

become Everest victims

The deaths of an Irish and a British climber on Mount Everest took the toll from a deadly season on the world's highest peak to 10, expedition organisers said on Saturday. British climber Robin Fisher, 44, reached the summit on Saturday morning but collapsed when he had got just 150 m back down the slope. On the northern Tibet side of the mountain, a 56-year-old Irish man died on Friday morning, his expedition organisers confirmed in a statement. AFP



makes a better parent

People who regularly read with their children are less likely to engage in harsh parenting and their children are less likely to have attention problems, say researchers. The study, published in the Journal of Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics, says that reading with your child "on a daily basis provides not just academic but emotional benefits that can help bolster the child's success. IANS



Volcanic eruption in Bali causes flight cancellations

A volcano erupted on the Indonesian holiday island of Bali, causing some overnight flight cancellations to and from Australia as an ash cloud rose into the sky, officials said on Saturday. Mount Agung volcano spewed out lava and showers of rocks over a distance of about 3 km, with ash falling over dozens of villages, officials said. There were no reports of casualties. Photographs showed an ash column and glowing lava in the crater of the volcano.

At Cannes, Modhura Palit gets India its moment in the sun

The young cinematographer received a special encouragement award during the Pierre Angénieux ExcelLens in Cinematography ceremony

NAMRATA JOSHI

India had a brief moment in the sun at the Cannes Film Festival on Friday night when the young Indian director of photography, Modhura Palit, was given a special encouragement award during the Pierre Angénieux ExcelLens in Cinematography ceremony opened by the General Delegate of the festival, Thierry

Frémaux, in Salle Buñuel at Palais des festivals. The award highlights the promising work of a young film professional and will offer Ms. Palit the opportunity to use the best of the Angénieux technology for the images of her next pr oject.

Ms. Palit, dressed in an orange and green silk sari, is the first Indian and the first woman to get this recognition. A graduate of the Satyajit Ray Film and Television Institute of Kolkata and a member of the Indian Women Cinematographer Collective, Ms. Palit is a freelance cinematographer who has been working primarily on independent films.

Encouragement for girls She said the recognition seems unreal, like a fairytale. In fact, when she got the information on E-mail, she thought it was a spam. Ms. Palit hoped that her award

would encourage young girls

to take to a profession that is



Modhura Palit • FACEBOOK

considered "manly" while also hoping that that the idea of "woman" cinematographer will also go away some day. "You can't genderise a craft," she said.

Indian cinematographer-

filmmaker Rajiv Menon, while congratulating Ms. Palit, said that it was an honour to see a young Indian cinematographer breaking new grounds. "It warms my heart that a young Indian girl is coming up with images that the world is waiting for and competing with the best."

The big award for the day, the Pierre Angénieux Excel-Lens in Cinematography honour was bestowed upon Bruno Delbonnel (AFC, ASC), renowned French director of photography with five Oscar nominations for Best Picture (Le Fabuleux Destin d'Amélie Poulain in 2002, Un long dimanche de fiançailles in 2005, Harry Potter and the Half-Blood

Prince in 2010, Inside Llewyn Davis in 2014 and Darkest

Meanwhile, a Brazilian film, Karim Ainouz's The Invisible Life, about two inseparable sisters, with common hopes and dreams, who are forced to live away from each other, walked away with the Best Film award in the Un Certain Regard section of the Cannes Film Festival

Russian Kantemir Balagov bagged the best director award for the Cannes favourite Beanpole, about two women in Leningrad rebuilding their lives from the wreckage of Second World War.

Neighbours Canada and U.S. got to share the Coup de Coeur prize with Monia

Chokri's A Brother's Love and Michael Angelo Covino's The Climb, respectively.

Critics divided

Two period pieces, that left the critics divided, also walked away with awards -Jeanne (Joan of Arc) by Bruno Dumont got a special mention, while a Special Jury prize went to Liberte by Albert Serra that faced multiple walkouts at its premiere screening for its explicit portraval of sex.

Un Certain Regard presented 18 films this year, 9 of them first films. The jury headed by Lebanese director-actor Nadine Labaki was comprised of Marina Foïs (actress, France), Nurhan Sekerci-Porst (producer, Germany), Lisandro Alonso (director, Argentina) and Lukas Dhont (director, Belgium).

