



## WATER SHORTAGE BRINGS OFFICIAL APATHY TO FORE

Residents of villages around Kasauli complain of receiving muddy water after five days. **P2»**



## PINING FOR ROHTANG? GET A PASS, 12K AVAILABLE DAILY

800 petrol and 400 diesel vehicles allowed daily beyond Gulaba barrier towards the Pass. **P3»**



## YOUNG ACTORS MAKING A MARK IN BOLLYWOOD

We look at some of the most promising young stars and what they have in store after recent hits. **P4»**



## IN BRIEF

### CM'S CHOPPER INSPECTED



**Dharamsala:** In view of the Lok Sabha election and Assembly byelections, Kundan Yadav, a senior IRS officer appointed by the Election Commission as Expenditure Observer for 17 Assembly segments under Hamirpur parliamentary constituency, on Friday visited Dehra and Jaswan-Paragpur. A Flying Squad Team inspected the Chief Minister's helicopter in Yadav's presence. Maintaining that this was a routine inspection, Yadav said the CM's security officials and helicopter crew provided full cooperation. **OC**

## HELPLINE

### POLICE

Report contusion (WhatsApp)  
8988700100  
Report cyber crime - 1930  
Gadriya helpline (women safety) - 1515  
Hoshiar Singh (Forest crime) - 3090

### HEALTH

Medical emergency - 108  
Drug de-addiction, counselling and general health enquiry - 104  
Free drop back ambulance service for expectant mothers - 102

# Chaos on roads after PM's rally

Key Nahan stretch out of bounds; office-goers, schoolkids left in the lurch

AMBIKA SHARMA  
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

NAHAN, MAY 24

Residents faced inconvenience as road diversions were put in place in the town during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Vijay Sankalp Rally at Chowgan ground today.

Office-goers and schoolchildren had to walk over a km in the sweltering heat as all vehicles, including school buses, were stopped near the ITI on the Nahan-Kumarhati highway. No vehicle was permitted beyond this point after 8 am.

Though the police had informed the residents about the affected routes a day ago, they had to face inconvenience as no alternative route was available.

Even party functionaries coming from Shimla, Solan, Renukaji and Pachhad Assembly segments of Sirmaur were stopped at a certain point and they had to walk till the rally venue located in the heart of the town.

Chaos prevailed throughout the day as the police and security personnel restricted public movement as part of the security arrangements.

After the rally ended, a huge traffic jam was seen on the Nahan-Sarahan National Highway due to the influx of



People scale a boundary wall to leave the rally venue in Nahan. TRIBUNE PHOTO: LALIT KUMAR

vehicles, which had been stopped there. Traffic moved at a snail's pace, long queues of vehicles stretched for several km as BJP functionaries had come from nearby Solan district and other areas of Sirmaur district.

The BJP had, however, made constituency-wise systematic arrangements for lunch for its workers at several places along the highway. Enthusiastic workers were seen dancing to the tunes of Pahari

songs near Sarahan after the rally ended.

Before the PM's arrival, the BJP leaders comprising sitting and former MLAs were seen scrolling their cell phones while seated on the stage.

Carrying big cutouts of the Prime Minister in the traditional Himachali cap and a stole as well as the party's poll symbol, the workers kept waving flags in the rally venue, which was painted in saffron hues.

# Villagers threaten to boycott polls over water woes

OUR CORRESPONDENT

KULLU, MAY 24

Facing problem in getting water for drinking and irrigation purposes, residents of Jahlma village in Udaipur subdivision of Lahaul and Spiti district have threatened to boycott the June 1 Lok Sabha poll and Assembly byelections.

The residents said they would be forced to boycott the elections if some concrete steps are not taken to resolve the water crisis.

They held a meeting and

appealed to the government to be serious about the problem. The villagers alleged that the irrigation system in the area was in a bad shape. Earlier also, the villagers had reached out to the district administration and the state government with the problem, but to no avail.

The residents stated that if the government does not take a decision soon, the people of the entire area will be forced to boycott the elections. "The government should find a quick solution to the problem," a villager said.



Residents hold a meeting at Jahlma village in the Udaipur subdivision of Lahaul and Spiti district on Friday. TRIBUNE PHOTO

# SKM calls for vote against BJP



TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

SHIMLA, MAY 24

The Sanyukt Kisan Manch (SKM) has decided to vote against the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the June 1 elections. In a press conference held in Rohru today, the SKM urged its constituents, apple growers and other fruit growers to vote against the BJP, as the party has "ignored their interests in the past 10 years".

The SKM claims to have the support of 27 associations of apple growers, stone fruit growers and vegetable growers, and has a significant presence in the Shimla and Mandi parliamentary constituencies.

"We had put out our six-point demand charter for consideration of both the parties, with the condition that the SKM will support the one which will back our demands. The Congress has accepted

Sanyukt Kisan Manch claims to have support of 27 associations of farmers, horticulturalists



SKM leaders addressing the media in Rohru. TRIBUNE PHOTO

four of our demands. We were waiting for the BJP to reach out to us with some promises, but it did not. So, we have decided to oppose the BJP in the elections," said Harish Chauhan, the convener of the Sanyukt Kisan Manch.

"I have been a BJP voter for a long time, but if the party is not at all considerate towards the demands of my community, it's my duty to stand with my community. We will

urge the fruit growers and farmers to not vote for our interests," he said.

Rajan Harta, an SKM member, said the decision to oppose the BJP was not political, but driven by the need to protect the apple economy and the interests of apple growers and other fruit growers.

"If our livelihood isn't an issue in the elections and we

don't stand up for ourselves, the apple economy will be totally destroyed. We will have to rise above our political affiliations like farmers of Punjab and Haryana and fight collectively to save our livelihood," said Harta.

The major demands of the SKM include raising the import duty on apple and other fruit to 100 per cent, removal of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) on farm inputs and equipment, restoration of the budget for Market Intervention Scheme (MIS) and loan waiver, etc.

"The Congress has included the demand for MSP in its manifesto, Priyanka Gandhi has tweeted about removing GST from farm inputs and equipment, and the state Congress has promised to fight for increasing the import duty. At the moment, the Congress appears more sensitive towards our demands," said Chauhan.

