F-35B Lightning II fighter jet made an emergency landing at Thiruvananthapuram International Airport in Kerala late on Saturday night after running low on fuel while on a sortie over the Indian Ocean.

"Normal occurrence of diversion by F-35. IAF fully aware and facilitated the aircraft for flight safety reasons. All assistance being given, and IAF is in coordination with all agencies," the Indian Air Force said in a statement.

The 5th-generation stealth fighter is part of the UK's HMS Prince of Wales Carrier Strike Group, which is currently operating in the Indo-Pacific and had recently completed joint maritime exercises with the Indian Navy.

Military aviation experts describe the incident

as unusual but not unprecedented. The F-35B variant is specifically designed for short take-off and vertical landing (STOVL), allowing it to operate from aircraft carriers without catapult systems. It is not clear why the aircraft was unable to recover onto the Prince of Wales, although early indications suggest poor weather conditions around the carrier may have prevented a safe landing.

The F-35 programme, spearheaded by US defence contractor Lockheed Martin, is widely regarded as one of the most advanced multirole fighter aircraft platforms in service today. The aircraft's stealth capabilities, electronic warfare systems, and data-sharing infrastructure are central to the US, UK, Israel and NATO's modern air strategy.

Iraq urges U.S. to prevent Israel from violating airspace

MI News Service, Baghdad: Iraq on Saturday urged the United States to uphold its responsibility to prevent Israeli aircraft from breaching Iraqi airspace to carry out attacks. Sabah Al-Numan, spokesperson for the commander-in-chief of the Iraqi armed forces, stated that the Iraqi government called on the U.S. to fulfill its obligations under bilateral agreements and international conventions to prevent such violations.

The Iraqi government reiterated its firm and unequivocal rejection of any violation of Iraqi airspace or its use for military attacks carried out by Israel against Iran or any other neighboring country, the statement said.

Iraq has exercised the

highest levels of restraint in hopes of allowing diplomatic and political solutions to defuse the crisis through peaceful means, the statement added.

The spokesperson stressed that Iraq has the right, under international law and the United Nations Charter, to use all available means to respond to any violation of its national sovereignty by any party.

On Friday, Iraq submitted an official complaint to the United Nations Security Council, condemning Israel for violating its airspace to conduct military operations.

In the pre-dawn hours of Friday, Israel launched a series of coordinated airstrikes targeting strategic locations across Iran, including the capital, Tehran.

Israel urges United States to join military campaign against Iran

MI News Service, Tel Aviv: Israel has formally requested the United States to join its newly launched military campaign against Iran, according to a report by Axios on Sunday, citing both American and Israeli sources. The request centers around Israel's inability to strike Iran's heavily fortified Fordow uranium enrichment facility, which is buried deep inside a mountain and beyond the reach of Israeli airpower alone. Officials say U.S. involvement would be critical to effectively targeting the site.

A U.S. official confirmed to Axios that Israel made the request, but stated that the Biden administration is not currently considering participating in any military operation. The White House has maintained that Israel acted independently in its recent actions targeting Iran's nuclear infrastructure.

In earlier discussions between U.S. and Israeli leadership, former President Donald Trump was

reportedly open to the possibility of American military involvement if necessary, according to an Israeli source. However, the White House denied that claim on Friday, distancing itself from any suggestion of prior agreement. The situation highlights rising tensions in the region and renewed Israeli pressure on Washington as Iran's nuclear program remains a key concern for both allies. So far, the U.S. stance remains one of non-involvement.

