

# TOP NEWS OF J&K

JAMMU, SUNDAY, MAY 05, 2024

Daily Evening Newspaper



ENTERTAINMENT | 6

**Parineeti Chopra shares clip of her 'real debut': 'Where's Raghav', asks Twitterati**



NATIONAL | 7

**PM Modi's political history based on 'Hindu-Muslim dispute': Digvijaya Singh**

INTERNATIONAL | 8

**Canada a 'rule-of-law country', says PM Trudeau after arrest of three Indians in Khalistani activist Hardeep Nijjar killing**



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## BRIEFLY

### Unidentified male body recovered from Jhelum in Srinagar

SRINAGAR, May 5 (Agencies): An unidentified dead body of a male has been recovered from river Jhelum in Chatabal area of Central Kashmir Srinagar district on Sunday.

An official told news agency Kashmir Scroll that an unidentified male body was fished out from river Jhelum from veer Chatabal area of Srinagar.

He said that body has been shifted to hospital for medico legal formalities while identification is being ascertained.

### MeT predicts generally dry weather in J&K

SRINAGAR, May 5 (Agencies): The weather department here on Sunday forecast generally dry weather with possibility of thundershower activity in the afternoon at a few places till May 10.

"Generally dry weather is expected and thundershower activity during the afternoon can't be ruled out at a few places," he said.

On May 11, he said, there is forecast of partly to generally cloudy weather with light rain and thunder at few places.

Generally cloudy weather with light rain/snow (over higher reaches) has been predicted at many places with thunder activity at few places on May 12.

On May 13, he said, partly to generally cloudy weather is expected with light rain at few places.

Regarding temperature, he said, Srinagar recorded a low of 11.2°C against 11.0°C on the previous night and it was 1.5°C above normal for the summer capital of JK for this time of the year.

Qazigund recorded a minimum of 11.6°C against 10.0°C on the previous night and it was 3.1°C above normal for the gateway town of Kashmir, he said.

Pahalgam recorded a low of 3.7°C against 6.1°C on the previous night and it was 1.2°C below normal for the famous resort in south Kashmir.

Kokernag, also in

## LG Manoj Sinha addresses Shri Kuberath Rai Memorial Lecture

GHAZIPUR (UP), May 5 (Agencies): Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha today addressed Shri Kuberath Rai memorial lecture at Ghazipur.

Paying homage to Shri Kuberath Rai, the great essayist, scholar and poet, the Lt Governor remembered his significant contribution to nation-building.

"Kubernath Rai enriched hindi literature and he remains an immense source of intellectual inspiration. His essays provide an



opportunity to the readers to discover new ideas and perspectives," the Lt Governor said.

At the memorial event, the Lt Governor recalled

the ideals and values espoused by Shri Kuberath Rai and said that he is a living illustration of soul of Indianness who served the literature and

culture with dedication to strengthen the national unity.

Kubernath Rai through his voluminous literary works promoted ancient ideals and values and also encouraged new ideas by breaking old concepts. In his works, he gave new dimensions to the country's progress and emphasised on people's role in development, peace and harmony, the Lt Governor said.

The Lt Governor called

Turn to page 9

## CEO Pole expresses confidence in peaceful, good voter turnout in elections amid ceasefire

JAMMU, May 5 (Agencies): PK Pole, the Chief Election Officer of J&K UT, expressed optimism hope that peaceful conduct Lok Sabha elections in border areas will happen, citing the ongoing ceasefire.

Speaking at a sweep program in Bandipora district, Pole stated, "We are hopeful this year the elections in border areas will be conducted peacefully due to the prevailing ceasefire from five years now."

Addressing potential



threats, he affirmed, "If there is any attempt from across the border to interfere with the elections, the election commission has already a plan B in place and elections will still be

conducted." He noted the preparedness to counter any disruptions to ensure the electoral process remains unaffected.

For the Gurez constituency, Pole mentioned contingency plans involving the Indian Airforce to transport polling parties and equipment should weather conditions close Razdan Top. He highlighted the satisfactory voter turnout in Gurez and Bandipora constituencies in

Turn to page 9

## EVM A theft machine, make sure you voted the right party: Farooq Abdullah

SRINAGAR, May 5 (Agencies): National Conference president Farooq Abdullah on Sunday asked the voters in Kashmir to remain vigilant to the possibility of manipulation of the EVMs when they cast their votes for the Lok Sabha elections.

"It is important for all the voters to know that the EVM is a theft machine. On the polling day, you will go through the process of identification and then your finger will be inked. When you go to the EVM booth, you should check the (LED) lights on it," he said.

"After you cast the vote, there should be a



beep from the machine. If there is no light on the machine, you should come out and ask the (election) staff about it," Abdullah, who was addressing an election rally in Panzinaara on the outskirts of Srinagar city, added.

The former chief minister was campaigning for party candidate Aga Ruhullah Mehdi, who is

contesting the Srinagar Lok Sabha seat, going to polls on May 13.

Abdullah urged the voters to ensure that the VVPAT slips have the same election symbol printed on them as the one they voted for.

"After you cast your vote, there will be a (VVPAT) slip. You should check whether the symbol on the slip is the same as the one you have voted for," he said.

Abdullah urged the party leaders to ensure that they appoint "scrupulously honest" people as polling agents for the elections.

The NC president alleged the ruling BJP and Prime Minister

Turn to page 9

## IAF Convoy Attack | Several people detained for questioning, search on for terrorists in Poonch

MENDHAR/JAMMU, May 5 (Agencies): Several people were detained for questioning on Sunday as a massive search operation for terrorists behind the Indian Air Force (IAF) convoy attack in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district entered the second day, officials said.

Additional Direc-

tor General of Police, Jammu, Anand Jain and senior officers of the Army and intelligence agencies visited the ambush spot in the Surankote area. The Army also conducted aerial surveillance using a helicopter, they said.

Five IAF personnel were injured in the attack on Saturday eve-

ning near Shahsitar and one of them later succumbed to injuries at a military hospital.

The officials said a well-coordinated joint operation by the Army and the police was underway in many areas, including Shahsitar, Gursai, Sanai and Sheendara Top, to neutralise the terrorists. The attackers are

believed to have fled to a forest after the attack, they said.

Besides AK assault rifles, the terrorists also used a US-made M4 carbine and steel bullets to cause maximum casualties, the officials added.

The IAF has identified the fallen hero as

Turn to page 9

## Several youth from Pulwama joins Azad-led DPAP

SRINAGAR, May 5 (Agencies): In a significant development a large number of youth from Pulwama District joined Democratic Progressive Azad Party (DPAP) at party headquarters on Sunday.

Senior DPAP leader



Taj Mohiuddin welcomed all the young entrants to the party fold.

Vice President of DPAP, Kashmir, Haji Mussadiq Hussain, graced the occasion, extending a warm welcome to the new

Turn to page 9

# MBA MOTORS

## MERCEDES - BMW - AUDI

DEALS IN SALE, PURCHASE, REPAIRING AND SERVICING OF USED CARS AND ORIGINAL SPARE PARTS

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## Four arrested for murder in Reasi

JAMMU, May 5 (Agencies): Four people have been arrested for killing a 45-year-old man around five months ago in a remote village in Jammu and Kashmir's Reasi district, police said on Sunday.

Mohd Rafiq was found dead outside Jia Baggo Dass village in the district's Chasana area on December 9, they said.

The case was solved with the arrest of his neighbours Nazir Ahmed Ruslla, Shabir Ahmed, Nazir Ahmed and Farooq Ahmed, a police spokesperson said.

Officials said Rafiq was attacked by them for allegedly having an illicit relation with the wife of one of the accused.

After killing him, they dumped the body the side of a road, around 500 metre from the scene of the crime, to

Turn to page 9



## JKNPP (INDIA) launches "BJP Mukht J&K" is our avowed pledge: Harsh Dev

Top News Report

UDHAMPUR, May 5: After the seizure of its symbol by ECI in pursuance of a conspiracy hatched by BJP and its stooges, the Panthers Party led by Harsh Dev Singh has been allotted a new name and symbol by the apex poll body of the country. The Panthers Party headed by Harsh Dev Singh has now been re-christened as J&K National Panthers Party (INDIA) and has been allotted the symbol of 'Truck' by the Election Commission of India.

This was stated by the Party Chief Harsh Dev Singh at a press confer-

ence held in Udhampur today where he vowed to oppose, expose and finally depose the saffron regime for its politics of duplicity, deceit and debauchery.

Maintaining that BJP had lost the confidence of the people in view of its multiple betrayals, Singh said that it had no right to continue in office.

He said that having dismantled the oldest historical dogra state of J&K and downgraded it to UT level, the BJP govt had extended several draconian laws to it without the nod of legislature. Opening of multiple Toll Plazas and limitless Liquor shops

and Bars, introduction of Smart meter, enactment of Property tax, sky-rocketing prices of essentials, burgeoning employment, patronized all pervasive corruption, settlement of Beharis and UP people in UT and politics of hate seemed to be the only notable achievements of BJP rule, said Singh.

While rising prices had made the lives of people miserable, the BJP govt was resorting to extortion in the form of increased cesses, duties, tolls and taxes. Several Toll Plazas had been installed in the Jammu region to loot the people of their marginal incomes despite the condition of roads being

highly pathetic.

He said that Sarore Toll Plaza and Ban Toll Plazas had been assured to be removed by BJP including its central leaders which however turned out to be mere hyperboles. And contrarily the Toll was enhanced at Lakhampur, Ban and Nashri plazas thereby causing massive resentment amongst the general masses.

Likewise, the opening of several liquor shops despite people's opposition in the cities of temples had further created massive resentment amongst the locals particularly the women-folk. And while the region

faced chronic crisis in power and water sectors, the govt came up with the proposal of installation of Smart meters as if to rub salt on the wounds of people, said Singh.

Harsh Dev said that having failed to redeem its promises, the BJP was now indulging in divisive politics and creating hatred by invoking caste, colour, creed and religion in the affairs of govt thereby denting its own reputation beyond redemption. It needed to be dismissed lock, stock & barrel, said Singh and urged upon the people to support and strengthen JKNPP (INDIA) and make J&K 'BJP Mukht'.

## DFSS holds protest against nuisance of Khalafwarzi officer of JMC



Top News Report

JAMMU May 5: The workers of Dogra Front & Shiv Sena (DFSS) under the leadership of president Ashok Gupta held a protest against the nuisance of the Khalafwarzi officer of the Jammu Municipal Corporation (JMC).

