



MOTHER'S DAY

# A little light shines through

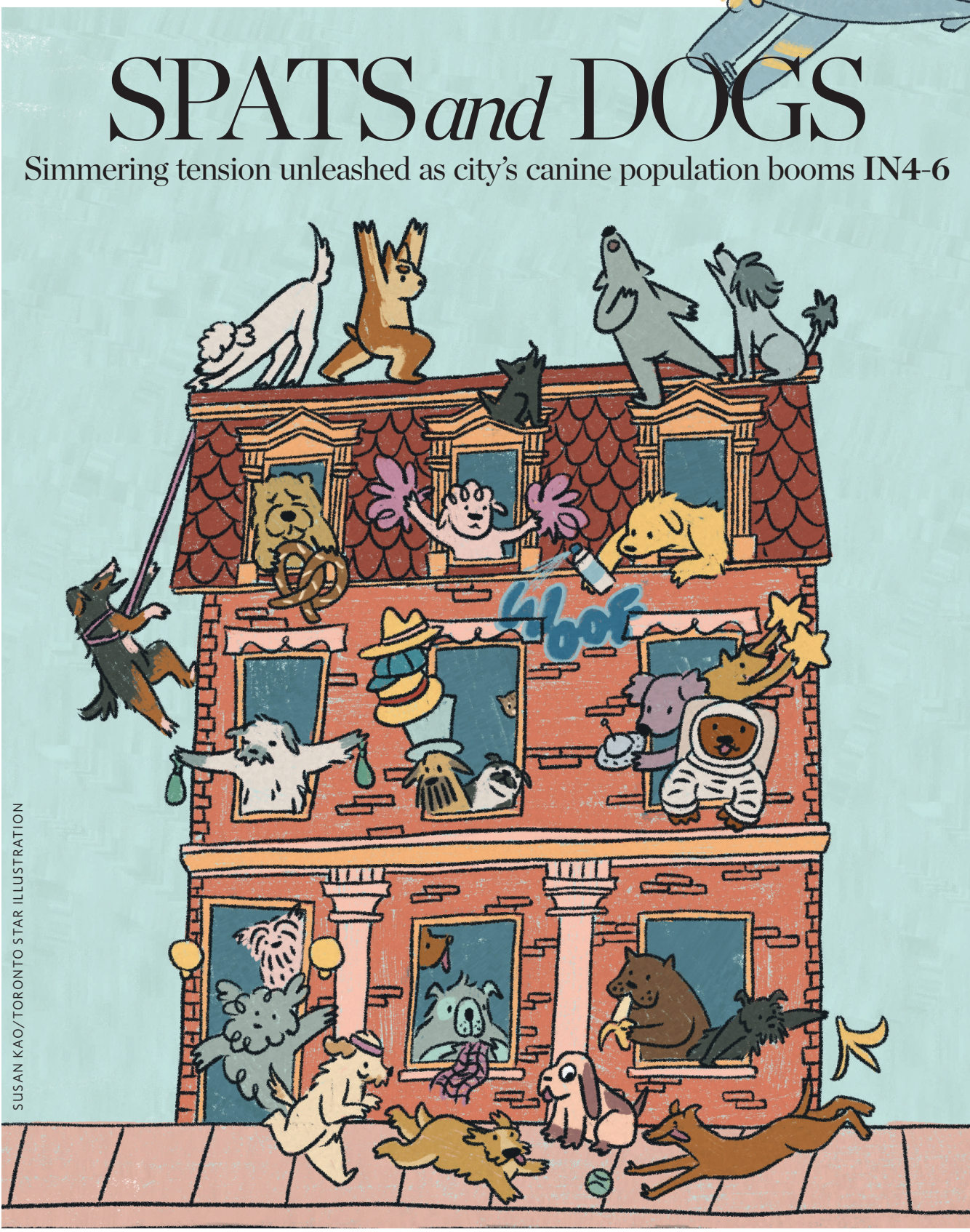
Family finds hope amid the uncertainty as they prepare to spend mom's special day in the NICU at Sunnybrook A8