Iran mulls blocking Strait of Hormuz after Israeli attacks, says lawmaker

MI News Service, Tehran: Iran is considering closing the strategic Strait of Hormuz in response to Israeli military attacks, a lawmaker said Saturday. The state-run Press TV quoted Iranian parliamentarian Esmail Kowsari as saying Tehran is weighing the move, which could have significant consequences for global oil supplies. "Iran is considering blocking the Hormuz Strait in the Persian Gulf, which sees more than 17 million barrels of oil pass through it every day," Kowsari was cited as saying. The remarks came a day after Israel launched a series of strikes against Iranian territory, targeting nuclear and missile facilities early Friday, killing senior military figures and scientists. The wave of attacks has continued and resulted in the deaths of at least 78 people with 320 others injured, according to figures earlier announced by Iran's UN envoy. In retaliation, Iran fired ballistic missiles at several locations inside Israel.

UAE president discusses Mideast tensions with French, Italian leaders over phone

MI News Service, Abu Dhabi: President of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan on Saturday held separate telephone conversations with French President Emmanuel Macron and Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni to discuss recent developments in the Middle East, particularly in the wake of Israeli strikes on Iran, according to the Emirates News Agency (WAM). During the calls, the leaders exchanged views on the escalating tensions and stressed the importance of exercising maximum restraint. They underscored the need to avoid further escalation and to resolve disputes through diplomatic means that safeguard regional peace and stability. The conversations also highlighted the UAE's strategic relations with both France and Italy, with the leaders vowing to continue strengthening bilateral cooperation across various fields in support of shared interests.

Grief rises above barriers as Hindu, Muslim civil groups work 24/7 to serve Air India crash victims' kin



MI News Service, Ahmedabad: Society groups and NGOs work for the fourth consecutive day to help the distressed people at B.J Medical College. At the hospital's Kasauti Bhavan, these volunteers and organisations are providing snacks, energy drinks, food and tea to the steady stream of relatives and friends of the Air India AI171 crash victims and well-wishers. Packets of biscuits and namkeen (salty or savoury snack), glasses of chaach (butter-milk), lassi, and glucose, and bottles of water are swiftly handed over to anyone in need. Volunteers and members from the Thali Yuva Sangh, the Vishv Umiya Foundation, the Ram Shyam Charitable Trust, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, the Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind are among those present at hospital premises in these pressing times. Sunday is no exception as many anxious family members wait outside the hospital for updates regarding their loved ones. Many of them have food at the stalls put up by these civil society groups and NGOs. Hafiz Nizam and Krishna Ben Agrawal are among the men and women quietly going about with their task to help the distressed.

Hafiz Nizam (standing) of Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind serves refreshments to the people at Ahmedabad's BJ Medical College on Sunday | Praveen Jain | ThePrint A local businessman, Nizam is working from the very beginning of the tragedy that unfolded in Ahmedabad. He is part of the Jamiat's 26-member team helping people and distributing food packets in the hospital. "Our three ambulances are also in the service for ferrying the bodies," the 25-year-old says, adding the team is deployed throughout day and night at the hospital. The people from all religions are united here, he says, distributing water bottles. "Yae Hindustan ki asli tasveer hae...yahi ekta hae. Allah se dua karte hae ki hamesha ye bana rahe. Sab milkar kaam kar rahe hain (This is the real picture of India...this is unity. We pray to Allah that it always remains so. Everyone is working together)." Krishna Ben says that she immediately decided to do something for people at the hospital when she saw the news of the plane crash on 12 June. "TV mae dekhthe hi raungte khade hogaye. Hum bhag ke hospital aaye (As soon as we saw it on TV, we got goosebumps. We rushed to the hospital," the president of Shri Ram Shyam Charitable Trust recalls. Her team, she says, reached the hospital at 9 pm Thursday with khichdi, kadi and gathiya (Gujarati food). They distributed food till 1 am that night. "Hume laga ki logo ki seva karni chahiye, yahi sabse bada dharm hai (We felt that serving people is the biggest religion)."

Pawan Kumar Mittal, a colleague of Krishna Ben, concurs with the sentiment. "Ish time mae koi Hindu aur Muslim nahi... Ko insan yaha se bhuka nahi jana chahiye. Sab logon kae liye kaam karre (There are no Hindus or Muslims in this time.