In a statement, the jury expressed great pleasure in having dived into the diversity of selection; diversity that reflected on many levels: subjects, the way cinematic tools were used and the portraval of characters. The statement said: "It was very stimulating to have seen, side by side, filmmakers that master their language so well and others still finding their way to mastery... We were honoured to be transported into all these different universes. World cinema remains very much alive and in good shape!"

IISc researchers confirm superconductivity breakthrough

Achieving it at room temperature and pressure represents major advance

R. PRASAD SHUBASHREE DESIKAN CHENNAI

Superconductivity at ambient temperature has been the holy grail in physics for about a century and a team from the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru led by Prof. Anshu Pandey has confirmed that the material they tested exhibits major properties of superconductivity at ambient temperature and pressure.

A material is said to be a superconductor if it conducts electricity with nil resistance to the flow of electrons. Superconductors will help build very high efficiency devices leading to huge energy savings. Until now, scientists have been able to make materials superconduct only at temperature much below zero degree C and hence making practical utility very difficult.

This is where the IISc's work becomes particularly important. A revised article on the tests has been posted on May 21 in arXiv, a preprint repository.

The material that exhibited superconductivity is in the form of nanosized films



Quantum leap: A material is a superconductor if it conducts electricity with zero resistance to the flow of electrons. • AFP

noparticles embedded in a gold matrix. Interestingly, silver and gold independentdo not exhibit superconductivity.

The team examined 125 samples, of which 10 showed a drop in resistance, signalling the onset of superconductivity. The remaining samples were exposed to oxygen at the time of sample preparation leading to unsuccessful results. Reproducibility and repeatability are the cornerstones of science, and the IISc team was able to achieve it

"If this result is correct, it would be the greatest work done in India since the discovery of Raman effect," said Professor T.V. Ramakrishnan and pellets made of silver na- from the Department of of identical pattern of noise

Physics at IISc. "They have found a sharp drop in resis-

is potentially amazing." "This looks like a case where granular superconductors play a role. I am excited that the key first step in this challenging field has been brought about by a systematic and detailed effort," says Professor G. Baskaran from The Institute of Mathematical Sciences, Chennai.

tivity [in their material]. This

Identical noise

The initial version posted in arXiv on July 23, 2018 by Prof. Anshu Pandey and Dev Kumar Thapa attracted criticism, raising doubts about the data and hence the study. The reason: the presence

(random fluctuations of data that hinders perception of a signal) for two presumably independent measurements of magnetic susceptibility. Noise, by its very virtue, is random and so finding nearly identical noise in measurements made under different conditions is highly improbable. Brian Skinner, a physicist at MIT, Boston, was the first to notice this.

In one of his tweets in August 2018 he said: "...They [IISc team] are really not backing down from their claims. They emphasize that they are focused on providing validation of their data..." And the IISc team did just that. On May 22, 2019, Dr. Skinner tweeted "...I am gratified, to say that least, that it is a scientific story now, and not a story about social scandal."

Interestingly, the new data still show the repeated "noise" in some instances. However, the researchers have clarified that the magnitude of the noise is well above instrumental resolution. "This suggests a possible physical origin related to the sample as opposed to instrument artefacts,

Bong Joon-Ho's *Parasite* strikes gold at Cannes

Belgium's Dardenne brothers won the best director award

REUTERS/PTI

Parasite, a suspenseful dark comedy about class struggles directed by South Korea's Bong Joon-Ho, won the top Palme d'Or prize at the Cannes Film Festival on Saturday.

The award adds to a successful run at the French cinema showcase for Asian films after Japanese director Hirokazu Kore-eda clinched the prestigious gong last

Mr. Bong, who made his mark at Cannes in 2017 with Netflix-produced Okja, set his latest movie in modern South Korea. Belgium's

brothers won the best director award for their story of a radicalised Muslim youth, Young Ahmed. It follows a down-ontheir-luck family of four who

ing them jobs. They worm their way into the other family's lives - be-

spot an opportunity to con a

wealthy household into giv-

fore things start going south. Mr. Bong is the second Asian director in succession to win the Palme d'Or, after Japan's Hirokazu Kore-eda, And Glory – one of the films who won last year for the that had been tipped for the



d'Or for his film. ■REUTERS

film Shoplifters.

This year's Cannes film festival also shone a light on newcomers, in an unusually crowded field.

Atlantics, a ghost story about migrants directed by Franco-Senegalese filmmaker Mati Diop, won the runner-up Grand Prix award. The movie, based on her 2009 short documentary, was Ms. Diop's first featurelength film.