The Manch has decided to hold press conferences at different places in coming days to mobilise fruit growers and farmers to vote against the BJP.

# HC extends bail of Independent MLA, Gagret legislator's father

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

SHIMLA, MAY 24

The HP High Court today extended the interim anticipatory bail of Hamirpur Independent MLA Ashish Sharma and Rakesh Sharma, the father of Gagret MLA Chaitanya Sharma, till June 10.

Both the bail applications were listed before the court. After hearing the counsel for the parties, Justice Ranjan Sharma extended the period of anticipatory bail till the hearing, listing the

Duo had been booked over 'electoral offences' related to RS poll

matter for June 10.

The police had on March 10 registered a case against the Independent MLA and the father of a Congress rebel over "electoral offences" related to the Rajya Sabha poll, in which six Congress MLAs and three Independents had voted for the BJP candidate. A case of criminal conspiracy,

corrupt practices and undue influence on election was registered at Boileaganj Police Station in Shimla on the complaint of two Congress MLAs.

A case was registered against both of them under Sections 420, 171 A and 171 C, 120B of the Indian Penal Code and Sections 7 and 8 of the Prevention of Corruption Act.

In their bail application, both have alleged that they are innocent and they have been falsely implicated in this case and that the allegations are politically motivated.

## One held with 12-kg charas

NURPUR, MAY 24

The Nurpur police busted an inter-state drug racket with the arrest of a drug supplier, Ramesh Kumar of lower Ropa village in Mandi district, in the wee hours of Friday.

The police recovered 12.156 kg charas, believed to be biggest ever haul of the intoxicant in the district. On a tip-off, the police had set up a naka at Keharian near Dol under Jawali police station jurisdiction and stopped an Alto car and seized the contraband.

A case under Sections 20, 25, 29 of the NDPS Act has been registered. — OC

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## CS urges locals to report forest fires promptly

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

SHIMLA, MAY 24

Chief Secretary Prabodh Saxena today chaired a review meeting on enhancing forest fire prevention measures across the state. While emphasising the invaluable importance of forests, the Chief Secretary (CS) underscored the collective responsibility of the public and administration to safeguard this natural wealth. The CS highlighted the role of public participation and awareness in controlling forest fires. He urged local communities to actively engage in extinguishing forest fires and advised them to report any signs of smoke or fire to the nearest Forest Department office or emergency services via toll-free numbers — 1077 and 1070.

He also stressed the need to avoid activities that could trigger fires, such as discarding burning cigarettes, unauthorised campfires and using fireworks near forested areas.

He said several proactive steps, including provision of multi-utility vehicles, blower bags and deployment of drone surveillance in critical forest areas, have been taken by the department.

## Pong fire: Environmentalists seek action against offenders

OUR CORRESPONDENT

NURPUR, MAY 24

Up in arms against the illegal practice of setting crop residue on fire in the Pong Wetland Wildlife Sanctuary area, local environmentalists have alleged that the Wildlife Wing of the Forest Department has turned a blind eye to the practice.

A big fire in the sanctuary area on the banks of the Pong reservoir has not only unleashed havoc on the environment, but also made the lives of the residents of surrounding villages miserable due to the sudden rise in temperature. Locals rue that the fire has destroyed flora and fauna, with a large number of birds and their eggs perishing in the last one week.

Local environmentalists Manohar Lal Sharma, Ujagar Singh, Kulwant Thakur and Ravinder Singh alleged that the wildlife authorities had failed to check the illegal activity despite the ban imposed by the Supreme Court on February 14, 2000, on all non-forestry activities in wildlife sanctuaries across the country.

They said the sanctuary area — under the wildlife

Over one lakh exotic migratory birds visit the wetland every winter



A patch of land in the Pong Wetland area blackened by fires set to burn stubble.

ranges Nagorta Surian and Dharmeta — was on fire for the over two weeks, but no action had been taken by the authorities concerned against the offenders or land mafia.

Milki Ram Sharma, an environmentalist from the area who has been talking about the illegal activities going on in the sanctuary for the past nine years, recently

filed a petition with the National Green Tribunal (NGT), seeking legal action against encroachers and those violating the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, besides checking violations of the mandatory provisions of the Forest Conservation Act, 1980, and Environment Protection Act, 1986.

Attempts to contact DFO,

Wildlife, Hamirpur, Raginald Royston proved futile as his mobile was switched off.

In 1999, the Centre had notified the Pong Dam Wetland area, spread over around 300 sq km, as a wildlife sanctuary under the Indian Wildlife Act, 1972. Over one lakh exotic migratory birds visit and stay in the wetland every winter.

## Paucity of water in Solan dist brings official apathy to fore

Residents go without supply for up to five days

AMBIKA SHARMA

Official apathy has left the residents of many areas of Solan district deprived of water. No tankers have been deployed, even as people go without water for four to five days. The district administration has failed to seek the requisite permission from the authorities to deploy tankers, reflecting their indifference towards the suffering of residents. "The officials are so consumed in preparing for the Lok Sabha elections that they have conveniently forgotten their basic duty of providing this essential commodity to residents. We are left to fend for ourselves as we spend hundreds of rupees daily just to buy water," rued Anuj, a resident of Dharampur.

Residents of the villages around Kasauli such as Garkhal complained of receiving muddy water after five days as little water was left at the source. The situation was no different in Solan city.

Given the sad state of affairs, a group of villagers from Badaha, near Kasauli, visited the officials concerned to seek a solution. They complained that it had become difficult to spare water for their cattle, who

### WATER SOURCES ALL DRIED UP

Getting water through tankers has also become difficult for the residents as the majority of the water sources from which these tankers get water are almost completely depleted. The demand is much greater than the scanty supply, because of which commoners are forced to buy bottled water.

were the worst sufferers. A large number of people who domesticate cattle for milk face a similar plight.

What is concerning is that subdivisional officers and field staff of the Jal Shakti Department (JSD) have been sending weekly reports of the situation of the water shortage to the district administration, but the officials prefer to sit pretty over the issue and let the residents suffer.