Nurul Islam Khan

On Sunday, DYFI organized a reception for meritorious secondary and higher secondary students at Nilmani Halder Lane in New Market. The meeting at Ward No. 46 of Chowringhee LC was attended by Left Front Chairman and veteran CPI(M) leader Comrade Biman Basu. Dr. Fuad Halim was also present. The youth organization organized this meeting to encourage the students.

Congress accuses Israel of attacking Iran's 'sovereignty', says it 'only deepens instability'

MI News Service, New Delhi: The Congress Sunday accused Israel of violating Iran's sovereignty, stating that the killings of top Iranian military generals and nuclear scientists represent a dangerous escalation with "grave regional and global consequences". The principal opposition party expressed its stance a day after the BJP-led Union government distanced itself from a Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) statement that sharply criticised Israeli actions against Iran. Iran is a member state of the 11-member SCO.

"The Indian National Congress unequivocally condemns Israel's recent bombings and targeted assassinations on Iranian

soil, which represent a dangerous escalation with grave regional and global consequences. This attack on Iran's sovereignty and encroachment of its rights, whether through aerial strikes or covert killings, only deepens instability and sows the seeds of further conflict," the Congress said in a statement.

"The Congress party firmly believes that diplomacy, dialogue, and international cooperation, and not violence, are the only legitimate and sustainable path forward. Hostilities must cease immediately. Continued military brinkmanship risks plunging an already fragile region into wider war, with catastrophic human and economic

fallout," it added.

The party had Saturday questioned the Centre's move to distance itself from the SCO statement that termed Israel's "aggressive actions" in Iran, including targeting of energy and transport infrastructure, "a gross violation of international law and the United Nations Charter".

In response, the Ministry of External Affairs said that India did not participate in the discussions at the SCO on the statement. The MEA added that New Delhi has already urged that channels of dialogue and diplomacy be utilised to work towards de-escalation. "The External Affairs Minister, too, discussed this

matter with his Iranian counterpart yesterday and conveyed the deep concern of the international community at the turn of events. He also urged the avoidance of any escalatory steps and an early return to diplomacy," stated the MEA.

Congress general secretary (communications) Jairam Ramesh said that the MEA's statement suggested that India has become an "abject apologist" for Israel.

"What does this MEA statement really mean? It seems to suggest that Israel can attack Iran but that Iran should exercise restraint and not climb the escalatory ladder. Have we been reduced to being an abject apol-

ogist for Israel? We cannot even condemn Israel's attacks on and targeted assassinations in Iran?" Ramesh posted on X on Saturday.

However, the party's formal statement issued Sunday had no reference to the SCO issue. While condemning Israeli action, the Congress also acknowledged India's strategic ties with Israel in recent decades.

"India has long-standing civilisational ties with Iran and, in recent decades, has developed strategic relations with Israel. This unique position gives our country the moral responsibility and the diplomatic leverage to act as a bridge for de-escalation and peace.

India go down 2-3 to Australia

ANTWERP : Talisman Manpreet Singh's 400th milestone international match didn't go as he would have hoped, with India going down 2-3 to Australia in the ongoing FIH Hockey Pro League 2024-25 (Men) here in Antwerp on Sunday. It was goals by Tim Brand (4'), Blake Govers (5') and Cooper Burns (18') that set up the victory for Australia, while Sanjay (3') and Dilpreet Singh (36') scored for India, according to a release from Hockey India.

After getting off to a fine start, an opening goal came only in the third minute through the handy work of Sanjay, who picked up the rebound from a PC to put India ahead by 1-0. India lost the lead, with Australia responding swiftly with an equaliser in the very next minute. It was Tim Brand who scored in a sensational fashion, and only seconds later, they stunned India with a second goal through Blake Govers.

There was little India goalie Krishan Pathak could do to stop the blazing Aussie attack.