Gupta further stated that in the area of bus stand when fruits were

seized from Rehriwala sorting up to 50 kg and when the Rehriwala went to retrieve the fruits only 20 kg was returned as the officers stated that rest of the fruit has been stolen.

Gupta further stated that during the drive of the Municipality unofficial people are also roaming with JMC and when the goods are seized no receipt is given and during the time of reim-

bursement the entire lot is not given back.

He further stated that the parameters for seizing goods should be made public so that people should know about the charges and the reimbursement process.

The party people present at the protest were Abhishek, Prem, Kalu, Naresh, Raju, Ganesh, Lovely, Ajay, Rakesh and Subash.

## Kesri leads protest against Irrigation Deptt for not repairing irrigation canals



Top News Report

JAMMU, May 5: Shiv Sena Hindustan activists led by J&K President Pt Rajesh Kesri today held strong demonstration at Cool Kalyan against the Irrigation Department for not maintaining irrigation canals. Kesri, while speaking against the irrigation department, said that when department starts getting canals cleaned with JCB, the banks of canals get broken and when the canal passes through the village settlement then in the rainy season or when the water in canal is released then due to broken banks, the canal water enters residential areas and the whole settlement gets polluted. Kesri further said that the irrigation canal

which passes through Cool Kalyan village due to broken banks, all the water enters into the village settlement. Due to which people get troubled, it becomes difficult for the children to go to school in the morning, they cannot leave the house because the water bursts so much in the village that people have to take off their clothes, put them on their shoulders and take out the shoes with their hands, many times. Children's books get wet in water.

Kesri said that repeated efforts were made to make the government pay attention to this burning issue, but the concern to hoodwink gullible people take eyewitness action which later on causes immense hardships for locals as when

the situation gets worse none from concerned department pays any visit to listen to grievances of locals. He requested the government to pay attention to the border areas as soon as possible because these people have already suffered a lot and they do not have many resources, hence the government should repair the canal as soon as possible. Prominent among those present on the occasion include Balveer Kumar, Suresh Kumar Rania, Balwant Saini, Rajesh Kumar, Dheeraj Kumar, Ghara Ram Captain Om Prakash Darshana Devi Suman Devi Neeru Devi Rajni Devi Vijay Kumari Surjit Kumar, Bhajanlal, Ramdas, Ram Data, Jagjivan Singh besides others.

## Progressive Youth Society organizes Cultural Programme

Top News Report

UDHAMPUR, May 5: Progressive Youth Society (Regd.) Ramnagar District Udhampur organized a Cultural Programme in collaboration with Ministry of Culture (Govt. of India) under Repertory Grant in which Shamshad Begum Headmaster Govt. High School Upper Hartarayan (Udhampur) was the Chief Guest whereas Sanjay Kumar Ex-Sarpanch Upper Hartarayan presided over the function.

The programme started with welcome address by Manoj Kumar Sharma 'Nishchint' President PYS followed by compering

of O.P Deepak.

Prominent singers Mohinder Singh Sumbria, Ashok Kumar and Seema Mehra enthralled the audience with their melodious songs in Dogri language on which students started dancing.

Audience comprising of children, men and women appreciated the cultural event. Sanjay Kumar Ex-Sarpanch and Vinod Kumar Teacher appreciated and thanked to Progressive Youth Society for this event. Tanveer Ahmed member PYS presented vote of thanks.

Prominent among others were Balwan Singh, Sohan Singh, Mirza and Ashu Devi (Teacher).

## Kund-Nagrass road in Kulgam collapsed, locals demand its repair

Top News Report

KULGAM, May 5: A vital road connecting Kund valley with Qazigund in Devsar belt area of south Kashmir's Kulgam district has collapsed even as locals demand immediate repair work on the road.

According to the locals this road is the shortest road connecting Kund valley with Qazigund belt via Watihal has collapsed, which posing



## Vi Introduces Postpaid Roaming Packs for Azerbaijan and Select African Countries

Top News Report

JAMMU, May 5: In the last few years, Azerbaijan has seen a tremendous influx of Indian tourists visiting the country. A recent study indicated that the number of Indian visitors traveling to Azerbaijan almost doubled to 120,000 in 2023, which is a 100% increase in tourism as compared to the previous year.

To cater to this attractive destination, leading telecom operator Vi has announced new international roaming packs for Azerbaijan and 12 other African countries. Vi Postpaid users traveling to Azerbaijan and African countries such as Cameroon, Sudan, Rwanda, Ivory Coast, Liberia, (Equato-



rial) Guinea, Swaziland, South Sudan, Benin, Uganda, Zambia, and Guinea Bissau, can now enjoy seamless connectivity with international roaming packs starting at just Rs 749.

Vi Postpaid users will have a variety of options including a 24-hour pack, a 10-day pack, a 14-day pack, and a 30-day pack to stay connected while travelling abroad. Vi also has an 'ALWAYS ON'

feature which protects users from high International Roaming Charges for any usage after pack expiry.

Vi is committed to providing the best international roaming packs tailored to meet the needs of every traveler. With these added countries, Vi users can avail hassle free international roaming packs at value prices in 117 countries worldwide.

## Jodhamal students emerge Best Delegation in GDMUN'24

Top News Report

JAMMU, May 5: Jodhamal delegation at GDMUN'24 was adjudged the Best Delegation by virtue of their quality contribution to the success of the GDMUN'24.

GDMUN is a prestigious annual fixture hosted by GD Goenka School, Jammu and is looked forward to by many Jammu Schools.

A dedicated group of 34 students represented Jodhamal Public School at GDMUN'24 and exceeded all expectations with their insightful debates and innovative resolutions, addressing pressing global challenges.

The bright Jodhamal participants who contributed to this remarkable achievement include Aviral Kapoor: Best Delegate (UNSC), Navaj Anand: Best Delegate (Journalism), Guhika Sachdev: Best Delegate (UNCSW), Moksh

Sharma: High Commendation (Photography), Shaurya Jamwal: High Commendation (UNSC), Nirjara: High Commendation (Journalism), Samiah Sami: Special Mention (UNHRC), Jasmeh: Special Mention (Journalism), Divyansh: Special Mention (Lok Sabha), Soham: Special Mention (UNHRC), Manya: Special Mention (Journalism), Raunak Gandhi: Special Mention (UNSC), Advitya: Verbal Mention (UNSC), Amay: Verbal Mention (UNHRC), Adhvik: Verbal Mention (Lok Sabha), Subah: Verbal Mention (UNHRC), Armaan: Verbal Mention (Lok Sabha) and Yuvin: Verbal Mention (UNHRC).

All the students were given the Certificates of Achievement and mementos. Jodhamal School received the Best Delegation Trophy.

Speaking on this occasion Nandan Kuthiala, Trustee of the School said, "Winning the Best

Delegation Trophy reinforces our strong belief in providing a sturdy platform for our students in debating and other oratory skills where they can express their ideas without any bias and inhibitions. This accomplishment reflects not only the school's commitment to nurturing young leaders but also its ability to foster critical thinking and diplomacy in the next generation of students."

These students were mentored by Mubeen, Anjali Mahajan and Raghunandan.

Furthermore, Nandan Kuthiala, Trustee, Arati Kuthiala, Director, Girish Kumar, Principal and Amita Arora, Vice Principal of the School extended their hearty congratulations to the teachers and the entire team for their remarkable achievement. Their guidance and mentorship have played a pivotal role in shaping these young minds for success.

## Ladakh surpasses last year achievement in MSME schemes implementation

Top News Report

LEH, May 5: MSME-DNC, Ladakh the field office of Ministry of MSME, implements various schemes and activities for the benefit of MSME Sector for Ladakh with jurisdiction of both District Leh and Kargil. The activities including Entrepreneurship Awareness Program, Intellectual Property Rights Awareness Program, Procurement Marketing Support Scheme Awareness Program, PM-Vishwakarma Awareness Program, PM-Vishwakarma Awareness Workshop, Entrepreneurship & Skill Development Program, Management



Development Program, Reimbursement of Barcode Expenditure, Reimbursement of Stall Charges, To and From Charges, Advertising Expenditure for participating in various exhibitions conducted in all parts of the Country. MSME Development

Nucleus Cell Office inaugurated officially by Nara-Union Minister of MSME through VC on 14/02/2024 in the presence of Janyang Tsering Namgyal MP of Ladakh, Sanjeev Khirwar, IAS Principal Secretary Industries and

Commerce, Tashi Kachu, Chairman, Ladakh Chamber of Industries & Commerce and other dignitaries, the event was Co-ordinated by G.Velladurai, IEDS, Joint Director, MSME DFO Jammu, J&K. During the financial year

2023-24 MSME DNC Ladakh organized 09 programs covering EAP's, IPR's, PM Vishwakarma Seminar's & Workshop and PMS awareness program benefitting 3505 participants covering both the Districts of Leh and Kargil of Ladakh including flung areas like Rupsho, Kharsa, Vill. Phyang compared to 120 participants benefited in the 2 programs organized in the financial year 2022-23 in District Leh of Ladakh. These achievements were made possible through the dedicated work of Sonam Targias and Thinles Tsomo who were looking after the activities in the office.

## EDITORIAL

## CONSERVATION OF BIODIVERSITY

Conservation of biodiversity is vital for maintaining the Earth's environment and sustaining life on the planet. There are a number of ways in which the richness of biodiversity helps in maintaining the ecological system. Conservation of biodiversity is important for the survival of living beings on Earth. Hence, a lot of emphases is being given on the conservation of biodiversity these days.

Due to human activities, numerous varieties of animals go extinct each year. Western Black Rhinoceros, Dodo, Tasmanian tiger, Golden Toad, Woolly Mammoth, Caribbean Monk Seal, Ivory-billed Woodpecker, and Japanese Sea Lion are some of the species of animals that have gone extinct.

Lemur, Mountain Gorilla, Vaquita, Sea Turtles, Amur Leopard, and Tiger are some of the species that are on the verge of extinction. Apart from these many species of plants and trees including Lepidodendron, Araucaria Mirabilis, Wood Cycad and Kokia Cookie have gone extinct and many species are endangered.

Earth is a beautiful planet which has given us many things which occur naturally. Natural resources, rivers, valleys, oceans, different species of animals and beautiful varieties of plants and trees are among some of these.

In today's world, we are busy developing our surroundings and spoiling our beautiful environment. Today, we have exploited most of the things that were available abundantly in nature. Thus, there arises a need to conserve these natural things. Among other things, there is a serious need for the conservation of biodiversity.