Getting water through tankers has also become difficult for the residents as the majority of the water sources from which these tankers get water are almost completely depleted. The demand is much greater than the scanty supply, because of which commoners are forced to buy bottled water.

Residents of Solan city, Dharampur, Jabli, Parwanoo, Garkhal, Sanawar, Sanwara and several villages around Kasauli have been receiving water after four to five days. Since the discharge in a

majority of the water supply schemes has been drastically reduced, ranging from 25 to 75 per cent, the staff of the JSD has been unable to cater to the needs of residents.

In the Solan division of the JSD, nearly 52 water supply schemes suffered from a reduction in quantity ranging from 25 to 75 per cent. In 31 schemes, water discharge has reduced by 75 per cent, while in eight schemes it ranges from 50 to 75 per cent and 10 schemes suffer from shortages ranging from 25 to 50 per cent. In three schemes, the situation is comparatively better, with the discharge being reduced up to 25 per cent said Ashish Rana, Executive Engineer, JSD, Solan.

Solan DC Manmohan Sharma said, "I have been apprised of the situation by officials. I will seek permission from the authorities concerned in a day or two to deploy tankers at various places. It may be noted that tankers have already been deployed in Parwanoo." — TNS



A view of the almost dried up Giri river. TRIBUNE PHOTO

## Task force reviews efforts to reduce single-use plastics

SHIMLA, MAY 24

The government today directed all deputy commissioners to conduct review meetings to assess the progress of the initiative to reduce single-use plastics.

Chief Secretary Prabodh Saxena chaired the fourth review meeting of the state-level special task force to discuss the management of single-use plastics here today. "We have put in place the Buy

Back Policy for non-recyclable and single-use plastic waste at Rs 75 per kilogram through registered rag-pickers and individual households," he stated.

He said under this policy all types of packaging plastic waste, including confectionery items and cleaned and dry packaging and pouches/packets of liquids such as milk, oil, shampoo etc were being purchased.

Saxena highlighted the detrimental environmental impact of using plastic and pointed out that the focus on solid waste management, particularly plastic waste, underscored the need for environmentally friendly and scientifically sound alternatives. He said stringent measures were taken and stockists, traders, retailers and vendors were prohibited from using non-biodegrad-

able carry bags.

Saxena said various initiatives had been undertaken to collect plastic waste. He said with the involvement of the environment, science and technology departments, the Pollution Control Board and urban local bodies, the state had made significant progress in managing plastics.

Director of Environment, Science, and Technology DC Rana said that approximately

1,300 tonnes of plastic have been collected under the Buy Back Policy and used for the construction of roads by the Public Works Department (PWD) and in cement factories within the state. A target had been set for the PWD to build 200 kilometres of road using this plastic. Additionally, awareness activities about single-use plastics were being conducted throughout the state, he said. — TNS

## WHAT OUR READERS SAY

Is a civic issue bothering you? Are you agitated over the lack of concern? Is there something heartening that you feel needs to be highlighted? Or a picture which in your opinion ought to be seen by many, and not just you?

**The Tribune** invites its readers to have their say. Please email at: [hpreadersfeedback@tribunemail.com](mailto:hpreadersfeedback@tribunemail.com)

### PDS DEPOTS OUT OF FLOUR IN KHARAL VALLEY

THE BPL and NFS consumers under the public distribution system (PDS) have not been receiving subsidised flour from government depots for over 45 days in Kharal valley, while the APL cardholders are getting a regular supply. Consumers are forced to make repeated trips, only to come back empty-handed, and must purchase flour from the market at a higher price. The supply of ration to these depots is irregular — at times flour is not available, at other times they do not get pulses. The authorities concerned should make flour available at fair price depots and regularise the supply of ration. **TEHAL SINGH, GHARAKAR**

### OVERCROWDED SHIMLA BUSES BOTHER RESIDENTS

IT is extremely difficult to travel in private buses in Shimla. Drivers and conductors of these privately-operated buses try to fit in people even after they are packed to capacity. Travelling in such buses becomes extremely inconvenient, particularly for children, women and the elderly. If someone objects to these practices, they are asked to get down and take another bus. The authorities concerned should look into this matter and issue challans to errant operators. **SUNITA, SHIMLA**



### RAINWATER ACCUMULATES ON DHALPUR ROADS

COMMUTERS face major troubles because of waterlogging on the college road in Dhalpur. The road turns almost into a pond after rains due to the lack of proper drainage. Pedestrians are often splashed with dirty water, courtesy the vehicles crossing the inundated stretch. The condition has worsened due to the undergoing construction of a Kullu Municipal Council market adjacent to the road. The authorities concerned have turned a blind eye to the problems faced by people in Ward 9. They must ensure proper drainage in the area. **SANJAY, DHALPUR**

## Chamba farmers trained to boost agri exports

CHAMBA, MAY 24

In a collaborative effort to boost exports of agricultural and horticultural products, the National Institute of Plant Health Management (NIPHM), Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, Government of India, conducted a one-day training programme at the Holistic Himalaya Farmer Producer Company in the Salooni subdivision of Chamba.

The training programme, conducted by scientific officer Jyoti Bhardwaj, was supported by the Department of Horticulture (Salooni). The meeting saw active participation from Holistic Himalaya president Yunus Bano, CEO Mohammad Riaz and female farmers associated with the organisation. Dr Bhardwaj provided



Farmers and NIPHM scientist Dr Jyoti Bhardwaj at the workshop at Bhandal village in Salooni.

insights into the agricultural activities facilitated by NIPHM, emphasising the institute's role in training for plant health management and export capacity enhancement at both national and international levels. She highlighted NIPHM's

focus on modern agricultural practices, which could be implemented across various sectors of agriculture.

Dr Bhardwaj informed the attendees about export-related aspects of agricultural products. She assured them that NIPHM would support the

promotion of agriculture through export enhancement.