It was perhaps one of the fastest 10 minutes in any game this far in the European leg of the tournament, with both teams living up to the billing, producing a



high-octane encounter. At the first quarter break, Australia was in the lead by 2-1 and extended it to 3-1 when Cooper Burns struck

one past Pathak in the 18th minute. This goal put India under the pump, and Australia attempted to increase its advantage with a

fast-paced attack. The next few minutes saw both teams trade PCs, but neither found success, ending the first half with Australia

leading by two goals.

Following the ten-minute break, India returned with fresh vigour to reduce the deficit. Good stick work was on display when Abhishek set up Dilpreet to score a fine field goal in the 36th minute. This was an important goal to keep India in the hunt, but Australian defence was relentless, not allowing any one-sided marking in the circle.

With just one goal difference between the two sides, it was going to be a nail-biting final quarter. There were a few moments that could have brought India back in the fold with an equaliser, but they couldn't capitalise on the chances. Australia did well in restricting India in the final stretch to pick up the crucial winning points from this game.

"It is unfortunate we have lost six back-to-back matches here. It has never happened before but if you see, all these games have been very close and we have done well overall but have not been able to finish well. This is something we will deliberate on and try to bounce back in the upcoming matches," stated Manpreet Singh after the game, as quoted from a release by Hockey India.

Season 1 of Rugby Premier League commences from June 15



MUMBAI : The wait for Season 1 of the Rugby Premier League (RPL) is finally over. Fast, physical, fearless - the first ever franchise-based Rugby Sevens league in the world, which is organised by Rugby India and GMR Sports, will host the who's who from the world of rugby, in Mumbai from Sunday.

Battling it out for top honours are six franchises, Bengaluru Bravehearts, Chennai Bulls, Delhi Redz, Hyderabad Heroes, Kalinga Black Tigers, and the Mumbai Dreamers.

The RPL will feature 30 marquee international players from powerhouse Rugby Sevens nations, including New Zealand, Australia, South Africa, Fiji, Argentina, Great Britain, Ireland, USA and Spain. Additionally, 18 international players from Canada, Hong Kong, and Germany will also be part of the tournament, enhancing the league's competitive depth.

Last but not the least, the RPL will also see 30 Indian players selected from an auction pool of 71, participate alongside the international legends.

Each squad will have 13 players with two Indian players required to be on the field of play

at all times during the game. At any given point in time, there will be seven players on the field of play. The seven is then divided into three forwards and four backs.

The forwards are the big, and physical players who will compete in the scrum and lineouts. Meanwhile, the backs are the fast, agile, and athletic players. The backs are the players who usually score most of the points in a game. 13 players - (5 Marquee + 3 Bridge + 5 Indian) + 5 Management (Head Coach, Assistant Coach, Physiotherapist, Massage Therapist and S&C).

The starting Seven players in the RPL will feature two international players, two international Bridge Players + two Indian players + 1 Coaches choice.

Each game will be played in four quarters which will be off four minutes each, with a break of two minutes in between each phase. The total time duration for one match is not expected to exceed 22 minutes. Season 1 of the Rugby Premier League kicks off on June 15, with a final scheduled for June 29, in Mumbai at the Shahaji Raju Bhosale Sports Complex (Andheri Sports Complex).

Australia head coach McDonald mulls top-order changes after WTC final loss to South Africa



LONDON : Australia head coach Andrew McDonald hinted at a rejig in the top order after misfiring in the World Test Championship (WTC) final defence against South Africa at Lord's.

Marnus Labuschagne was a hot topic during the buildup to the high-stakes final, which Australia lost by five wickets. Amid his lean phase with the bat, Labuschagne was promoted to the top of the order with hopes of his return to blazing form. However, he returned with scores of 17 and 22, leaving him with an average of 27.82 for the WTC cycle and making his position in the team uncertain.

With Australia's tour of the West Indies scheduled to begin on June 25, young Sam Konstas has been pushing his case for a return to the top spot since the Border-Gavaskar Trophy. Labuschagne could retain his spot if Steve Smith fails to recover in time after sustaining a finger injury on the third day of the WTC final.