Conservation of biodiversity is important for many reasons. Here are some of the main reasons to conserve biodiversity:

**Process of Food Chain:** Different species of animals and plants serve as the source of food for other animals and living organisms. Thus, conserving biodiversity help to keep the food chain among the living organisms.

**Nutritional Needs:** The decline in the variety of plants and animals would mean the decline in the variety of food we eat. So, this is likely to result in nutritional deficiencies.

**Cleaner Air:** Plants and trees have a greater ability to purify the air and keep the atmosphere clean. As there is a decrease in the number and types of trees and plants, it impacts the quality of air in a negative way.

**Better Cultivation of Crops:** Fertility of soil is maintained by many insects, organisms and microorganisms work on different levels. So we have to maintain the level of microorganism which is better for the cultivation of crops.

**For Medical Reasons:** For making different medicines many species of trees and plants are used so as to cure various diseases.

The greater the population the higher the needs which would result in further exploitation of flora and fauna and decline in biodiversity. For the conservation of biodiversity, we have to control the human population and allow other species of plants and animals to replenish on our planet.

The changing climate, deteriorating air quality and the growing amount of pollution on land and water bodies are leading to different types of diseases in many. It is essential to reduce the activities leading to pollution so as to conserve biodiversity.

Due to deforestation, there is the loss of habitat. Due to this reason, wild animals are unable to survive in the new environment and die.

We need to understand that natural resources are not only essential for us but are also vital for the survival of other species. We must thus utilize only as much as we require them so that these remain available in abundance in nature for future use.

Apart from this, one of the best methods to conserve biodiversity is by spreading awareness. The government can do so at a bigger level while we can spread awareness by word of mouth and through social media.

Conservation of biodiversity is of utmost importance. We must all make efforts to conserve biodiversity rather than contributing towards its declination. Thus, the richness of biodiversity is essential for the survival of living beings on Earth.

## Jai Maharashtra! Jai India! May the worthy succeed...

By: Shobhaa De

The state I proudly belong to (Maharashtra) was established in 1960. The Samyukta Maharashtra Samiti was actively demanding the formation of a separate state from 1956. The States Reorganisation Commission recommended the formation of states based on language, leading to the Bombay Reorganisation Act and the subsequent birth of two separate states on May 1, 1960 -- Maharashtra and Gujarat. Significantly, Maharashtra Diwas and Gujarat Gaurav Din overlap with International Labour Day, or Kamgar Din. And I hardly hear Marathi being spoken these days. Maharashtrais prefer Minglish!

This year, the "din" in Maharashtra is deafening, as various political parties are busy slugging it out noisily as our D-Day approaches. The average voter is thoroughly confused, and rightly so. Very few know or care which "Sena" is in the fray -- the cast of characters is the same, but are standing under different leaking umbrellas. Asli Sena ya Naqli Sena ... Ki farak penda, pappey! The unprecedented heatwave across the state is discouraging participation, as voters ask themselves tiredly: "Isn't it the same set of crooks who've looted Mumbai, taken citizens for a ride, and are now asking for our votes?" Never before have the candidates displayed such naked opportunism as they leave one party to hop on to another party's bandwagon, after ensuring that their backside are adequately covered. Who can keep track of these turncoats?

Family politics (Pawars) have little to do with ideology and development -- it is all about sharing the loot. "Ideology is passe", declared veteran leader Ram Naik.

In all this, the Marathi Manoos is nowhere. Nepo netas, like nepo Bollywood bachchas, are hogging all the key seats, while the voter is being treated like a simple-minded fool, who'll trot up obediently on voting day, and do as he or she is told. No chance!

Whether in my home state or elsewhere in India, the canny voter instinctively knows what's in his/her interest. Sick of the same old lies and unfulfilled promises, the voter is ready and armed to stage a stealth attack and seize this crucial election, and proving the pundits wrong once again.

Perhaps this is mere wishful thinking. But female intuition comes with its own logic. Women read "moods" very acutely -- be it their husband's, children's or the country's. Looking at the tepid second phase of voting, it's pretty apparent that the tide is turning... and will turn further. Voters are sick of the bombast and chest-thumping, name calling and fake economic forecasts. For those who insist the Western media is meddling in our affairs -- yes, indeed, the Western media is closely monitoring each phase. That is the job of the media. Are their reports malicious and slanted? Perhaps. Are Western countries only interested in how their own economies will benefit if the election results overwhelmingly favour the BJP? No argument. Does any foreign nation really and truly care about India and Indians, beyond their own self-interest? You know the answer.

The voter has a strong, analytical, capable mind that is not as easily brainwashed as the Western media believes. All the firangi self-styled intellectuals and financial analysts who show up to tell us what we should be doing, "for

our own good", should be served rooh-afza, baraf ke saath, as they zip around the country, and told to chill in their luxury SUVs, while the natives go about their lives. Intelligence-gathering is a cushy job. But it's worth remembering that our home-grown psephologists too have consistently got it wrong and misread the mood of the electorate. No matter what level of rigging and EVM tampering takes place, the Indian voter cannot be hoodwinked or beaten.

Having said that, if despite the mass ennu and voter fatigue, the BJP does manage to form the next government at the Centre, critics will have to eat their words, suffer indigestion and concede the win in the true democratic spirit that the old India we love has always cherished. Alas, only the very naïve and overly optimistic commentator can confidently claim that the INDIA alliance will win. The odds are heavily stacked against this motley, ragtag group that has flopped miserably at providing even a semblance of a united and strong Opposition. The tepid comeback has come too late, and there isn't enough ammo in the salvos aimed at the BJP to damage that party. Yes, there is some sympathetic public cluck-clucking for the underdog, and outrage over the arrest of Arvind Kejriwal. But none of this is sufficient to provide a cohesive counter narrative. Which is really a shame, given how Emotional IQ is such a valued attribute in our country. The right buttons should have been pressed two years ago by those whose ambitions were soaring unrealistically. So many missed opportunities! Hey Devaa! The electoral bonds issue, for one. The draconian misuse of the ED, functioning more like the dreaded

Gestapo than a respected government agency. These were tipping points that could have been better leveraged by the INDIA bloc to alert voters about the dangers of authoritarian rule. But INDIA blew it!

No matter. The wisdom, resilience and practicality of the Indian voter has always but always come through when most needed. While foreign investment forecasts are gung-ho about a clean sweep, and the markets are heady, even euphoric at the prospect of a Modi-led India, with financial top dogs predicting big gains, there are also watchful skeptics on the sidelines, quietly hedging their bets. The only debate worth engaging in is the JODO versus TODO one. The hope is that citizens will vote for long-term political/financial stability and religious harmony (JODO) over divisive politics and hate (TODO). Frankly, the former is better for business. And which young Indian does not dream in technicolour? That dreamer will instinctively vote for the party that creates jobs, provides opportunities. The time for theatrics is over.

Nautanki entertains. But does not put food on empty tables. The hungry, unemployed Indian is an angry Indian. The word to describe such a person is "hangry". Ignore "hang-er" at your own peril. And oh... there are enough life lessons provided by our magnificent cricket heroes. Young boys like fruit-seller Abdul Rashid's 22-year-old son Umran Malik from Jammu city, who has made it to Team India, despite there being no playground in his area. No godfather. No nothing. Just pure grit, determination and talent. Tomorrow's India belongs to him... and all others like him. Move over, has-beens. Your time is over.

## The Revanna scandal isn't about sex, but criminality

By: Indranil Banerjee

There is nothing new about politicians and sexual misconduct. The list is long and the accompanying outrage well documented. Recall how the world had gasped at the discovery of an episode involving a young intern in America's White House and the then President of the United States. Mercifully, most such cases are quickly forgotten. How many would remember the case of actor and former California governor Arnold Schwarzenegger fathering a child with his housekeeper? The legendary Franklin D. Roosevelt is said to have had a mistress while John F. Kennedy was known to have had extra-marital affairs.

Sexual shenanigans in the United States started with its founding fathers and continues with the shameful lawsuits involving the previous US President.

India too has not been without its share of sex scandals involving politicians. India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru is said to have had a relationship with Edwina Mountbatten, the wife of the last British Viceroy, although some historians have declared that it was entirely platonic. Many politicians, including at least one Prime Minister, have had questionable sexual relationships, but the Indian media has tended to be remarkably restrained on such issues.

Only when the evidence has been thrust into public view has the media reacted, as was with the sensational case of Congress stalwart Narain Dutt Tewari, a not particularly attractive individual, who was seen in bed with three women at one time. He was subsequently

found to be the genetic parent on a young man, whom he refused to legitimise despite the evidence.

Several Indian politicians have literally been caught with their pants down. The list includes personages like Suresh Ram (son of Babu Jagjivan Ram), BJP leader Raghavji, the brilliant Congress leader Abhishek "Manu" Singhvi, one-time Rajasthan minister Mahipal Maderna, Dhruv Narayan Singh, the BSP's Purushottam Naresh Dwivedi, Samajwadi minister Gayatri Prasad Prajapati, former BJP MLA from Unnao Kuldeep Singh Sengar, and many more.

The Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) counted 134 sitting Members of Parliament (21 MPs) and Legislative Assemblies (113 MLAs) who have cases related to crimes against women. The charges include gangrape, rape and murder, sexual harassment and so on.

The latest to join this dubious league is Karnataka's 33-year-old Member of Parliament Prajwal Revanna, who belongs to the Janata Dal (Secular) and happens to be the grandson of former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda. Mr Revanna has emerged as a satyr fond of ravaging women without their consent and would have got away with it had it not been for the leak of a pen drive containing an astonishing 3,000 or so explicit videos apparently shot by the member himself. The MP and his father have also been accused of sexual harassment by a woman who worked as their cook. A police case has been registered against both father and son but the latter is said to have fled the country, and is believed to be in Germany.

The Prajwal Revanna case has acquired political overtones,

coming as it does in the midst of the ongoing Lok Sabha elections. The Opposition has been circulating photographs showing the absconding offender with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and suggesting that this is typical of the kind of people the BJP supports. The Janata Dal (S) happens to be an electoral ally of the BJP in the state.

The public focus of the Revanna case is on its sexual aspect, the MP's enormous appetite for coitus and unrestrained exploitation of vulnerable women. He is projected as a sex fiend with support from the country's most powerful personage.

The focus on sex, unfortunately, detracts from the true and more serious aspect of the episode: its obvious criminality. Ironically, in India today, criminality is no longer considered as sensational as sexual misconduct.