Efforts would be made to assist farmers in remote areas by providing technical knowledge, which would help them market their Himalayan resources and products effectively, she said. She also discussed plans for raising awareness through government initiatives. The farmers assured Dr Bhardwaj that they would adopt good agricultural practices and improve their field collection methods. She acknowledged the aspirational status of Chamba and its significant potential in agriculture. These collective efforts are expected to boost farmers' income and enable them to standardise their agricultural practices through technology. — OC

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## School gets robotics lab



Students at the lab in Auckland School for Boys in Shimla. TRIBUNE PHOTO

SHIMLA, MAY 24 'Create-stem and robotics lab' was inaugurated at Auckland School for Boys today by founding Principal Michael John. A special demonstration by Kurious Lab's trainers and Form V boys was also held. This year CREATE will cater to forms III, IV and V. The principal said this would be done to ensure comprehensive integration with the academic programme. — TNS

**AU SMALL FINANCE BANK LIMITED** (A Scheduled Commercial Bank)  
 Regd. Office: 19-A, Dhuleshwar Garden, Ajmer Road, Jaipur - 302001 (CIN:L36911RJ1996PLC011381)

**APPENDIX IV [SEE RULE 8(I)] POSSESSION NOTICE**

Whereas, The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of the **AU Small Finance Bank Limited (A Scheduled Commercial Bank)** under the "Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest [Act, 2002 (54 of 2002)]" and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued demand notice on the date as mentioned below calling upon the borrowers to repay the amount mentioned in the said notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice as per the details given in below table:-

Name of Borrower/Co-Borrower/Mortgagor/Guarantor/Loan A/c No.	13(2) Notice Date & Amount	Description of Mortgaged Property	Date of Possession Taken
(Loan A/C No.) L9001060130718938, Dharm Pal (Borrower), Sukh Ram (Co-Borrower)	13-Feb-24 ₹ 5,03,397/- Rs. Five Lac Three Thousand Three Hundred Ninety-Seven Only as on 12-Feb-24	All That Part And Parcel Of Residential/Commercial Property Land / Building / Structure And Fixtures Property situated at Khowat/Khatoni 273/287 Khasra No. 480 share of 9/20rd, Land measuring 00-03-00 Bighas (Along with House/ Structure in Khasra No. 480) Out of Total Land 00-06-00 Bighas situated at Mohal Saryanj Hadbast No. 312 Tehsil as per Jamabandi for the Year 2016-17 issued by Halka Patwari of Patwar Circle Saryanj Tehsil Darlaghat District Solan HP Admeasuring 00-03-00 Bigha East: Khem Raj Gupta House 25'10", West: Own Land/ Road 25'10", North: Khem Raj Gupta House 29', South: Prem Lal Land/ House 29'	22-May-24
(Loan A/C No.) L9001060729290032, Manoj Kumar (Borrower), Smt. Dashoda Devi (Co-Borrower)	12-Jan-24 ₹ 13,39,485/- Rs. Thirteen Lac Thirty-Nine Thousand Four Hundred Eighty-Five Only as on 10-Jan-24	All That Part And Parcel Of Residential/Commercial Property Land / Building / Structure And Fixtures Property situated at khata No. 7 Khatani No. 7 Kitte 50 to the extent of 2/9 share of land measuring 0-80-86 Hectare out of total land measuring 03-63-86 Hectare situated at Mohal Gohari Hadbast No. 478 Tehsil Arki District Solan HP as per Jamabandi for the year 2019-20 issued by Halka Patwari Tehsil Arki, Solan HP Admeasuring 0-80-86 Hectare	22-May-24

The borrower having failed to repay the amount, therefore notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein above mentioned table in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under section 13(4) of the said [Act 2002] read with Rule 8 of the said rule on the date mentioned in the above table.

"The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets."

The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the **AU Small Finance Bank Limited (A Scheduled Commercial Bank)** for the amount and interest thereon mentioned in the above table.

Date : 24/05/2024 Place : Solan, HP Authorised Officer AU Small Finance Bank Limited

# Pining for Rohtang? Get a pass, 1.2K available daily

ABHINAV VASHISHT

**KULLU, MAY 24**  
The 13,058-foot high Rohtang Pass, a world famous tourist spot, was thrown open to the tourists today. Following a recommendation from the Manali SDM, the district administration has opened the Manali-Rohtang road for the movement of vehicles till the Rohtang Pass.

Only 800 petrol and 400 diesel vehicles are allowed daily beyond the Gulaba barrier towards the Rohtang Pass, as per the orders of the National Green Tribunal (NGT), to protect the fragile ecology of the region. Permits can be obtained online by paying the Rs 550 fee, including congestion charges. Vehicular traffic beyond Gulaba was suspended on November 27 last year. Traffic movement was allowed till Gulaba from April 10 and till Marhi from May 16. Last year, the tourists were allowed to drive up to Marhi after May 18 and to the Rohtang Pass from June 13.

The opening of the road to Rohtang Pass will give a boost to tourism in Manali. The Rohtang Pass is a major attraction for tourists as they can witness snow there right until September, when access to it is withdrawn.

Before the NGT order, around 5,000 vehicles used to reach the Rohtang Pass every day during the peak tourist season, but now only 1,200



The world-famous Rohtang Pass was buzzing with tourists on Friday. TRIBUNE PHOTO

## 800 PETROL, 400 DIESEL VEHICLES ALLOWED PER DAY

- Only 800 petrol and 400 diesel vehicles are allowed daily beyond Gulaba barrier towards the Rohtang Pass, as per the orders of the National Green Tribunal (NGT), to protect the fragile ecology of the region
- Permits can be obtained online by paying the Rs 550 fee, including congestion charges
- The stakeholders say that providing limited permits has led to high fares
- After the Atal Tunnel opened in October 2020, a majority of tourists visiting Manali head for the Lahaul valley to enjoy the snow in Sissu and Koksar. Around 25.76 lakh vehicles passed through the strategically important 9.02-km Atal Tunnel in two years from January 2022 to December 2023

vehicles are allowed daily.

In April last year, the NGT rejected a petition filed by the Him Anchal Taxi Operators Union, Manali, to increase the number of vehicles allowed to the Rohtang Pass, stating that the carrying capacity of the area did not allow for traffic in such numbers.

Stakeholders in the tourism industry, however, say that the cap on the number of vehicles deprives many visitors of visiting the world-famous Rohtang Pass. They add that

providing limited permits has led to high fares and black-marketing.