"It was a big discussion leading into this Test match, and I was on the record a couple of weeks ago talking about the need to bed down that opening combination. We've had a bit of musical chairs there, so it might be the time," head coach Andrew McDonald said as quoted from ESPNcricinfo.

Australia's seasoned opener, Usman Khawaja, returned to the unwanted spotlight after his twin dismissals to Kagiso Rabada at Lord's. Earlier this year, Khawaja struck his career-best 232 against Sri Lanka three Tests ago. However, his Achilles Heel against pace from around the wicket was again exposed.

Despite his struggles, Khawaja is expected to enjoy an elongated run, just like his former partner David Warner received when he was under question during the latter stage of his career. If Khawaja continues to get backed, he will be one of the candidates for the highly anticipated Ashes later this year. "He's on contract, he's an important player. He gives us stability at his best at the top. And we like to look at our players at their best. No doubt, a couple of failures here and people then start to talk about maybe it's the end. I don't see an end date with the way he's training, the way he's preparing, the way he's moving. He went back to Shield cricket, got 100 last [season]. So I think he's got plenty of runs left in him," McDonald said "It'll come down to his inner drive and the way he prepares. It was a bit the same with Davey as well.

Surinder describes Delhi's best pitch award in IPL 2025 "special", DDCA Director reveals steps taken to promote women's cricket

NEW DELHI : Delhi and District Cricket Association (DDCA) Director Shyam Sunder Sharma lavished praise on the impact Delhi Premier League (DPL) has made and outlined steps being taken to promote women's cricket and its growth.

According to Sharma, 14 players earned a spot in the 18th season of the Indian Premier League (IPL) and turned into prospects for the Indian team.

"The first season of DPL went very well. Everyone praised DPL. Fourteen youngsters went into IPL because of it. Everyone is saying that Priyansh Arya, Ayush Badoni and Digvesh Rathi are being seen as future prospects for India. This is because of DPL and this tournament was the brainchild of our president, Rohan Jaitley," he told ANI. Sharma also revealed that subsidy is being offered to the clubs under DDCA to promote women's cricket and added, "We have a special focus on women's cricket. There has been an addition to our subsidiary; whichever club plays a women's team will be



given a subsidiary of Rs 1 lakh."

Former India cricketer Surinder Khanna hailed the DDCA for being awarded the Best Pitch and Ground Award of the Season in IPL 2025 and described the milestone as "special."

Surinder credited the DDCA management and the ground in-charge, Ankit, for providing top-class wickets, especially in Delhi's scorching heat, which offered enjoyable conditions for both sides.

400 caps and counting: India's hockey legend Manpreet Singh etches name in history

ANTWERP : As the sun dipped behind the stands of Wilrijkse Plein in Antwerp and the Indian national anthem played once again, there stood a familiar figure--poised, composed, with eyes filled with purpose. For the 400th time, hockey icon Manpreet Singh walked out wearing the India jersey, adding his name to an elite list of legends who have graced the world stage with unwavering consistency and heart.

In that moment, Manpreet wasn't just a player lining up against Australia in the FIH Hockey Pro League 2024/25--he was a symbol of longevity, leadership, and an era that has seen Indian hockey return to global reckoning.

The 33-year-old midfielder from Punjab, a place synonymous with Indian hockey folklore, now stands as the second-highest capped Indian men's player of all time, behind only former Captain and current Hockey India President Dr. Dilip Tirkey (412 caps). What makes Manpreet's story even more compelling is that it's far from over.

From his debut in 2011 as a spirited 19-year-old to becoming the heartbeat of the Indian midfield, Manpreet's career mirrors Indian hockey's resurgence.

He has won 4 Asian Champions Trophy titles (2013, 2018, 2023, 2024), 2 Asian Games Gold medals (2014, 2023), 2 Olympic Bronze medals (2020, 2024), 2 Commonwealth Games Silver medals (2014, 2022) and Podium finishes at the 2014-15 and 2016-17 FIH World League and Hockey Champions Trophy in 2018.