The Revanna episode therefore is egregious not so much because of its sexual nature but because it suggests unrestrained and habitual delinquency that has continued with impunity over time. The core issue is that of a politician having forcible sex with women who are powerless to resist or speak up.

Sexual profligacy might be distasteful, but it is not abhorrent in itself as long as there is no element of force, brutality, harassment, blackmail or compulsion involved. Thus, for instance, the Nehru-Edwina relationship evokes no outrage since it was between two consenting adults and not something involving coercion or force.

The Revanna case is reflective of a much larger problem that is not debated as much as it ought to be, and that is the increasingly unrestrained power of the Indian

political class. It is not a matter of one political party or another; it is a generic problem spread across the political spectrum. The average politician today considers himself to be a super citizen with super privileges, who can get away with virtually anything. That constitutes a huge and present danger.

It is unfortunate that criminality and the related problem of corruption of the political class per se does not cause any outrage in this country. Neither is it an election issue. Not surprisingly, both criminality and the power of the political class in India is growing.

The Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) estimates that criminality in politics is rising. In the 2009 Lok Sabha elections, 15 per cent candidates across political parties had declared criminal cases against them; this figure rose to 17 per cent in the 2014 Lok Sabha polls and to 19 per cent in the 2019 elections. In the ongoing elections, in the third phase alone, 18 per cent out of 1,352 candidates have declared criminal cases against them; in the second and first phases, this figure was 21 and 16 per cent respectively.

The ADR observed: "This data clearly shows that political parties have no interest in reforming the electoral system and our democracy will continue to suffer at the hands of lawbreakers who become lawmakers."

The Indian politician today is designated as a "dignitary" who goes around with armed guards, cars flashing red lights, pays no toll, gets free medical and other facilities and in some cases free club membership as well. Some clearly feel they are even entitled to free sex. Welcome to the criminal republic.

## Khatana condemns terrorist attack on IAF warriors

'Kashmir people should vote for some honest candidate, BJP will win Ladakh'

### Top News Report

BILLAWAR, May 5: Senior BJP leader and Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha), Gulam Ali Khatana has condemned the terrorist attack on Indian Air Force (IAF) warriors in which one warrior was martyred and five others injured.

Speaking at a sports event in Billawar tehsil of district Kathua, Khatana said that the terror attack is the outcome of frustration among militants ranks who are being continuously eliminated after the government led by PM Modi has given a free hand to security forces by adopting zero tolerance policy against terrorism.

Appreciating the people of Billawar the MP lauded the brotherhood and amity existing in the area. He assured all the required developments in the area for the welfare of the people of Billawar.

"In the last 10 years of BJP rule led by PM Modi every nook and corner of our country has seen historic developments," he maintained adding: "The third term of PM Modi to helm the affairs of our country will see more developments."

Answering to a reporter Khatana said that people of Kashmir should vote to an honest candidate in the ongoing Lok Sabha elections and they should not elect the traditional

parties which have only brought bloodshed and uncertainty in Kashmir.

The senior BJP leader expressed confidence that BJP will emerge as a winner from the Ladakh Lok Sabha seat.

"People of Ladakh know that Congress during its long tenure in the country has done nothing for Ladakh so the people of Ladakh don't believe the big promises of either Congress of other members of INDI alliance," Khatana further said.

He said that BJP will cross the mark of 400 Lok Sabha seats this year which will pave the way for PM Modi to take the reins of the country for one more time.

## Modi is creating hate among Hindus towards Muslims in India: Rajesh



### Top News Report

JAMMU, May 5: Bahujan Samaj Party General Secretary and Media Head Rajesh Gupta accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday of trying to create a fear psychosis among Hindus to stay in power and said he no longer talks about the issues of the common people that propelled him to the top post in 2014.

He accused the prime

minister of trying to "create hatred" in the country and said "we are against it". He is creating hatred among Hindus towards Muslims.

Rajesh Gupta said, "Modi's economic policies had ruined the nation and pushed people into sufferings. Unemployment is on the rise and we are worse than countries like Nigeria in poor index. GST is being imposed on pencil, hospital beds and even on last rites."

Gupta came down heavily on Prime Minister Narendra Modi alleging that "When he came to power in 2014, he used to raise the issue of the price of LPG cylinders. The price of a domestic gas cylinder was Rs 400 at that time. He used to raise the issue of price rise, unemployment..

## JKBS distributes text and note books to poor students



### Top News Report

R.S.PURA, May 5: Members of Jammu and Kashmir Batwal Sabha (JKBS) on Sunday visited R.S Pura's Chohala Village and distributed text and note books among the poor students.

Members appreciated the students' efforts that despite being in acute poverty, they have con-

tinued with their studies.

Speaking on the occasion, the JKBS General Secretary R.L Kaith said to students, 'No good life is possible without education. It indorses the intelligence of human beings, develops his skill, and enables him to be industrious. It ensures his progress and also channelizes the undeveloped capacities, attitude, interest,

urges and needs of the individual into desirable channels."

Members as such urged the students to focus on their studies and at the same time ensure that they remained healthy.

Among the JKBS members who visited there included Messers Hans Raj Loria, Havildar Des Raj, Sohan Lal, Jagdish Raj and Sukhdev.

## NC City President demands early completion of Govt Polytechnic college buildings of Kishtwar

### Top News Report

KISHTWAR, May 5: National Conference City President Kishtwar, Naseer Bagwan on Sunday demanded early completion of Govt. Polytechnic College buildings which are at Cherhar Kishtwar.

While issuing press note, he said that the engineering students required better infrastructure, better facilities to learn about the engineering.

He said the same location for construction of new infrastructure, buildings was sanctioned by the then National Con-

ference Vice President and former Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, Omar Abdullah and Home Minister Sajjad Ahmed Kitchloo but the present government and administration has lingered it on without any reason resulting the loss of infrastructure.

He said the district administration of Kishtwar should strong note of it and take up the issue with UT and central government for early completion of the same college which would help to give better more subjects to the pupils, aspirants of engineering.

## SDH Bhaderwah drubs DHS Doda in friendly cricket match

### Top News Report

DODA, May 5: To pay tribute and homage to the legendary Cricketer and Rtd DHO Doda Dr Tariq Masood for his remarkable contribution to the game of cricket, the District Health Society in collaboration with District Administration Doda host one day cricket exhibition match in his memory at Sports Stadium Doda on Sunday (05-05-2024) under Nasha Mukt Bharat Abhiyan, in which SDH Bhaderwah team thrashed DHS Doda by 04 wickets.

Earlier before the start of the match, the event was formally inaugurated by Deputy Commissioner Doda Sh Harvinder Singh along with CMO Doda Dr Om Kumar, Inam ul Haq (Son of Late Dr Tariq Masood) and other dignitaries, whereas a two minutes silence was also observed as a mark of respect to the departed soul.

The District Health Society Doda team was led by Harvinder Singh, who is Deputy Commissioner Doda, while the SDH Bhaderwah team was led by Captain Dr Mohd Ashraf (BMO Bhaderwah).

Earlier, SDH Bhaderwah after winning the toss elected to the



field first.

Batting first, DHS Doda was all out for just 91 runs in 13.4 overs. Ashok Shan was the top scorer with 23 runs, while Harvinder Singh scored 13 runs to the team. From SDH Bhaderwah, Naveed Khan scalped 3 wickets, while Dr Subhash Sharma and Kulwant Singh shared 02 wickets each.

In reply while chasing the allotted target, SDH Bhaderwah

super striking first batting order and with the help of some middle order batsman helped the team to achieve the target with one over left by losing their 06 wickets. Dr Touseef Malik was the highest scorer from who made 20 runs while Dr Mohd Ashraf and Arshad Zaffar contributed 19 and 14 runs respectively. From DHS Doda, Irshad Malik grabbed 03 wickets while Jahangir Mehta and Ajay Singh shared 01 wicket each.

Naveed Khan of SDH Bhaderwah was declared as Man of the Match for his brilliant all-round performance.

The prize distribution ceremony was attended by ADC Doda Sh Sudershan Singh, CMO Doda Dr Om Kumar, Chief Accounts Officer GMC Doda Sh Mohd Iqbal Ganai, BMO Ghat Dr Ab Gafoor, EO MC Doda Sh Amit Sharma, BMO Bhaderwah Dr Mohd Ashraf besides family members

of Late Dr Tariq Masood, Civil Society Members and officials from Health Department Doda who distributed prizes among both the teams.

Later on ADC Doda along with CMO Doda presented an Award of Appreciation (Posthumous Award) and Memento to Inam ul Haq Son of Late Dr Tariq Masood, in recognition of his selfless and dedicated services in the department and social work.

On this occasion, a pledge on Nasha Mukt Bharat Abhiyan was also taken by both the teams and dignitaries present during the match.

CMO Doda Dr Om Kumar in his speech thanked Distt. Administration & other allied departments for their support in making the event a resounding success and also recalled the dedicated services rendered by Late Dr Tariq Masood.

While speaking on the occasion, ADC Doda Sh Sudershan Singh lauded the efforts of CMO Doda and congratulated both the teams for exhibiting their cricketing skill in the match.

The match was officiated by Iqroo Hussain, Parmod Singh, Vinod Kumar, Khalid Hussain, Nehaan Butt and Javed Ahmed Butt.

## SKUAST-J organizes educational visit for Stephens International Public School students

### Top News Report

JAMMU, May 5: Stephens International Public School (SIPS) embarked on an enriching educational journey as 160 students and eight staff members led by Yogeshwar and Ms Sarabjeet visited the Faculty of Agriculture at SKUAST-Jammu. Prof. Anil Kumar Sharma, Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture, aimed to provide students with firsthand exposure to agricultural practices and innovations.

Upon arrival, Prof. Ravinder Singh welcomed the SIPS delegation to the campus and provided an overview of the day's itinerary.

Prof. Parshant Bakshi, Head of the Division of Fruit Science and Head of the Centre for Organic and Natural Farming, delivered a captivating presentation on the University's initiatives and the significance of sericulture and apiculture in sustainable agriculture.

The highlight of the visit was the insightful session led by Prof. Kamlesh Bali, who demonstrated the intricate process of silk produc-

tion. From the stages of larva to cocoon, students gained practical insights into the life cycle of silkworms, fostering a deeper understanding for this vital agricultural practice.