A tourism beneficiary, Puran, said, "Now a majority of the heavy vehicles to and from Lahaul pass through the Atal Tunnel and the government should approach the NGT to raise the number of vehicles towards the Rohtang Pass."

However, after the Atal Tunnel opened in October 2020, a majority of the tourists visiting Manali head for the Lahaul valley to enjoy the

snow in Sissu and Koksar. Around 25.76 lakh vehicles passed through the strategically important 9.02-km Atal Tunnel in two years from January 2022 to December 2023.

The influx of tourists to the Lahaul valley is increasing rapidly. This has raised concerns about the carrying capacity of the tunnel and the valley. The state government recently formed an 11-member committee to work towards protecting the Lahaul valley ecosystem.

## Webcasting in 50% poll booths of Shimla district

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

SHIMLA, MAY 24

A training camp for micro-observers was organised under the chairmanship of general observer for the Shimla Lok Sabha constituency, Jang Bahadur Yadav, here today. He said, "Webcasting will be done in 50 per cent polling stations of the district. In order to maintain secrecy of voting, micro-observers will have to ensure that the camera is not installed above the EVM machines."

The general observer said micro-observers would be deployed at various polling stations in the district, orders for which would be provided during the second training on May 29. He said the work of the micro-observers would be to oversee various types of activities taking place at the polling station.

He said the micro observers, without being a part of the polling parties, would monitor all polling activities and submit their reports to the concerned Assistant Returning Officer (ARO).

Yadav said the micro-observers would also have to supervise all the work being done by the presiding officer to ensure free and fair elections. The micro-observers would also have to ensure that basic facilities were available at the polling booth, he added.

On this occasion, Additional District Magistrate (Law and Order) Ajit Bhardwaj, District Information Science Officer Pankaj Gupta and Tehsildar Election Rajendra Sharma, along with other officials, were present.



Kangra Deputy Commissioner Hemraj Bairwa visits an aged voter in the constituency.

# Kangra gears up for polls, 19 strongrooms set up



OUR CORRESPONDENT

DHARAMSALA, MAY 24

District Election Officer and Deputy Commissioner Hemraj Bairwa yesterday reviewed the vote-from-home facility and the EVM-VVPAT commissioning process in the Kangra constituency.

Bairwa gave necessary instructions to officials and employees deployed on election duty to facilitate smooth voting.

The DC said the commissioning process of the EVMs and VVPATs allotted for the Lok Sabha election and byelection to the Dharamsala Assembly constituency would be completed tomorrow.

The DC said 19 strongrooms had been set up to secure EVMs and VVPATs in the Kangra parliamentary constituency.

He added that the strongroom for the commissioning process would be opened in the presence of candidates or their authorised representatives. After the completion of the process, the machines will be sealed and kept in the strongroom. During this period, no person will be allowed to carry any type of electronic device inside the hall.

The DC said as per the guidelines of the Election Commission of India, 1,000 mock polls were conducted in five per cent of the total EVMs to be used. Besides, one mock poll will be conducted in the remaining EVMs to ensure proper functioning of each button and correct confirmation of the

vote cast by the voter for the candidate of his choice. During this mock poll, every vote cast in the name of the candidate in all the EVMs is confirmed by all political parties and their candidates to ensure that no problem arises on the day of voting.

The DC also instructed the booth-level officers to deliver the voter slips to the voters. Bairwa added that a SVEEP campaign was being organised in the district to increase the voting percentage. Along with this, special focus has been laid on the polling booths with less than 60 per cent voting in the last Lok Sabha elections.

He said 1,910 polling stations have been established in the Kangra-Chamba parliamentary constituency and necessary facilities have also been provided as per the guidelines of the Election Commission.

# 7 lakh litres of illicit liquor seized so far

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

SHIMLA, MAY 24

The State Taxes and Excise Department has seized seven lakh litres of liquor in the state after the implementation of the model code of conduct.

The State Taxes and Excise Commissioner Younus today said, "In a bid to ensure free and fair elections and thwart any illicit activity, the department has taken strict action to crackdown on unlawful liquor activities in the state."

The department today conducted raids in eight different locations of Indora tehsil, in the Nurpur area of Kangra.

The commissioner added that the teams have succeeded in confiscating 18,000 litres of illicit liquor in Gagwal-1, 26,000 litre in Gagwal-2, 30,000 litre in Ullahrian, 26,000 litre in Tyora, 10,000 litre in Khanpur, 5,000 litre in Bhadroa, 5,000 litre in Milwan and 2,000 litre in Basantpur.

59 teams, 24x7 control room to clamp down on illicit trade

He said 1.23 crore litres of lagan, valued at Rs 1.23 crore, was seized and destroyed during the operation.

The department has formed 59 teams to clamp down on illegal liquor trade across the state. These teams are actively conducting raids at multiple locations to suppress such illicit activities.

Besides, the department has set up a 24x7 control room to register complaints regarding illegal liquor trade and freebies in the state. The citizens have been urged to report any such activity through designated channels, including the toll-free number 18001808062, landline number 0177-2620426, WhatsApp 94183-31426, or by sending an email to controlroomhq@gmail.com.

# Liquor vendors calling shots as MRP missing

RAGHAV GULERIA

DHARAMSALA, MAY 24

Many liquor vendors in Kangra district are overcharging customers as this year the maximum retail price (MRP), which mandates that no one can sell a pre-packed commodity at a price exceeding it, is conspicuously missing.

In Nagrota Surian and surrounding areas, vendors are not displaying the rate list and are selling liquor at exorbitant rates.

As per the State Taxes and Excise Department rules, vendors can charge 10 to 30 per cent above the minimum selling price (MSP), and they are abusing this rule and exceeding this limit.

Rajesh Nandpuri, who runs a mobile phone shop at Nagrota Surian, said, "The liquor vendor near the bus stand charged me Rs 260 for purchasing a quarter of Royal Stag, whereas Rs 140 was marked on it. Besides, every vendor here is charging Rs 300 for country liquor (MSP Rs 190). I have registered a



Many liquor vendors have not displayed the rate list.

complaint on the Chief Minister Sankalp Seva helpline." Interestingly, this year MSP is marked on the liquor bottles, but the MRP, which protects the rights of the consumers, has not been marked.