Manpreet's consistency on the field has been matched by his recognition off it. His accolades underline his immense contribu-



tion to Indian sport, including Arjuna Award - 2018, FIH Men's Player of the Year - 2019, Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award - 2021, Hockey India Balbir Singh Sr. Player of the Year - 2019, Hockey India Ajit Pal Singh Award for Midfielder of the Year - 2014, 2021

But for Manpreet, it was never about the medals alone. It was about showing up -- every single game and every training session -- with the same fire he felt when he first picked up a stick on the dusty fields of Mithapur, Jalandhar.

Speaking on the milestone, an emotional Manpreet said, as quoted from Hockey India, "I still remember the goosebumps I felt

in my debut game. To be standing here, 400 games later, is beyond anything I imagined. This milestone is shared with every coach who pushed me, every teammate who backed me, and every fan who believed in me when I needed it most. I'm still learning, still growing -- and I play with the same hunger today as I did at 19."

Hockey India President and the only Indian player ahead of Manpreet in the all-time caps list, Dilip Tirkey, lauded the achievement and stated, "Very few athletes achieve this level of consistency and endurance. Manpreet has been the spine of Indian hockey through its most transformative decade. His fitness, leadership, and composure under pres-

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sure set him apart. We are proud to see him carry forward the legacy with such grace."

Hockey India Secretary General Bhola Nath Singh added, "400 caps is not just a number -- it's a legacy built on sacrifice, discipline, and devotion to the sport. Manpreet has set the bar for professionalism and pride in wearing the India jersey. He has been a true ambassador of Indian hockey and a generational role model." (ANI)



"Trailblazer": Arunachal Pradesh CM showers praise on Hillang Yajik for historic performance at South Asian Bodybuilding Championships

NEW DELHI : Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu lavished praise on Hillang Yajik, who made history by clinching gold and silver at the 15th South Asian Bodybuilding and Physique Sports Championships 2025 in Thimphu, Bhutan.

Yajik, who hails from Arunachal Pradesh, clinched a gold medal in the Women's Model Physique (up to 155 cm) category and a silver medal in another category. Following her splendid performance at the event, Yajik became the first woman athlete from Arunachal Pradesh to win gold in physique sports at an international tournament.

Khandu hailed Yajik for her dazzling performance at the 15th South Asian Bodybuilding and Physique Sports Championships 2025 in Thimphu, held from June 11 to 15.

"Big applause to Ms. Hillang Yajik for her phenomenal feat at the 15th South Asian Bodybuilding & Physique Sports Championships 2025 in Thimphu, Bhutan! With 1 Gold and 1 Silver medal, she becomes the first-ever woman from our state to clinch an international Gold in physique sports -- a trailblazer in every sense! Your dedication, discipline, and determination have carved a proud chapter for Arunachal and the nation. More power to you, Hillang," Khandu wrote on X.

Union Minister of Parliamentary Affairs Kiren Rijiju congratulated Yajik for her record-shattering performance and wrote on X, "I'm delighted as India's Miss Hillang Yajik wins 1 Gold and 1 Silver Medal at 15th South Asian Bodybuilding & Physique Sports Championships 2025 at Thimphu in Bhutan. Hillang Yajik is from Arunachal Pradesh, who has created a history. Heartly Congratulations to Hillang Yajik!"

Rajya Sabha MP Satnam Singh Sandhu extended wishes to Yajik and wrote on X, "Congratulations to Hillang Yajik from Arunachal Pradesh for making India proud! Her stellar performance and dedication towards fitness has won her 1 Gold & 1 Silver medal at the 15th South Asian Bodybuilding & Physique Sports Championships 2024 in Thimphu, Bhutan! Great to see Indian women establishing themselves at international level for bodybuilding and fitness."