Throughout the visit, students were actively engaged, with Marvi Khajuria, Sukanya Bharti, Sidhant, and Devyanshu assisting in ensuring its smooth execution. Their enthusiasm and dedication were instrumental in making the experience both educational and enjoyable.

As the day concluded, the students and staff expressed their heartfelt gratitude to Prof. Bakshi, Prof. Kamlesh Bali, and the entire SKUAST-J community for organizing this enlightening experience. The visit not only sparked curiosity but also instilled a sense of environmental consciousness and agricultural innovation among the students, paving the way for future collaborations and endeavors in the field of agriculture which is the focus of NEP 2020 to provide students with skill development.

## Director Horticulture Jammu conducts extensive tour of District Ramban

### Top News Report

RAMBAN, May 5: Director Horticulture Jammu Chaman Lal Sharma, on Sunday conducted two days extensive tour of District Ramban.

He was accompanied by Chief Horticulture Officer Ramban, Manager cum Chemist, District Horticulture Officers, Farm Manager ACHD Ramban, Horticulture Development officer and other staff of the Department.

The tour was aimed to chalk out plans for development of departmental nurseries on scientific lines with latest facilities under the Holistic Agriculture Development Program (HADP). During inspection of Govt. Fruit Plant Nursery Batote, the Director stressed the need to prepare a plan for its up gradation on scientific lines by incorporating latest equipments/machinery and installation of Micro-Irrigation system for the mother blocks.

He visited the private nursery namely Sadae- bahar at Darmund, Ramban established by an entrepreneur Abdul

Qadoos, with the assistance of the department wherein he inspected the nursery plant material stock and other facilities available.

He guided the entrepreneur to modernize the nursery with latest technological interventions for production of quality planting material of High Density cultivars.

Acknowledging the importance of quality planting material in establishment of orchards, the Director inspected the Advanced Centre for Horticulture Development Farm at Ramban and laid emphasis on the need for modernization and development under HADP.

He instructed the farm manager to upgrade the Hi-tech poly house structures with latest equipments.

The Director underscored the importance of divisional level farm for imparting training to the new recruits as well as to the aspiring private entrepreneurs on scientific lines enabling them to acquire advance skills in plant propagation techniques and nursery management practices. This

will also equip the youth technically for establishment of private nurseries and orchards thereby generating employment opportunities for them.

During the visit, the Director addressed a large gathering of farmers at Ramban and elaborated the details of the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme providing incentives / assistance for the welfare of the farming community.

He sensitized the gathering about the main components of the programme and asked them to apply online for different Govt. schemes through Kissan SATHI-Dashboard. He urged them to avail the benefits on different components of the schemes viz: Plantation, Protected cultivation, Water harvesting tanks, Drip irrigation, Custom Hiring Centres, Machnieri, Processing units, Nursery establishment etc. for upliftment of their socio-economic status.

Later, the Director Horticulture took a meeting of the Extension and Nursery staff in order to review the scenario of

Horticulture in Ramban District. During the meeting he directed to percolate the benefits of the Centrally sponsored as well as UT CAPEX schemes at the grass root level so that the farming community may be benefitted at large.

The chair also listened to the problems of the staff patiently and assured to address their genuine demands. All the staff members of Ramban, Ramsoo, Banihal & Gool attended the meeting.

At the outset of meeting, Chief Horticulture Officer Ramban Anil Kumar Gorka welcomed the Director Horticulture and briefed about the status of Public Sector nurseries and works going on in the field. Farm Manager ACHD, Govindpura, Ramban Virinder Kumar also remained present during the meeting and briefed the chair about the farm activities and production status of the Plants. Among others, Manager cum Chemist Anil Chhibber, DLSMS Sandeep Sharma, HDO's Abhinav Gupta and Sunil Gupta were also present during the meeting.

## Electricity woes continue unabated in Kulgam, Abbas Rather demands adequate power supply



### Top News Report

KULGAM, May 5: While expressing serious concern over the precarious power situation in Kulgam, DDC Member Mohamad Abass Rather said the electricity woes continue unabated in Kulgam district.

Even in this season of the year people in Kashmir valley have to bear the brunt of power crisis. The government must provide uninterrupted power supply to people,

he said in a statement. "No power schedule is being followed on ground and even metered areas are facing long and

unscheduled power cuts. People living in rural and far-flung areas of the district are without electricity. People are compelled to arrange alternate sources of illumination since they are facing the worst power crisis. The people in some areas have to face low voltage," he said adding that due to the unbearable hike in tariffs, the anxieties of the people have been deepened.

The decision of the administration is highly unjustified and is bound to make common people to suffer more. As such it need to be withdrawn.

## Kareena Kapoor Khan appointed UNICEF India National Ambassador

*She will support the not-for-profit organisation in furthering every child's right to early childhood development*

UNICEF India announced Bollywood star Kareena Kapoor Khan as its new National Ambassador.

The 'Crew' star, who has been associated with UNICEF India since 2014, will support the not-for-profit organisation in furthering every child's right to early childhood development, health, education and gender equality, a press release said.

Kareena had earlier served as a Celebrity Advocate for UNICEF India.

"There are few things as important as the rights of children, the future generation of this world. I am honoured to continue my association with UNICEF now as India's National Ambassador," the 43-year-old actor said in a statement.

"I will strive to use my voice and influence for vulnerable children and their rights, especially around early childhood, education and gender equality. For every child deserves a childhood, a fair chance, a future," she added.

Besides Kareena, UNICEF India has also appointed its first-



ever Youth Advocates, who are peer leaders and champions on issues like climate action, mental health, innovations and Girls in STEM (science, tech-

nology, engineering and mathematics).

The four advocates are Gauranshi Sharma from Madhya Pradesh on right to play

and disability inclusion; Kartik Verma from Uttar Pradesh on climate action and child rights advocacy; singer Nahid Afrin from Assam on mental health and early childhood development; and Vinisha Umashankar, budding innovator and STEM pioneer, from Tamil Nadu.

"These youth advocates are part of UNICEF's global programme and join a cohort of more than 93 youth advocates who have been appointed across the globe and are driving change on issues concerning children and young people," UNICEF India said.

UNICEF India Representative Cynthia McCaffrey said she is delighted to welcome Kareena as the National Ambassador.

"She has brought energy and impact through her support to several national and global campaigns. She joins as UNICEF India National Ambassador together with our four Youth Advocates to the UNICEF family. We look forward to working with her and the four youth advocates to continue advocating for child rights," she added.

## Sonakshi Sinha enjoys gossip session with rumoured boyfriend Zaheer Iqbal, Huma Qureshi



Actor Sonakshi Sinha, who is currently basking in the success of her new web series 'Heeramandi: The Diamond Bazaar,' had a pleasant reunion with rumoured beau Zaheer Iqbal and her close friend Huma Qureshi.

Fans got a peek into their friendship, creating a memorable and enjoyable moment.

Zaheer Iqbal, shared a picture on his Instagram stories, featuring himself with Sonakshi Sinha and Huma Qureshi.

In his caption, 'Long overdue GOSS session,' Zaheer hinted at an exciting catch-up session.

Huma also reposted the picture on her Instagram stories with a caption that read, 'My Heeras,' offering fans a glimpse into their enjoyable bonding time.

The recently released web show, 'Heeramandi: The Diamond Bazaar,' marked the OTT debut of much-loved director Sanjay Leela Bhansali.

Through the stories of courtesans and their patrons, the series delves deep into the cultural reality of Heeramandi.

Starring a talented ensemble cast including Manisha Koirala, Sonakshi Sinha, Richa Chadha, Sanjeeda Sheikh, Sharmin Segal, Taha Shah Badussha, Shekhar Suman and Adhyayan Suman, 'Heeramandi' got released on May 1 on Netflix.

## Parineeti Chopra shares clip of her 'real debut'; 'Where's Raghav', asks Twitterati

Bollywood actress Parineeti Chopra, who is winning accolades for her work in the recently-released streaming movie 'Amar Singh Chamkila,' has shared rare footage of her singing debut.

The actress took to her X handle and shared an old clip from her school days, in which she could be seen singing with a group of kids.

'My real debut,' she wrote.

However, the Twitterati in the comments section seemed more concerned about the whereabouts of her husband and Aam Aadmi Party leader Raghav Chadha, who has gone 'underground' for some time now.

One user wrote, 'Where is Raghav these days?'

'When is he coming back? We are concerned,' wrote another.



A third user wrote, 'How is @raghav\_chadha? When is he back?'

Earlier, the actress was trolled for her stage singing debut. A clip of her singing 'Aaj Jaane Ki Zid Na Karo'

went viral with people on social media urging her not to sing.

She was again trolled after a clip of her singing a Punjabi song from 'Amar Singh Chamkila' during the film's trailer launch went viral.

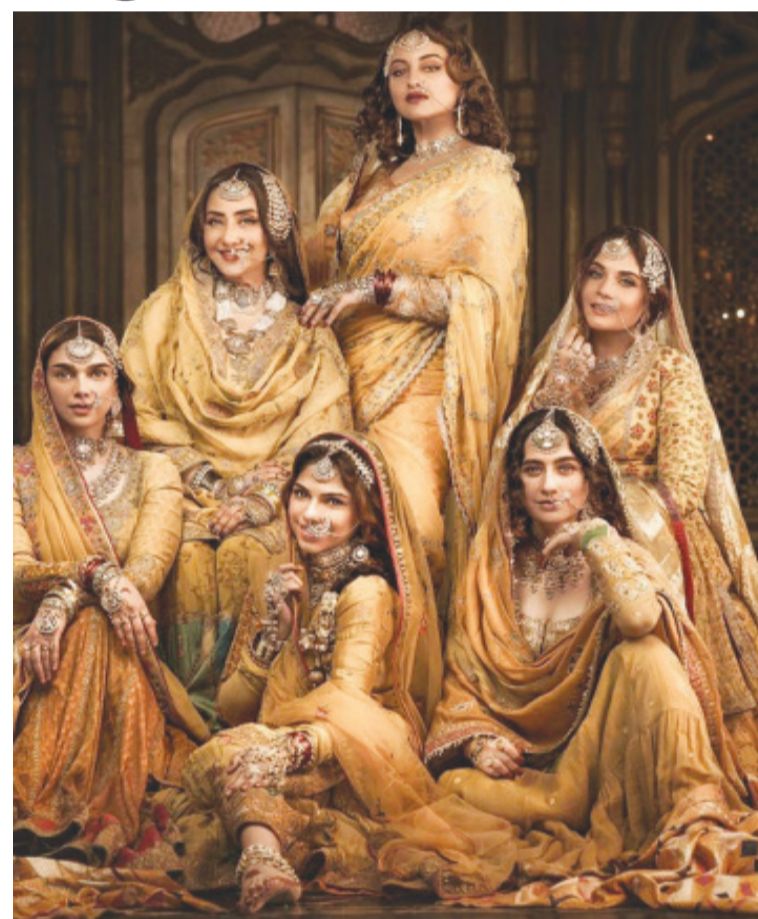
## Broad necklines, fuller sleeves, choli-cut anarkalis: Designers decode 'Heeramandi' style

From the sets to the costumes and jewellery, everything filmmaker Sanjay Leela Bhansali does to tell a story is dazzling. Designer duo Rimple and Harpreet, who made over 300 costumes for the director's debut series 'Heeramandi: The Diamond Bazaar,' have decoded each outfit and revealed what they kept in mind while making it.