According to the department, this has been done

deliberately to empower the vendors, who are situated on the interstate borders, to compete with the vendors of Punjab, who have been given free hand to increase the sales. However, this logic does not justify the missing MRP, which is significant in protecting the rights of consumers.

## COMPLAINT NUMBERS

- 01894230186 Kangra Zone
- 01905223499 Mandi Zone
- 01772620775 Shimla Zone

Information can also be shared on toll-free number 180 018 08062, telephone number 0177-2620 426 and WhatsApp number 94183 31426

Talking to *The Tribune*, State Taxes and Excise Department Commissioner Dr Younus said, "We have specified the margin over MSP which the vendors are supposed to charge. They have been asked to display the rate list with the MRP of each brand. Any violation will be strictly dealt with and repeated challans would lead to cancellation of the licence. The department is pro-customer and any complaint made would be immediately heard."

As per the prevalent excise policy, 10 per cent dividend has been fixed on single malt, whiskey, rum, gin, vodka, bio beer, bio wine, cider and 30 per cent dividend on all beer brands and country liquor.

# Priyanka to visit Kullu on May 29

OUR CORRESPONDENT

KULLU, MAY 24

Priyanka Gandhi Vadra is scheduled to visit Kullu on May 29. Sachin Pilot is the only star campaigner from the Congress who visited the district, but he did not canvass in the Kullu Sadar constituency. No star campaigner of the Congress party has so far visited the Kullu Sadar constituency, having the highest number of voters among the four Assembly constituencies of the district.

The BJP Mandi parliamentary constituency candidate Kangana Ranaut campaigned here twice on March 24 and on April 12. Meanwhile, the Congress candidate Vikramaditya Singh campaigned here on May 15.

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari was scheduled to come to Kullu, but his plan was cancelled. BJP national president Jagat Prakash Nadda, having his aunt's

house in the Shastri Nagar area of Kullu, did not visit the district during his recent visit to Himachal Pradesh. No star campaigner of the BJP had visited the Kullu Sadar Assembly constituency so far.

Senior leaders of both parties have held a few public meetings in Manali, Banjar and Anni Assembly constituencies, but no election campaigns were carried out in the Kullu Sadar Assembly constituency. Even the candidates have ignored the constituency.

Kullu MLA and CPS Sunder Singh Thakur had been made the Congress byelection in-charge for the Lahaul-Spiti Assembly constituency and he is handling the election campaign of the Congress in Lahaul and Spiti and is mostly camping there.

The local leaders of both the parties are heading the campaign for the candidates here.

# Lingadi feast begins in Kullu

OUR CORRESPONDENT

KULLU, MAY 24

With the temperature rising, Kullu residents have been relishing fiddlehead delicacies. Locally known as Lingadi, this fern (non-flowering plant) is consumed as a vegetable in the region. Pickles and dishes made from this plant are loved by locals and visitors alike.



During the fiddlehead season, many eateries serving local cuisines in the tourist hotspots serve dishes and pickles made with Lingadi. The dish is sought by many visitors, and its demand has led to ready-made Lingadi pickle jars being available in the market throughout the year.

Lingadi grows naturally and is found in abundance along the rivers and streams of the region.

The Ostrich variety of this vegetable, which grows in the months of April and May, is considered fit for eating. However, other varieties of the plant have been found to be somewhat poisonous.

The plant is harvested early in the season, before the fern has bloomed and reached its full height, and is cut fairly close to the ground.

Lingadi provides livelihood to many villagers of Kullu,

and usually sell for Rs 50-80 per kg. People in rural areas of Kullu harvest this readily available plant in large quantities for both household and commercial purposes.

This wild vegetable is rich in many types of nutrients. According to experts, 17 types of minerals are found in the plant and it contains Vitamin A and C in abundance. However, excessive consumption of it can also cause Vitamin B deficiency due to the enzymes it possesses.

Lingadi contains 87 per cent water, four per cent protein and three per cent carbohydrates along with fat, fibre and ash. Minerals like magnesium, iron, potassium, phosphorus, niacin and zinc, fibre calcium and Omega-3 and Omega-6 fatty acids are also present in the much-loved vegetable.

# Constitution the focal point of campaign

TIKENDER PANWAR

"B HAIYA, are we really going to see the end of our Constitution?" murmured a former BJP councillor from the Shimla Municipal Corporation into my ear.

The occasion was the birth anniversary of Dr Bhim Rao Ambedkar in Shimla on April 14. Soon after the Governor left the venue, such slogans were raised by different community leaders: "Is desh ki raksha kaun karega," and "Is Samvidhan ki Raksha kaun karega," with resonating answers: "Hum karenge" (Who will protect the Constitution and the country? We will do it!).

Having been a witness to more than 20 years of both Babasaheb's birth and death anniversaries, this was the first

**SAFEGUARDING INTERESTS OF ALL**

The Constitution does not promote the agenda of a majoritarian state. It does not aim to create a state based on a strong intertwining of religion in governance.

time that the Constitution became the central point of conversation during the event.

**400 boomerang for BJP?**  
The figure of 400 seats for the BJP in the Lok Sabha elections matters differently to different sections of people. For the marginalised, Dalits, minorities and other sections, the figure signifies that once the ruling party achieves this number, there is something imminent concerning the constitutional framework

that will change. The Constitution does not promote the agenda of a majoritarian state. It does not aim to create a state based on a strong intertwining of religion in governance.

Now, how does this affect marginalised communities? Shouldn't they be part of the larger bandwagon of a majoritarian state if they belong to the same religion? Though the Constitution has not been able to create an ideal state or developmental model, it has still been able to implement some redistributive policies through affirmative actions such as social and economic reservations.

Bezawada Wilson, a leader of sanitation workers, explained this to the author in an interaction. He said, "His grandfather lifted faecal matter of other human beings in the village

and remained a 'near slave' all his life, whereas his father also did the same work in cities, but for the first time saw currency in his hands, through which he could go to the market and buy things at his wish."

Then he went on to explain now his generation and others, through the enabling factor of the Constitution, can sit with policymakers and fight to reclaim their rights.