PROUDLY CANADIAN OWNED SINCE 1892

# SUNDAY STAR

WEATHER HIGH 14 C | MAINLY SUNNY | MAP A22

SUNDAY, MAY 10, 2026



SUSAN KAO/TORONTO STAR ILLUSTRATION

## SPATS and DOGS

Simmering tension unleashed as city's canine population booms IN4-6

PROVINCIAL POLITICS

## Erskine-Smith rejected as Liberal candidate

Leadership hopeful questions results after loss to Hafiz in Scarborough vote

ROB FERGUSON  
QUEEN'S PARK BUREAU

In a blow to Liberal leadership hopeful Nate Erskine-Smith, party members in Scarborough Southwest rejected him as their candidate for an upcoming byelection.

The win by businessman Ahsanul Hafiz on Saturday complicates Erskine-Smith's second bid to head the provincial party.

He would not discuss next steps in that regard, charging there were irregularities involving the eligibility of some riding association members to cast ballots at Birchmount Park Collegiate Institute.

"Not until we figure out what to do in response to all this," the 11-year MP from neighbouring Beaches—East York told reporters in a steady rain as he made his way to the school's parking lot.

"I've spoken to a few scrutineers in there who said they've never seen anything like it, and it's unreal what happened in there," he added, speaking of his observers in the counting room where the tally showed he lost by 19 votes.

He also accused the party "establishment" of working against him.

Party officials stood by the results, noting the rules were set months ago.

So did Hafiz, who owns 30 Domino's Pizza outlets and is a native of Bangladesh with strong ties to the riding's large Bengali population.

"It's 100 per cent fair," he said. "The whole community was behind me."

His supporters jumped to their feet when the results were announced on stage in the school auditorium.

"Thank you from the bottom of my heart," a jubilant Hafiz said to the crowd.

"The game has just started ... now we have to play the final," he said, using a hockey analogy to describe the byelection to come.

SEE NOMINATION, A9

ONTARIO PLACE

## Assessment of Therme's spa bid cited partnership that didn't exist

ANA PEREIRA  
BUSINESS REPORTER

The Infrastructure Ontario assessment of Therme's bid to build a spa at Ontario Place wrongly presented development giant Aecon as a "construction partner," a document obtained by the Star has revealed, potentially improving the bid's likelihood of success.

When asked by the Star about its involvement in the project, an Aecon spokesperson said the two companies did discuss a potential collaboration at the time, but nothing was finalized.

"Aecon was aware that we were within the bid. However, the discussions for Aecon's involvement were ongoing, and we are no longer involved with the project."

The spokesperson did not clarify whether the company was aware that Aecon was presented as a construction partner on the document, a scorecard evaluating Therme's submission that was prepared in October 2019.

Therme confirmed in an email to the Star that it was in talks with Aecon at one point.

SEE THERME, A2

**Aecon says the two companies did discuss a potential collaboration, but nothing was finalized**

## Labour trafficking on the rise in Canada amid tightened pathways to immigration

GHADA ALSHARIF  
IMMIGRATION AND WORK REPORTER

Alberto was recruited in Mexico by a Canadian window cleaning company and promised a steady job in Canada, with his flight and work permit costs covered. But shortly after he arrived in Toronto, more than \$11,000 was illegally deducted from his pay, leaving him in debt, working more than 10 hours a day for about \$300 a week and relying

on food banks to survive.

Sofia came to Canada from Honduras to work as a live-in caregiver. Isolated and unfamiliar with Canadian labour laws, she was forced by her employer to work 19-hour days — cleaning, cooking, shopping, doing laundry and caring for a two-year-old — for just \$540 a month.

Marcus, an engineer from Mexico, was recruited to work for a Canadian cleaning company servicing

everything from commercial buildings and supermarkets as well as window and carpet cleaning. His employer withheld his work permit and more than half his wages went unpaid, restricting his ability to leave or speak out.

None of the three realized they were victims of labour trafficking and in all three cases, the employers remain in operation and have faced no penalties.

SEE TRAFFICKING, A6

FULL INDEX A2 ONO



INSIDE

## World Cup dress rehearsal



Record crowd packs new-look BMO Field as Messi puts on show against TFC A3, S1