Harpreet said that in crafting the costumes, they employed various techniques to accentuate their beauty and grace.

"Broad necklines were deliberately chosen to highlight their exquisite body forms, enhancing their allure and presence on screen. Additionally, these necklines provided ample space to showcase stunning jewellery pieces, adding an extra layer of opulence to their attire," he said.

Rimple spoke about the importance of fuller sleeves. "Furthermore, we opted for fuller sleeves to imbue the women with an air of elegance and poise befitting their status as powerful courtesans. The flowing sleeves not only added a sense of sophistication but also contributed to their commanding presence in every scene,"



she added. Then there was a number of choli-cut anarkalis which added a touch of femininity.

"To enhance the natural curves of the body, we incorporated a significant number of choli-cut anarkalis. These designs hug

the body in all the right places, accentuating their curves and exuding sensuality and femininity," said Harpreet.

Known for spotlighting the traditional marori work in their creations, the designer duo shared that each garment was meticulously crafted to celebrate the beauty and strength of these remarkable women.

Anarkalis got the spotlight it deserved in 'Heeramandi'. Does it make a comeback into the wardrobe after the show?

"In our perspective, anarkalis have always stood the test of time," said Rimple.

"As guardians of Indian vintage silhouettes and fashion, we've consistently showcased anarkalis as a prominent section of our merchandise. Their timeless appeal lies in their flattering form, which complements any body type with its graceful and flowing design," added Harpreet.

Rimple said that they "believe in celebrating the enduring elegance of anarkalis, ensuring that they remain a staple in our store's collection, embodying the essence of traditional Indian fashion with a touch of modern flair."

## Shekhar Suman defends Sanjay Leela Bhansali for making actors wait for a long time: 'You can't complain...'

Shekhar Suman has been praising Sanjay Leela Bhansali while promoting his recent release Heeramandi. The actor, who plays a crucial role in the OTT show, has worked with the filmmaker for the first time. In a recent interview, Shekhar defended the director against complaints that he keeps actors waiting for long hours.

Shekhar says an actor should prep like a soldier

Shekhar was asked about the filmmaker's meticulous process resulting in delayed shoot for actors. The Heeramandi actor opined, "It's like a soldier waiting for the enemy to attack. He wouldn't say, 'I've been waiting for 12 hours, now I want to go home'. Does it happen? No, he's there! When-

ever the enemy comes, he starts firing. It doesn't matter if it's snowing or if it's hot. An actor has to have the preparedness of a soldier."

"You can't complain about losing your concentration"

He further added, "Even if Mr Bhansali says you keep doing it for two days, three days, you keep doing it if you're an actor. You can't complain about losing your concentration. Then get the hell out, you have no business being an actor."

Whenever you look back, you will look back with so much glee and pride. And that's why one has so much respect for him. Everybody gets impatient, but that's not losing your temper. There is time and money involved, other actors are waiting



because of your lack of understanding... That becomes unfair to the director. They way he pampers his actors it's no one's business."

About Heeramandi Heeramandi is set in the backdrop of Indian Independence movement against the British Raj in the 1910s-1940s. The series depicts the lives of courtesans of the red-light district of Heera Mandi in Lahore. Shekhar portrays the character of Nawab Zulfikar in the show, while

his son Adhyayan plays Nawab Zoravar Ali Khan. Manisha Koirala, Sonakshi Sinha, Aditi Rao Hydari, Richa Chadha, Sanjeeda Sheikh and Sharmin Segal, Fard-een Khan and others play pivotal roles in the period drama series. Heeramandi is available for streaming on Netflix.

## Meryl Streep will be honored with a special Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival's opening ceremony on May 14

Meryl Streep will be honoured with a special Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival's opening ceremony on May 14, the organisers announced.

The Hollywood icon, who won the best actress prize at Cannes in 1989, will join the kick-off of the 77th edition at the Grand Theatre Lumiere. "I am immeasurably honoured to receive the news of this prestigious award."

To win a prize at Cannes, for the international community of artistes, has always represented the highest achievement in the art of filmmaking. To stand in the shadow of those who have previously been honoured is humbling and thrilling in equal part. I so look forward to coming to



France to thank everyone in person this May," Streep said in a statement.

She'll return to the renowned French festival, after a successful Hollywood career spanning five decades.

"We all have something in us of Meryl Streep! We all have something in us of Kramer vs. Kramer, Sophie's Choice, Out of Africa, The Bridges of Madison County, The Devil Wears Prada and Mamma Mia! Because she has spanned almost 50 years of cinema and embodied countless masterpieces, Meryl Streep is part of our collective imagination, our shared love of cinema," Cannes festival heads Iris Knobloch and Thierry Fremaux said in a joint statement.







# Kangana Ranaut knocks Tejasvi Surya in flub, Tejashwi Yadav reacts

NEW DELHI, May 5 (Agencies): Actor-turned-politician Kangana Ranaut made a gaffe when she mixed-up Tejashwi Yadav and BJP MP Tejasvi Surya while taking a dig at the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) leader for "eating fish". The incident occurred while she was addressing an election rally in Himachal Pradesh. The rally on Saturday took place in Mandi, the Lok Sabha seat in Himachal Pradesh where Ranaut has been fielded as the BJP candidate. While criticising the Opposition, she said, "There is a party of spoilt 'shehzadas' (princes).

They themselves don't know where to go. Be it Rahul Gandhi, who wants to grow potatoes on the moon, or Tejasvi Surya, who indulges in hooliganism and eats fish." As videos of Ranaut's gaffe went viral on social media, Tejashwi Yadav reacted to the mix-up and said, "Ye mohatma kaun hai (Who is this madam)?" Tejashwi Yadav was embroiled in controversy last month after he posted a video on social media, which showed the RJD leader and Vikasheel Insaan Party (VIP) chief Mukesh Sahni enjoying a meal of fried fish and rotis in a helicopter after campaigning.

BJP stalwarts, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, criticised the RJD leader for the content of the video as it was posted during Navratri. The former Deputy Chief Minister of Bihar later clarified that the video was shot before the week-long Navratri festivities started. At the rally, Kangana Ranaut not only made the gaffe, but also attacked the Congress, including late leaders, due to which the party lodged a complaint against her with the Election Commission. "Motilal Nehru, the father of former Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, was

Ambani of his time but no one knows where his wealth and property came from. He was close to the British, and from where he got the wealth is still a secret," she said. "Nobody knows how Jawaharlal Nehru became the prime minister as voting was in favour of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel". Since then, this "deemak' (termite) of dynastic rule has infected the country. On one hand, we have a 'tapasvion ke sarkar' (BJP government), and on the other we have 'bhoogion ke sarkar' (Congress) made up of small gangs of 'shehzadas'. One is in Delhi

and the other is here (in Himachal Pradesh)," Ranaut said, in a veiled reference to Vikramaditya Singh, the Congress candidate pitted against the actor in Mandi. In its complaint filed by state convenors, the Congress said Ranaut "used derogatory and insulting remarks against senior leaders of the Congress party and crossed all lines by making comparisons of freedom fighters with businessmen". "She has tried to draw comparisons between freedom fighter Motilal Nehru with one of the top businessmen of the country."

# Paytm COO Bhavesh Gupta quits; company rejigs senior management

NEW DELHI, May 5 (Agencies): Paytm's parent company One97 Communications president and chief operating officer Bhavesh Gupta has resigned from the company, an official statement said on Saturday. Gupta was steering the lending business, online and offline payments, and compliances, among others, at Paytm. Verticals, headed by him, were adversely impacted by the RBI's ban on Paytm Payments Bank (PPBL) from carrying on new transactions. "Bhavesh Gupta, President and Chief Operating Officer, who was overseeing the payments and lending businesses, has decided to take a career break due to personal reasons. He will be transitioning to an advisory role, offering guidance for Paytm's growth initiatives until the end of the year," the statement said. Gupta joined Paytm in

August 2020 from Clix Capital, formerly GE Capital. He will be relieved from the services of the company on May 31. Paytm had estimated a Rs 300-500 crore loss due to the RBI's restriction on PPBL. It had to pause its lending business, which is learnt to have resumed now. As part of a change in leadership structure, fintech firm Paytm has appointed Rakesh Singh as chief executive officer of Paytm Money. "Rakesh Singh has recently been appointed as the new Chief Executive Officer of Paytm Money Ltd. With over two decades of experience, Rakesh Singh was previously the CEO of the stock broking business at Fisdom and has held key management positions with ICICI Securities and Standard Chartered Bank," the statement said. The company has

moved Varun Sridhar, who was heading Paytm Money, as CEO of Paytm Services — which deals in the distribution of mutual funds and other wealth management products. "I would like to thank Bhavesh for his contributions and his role in ensuring a smooth transition. Our focus on payments and lending is stronger than ever, and I will work with the seasoned leaders that we have in each of our businesses to execute our plans," Paytm CEO Vijay Shekhar Sharma said. He appreciated Sridhar's contribution in expanding Paytm's role in deepening the penetration of mutual fund and wealth management products in the country. "I welcome Rakesh to Paytm Wealth business where we are committed to building world-class technology-led wealth offerings to young Indians," Sharma said.

# No force can engineer split in family: Robert Vadra responds to BJP's 'sidelined' dig

NEW DELHI, May 5: Businessman Robert Vadra on Sunday responded to the BJP's jibe that the "Rahul Gandhi camp" in the Congress party was sidelining both Vadra and his wife, Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra. Businessman Robert Vadra with his mother-in-law, ex-Congress chief Sonia Gandhi, in Rae Bareilly on Friday. (Photo by Deepak Gupta Hindustan Times) On his Facebook profile, he wrote that "no force can engineer a split in the family." "No power, positions of politics can get between our family. We all have, we will, and we shall always work for the people and betterment of our great nation. Thank you to everyone for your support and best wishes. Will help as many people as I can, through my public service always," Vadra stated.