What the councillor feared was a loss of such rights once the 400 mark was reached because that would change the spirit of the Constitution, the scope of affirmative actions, and so on.

**State no different**  
In Himachal Pradesh, where the elections are to take place on June 1, the last leg of the phase, the issue of tampering with the Constitution is turning

out to be one of the biggest phenomena subtly infiltrating the minds of people. The state has the second highest ratio of Dalit population after Punjab in the country. With the advent of a strong presence of the state apparatus in many social development infrastructures along with affirmative actions, there is a natural fear that a change in the Constitution will adversely affect them.

Though the ruling party in the state (Congress) is making a high-pitched campaign on its role in the recent disaster and the poaching of its MLAs by the Opposition, the subtle campaign is steered by the Constitution and its continuity in the current conjuncture. How this will manifest during the campaign, only time will tell.

— The writer is a former Deputy Mayor of Shimla

# Tribune Life Style

HIMACHAL | SATURDAY | 25 MAY 2024

## DEEPIKA SHINES IN YELLOW

Actress Deepika Padukone, who is expecting her first child with Ranveer Singh, stepped out in Mumbai on Friday, in a beautiful yellow dress that elevated her charming personality. The mom-to-be took to Instagram and treated fans to a couple of images.



## Big honour

Superstar Chris Hemsworth received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame for his contribution to cinema. His family and Robert Downey Jr, his co-star in many Marvel movies, were also present on the occasion.



## STARS in the making

Young actors are making quite a mark in Bollywood. They are redefining the future of Bollywood with their talent, dedication and charisma. As they take on new projects and challenges, they promise to bring fresh perspectives that will captivate audiences worldwide. Here's a look some of the most promising young stars and what they have in store after their recent hits.

### SHE'S A TRENDSETTER

#### Alaya F

Alaya F, known for her fashion sense and acting skills, has quickly become a trendsetter. She recently starred in *Bade Miyan Chote Miyan*, and *Srikanth*, alongside Rajkumar Rao. Alaya's charisma and style continue to set her apart.



### PROMISING LINEAGE

#### Agastya Nanda

Agastya Nanda, the latest member of the illustrious Bachchan family to enter Bollywood, made his debut with *Archies*. His performance has already been well-received. Given his lineage and early accolades, Agastya is poised to continue making waves.



### COMEDY ZONE

#### Naila Grewal

Naila Grewal made an impact with her performance in the comedy-series *Mamla Legal Hai*. Despite working with seasoned actors, her portrayal stood out, earning her rave reviews. Up next for Naila is *Ishq Vishq Rebound*, a project generating a lot of buzz.



### DYNAMIC TALENT

#### Adarsh Gourav

Adarsh Gourav, acclaimed for his role in *The White Tiger* and a BAFTA nominee, is one of Bollywood's most dynamic young talents. He's set to star in a highly anticipated Hollywood series about aliens and will also appear in *Superman of Malegaon*, directed by Reema Kagti.



### DANCING SENSATION

#### Raghav Juyal

Raghav Juyal is not just a dancing sensation, but also a versatile actor. He's set to impress audiences with his upcoming action film *Kill*, which promises hardcore action and daredevil stunts. Raghav's multifaceted talent is sure to shine.



### CAPTURING HEARTS

#### Sanjana Sanghi

Sanjana Sanghi rose to fame with *Dil Bechara*, capturing hearts with her emotional performance. She followed this with notable roles in *Kadak Singh* and *Dhak Dhak*. Her beauty and talent make her one to watch out for in the future.



## Tune of the land

Diljit Dosanjh lends his voice to *Tu Juliet Jatt Di* from *Jatt & Juliet 3*

The song *Tu Juliet Jatt Di*, from the upcoming Punjabi movie *Jatt & Juliet 3*, has hit the airwaves. The music video of the track features Punjabi superstar Diljit Dosanjh, alongside actress Neeru Bajwa. The music for the song has been composed by Bunny and features the voice of Diljit.

The love song has a vibrant flavour and has Indian elements fused with contemporary sonic ones. Diljit expressed his enthusiasm for the project, "Releasing *Tu Juliet Jatt Di* is a special moment for me. The song is fun and full of emotion, much like our movie *Jatt & Juliet 3*. Collaborating with Neeru again was fantastic, and I'm sure fans will enjoy this track." *Jatt & Juliet 3* continues the adventurous saga of Fateh (Diljit) and Pooja (Neeru) as they navigate new challenges and hilarious misunderstandings. The music video of the track will be released today. — IANS



## When the screen gets big

Pranab J Deka, whose debut feature film *Kooki* was screened at Cannes, is hoping to give the Assamese film industry a fillip

### PARBINA RASHID

PRANAB J DEKA likes to keep the record straight. "Kooki is not an Assamese film, but a Hindi film made in Assam," he told us just before his film was screened at the Cannes Film Festival. As we wondered whether we should congratulate him for bringing Assam on the global map, he volunteered, "Mehnat ka phal mila hai, but...paisa aana chahiye."

And that sentence set the tone for the conversation. A proud Assamese, who made his debut feature film *Kooki*, with all cast and crew from Assam, is desperately hoping for a push for the Assamese film industry. So, what's ailing it? We expected the oft-repeated phrase 'government apathy', but, no, Deka has no such grievance. "In fact, the government has been pretty helpful. We have the infrastructure and high-tech equipment. But most of the people involved with the industry are working on a part-time basis. They need a primary source of income to sustain," he rues.