Spain's Antonio Banderas won the male acting prize for his role as a tortured filmmaker in Pedro Almodovar's loosely biographical Pain

top honour this year.

Britain's Emily Beecham was crowned best actress after starring in Jessica Hausner's Little Joe as a botanist who starts having doubts about her latest geneticallymodified creation when it begins to affect her loved ones.

Our Mothers, a film by Guatemalan director Cesar Diaz, won the Camera d'Or for the best debut film. The film was part of the parallel Critics' Week.

The Prix Un Certain Regard went to Brazilian writer-director Karim Ainouz's

Chasing the waves



Perfect ride: Japan's Kanoa Igarashi, who won the World Surf League Men's Championship Tour event at Keramas in Gianyar on Indonesia's resort island of Bali on Saturday, performing a manoeuvre during the final. • AFP

Russia launches Arctic icebreaker

Nuclear-powered ship aims at tapping commercial benefits, ensuring dominance

REUTERS ST PETERSBURG

Russia launched a nuclearpowered icebreaker on Saturday, part of an ambitious programme to renew and expand its fleet of the vessels in order to improve its ability to tap the Arctic's commercial potential. The ship, dubbed the Ural

and which was floated out from a dockyard in St Petersburg, is one of a trio that when completed will be the largest and most powerful icebreakers in the world. Russia is building new in-

frastructure and overhauling its ports as, amid warmer climate cycles, it readies for more traffic via what it calls the Northern Sea Route (NSR) which it envisages being navigable year-round.

The Ural is due to be



Float-out: The nuclear-powered icebreaker 'Ural' during the launch at the Baltic Shipyard in St. Petersburg. • REUTERS

handed over to Russia's state-owned nuclear energy corporation Rosatom in 2022 after the two other icebreakers in the same series, Arktika (Arctic) and Sibir (Siberia), enter service.

"The Ural together with its sisters are central to our strategic project of opening the NSR to all-year activity," Alexey Likhachev, Rosatom's chief executive, was quoted

President Vladimir Putin said in April that Russia was stepping up construction of icebreakers with the aim of significantly boosting freight traffic along its Arctic coast.

The drive is part of a push to strengthen Moscow's hand in the High North as it vies for dominance with traditional rivals Canada, the United States and Norway, as well as newcomer China.

By 2035, Mr. Putin said Russia's Arctic fleet would operate at least 13 heavy-duty icebreakers, nine of which would be powered by nuclear reactors.

The Arctic holds oil and gas reserves equivalent to 412 billion barrels of oil, about 22 percent of the world's undiscovered oil and gas, the U.S. Geological Survey estimates.

Moscow hopes the route which runs from Murmansk to the Bering Strait near Alaska could take off as it cuts sea transport times from Asia to Europe.

Before Instagram, selfies and personal branding, there was Andy Warhol

A retrospective of the artist's work is on display in San Francisco

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Before Instagram and Facebook, before selfies and filters that perfect selfies, there was Andy Warhol, using his art to imbue friends, family, celebrities even himself with a certain mystique.

A retrospective of Warhol's work on display in San Francisco captures the artist's ability to use paintings, drawings, photographs and

other mediums to create buzz-worthy personas the way people do now using social media. The idea of personal

branding, "of how we can be who we want to be," was something Warhol was trading on more than a half-century ago, said Donna De Salvo, deputy director for international initiatives and senior curator at New York's Whitney Museum of American Art,





Power of images: A retrospective of Andy Warhol's work on display at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. • AP

where the exhibit originated. "He had a real understanding of something about

American culture, which is now more global." "Andy Warhol From A to B

week at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and

and Back Again" opened this runs through September 2. It includes over 300 works spanning his 40-year career.

The retrospective features some of the artist's most iconic creations depictions of Campbell's soup cans and Brillo boxes, for instance, and silkscreen portraits of Elizabeth Taylor, Marilyn Monroe, Elvis Presley and others along with lesser-known pieces from his early and la-

"Warhol is constantly labelled a pop artist, but all that happened within three or four years, and then he moved on and the work goes quite dark and explores questions of gender and sex-

tures," said Gary Garrels, Elise S. Haas senior curator of painting and sculpture for the San Francisco museum. Ms. De Salvo also notes the

ual identity, fame, subcul-

"multiplicity of images" in Warhol's work. "This is where he's such a genius of permutation that he could create so many iterations of an image in an analog way, where now there's a software program to do that," she said. "There's so many ways. There's a 'Warholizer.' He so anticipated what technology would bring about."