On Saturday, a day after the grand old party announced Rahul Gandhi's candidature from Rae Bareilly and nominated Gandhi family loyalist KL Sharma from Amethi, the ruling BJP had taken a dig at Vadra. "Spare a moment for Robert Vadra, who despite claiming immense popularity in Amethi, was overlooked for the seat. It is

obvious that the Rahul Gandhi camp is systematically marginalising both, Priyanka Vadra and her husband, in the Congress. How soon before the sister rebels?" BJP IT cell chief Amit Malviya said in a post on X (formerly Twitter). It took the Congress until the final day of nominations for Amethi and Rae Bareilly, to declare its candidates for the seats. The

two Lok Sabha constituencies in Uttar Pradesh are synonymous with the party's "first family," the Gandhis. It was being speculated that Priyanka Gandhi Vadra will finally make her electoral debut from one of the two seats, but she eventually opted not to contest to keep herself free to campaign across the country. On the other

hand, Rahul Gandhi, who has already contested from Kerala's Wayanad, from where he is the sitting MP, chose Rae Bareilly instead of Amethi, from where he made his poll debut (2004) and won two more terms (2009, 2014) but lost to the BJP's Smriti Irani in 2019. In February, the siblings' mother, ex-Congress chief Sonia Gandhi, vacated the Rae Bareilly seat as she has not been keeping well, and became a Rajya Sabha MP from Rajasthan. In Amethi, meanwhile, the BJP has again fielded Irani, the constituency's 2014 runner-up and its current representative, while in Rae Bareilly, the ruling party has given ticket to UP minister Dinesh Pratap Singh, who brought down Sonia Gandhi's winning margin in 2019, when she emerged as the Congress' sole Lok Sabha MP from Uttar Pradesh.

# Samruddhi Expressway Accident: Woman Killed, 2 Injured in Bus Collision Near Buldhana

MUMBAI, May 5 (Agencies): A woman was killed and two others were injured when a private bus rammed into the state transport bus they were travelling in on the Nagpur-Mumbai Samruddhi Expressway in Maharashtra's Buldhana district, police said on Sunday. "The accident occurred on the Chikhali-Mehkar road on Saturday morning," an official said. "The private bus was heading towards Mehkar from Surat (Gujarat) when it rammed into a state transport bus from



behind," he said. "A woman travelling in the state transport bus sustained injuries and was rushed to a nearby hospital, where she was declared dead, and two other passengers in the bus were injured," the

official said. The police have arrested the driver of the luxury bus under section 304-A (causing death by negligence) and other relevant provisions of the Indian Penal Code, he said.

# JKTJAC holds monthly meeting, raises burning issues of Teachers

## Top News Report

JAMMU, May 5: A monthly meeting of Jammu Kashmir Teachers' Joint Action Committee (JKTJAC) held at Udhampur under the leadership of UT President Vinod Sharma and District President Udhampur Lekh Raj Parihar today on 05.05.2024. The meeting was attended by the JKTJAC representatives of JKTJAC from eleven zones of the district. While speaking on the occasion Mr. Vinod Sharma demanded release of pending dues of Mid Day Meals for the year 2023-24. He said that though liability of Pre Pry and Pry for the financial year 2023-24 has been cleared recently but still there is liability of upper Pry and cooks' honorarium.

He also demanded the resolution of various other genuine and burning issues of the teaching fraternity and appealed the LG administration to resolve them for the welfare of thousands of teachers of the UT. Raising the issue of comprehensive transfer policy in favour of teachers appointed under ReT scheme he said that these teachers have been working in the same schools for last more than two decades and suffering badly including females due to non availability of transfer policy. He appealed worthy Administrative Secretary School Education for consideration of the genuine demand of transfer policy for the welfare of thousands of these teachers. He also demanded conversion of headteachers posts



into non plan posts of masters so that many headless middle schools get justice. While speaking he also appealed the Director School

Education Jammu to issue regularisation orders of ReTs who have completed 5 years ReT period as they are waiting for their regularisation for

a long time and conversion of RRETs to Teachers Grade II/III. Other demands highlighted on the occasion included.

Raising Grade of teachers at par with their counter parts in other UTs; Provision of 2nd teacher in single teacher schools under rationalisation so that poor students aren't deprived of their proper education right. Filling up of vacant posts ZEOs/ Principals/ Headmasters as many zones/schools are headless, Issuance of DPC list of teachers to master. Speaking on the occasion Mr Lekh Raj Parihar demanded the release of more than two years arrears (time barred) of teachers and masters as they are suffering badly and updating of service records of teachers in the zones of District Udhampur as teachers are facing lots of problems for getting them completed and appealed CEO Udhampur to take up

this issue with the ZEOs/DDOs so that teachers may not suffer any more. Meanwhile JKTJAC leadership demanded uniformity in all the districts in completing the files of one time exemption to the teachers who have enhanced the higher qualification during service by simplifying the process. Others who also spoke on the occasion were Sham Sharma, Sukesh Khajuria, Pritam Goswami, Ravinder Singh Rathore, Bhushan Khajuria, Jagdish Chander Sharma, Parshant Sharma, Anil Sharma, Jai Parkash, Sham Singh, Manoj Sharma, Amit Gupta, Dharuv Singh, Sudesh Kumar, Vipin Raina, Som Raj, Rekha Thakur, Mohd Mustafa, Rakesh Tripathi, Ankush Sharma, Vinod Kumar and others.

## FROM PAGE 1

### LG Manoj Sinha addresses Shri Kubernath Rai Memorial Lecture

for dedicated efforts to ensure his works are available to readers from other regions and it is translated in different languages so that a larger number of readers have access to his great works. CEO Pole expresses confidence in peaceful, good voter turnout in elections amid ceasefire previous polls and expressed hope for more participation of people in elections from Bandipora. He expressed confidence that voter turnout this time will break all the previous

### EVM A theft machine, make sure you voted the right party: Farooq Abdullah

Narendra Modi had stooped to communal scaremongering for electoral gains. "He (Modi) is trying to scare the Hindus by telling them that if they have two houses, they (the opposition) will snatch one and give it to Muslims. Then they scare the Hindu women, telling them that their mangalsutra will be snatched and sold. The proceeds of the sale will be given to Muslims," he said. "They (the BJP) do not know that no one is benevolent to Muslims. It is the God who gives or stops sustenance," he asserted. Abdullah said the current elections were not about development but about saving the country. "Today the fight is not about roads and electricity. The fight is to save the country.

### IAF Convoy Attack | Several people detained for questioning, search on for terrorists in Poonch

Because if the nation is saved, we too will be safe," he said. Corporal Vikky Pahade and expressed condolences to his family. "The CAS (Chief of Air Staff) Air Chief Marshal V R Chaudhari & all personnel of Indian Air Force salute the braveheart Corporal Vikky Pahade, who made the supreme sacrifice in Poonch sector, in the service of the nation. Our deepest condolences to the bereaved family. We stand firmly by your side in this hour of grief," it posted on 'X'. The officials said teams of the Army's Para Commandos were also pressed into service in the search operation.

### Four arrested for murder in Reasi

There has been no "contact" with the terrorists yet, they said, adding that several people were detained for questioning in connection with the attack, the first major incident in Jammu region this year. The officials said checking of vehicles has been intensified across the district which is going to polls in the sixth phase of the Lok Sabha election on May 25. Poonch is part of the Anantnag-Rajouri parliamentary constituency. The border district of Poonch, along with adjoining Rajouri, has witnessed major terrorist attacks over the past two years. The region was peaceful between 2003 and 2021.

### Several youth from Pulwama joins Azad-led DPAP

entrants and emphasizing the party's commitment to addressing the aspirations of the youth.

### MeT predicts generally dry weather in J&K

mislead police, the officials said. south Kashmir, recorded a minimum of 10.3°C against 8.6°C and it was 1.9°C above normal, the official said. Kupwara town recorded a minimum of 7.0°C against 9.4°C on the previous night and it was 1.4°C above normal there, the official said. Gulmarg recorded a minimum of 3.0°C against 3.5°C on the previous night and it was below normal by 1.3°C for the world famous skiing resort in north Kashmir's Baramulla district. Jammu, he said, recorded a low of 19.6°C against 22.1°C on the previous night and it was below normal by 3.0°C for the winter capital of J&K. Banihal recorded a low of 13.2°C, Batote 13.0°C and Baderwah 9.0°C, he said.

## Tax on two-wheelers too high, market over-regulated: Bajaj

**Tax experts feel lowering GST rates on two-wheelers will have a significant impact on the government's overall GST collection in the short term.**

NEW DELHI, May 5 (Agencies): Bajaj Auto managing director Rajiv Bajaj said auto sector is suffering from 'over-regulation' and this has led to a sharp rise in selling prices, making the product unaffordable for many. Bajaj also questioned the rate of taxation on two-wheelers, especially the commuter segment ones.

He said motorcycles that cater to the common citizen are levied a goods and services tax (GST) rate of 28%, which is very high compared to other developing markets.

"Why do we have to pay a GST of 28% on vehicles that the 'aam aadmi' uses... In most developing countries, including Asean and Latin American nations such as Brazil, the middle- to lower-end motorcycles fall in the



tax bracket of 8 to 14%," said Bajaj on the sidelines of the launch event of the new 400cc Pulsar motorcycle.

While Bajaj welcomed the introduction of BS-VI and other policy measures to cut emissions, he said making ABS compulsory is also a regulatory overkill.

"On one hand we want regulations at the high-

est level in terms of emissions, which is fine. But then the government should reconsider the GST at 12-18% and not at 28%," said Bajaj. Not only Bajaj, but other players in the industry as well have been seeking a rate cut for two-wheelers from the government to boost sales which are yet to bounce back to pre-Covid levels. FADA,

the automobile dealers association body, had written a letter to the Road Ministry in 2023, asking for a GST rate cut for two-wheelers, predominantly within the 100-125cc segment which accounts for more than two-thirds of total two-wheeler sales.

FADA had cited that due to rising cost of raw

materials, stricter emission norms and higher taxes, the price of the popular Honda Activa has escalated from Rs 52,000 in 2016 to Rs 88,000 in 2023. Bajaj Pulsar has witnessed a substantial increase in price from Rs 72,000 in 2016 to Rs 1.5 lakh last year.