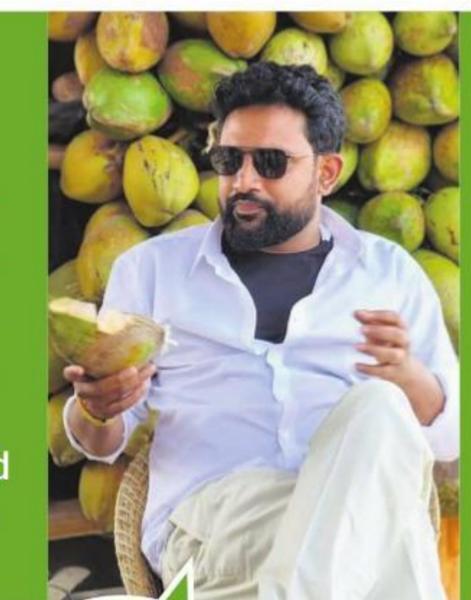
### AGING CHALLENGES

An FTII graduate, Deka is aware of the struggle one has to go through in the industry, and he has had his own share in plenty. Right from working with Gajendra Singh Chauhan in *Radio Mirchi Award Show* to doing TV shows like *Crime Patrol* to assisting in a movie like *18.11*, which he now dismisses as *ghatiya* (trash), he has done it all. "When you come from a film institute, it is difficult to settle down for the small screen, but one has to do what one has to do," he said. And that's what goaded him to make a TV series, *Ultimate Date*.

### FOR A CAUSE

The title bring us back to his 'date' with the movers and shakers at Cannes. Happy that his producer Junmoni Devi Khaund and the lead actress Ritisha Khaund could promote the film at Cannes, he felt *Kooki* should be watched by people across nations.

The origin of the film that narrates the journey of a rape survivor and the multiple stages of mental trauma she has to endure, goes back to



I was so involved with *Kooki* that every time my actress cried in front of the camera, I cried too... but I had to shoot it in a restrained manner.

aware that rape was not a good subject for a debut movie. "The biopic treatment of such a story does not allow a director to realise his full potential. I had to shoot it in a restrained manner. There was no drama except for the pain the rape survivor felt."

But he made sure that within the minimalistic parameters the theme allowed him, he didn't turn it into a boring commentary on a subject that has been much explored. "You won't get bored watching *Kooki*. You will leave the theatre with a positive feeling."

It's the same feeling he experienced after people from several nations, including France and Morocco, showed interest in screening *Kooki* in their countries. He remains grateful, for opportunities helping him to translate those opportunities into something tangible. That includes the nameless shopkeeper of a CD shop in the Maligoan area of Guwahati, who introduced him to Satyajit Ray, Francis Ford Coppola and world cinema!



## RIP FIROZ

Actor Firoz Khan, known for imitating Amitabh Bachchan, passes away

Actor Firoz Khan, best known for mimicking megastar Amitabh Bachchan, is no more. Firoz died of heart attack on May 23.

He was in his 50s. Firoz was majorly known for mimicking Amitabh but he shot to fame on the TV show, *Bhaji Ji Ghar Par Hai*. He also featured in projects like *Duplicate Sholay* and *Jija Ji Chhat Par Hai*.

In his beloved memory, Firoz's son Faij recalled his father's achievements. "My father moved to Mumbai in 1995. He worked hard and got roles in so many projects. He also worked in Tamil and Telugu films," his bereaved son shared.

Firoz also starred in Adnan Sami's super-hit song *Thodi Si Tu Lift Kara De*. Social media users also expressed grief over his demise. — ANI



Payal Kapadia and cast of *All We Imagine As Light* shine at Cannes

Filmmaker Payal Kapadia and the cast of *All We Imagine As Light* shone bright at the 2024 Cannes Film Festival, as they took to the red carpet ahead of the film's history-making screening in Cannes.

Kapadia's feature directorial debut, which was screened on Thursday night, is the first Indian film in 30 years and first ever by an Indian female director to be screened in the main competition of the prestigious film gala. Kapadia and the film's cast members, Kani Kusruti, Divya Prabha, Chhaya Kadam and Hridhu Haroon, were beaming with energy as they walked the Cannes red carpet. They were accompanied by cinematographer Ranabir Das, and producers Julien Graff, Zico Mitra, Thomas Hakim.

At the film gala, *All We Imagine as Light*, also written by Kapadia, competes for Palme d'Or alongside 19 other highly anticipated titles, including

## Historic screening

### FTII student wins La Cinef Award

Indian film *Sunflowers Were The First Ones To Know* has been crowned the winner of the La Cinef Award for Best Short Film at the ongoing 77th edition of the prestigious Cannes Film Festival. *Sunflowers Were The First Ones To Know* is a student film, directed by Chidananda S Naik, who studied at FTII, Pune. The short film is based on a Kannada folk tale about an old woman who steals a rooster, and this pushes her village into perpetual darkness. The winner was awarded a prize money of 15,000 euros. Taking to X, FTII officials wrote, "FTII brings big honour to India. Our student film *Sunflowers Were The First Ones To Know* is the winner of La Cinef Award at the 77th Cannes Film Festival. Student director Chidananda S Naik received this prestigious award at Cannes on May 23." Meanwhile, the third prize in the La Cinef competition went to another Indian film, *Bunnyhood*, directed by Mansi Maheshwar. [www](#)

films from master directors like Francis Ford Coppola (*Megalopolis*) and Yorgos Lanthimos (*Kinds of Kindness*), Paul Schrader (*Oh, Canada*), David Cronenberg (*The*

## Madhuri treats Kartik rasmalai

Kartik Aaryan, who has been off sugar for over a year-and-a-half to prepare for his role in the upcoming sports drama *Chandu Champion*, was treated with his favourite dessert *rasmalai* by the judge of the reality show *Dance Deewane*, Madhuri Dixit.

The actor appeared on the stage of the dance reality show for the finale episode, where he was accorded a warm welcome by the judges Suniel Shetty and Madhuri, who treated Kartik with *rasmalai*. The moment was filled with playful banter—Madhuri and Suniel also lauded Kartik for his dedication and versatility.

Madhuri admired how Kartik's transformative journey for his roles reflected his deep passion for acting as she wished him luck. Suniel applauded Kartik's work, joking that the *rasmalai* was a well-deserved reward for his hard work. The grand finale will air on May 25 at 9:30 pm on Colors. Kartik plays Paralympic gold medalist Murlikant Petkar in the film *Chandu Champion*, directed by Kabir Khan. Produced by Sajid Nadiadwala and Kabir Khan, the film will release in theatres on June 14. — IANS



और सभी न्यूज़ पेपर मैगजीन प्राप्त करने के लिए सर्वप्रथम इस टेलीग्राम ग्रुप को ज्वाइन करें नीचे दिए लकि पर क्लिक करके ज्वाइन टेलीग्राम

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