The government, meanwhile, hasn't shown any interest or hinted at lowering the GST rate on two-wheelers. Tax experts feel lowering GST rates on two-wheelers will have a significant impact on the government's overall GST collection in the short term. Bajaj Auto on launched its biggest Pulsar brand bike, the Pulsar NS400Z, which comes with an introductory price of Rs 1.85 lakh.

## Volkswagen strengthens retail footprint with new store in TN

**With the setting up of a new outlet at Ambattur in Chennai, the total network for the automobile major stands at 26 sales and 20 service facilities in Tamil Nadu.**



CHENNAI, May 5 (Agencies): German automaker Volkswagen has inaugurated a new store in the city under its expansion drive in the state, strengthening its retail presence in the country.

With the setting up of a new outlet at Ambattur in the city, the total network for the automobile major stands at 26 sales and 20 service facilities in Tamil Nadu.

"The Chennai Met-

ropolitan area is one of the key markets for Volkswagen in India. In 2023, our Virtus was one of the highest-selling sedans in this market. With this inauguration of our newest touchpoint in Chennai, we are emphasising our commitment to the rising need for premium, safe, and reliable vehicles throughout India", Volkswagen Passenger Cars India Brand Director Ashish Gupta said in

a company statement.

The new store 'KUN Capital Motors' is headed by Director Arun Uppuswami and has a five-car display and 25 service bays, among others.

"Our long-standing partnership with Volkswagen has driven a highly successful mobility revolution in Tamil Nadu. With class-leading products on offer, we are once again glad to make the safest portfolio of Volkswagen Taigun, Tiguan, and Virtus, even more accessible to customers through the new city store," Uppuswami said.

With the latest facility, Volkswagen has 208 sales and 142 service touchpoints across 155 cities in India.

## Study calls for making cardiorespiratory fitness part of annual checkups

NEW DELHI, May 5 (Agencies): Making cardiorespiratory fitness a part of your annual health check-ups can help you gauge your health status and understand the risk of underlying disease as well as predict mortality, according to a study.

Cardiorespiratory fitness (CRF), also known as cardio or aerobic fitness can be defined as the ability of the heart, lungs, and blood vessels to supply oxygen during sustained physical activity.

According to the American Heart Association, an individual's aerobic fitness level can indicate factors such as smoking, hypertension, and high cholesterol.

The study, published in the British Journal of Sports Medicine, suggests the need to incorporate this measure in routine clinical and

public health practice. It comes amid reports of even seemingly healthy and fit people succumbing to heart disease, among others.

"Apparently 'healthy' adults can take the cardiorespiratory fitness test - under medical advice and supervision annually. It has the power to predict the risk of cardiovascular disease (heart attacks, strokes), and is an even stronger predictor of mortality than diabetes, hypercholesterolemia, and smoking (tobacco abuse)," Sanjay Chugh, Associate Director and Senior Consultant Inter-

ventional Cardiology at Narayana Hospital in Gurugram said. "It also predicts risk of developing diabetes, cancer or mental illness," he added.

In the study, a high CRF measure was found to lower the risk of

death from cardiovascular disease and cancer, while a low CRF indicated the risk of developing chronic conditions such as hypertension, heart failure, stroke, atrial fibrillation, dementia, and depression in the future.

The test measures maximum oxygen uptake (VO2 max) and how it's used during intense exercise.

Sanjay noted that in patients planned for surgery, "the test predicts the surgical risks of complications and death from surgeries and helps risk stratify, prognosticate, and guide patient management."

'CRF measurement should be routinely included in clinical practice,' Sudhir Kumar, a neurologist at Indraprastha Apollo Hospitals, wrote in a post on X.

## Obesity, poor diet, physical inactivity driving early onset of cancers: Health expert

SYDNEY, May 5 (Agencies): Obesity, poor diet, and physical inactivity are driving the onset of several cancers, including gallbladder, colon, kidney, and pancreas, according to a top health expert from the University of Sydney in Australia.

Once known to affect the elderly, the last three decades have seen an enormous surge in early onset of cancer, occurring even before people turning 40 or 50.

Various studies have provided evidence that the cancer surge seen globally, including in India, is driven by an unhealthy lifestyle, including high consumption of junk food rich in sugar, salt, and fat combined with a lack of exercise, among others.

"Globally there has been a significant rise in some types of cancer in younger people. For instance, in the 30 to 39-year-old age group in the period from 1991



to 2021, the rate of cancers of the gallbladder has increased by 200 per cent, uterine by 158 per cent, colorectal by 153 per cent, kidney by 89 per cent, and pancreas by 83 per cent," said Robyn Ward, Executive Dean and Pro Vice-Chancellor Medicine and Health at the University of Sydney, said.

"The reasons proposed for this increase include obesity, poor diet, and physical inactivity," she added, noting that "young millennial adults are three times more likely to get cancer than the same age group born in the 1940s". Robyn noted that "overall, the incidence is higher in men than women and men are more likely to die". Cancer incidence does vary by organ type, for example, prostate, lung, and colorectal cancer occur the most in males,

while breast, lung, and colorectal cancer are predominant in females, the Professor noted.

What are the commonly occurring 'early' cancers? How to prevent it?

In the majority of cancers like cervical and colorectal, the chance of cure increases with early detection. But for some like brain cancer, early detection makes no difference.

The best proof of prevention is cervical cancer and colorectal (bowel) cancer, said Robyn.

Cervical cancer is preventable through vaccination and treatable if detected early. Infection with specific strains of human papillomavirus is the primary driver (95 per cent) of cervical cancer, which is preventable by vaccination.

On the other hand, increasing national screening programmes for breast, cervical, and colorectal (colon) cancers can help boost

treatment as well as decline in mortality rates.

"For the right cancers, early screening will assist, for example cervical, bowel, and breast. But the current screening programmes for these population-based programmes are based on age not risk," the professor said.

Some younger people may be at a higher risk of cancer while elderly may not. So age-based screening programmes may not help, but modern technologies like genomics, big data, and Artificial Intelligence (AI) may play an important role.

"A huge opportunity with modern technologies like genomics, big data, and AI is to develop genetic stratification, incorporated with health records to develop risk-based screening. This helps create personalised screening programmes," she said.

## Tackling malaria: As monsoon approaches, incidence of the disease will rise. Prevention remains the best solution

NEW DELHI, May 5 (Agencies): Malaria is one of the major public health problems in India, with an estimated 33.8 lakh cases and 5,511 deaths in 2022. A potentially deadly condition, maximum cases are witnessed during the monsoon months of June to September, when collection of rainwater after heavy rains promotes mosquito breeding.

As climate change and rising temperature bring more areas under the spread of malaria, there is a dire need to control as well as prevent this disease.

Prevention involves a multi-faceted approach that includes vector control, personal protection measures, and community engagement.

Vector control: Use insecticide-treated bed nets (ITNs) to prevent mosquito bites while

sleeping. Insecticide sprays indoor can check mosquito breeding and resting sites. Draining of stagnant water and good sanitation practices can reduce mosquito breeding grounds.

Personal protection measures: Wear clothes with long sleeves that should also cover legs, especially during peak mosquito activity times of dusk and dawn. Apply insect repellents containing DEET (N,N-diethyl-meta-toluamide) or picaridin on exposed skin. Additionally, use screens on windows and doors to prevent mosquito entry inside homes.

Use of chemoprophylaxis (chemical agents to prevent infectious diseases): For people travelling to malaria-endemic areas, taking prophylactic (preventive) medications prescribed by healthcare

providers can help in checking infection. However, chemoprophylaxis are not usually recommended for people living in endemic areas because of the risk of drug resistance.

Community engagement: Educate communities about malaria transmission, symptoms and prevention strategies. Take steps to promote community participation in vector-control activities, like cleaning up mosquito breeding sites.

To prevent malaria and mitigate its effects, a multifaceted approach is needed to prevent complications and further transmission. By implementing these strategies, the spread and the impact of malaria, especially in regions that are vulnerable to outbreaks, can be checked.

What to do in case of infection

1 Visit a doctor: In suspected or diagnosed cases, seek immediate medical attention if you experience symptoms like fever, chills, headache, muscle aches, and fatigue. Early diagnosis and treatment reduce the risk of severe complications and transmission to others.

2 Diagnostic testing: Malaria diagnosis requires laboratory testing of blood samples for confirmation of parasite presence. Rapid diagnostic tests are used in resource-limited settings for quick and accurate diagnosis.

3 Treatment options: Treatment depends on severity of the infection, individual's age and medical history and the species of malaria parasite. Anti-malarial medications like artemisinin-based combination therapies (ACTs)

are generally used for uncomplicated cases. Severe cases may require hospitalisation and intravenous (IV) anti-malarial drugs like quinine or artesunate.

4 Follow-up care: Make sure that you complete the full course of anti-malarial medication prescribed, even if symptoms improve. Follow-up appointments may be needed to monitor treatment response and to check for any complications.

5 Preventing transmission: During the acute phase of illness, take precautions to prevent mosquito bites. This will avoid transmission of infected blood through the parasite bites to others. Sleep under insecticide-treated bed nets and use mosquito repellents until the parasite is cleared from your bloodstream.

## High BP in childhood may raise risk of heart attack, stroke later by 4x: Study



NEW DELHI, May 5 (Agencies): Hypertension in childhood and adolescence may raise the long-term risk of serious heart conditions like stroke and heart attack, by four times, according to a new study.

Hypertension is known to affect one in every 15 children and adolescents worldwide and has become a growing concern.

To understand its long-term effect, researchers compared 25,605 chil-

dren and adolescents diagnosed with hypertension between 1996 and 2021 in Ontario, Canada, to peers without the condition.

The follow-up of 13 years showed that those with hypertension had a two to four times higher risk of experiencing heart attack, stroke, heart failure, or cardiac surgery compared to those without it.

Experts called for boosting blood pressure screening and treatment during childhood

to reduce the risk of serious cardiovascular disease as an adult.

"Devoting more resources to paediatric blood pressure screening and control could lower the risks of long-term heart conditions in children with hypertension," said Cal H. Robinson, paediatric nephrology fellow at The Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids) in Canada.

"More awareness about the importance of regular screening and follow-up for paediatric hypertension may prevent children from developing significant adverse heart outcomes later in life," Robinson added.

The findings will be presented at the Pediatric Academic Societies (PAS) 2024 Meeting, held May 3-6 in Toronto.



